

ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT

Lieutenant General Ormond R. Simpson,
U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)



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HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
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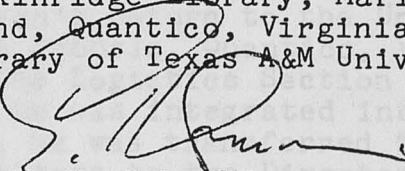
FOREWORD

This typescript, the transcribed memoir of Lieutenant General Ormond R. Simpson, USMC, Retired, results from a series of tape-recorded interviews conducted with him at Texas A&M University by Dr. Terry Anderson on 8 and 10 September, and 8, 13, and 27 October 1981 for the Texas A&M University Oral History Program. It also includes a Special Vietnam Interview conducted for the Marine Corps Oral History Program on May 23, 1973. This program obtains, by means of tape-recorded interviews, primary source material to augment documentary evidence.

Oral History is essentially spoken history, the oral recall of eyewitness impressions and observations recorded accurately on tape in the course of an interview conducted by a historian or an individual employing historical methodology and, possibly, the techniques of a journalist. The final product is a verbatim transcript containing historically valuable personal narratives relating to noteworthy professional experiences and observations from active duty, reserve, and retired distinguished Marines.

General Simpson has reviewed this transcript and made only minor corrections and placed a restriction of OPEN on the use of his memoirs. This means that a potential user may read the transcript upon presentation of appropriate credentials. The reader is asked to bear in mind that he is reading a transcript of the spoken word rather than the written word.

Copies of this memoir are deposited in the Oral History Collection, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC; Breckinridge Library, Marine Corps Development and Education Command, Quantico, Virginia; and in the Oral History Section of the Library of Texas A&M University.


E. H. SIMMONS
Brigadier General
U.S. Marine Corps, Retired
Director of Marine Corps
History and Museums

Date: 17 June 1985

LIEUTENANT GENERAL ORMOND R. SIMPSON, USMC, RETIRED

Lieutenant General Ormond R. Simpson was born March 16, 1915, in Corpus Christi, Texas. He graduated from high school there in 1931. A member of the ROTC unit at Texas A&M College, he was designated Military Honor Graduate and awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering upon graduation in June 1936. He held an Army Reserve commission until July 11, 1936, when he was commissioned a Marine second lieutenant.

In November 1940, he was assigned to Marine Corps Base, San Diego, where he served as a company commander with the 8th Marines until the outbreak of World War II. Shortly after his promotion to captain in December 1941, he sailed with the 8th Marines, 2d Marine Brigade, for the Pacific area.

Stationed on Samoa, he served as Regimental Adjutant of the 8th Marines until August 1942, when he was promoted to major and named Assistant Operations Officer of the Samoan Group Defense Force. In March 1944, he joined the Emirau Landing Force, 3d Marine Division. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in April 1944, and returned to the United States the following month.

After completing the Infantry Course, Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, General Simpson returned to the Pacific in November 1944. He served at Leyte and Manila, Philippines, as Assistant G-4, General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific area, and later joined the Staff of the Supreme Commander, Allied Powers (General Douglas MacArthur), as Assistant G-4. He earned the Army Legion of Merit Award for exceptionally meritorious conduct from December 1944 to January 1946, during the planning for the invasion of Japan and its subsequent occupation.

Following Colonel Simpson's return to the United States, he was assigned to Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, and served as an instructor in the Logistics Section for over three years. While at Quantico, he was integrated into the Regular Marine Corps. In June 1949, he was transferred to Headquarters Marine Corps as Special Assistant to the Director of Plans and Policies and was promoted to colonel in November 1951.

The following month he was detached from Headquarters to join the 2d Marine Division, Camp Lejeune. He was given command of the 6th Marines, which he held until April 1953, when he became the Division Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4. In September 1953, he departed for Korea where he subsequently earned the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service as Commanding Officer, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division. The following February he became Division Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3.

On his return from Korea in July 1954, Colonel Simpson attended

the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, graduating in June 1955. Ordered to Headquarters Marine Corps that July, he served briefly in the Policy Analysis Division, then was named Secretary of the General Staff in October. In January 1956, he became Military Secretary to General Randolph McC. Pate, Commandant of the Marine Corps, serving in that capacity for two and a half years.

From July 1958 until June 1960, he was Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico. Following that assignment, he joined the staff of Duke University in July 1960, serving for a year as Commanding Officer, Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps unit and Professor of Naval Science. Departing for Okinawa in August 1961, he assumed duties as Assistant Division Commander of the 3d Marine Division, and was promoted to brigadier general.

In May 1962, when American troops were requested by the government of Thailand during the Laotian crisis, General Simpson was ordered to Thailand as commanding general of the 3d Marine Expeditionary Brigade and Naval Component Commander, Joint Task Force 116. He remained in Thailand until August 7, 1962, then resumed his duties on Okinawa. In November 1962, following his return to the United States, he was assigned duty at Headquarters Marine Corps as Assistant Director of Personnel until March 1963, then served as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1. For his outstanding performance of duty in the latter assignment, he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal.

In April 1965, General Simpson took command of the 2d Marine Division, FMF, at Camp Lejeune. He also commanded Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina from September until December 1966. For service in these capacities, he was awarded a gold star in lieu of a second Legion of Merit. He was promoted to the rank of major general in January 1966.

Upon detachment from Camp Lejeune in November 1967, General Simpson became Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina, for which he earned a gold star in lieu of a third Legion of Merit.

General Simpson was ordered to South Vietnam in December 1968, to command the 1st Marine Division. For exceptionally meritorious service in this capacity from December 20, 1968 to December 17, 1969, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, four personal decorations by the Vietnamese Government, and one personal decoration by the Korean Government.

In January 1970, he assumed command of the Marine Corps Supply Center, Albany, Georgia. Upon completion of this duty, he was awarded his fourth Legion of Merit. While stationed at Albany, he was nominated for promotion to lieutenant general by President Nixon and was confirmed by the Senate on 23 April 1971. He was

promoted to three-star rank on July 1 and served his last active duty assignment as Director of Personnel, Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower, Headquarters Marine Corps. General Simpson was presented a second award of the Distinguished Service Medal in retirement ceremonies held at Marine Barracks, Washington, DC on April 30, 1973.

A complete list of his medals and decorations include: two awards of the Distinguished Service Medal; the Legion of Merit with three gold stars in lieu of second through fourth awards; the Bronze Star Medal; the Navy Commendation Medal; the American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three bronze stars; the World War II Victory Medal; the Navy Occupation Service Medal; the National Defense Service Medal with one bronze star; the Korean Service Medal; the Vietnam Service Medal with four bronze stars; the National Order of Vietnam, 5th Class; two Vietnamese Gallantry Crosses with Palm; the Korean Choong-Mo Medal; the Vietnamese Army Distinguished Service Order, 1st Class; the Vietnamese Chuong-My Medal, 1st Class; the Philippines Liberator Ribbon with one bronze star; the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation; the United States Service Medal; and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

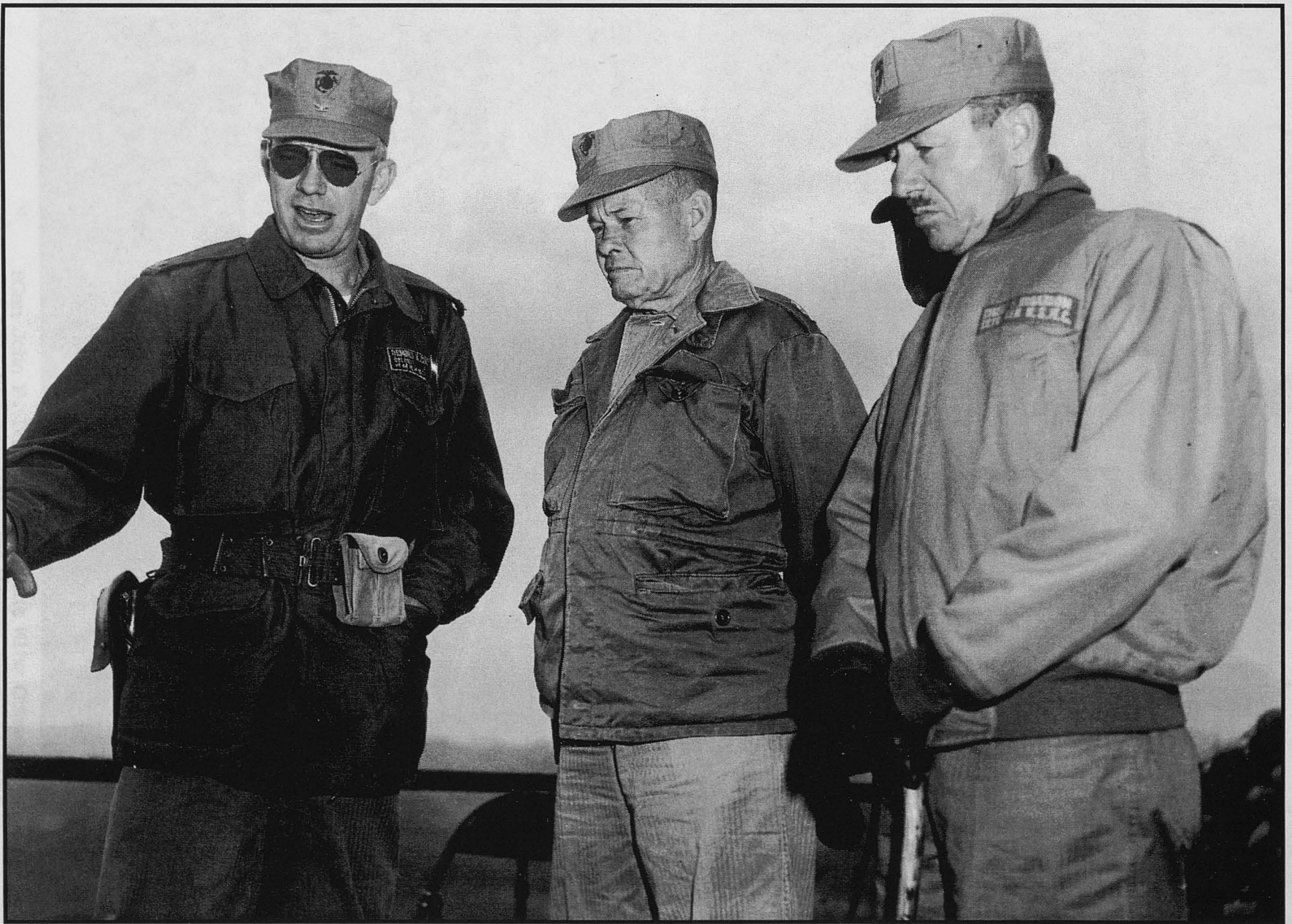
General Simpson and his wife, the former Marjorie Miller of Bryan, Texas reside in Bryan, where General Simpson is the Vice President for Student affairs at Texas A&M University.



LtGen Ormond R. Simpson
Washington, D.C. 1971



Col Ormond R. Simpson
11 Dec 1951



(Lt to rt) Col Simpson, MajGen Puller, BGen Hogaboom during MajGen Puller's visit to the 1st Marine Division in Korea, 1954.



BGen John F. Dobbin, Assistant Wing Commander,
and BGen Simpson, CG, 3rd Marine Expeditionary
Brigade at 3d MEB Headquarters, 22 May 62

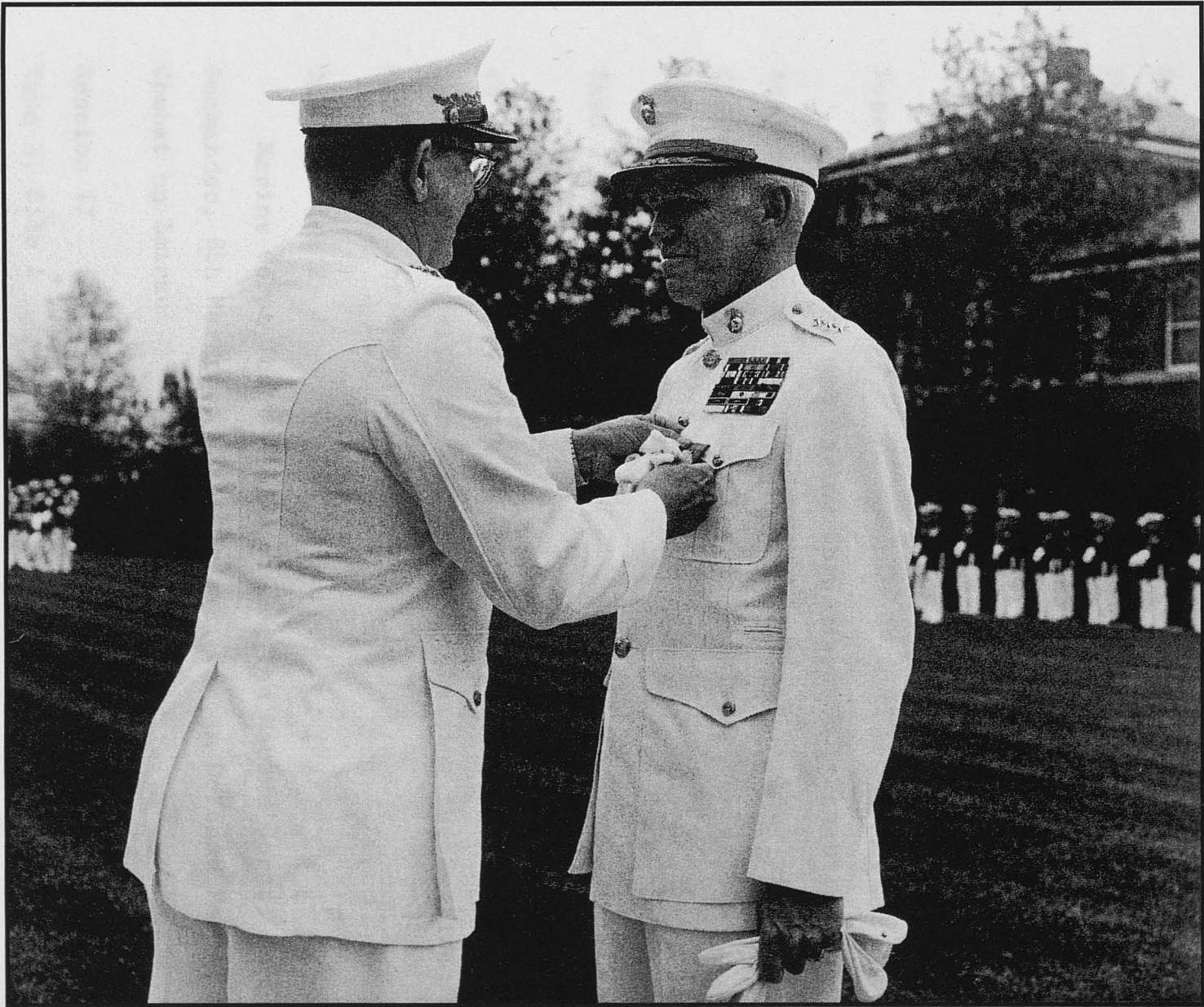


1st Marine Division at command ceremonies in Vietnam,
20 Dec 66. MajGen Carl Youngdale (r) receives MajGen Simpson

BGen Wheeler, left, accepts the Division colors from MajGen Simpson during change of command ceremonies for 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune 21 Nov 1967.



1st MarDiv change of command ceremonies in Vietnam,
20 Dec 68. MajGen Carl Youngdale (r), relieves MajGen Simpson



Gen Robert Cushman, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, presents the Distinguished Service Medal to LtGen Simpson during retirement ceremonies, Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C.
30 April 73.

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Simpson: He was a traveling salesman for a retail hardware company, I mean a wholesale hardware company in Corpus Christi, Texas. A rather remarkable man, really; one of seven sons. His father was a Methodist circuit rider, came from Marble Falls, Texas; and very poor, if you can imagine--circuit rider. I never knew my grandfather. He died, he probably was dead before I was born, as a matter of fact, but my father told me that they had a little scrub apple farm there around Marble Falls and he said they saw their father only twice a year and that's when they planted the cotton crop and when they harvested it. The rest of the time he rode horseback in Texas preaching--Methodist preacher--a "circuit rider."

My father never went beyond the seventh grade. And I think a truly remarkable man to do what he did and never have any more formal education than that. He never went high school,

MARINE CORPS ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interviewee: LtGen Ormond R. Simpson, USMC (Ret.)

Interviewer: Dr. Terry Anderson

Date and Place of Interview: 8 September 1981 at Texas A&M
University.

Begin Session I, Tape 1, Side 1, September 8, 1981

Anderson: You were born in Corpus Christi in 1915, grew up in Corpus Christi. Could you tell us about your early years? Let's start out with your father. What type of man was he, what was his occupation?

Simpson: He was a traveling salesman for a retail hardware company, I mean a wholesale hardware company in Corpus Christi, Texas. A rather remarkable man, really; one of seven sons. His father was a Methodist circuit rider, came from Marble Falls, Texas; and very poor, if you can imagine--circuit rider. I never knew my grandfather. He died, he probably was dead before I was born, as a matter of fact, but my father told me that they had a little scrub apple farm there around Marble Falls and he said they saw their father only twice a year and that's when they planted the cotton crop and when they harvested it. The rest of the time he rode horseback in Texas preaching--Methodist preacher--a "circuit rider."

My father never went beyond the seventh grade. And I think a truly remarkable man to do what he did and never have any more formal education than that. He never went high school,

but he went to the Tyler Business College. Now whether that still exists I don't know, but there he studied bookkeeping, that sort of thing. And he came to Corpus Christi in, well let's see, well the early 1900's, maybe around 1910, something like that. He went to work for this hardware company. He never worked but for one company there. Started in as a bookkeeper, eventually became a top salesman. The days of wholesale hardware business, Terry, is now just about gone, as I understand it, but that was a pretty good business in those days.

Anderson: The chains have sort of taken over.

Simpson: They were wholesale in the sense that they sold primarily to retail merchants, but they did sell to large farmers and ranchers, and that sort of thing.

He was a man that I have often said you hear people living before their time; he was a man who really lived after his time. He would have been happier in Texas in 1870.

Anderson: Really?

Simpson: He loved the old west, he loved the ranches, and the folklore; a great fan of Zane Grey and that sort of thing. Even though Corpus was a relatively small town of, oh, 15-20 thousand, even so, he was always uncomfortable there. He was much more comfortable in the back country as he called it. He worked the territory from Corpus Christi down to Hebronvillia, Laredo, and that part of the country.

My early memories of him, he was gone a great deal because of the roads and the cars and that sort of thing. In later years he was not gone overnight because they had better roads and better cars and so forth. But we saw him, as a child, I saw him only on weekends because he was gone in this "back country" all the time. He had no customers in Corpus Christi, they were all back there in the back country.

As I grew a little older, I traveled with him on occasion in the summer times and that sort of thing. Very many memories of visiting the King Ranch and the Kennedy Ranch and some other lesser known ones, but perhaps more interesting. The King Ranch was very interesting in those days because they had not yet discovered oil and it was a true working ranch albeit a very, very large one. At that time it was 2,200,000 acres. So, those were interesting times for me to see and to be with him.

An expert wingshot, taught me to hunt; he had no hobby other than a little bit of hunting. His avocation and vocation was his work and his family and his church. A man who never smoked, never drank, really a truly--in my own mind--great American because he, you know, he stood for all the solid virtues that you and I believe in and perhaps don't practice as well as he did.

My childhood, and I was born in Corpus and my mother stayed there until she died two weeks ago at the age of 88. She had been a member of the First Methodist Church in that town for 71

years, same church. She was the longest continuous member of the church. Not the oldest, but the longest in terms of tenure of membership when she died, 71 years in that church. I have an older sister, Gladys, who is 16 months older than I am.

I would say, overall, our childhood was uneventful. We were not poor in the sense that we always had enough to eat, but also we never had very much money. I actually graduated in 1931 from high school and could have been a year ahead here, but my sister was already in college. My mother went to high school but she never went to college, she finished high school in Corpus Christi, as a matter of fact, 1911.

Anderson: So she was, so although your father only had a seventh grade education, your mother did finish high school.

Simpson: She finished high school, but neither went to college. But they were determined that both of us would have a college education.

Anderson: Now, why was that? Isn't that rather unusual?

Simpson: I don't really think so given that period of time. They wanted us to have better things than they had. And there was a strong belief at that time that a college education was a key to better things.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: So they talked to us from the word go about the fact

that we would go to college. And my sister went to Southwestern which, as you know, is affiliated with the Methodist church. I laid out of high school, I laid out a year between graduating from high school and coming up here because she was in school and this, as you recall, was in the depths of the depression and there simply was not enough money for both of us to go. I laid out a year and worked at my father's hardware business. I took a sort of post-graduate course in public speaking in high school and worked that year and had enough money to...with \$100, he raised \$100 and I think he probably had to borrow it, but I came to A&M then in the fall of '32.

But, back to those early years, nothing of any particular importance. I was not an athlete, although, I tried to play basketball but was not good enough to make the team. I tried out for football and broke my collarbone, decided that was not very productive. My sister was a superior student, valedictorian of the class; and I was a rather indifferent student. I passed but I never excelled.

Anderson: And so you didn't have any brothers?

Simpson: No, I don't have any brothers, no.

Anderson: Just one sister?

Simpson: One sister, she's still alive.

Corpus is now a city of 225,000, it was then, I would guess, somewhere on the order of 15 to 20,000. One high school.

The kids from here who come from Corpus are suprised to learn that it was any more. They always ask me what high school did you go to, you know. And I have to tell them there was one, and they can't imagine it because there are 12 now. It was a small town. You see, that was before they hit oil. And as a matter of fact, I was a boy there in the high school when they dug the port, made the port of Corpus Christi. And later on I saw them build the naval air station there which contributed a lot to the prosperity. I've never been back except to visit since that time.

Anderson: Could you tell me about the background of your mother's family?

Simpson: Yes, that's kind of interesting. That's where my first name comes from. She's a native of Alabama, one of nine children. I believe the youngest of nine. Her father was a farmer in a little place called Sumnterville, Alabama which is just outside Livingston. Livingston is right on the western border of Alabama near Meridian--about 30 miles east of Meridian. They also were very staunch Methodists, and they, matter of fact, they kept the family bible for about 5 generations. That kind of thing, recording all births, deaths, and all marriages.

An older sister of hers married and came to Corpus Christi. And of course, they were very poor, all they had was cotton and not much of that. And my mother came from Alabama, I guess in

about 1908, to live with her older sister. Her mother had died, my mother's mother had died, my maternal grandmother which I never saw--whom I never saw, had died early and this elder sister had sort of raised this brood of children. She got married and moved to Corpus with her husband, and my mother then, I believe in 1908, came to Corpus to live with her and to go to high school. And she went to the high school, her graduating class in high school was 11, 11 in total. And on their 50th reunion, believe it or not, they were able to round up 8 of the 11; seven of them living in Corpus Christi. So they had a class reunion.

But, it was through the church, both of them being Methodist, that my mother and father met. He coming, both of them coming from a very strong Methodist background.

I do have memories of the fact that that was reflected in our conduct as young people. We had Sunday was a day of church going. We had Sunday clothes, and we put those on when we arose Sunday morning. We went to Sunday school, we went to church, we kept those clothes on in the afternoon. We could not play games, we could not play ball, we could not go to a movie, we could just sit. And the big event of the day was along about 3:30 or 4:00 we'd go for a drive. And the drive then consisted of going to the cemetery and look up all of the old relatives that had died, which I found fascinating, you can imagine at nine years of age. But it was not until late in high school that I was allowed to go to a movie on Sunday. We

could have no playing cards in the house other than something like Old Maid. And even those cards had to be hidden when my aunt--she was a very strong, domineering women--when she was coming to visit we had to get all evidence of any frivolity out of the way.

I don't want to paint this as an unhappy childhood, it wasn't at all. It was rather strict, but we were a close knit family and a very loving one, and we enjoyed our life. We didn't have very much money, but we had enough, enough to do the essential kinds of things. We never felt poor.

Anderson: Even during the Depression?

Simpson: No, no. We didn't because nobody had any money.

Anderson: Sure, right.

Simpson: And there were a lot of people a lot worse off than we were, you see. There were people that really didn't have enough to eat, and lot of them didn't have enough to eat. We did have enough to eat--we didn't eat fancy. We had a garden, my mother did a lot of canning, my father would bring in chicken from the back country where he went that he could get for practically nothing and we'd get chicken in the back yard. I learned early on how to wring the neck of a chicken, and my mother dressed those. We ate plain, substantial food. We never had anything fancy. The big event for us was when once a year we would make a trip to the city, and the city was San

Antonio. And that was considered an all day trip in those days. My mother fixed a picnic lunch of fried chicken, and we would go about half way which was about to Kennedy and stop there and have a picnic on the ground and then get into San Antonio and spend the night. I don't remember what we did there. We had some relatives, but that was always one event. We made that trip only once a year. It's the only traveling that we did.

Anderson: You said that your aunt was a domineering woman. Was that also true of your mother?

Simpson: No, my mother had been subject to my domineering aunt, and she was not a strong person in her own right. So she was rather subservient to her...her aunt, well, she called her "mama," she was more like her mother than anything else. A good many years older, perhaps, 20 years older. So, she was really subject to her will.

My father was a strong man, but a rather quiet one.

Anderson: Was he the authority in the household?

Simpson: When he was there, when he was there. He did set the ground rules which we all clearly understood. We were all tremendously fond of him. It was a, in retrospect, it was a very pleasant life, not an exciting one but really a very pleasant one.

But, their ambition was for both of us to finish college

and we both did. I like to think we might have done it without their urging, but their determination that we would both go to college really left us no alternatives which is very good.

Anderson: Before we get to your education, I'd like to ask you, it's obvious that you've been very successful in your life; in what ways do you think your parents contributed to that?

Simpson: Well, I think my father's towering integrity. He was a man of impeccable, absolutely towering integrity. And that I have attempted to follow. I have never submitted to anyone challenging my own personal integrity, will not today. Also, his industry, the fact that he was willing to work very, very hard to make his family comfortable. I didn't know it at the time, but that had an influence on me, the fact that he worked very, very hard. Never played, the only recreation, as I say, a little hunting.

If I could digress and give you a little anecdote I could tell you the kind of guy he was.

Anderson: Yes, please do, please do.

Simpson: He was a man who believed in game conservation before that became a popular thing. One time when I was about 15, I went duck hunting, he had taught me to shoot, and in those days I was really an expert shot--at his hands, at his training. And I went with an older friend of mine on a duck hunt one day, and we had phenomenal luck. We went to Laguna Madre down below

where the Naval Air Station is now. Perfect day for duck hunting. The limit in those days, believe it or not, was 25 ducks a day. We had a perfect day, we had a cold, wet, north wind blowing; and we literally fired all day long. We got 71 mallards and we put them in the boat. We got home late and he was in the back yard when we drove in pulling this boat. And he had a flashlight in his hand and he came out and said, "How'd you do?" And I said, "Well, we did very well indeed." And he took his flashlight and he shined it into this boat where just a huge heap of ducks were. And he said, "How many did you get?" And I said very proudly, "We got 71." And he said, "Son, what is the limit?" And I said, "25." And he said, "Well, you're a little over, aren't you?" And I said, "Well, yes. But that sort of makes up for all the days we went out and didn't get anything." He didn't say anything. We had drawn these ducks. You know, we were out there in the blind and we'd shoot and go out and pick up what we'd knocked down and we'd draw them and then put them in the weeds and it was cold enough that they didn't deteriorate. So they were all drawn, and he said, "What are you going to do with them?" He never raised his voice, he said, "What are you going to do with them?" And I said, "Well, we're going to eat some supper and then we're going to take them down to the ice house [they weren't picked] and then tomorrow we thought we'd take them around the neighborhood and give them away." These were huge mallards, and he said, "No, no. That's not what you are going

to do." He said, "You're going to pick them." I said, "Pick them?" He said, "Yes, and you're going to start right now." He said, "You've already had supper," which we hadn't. We'd eaten a sandwich at noon. And I said, "My lord, that's liable to take all night." And he said, "I dare say. I think it will, but get started." Well, he set the clock every two hours and got up during the course of the night and came out and inspected the ducks, and if he found a single pin feather we'd get the pliers and pull those feathers out. It was cold, so the game was not deteriorating and at 5:30 the next morning we finished picking 71 ducks. It's the last thing he ever said to me about game limits or anything else, and I never shot beyond the limit not til that time--but he never raised his voice--but I learned a very valuable lesson in leadership. We didn't eat any supper, and of course, we were the most popular people in town that day because then we carried around...you give somebody a brace of mallards that were all plucked, and cleaned. We were pretty popular, but we never forgot that lesson. That's the kind of guy he was. Very low keyed, but very positive and a man of just tremendous integrity.

I remember one other time I was hunting with him, we had no dog and I ran across a small covey of quail and I was sort of herding them into a corner of a fence row where I thought I could get them on the ground and I had about four or five that I was sort of herding along there. I raised this 410 gauge about to shoot and over my head came this stick. Dad was behind

me and he threw the stick at the birds and they flushed, and I fired and I missed and all he said was, "If I ever see you try to shoot a bird on the ground again, I'll take your gun away and you'll never hunt again." Last time for that, couldn't shoot a dove on a telephone wire, he said, "If you can't hit it on the fly, you don't deserve to have it." You learn something out of a thing like that.

One thing about my parents, they are of very strong religious convictions and background, as I say, we went to on Sunday was given over to church entirely, Sunday school, church, Sunday dinner, maybe a ride, and back to church at night. And when we were old enough we went to, what do they call it, MYF, or something, the youth group--and then the church, Wednesday night was prayer meeting. Now, perhaps to my own fault, Terry, I should admit that that was counterproductive on my part. There were no options, you went. You had to be really seriously ill to miss any of those occasions. And as I say, I think it's not to my credit, but I operated a little bit differently with my children because when I once got away from there, I didn't go to church for three years.

Anderson: So you revolted against it.

Simpson: I revolted against that sort of thing when I got away from home. I've never since gone back.

Anderson: So that's why you think it was counterproductive.

Simpson: Counterproductive in the sense that I was forced to go. And being forced to go, I never really learned anything because I felt I was there under duress, which I wasn't.

Anderson: Yes, yes. It seems like the type of punishment has been called psychological punishment and no physical punishment from your father.

Simpson: None, no physical punishment. Very, very little from my mother and only when I was a small boy which was sort of a switch around the leg, when I disobeyed or something like that.

From my mother, Terry, I think I learned to care for people. She was a very caring person. She was never a person that would likely say, "How are you?" She would say, "How are you," but she wanted to know how you were, and there is a difference, you know.

Anderson: There sure is.

Simpson: We pass each other in the hall and say, "Have a nice day," when we really don't give a damn whether you have a nice day or not. But when she said, "How are you," she really wanted to know how are you. I remembered that always.

I think a great part of leadership is caring for people, having a genuine interest in their well being or their problems, whatever the case may be. And I've tried to remember that. That was not a conscious thing I learned from her, but I do it

now in retrospect, you know. I really care how people are getting along. And I don't casually pass the time--oh, I do. But I try to remember, if I ask somebody how they are and they in fact tell me how they are, you know, "I got a back pain and my head hurts, and I've got a terrible cold," I immediately have some empathy and some sympathy towards the guy rather than trying to say, "How can I get out of this mess and get on to what I'm supposed to be doing," type of thing like that. That's what I learned from her.

Anderson: So she didn't have a superficial feeling toward people, it was real.

Simpson: She really loved people, and as a consequence, she had an enormous circle of friends because she earned her friends and she took care of them. She went to see them when they were ill not because she felt she ought to but because she would have wanted to know how they were getting along.

Anderson: Did your father have a lot of friends, was he a leader in the community?

Simpson: No, he was pretty much a very quiet sort of guy which sounds strange for a salesman because he was a superb salesman. But he loved what he was doing, and he loved the people that he called on and what they were doing. The hardware business was his world, he knew it like the back of his hand. He did this, you see, for--oh my heavens--40 years plus,

Anderson: What did she go on to do in her later life?

and so a lot of these people he...he knew more people outside of Corpus Christi than he knew inside because he was always gone five days a week, you see. He was never a joiner, never a member of the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, school board, anything like that. But, he really spent most of his time in that what he called back country.

Anderson: Let's talk about your education. You said that you were an indifferent student.

Simpson: Well, by comparison, which was always difficult for me, my sister was a grind. She studied all the time. I was a little bit more of a gay blade sort. I studied enough to make adequate grades. I probably, in high school I probably had a B average. My sister had a straight A average. That was the subject of some discussion between me and my mother, primarily. She wanted to know why my sister could make A's, why couldn't I make A's. And I told her I thought I probably could if I wanted to study as much as my sister, but I didn't particularly want to. And she thought that I should do as well as my sister. I sort of resented my sister. She was not all that superior, except she was willing to devote the hours that it took. She had to work real hard to do it. My sister was not a popular girl. I think really because she was sort of a grind. She never had any dates in high school, didn't until she went to college.

Anderson: What did she go on to do in her later life?

Simpson: Oh, she's had a fine life. She married a guy who was just a year older, no I guess he's her same age, and he graduated from high school in Robstown, which is a little town just west of Corpus about 12 miles.

And he also, he has done superbly. He was one of nine brothers, and his father was a conductor on the Tex-Mex Railroad which is a little railroad that used to run from Corpus to Laredo. I don't think it does anymore. But, obviously they didn't have any money, so he worked his way through Texas A&I and took his degree in accounting. And somewhere at which point he met my sister, I'm not real sure because she was at Georgetown and he was down there by Robstown in the summer. But at any event, they were married, I believe, in 1936. And his first job was as a bookkeeper in the Beeville High School at the magnificent sum of \$120 a month and she was teaching school. And then he came to Corpus as a bookkeeper in a hardware company. Not the same one that my father was associated with, this was a retail hardware company. During the war he was drafted, but because he was an accountant the Army was very wise, they didn't send him into the infantry. They put him in Chicago in a contract negotiating division which he could handle because of his accounting background. He came out of the Army, never intending, of course, to stay, They spent all their wartime years in Chicago, after basic training, I suppose. He came back to Corpus and he went to work for what's now called the Internal Revenue Service, I've forgotten what it was called then, same thing, he went to

work for them as a salaried employee.

By that time there were a lot of people in the Corpus area that were friends of his and mine who had made an awful lot of money in oil. And they were people who were not accustomed to an awful lot of money, and they didn't know what to do with it. And he figured that there was a future for an accountant, a CPA, in handling their tax accountants. So, while he was with the IRS, he managed to maneuver himself into a position of auditing large tax returns. Not to know anything secret about these people, but to see how those tax returns were handled in terms of what we would now call tax shelters, joint ventures, and that type of thing. He passed his CPA the first time he took it, then he quit the IRS, and hung out his shingle as a CPA. Like many new young professionals, he damned near starved. But it caught on and he did get some of those accounts from friends of his who had large incomes of \$50,000 a month and that sort of thing, and he eventually built up a firm to where he had six CPA's working for him.

And then one day about 30 years ago when I was visiting down there he told me that he was then making, oh, \$45,000 a year, which was a lot of money in those times, but he told me that he wanted to be wealthy. And that he figured even as a CPA, he was making good money but he thought he was paying too much income tax, even in those days. He could never accumulate enough to be wealthy. So, he said he was going to organize an insurance company. And I can remember him well, he said, "I'm

going to make my fortune. So over a period of 25 years he did just that. He didn't make anybody else's fortune, but he organized and ran this insurance company for 25 years. He was fluent in Spanish and the company operated in Mexico, Santo Domingo, Haiti, and Central America, in addition to Texas. So what he did was to build up this insurance company where it was lucrative for a takeover. And he held controlling interest of it. So he sold his portion of the thing for, I think, about 3 million dollars, somewhere in that range. So, he's been quite successful, very, very shrewd businessman. They have two children, one of whom, by the way, is a PhD in engineering that teaches here at Texas A&M, his son, named Sam Doughty. He has a PhD in engineering from the University of Texas, but he's teaching here. And then they have a daughter who is an attorney and she's with the Insurance Commission in Austin. They have a beautiful home in Corpus. My sister has never lived anywhere else, except during the war years when they.... So, they've done very, very well indeed.

Anderson: Now, what were your favorite subjects in high school?

Simpson: English, history, public speaking.

Anderson: I'm always interested in when future leaders began their leadership roles. Did you have anything in high school in which you were a leader of a student group or an organization or a club or anything like that?

Simpson: Debating club.

Anderson: Debating club.

Simpson: Debating club, only. I was not skilled enough to be a leader in athletics. I did sing in the glee club, I played in the band. And I enjoyed that a lot, my high school band. I played trumpet.

In retrospect though, Terry, I would not count myself as a leader in the high school.

Anderson: When do you think that you started to assume roles of leadership.

Simpson: Here, at Texas A&M.

Anderson: Okay. Well, we'll move on to that. Now, did you have burning ambitions when you graduated from high school?

Simpson: No. My father recommended that I become an engineer, and for a very pedantic reason that engineers made money. That turned out to be a very, very poor reason. As a matter of fact, I talk to a lot of would-be engineers today, and I ask them why and I still find guys today they read that a petroleum engineer gets \$24,000, so they come in and enroll in engineering. And I say, "How are you in math?" And they say, "Not very good." And I say, "Well, you're in the wrong place. You're not going to make it in engineering." And engineering here was a struggle to me. I was in mechanical engineering,

and I did graduate in eight semesters. But not with enormously high grades. But somewhere along the line, and I can't pin point this, I became interested in the military career.

Anderson: Yes, I was wondering about that. You think it was when?

Simpson: After I came here. No, I must have had some earlier inclinations about it because I wanted to go to the New Mexico Military Institute and I talked to my father about it briefly one time. At that time the New Mexico Military Institute was a military school, of course, but I think I was interested in it not only from a military aspect but because they were all mounted at that time. Everybody had a horse, it was cavalry outfit. That discussion was very brief. We simply don't have the money, no question about it. And frankly, I came to A&M, I had no one...no one had gone to A&M, no one had directed me here. But to be very honest and candid, A&M was the cheapest place to go to school in Texas at that time and get a reasonably good education. Even in those days, the engineering school had a good reputation. It was nothing like the engineering school of today, but even in those days, it was considered a good engineering school. So, I came to Texas A&M in 1932, enrolled in engineering.

At that time, undergraduate student body and corps of cadets were one and the same.

Anderson: Let's go back here to this New Mexico Military for a minute. Do you remember the first time you ever even thought about anything to do with the military? There weren't any military personnel down in Corpus.

Simpson: No, an older friend of mine that had been two years ahead of me went to New Mexico Military Institute, and when he came home, I was enamored with his uniform and he told me about what they did and whatnot. And I thought I'd like that sort of thing. I had become rather interested in reading things like the History of Civil War, that sort of thing. I should be able to tell you that I had aspirations of being a general, I didn't. I thought it would be something I would enjoy doing. That belief was confirmed when I came to A&M and got in the Corps of Cadets and started in ROTC.

Sometime during those years, early years, I formed a conviction that I'd like to have a career as a military officer.

Anderson: While you're here at A&M?

Simpson: Yes. I loved it.

Anderson: Well, what did you like about it?

Simpson: Now, up to a point. I loved the military aspect of it. Frankly, I liked the drilling, I liked the uniforms, I liked the precision of our military formations. I did not love the corps. The corps was a brutal organization at that time. Hazing, if we had that sort of thing today, people would go to

jail for it.

Anderson: Yes, yes.

Simpson: Everybody had a board in their room and actually we were beaten unmercifully until people acutally bleed through their trousers. It used to happen at noon--I can remember people going to class that way. It was very bad indeed. I would have left if I had the option that the cadets have today of moving across the street. The option in those days was to leave school, if you left the corps, you left school.

I hated the hell out of the sophmores, but I could not bring myself to go home and tell my dad that I had failed in A&M. So, I was determined not to fail, and I stuck it out. Contrary to what happens now, in those days, once you became a sophmore things were pretty pleasant for you. And I began to blossom. I liked what I was doing, I was making adequate grades, not superior grades. I was selected for the corps staff when I was a junior which I loved. I thought that was great.

I was having a difficult time staying in school, Terry. My father didn't have much money to send me, I was working. I was a waiter in a mess hall, I was the assistant bugler. I made \$10 a month as assistant bugler. Literally doing everything that I could to stay in school. And I had a cousin who'd gone to Annapolis, and I thought that ought to be great because you go to school free. So, my father was a friend of Richard

Kleberg, that is the Kleberg clan that, still does, run the King Ranch, as a matter of fact. And Kleberg at that time was a congressman. My father became a fairly close friend of his when he was running the ranch down there. But he was our congressman from that district. So, I had this great idea that my father would get me an appointment from his friend Kleberg to Annapolis. And so I asked him if he would intervene on my behalf, I told him I'd like to go to Annapolis. And he said, "Well, why?" And I said, "Well, because it's a good education and offers a career, albeit a Navy career, and it's free." And he said, "Very well, if that's what you want to do, get on with it." And I said, "Well, but I need your help. I need you to talk to your friend Dick Kleberg about an appointment." He said, "I'm not going to talk to him, I don't want to go to Annapolis. You're going to go to Annapolis, you want to go to Annapolis, you go talk to him."

Even in those days congressman had a local office and he had a local office there in Corpus. So I went down to the local office to enquire and it's rather interesting that the guy that I ran into was LBJ.

Anderson: No kidding?

Simpson: Yes, he was Kleberg's local representative there in Corpus. And so I talked to Johnson about it, but even in those days, Mr. Kleberg had gotten very smart about these appointments and he had everybody take a competitive exam, all

the applicants take an exam, which most congressman do now. Well, I won that exam and won an appointment to Annapolis and then discovered that I was 19 days too old to get into Annapolis. This was about my junior year, I mean my sophomore year, something like that.

But then the local Army officer, see there was only Army ROTC here at that time, and they said, "Why don't you try to go to West Point because they have a two year older limit." Whether they still do or not, I don't know. So, I went around this circle again and the next year which was my junior year at A&M, I took the exam again, and then I won an appointment to...I won the competitive exam again, and I then received an appointment to West Point. I was young enough to get into West Point. And I thought I was in perfect physical condition and they even got so far, well, I had the appointment and they sent me down to San Antonio, that being the only Army post around, to take the physical exam. And I checked out of school, well I didn't resign but I went down there to take this exam which was a very comprehensive thing, about two days. Recall now, this is about 1934. And everybody in the country wanted to go to either West Point or Annapolis because they were free. So they were looking for reasons to throw people out. And after two days of physical examination, the only thing they could find wrong with me was this protruding jaw which is called dental malocclusion. And I was rejected from West Point based on that.

But they had taken plaster casts and wax impressions and

so forth and so on and finally came to this conclusion. The Army officers were enraged when I came back to A&M and told them what had happened, but nothing could be done about it.

Anderson: So, the ROTC officers on campus here, supported you?

Simpson: Yes, because I was sort of their favorite, you know, I was the guy who was going to make it somehow. I was one of the few....

Anderson: They were probably West Point people, weren't they?

Simpson: Yes, yes, they were. And they wanted me to follow their footsteps, of course. And they thought I could succeed and so forth. But, there was nothing they could do about it.

So, I came back. In my junior year the Marine Corps, which I knew nothing about, pulled a deal for about three years before the Army got wise to what was happening. See, the Marine Corps has no direct school of its own. It does get a percentage of graduates from Annapolis; at that time 25, but other than that they had OCS and that kind of thing. So, in 1935 when I was a junior, the Marine Corps came to this campus and they offered four distinguished military graduates permanent commissions in the Marine Corps. And they took them. All stayed in, by the way, all still alive. Three of them retired general officers, one of them a retired colonel. Interesting thing.

Anderson: And you took one of those?

Simpson: The next year I took one.

Anderson: Okay.

Simpson: Yes, yes. As a matter of fact, I took it at the behest of the military science people because I'd been turned down for...they knew I'd been turned down for West Point, and I said the Marine Corps has got the same sort of standard. And they said, "Well, we'll do something about that." I had to go to Pensacola to take my physical exam and....Somehow, the Army officers at A&M persuaded the Army doctors to take the X-rays and cast to the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington and recommend a waiver be granted for my admittance in the Marine Corps. This effort was successful and the Army officers told me before I left for Pensacola that the Navy would grant a waiver; however, I was given no documentary proof.

In Pensacola, the Navy doctors told me the same thing the Army doctors in San Antonio had said--acute dental malocclusion--disqualified! I explained what had taken place and the Navy people were good enough to send a telegram of inquiry to Washington. After a wait that seemed like forever, but was only 24 hours, the answer came back that indeed a waiver had been granted and I was accepted.

End Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1

Anderson: And so that's how you got in the Marines.

Simpson: That's how I got into the Marine Corps, sort of backed into it.

Anderson: Were you disappointed, I should ask you, that you went into the Marine Corps instead of the Army?

Simpson: Never! Never after I got in there. I would have taken the Army immediately over the Marine Corps if they had laid both of them on the table because the Army is what I knew, and these were the guys that I knew, see. And I didn't know any Marines, except these four second lieutenants that I had seen that went on somewhere else in the Marine Corps. Later I picked up with them again, of course. But, I went into the Marine Corps because that was the only option that was offered to me for a regular commission on a permanent career.

And as I say, we graduated about 2nd or 3rd of June, there about, graduation was later in those days. And I began to wonder, I had not approached or began to talk about commissioning and all that sort of thing, how we were going to do the commissioning--for the Army. And I began to wonder what's going to happen to me. The PMS called me in one day and he said, ... oh, word came in that my Marine Corps commission was effective 1 July. That's the first time I ever heard of "fiscal year," but the Marine Corps didn't have the money to pay me for June. So I had a blank month in there, essentially June, and so this

colonel called me in, Colonel Embry, and he said, "What are you going to do during June? I know you haven't any money." And I said, "You're right." He knew I was working and scrapping to get through. I said, "I guess I'll go home. I don't think anybody will hire me for a month and I'll wait till I get on the Marine Corps payroll and take it up from there." And he said, "Well, why don't you go on active duty with the Army?" And I said, "God, I'm going into the Marine Corps, Colonel." He said, "I know that." But he said, "Go right into the Army. I'll get you three weeks active duty. You'll make more money and you might learn something." And I said, "It doesn't seem quite right since everybody knows that I'm going..." "Well, you got to learn your first lesson, we're all trying to defend the country." So, I went through commissioning here, was commissioned as a 2d lieutenant in the Army of the United States which is, as you know, is the Army Reserve. And I went for three weeks active duty with the 9th Infantry in San Antonio.

Very pleasant experience. The 9th Infantry, as you know, was an old line infantry regiment. Some of the enlisted men had been in the same company for 20 years. The sergeant major had been in for 26 years and never been out of San Antonio.

Anderson: So you were in the Marines--so as of the 1st of July you were a Marine on active duty and you were also in the U.S. Army?

Simpson: No, no.

Anderson: Well, what happened after your three weeks were up?

Simpson: Then I resigned my Army commission.

Anderson: Oh, you resigned your Army commission.

Simpson: See, you do it from here, I held up my hand, I was commissioned a 2d lieutenant in the Army of the United States. I went to Fort Sam for three weeks active duty, as a reserve officer on active duty with the regular Army. At the end of that three weeks, I then resigned my reserve commission in the Army and a week later I picked up my Marine Corps commission, which was sent to me at my home and I was sworn in by the postmaster. There was no military officer around, so the postmaster presided at swearing me into the Marine Corps.

One interesting thing there, my father looked at these orders...the Marine Corps had and has today, a Basic School for all of its 2d lieutenants. That's where my friends had gone the year before, a nine month course then conducted in Philadelphia. And so, I assumed I was going to Philadelphia. And they had instructions in here, you know, about you could take this piece of paper and you could get a railroad ticket and so forth and so on. My dad had asked me where I was going to go and I said "I'm going to go to Philadelphia." Well, he's reading these papers, he doesn't know anything about it, and he said, "Where did you say you were going to go?" And I said, "I'm going to go to Philadelphia." And he said, "I don't know anything about the Marine Corps, but I think you're going to be

kind of out of place because this paper says that you're supposed to go to San Diego." So I read the thing, and by God, I was supposed to go to San Diego.

What had happened was they had commissioned 150 2d lieutenants and the Basic School had a capacity for only 100. So they elected 50 that came from Annapolis, Texas A&M, VMI, Citadel, Norwich, what they call military schools, and they sent us direct to duty with no uniforms, nothing.

The four of us that came from here lived in different parts of the state and we got in telephone communications. We're all going to San Diego, so we got together in Dallas and got on the train in civilian clothes and went to San Diego. And we arrived in San Diego by train and then we took a street car out to what's now the Marine base, in San Diego. Somehow or other, I became the leader of this group and I walked over with my one suitcase and my ten dollar suit and I walked over to this Marine who was nine feet tall at the gate and I said, "I'm 2d Lieutenant Simpson, I'm reporting for duty." And he looked down at me and he said, "No, you ain't no 2d lieutenant." He said, "2d lieutenants wear uniforms and they report in swords, and gloves." I said, "We don't have any uniforms, don't have any swords, don't have any gloves." He said, "Then you ain't any lieutenant." I said, "Well, I got to see somebody else." So he said, "Well, that's beyond me." So he sent for the sergeant of the guard. And we went through this drill again, all four of us standing there, you know. Sergeant of the guard said he

couldn't solve this, so he sent for the officer of the day. No, he sent for the officer of the guard. The officer of the guard couldn't solve it, he sent for the officer of the day. The officer of the day came down, I repeated this thing for the fourth time, he said, "That's too much for me." So we went inside the headquarters building...

Anderson: Didn't you have official orders?

Simpson: Well, we had all this stuff, but they couldn't believe it. They never had a lieutenant that didn't even have a uniform before.

Anderson: Yes, yes, that's true.

Simpson: They said, "Where did you come from?" "Texas A&M." "We never heard of it," see. You know, if you'd come from Quantico or somewhere like that it would have made some sense. But they looked at these orders, they were all valid. We traipsed on in to the adjutant. It's interesting that everybody is still in tow, including the sentry on the gate. They're all following along because they've never seen anything like this before, see. So, we go in to see the adjutant.

Anderson: He just left his gate post there.

Simpson: He left his gate, got somebody else to fill in, I don't know. But everybody was in tow, the four of us and all these sergeants and corporals and the rest of the thing. The

adjutant said he'd never heard of anything like that, that we'd have to go see the chief of staff. So, we went to see the chief of staff, and everybody is still coming, all the sergeants and everybody still coming. Chief of staff said, "It's too much for me, we'll have to see the General." We went in to see the general and he said, "Those stupid SOB's in Headquarters Marine Corps." He finally accepted us as 2d lieutenants Marine Corps, but he said they should have told him. They had a list there of incoming 2d lieutenants, but nowhere did they say that we'd not been to Basic School. They thought we were coming out of Basic School.

And they couldn't figure out what to do with 2d lieutenants that didn't have any uniforms and didn't know anything about the Marine Corps. And at that time, I tell you frankly, if they'd given us a ticket back to Texas, we would have said, "Forget it, we'll go back and start all over again." Because, we didn't feel welcome. Everybody was looking at us, you know, like a queer sort of a deal. Well finally, we were assigned over to a regiment and put in the hands of a very helpful old captain who was very understanding. And he didn't understand how this happened--I say understanding besides he was very helpful in what he did. The colonel of the regiment turned us over to him, they said, "They're your guys, I don't know what you're going to do with them, but they're your guys. You got to bring them in shape."

The Marine Corps in those days was very big on rifle

shooting. So we went over to the post quartermaster and we bought some khaki uniforms which you wore at the rifle range at that time. We didn't have anything like the fatigues or utilities that they have now. He took us to the post tailor and we were measured for our uniforms which, of course, we had to buy. But, we were on the payroll. And then, they assigned us to the rifle range and we stayed at the rifle range a month firing every weapon they had out there. And in the meantime, the tailor was making our uniforms. And so, eventually, we came back and picked up our uniforms, and of course, we learned a lot at the rifle range about the Marine Corps just in talking to people and shooting and that type of thing. And then we were sort of assimilated into the Marine Corps element on the west coast there.

Anderson: Okay, before we go on, I want to go back somewhat.

Simpson: Yes, I thought you might like to go back to Texas A&M.

Anderson: Yes, I want to go back to A&M. Now as far as A&M is concerned, what outfit were you with?

Simpson: No.
Simpson: In the band.

Anderson: Why not?
Anderson: Yes, that's right.

Simpson: I didn't believe in it, I don't today. I don't
Simpson: In the band and the infantry. See, we were branch oriented at that time. Matter of fact, my senior year I was in the band, but I was also regimental commander of infantry. You

could do that at that time.

Anderson: In other words, you had a lot of leadership experience right here in the corps.

Simpson: I did, right here, yes.

Anderson: You said before on the tape, you said that they did that type of hazing today they'd be thrown in jail. Could you explain the type of hazing that they did, besides just beating.

Simpson: Yes. Well, no that was the main thing. I mean, it was what would be counted today as cruel and inhuman punishment. It's prohibited by law, state law; was then, but nobody paid any attention to it. That was the worse thing about it. That was the part about it, the physical, brutal deed that everybody underwent.

Anderson: Now after you were a freshman, and you became a sophomore, junior, and senior; did you carry out the same type of punishment on the freshmen?

Simpson: No.

Anderson: Why not?

Simpson: I didn't believe in it, I don't today. I don't think I ever hit a freshman.

Anderson: Really?

Simpson: There were a number of people that didn't, I was not alone. I was not strong enough to campaign against it because it was a thing that was done in those days--I mean to have any influence in changing the lifestyle except I didn't participate. And as I say, I was not alone, there were others. Oh, I did participate in some of the hassling of freshman, and I had freshman as room orderly, and I had them run detail for me, and get my laundry, and get my mail, and wait on me hand and foot, and that sort of thing. But, I never owned a board. But yet I rose to a position...I would have been corps commander, Terry, except the guy that beat me out for it, there were two of us that went down to the wire for corps commander, and he was a superior student in electrical engineering with--we didn't have GPR's at that time, but if we'd have had them he'd have had about a 3.8 and I would have had about a 2.8. And I was later told that that made the difference.

Anderson: What happened to him?

Simpson: He worked for General Electric, was a very successful engineer, lives in Dallas, retired now, worked for General Electric for 35 years, highly successful electrical engineer just like he started out to be.

Anderson: Yes, sounds like it. What was the purpose of hazing?

Simpson: I've never really found out and I don't know its purpose today, to the extent that it still exists. None of

what I've objected to so violently still exists. You see what happened was after they took the board away, then that's when they invented some of the crazy things that they do over there now.

Anderson: Such as?

Simpson: Such as the campusology which you've heard of where they got to know the answers to all sorts of crazy questions.

In 1948 in order to element the hazing, though they said it was due to overcrowding, they put all the freshmen at Brown Airfield near Bryan, and they stayed there for three years. Then a phemomenon came about, the upper classmen came back and there was no freshman class. So they hazed the sophomores. And it's been eight years since I've been back here trying to convince these people that there is no point in hazing sophomores. And they do still today. "Sophomore privileges" they call them, ridiculous, absolutely absurd. They came across a lot of--they invented a lot of other forms of harassment, much of which we have been able to eliminate, well, in the time I have been here. Not because I was here but the corps' made a lot of progress in the last six or eight years, in terms of its lifestyle.

But, hazing in itself has no purpose, no valid purpose. Oh, they'll give you this "old Army" stuff and that sort of thing. Old Army never existed except in the convenient minds of the former students the way they think it was but it never was during that particular time.

We did some ridiculous things, not in the line of hazing. On the administration building at that time there was a naked light globe on top that was on a gooseneck thing like that, came up like that with no shade over it. I never knew why it was there because we had no airfield at that time. But it was called Praxy's Moon, and everybody in the corps had a rifle, and it was an operable O-3 rifle. And we kept them in our rooms, we didn't have a rifle rack or anything else to secure the weapons. And so, it was considered to be a part of your duty as a junior when you went to summer camp and fired the rifle to bring home one or two clips of ammunition. And so, most of the seniors had live ammunition in their rooms. And my freshman year was spent in Walton Hall and the thing was considered fair game then; the seniors could get on the roof with their rifles, and right underneath the slot where you went on the roof, the freshmen were there with buckets of hot water and soap and that sort of thing, and the seniors would shoot at this "moon" with the damn bullets going all over the countryside. And of course, once they hit it, which they did on rare occasions, there was great hurrah all across campus. Everybody jumped and cheered, came out and hooped and howled and whatnot. The purpose of the freshman with the bucket was as soon as they'd shoot one, they'd pass the rifle down because if the MP's were around they'd smell the bore to see if it had been fired. I guess people got caught, nobody in our outfit got caught. But, I get a lot of free and unsolicited

advice now from some of my classmates, you know, about, "Why do you let the corps do this?" "Let me just tell you a few things that we used to do, have you forgotten so forth and so on?" That's indicative of the kind of thing that we used to do. See we were a very immobile group. There were only seven students with automobiles here. If you can believe it, right out here in front of the YMCA there was a circle, traffic circle, and my class built the first bugle stand in it. As a matter of fact, I hand crafted part of it down in the shop, and we had it in this traffic circle out there. That's the bugle stand that today is over there by Duncan Hall. But, seven student automobiles were parked on the gravel parking lot just south north of what we now call the Academic Building, that was then the Main building. The commandant's office was in that building and the keys to those cars were kept in the commandant's office. And if you had a car, the only way you could get it was if you had a valid out of town weekend pass. Then you could draw the keys on Friday afternoon if you had no Saturday classes. And they had to be back in there at eight o'clock on Sunday night. So, we didn't have any traffic problem on the campus.

So, we went to corps trips on chartered trains. One dollar round trip to Houston, two dollars round trip to Dallas. That's where we made corps trips in those days. Slept on the train going up and coming back, marched, went to football games, got on the train and came home. This building, the YMCA, performed

in a modest fashion what MSC does now. But there were no telephones in the rooms, there was no air conditioning anywhere, of course.

About the only organizations other than some scholastic societies were the hometown clubs. The intramural program was a very modest one. But, everybody stayed here because the only way to move was to go catch a ride on the highway type of thing, hitchhike.

Anderson: Hitchhike on Highway 6.

Simpson: And that was developed to a very high science in those days. There were rules of conduct and where you stood and how you stood in the line; and if you went "up stream" as they called it, if you went up ahead to pick up the ride before it got to this pickup point, boy that was worth your life. And there was a designated point out here where you could pick up a ride going north or south and the corner of the Court House and what's now Texas Avenue was then College Avenue and Bryan was the other pick up point. And you were, by the local rules set by the student body, you could not go up stream or down stream. You had to get in line there. And that's where everybody moved who did any moving. I went home that way at Christmas time.

Anderson: I imagine there was a long line, too, wasn't there?

Simpson: Oh, yes. But in those days, people would pick

you up, not today they wouldn't. I wouldn't pick up a guy today. But in those days, everybody would pick you up. And they'd come up and say, "I'm going to Beaumont, I can take 4." And if you were just trying to go to Houston, but you knew that somebody in back of you that was trying to get to Beaumont, you'd let him get ahead of you. You know, say, "Who's going to Beaumont?" And they'd take the first four guys that were going to Beaumont and that way they could go all the way to Beaumont.

It was a very interesting thing, but a very strict protocol about it. And everybody observed it out of fear of life and limb.

Anderson: Was it first come first serve, or was it based on rank?

Simpson: No, no, first come first serve; with the exception of what I've said here.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: In other words, if I'm first in line and I'm going to Houston and it didn't make any difference whether you were senior or freshman, it's when you got down to the pickup point that made the difference as to when you got a ride.

I thought you might be interested in knowing the size of the corps when I was here, which was the undergraduate student body. And I looked it up and I found to my horror that I had been off by a 100%--people had asked me how big the

corps was at that time. My freshman year which was '32-'33 it was 2001. That was the entire undergraduate student body. Now, there may have been 50 or 75 graduate students, I don't know. If they were here, they were not obvious to me, I didn't know who they were. And we all wore uniforms, and we marched to meals three times a day. There were no noon classes at that time; we did have Saturday morning classes. But we did have 21 meals a week at that time, we only have twenty now. But there were meal formations for every meal, including Sunday.

It went 2,001 and the next year it grew a little bit to 2,158 and then took a big jump to in my junior year it was 2948 and in my senior year it grew again to 3430. What that indicates is the country coming out of the Depression.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: It cost me about \$400 a year to go to school. I went to school for \$1,600 for four years which is less than it cost me to send my son to Rice for one year, even before tuition was instituted.

Also, everybody that I knew, and I think everybody paid their room and board in monthly increments. The fiscal office was down in what's called the Systems Building now, and everybody had to trip down there once a month a pay what they call their "maintainence fee"--that was room, board, and laundry. I think something on the order of about \$30 a month, something like that. But we had people drop out throughout the year that

Anderson: When was it that the corps band became so important?

simply couldn't raise that \$30.

We didn't feel poor because nobody had any money. I had, for example, two shirts. I was wearing one, and one was in the laundry. And if I spilled something on this shirt that I had, uniform shirt, I had to wash it in the wash basin at night and hang it on a line. Looked pretty crummy, we looked horrible compared to the Corps today, uniforms were not comfortable at all.

Food was good, family style feeding, all in Saisa Hall. Recreation was what we made of it. A rather modest intramural program, but a lot of pick-up softball and that sort of thing. Of course, didn't have any frisbees, football, and whatnot. Corps did not march into football games, but the corps attended all football games, but informally. We just went down as individuals. The band marched. The band marching formation in those days, Terry, was about the equivalent of, I guess, of what Snook High School does now. We did such crazy things as spell out game, we looked a little more like the Rice "MOB" than--and nothing like the Texas Aggie Band of today.

Curiously enough, we had a corps, you see, that was larger than our corps is now--well, the last two years it was. We opened the band this year at 350, and the band in my time was only 150. We weren't very good musically and we were poor marching. We didn't think so at the time, but I mean in comparison to what the kids do now.

Anderson: When was it that the corps band became so outstanding?

Simpson: During the tenure of Verne Adams. When I was here, Colonel Richard Dunn was the band major, but I think it was Colonel Adams who retired in '73, and had been band master for about 25 years, it was he who evolved these marching evolutions that they do down here now. And, of course, it's the kind of thing that grew on itself. Once they could find that they could do something intricate like that then they just out-did themselves. As a matter of fact, I often tell them that they are captive to their own maneuvers and try to out-do themselves everyweek. That's pretty difficult to do. But, I think they are a wonder to behold to watch at half time ceremonies. Takes an awful lot of time, however, to perfect those drills. They have to run them through a computer.

Anderson: Do they really?

Simpson: The one that scares me to death, that double cross-over that they do in the middle of the field, the computer came up and said that you can't do that. But they figured out a way where they could go lock-step in the middle there. It's very, very complex, and it's a terrifying thing for me to watch because I have some responsibility for the band and if any one person messes up, there's no way to recover. All you can do is fall out and fall in again, start all over. But, I'm very proud of the band in the way it performs today.

But you see, it's kind of hard to relate the student body-- the kids in the corps come in and talk to me and they want to

know how was it in the old days.

Anderson: And what do you tell them?

Simpson: Well, I tell them that it's very difficult because there's really no comparison, but I also try to tell them that I am not at all interested in the corps of my day. I do a lot of correcting. I talk to them pretty straight about things we're doing wrong. But I always preface this with the fact that I'm not trying to recreate the corps in the image of the one that I left here, that I want it to be a much better corps than that, and it already is, infinitely better than that. But I want them to correct the mistakes that....

Anderson: Infinitely better in what way, besides just the band?

Simpson: In the lifestyle, oh no, total lifestyle 100% better.

Anderson: Better living conditions?

Simpson: Better living conditions, better lifestyle, they have eliminated for all practical purposes physical hazing. They have a lot of pushups, but there's nothing wrong with pushups. And those guys are in far better physical shape than we were. They run, they do a lot of things. It's a much better corps.

My big stress with them since I've been here--the primary one is that they have got to get everybody in the corps working

up to their academic potential which we have done. But we're making progress on it now. The average GPR is just even with the GPR of the undergraduate student body.

Anderson: Which is?

Simpson: Just level, about 2.4. My contention is that in the corps, at least I contend that, that in the corps, given the control study conditions that you have five nights a week over there and given the number of people that are interested in your progress--academic progress--you ought to have a little bit better GPR than the undergraduate student body.

Now, you can argue--they don't know enough about what I'm talking about to shoot holes in it, but there's some holes in that argument. I don't know what the average SAT of the corps is compared to the rest of the school, I don't want to find that out, that's not useful to me. I do know we have a lot of 4.0 and 3.8 students that didn't enter the corps because they didn't think they could make 4.0 or 3.8 if they were in the corps. Though interestingly enough, in the spring semester, in the computer run of all the undergraduate student body, there were some 156 people that made 4.0.

Anderson: 156 on campus?

Simpson: On campus. And there were a higher percentage of those in the corps than the corps was of the undergraduate student body.

Anderson: No kidding? That's fantastic.

Simpson: Yes. We had a guy here about four years ago, Terry, who was a math major. He placed out of enough hours so that at the end of his junior year, he had enough hours to graduate. He continued his senior year--he didn't take his graduation--he could have graduated in three years. And he had a 4.01.

Anderson: How can you have that?

Simpson: Well, up until about five years ago, they gave grade points for PE but didn't count the hours. So, he had straight A's plus his PE, and he had better than a 4.0. You can't do that anymore. They changed that around. But his senior year, his fourth year here, he was, obviously enough, was a scholastic officer on the corps staff, as you might well imagine--as a cadet lieutenant colonel. But all of his studies during his senior year were graduate courses. He had already taken all the the undergraduate math courses that there were, so he took graduate courses. He took the 90 day option in the Army and then after he completed 90 days in that, he went to Harvard Law School and he graduated with honors in law and he's now with one of the big firms down in Houston. Steve Eberhart, he was student body president.

Anderson: Brilliant.

Simpson: Brilliant, brilliant. He could do everything. Very interesting guy, got in the corps to get a room, stayed in and

liked it. Excelled, was a leader all the way through.

Anderson: Let's go back now to the 1930's and sounds like there were a lot of things, at least there were a few things that you disliked about the corps. Hazing was one, was there anything else, any other things that you disliked about being in the corps?

Simpson: No. I liked the rest of it.

Anderson: Okay, what did you like then about being in the corps.

Simpson: I liked the comraderie, I liked the outfit's spirit, I liked the unit's spirit. I liked formations, the parades, the ceremonies that we had. Everything I liked about the corps very, very well indeed, except, the hazing which was, as I have pointed out to you in response to your question, I think was pointless. I felt then and I think now the same thing.

Anderson: In what way did being in the corps here at A&M help you in your military career?

Simpson: It helped me in giving me an early experience in opportunity for leadership experience. That's the primary thing it did for me. Again, it gave me confidence. When I entered the active military service I felt that I was...and it had been demonstrated in later years, our graduates that we

sent to the active duty military are ahead of their contemporaries from West Point and Annapolis; in terms of poise, in terms of self confidence. Because those institutions operate on an area where they have what they call tactical officers who stand along side of the corps commanders. You see, the corps, by and large, sort of runs itself here. We manage it and we keep it from going overboard, but the corps commander really commands the corps. The corps commander at West Point doesn't. He has a regular Army officer standing right along side him, and he doesn't make any decisions, the Army officer makes it and tells him what to say. But our guys make the decisions. He may make them wrong, but we let them learn by making mistakes; as long as they're not great big mistakes.

Anderson: Well let's continue on this theme. Would you compare the average 2d lieutenant that comes out of the corps here at A&M with one that comes out of West Point.

Simpson: Better! Better qualified in terms of leadership experience, in terms of his self confidence, in terms of his maturity, and in terms of his poise. He does not know technically as much about the Army as his West Point peer does, but he very quickly picks that up. And he gains--he starts ahead of this guy in these qualities that I've already talked about and then he can pick up the technical aspects of it very quickly.

I think we send from here, I think we send to the four Armed Services the best qualified 2d lieutenants than they get

from any source. Now the service academy graduate, of course, takes a different view of that, but that's my own personal opinion.

Anderson: I'm sure that they do.

Simpson: Oh, sure.

Anderson: Is there a lot of...now, okay. I was comparing them with other ROTC type institutions.

Simpson: We're better off than they are. Infinitely better in terms of the quality of the product that we send the Armed Services, infinitely better than a university like Rice or Texas where ROTC is only a part time thing. I know something about that because I was a professor of Naval Sciences at Duke for one year and I had a staff of one additional Marine Officer and five Navy officers and six enlisted, and we had several midshipmen whom we saw once a week. Well, we saw the junior and seniors in class three times a week, but we saw the freshmen once a week. And they wore the uniforms two hours one day a week. And the people that we have in this seven day corps that are in leadership positions--leadership opportunities and leadership positions--and they do that seven days a week. And they're an awful lot better than those guys.

I think our graduates are superior to the other military colleges like The Citadel....

Anderson: VMI.

Simpson: ...VMI because those schools are organized the same way West Point is, as I say, with a tactical officer standing right there telling them what to say. Also, I think our people have a better academic background than VMI, Citadel. The university faculty is far superior to the faculty there.

Anderson: Oh, yes.

Simpson: Those people all wear uniforms. Some of them are qualified academically, but they're not superior academically. I mean, many of them have earned PhD's, but their faculties can't compare with the faculty here; so our degree, in whatever discipline it may be, is, I think, far superior to those people. So I really think that we're sending the best qualified people to the Armed Services. Most of the--a lot of the people in the services not from this school believe that.

Anderson: Now, over the years, okay, if we're sending the best 2d lieutenants over the years, and outgrowing our increase in grade and live promotions, do you think that they level out?

Simpson: Oh yes, oh sure. The advantage that I mentioned to you, Terry, is true only for about the first two or three years.

Anderson: Okay.

Simpson: And that's true whatever source you came in from. Whether you come in from West Point, Annapolis, whatever you

came from, after about that period of time you're essentially judged by what you've accomplished as a commissioned officer not what your source was. They long since forget about the source.

Anderson: Okay. In other words, I've heard many officers talk about, oh, there is a West Point Club and there's an Annapolis Club and they're all looking out for each other.

Simpson: They call them "ring knockers."

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: That was true in the early days when I was first commissioned in the Marine Corps that was true in the Marine Corps, very definitely true in the Navy, and I suspect was true in the Army. Most of that disappeared in World War II. It's no longer true. It's a myth that floats around, but it's not true at all in the Marine Corps, and I think to a far lesser extent...the Army when they got George Marshall, who was an ROTC graduate, then they began to realize that maybe there is something beside West Point that can also turn out a competent Army officer.

Anderson: Oh, yes.

Simpson: Yes, yes. And, we've had ROTC graduates that are Chief of Naval Operations, we have an ROTC graduate that's Commandant of the Marine Corps, an ROTC graduate Chief of Staff

of the Air Force. So, it's what you do after you get there. This advantage that I've pointed out to you is extent only-- that will sustain you--well, won't sustain you at all unless you perform, but if you perform it will give you a little bit of a head start the first two to three years. And then from there on it's what you do.

Anderson: In other words, you do not agree with that myth of the club?

Simpson: Certainly not. I was one of six lieutenant generals in the Marine Corps and I didn't go to Annapolis. No, I don't think so at all. I don't think it exists at all. I think some people take refuge in that if they stumble along the way and they came from some other source, you know; they say, "Well, I was done in by the West Pointers, or the other Ring Knockers from Annapolis," or something like that.

Anderson: Use it as an excuse.

Simpson: Sure, but it's not true. I mean, you can make it all the way to the top, if you've got the gear regardless of what source you come from. The only ones that don't or that have a valid--they don't have a valid complaint there, but we have some people who come from the enlisted ranks, did come from the enlisted ranks without an adequate college education. That's no longer true. All of our newly commissioned officers have at least a baccalaureate degree. Those people

had limited potential, but they knew that when they were commissioned from the enlisted ranks.

We have a program that operates right here on our campus called the MECEP program. We've got eight enlisted Marines that are going to school here to complete their baccalaureate degrees. They are superior students, they're 3.6, 3.7 type people. They go around-the-clock, summer and winter. They draw full pay and allowances. The Marine Corps pays for tuition and fees. Most of them are married, most of them are highly picked, I mean, hand picked. We had not one breath of trouble with any one of them. They go to Officer's Candidates Class the summer before they graduate, and then we commission them. And if you've ever been to one of our commissioning exercises, they go across the stage down there and you can't tell the difference. We don't identify them, and then they go to Basic School like everybody else.

Now, they have as good a chance as anybody else because they've got a baccalaureate degree from a recognized university. They have a little head start, as a matter of fact, because they already got enlisted experience. Their only handicap is that they are a little bit older than their contemporaries, three to four to five years older. That doesn't hurt them at first, it can hurt them a little bit later. They can get a little over aged and gray.

Anderson: Now, let's go back. You said that A&M and being in the corps helped you in many ways in your career, especially, as

far as leadership was concerned. Is there anyway in which it hurt you or hindered you being in the corps?

Simpson: That my attendance at A&M as a member of this corps hurt me in a military career?

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: None.

Anderson: Okay, then let's move on to politics. I want to talk a little bit about the Depression. We've talked already a little bit about the Depression and the impact that it had on your life. It was one of the things, obviously, this was the cheapest school and you came here.

Simpson: Right.

Anderson: During the Depression, of course, we had Franklin Roosevelt in the White House and he instituted a number of social programs and those social problems--programs have been with us for the last half a century. Now, I was wondering if you could remember about you father. What political party did he support at that time?

Simpson: None.

Anderson: None. He was apolitical?

Simpson: Apolitical.

Anderson: You met Lyndon Baines Johnson, did you support his basic philosophy, his political philosophy or Roosevelt's philosophy or how would you describe yourself as far as politics are concerned?

Simpson: Terry, I think like most military officers I really didn't pay an awful lot of attention to politics. I never voted while on active duty.

Anderson: No kidding? I talked to a number of generals who have said that. That's pretty much of a tradition, isn't it?

Simpson: A tradition, and it's based on the fact that you don't vote for your commander-in-chief; that's what it stems from. And I was simply told--there is no law against it--but I was simply told as a youngster in the Marine process when I was in the Marine Corps that you simply don't vote because you don't vote for the commander-in-chief. And you moved around too often to be knowledgeable enough to vote in local elections. So I never paid a poll tax and I never voted during anytime I was on active duty. I do regularly now, but I did not at that time.

No, I couldn't support Lyndon Johnson, Terry, because of what my father told me about him. My father was convinced that he stole the election to the Senate in Duval County. He was absolutely persuaded...now here again is my father's integrity--he was absolutely convinced in his own mind that they voted dead Mexicans. You recall in that recount, he won by 71 votes

in Duval County. My father thought and the law eventually proved that the Duke of Duval County was a crook, but he told me that 40 years ago, talking about his father. And he, the Duke of Deval County, of course, he since died and the son has, and well, he was about to go to jail, and he committed suicide. But, my father was convinced that Johnson stole that election to the Senate. I don't know of my own knowledge, but I believe him, and he spent enough time out there that I think he must have possibly known. So, I've always had a big question mark, I did all the rest of my life, about Johnson.

I met him later on, as a matter of fact, on several different occasions; when he was Senator and I met him again when he was President. Incredible memory for names.

Anderson: He remembered your name?

Simpson: He did.

Anderson: No kidding.

Simpson: From the time I was a whipper-snapper here in school and I had an appointment with him and the next time I met him he was the majority leader of the Senate. And I said, "Senator, I'm from Texas." And he said, "You're from Corpus Christi, and you're name is Simpson." Boy, he had the politician's knack for that sort of thing. Then I didn't meet him again until he was President and he remembered my name again, but--well, I'd

been around the Washington scene quite a lot at that point.

Anderson: Sure, sure. By that time you were a general.

Simpson: I didn't take any part in politics.

Anderson: Do you have a political philosophy?

Simpson: If I have one, it would come closer to Mr. Reagan's than any other that I've seen right now.

Anderson: So, do you consider yourself a conservative?

Simpson: A conservative. I think many of the social reforms of the last half century probably outlived their usefulness, conceived some of the innovations that were conceived in the early days were probably necessary at the time given the extreme circumstances that the country was in at the time. But I think they were allowed to live beyond their time and to go beyond any reasonable expectations. I don't know whether Reagan is going to be successful, I hope that he is. I think he's moving in the right direction.

I was not an admirer of Carter, he's one President I didn't meet. I did meet Nixon, didn't know him, met him. But yes, I consider myself quite conservative.

End Side 2, Tape 1

Begin Tape 2, Side 1

Simpson: ...nor do I contribute politically to any political

campaign, nor am I active in any political campaign. I vote in the Democratic primary not because I consider myself a Democrat but because most of the candidates in local elections that I want to vote for are running on a Democratic ticket. So I vote in the Democratic primary and vote the way I want to in the general election.

Anderson: Okay, okay. You know, often we've heard journalists say, we've heard other people charge that there is a military mentality. Have you ever heard that? Military, I'm sure that you have.

Simpson: Oh, sure, sure.

Anderson: You hear this from the student body here sometimes when they talk against the corps. Would you give me your definition of military mentality.

Simpson: I don't believe there is any such thing.

Anderson: Okay, fine.

Simpson: No, I don't think it exists. It probably comes about, you see, by the fact that for a great many years--see, I spent 37 years in the Marine Corps and as I say I never voted, so people in the private sector or public sector aren't associated with the military, seem to think that the military have set themselves apart. Not necessarily above, but apart from the mainstream of life, you see. And we were engaged in a profession which is alien to the average civilian kind of thinking. We're

engaged in trying to figure out how to win a war and that's abhorrent to most civilians. And I understand that. And they think we are a rather queer breed of cats because we want to spend our life trying to figure out how to win a war when they don't want a war at all. Neither do we, indeed, we want it less than they do because we know a lot about it. But, we happen to believe that there might be a war and we better be ready to win it if there is a war. And we hope that there will never be one, but I've attended three in my lifetime.

So I think that--the military mentality doesn't ever come from the military, it comes from those not in the military that think we are a breed apart or at least have set themselves apart in their own thinking from the mainstream of life. We don't participate in politics, I never sat on the school board, I never attended a city council meeting, that kind of thing you see. "So, you're preoccupied with killing people." Well not at all. I'd like to be preoccupied with a profession in which I hope would prevent people from being killed or becoming enslaved and losing their freedom. You've got to have that sort of belief in order to endure 37 years in active duty military. You've got to believe deep in your heart, Terry, that you're contributing something to your country. If you don't have that conviction you shouldn't be in there.

Anderson: Oh, absolutely. No. So you think this so called term military mentality is pretty much of a myth made up by civilians about the military.

Simpson: Indeed I do. I think that's an aberration.

Anderson: Okay. Now, I want to get back to the corps for a minute. There must have been some professional soldiers here at A&M that had an impact on your development. Is that true?

Simpson: Yes. Colonel George Moore, defender of Corregidor. Colonel Emery was the professor of Military Science and Tactics when I first came here, Colonel Moore was the one when I graduated--splendid officer. I remember Captain Orr of the Army and I remember Captain MacNamara of the Army. Both infantrymen, both men I admired. I guess one of the reasons that I was always an infantryman even in the Marine Corps, though there were more pragmatic reasons, infantry is a line to success in the Marine Corps. I had a degree in engineering and they always wanted to make me a combat engineer and I avoided it because it's a dead end street in the Marine Corps, doesn't lead anywhere.

Yes, these were our role models. I can remember when they were trying to convince me to go into the Marine Corps, one of the majors called me in one day and he took out of his desk he took a pay scale and he said, "I want to tell you that when you get to be a major, you make \$500 a month." Tremendous! That was a lot of money. I was offered as an engineering graduate, I among several others, were offered the top paying jobs of my graduating class. I was offered a job with the-- I've forgotten what oil field supply company it was, but I

didn't take it--\$125 a month. That was the highest monthly salary offered to any A&M graduate in 1936. Marine Corps offered me \$125 a month as a 2d lieutenant plus \$40 a month quarters allowance if you could manage to stay out of quarters. So interestingly enough, a commission was the best job monetarily speaking that was offered at that time. Today, it's one of the poorest paid.

Anderson: It is an odd thing. Did you ever consider going into the private sector?

Simpson: Yes. I left the Marine Corps for awhile.

Anderson: Oh, I didn't know that.

Simpson: Oh, it doesn't show here because it's not pertinent to this.

Anderson: When was that?

Simpson: I left it in 1937 and went back in 1939 and I left it and I always regretted leaving it and I was always delighted to go back, but I left it because it didn't challenge me.

To give you an illustration; I was one of five 2d lieutenants at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. We had absolutely nothing to do. We actually sought to be made Officer of the Day because it gave you something to do. I had not been to Basic School at that time, I was waiting to go into Basic School. And I was reading books all day long and I was worried. Not only was

I bored, not only was I not challenged, I felt that I was supposed to be doing something but I didn't know what I was suppose to do because nobody was telling me. I asked to see the commanding officer. The commanding officer was an old goat who came to work at 9:30 every morning and went home promptly at 10:30 and that was his contribution to the Marine Corps. Most of the other officers, the captains, majors that were about were of a similar type. I asked to see the commanding officer and he, with some very poor grace, saw me and he said, "What is your trouble, lieutenant?" And I said, "I am not doing anything, I feel that I am derelict in my duties, but I don't know what my duties are supposed to be." It was a wintery day in Philadelphia and it was snowing hard and he said, "Where are you from, young man?" And I said, "I'm from south Texas." He said, "Have you ever seen it snow before?" And I said, "No, as a matter of fact this is the first snow I've ever seen." He said, "Very well. You go in your office and put your feet on the radiator and look out the window and watch it snow." That was the only guidance he gave me. I decided that if that's the biggest challenge they could bring to me, I would resign and I did. I took a reserve commission and came back to Texas A&M not knowing where else to go, but also drawn here by the fact that I was engaged to a girl in Bryan whom I married and am still married to. And I got a job here on the staff of A&M and I was Director of Student Labor which was a big thing at that time. The NYA program was effective at that time.

When I resigned my regular commission I took a reserve commission and then I managed to get myself recalled in 1939 when we started to build up for the war. After that it was great, but I have watched it from that point on. We never went back to the days of the doldrums and I dare say that the other services were pretty much in the same shape at that time.

Anderson: Yes, we're going to talk about the services in the '30's.

Simpson: We're talking about....

Anderson: We're talking about a lot of dissatisfaction.

Simpson: We're talking about...well, for example, when I went into the Marine Corps, my entry from A&M, after I had gone through this hiatus that I told you about--shooting the rifle and getting my uniform and so forth and so on, I was eventually assigned to a company. The company had 61 men in it. It was commanded by a captain who had 19 years of service. 19 years of service! And that was the first time they had given him a company. He'd been a captain for seven or eight years. He couldn't do anything that a captain ought to do, I mean, he was in poor physical shape. But I think all the services were in that sort of shape at that stage of the game. They were not very much of a challenge to me. But I went back and that's the reason it says in here that--it says in here that I got a reserve commission integrated in the regular service after the

war. This is true, I went to World War II as a reserve officer. But there was no stigma attached to that, that didn't make any difference.

Anderson: Well let's go back to A&M a minute.

Simpson: Right.

Anderson: Why did you chose engineering, because of your father?

Simpson: Because engineers made money.

Anderson: That's right. Were there any....

Simpson: In high school I liked mechanical drawing, but of course, as I reflect on it, it was a very poor choice because I was never strong in math. I was excellent with my hands in mechanical drawing and that sort of thing. I could use the ink--India ink--and I knew how to do that, but I was not strong in mathematics. Fortunately, neither was the School of Engineering, particularly, at least in mathematics in those days.

I really liked the precision of the engineering courses, shop courses I loved. We did a lot of hands on things at that time. We had a pattern factory and we made patterns and we took them into the foundry and we made from the patterns we actually cast in bronze and iron and other kinds of things like that. We had a machine shop course in which we became

apprentice tool makers. I liked liked the precision of that sort of thing; first encounter with the metric system. It was a precise kind of thing. I don't know why I was never particularly good in mathematics. I didn't particularly like it, I like things with precision but I couldn't translate precision....

Anderson: Mathematics is very precise science.

Simpson: ...is precise. This is an anomaly. I mean, people that like to see things precisely normally would like mathematics. I didn't dislike it, I just wasn't very good at it. It was one of my difficult courses; calculus was the most difficult course I ever took.

Anderson: Still is for a lot of engineers.

Simpson: For a lot of engineers it really is. For some people it was a real breeze.

Anderson: Were there any professors here that had an influence on your life?

Simpson: Yes. Well, not much on my life, but Mr. Charlie Crawford who is retired this year was head of the mechanical engineering department at that time.

Anderson: Yes, he wrote a history of it.

Simpson: Yes, he did. A Hundred Years of Engineering History at Texas A & M.

Anderson: Yes, I've read it.

Simpson: Yes, I remember Charlie very well, still see him on occasion. Oh, we had people--a math professor, Dutch McAlperin, who--German, spoke with a very heavy accent, very difficult to understand. The legend was that--local folklore had it that he was on retainer from General Electric and the faculty post office boxes were all at that time down at the railroad station which is right opposite the Westgate there, the railroad station, and there was a post office in there. And the story that we had, that we loved, and nobody could disapprove it, was that General Electric sent him these terribly difficult mathematical problems that their own engineers couldn't solve and according to our best information, which we liked to believe and didn't want anyone to ever disapprove, was that he would walk down to the post office and take this envelope out of the box from General Electric and would work out the solution on the back of the envelope before he got back to the office. Probably totally untrue, but we loved it and we thought it was very, very appropriate that he was all that brilliant and so forth and so on.

Civil engineering courses that I took I liked. Surveying I thought was a lot of fun.

Anderson: What about the quality of your student colleagues in the class, academically?

Simpson: They were for the most part pretty much like me, I

think. Some far more adept or talented, particularly, those that had a facility for mathematics. I found A&M difficult for me, even in those days. Some few didn't. But most of us studied a great deal, Terry, because we didn't have anything else to do, we studied at night. And I had a senior my freshman year--I was the room orderly for a senior my freshman year--who was studying economics, went on to become a PhD in economics and was on the faculty here for a great many years, a guy named Elkins, "Satch" Elkins--now dead. But I was his room orderly and he told me in the first days I was here, he said, "Fish Simpson, you are going to pass your work." And he said, "You're in engineering and I'm in economics and I know nothing about engineering. But you're going to bring to me every paper that you receive back and you're going to prove to me that you can work the problems that you have missed or answer the questions that you have missed. And if you can't do that, then I'm going to find somebody else in our outfit here that's in engineering that can tutor you to do it." And from that day until final review, every paper that I got back; examinations, tests, quiz, essay, whatever, in whatever course, I took it to him and I had to demonstrate to him that I knew the questions that I missed, whatever they were. If they were problems, the fact that I'd bring to him a problem worked out satisfactorily was not enough. He made me sit down and work the problem from scratch right there without any notes. The guy cared.

Anderson: That's camaraderie.

Simpson: He cared whether I passed or not, he couldn't help me pass but he could make sure that I knew that somebody cared. Had a sort of love-hate relationship with him, but I think within the year probably the best friend that I had. I felt that if I were in trouble I would go to him first.

Anderson: And was that fairly typical?

Simpson: That was typical of the corps. And that was one of the things that I liked about it and one of the things that I preach these people to now. I told this story a thousand times since I've been back here. And I'm telling them they've got to get back to that same kind of thing. They're moving in that direction, they really are moving in that direction now.

Anderson: So, they're helping, so now it's moving back toward helping each other?

Simpson: That's correct.

Anderson: When did it move away from that ideal?

Simpson: Well, the corps went through a great transformation, you see. It essentially ceased to exist in World War II. And then we had a situation, and I don't really know because I wasn't here, I was gone 37 years, I don't really know what happened, but we had an influx of veterans who wore uniforms that were not in the corps and then the corps sort of evolved itself. Then they picked up on this hazing after the war and

the people picked up again on the boards and the ax handles and that sort of thing. And then they moved the freshmen out there to Bryan Airfield and then they moved them back. I think there was sort of a rebellion during the '50's against the whole system of school and that sort of thing. And they came up with this terrible phrase that you still hear about "two's enough and blow off the rest of it" type of thing. That's what I've been working to do something about since I've been back here.

But, that was not uncommon, this relationship that I mentioned to you with this senior. I would say most of my freshmen contemporaries, not necessarily a senior, might be a junior. Sophomores were a nonentity. We had very little to do with sophomores, they had little to do with us. But if the sophomores bothered the freshmen when he was studying, the seniors took care of the sophomores, just like that, very quickly. So, we called the sophomores Mr. but they didn't have anything to do with us and we didn't have anything to do with him back then.

Anderson: This seems to be part of the spirit of A&M. Let's talk about spirit, I've always heard about this uniqueness. Is that a unique aspect do you think of A&M?

Simpson: Sure, sure. And now your next logical question is, "What is the spirit of A&M?"

Anderson: Yes, what is it?

Simpson: And I'd like to tell you that I'm not going to dodge that question, I'm going to tell you something else that's parallel. I've been asked a thousand times, "What makes a Marine," and I don't know. All I know is if we take X number of people and we do everything we can in training that out of the end of that line will come Y number of Marines. We do not know what it is that triggers this and I defy anyone to refine it down to a precise prescription. Because I don't think--I think everyone has their own motivation keys and what worked for one person doesn't necessarily work for an other. And I think in a sense is true here.

I think the thing that makes A&M unique is the corps' cadets. Corps' cadets now is--well, we're 2,300 out of 3,500. I say 'we' because that's my work today. But I contend, Terry, if you took the corps' cadets out of Texas A&M that uniqueness would be gone even though the uniqueness spreads across the entire spectrum to almost all the 35,000. It stems primarily from the corps which is the custodian of the traditions of Texas A&M. The worthwhile traditions that we have here came from the corps cadets; silver taps, muster, that kind of thing came from the corps' cadets. And I try to tell the corps that they are the custodian of that spirit, the custodian of the Aggie spirit because it's the traditions that makes it so. You see, the corps is as old as the institution itself, I mean, it started in 1876. And I think that is the thing that has given the uniqueness to it, and while we are getting way ahead of

ourselves, I want to tell you if I may, and you can come back to this if you find it interesting, why I'm here, which is not, interesting enough, not to preserve the corps because we've always had a corps. I think that is a very poor reason for doing it. I am not here for any reason other than I know what the corps can do for the individuals that go through it. Whether or not they go into the military or whether they go into the private sector, what it teaches them in terms of a sense of responsibility, accepting responsibility, and what it teaches them in terms of integrity for the most part. We're not totally successful in that, but that's the reason that I'm here--for what I know that it does. I don't need this job, don't have to have it, but I'm here because I know what it does for these young people that go through it--for the most part.

But, I am convinced, to go back to the original question, that it is the presence of the corps and its adherence to worthwhile traditions that gives the unique spirit to this thing. The corps is a tremendously powerful organization. It exerts an influence on the student body far in excess of its important number. And, if the corps ever died, and it could, we would look very much like the University of Texas. The school would not be harmed academically. And ROTC could exist without the corps. The corps couldn't exist without ROTC. But, I think in ten years, if the corps died in ten years, I think you would have a very difficult time finding anything particularly unique about Texas A&M except, that it's in a, more or less, a comparatively

rural setting as opposed to an urban setting such as the University of Houston and the University of Texas at Austin. It would never be, I think, quite as sophisticated as the University of Texas and I hope we could never look like the University of Houston. But the unique spirit would be gone, whatever that spirit is. It's a fierce loyalty to the school.

Anderson: While we're talking about spirit, would you or could you compare and contrast the spirit that they have in trying to build a United States Marine Corps with that high they have here.

Simpson: Very, close, very, very close. The Marine Corps is a small outfit that's been essentially beleaguered for most of it's...has to fight for its existence for over 200 years. And the Marine Corps teaches its people that they are superior and they do that deliberately.

Anderson: Yes, you can tell that from the television ads.

Simpson: They do that deliberately. You know, the Proud, the Few, the Marines, this is a very deliberate thing, and it has paid off in battle. We have people performing on the battlefield better than they really are because of their fierce loyalty to their comrades on each side of them. You know, the Marine Corps tells people, "You may be a coward, you may be a quitter, but you're not going to let down the guy on your left and your right. You may let yourself down, but your not going

to let them down." And with that you bring a guy to a level that's really beyond his own particular competence.

Same thing happens to a small extent here. They talk the same sort of language. I have to sort of watch that a little bit to keep a cap on that sort of thing. I don't want to put a cap on it too far, but I don't want it to get out of hand either because I want the cadets to get along with the rest of the student body. And they are. But, when I came the cadet corps was "sucking its thumb" suffering from a lot of self-inflicted wounds. They felt that nobody appreciated them anymore, that they had made contributions, but they were a minority group that nobody really appreciated...that just wasn't true.

They were...what was happening was the corps was in a search for its own identity. The corps had dominated the student body, had been the student body for 75 years and now it no longer was. So they didn't know where the hell they were. They're finding themselves now.

Anderson: How do you keep a cap on that? First you're trying to build a military elite, basically, like the Marine Corps. You're trying to build an elite and one, not all, one of the ideas of the Marine Corps is that they are the elite, yet at the same time you're attempting to be realistic about the individuals. I don't know how many individuals come into my office and told me these incredible things about Texas A&M; "Best engineering school in the world, best this in the world, best that in the world," and it's not true. Maybe they even know it's not true,

but they still tell you these things, so how do you balance the fact that you're trying to build an elite, trying to increase confidence, trying to make the best fighting force or the best corps cadets in the country, yet at the same time, you want them realistic about the country and their experience here at A & M or the Marine Corps.

Simpson: Well, it's a matter of balance, and there's no, I can't put any formula on the thing. I try to teach them to excel in what they're doing best over there, but again, as you have used the word realism, I point out that they've got to get along with the rest of the student body. And that after all, I simply say to them, "The corps is not for everybody." You've got some awfully good guys that are over here on the other side of the fence. They chose not to be in the corps but that doesn't mean that they are dumb, stupid, or ignorant. They're pretty bright, as a matter of fact, and they're not going to resent you unless you become obnoxious.

My objective would be to have a corps that every student outside the corps, even those who, if you could pay him \$500 a month would not in the corps, would be proud that we've got a corps. That's what I tell them. In other words, I want the non-corps student body to be proud of the corps even though they wouldn't touch it with a ten foot pole as far as personal involvement is concerned. I would like them to be proud that the corps is here and what the corps does. And that's the way I work on that sort of thing. I say, "Go ahead and excel at

what you do best, but don't antagonize the rest of the student body. You need their support and their respect, and you don't always earn it."

Anderson: You know, that doesn't always work as you well know. Not so much here at A&M, but I was in the Navy and it doesn't work so well between the Marine Corps and the US Navy.

Simpson: No, of course it doesn't.

Anderson: You know as well as I do that there is a lot of friction between those two and you get two groups of enlisted men drinking in the same bar and....

Simpson: Bang-bang.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: Sure, there's no perfect solution to it.

Anderson: No.

Simpson: There's no perfect solution to any sort of human problem, Terry, that we're dealing with where we're dealing with an equation in which all the factors are variables, and when we're dealing with people that's exactly what we're doing.

Anderson: Sure.

Simpson: And what works with one guy doesn't work with the other one.

Anderson: Well, let's start in with your military career then. How much time do you have left, by the way?

Simpson: I have plenty of time. I can go for another 45 minutes if you've got enough tape there.

Anderson: Okay, let's start in then with your military career. And why don't we continue where you left off. How did you ever get your uniform once you got out there at San Diego?

Simpson: Base tailor. All the uniforms were tailor made, none off the rack. So we were measured for uniforms, and "blues" and "greens," as we called them in those days. California, believe it or not, was cooler in those days; we didn't have any whites. The Marine Corps had that in their kit of uniforms, but we didn't have to have whites. And we wore the winter uniform, the green uniform, the year round. It was actually that much cooler.

And then we went out to the rifle range at La Jolla then, imagine having a rifle range in La Jolla. We did. And then we began to learn. Oh, I actually tell you a story. The night before I left the Army, the 9th Infantry had a party. Not for us, of course, but they had--see the 9th Infantry was in the Boxer Rebellion and they had their own china, silver, tablecloths, and all that sort of stuff they brought from China. So every now and then, the regimental officers would have a party at the Gunter Hotel, and one of those happened to be scheduled during my last week of active duty with the Army.

And of course, I was sort of a marked man, as you can imagine. There were a lot of 2d lieutenants reserve, but I was pointed out, you know, "He's going to go into the Marine Corps," type of thing--the only that they'd ever seen. So, the colonel called me over, the regimental commander called me over... I wish I could remember that guy's name, but he was interesting because he thought he was a reincarnation of Napoleon. He was a great student of Napoleon, he was exactly the same height as Napoleon, he had studied his life and he knew how much he weighed every year of his life and he weighed the same thing. He did everything except put his hand in his jacket like that. But he was an interesting little man, and he called me over and he said, "Well, Lieutenant Simpson, I understand you're going into the Marine Corps next week." I said, "That's right, sir." He said, "Well, have you enjoyed your time with the 9th Infantry?" I said, "I have, indeed." And he said, "Let me give you a little advice." He said, "When you go in the Marine Corps next week, you are going to be doing a lot of the same kind of things you did here." And I said, "Well, I'll enjoy that because I've enjoyed my time here." He said, "One bit of advice I want to give you is when you go into the Marine Corps, find out how they do things and whatever you do, don't say that's not the way we did it in the 9th Infantry." And I have remembered that for a long time.

But, those three weeks helped me and I enjoyed my time in San Diego. I thought it was very, very interesting.

Anderson: What were you doing at there in San Diego?

Simpson: I was in an infantry company, and I was a platoon leader in an infantry company. That was good, I found that to be a challenge. It was only when I was sent back to Philadelphia that I became disillusioned.

Anderson: Okay, so you were in San Diego for about a year.

Simpson: No, no, we went out there in....

Anderson: In '36.

Simpson: ...in July, '36, 1st of July of '36 and stayed there until December. At that time travel funds were very difficult to come by and if you were ordered from one coast to the other you were normally ordered to move on an Army transport which took 30 days to go through the Canal. But you didn't have to go on the Army transport. You could go across country, but they would pay you only what it would cost them to put you on the Army transport which was about three dollars a day for food. So if you chose to go across country, you could get that much time. Now, they knew that in April I was suppose to go to a short course in Basic School. The regular course was nine months long. They figured since we had this experience and came from military colleges, they could get away with three months of a condensed course at Basic School. And the reason I was in this holding pattern at Philadelphia was because there was an Army transport coming around in December, even though I

wasn't due in Philadelphia until April, they ordered me aboard that thing to save money and then they put me in the Philadelphia Navy Yard, Marine Barracks simply as a holding pattern to wait to go to...that's during that particular period of time. That's when I had nothing to do.

So, we got over there in January of '37. I enjoyed the Basic School, I finished number one in Basic School. There was another disillusioning thing. It had been a practice in the Basic School, they had certain duty stations they knew we were going to be assigned. Of course, you can ask for anywhere you want to go in the Marine Corps, but they knew the needs of the service meaning, for example, we were going to send X number people to China. At that time we had a big detachment in China. So many to the West Coast, so many here, there, and so forth and so on. China, that was the "days of the Empire," that was the place to be as a 2d lieutenant; you lived like a king. And they would post this list, you see, of the duty stations and say you would get your pick of these depending on how you finish in the class. In other words, number one man gets his pick and so on down the line. Last guy getting whatever is left over. So there was much struggle in being number one because there were seven stations open in China. I wanted to go to China for a lot of reasons. One being that I would get cross country travel and then duty in China and whatnot. So I became number one. But I reckoned--and this is the first time we got into any kind of politics. The Basic School

commander was a lieutenant colonel and he'd been told that he was going to go to Quantico to command a battalion and that he was going to get seven 2d lieutenants out of this class. And he took the first seven, obviously.

Anderson: No kidding?

Simpson: He took one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. The number eight guy went to China and the ninth guy went to China and the tenth guy--that's the first time I ever ran across that sort of politics.

Anderson: Were you irritated?

Simpson: Yes! Yes, I felt I had been let down. I'd been told that if I finished number one I would have my choice of stations. And I did finish number one and I didn't get it, and I didn't like that. And I've never allowed myself to be a party to any of that sort of chicanery since that time, that period of time. That was another disillusionment.

Anderson: And of course, he took you because he wanted the best that he could have.

Simpson: That's right. But you know, had we been told that, had we been told that at the outset.

Anderson: Sure, you would have come in number eight.

Simpson: Come in number eight, sure, damn right I would.

Yes, I could manage that. I knew how to manipulate that system.

But, I didn't like that. I felt, again if you will, a breach of integrity. He was running the school, he told us this, and then turned around and did something contrary to what we had been told. And that sort of contributed to my discontent in being sent, and against my will and against what I thought I had been promised, to duty in Quantico as opposed to going to duty in China.

Anderson: And what were the reasons, then, for you to leave the service in 1937. Was that one of the reasons?

Simpson: Accumulation...Quantico wasn't all that bad, but I still have very bitter taste of the Philadelphia Navy Yard. At that time, there was a lot of Marine Barracks duty in the Marine Corps. There is not very much any more. And I was afraid that I--I was...frankly, Terry, I was disappointed in the quality of the Marine Corps officers with some exceptions.

Anderson: Oh? Tell me about it.

Simpson: Well, the ones that I saw in Philadelphia were, by and large, to be real candid with you, were a bunch of bums. They were passed over captains, been passed over because of excessive use of the alcohol. The colonel, as I told you, was the guy that spent one hour a day in the office. He was so obese that his blouse wouldn't fit; he could only button one button of it.

also. That was not true in Quantico. They were a cut above in Quantico. But even so, when I was--my first job as Officer of the Day in Quantico I had a captain come in and report to me and I was horrified to find out that this captain was under arrest. And part of his arrest--he was awaiting general court martial for drunkenness--and part of his conditions--he was not in confinement but he was allowed to subsist in quarters, but he had to report to the Officer of the Day twice a day. And I was a brand new 2d lieutenant, he was a captain with 12 years service--I didn't want to be that! I didn't want to become that.

The officers in Quantico, now there were some brilliant ones there. My company commander, who tried desperately to keep me from resigning, was a guy named Bill Twining. He was the only living genius I've ever know. He had the finest mind...he was the brother of Nathan Twining that was Chief of Staff of the Air Force and eventually Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. But this guy was a lot brighter than Nathan. Served with him later, after I came back, on several occasions. I was his chief of staff twice. The most brilliant man I've ever known, George Washington University law graduate, summa cum laude, graduate of the Naval Academy. By long odds, the finest writer I've ever seen. But I've never seen a man given a problem where you need to go from A to Z, he would get to Z faster than anybody I've ever known, and he was totally intolerant of people that were slower than he was, which meant everybody

else.

But, he taught me a lot of leadership traits, leadership qualities. As I have mentioned to you and as you know if you've been in the Navy, the Marine Corps, then at least, set great store by rifle markmanship. He was company commander and we spent three weeks on the rifle range. The first day we were on the range at Quantico, Captain Twining was called away to Washington because his talents as a lawyer were needed. The Marine Corps was in political trouble even in those days. And he did not return until the day before we fired for record, and we had practiced for three weeks. He came back to us the afternoon of the day before we fired for record. 315 at that time was expert, 315 out of a total of 350. Captain Twining came back to us that afternoon as we were cleaning our rifles and he went in and drew just an ordinary rifle off the rack and went out and fired two rounds at each of the different ranges and the next morning he fired with us and he fired 333 and the next high score in the whole company of about 125 was 327. So, he was the old man, no question about it. I mean, he didn't have to say anything. What he did was to prove to us that he could do everything we could do better than us and not even practice the thing. He taught me a lot. I treasured him, I still correspond with him.

Anderson: Did he become a general officer?

Simpson: He retired as a four star general. Well, he was

three star, but he retired before that 1959 bill that allowed him to retire with four stars on retirement, oh yes.

However, his brilliance sometimes got in his way because, as I say, he was intolerant of people that couldn't think as fast and that included everybody. But his brilliance was not to be denied. I got back with him after the war and we got into military political business on the unification fight and that sort of thing. Best diction of anyone I've ever known outside of Churchill. If you've read any of that story of the unification history and so forth and so on--you know, the trilateral theory that everything that flies belongs to the Air Force, and everything that floats belongs to the Navy, and everything on the ground belongs to the Army; leaves no place for the Marine Corps.

Anderson: Right.

Simpson: So, the Marine Corps had to carve out a place for itself. And if you are familiar with the National Unification Act of 1947, it places them in their roles and missions. The roles and missions for all four of the services including that of Navy and the Air Force were written by then Colonel Twining. He wrote them all. My job was to help "peddle" them on Capital Hill. I'm glad to say the statute of limitations has run out on us, the kinds of things that we did. But as terms of a speech writer...the thing that turned the tide in that thing, in favor of the Marine Corps at least, was an action by the

Senate Armed Services Committee. And the Commandant was to make this speech, and it was crucial, absolutely crucial. And he sent for Twining to write this speech, and Twining went back--Twining was in Quantico--and he went back to Quantico and he sat down at 6 o'clock one Saturday night, and he wrote all night long. He used a pad like this and had a bunch of pencils, that's where I got this habit, and he would write. He had a almost indecipherable hand, but he had a sergeant who could transcribe it. And the sergeant came over at dawn on Sunday and took this scribbling that he had written and--he was a man that could write like that and there was no editing required, you know, that's the way it was. On Monday he took the speech to Washington and gave it to General Vandegrift--this is 1947--and General Vandegrift read it and said, "My God, I can't give that speech." And he said, "Well, you may have the distinction of being the last Commandant of the Marine Corps." And he said, "But, soften it up a little bit, just soften some of it." "No," he said, "you've got all these bright young men out here, let them do it." Well, Twining was the kind of writer, and as a historian you've seen some of this, you couldn't change his stuff. There wasn't anything you could do with it. You could tear it up and start all over again, but you couldn't modify it because every word he had in it meant exactly what he meant for it to say. Well, he turned it over to these people out there and they gave up, they couldn't do anything with it. They told him they couldn't edit that speech, they

could write another speech but they couldn't edit that one. So, he (Vandegrift) worried and sweated over it and finally he gave it. And I went in civilian clothes to hear him give it, with Twining.

Anderson: So, finally the Commandant gave it?

Simpson: Yes, after much sole searching, but he was scared to death. But he gave it and at least three three stars--Lord, I've forgotten the name, one from the Army, Air Force, we sat right behind him--and he had that glorious sentence in there that if the Marine Corps must go--no, I'm a little ahead of myself. The end of the speech reads, "The bended knee...", now mark you, this is not bent knee, this is "bended knee." "The bended knee is not in the tradition of the Marine Corps. If the Marine Corps must go, let it go with its banner flying and not by a fiat of Congress." Something like that. It was a stirring type of thing. Well, these three three stars that were our died-in-the-wool opponents, I heard one of them turn to the other and say, "If that committee stands up and sings the Marine hymn, I think I'll die." Then he got up and walked out, and that was the turning point. And that's the reason the Marine Corps was written into the act and that's the reason the Marine Corps exists today.

But anyway, I'm getting way off the subject. What do you want me to talk about?

Anderson: We're going back to the '30's now. And I wanted to

talk a little bit about the morale of the Marines. You talked a little bit about the professionalism of the Marine Corps in the '30's. You said it was pretty poor, you said the quality of the officers were pretty poor at that time although you did note some exceptions.

Simpson: Oh, there were many exceptions, many exceptions. You see, the Marine Corps was very small. When I came in there were 990 officers and I was number 991. And there were enough of those people...see everybody was over age and gray, as you might expect. The SNCO's were good. They were true professionals. They taught me a very great deal when I was a young officer and I was still learning from SNCO's when I retired. And they certainly took care of their own. I remember an instance in San Diego when I was a platoon commander. At that time, when a man's enlistment was up, he was "paid off" and became a civilian for one day. That was true even if he had declared for reenlistment. I had a platoon sergeant with more than 20 years service. He was a bachelor and had saved his money through the years. He had \$17,000 on deposit with the paymaster. On the day his enlistment expired, I had to discharge him and give him a check for \$17,000. The NCO's then took him in hand and kept him in the barracks the rest of the day and night. They actually kept watch....

End Side 1, Tape 2

Begin Side 2, Tape 2

Simpson: ...watch on him that night. Make sure nothing happens to him because he was a civilian. The next morning we came down and we had a reenlistment ceremony and I swore him in again. He gave me back the \$17,000 check which I took to the paymaster. That night they had rip roaring party, but he was back in the service again. For one night he was a civilian and that night they never let him out of their sight.

Anderson: They were taking care of him.

Simpson: They were taking care of him. That sort of thing permeated the entire Marine Corps. That particular thing never happens today, of course, as you know. If a guy "ships over," everything just rolls and he's never a civilian, but it was at that time.

The Marine Corps perseveres in spite of itself. We had a lot of over age officers, over age and gray, a lot of people out of shape, a lot of disillusioned people at the time the war started. And I think it's been to the everlasting credit and spirit of the Marine Corps--I think this is probably true of the other services too, that the Marine Corps did as well as it did given what it started with. It had a lot of young competent officers and it had some very competent field grade and general officers. But it had a lot of colonels that were not worth the powder to blow them up. And they failed early in the war. We sent a lot of them home from the Pacific, a lot of them. Some

in disgrace, having been relieved of command, they were totally incompetent.

That has never happened since that time. The quality of of the Marine Corps officers that were in the Corps after the war were--all of the "dead wood" had been cleaned out and by that time it was a highly competitive thing and everybody was competing. And we were all working hard, and I never again felt unemployed at any time in the Marine Corps.

Anderson: Now, what did you do for those two years when you were not in the Marine Corps?

Simpson: Right here.

Anderson: That's right, you came back here, that's right.

Simpson: Running the Student Labor Board. Then I went back as soon as I could.

Anderson: You were eager to get back?

Simpson: Oh, sure.

Anderson: But this time under new circumstances, it was obvious that the war was brewing?

Simpson: By that time things were beginning to start. And they were beginning to ask for reserve officers to come back and they were talking about mobilizing the reserves and what not. And I knew it would be a busy time and I also knew that

if there was going to be a war I was going to be a part of it. So I asked to go back in '39 and I stayed there since that time. And from that time on until the day I retired from active duty I was challenged in every assignment that I had.

Anderson: Had you married at that time?

Simpson: I married during the time I was out of the Marine Corps. See, you could not marry--when I was commissioned you couldn't marry for two years.

Anderson: No kidding?

Simpson: That was against the law. And the penalty for marriage during that time was immediate dismissal. And they exercised it.

Anderson: Really?

Simpson: There were a few secret marriages that I knew about. I didn't know about them at the time, but I learned about them later. But the people that married during that time lived under the threat of discovery at that time. There were some very awkward circumstances when unexpected children came along.

Anderson: Yes, I would think so.

Simpson: But, no that was the law. It wasn't really a very bad law when you come to think about the logic of it. The logic was that the officer needed two years to shake down and

find himself around in the Marine Corps before he brought a wife in it that didn't know anything about the Marine Corps. You, of course, you couldn't get away with that anymore today. But there was certain amount of logic in that.

Yes, I married during that time. And then my wife went back with me for a very short time.

Anderson: And what did she think about you going back into the service?

Simpson: She was all for it. She knew I would be happier there than anywhere else. She really was not all that enthusiastic about me leaving in the first place, but when she saw that I was itching to get back to it and things were going, she supported that a hundred percent and has ever since.

Anderson: What did you think about leaving a bride?

Simpson: If I was going to go, she was ready to go. Remarkable woman, remarkable. Basically an introvert, but she was my total support for 35 years. I left her alone for 11 of those years, unaccompanied tours. She essentially raised our children, and I'm afraid it's taken quite a toll. The children are now grown, educated, and on their own. I have a daughter who is a PhD clinical psychologist, son who has a master's from Rice and is with IBM. There is just the two of us left, but I'm afraid those years that I put such heavy responsibilities on her has cost us. That's another story however, nothing to do

with the Marine Corps.

Anderson: Why did you decide, if you don't mind me asking, why did you decide to send your son to Rice?

Simpson: I didn't.

Anderson: He decided?

Simpson: He decided, yes. Terry, his own guy, the military is not for him. Now, he's not anti-military, he's not by any means anti-military. But he never really showed any particular interest in Texas A&M. And I think one of the reasons was that, you see, A&M at that time was still compulsory military and he didn't particularly care for that. He went to Rice in the '60's. But he wasn't particularly interested in Texas A&M. I think one of the reasons was, that in my junior and senior year was quite successful on this campus, and he knew the military was not his business and he didn't care anything about it and he didn't want to try that. So he picked Rice. And it was just exactly the right school for him. He's very bright and Rice was a real challenge for him. He had to work hard at Rice. But he took a master's in electrical engineering with a minor in computer science. Did it in five years. And did very well, indeed. Went to work for IBM. When I was in Vietnam he--Rice was pretty smart, see. They didn't give him a bachelor's at the end of four years and a master's at the end of five. They waited til the end of five to take to protect

the draft deferment. And then they gave him two degrees, they gave him a BS and a MS too.

Anderson: So, he decided and as far as you were concerned that was fine with you.

Simpson: Indeed, indeed. I told him he could go anywhere that he wanted to go as long as I could afford it. He was the last class to go to Rice without tuition. And Rice was just right for him, right size school, a very challenging academic curriculum.

Anderson: Okay, now on November 1940, that's your first duty station after you come back into the service, right?

Simpson: I came back into the service back in San Diego.

Anderson: Back in San Diego, and you were company commander with the 8th Marines until the outbreak of World War II a year later. What did you do as a company commander? Basically, was this a training mission?

Simpson: Training, training, yes. And then we brought in the organized reserves so we fleshed out our company. However, we split up and formed so many different units that my company was not a very big one. I had 79 men the day the war started and we were in San Diego and I was playing tennis that Sunday with a friend of mine. His wife came down the hill and came up the tennis court blowing the horn and everything. I'll never forget

that my opponent, her husband, was at the opposite end of the court, he was about to serve, and she blew her horn, I went over to the thing and she said--he was the most methodical I've ever seen. He was bouncing the ball up and down like that, he didn't come around there and she was screaming out the window, and I ran over and I said, "What's wrong?" And she said, "The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor." And I leaned over and I said, "Dick, come on. We've got to go, the Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor." And he bounced the ball up and down again and he said, "We might as well finish the set. It's going to be a pretty long war." We didn't finish the set.

We went home and put on our uniforms. And we were stationed out at Camp Elliott which was a place just outside of San Diego up on the Mesa. And when I joined my company out there in the early afternoon, it was absolute chaos. The bugler was standing in the middle of the quadrangle playing "Call to Arms," people were loading their weapons, and rifle bullets were going back. This was going on for an hour or so, I got it quieted down. And then the word was that the Japanese fleet was right off the Pacific coast.

Anderson: Oh, yes. There were a lot scares for the first few months.

Simpson: Oh, my God. So, we were going to go down to defend the West Coast of the United States. And we went down there in trucks and the battalion executive officer told me that he

said, "Your right flank is the Del Coronado Hotel." And he said, "You get in this truck, [we didn't have any jeeps in those day] and I'll show you your left flank." We got in the truck and took off at 30 miles an hour. Remember, I had 79 men, and I kept tapping him on the left shoulder, and I said, "Major, where is the left flank?" He said, "It's at the Mexican border."

Anderson: 79 men?

Simpson: Well, I had all the way from Coronado to the Mexican border on the Silver Strand, the world's greatest landing beach. I couldn't keep them in rifle shot of each other. And he said, "And tie in with the border patrol behind you. I think they're back there about 40 miles."

That was the kind of guy that I didn't admire very much. But, we have--I had three lieutenants and what we did was sort of set up a kind of picket line. The best we could do would be to be a trip wire. At least we would know if they came ashore.

Anderson: Did you actually dig in?

Simpson: Yes, we dug in the sand, yes. Behind the sand dune. And then people took, my CP was just a hole in the sand dune with shelter half out like that. And the guys were on the lee side of the sand dune looking out to sea watching out for the fleet. There was a lot of heat lightning and we thought that was gun fire, and waited for the rounds to land, but they never came.

Anderson: Where there swimmers still there on the beach?
Those Californians do....

Simpson: No, hell no. Everybody was scared, they were all going to the hills. The civilians were going to the hills.

But, it rained that night and....

Anderson: Was this December 7 or 8?

Simpson: December 7th. And you see, we had been as lieutenants in the Marine Corps up to that time, we were what they called "bare breasted" in the sense that we didn't have any ribbons. And we had to listen to all this "guff" about Guadalcanal, I mean not Guadalcanal, about Nicaragua, Haiti, Santo Domingo, that sort of thing, and World War I. We still had a lot of guys from World War I. And of course, we couldn't say anything. Well, my executive officer, 1st lieutenant, came in through the rain and he found me in the tent that night--I mean in the lean to with an EE-8 crank telephone. And he said, "Well captain, looks like it's going to be a big war." I said, "Well, I don't know. It's already big enough for me." Because we were totally in the dark. We had no intelligence or anything. We were just told to defend the beach, defend the left flank of the United States. He said, "Well, I hope to God that it's big enough that I never have anybody again say, 'Well now, when I was in Nicaragua....'" Well, I saw this guy later and ...of course it's an interesting thing, you see. We never heard about Nicaragua again, but then we bored

all the 2d lieutenants mad from 1945 until 1950, whenever Korea started, see, because we were always talking about Guadalcanal, Tarawa, or what. But then Korea came along, and then they did the same thing to the 2d lieutenants until Vietnam came along because they had to keep quiet while they were talking about what had happened in the various..."Were you at the Chosin Reservoir, were you not?" So now everybody has got something to talk about and I'm sure the kids going in now have to listen to all this guff about what we did in Vietnam, you know.

Though interestingly enough, the people don't talk about Vietnam. Old friends and comrades of mine that served with me in Vietnam come by and chat and we don't talk about Vietnam.

Anderson: Why do you think that is?

Simspon: Oh, I know why it is. Those who fought there and saw that that war could have been won easily, not easily, but it could have been won long before I went out there had we been allowed to win it, and the fact that we thought that we knew how to win the war and were not permitted to win it, and that everything that we fought for and all the men that we lost, that we obviously have lost in vain, is a painful thing to talk about.

Anderson: Yes.

Simspon: I commanded the 1st Division Reinf--remember that I

Anderson: Well, we're going to get to Vietnam.

Simspon: Okay, fine.

told you the Marine Corps had when I came in had 990 officers and 17,000 enlisted--my division was heavily reinforced. I had 2,400 officers and 34,000 enlisted in that one division in defense of Da Nang. And we believed in what we were doing and we believed that we did something worthwhile. And it's all gone, and all the effort that we put in, the men we lost, the wounded that we had were all in vain and that's a pretty painful thing to talk about when there was a way to win it and we weren't allowed to win it.

The great lesson out of Vietnam for America is a very simple one, don't go to war unless you are prepared to win it. If you're not prepared to take the steps that are necessary to win a war, stay out of it. We've never made, the country never made the resolve to do the things necessary to win that war. They wanted to win it, but they didn't want to do--at least the leadership, the political leadership--didn't want to do the things that were necessary to win the war. The war could have been won in 1967 by the 1st Marine Division landing at Vinh. This was a superbly trained amphibious division, and they fed them into Vietnam one battalion at a time over a nine month period. Terrible waste of skill, the amphibious skills were never utilized at all. That would have involved an invasion of North Vietnam, to cut off the neck right there at Vinh.

Anderson: Well, we're going to get to Vietnam.

Simpson: Okay, fine.

Anderson: We're going to spend a lot of time on Vietnam. It's one of the most fascinating aspects about the military. Let's get back to 1941. When the war broke out you were down on the beach and at this time, I've read many times, that there was a lot of hysteria among the Californians that there was going to be an invasion. Did you witness that?

Simspon: My wife did. I was on duty all the time. My battalion commander's wife called my wife and she gathered up the battalion wives in two cars or three cars and they went back into the mountains and stayed for three days. I didn't know this because I was on the beach. But there was a tremendous amount of hysteria. Many, many civilians leaving the areas, the roads leading eastward were choked. People were leaving their homes, those civilians that were not involved. The military, of course, was going the other way. And we didn't--I don't know how long it lasted because we left for Samoa very early in January, I've forgotten whether I put that time in here.

Anderson: December '41.

Simpson: No, I was promoted to Captain.

Anderson: January '42.

Simpson: January '42.

Anderson: Okay.

Simpson: January '42 I went to....

Anderson: You left for Samoa. But before we get to Samoa, and your wife did witness a lot of this hysteria. I was wondering about another thing, very historical about which is still in the news and that is during January and February--starting in February of 1942, the United States began to round up Japanese of American or Americans of Japanese descent and started shipping them to so called relocation centers. What was your opinion of that, what was your feeling?

Simpson: At the time?

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: I didn't know. I was gone, I was in Samoa.

Anderson: Yes, yes.

Simpson: I didn't know about that until I got back. You see, we got no newspaper, and the only news that we got in Samoa was....

Anderson: You went before this started?

Simpson: Oh, yes.

Anderson: And therefore you were not in any of the relocation. And of course that was carried out by the Army and not the Marines anyway, but I thought....

Simpson: That's right, no, I didn't know anything about it

when it happened. I didn't know about it until I came back to the States 31 months later. We were in Samoa, the only news we got was...you know what that's called, I've forgotten. I was trying to think of the name of it today. I don't know whether they still do it or not, but the Navy used to broadcast sort of a news bulletin to all ships and they'd print up sort of a news paper. It didn't look like a newspaper, just a mimeographed thing. That's the only news we got. And that was never in that news, the fact that they were evacuating the Japanese.

Anderson: Okay, now as far as being on the beach in December of 1941, were you ever reinforced or did you still have your 79 men for how many, how far is it, anyway, from San Diego?

Simpson: 15 miles.

Anderson: Yes, 15 miles.

Simpson: And no vehicle, we didn't have any vehicles. We were down there for three days. Then we came back for two and went back again. We sort of kept up that routine until we left for Samoa.

Anderson: Why did you go to Samoa, why did they send you there? In defense of the Island?

Simpson: Yes. You see, already the then Joint Chiefs had figured that Australia was going to be the place where they were going to have to hold. They thought that the Philippines would

fall. And if you look at the chart, Samoa is on a great circle course from the West Coast to Australia.

Anderson: Sure.

Simpson: And it has a good harbor, and they figured they had to hold Samoa in order to protect the shipping lanes to get reinforcements to Australia to eventually come back up to Japan. That happened, but the only action we saw in Samoa was one Japanese submarine came up and fired three rounds that landed in the harbor and only one landed ashore and that hit, ironically enough, on a store owned by Japanese. And that's the only combat we saw down there.

We were the Samoan Defense Force. It included not only the island of Western Samoa which was American, I mean Eastern Samoa; Western Samoa which was under New Zealand; Wallis Island which was New Zealand; and Funafuti. Those islands constituted the Samoan Defense Force.

I lost my job as a company commander and that was to my great regret, but I had a mentor. My battalion commander when they...see, we went down as a brigade and then eventually they sent a major general to command this whole aggregation when they occupied all five of these islands. And my erstwhile battalion commander who did not deploy originally with us came down as the G-3 of that staff. When I was promoted to major which promoted me out of my position as company commander, he reached down and picked me up and put me on this big staff-

--over my screaming protest. I wanted to stay with the regiment because they went to Guadalcanal. Of course, maybe I'm alive today because he did it, but nevertheless, that's the reason I stayed in Samoa so long.

Anderson: You were there for three years, it looks like.

Well, two years.

Simpson: Yes, I was there for a long, long time.

Anderson: Yes, early '42 until April '44.

Simpson: That's right, that's right. In a purely....

Anderson: March '44.

Simpson: In a purely defense posture. It was extremely interesting right at first because we were...well, we were scared. I say scared, we didn't know whether the Japanese were coming or not. And so we were busy as hell building defenses.

But Samoa is a very defensible place. It's only about 12 miles long and about two miles wide at the widest. And it's got mountains, well, rocky crags that go up to peaks that are about well I guess, probably up to 900 feet. And very, very few landing beaches. So it was a highly defensible thing. We had it overdefended. Hell, we could have taken on anything they sent in there. At one time we had 15,000 Marines on that island.

Anderson: Gee whiz. How did the Marines get along with the

Samoa people.

Simpson: That was one of the great tragedies. Oh, they got along great, but the great tragedy is that we ruined the culture.

You see, the Samoans had it almost perfect, it was really South Pacific before we came. The Samoans had a tremendously peaceful existence. They lived in little villages. Pago Pago is the only town. Everything else in little villages along the coast line all the way around. The middle of it is mountains. They had banyon trees, guava, tropical fruits, they could catch all the fish they wanted. As I look back on it, just a beautiful, idealic setting. And we messed it all up, for all times.

Anderson: In what way?

Simpson: Well, we came in and we were building an airfield and we were building fortifications and other things. And so, we hired these Samoans, and it came to where they much preferred to go to what they called the "bush store," they much preferred to go there and buy canned salmon, canned tuna fish than to go out in their own ocean and catch fish.

Money meant nothing to them when we arrived, it meant something to them shortly thereafter. But we destroyed their culture. Not deliberately, but our very presence there and our money and all that sort of thing. And anybody could get a job type of thing. Samoan girls were perfectly beautiful, and young Marines had a great time.

Anderson: Yes, I would imagine.

Simpson: When we arrived the standard dress of the Samoans was what they call a "lava lava" which is a skirt that raps around and tucks in and nothing up above. Yes, the Marines thought that was great. They loved it, they thought it was great. Each little village had one water fountain, not a fountain but a spigot of water in the middle of the fountain thing and they had some rocks there and everybody took their baths there. And everybody was uninhibited totally, you know, they just bathed in the nude; man, women, children, and all the rest of them. Well, as I say, young Marines thought that was pretty damn great. But, that all changed during the time we were there.

But, our presence there, our building of roads--big roads, there were trails, the building of roads, influx of money, post exchanges, liquor, cigarettes, that sort of thing literally destroyed an almost idyllic culture and they've never gone back to it. And they never will. I guess if it hadn't been us it would have been somebody else. But I've always regretted that. Samoans are very, very warm, friendly people. Not particularly industrious because they didn't have to be. It didn't take much to live in Samoa, not much effort.

It was an interesting time. It got boring. I felt the war was passing me by and like all young captains, you know, it was the only war we were ever going to have, if I don't get into it, why you know, so on and so forth.

Anderson: In other words, you were eager to get into combat?

Simpson: Oh, I was trying like hell to get there. Combat teams, regimental combat teams used to come through there and I always would go down and ask for a job, and the regimental commander would always take me but the general wouldn't let me go. And he told me after the fifth time I asked him, he told me flat footed, "They sent me down here, and when they order me away then you can go." And that's the way I finally got away, when he got his orders. But the war in the meantime had gone by, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, the rest of those islands.

We went down there with very primitive equipment; prior to World War II we didn't have a jeep when we went. Our mortars were the old three inch tumbling type mortar, we didn't have the 81mm mortar. We'd never seen an LST. All that came into being and into the active force while we were down there. First LST I ever saw was in Samoa, the first jeep I ever saw was in Samoa.

Anderson: No kidding?

Simpson: We went down there with 1903 Springfield rifles. Couple of years later we began to get a little bit better, the Garand rifle and that type of thing.

Anderson: So basically what you did was fortify the island.

Simpson: We fortified it, that's correct. We turned it into a real fortress with all sort of coastal defense, we even had

barrage ballons, the big sausages that would hang up all over the islands--used to protect us from dive bombers and that sort of thing.

We had a pleasant time, but after a year or so it wasn't too challenging because we were convinced the way the news that we were getting from the war that, you know, that it wasn't....

Anderson: They weren't going to attack.

Simpson: ...they weren't going to attack us. Also, another tragic thing happened, it didn't happen to me, but it happened to a lot of our people. A lot of our Marines contracted filariasis.

Anderson: What's that? What is filariasis? Some kind of a skin disease isn't it?

Simpson: No, no, it's a terrible disease transmitted by mosquitoes. And what it does is give gross enlargements to certain of the extremities.

Anderson: Oh, yes, yes. The legs will get real huge. Yes, yes, I've seen that.

Simpson: Yes, the legs would go down to where you could barely see the toes, and that sort of thing.

The local folklore was, the local wisdom was that the white man couldn't get it because the Navy had been in Samoa for 40 years and nobody in the Navy had ever contracted it.

However, that was based, I mean, that was a fact that no naval personnel had contacted it. However, what they overlooked was the fact that the Navy lived in a compound right there in Pago Pago behind the wire screens. They had their movies inside, and no Samoans were present. Now we spread out all over the island, the Marines spread out all over the island. They were in contact with the natives, the natives had filariasis, the mosquitoes would bite the natives that had filariasis, and bite the Marines--and the Marines got it. They had--the numbers were so great that they had to open a special hospital in Oregon to take care of the Marines that contracted that.

Anderson: No kidding. Did they get rid of it?

Simpson: Yes, yes, it was not fatal. But, they had people with testicles that would get this big and that sort of thing. We evacuated literally hundreds. Just rest was about the only thing that would do it and then they couldn't go back. I never did contract the thing, but of course I didn't live in the bush either. That was perhaps the worst thing that happened to us.

Anderson: Did you ever get any liberty, did you ever get to come back home or....?

Simpson: I was just there.

Anderson: What was your routine like during the day, I mean, did you get days off? How hard did you work your men?

Simpson: Well, of course I was on the staff and I worked pretty hard. We worked seven days a week there being nothing else to do. We could have taken time off except there wasn't anything to do with your time. We never had any ground big enough to build a football field on. So we went for volleyball, and horseshoes. We could scratch out a volleyball court. And after we had built the defenses and had refined them and rehearsed our drills, then as far as the men were concerned and ourselves too, the officers, we went in for physical conditioning as much as we possibly could.

See, I was only a captain for seven months and then I was a major and then five months later I was a lieutenant colonel. So I was on the staff down there, and as I say, in order to offset boredom and that sort of thing we went in heavily for physical recreation to try to keep people busy, and organizing volleyball leagues. We couldn't play softball, we didn't have enough room. Oh, a couple of places where it couldn't have been played, but we couldn't do that.

Anderson: Were you happy to leave?

Simspon: Oh, God. God, I should say I was. I almost prayed to get out of there.

I went from there down to Guadalcanal. I joined the 3d Marine Division. I've forgotten, we were going to go up on a prohibitively--on an operation that they eventually cancelled and we went instead to Emirau which bypassed the original

objective. We took five Seabee battalions and a Marine brigade and we were told by Admiral Halsey that our purpose in life was to land those Seabees because they built two airfields on the thing. And we were not up there very long. We were only there, oh, I guess a couple of months.

Anderson: Was that your first taste of combat then?

Simpson: Yes, yes. And that wasn't very much. We only killed 50--that's the first dead Japanese I ever saw. We only killed 50, only 50 on the island. We killed all of them. No big deal, I mean, not much to it. Lot of wild ass shooting there at night, you know, bang bang. I spent most of my nights in a hole. Not that I was afraid of the Japanese, I was scared of our own people, you know, they were shooting at shadows and that sort of thing. Most of our people had not too much experience in combat and that sort of thing.

Anderson: So they were all fairly antsy. American Marines are pretty antsy.

Simpson: Well, anybody was.

Anderson: Yes, I mean, you know, basic combat.

Simpson: Sure, yes. When you get into that business, anybody that tells you they're not scared is lying. There are a few people...there are various degrees of bravery. I think Louis Puller was a guy who simply didn't recognize fear. He got five

Navy Crosses and I always have contended that he would have gladly traded those five Navy Crosses for a Medal of Honor if it had been posthumous. But yes, sure, particularly the first two or three nights. It's a fear of the unknown, you know, you don't know where the enemy is and in what force. You don't know whether he's got a landing force out there that's coming after you or not. You feel you're pretty secure, you think you've cleaned out the island, which we had. The island wasn't very big, about the size of Samoa, but flat so we could cover it pretty well. And we got them all during the first couple of days. So we knew there were none there, but we didn't know what was off shore. There was very meager intelligence.

Anderson: Was the fighting hand to hand, or was it just....

Simspon: No, no, matter of fact, they were running?

Anderson: Was it mostly machine gun?

Simspon: Mostly machine gun, some rifle fire.

Actually they could see what happened, they could see that flotilla out there and they were really trying to get off the island when we caught them. Four did, four got in a canoe and got out to sea and an American destroyer blew them out of the water with a five inch gun. I thought it was a little bit of overkill myself. I watched that. They literally blew them out of the water. First time, first round hit, right underneath the damned thing.

Anderson: And they were on a canoe?

Simpson: In a canoe. Big threat to the American destroyer.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: I think we better sign off here somewhere.

Anderson: Yes, let's sign off and I'll come back Thursday.

End Session I, Side 2, Tape 2

Begin Session II, September 10, 1981, Tape 3, Side 1

Anderson: Last time we were concerned with Emirau landing force and the Japanese, and you said that was your first taste of combat.

Simspon: Yes, that's right. As a matter of fact, you'll find as we go further that I didn't actually see very much combat throughout World War II as just a matter of chance, of course, it depends on where you are, how much direct contact.

We went to Emirau with the assigned mission of landing five Seabee battalions so they could build two airfields. It was assumed that the island was lightly defended and it turned out that that was not only true, but it was really sparsely defended at all. There were some 50 odd Japanese there and then when they saw the size of our invasion force which was about 3,000 plus the Seabee battalions which we were landing. Of course, they tried desperately to escape, they put up no fight.

Our landing infantry, I was on the staff of the brigade commander, so I didn't land in the initial wave. But those Japanese they encountered, took no prisoners which was rather typical of the Japanese. They seemed to rather want to die rather than become a prisoner and that's what most of the people did.

Anderson: So they fought right there and fought until they were dead, basically?

Simpson: Yes, but it was a sort of fire and fall back type of thing. I mean, they didn't dig in and fight until the end at any one particular place. They were actually fleeing across the island and our Marines were pursuing them, picking them off one by one.

Anderson: Why do you think they wouldn't be taken prisoner. I mean, 50 against 3,000, they knew they couldn't put up much of a resistance?

Simpson: We never, in my time in the Pacific there was never a time that I knew anything about or even heard about where the Japanese voluntarily surrendered until the end of the war. They were imbued with the spirit that they must not surrender, they must die for the emperor. And that's essentially what they did, all the way through the war to and including Okinawa. Essentially, that was true everywhere we went, that's the reason we hit...the few prisoners, I didn't take them, but the few prisoners that were taken by the U.S combatant forces in the

Pacific were usually people who were wounded and disabled in some way. Very few voluntary surrenders, none that I know anything about. And I think that's evidence to the fact, as you know, that people were found or at least discovered or came out of the bush in Guam as recently as two or three years ago.

So, one of the things that I found in my years out there is to recall that it's very difficult for us as Americans to understand the kind of rationale and thinking of the Orientals. They think entirely differently than we do with a different set of standards and different set of values. And there were many circumstances and times during the war where we would think any rational man would surrender, they didn't. But by their standards that was the appropriate thing to do. I'm certain that Americans under some of the same circumstances would have surrendered, such as the 50 people on the island of Emirau as we had this thing surrounded. Heavy landing, comparatively heavy landing forces, naval gunfire, and the rest of the thing. It was obvious that they had no chance for resistance, they were armed only with rifles and we had everything else to include, as I say, naval gunfire. Their only alternative was to surrender or to die, and they chose to die, which they did. We saw that or our forces saw that essentially throughout the war.

Anderson: Was there any discussion amongst the officers or troops about the Oriental mind?

Simpson: Oh, yes, quite a lot. None of us knew very much about it, but we learned. Of course, none of us are experts even today on the thing, but we learned by experience. My own having been there in the South Pacific, and in Thailand, and in Japan, the Philippines, and other places, I have learned a little. I'm certainly no expert on the Oriental mind, but I have learned that I have to be very careful in predicting what those people are going to do. Such as I'll tell you later on in our interviews about one of my more interesting experiences in having a brigade in Thailand in 1962, and there I found out to my great interest that the Thai language does not include the word "no." They don't have any word that corresponds to "no." So I was warned by my interpreter, who was American, that the governor very often would, felt that he would have to refuse some request, that he would never tell me no. That he would sort of lead me off down the primrose path, and I began to recognize those symptoms. He was essentially telling me no, but it was not within his culture to say "no" to anything.

So, we learned basically by experience and by exposure to them many things. And we also found that there is no such thing, in my judgement, as an Oriental culture. The standards and the conduct of the Filipino's, for example, are entirely different from that of the Japanese, the Thai's different again, the Vietnamese different still. There's certain common characteristics that being a totally incomprehensible regard for human life which is precious to all of us, but to them, I would think

in the whole that human life is fairly cheap, they set pretty low standards, low prices on human life, indeed, including their own. That's a little hard for Americans to understand, but that's the way we found it when we were there during those years.

Anderson: Yes. And so the whole time that you were in the Pacific there on your campaigns, you never took any prisoners?

Simpson: Except in those few cases where we were able to literally capture them when they were unarmed and unable to commit suicide or do other things, or where they were left behind as wounded. But, the Japanese were very careful about that, they didn't leave wounded on the battlefield. They were good at taking them back.

Anderson: What was the opinion of the American soldiers here and then later on in the Philippines, what was the opinion of the quality of the Japanese soldier?

Simpson: Fanatics, but it varied. There were some of the main line forces of the Japanese that were extremely well trained. They seemed to be all very well disciplined in the sense that they followed completely and to the letter the orders of their commanders. This seemed to be without question, Terry. Where an American would have protested or questioned, we didn't see any instances of where they questioned the orders and the order not to surrender or to commit suicide or harakiri or whatever,

usually came from the commanders and they seemed to follow those orders blindly. In our own military type of thinking, we admire that up to a certain point, but there is a definite point in there where....

Anderson: It's tough to define.

Simpson: ...it's very tough to define, and I wouldn't attempt to do so.

Anderson: And that point in the Marines is probably farther than in some of the other services.

Simpson: I think so, yes. Of course, if you teach that sort of thing, then along with it goes responsibility that you have responsible commanders.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: You can't afford to teach a man to accept without question the orders that he receives unless, as a counterpart to that, you give him a competent man who will issue reasonable and sensible orders. You can't do one without the other.

Anderson: Now, let's move on. The basic feeling toward the Japanese, I've heard many times, is hatred. Was that the feeling that the Marines had, that you yourself had?

Simpson: No, I did not. I've been in three wars, Terry, and I never really experienced hatred for the enemy. The

feeling toward him was a rather, a rather impersonal kind of thing, a very earnest desire to defeat him because that was our only purpose in being there. A certain respect for the opponent who seemed to be a well trained military man or military unit, a certain grudging respect for that.

Hatred--I heard a lot of enlisted men talk about it, and perhaps those that were involved in a peak of incredible high violence such as Tarawa, I was never in one of those and I would guess that perhaps some of those Marines that survived that battle and spent all 76 hours on the beach at Tarawa, it's probably true that during that period of time they developed an intense hatred for the adversary because it was touch and go, as you know, for a great many hours as to who was going to die....

Anderson: Yes, sure.

Simpson: ...when many were dying on both sides, as to who was going to win. And I can't say because I was never in that sort of situation, but I think if I had been a battalion commander there and had seen half of my battalion die or be shot up in the water as they were, it would not have been difficult for me to develop a hatred at that particular time for that particular group of Japanese. But in terms of hating the Japanese as a nation and as a group of people, no. I have never felt it and I don't think that really anyone actually did, they may have said so but I...I still hear people, not

professional officers, but I still hear people now who served in World War II in the Pacific saying such absurd things as they wouldn't think of visiting Japanese, home islands of Japan even today.

Anderson: Yes, I've heard that.

Simpson: Whether they seem to take a great pride in the fact that, you know, "The damned Japanese, I'll never even go to their country and spend a dollar," and so forth. That's pretty ridiculous as far as I'm concerned. The people that they would become associated with in Japan today were not even born when World War II was fought for the most part. No, I don't take any stock in that at all.

Anderson: Yes, okay. Now, you were promoted to a lieutenant colonel in 1944 and then you returned to the United States for Command and General Staff School right during the war. Why was that? Didn't they need you out there?

Simpson: Well, they didn't let me stay back long as it shows. But, this course, the Command and General Staff School is normally nine months long. And what they did was to condense that course and shorten it to compress it into 90 days. And we went to school at seven o'clock in the morning. Our class was 990 Army officers, to include Army/Air Force, and two Marines. I was one of the two Marines. 990, there were no Navy officers in there.

Anderson: Why you, why do you think you were one of the two?
Do you have any idea?

Simpson: This I have no idea. But it was a very intense thing. I've never been to medical school, but I imagine it was sort of like that in the sense that we went to class-- having 990 it was essentially a lecture course and examination course. But we were in a...they took a place called Gruber Hall which had been the old riding hall at Fort Leavenworth when they had horses. So it was a huge sort of arena type of thing. This had been floored and fitted with desks, two man desks. Well, really tables essentially. So it was essentially lectures and that kind of thing. This was a very interesting course because a great many of us that were in that course had already been overseas and come back, you see. So there was a great deal of comparing of notes and that sort of thing. But we went from seven in the morning until six at night. And then we normally studied about four to six hours each night. Sundays was the only day we had off.

For me it was a great change of pace. I think the greatest advantage out of it, that I gathered out of it was the association with Army officers and comparing experiences. Many of the had come from European theater which I had no feeling for whatsoever. A lot had come from the South Pacific and people that had different experiences than I did. It was very valuable from that and as you will see later on, I also went to the Army War College and it was interesting that many of the people that had been at

Leavenworth with me were in the Army War College by the time I got there. Really, my association in the two Army top schools, the greatest value that I think I received out of it, although there were many, but I think the greatest value was the association that I made with other people.

Anderson: How was the curriculum?

Simpson: Which, in Command and Staff College?

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: It's rather hard to judge because they had attempted to compress too much in too short a time. You can't, as you know even better than I, you can't sit at a desk from seven until six, essentially ten hours a day six days a week, you can't concentrate that long and absorb that long. It was too much too fast. The Army War College which I'll tell you about at a later time was entirely different. I think their course now is an extraordinary thing, extraordinarily good one, but it runs nine months. And it's much more reasonable. And they have time for research and reflection. We had none. But of course, a great change of pace for me.

Anderson: I was somewhat amazed that they even continued the course during the war when they needed so many combat officers.

Simpson: Well, I think what happened was that they found that - you see, there was no point system for rotation overseas during

World War II. Essentially in the Marine Corps you went and stayed unless you were shot, killed, or essentially disgraced, or for some reason, some indeterminable reason, they had decided that you had been out there long enough and you needed to come back to the States and sort of get the adrenalin flowing a little bit and change of perspective. And I think that was true in my case. See, I had been out there 31 months and I think some kind soul decided that I better come home for a little while. I was actually only home five months and went back again this time for 17 months. It was a good thing.

Now, in Vietnam we rotated people too fast. In World War II we did not rotate enough and we got people literally burned out. Now a lot depended on what organization you were in and how long it was in combat and under stress and strain and that kind of thing.

Anderson: Sure, sure.

Simpson: Oh, you could do--well, of course, Pearl Harbor wasn't overseas duty, but I mean, I guy could do that standing on his head for the rest of his life. Or you could be in Noumea, for example, Headquarters of the South Pacific Command. That was sort of "uptown" living in Noumea. Brisbane, Australia, not in combat, no problem there.

Anderson: But under combat situations.

Simpson: Under combat situations there is only so long that

you can remain effective in this and that varies with the individual as to how long you can remain effective in a combat situation.

Anderson: And by that time before you were sent to Command and General Staff School, had you inform the Marine Corps that you planned on staying in a career after the war?

Simpson: Never came up. We had a war to win. That decision was going to come later. I never gave it a thought. Well, I did, but there was no avenue. They didn't solicit my opinion and at that point they could care less what I was planning to do. And even though I felt I wanted to stay, I think I would have reserved judgement at that time depending on what--how we made out in the war and what my own personal role in it was and how I felt about what we had done. So, I was not asked that question and didn't respond to it.

But I cherished the comradeships that I had and so forth and so on and I felt that, if I gave it any conscious thought, Terry, I probably felt affirmatively about the thing, positively about it. But, no, no, I did not ask.

Anderson: After your five months--were you living with your wife? Was she allowed to be in the area?

Simpson: No, but she was there anyhow. Yes, I was told not to bring her because there were no accommodations, but fortunately there was a--one of the officers that I mentioned early on who had been here at A&M was on duty up there.

Anderson: Who was that?

Simpson: Captain Orr when he was here, then Lieutenant Colonel Orr and I knew he was there. Somebody told me he was there. And my wife was here in Bryan and when I came home I had these orders there and I knew from talking to people out here that Captain Orr was there and I called him on the telephone and told him I'd been gone 31 months and that I was sure that I was going back shortly and that I was ordered to Command and General Staff School and told not to bring my wife and I was going to bring her anyway. And he said, "You bring her here and I'll have a place for her." And he got us a one bedroom apartment. So she was with me during that period of time. Thank God!

Anderson: Really!

Simpson: Yes, it was hard enough as it was through the years to have left her so long. So she was with me, she didn't see very much of me except on Sunday. That was essentially the only day we had. Saturday night and Sunday because I studied on Sunday night.

Of course, one of the things that these great separations have taught us, Terry, which many married couples would do well to learn, and that is to cherish the time that you have together. It becomes much more precious to you when you've been separated and know that you are going to be separated again. I don't recommend family separation, but it does have a certain virtue in the sense that when you have endured the kind of separations that

we have in our family you cherish the time that you have together rather than taking it for granted such as most married couples do.

Anderson: After five months back in America where you ready to go back to combat?

Simpson: Not particularly, but I knew it was my time and there was a lot going on and I thought I better go. So I was not surprised nor unhappy when the orders came in.

Anderson: Would you have rather gone to Europe to fight or would you have rather gone back to Asia?

Simpson: Oh, go back to the Pacific the only thing that I knew, and that's where my people were. No, I would have been out of place in Europe. We didn't have any Marine units there and I was a Marine through and through. But what I wanted to do was to go back to the Pacific and be a battalion commander of infantry. That's what I set my sights on.

Anderson: I see. Yes.

Simpson: It didn't work out.

Anderson: No, it didn't work out.

Simpson: And I'll tell you why.

Anderson: Okay.

Simpson: I had it all "greased," I thought. By this time I was about a third way up the ladder of lieutenant colonel; I commanded a company, I commanded a platoon and a company; temporarily XO of a battalion for a short while. I thought I was fully qualified to be a battalion commander. They were organizing then the sixth and last Marine Division, and they were organizing it on Guadalcanal which was then a secure area when I went back the second time. And I had it pretty well arranged through the "old boy" net that if I could work my way through Pearl Harbor and get to Guadalcanal, that I could become a battalion commander in this 6th Marine Division. I knew the division commander, who was General Shepherd later to become Commandant.

But my first hurdle was to get through Pearl Harbor because Pearl Harbor was the choke point for all field grade officers in the Marine Corps. Everybody was ordered to report to Pearl Harbor on their way out. And then they decided from there. That was Fleet Marine Force Pacific, and they decided from there where you were going to go. I also thought I had some friends in port there that would facilitate me getting to getting to Guadalcanal to join the 6th Division. But when I arrived, I found to my horror that they had decided in their wisdom to send me to General MacArthur's staff as a liaison officer. And I said, "My God, why me?" I've heard all these stories about "Dugout Doug" and I've heard the stories about some disparaging remark that he was alleged to have made about

the Marines and I could not understand why me of all people they had chosen for this task. And their answer was, "You've just come from the Army Command and General Staff School, so you should be able to speak their language." That was why the rug was pulled out from under me in going to the 6th Division and I was sent instead to General MacArthur's staff.

Now the reason for me going down there or reason for any Marine going down there; there were no Marines under MacArthur's command and no reason for any Marines on his staff. But, if you recall the sequence of events, for example, the 1st Marine Division fought gallantly and very effectively over a long period of time in Guadalcanal, and then they were taken back to Australia for a period of rehabilitation and filling with replacements and retraining and that sort of thing. And then they went back into combat and this was sort of going on with all Marine divisions. The planning for the seizure of Okinawa was well under way. And this involved three Marine divisions plus three Army divisions. And after that was to follow the invasion of Japan. This was in the long range plan. You see, by this time they hadn't even gone to Iwo Jima yet, so the planning was way down the line. But they reckoned that they would need someplace...they had been bringing, for example, the 2d Division fought at Tarawa and suffered enormous casualties, but they were brought to the island of Maui to rehabilitate. But they were thinking about the fact that these divisions were going to be engaged in the assault on Okinawa, eventually, and that they

would then further be needed for the invasion of Japan. And they thought it was a waste of shipping to bring those divisions as far back as the Hawaiian Islands for rehabilitation, so some planning genius decided that the island of Leyte which was to be one of MacArthur's objectives after he bypassed Mindanao, they thought that the island of Leyte would be a superb place to rehabilitate these Marine divisions after they had fought in Okinawa.

So the purpose that I was sent down to MacArthur's staff was to, after Leyte was secured, to survey the area and report back on its feasibility as a rehabilitation area. That's the reason that I went down there and I joined the staff in Hollandia, New Guinea, and then moved with the staff to Leyte. The actual assault, initial assault had taken place by the time I reached Hollandia. But I only stayed in Hollandia overnight and then moved on to Leyte. But I was told in Hollandia that General MacArthur's staff did not accept liaison officers, but when told of my mission there, the chief of staff told me that--oh, I guess the G-1, I didn't get to see the chief of staff, he said that I could stay as--they would accept me as the working member of the staff and after the campaign for Leyte was finished, that then I could carry out this mission of surveying and report back on the feasibility of this area and so forth. But in the meantime, he said we'll put you in the G-4 planning section. G-4, of course, being in terms of general staff terminology, would have eventually been in charge of real estate assignment.

They had a whole real estate section, so that's the reason I went to G-4 with no particular logistics experience but to be there when Leyte was secured so that I could then pass judgment on the suitability of the area for rehabilitation of Marine divisions.

And they very fortunately put me in the long range planning group which was planning the logistics of the invasion of Japan. Each one of the G sections had such a group. G-3 had a group working on the operational requirements, we had a group working on the logistics, and a third group over in G-2, of course, was working on the intelligence. Those plans were pretty well developed, I mean, in other words, I joined them in mid-stream, they were well along. And the total concentration of our group was on the home islands of Japan. We were on Leyte as the combat was going on and we were--they dropped bombs on us at night, and there were a few wild random shots fired into our camp during the daytime but our attention was on the eventual invasion of the home islands of Japan. We were not even--we didn't even bother with Okinawa or anything like that. Nor were we directly involved in any means with the on going campaign for the recapture of the Philippine Islands. We were simply there. But we were working night and day on the plans for the invasion of Japan which was a, as you know, would have been a mammoth undertaking.

Anderson: Absolutely.

Simpson: Several times bigger than Normandy had it come off.

Anderson: Now, as far as the rehabilitation, what was your general feeling about that?

Simpson: Oh, well.

Anderson: Was it feasible?

Simpson: Oh, no, by no means. The area that they had selected on Leyte...Leyte is an absolute hell hole, a terrible, terrible place. And I never understood for one moment how anybody who had studied a chart, who had studied any sort of an atlas and read about the island, how they could ever have considered this island as a rehabilitation sight. My God, it was bad enough to try to live and survive there much less rehabilitate. It would have been far superior to rehabilitate the people right on Okinawa. They would have been a lot better off climate wise. The climate is miserable, heavy, heavy rains. The only sites that were big enough to hold two Marine divisions - flat enough to be able to encamp two Marine divisions which they had drawn a great circle on and shown me on the map before I left Pearl Harbor, those were under water about 90% of the time. I hadn't been in Leyte but three days and I hadn't even gotten to the area, it hadn't even been uncovered, that we were suppose to go to, but I had essentially made up my mind that this was a fruitless mission.

But, in any event, I....

Anderson: Were you, when you reported back, said that much?

Simpson: Well, that was interesting. I waited, of course, until the area was in fact uncovered and went to it so that I could say that I'd seen it on the ground and then I went to my mentor in G-4 and reminded him of my primary mission and I told him I'd like to make this report and he talked with General MacArthur and he said, "The Commander in Chief has no objection to you making this report as your own evaluation," but he said, "you must be very careful to ensure that they understand in Pearl Harbor that this does not necessarily reflect the Commander in Chief's opinion." I mean, not that he says it's good, but that he's not turning you away.

So, they allowed me to send a classified dispatch which I very carefully worded and I showed to them before I sent it stating that this is my personal opinion but one supported by engineer officers--disinterested engineer officers on the staff--who could care less whether we came or not, but they had experience in building camps and knew more about drainage problems and that sort of thing than I did. So I sent this dispatch to Pearl Harbor and thought I would be withdrawn forthwith. Didn't happen. They....

Anderson: What did they do, what'd they tell you?

Simpson: They told me to stay put. It was one of these things about "don't call me, I'll call you."

Anderson: Oh, really?

Simpson: I think they found out or I think they decided, Terry, that it might be useful to them at some point in the future to have a Marine officer on that staff. Now, recall at this time I was the only Marine in the southwest Pacific, I mean, I was the only guy there. To go back to Leavenworth, fortunately there were a goodly number of people that I had known in Leavenworth that were serving on this staff, so that made it...and what I was doing I was extremely interested in. And they knew what I was doing back in Pearl Harbor. They knew what I was doing.

Anderson: And they wanted some, the Marine Corps itself wanted some idea of what the Army was thinking about the invasion of Japan. Is that right?

Simpson: That's right. And they figured that the Marine Corps was going to have divisions committed to it and they probably already knew that MacArthur was going to be the overall supreme commander and they thought this would be their wedge to have somebody at court even though they'd have to put in somebody with a great deal more rank than me as they did eventually to include a brigadier general when they got serious on the final planning. But they had decided that it would be useful, as indeed it was to the Marine Corps. They had a lot of lieutenant colonels, but they only had one on MacArthur's staff and they thought it might be useful, might not, but it probably could be

useful in the future to have a Marine on that staff continuously. So, I actually stayed there, we were in Leyte, then we moved to Manila during the combat there.

Anderson: No kidding?

Simpson: Yes, why I've watched them shoot down the Intramuras, terrible thing to behold. I mean, you know, the old walled city, and to see it all--but they had no option. They had to do it.

Anderson: It was razed, wasn't it?

Simpson: Yes, by gunfire, point blank, 155mm fire. Well, not totally, but great gaps were shot into it. But, of course, the Japanese again didn't hold up. They were firing, nothing else to do. So we continued our work in Manila, refining the invasion plans of Japan, right until the atomic bomb dropped. And, indeed, we were ready to go as far as we were concerned.

Anderson: Okay, lets talk about the plans. What were some of the specifics? Did you have a difference of opinion being a Marine than your Army colleagues?

Simpson: Oh, yes. As a spy. Well, we worked in very, very close harmony. The Army people had done a lot of amphibious work in the South Pacific. They were using our doctrine, the doctrine that the Navy and the Marine Corps had developed. But, it was very harmonious type of thing. I didn't have to do very great deal

with the operational planning because I was in G-4, but we were working on such things as beach exits, supply over the beach, supply dumps, and that sort of thing. I was in contact with our G-3 counterpart because we needed to know what they were planning to do, you see, in order to provide logistics support for them.

Anderson: Sure, cooperate.

Simpson: We needed to know what the hell they were going to do and how many divisions they were going to put where and so forth and so on.

But, I had no differences of opinion with my Army counterparts that I would not have had with fellow Marines. The fact that I was a Marine did not develop any controversy.

Anderson: And since you were the only Marine on all of MacArthur's staff, how were you received when you first arrived?

Simpson: With suspicion.

Anderson: You were?

Simpson: Oh, yes. As a spy.

Anderson: As a spy?

Simpson: Well, not literally.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: Nobody could figure what the hell I was doing there, why I was there. I spent a lot of time explaining why I was there. It was--except for the friends that I had known previously, it was a rather cold reception they gave me because there were no Marines, and they didn't really see much reason for one. They accepted my explanation when I gave it, and then I began to gain acceptance when they found out I was willing to work. If I had...and it was a very wise thing not to make me a liaison officer because as a liaison officer I would have had nothing to do until we got to Leyte and got the area uncovered and secured. As it was...you see, that staff worked incredibly long hours.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: The staff worked from 7:30 in the morning until 5:30 at night and from 7:30 until 10:30 each night, and that went on seven days and seven nights a week.

Anderson: No kidding?

Simpson: Everyday and everynight. After we get to the Japan part I'll tell you a little bit about the affect of that sort of thing.

But you see, when they found out that I was willing to work, that I could pick up the pencil, that I could write reasonably well and that sort of thing and was asking no favors, then the acceptance came fairly rapidly.

I remember one brigadier general, I don't know his name, but one brigadier general was particularly antagonistic toward Marines and he was very curt towards me. He rarely spoke. And then after the assault on Iwo Jima and Rosenthal's great picture of the flag thing--that took, of course, a lot of time to get out to us. And I've forgotten how long after Iwo Jima was secured that we first saw this great picture of Rosenthal's, but I remember very well when I first saw it and it was a Sunday night and I was seated at my desk working and this...see, we had big warehouses, well, metal buildings with screens on it where we worked. There were sandbag emplacements outside and there were also no bomb shelters, but holes that you could get into when bombs dropped, but essentially it was office work is what it was because we were working from atlases and aerial photos and intelligence reports and that sort of thing. So, I was working there that night, and I had, I had sensed this feeling of antagonism on the part of this Army brigadier and I never knew quite what it came from except that he seemed to hate all Marines, and I was the only one around to hate so he hated me. And so I avoided him, of course, I mean I didn't avoid him like so, but I didn't try to cultivate the guy because I wasn't going to convert him. And that Sunday night about 9:30 he got a hold either a newspaper or a magazine that had this picture in it. In the meantime we had heard over the news broadcast the bare essentials of what had happened at Iwo Jima. We did not know about the flag raising, but we knew the terrific

casualties. But the fact that the island had been secured and was putting in the operations and airfield for the B-29's, we knew that from the fact that we had Air Force associates that told us about the thing. But, he got a hold of some publication that had that picture in it and a pretty detailed description of the battle at Iwo Jima and apparently he had read that and at 9:30 that night he walked over to my desk--he was a brigadier, I was a lieutenant colonel--and he very gently laid this piece of paper down with this big picture and this write up, he laid it down in front of me and he said, "Colonel, I'm sorry," and he turned around and walked away. After that the guy was very friendly. But somehow or other, he gained--the actions of the Marine divisions at Iwo Jima reversed his opinion of the entire Corps. After that he was very warm and friendly and wanted to know what I had heard, if I heard anything. Of course, I couldn't hear anything because of the censored mail and that sort of thing, but I told him I didn't know anything. I didn't know a damned thing about Iwo Jima.

We got some plans, Nimitz sent us some plans for the invasion of Okinawa and they asked me to brief those plans and to put together sort of a "dog and pony show" for the staff as to the invasion of Okinawa since it came under Nimitz's overall command, but was going to have largely Army and Marines in it too. And they gave it to me and I made up charts and that sort of thing. I will always remember that the name of that operation was "Iceberg"--code name for it.

But, after that I had no problems at all. Well, in Manila as it appeared that the invasion of Japan was coming closer, then the Marine Corps did augment their staff....

Anderson: With MacArthur?

Simpson: ...with MacArthur tremendously. They sent a brigadier general in, several colonels, and several more lieutenant colonels. My own assignment was undisturbed. The G-4 would not permit me to move off of this--but, indeed, that's right were I should have been because I was right where I should have been. It was fascinating work.

Anderson: Sure. And how were these additional Marines, how were they received?

Simpson: They were integrated into the staff, mostly the Sixth Army under General Krueger, and were headed by BGen Dudley Brown.

End Side 1, Tape 3

Begin Side 2, Tape 3

Simpson: ...very well indeed because MacArthur was the leader, MacArthur was "God" in the Philippines, so whatever he said went. There really wasn't any problem from that standpoint. Had MacArthur not been there, there probably would have been another problem, but he told the Filipinos that he would return and he did, in triumph. So, we were sort of in his train, if you will, so there was no problem.

Anderson: What about the leadership capability and quality of MacArthur? Can you comment on that? You must have met him a number of times.

Simpson: I don't know whether you've got enough tape to hear this one now or not, but that's my favorite subject.

When I got down to Hollandia I ran into an Army friend, not one who'd been at Leavenworth but someone that I had known before, and I sat with him that night and I was still a little put out about the fact that I was there at all because I felt that I should be at Guadalcanal drawing a sword, going to war. And I said, "Joe, tell me about this guy MacArthur." I said, "Is he for real?" He said, "Well, Ormond, if you're going to set out to understand this very complex man, you have to start with the understanding that he believes that he is a man of destiny." This is a pretty great statement, you know, and I said, "Well, Joe, is he?" He said, "Well, I'm a mortal man, but I've been on his staff four years." He said, "I couldn't prove that he's not."

Well, it was extremely interesting. I had no close association with General MacArthur, I met him on three different occasions. He was a superior theater commander. He's really one of the great "captains" of all times.

Anderson: What do you mean by that?

Simpson: I mean military professionals of the United States. If he had a superior--I never met one that I thought was his

superior as a military genius. From my reading, it is conceivable that John Pershing was, but I knew or met most of the leaders of World War II, U. S. leaders of World War II. I would assess MacArthur in terms of strategic and also tactical skills as perhaps being superior to any of them that I knew anything about.

I got to know a good deal about him, more so than the average lieutenant colonel on the staff would because starting in Leyte, when I arrived in Leyte, General MacArthur had five aide-de-camps. One of those turned out to be my tentmate. And we became close friends.

Anderson: What was his name?

Simpson: Ben Hackmeyer. It took me a year to find this out, but Ben was the guy who carried the secret codes. See, coding in those days was very primitive compared to what it is now. Everybody had top secret codes, but the decoding devices, decoding machines had a series of wheels on them and they went up to a maximum of five. But five was a code given only to theater commanders. It was Ben's responsibility to keep custody of that particular wheel. And there was an indicator at the top of the messages that would show the communicator what classification this message was. And he knew that he didn't have the capability of breaking anything that had--it didn't say five but it had an indicator up there. Then this was the guy who was called night or day when that dispatch came in. This

would be a dispatch from either the President or the Chief of Staff of the Army, Chief of Joint Staffs--Joint Chiefs of Staff, or perhaps Nimitz to MacArthur; "eyes only" type of thing.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: It would be this aide who would take this dispatch, get in this locked room, break the dispatch, carry it to General MacArthur, and then make whatever disposition General MacArthur told him. So he told me quite a lot about the guy that I would not normally have learned as an average lieutenant colonel. Understand, this was an enormous staff.

Anderson: Yes, about how many were on the staff?

Simpson: I never knew. There were 53 generals. I was a mid-grade lieutenant colonel by this time and one time in Manila I decided to try to figure out just sort of how big the staff was. And I got a listing of G-4 alone and I found out that in G-4 there were 75 lieutenant colonels senior to me, in G-4 alone. So, I gave up at that point, I don't know how many there were.

But, on the subject of MacArthur, I've been on many staffs, Terry, every staff I've ever been on and I'm sure every staff that I've ever had that answered to me always second guessed me. They didn't disobey me, but I think they second guessed me. And every other staff I've been on has been a part of second guessing the commander. I spent 18 months--17 months on that

staff. I never once, never once heard anyone on that staff second guess his decisions. Two things; first he made only those decisions that he considered appropriate for the Commander in Chief to make. The aide told me that if the chief of staff sent a decision paper in to MacArthur and if he looked at the subject matter, and he was that kind of reader, if he decided that that decision should be made below his level it came back out to the chief of staff with no note on it, with no signature or nothing else. That was the signal to the chief of staff that somebody else should make that decision, either him or some subordinate field Army commander someplace. So he was very careful.

Anderson: That gave an active role to his subordinates.

Simpson: This is something that I learned that served me well as I moved up in the ranks of command, that is to make the decisions that are appropriate to your level and don't do your subordinate's job.

Now, he was equally vigilant if someone below him made a decision that he thought was properly his. He got on that right away. Not a warm man by nature, needed to appear aloof, man of a great deal of personal dignity, but if he wanted to turn it on, a man of almost overwhelming charisma, if he wanted to do so. We saw some evidence of that in Japan.

Obviously a man of great bravery. The aide tells me of a story that I have always cherished about MacArthur. MacArthur

took over a house in Tacloban, that's the capital of Leyte. Our own camp was about five miles south from the beach, it was a tent camp built on the sand in a coconut plantation. But there was a planter's house in the center of Tacloban and MacArthur took that over as his residence and office. Now, the Japanese knew this and they came down and they bombed and strafed his house because they knew he was there. They also came down and bombed strafed us because they knew we were there. But the aide told me that one day about noon they were in this house... you see, when we were in Leyte, we didn't have--we had air superiority but not air supremacy, and by that I mean that the Japanese on occasion could come through. Their planes were based in Luzon, and also it depended on where their carriers were as to whether they could get through or not. But sometimes they'd come down in broad daylight. And the aide told me this story about the fact that they were in the house one time and a Japanese attack aircraft started strafing them, .50 caliber strafing and he said he hit the floor. And as he told it, he was trying to furiously trying to dig a fox hole in the middle of this mahogany floor. MacArthur was standing in the doorway, and the Japanese plane went around for a second pass and the aide was asking the General to get down and the General was standing there just stoned faced sucking on his pipe. And the next time the plane came through the .50 caliber bullets stitched right up the side of the door. And the aide said he was lying on the floor watching the General's face, he never changed his expression one iota. And when the attack was over,

he reached over and looked at these bullet holes, and of course, there were splinters and he just flicked away a couple of splinters and the only thing he said to the aide, who was still goggling on the floor was, "Not yet." That was the only comment he made. And I have to talk to people later about this, and you know, they always thought he was a sort of Hermann Goering type of guy. They questioned his bravery and that sort of thing, and I said, "Well, you know, look at it this way. The guy has got seven Silver Stars." And I said, "Think of the number seven. Now you might be able to weasel your way into three by being at the right place and talking a lot, but I don't think you can do that for seven. Some of those you've got to earn." He had everything in the book including eventually the Medal of Honor.

He was never referred by any term during the staff while I was there and the staff that I was associated with, never by any term other than the Commander in Chief.

Anderson: He wasn't even called general?

Simpson: Never. Now, whether they called him, I think, on the few occasions, on the two or three occasions that I met him, I said, "General MacArthur" but I mean when we're talking about him. They didn't talk about General MacArthur this, or they didn't talk about The General, it was always the Commander in Chief. Now I've never heard that done before. Usually there is a short thing, the Commander in Chief becomes "The CinC" because that's what they use in dispatches. And at Pearl Harbor

they'll say, "The CinC wants this," and it's not a derogatory term at all, not considered derogatory. Or they'll say, in the case of me as division commander, they'll say, "The CG wants this done," commanding general. That's perfectly alright, not derogatory. But in the case of this staff, it was invariably, "The Commander in Chief has said so and so," or "The Commander in Chief." Sounds so awkward, but it actually wasn't because it became, that was the way of life, that's the way everybody did it, so that's the way I did it.

But a tremendously interesting figure, great sense of history, certainly a tremendous ego. But under one or two associations, I'll cite one that I can recall. We got to Japan, we went in, of course, almost immediately. And here again it was very fortunate that I was in the long range planning group because our logistics group had been working on such things as the railroads in Japan, the beach exits, the transportation system. And we then became while we'd been working on the invasion plans of Japan, then our group of about 14 officers became the G-4 section for SCAP, Supreme Commander Allied Power, because the task when we got to Japan was no longer to fight, but it was to keep the Japanese people alive. And so, of all interesting things, here is a Texas Marine lieutenant colonel in charge of the coal mines in Japan. And the major general who was G-4 told me this, and he said, "We're concerned," because the Japanese have...the essential thing of keeping the economy alive was to keep the railroads running. That was the main

that. Spoke better English than I do. But in any event, I was

method of transportation. When we arrived in Tokyo there were 50 motor driven vehicles and they were all running on charcoal, there were none of them running on gasoline. The roads were essentially demolished by our own bombing. But the railroads, they had managed to keep most of those, they repaired them almost as rapidly as we cut them. But the trick was to keep the railroads running. Tokyo at that time had 8 million people in it and what was happening to people--there was no organized distribution of agricultural products. But the people boarded the trains in the early mornings and the trains spread out over Honshu and went out to certain distances, so many kilometers, and people got off at every stop and bought produce from the local farmers, and the train came back and picked them up together with the produce. This had to keep going.

Now, as we know, there is a lot of hydroelectric power in Japan, but also the railroads were highly dependent on coal. And the staff was alarmed because the coal production in Japan was dropping. And so I was put in charge of the coal mines in Japan. We all had an "opposite number," those of us on staff had an "opposite number" in the Japanese government. Mine was a Harvard graduate who was, I've forgotten his official title, but he would correspond more to our Secretary of Interior. So I called him over. We never went to see them, we always called them to us and they came regardless of rank. I'm a lieutenant colonel, this guy is I think a major general something like that. Spoke better English than I do. But in any event, I was

able to determine over a period of about a week to ten days to my own satisfaction that the Japanese were "trying us." We checked to see, they had the essential elements to mine coal; which in this case were timbers, which we were getting from China; wire rope to handle the hoists; explosives to blow out the coal; and of course, an unlimited amount of hand labor, unlimited. All these ingredients were there, yet the production of coal was dropping. And I thought about this for awhile. See, we had experienced nothing except total cooperation from the Japanese up to this point including the first and perhaps only time in history that an Army was ordered in their own homeland to disarm themselves and did. And they did exactly that, that's what MacArthur told them to do, to stack up their arms and turn in a list of their weapons by serial number and they did. Not an American touched that whole thing.

Well, it appeared to me that something that I didn't quite understand was going on. But the worst thing that had been going on was that the Japanese were going to try to see whether we would force them to mine coal at bayonet point. They knew we had that potential, but you see, that to be extrapolated into many things to where it would take a million men. Now I had no proof that that was going, but it could have gone into that because I couldn't find any reason, and my friend in the Japanese government was very, very evasive as to why they weren't mining coal, so this made me suspicious.

And so, I wrote a one page paper in which I established

the fact that they had the necessary ingredients including manpower to mine the coal, but that the coal production was going down and that it was my conviction that the Japanese needed convincing that they had to mine coal. And I ended up with this unusual recommendation, I recommended that the Commander in Chief call on the Japanese Premier, not my opposite number in the coal mine, get the Premier over and tell him to get that coal production up or he (MacArthur) would get another Premier. It's a pretty big deal for me as a lieutenant colonel to recommend.

Anderson: Sure.

Simspon: This is all on one piece of paper. I handed that paper in at 8:00 one morning. At 10:00 one morning, MacArthur did just what I recommended, but he was smart. He dealt only with the Emperor. So he had the chief of staff call in the Premier. But he didn't do anything to debate the issue with him. As he told me later, he simply said, whatever the guy's name was, "Mr. Premier, Prime Minister," I've even forgotten his exact title, "I have noted the decline in the production of coal. The coal production will increase in ten days or we'll have a new Prime Minister. Is that clear?" "Ah, so." The curve went back up like that--end of problem--that's the last of the coal mining problem.

Another thing, they gave me as an additional duty, since obviously, I didn't work very hard on running the coal mines for Japan--that remained my responsibility as long as the

production curve stayed up above a certain limit, why, I didn't tamper with it. The building supplies, terribly, terribly short supply; concrete, lumber, screens, steel, all in the hands of the Japanese army when we got there. We took them over. It became G-4's task, logically enough, to redistribute those things to the Japanese people. We were not going to use any of it ourselves, and didn't. The demand was enormous as you might imagine. The fire bombing of Tokyo, all the rest of this sort of stuff--overwhelming.

I decided that the first priority should go to hospitals, rebuilding the hospitals. Others thought schools, I disagreed, I said somehow these people have got to maintain their health or they are not going to be able to go to school. And there wasn't enough to do any one of the great many demanding things; home rebuilding, all that sort of things. But in any event, we were allocating the supplies to hospitals. And I was told that the parochial schools were very unhappy with this sort of thing, particularly the parochial missionary schools. And I said well that's simply too bad because until we get hospitals, health care in reasonable shape, why we're just not going to be able to give anything to schools. And one day I was waited on by an apparition. I've never seen such a guy before or since, he must have been about six feet five, he wore a huge friar's hat out to here, he had a staff that was seven feet long, he wore red gaiters and he came in with the staff--we were in the Dai Ichi Building, the Dai Ichi Building is an insurance

Delegate was not kidding. You see, as an accredited diplomat, building right across from the Imperial Palace. Beautiful building, beautiful office building. We were, of course, terribly crowded in there, I didn't have a private office. He asked and finally came over to me, and he beat the staff down and he said, "It's my understanding that you are Lieutenant Colonel Simpson." I said, "That's right." And he said, "It's further my understanding that you've been trusted with the responsibility of allocating the available building supplies." I said, "That's correct." And he said, "I further understand that you're not going to give any to my schools," meaning the Catholic schools. And I said, "Not at this time, sir. They're all going to hospitals." (Thump-thump) He beat the staff and said, "I don't think you understand, young man, but I'm the Apostolic Delegate." I said, "That doesn't make any difference. We're not giving at this time building materials to any schools, public, parochial, private, missionary, whatever. We're still trying to get the hospitals back into reasonable shape. They can accommodate sick and wounded for which they were needed." (Thump-thump) He said, "Is that your final decision?" I said, "It is." And he said, "You may be sure that you will hear from this." (Thump-thump) and he walked out. Everybody around was watching this thing. The G-4 came over and the major general came over. "What the hell is happening?" I repeated this conversation. He said, "Well, maybe we better let the Commander in Chief know about this." Fine, so I wrote about two paragraphs, and G-4 carried it in to the Chief of Staff. And the old Apostolic

Delegate was not kidding. You see, as an accredited diplomat, we had to give him access to radio facilities. And so, he had a direct link with the Vatican. And if you recall during that time, President Roosevelt-I mean President Truman, of course--then as now, the President had not an ambassador but a representative--it was Myron Taylor, I believe, at the time who was in the Vatican. But in any event this Apostolic Delegate sent a dispatch to the Vatican, then whether the Pope became involved I don't know, but Myron Taylor became involved and he in turn sent a dispatch to the President and the President in turn talked to General Marshall and General Marshall sent a dispatch to General MacArthur. All of this in 24 hours.

Anderson: He had his wife over there and others didn't have

Anderson: No kidding?

Simpson: Yes. The hours were exactly right.

Anderson: And by the time that that message came from General Marshall, did you already send your little report into the Commander in Chief?

Simpson: Oh, yes.

Anderson: So he was prepared for this?

Anderson: The rest of us--none of the rest of us had our wives and he had

Simpson: Yes, and he sent word out.

Anderson: What did he say? he with him. Now, he was Commander

in Chief, he could have as many guards as he wanted to, he

Simpson: The only word that came back from him was, "Tell

Lieutenant Colonel Simpson to proceed on present course and speed," an old Navy terminology, but that's the word he sent out to me. Now, I never saw the Apostolic Delegate again.

Anderson: So, he decided on your behalf.

Simpson: Yes. I had great respect for the man. You don't know him, his wife; warm, friendly, and charming. I met her in Manila.

Anderson: I heard that there was some resentment there.

Simpson: There was.

Anderson: He had his wife over there and others didn't have their wives.

Simpson: Yes, and I can't condone or admire that act. Yes, he had his wife in Manila and nobody else had their wives, or could possibly could. I personally wouldn't have done it that way. He chose to.

Anderson: And there was resentment?

Simpson: Yes. Not from me. There was resentment because all the rest of us--none of the rest of us had our wives and he had his. However, he was the only guy who was living in a circumstance where his wife could be with him. Now, he was Commander in Chief, he could have as many guards as he wanted to, he could have the Malacan Palace, he could be on the top floor of

the Manila Hotel where he had lived before the war. He had that restored and that is where he was living with guards all over the place. And his wife was quite secure there. But I couldn't have had my wife even if he had said you could bring her out. She couldn't have lived in an apartment with six lieutenant colonels nor under the circumstances where we carried guns all the time in the Philippines.

That's an interesting sidelight. The Filipinos stole us blind.

Anderson: Oh, really?

Simpson: Oh, God, yes. The Filipino houseboys--everybody had to get a footlocker and lock everything of value. We carried sidearms all the time even at work. We worked in the City Hall in Manila and had a pistol strapped on the side all the time. If you walked the street you carried one in daylight, and you never walked it at night. Yet, when we went to Japan, here was a nation we had defeated. We had Japanese houseboys, the Japanese would have given his soul for one cigarette. You could leave an open package of cigarettes with several missing, you know, you could have smoked three or four and leave the rest of them there. You could leave that laying on your desk or you nighttable or whatever, they would clear the dust under it, put it back, never once. Everywhere in a country we had defeated and within two weeks after we got there, we all turned in our sidearms. But we wouldn't have been caught dead in the

Philippines without our sidearms with us all the time. It was a peculiar twist when I say that not all the cultures are the same.

Anderson: Absolutely.

Simpson: I never knew during the 16 to 17 months that I was in Japan, I never knew of anyone American losing anything to theft. We lost a very great deal, all of us did, in the Philippines. But the Japanese, no.

Anderson: Well, let's go back to the Philippines. There is a few other questions that I'd like to ask you about now. Of course, the fighting for the Philippines is fierce and the man in charge was General Yamashita, and of course, Yamashita was tried right after the war and he was the first foreign general that the American government ever put to death, the famous war trial. I was wondering if you have any comment about that trial and if you remember anything about Yamashita.

Simpson: Only what I heard.

Anderson: So called "Tiger of Manila".

Simpson: Oh, sure. Of course, in the reconquest of the Philippines he was outmaneuvered, and ended up in the mountains and MacArthur came down the middle of the valley and took over Manila again; eventually, walled him off up there.

I guess you would like this expression, I did not agree

with the war trials nor with his being put to death.

Anderson: Even at that time?

Simpson: That's right.

Anderson: No kidding.

Simpson: That's right.

Anderson: Because I've read reports about that trial and he was, during the trial he was called things like "Dirty Jap" and it was incredible trial. Of course filled with the emotion of war.

Simpson: Yes, that's--what you're saying is very, very important, filled with the emotion of war.

Anderson: That's the point. Yes, yes. And it's kind of amazing that you disagreed with the trial. Why is that?

Simspon: Because the man was a professional soldier and while I disagreed totally and wholeheartedly with his methods, Terry, I had to give him credit for doing what he thought was required under his code of conduct at that time, even though I would not have subscribed to that code of conduct nor would I have done what he did. But, by that time we knew enough about the Japanese to know that they were blindly obedient, and he believed that his duty to the Emperor was to do all these various things. Atrocities they were by our set of standards not by their set

of standards but by our judgement they were.

I have respect for anyone that I consider a competent professional. Now, this is not to say that I totally excuse his conduct and I'm not saying perhaps that this guy should not perhaps have been imprisoned or suffered some sort of penalties for the atrocities that he allowed or directed his troops to commit, but I did not agree with him being put to death. And I don't today.

Anderson: Okay. Were you--you were in the Philippines when the atomic bomb was dropped, Hiroshima.

Simpson: Correct.

Anderson: That was the first time you heard about the bomb?

Simpson: Absolutely.

Anderson: Do you remember the response of you and your colleagues?

Simpson: Incredulous. We had never heard of the "Manhattan Project" either by name or by rumor. In retrospect, we all concluded that we should have known something, and the reason that we should have know something was that the U.S. Army/Air Force aviators from the Marianas were flying to the Philippines occasionally and they were making enormous bets with us--I didn't happen to be involved in that encounter but I heard about this, didn't hear about it until after the war was over

when the flyers had won their bets and our guys had lost--but they were willing to bet and in one pool up to a hundred thousand dollars so I was told. This is a third and fourth party thing, no way to ever prove this sort of thing. In one pool I was told there was a hundred thousand dollars, an aggregate, no one guy had a hundred thousand dollars--the aviators would pool this much on this side and the other side has got this much. And the bet was that the war would be over by the fifteenth of September. If I had been approached, I would have joined that pool because I was convinced we were going to have to invade Japan.

Simpson: Flew over it, never did land there.

Anderson: Sure.

Anderson: Flew over it low enough to see?

Simpson: We believed later, and everybody that lost money believed later, that the aviator knew something about the bomb because they came from Tinian where the Enola Gay flew from. But we--if anyone on that staff knew about the atomic bomb I didn't know about it and I never heard anyone that said they did.

My immediate superior was a major general, a call came about it later when we were in Japan and I asked him flatfooted one night if he ever knew anything about it, he said no. I asked him if he felt the Commander in Chief did, he said he did not know, he assumed that he did. I tackled my friend who was still with me, we were in the Dai Ichi Hotel, living in the Dai Ichi Hotel in Tokyo, and he was the aide to MacArthur, and I reckoned that if anyone would know whether MacArthur would know

about it he would know because he had the secret code. And I guess if he knew, he was absolutely sworn to secrecy.

Anderson: Because he wouldn't tell you?

Simpson: He would not, he would not. But I cannot imagine that they did not inform MacArthur, but if he knew he certainly kept it. None of us had any concept.

Anderson: Once you arrived in Japan did you ever go to Nagasaki or Hiroshima?

Simpson: Flew over it, never did land there.

Anderson: Flew over it low enough to see?

Simpson: Low enough to see the devastation, yes.

Anderson: What was your opinion then?

Simpson: My opinion was this was one hell of a bomb. Now, to a question that I am sure you would want to ask at some point in time, do I think the dropping of the bomb was justified?

Absolutely, and for a very personal reason.

Anderson: Oh? Could I ask you?

Simpson: Yes, I think it saved my life. I am not at all sure...you recalled that at one time MacArthur estimated that the invasion of Japan would cost us a million casualties?

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: Our information after we got to Honshu, Tokyo, and we saw the extent of the Japanese defenses, the defenses in depth, we had seen how they had fought for islands of inconsequence out in the Pacific, how they had died at Okinawa, at Tarawa, at other places like that would seemingly make no difference, it was apparent to us that they would have fought fanatically for their own homeland. And I do not at all question General MacArthur's estimate of a million casualties had we gone in there.

Anderson: Were you aware, when you were on the planning of the invasion of Japan, were you aware of these defenses?

Simpson: Not nearly to the extent that we were after we got there. No, no, they had concealed this very well, they concealed it very well. I rather suppose that the higher staff to include the Commander in Chief knew a great deal more about it than I did because as a logistician it was not necessary that I know too much about that sort of thing.

The full extent of their defensive preparations and the manner in which they did it was not totally revealed, I don't believe, to anyone until after we got there. And of course, they put the intelligence experts, they took a very large G-2 section there just simple for that purpose. And then we were briefed on what it was going to be. I think our invasion would have been successful but at enormous cost, enormous cost which conceivably, of course, could have been any of us.

have enough to eat. They were getting on an average, if it was evenly distributed, the people in Tokyo were getting 1200 calories a day. Even the Japanese can't continue on that indefinitely.

Anderson: No, that's dying.

Simpson: It's a starvation diet. This is the reason that there was such terrible urgency to keep these railroads running and try to get the food going into the city. And the reason the Americans brought in a great deal of motor transport, went to work on assisting and repairing the railroads, and again, the great urgency on getting the coal--get those distribution systems working. But, people in the countryside were better fed because they were eating their own produce, but these in the inner city were rapidly starving to death.

Now, one can say that you didn't have to drop the bomb because the Japanese were essentially defeated. However, the armed forces had taken over everything usable. And they were pretty well fed, and they were prepared to fight. The people might have been dying of a starvation diet, but the armed forces were prepared to fight and would have.

Anderson: Now, when you were there in Tokyo and you walked down the street or you drove down the street, did the hungry Japanese come up to you? How did they behave to their new conquerors?

Simpson: Bowed, extremely polite.

Anderson: Yes, I've heard that.

Simpson: They'd get off the sidewalk if they seemed to be in the way, they'd stand in the gutter as you went by, they'd always bow, extremely polite. If there was hatred, it was not apparent on the part of anyone.

Anderson: How about on the part of the Americans?

Simpson: No, no, no. We didn't feel so. As a matter of fact, we felt some compassion, particularly, toward the civilian populace--as we saw these terribly malnourished people. We thought that being true, that they would steal everything in sight. They didn't. Not only personal effects, but they didn't steal from our dumps, or ration dumps, or anything like that.

Anderson: Did you ration out food to the populace or did you just allow this train system to continue?

Simpson: We tried to make the Japanese...well, we did. We didn't want to get into their food distribution system, we did not want to be in the business of running the country. We wanted the country to run itself. And we did import food, staples, we imported rice; but we turned all of that over to the Japanese to distribute as they saw fit. We did not set up any welfare program of our own, if you will. We wanted the Japanese system

to operate itself and to become again self sufficient. And we fed to--the American policy was to feed into it to the extent that we could when shipping was available.

End Side 2, Tape 3

Begin Tape 4, Side 1

Simpson: ...nothing fancy. Potatoes, rice, that kind of thing, grains, soybeans; turned it all over to the Japanese government and let them put it in their distribution system.

Anderson: Now, how were your living conditions and the other officers?

Simpson: Our living conditions were probably the best that I saw during the war. We lived in this hotel, which was intact, and it had running water. The radiators were disconnected because they were getting ready to melt them down for scrap, but they were still there. And the American managers that they put in charge of the hotels had the Japanese hook them up again, and when it got wintertime, they had repaired the heating systems and we had enough heat. We had from August until about December, our only rations were essentially C rations that were heated. By October, we began to get things like, they would get some onions. You know, the big red dried onions, what one would call fresh onions, but they were essentially dried not frozen. They began to get some potatoes that were not canned, but for the first three months the rations we ate were the same

rations that we had all the way through the war except that they were heated.

Anderson: Gee, that must have been very dull.

Simpson: Yes, it really was. And if I can point out another thing, I mentioned to you that when we were in the Philippines, in New Guinea, and in the Philippines, we worked seven days and seven nights a week. And a very interesting thing happened along about November. We began to sort of catch our breath and feel like maybe we were on top of the thing. And so, they decided to slacken the pace a little bit. And they gave us Sunday afternoon and Sunday night off, and you have never seen more bewildered people in your life. Nobody knew what to do, nobody had an afternoon and night off, they couldn't remember and they sort of stood around in groups. And they really didn't know what to do because no one had ever had any spare time. Of course, there wasn't a hell of a lot to do.

Anderson: That's just the point. Did they have an officer's club?

Simpson: They--what we really did that Sunday afternoon, most Sunday afternoons after that, we got out and walked and saw as much of Tokyo as we could see. We then began to do some things like play volleyball, and that sort of stuff where we could clear out enough space to get in a little recreation. And we wrote letters home.

To mention an officers club, as you probably know, General MacArthur did not believe in having whiskey around. We had no legitimate whiskey in the Philippines. The Army never, during the time I was there, had any legitimate whiskey in Japan. The Marines were not quite as observant of his regulations and they had come prepared for an occupation with very considerable stocks of wines and spirits and whatnot, which they made readily available to me at ridiculously low prices. So, I became the most popular guy on General MacArthur's staff because I could go down to Yokosuka and buy a case of excellent whiskey for about \$2 a bottle. There was no raiding of your rooms, it was simple that he did not allow the organized importation of the thing. And I had always done better than anybody else in that regard because, for example, in the Philippines, my friends would come through that were Marines who were on Navy ships would be there, and you know, somebody would say, "Well, I know you all don't have any booze out here, so how about giving you a bottle of scotch," or whatever the case may be. And for example, in this apartment we moved into in Tokyo, we hadn't been in the kitchen, the door seemed to be stuck and we had no occasion to go into the kitchen--we didn't have anything to cook--but we began to detect this terribly odor from the kitchen so we broke down the door and there was a dead Japanese in there.

Anderson: No kidding.

Simpson: So, God knows how long he'd been in there, long

enough to be very, very ripe indeed. Anyway, we got rid of this guy and cleaned up the kitchen and we looked around and here was a Servelle refrigerator, you know, operates on gas.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: But the gas distribution system in Manila was inoperable....

Anderson: In Tokyo or in Manila?

Simpson: Now we're in Manila, back to Manila.

Anderson: Okay.

Simpson: We did have electricity supplied by generators that the Army put outside. So we had lights. And we looked at that refrigerator, we literally longed for some ice because, again, some of my friends in the Navy and the Marine Corps and whatnot, had given me one or two bottles of booze. Naturally, you're in the tropics, you can't afford to drink very much, and didn't, but we thought it would be just great if we had some ice-- because here was this refrigerator, we hadn't thought about it before. But there was a Seabee battalion down Dewey Boulevard, about four or five blocks, and I had a half bottle of bourbon. And I got in my jeep one night and went down to this Seabee battalion and I found the commander and I told him who I was, identified myself as a Marine, told him my problem. And he said, "The guy you want is Chief So and So." So, I went

down to the chief's tent, and I put this bottle of booze which was about 2/3's full, I suppose, on the table, told him my problem and he said, "Well, where do you live?" And I told him, and he said, "I'll be up there in the morning and have a look at it." And I got out of the tent and walked out and he said, "Colonel, you forgot the booze," (a Class VI, it was always polite to be referred to out there). And I said, "Oh, no. That's for you, chief." And he said, "I'll be there in the morning." That guy came and looked at that refrigerator and he went back to the camp and he made a heating coil and he fitted that into the refrigerator and plugged it into the generator, electricity, and boy, that thing was spitting ice cubes. We were the only people in town that had any ice.

The Filipinos did an interesting thing, though. And I ran into this guy, he was pretty interesting--a Spaniard in the Philippines. I ran across him...see, I grew up in south Texas and I learned to speak what I call "Bull Cart Mexican," and I also studied Spanish in high school, but I took that Spanish from one elderly lady who taught Castillian and the two don't mix very well. I never had any occasion to use any Spanish a- aing until I found myself in the Philippines where that was the language. Of course, Tagalog and the rest of it are dialects, but that's mostly outside of Manila. There were no social activities just prior to the end of the war, the Filipinos had begun to invite us to some Sunday noon parties. Sunday noon, because most of them didn't have any lights. And I met this guy

of Spanish descent who had on the most beautiful suit I'd ever seen in my life to that day and this--whiteshark skin. And, you know, I got to chatting with him, of course, he spoke excellent English and I asked him if he could tell me where he got that suit, that I'd like to have one like it. And he was a little embarrassed in the sense that he said, "Well, certainly I'll tell you, but," he said, "I really doubt that you can afford it, Colonel." He said, "This suit cost \$750." I said, "You're right, I can't afford it, forget it." Now, remember, this is 1945. So, he said, "Well, you're probably wondering why I can afford to pay \$750 per suit." And I said, "Well, I really am because I suppose you had extensive holdings here before the war, but I imagine also, the Japanese confiscated all of it." And he said, "Yes, they did." But he said, "As you guys started coming up the island," he said, "it was apparent that you were eventually going to get to Manila." And he said, "We also knew General MacArthur, he was not going to allow the official importation of American whiskey, but that there was going to be a great demand for whiskey. And in the Philippines, that can be made from sugar cane alcohol." So, what this guy did, he knew that the peasants were making sugar cane alcohol, but they were burying it because the Japanese would confiscate it. He knew this was going on. So, he went out and walked over those provinces around Manila, particularly, south of Manila in that peninsula down there, and he got a commitment from these people to buy this sugar cane alcohol at

one peso a liter, and he didn't take possession of anything, this is for delivery at a future date. And he essentially sewed up the whole crop. And then he went to Juan Alizalde of Alizalde Brewery and he--Juan was a friend of his, I don't know whether he is still is or not, but he was a friend of his, and he said, "Juan, what are you doing to get ready for the Americans. They're coming and there is going to be a big demand," and he said, of course, he's got that big brewery up there, and he said, "They're also going to be looking for whiskey." And Juan said, "That's one of the things I'm worried about." He said, "I can't get any alcohol. Somebody has got it all tied up." And he said, "Well, let me tell you." So, he made a deal with Alizalde to sell this sugar cane alcohol for 2 pesos a liter in place, Alizalde would go get it. And by that time he'd cleared something like \$400,000 clear, no income tax.

But, what they did was to take this stuff and they would cut it with water and then they had little boxes of capsules of different colors and they would take a beer bottle, one of those stubby bottles about this high would be filled with this mixture of water and alcohol and if you wanted gin they'd put one of these in it and shake it up, if you wanted scotch they'd put one of these in it and shake it up. The only virtue of this was that it wouldn't kill you. Tasted like hell, but it was not lethal and it wasn't strong enough, you know, like wood alcohol. It was not poison.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: But, that's what the guys were drinking, but in Tokyo, I had access to this wine mess that the Marines had down there, so I suddenly became very, very popular.

Anderson: Now, back to Japan. You were there when the trials started? In '46.

Simpson: I don't think so. When in '46 did it start?

Anderson: They started early in the year and they lasted til '48.

Simpson: I was not--I have no memory of it. You see, I left there in '46 and I was probably more engaged in that than with the actual trial.

Anderson: Yes, I know. Okay, how about writing the constitution of Japan. Of course, one of the things MacArthur did was that he was in charge of running the government and getting the government set up again so they could eventually take over on there own. And some of the charges against MacArthur that I've heard was that he was very dictatorial in the running of the government. Would you comment on that.

Simpson: Sure he was, and that was exactly what was needed at that time. He was highly respected by the Japanese, and he did what he did because he thought it was needed and he thought he could get away with it and and he could. Nobody else could have done it, but he had. I think he did a magnificent job in reorganizing Japan. I'm not sure that I would, in retrospect,

agree with everything he put in the constitution, but he did at the time. We were not involved in that sort of thing at all. I didn't have anything to do with that.

Anderson: There's another issue that was of importance and that was the Soviets and the British. As you remember, the United States occupied Japan, and of course, the British fought in the war along our side in the Pacific, especially the Royal Navy. The Soviets really didn't fight until the last week or so until the war was over, but nevertheless, the Soviets were very eager to get in on the occupation and the British played a very minor role. Did you have any relations with either of those? Could you talk about that.

Simpson: We got along fine with the British, no problem with the British. The Russians arrived after the fact, they arrived in all ranks. They arrived with their "secretaries." They took up residence in, those of comparable lieutenant colonel rank, took up residence in our hotel. The fact that they had females there was in itself not unusual for the hotel because we had some WAC officers and we had some Red Cross girls--Red Cross people, females--so that in itself was not unusual. But what was unusual was that the Russians never did any work. They apparently drank all night and slept all day.

Anderson: No kidding. Wasn't there something for them to do?

Simpson: No, not a damn thing for them to do. As you say,

they entered the war in the last two weeks, they were in the Kuriles, they had nothing to do with what we were doing. It was all a show piece, but if any of them ever worked, I don't know. But the ones that we had in the grade of lieutenant colonel never did. If they were--I suppose they were given office space, but I don't know where it was, it wasn't anywhere near me. But one amusing thing, I was telling you awhile ago about the radiator, you know, that were disconnected and they were stacked outside. Well, shortly after the Russians got there, they had progressed to the point where they had moved the radiators up in the halls, but had not reconnected them. So, they were sitting up and down the halls of this hotel waiting for the next step which was to connect them. That was alright because it was October and not yet cold. But, the Russians...remember now, we were still working seven nights a week.

Anderson: Sure.

Simpson: But we came home, we were tired, exhausted, and whatnot, and the Russians would be having a party. And they're all drinking their vodka and doing these Russian dances and so forth and so on--and raising all kinds of hell. But one of the guys that had been with us since the days of Hollandia was an Australian. And he was a great big guy, about 6'4". And one night, the Russians were having one of their numerous parties, fortunately none of them were billeted close to me so it was

not much of a bother to me, but they were only a few doors away from his room. And he went down three times and rapped on the door. They professed not to understand English and I guess didn't. But, he made it clear that he'd like them to quiet down, that he was trying to sleep and so forth and so on. They obviously understood him, but the party continued. The fourth time he took a little bit more direct action which, I think, tells you something about the Russians. He went down the hall-- now remember, these rooms with bare floors, no carpets on them, no rugs--he picked up this radiator which is about a 20 increment radiator, he lifted it, picked it up, he walked over to the door, raised his Australian boot, kicked the door off the hinges, threw the radiator in and and said, "Presento." Now, the radiator hit the concrete floor like a hand grenade because it's all hollow cast iron. Do you know, that was the last time there was ever any disturbance from the Russians in any part of that hotel anybody knew anything about. And we all heard this terrific explosian, came running down the hall, he simply told us what he'd done. But that's the last time we ever had any problem with the Russians raising hell in the hotel at night. We never saw them the rest of the time. They didn't mix or mingle. What they ate or where they ate, I don't know. I never saw them in the dining room.

Simpson: No, not particularly. We thought the British had
Anderson: Was there any comments about them, about the Russians,
I mean, why they....

Simpson: Well, we wondered why the hell they were there. They didn't have any real right to be there. They hadn't earned the right to be there. They obviously....

Anderson: There was some resentment there?

Simpson: Oh, a great deal.

Anderson: Oh, a great deal.

Simpson: Great deal. No one thought they had the right to be there. They didn't make any attempt to make our acquaintance, not that we would necessarily welcomed it, but they made no attempt. They stayed totally by themselves. But they were there, they were sharing in to whatever degree there was any glory in the occupation, they were sharing that. They were getting headlines that they were part of the occupation force and that sort of thing. Russian troops, if they were Russian troops there, I don't know. I never had anything to see about that. We had no problems with the British.

Anderson: What about--no problems with the British?

Simpson: None whatsoever.

Anderson: Was there any resentment that they were there?

Simpson: No, not particularly. We thought the British had done a great job in their end of the war in the other ocean. So, we had a great deal of respect for them. No resentment

against the British whatsoever.

Anderson: Good, okay.

Simpson: And they were not there in large numbers.

Anderson: Now, finally, as far as Japan is concerned, your main job then was working for SCAP was the coal.

Simpson: That's right. Coal--no, I did a lot of other things, but I mentioned the coal....

Anderson: For example.

Simpson: ...as an example. It all had to do with the civilian economy.

Anderson: Okay, right.

Simpson: Nothing to do militarily, but with trying to improve the economy, it being at the lowest conceivable state. America has never seen anything like that including in the depths of the Depression. We were first literally trying to keep the people alive, and then to permit them to somewhat better their life type of thing. So, I did--that's what all of us in G-4 were working on, working on a wide variety of projects of that sort of nature.

Anderson: And, as far as the relations with the Japanese were concerned, they were apparently good.

Simpson: Very cordial, very cordial. As a matter of fact, when it finally became known that I was coming home, this man in the Ministry of the Interior, when he learned of my departure, he came over and said that he thought I should take something of value home as a memento of my visit to Japan. And he took me to--a night--down some devious alleys that if it had not been Tokyo and I had not been known the Japanese, I would have been frightened to death. But, he took me to Mr. Mikimoto, the original Mikimoto, and told him that I wanted a string of pearls for my wife and Mr. Mikimoto picked out the pearls himself and matched them graduated from two strings. It was a fascinating unbelievable sight to see this old gray haired man with a white goatee, beard with a tray of pearls, two or three hundred pearls--these are artificial pearls--a tray of black velvet that had a groove in it underneath the velvet and to watch him match these pearls by hand. He must have changed several hundred pearls in order to get just the graduation he wanted.

Anderson: You still have them?

Simpson: In the bank vault. And of course, the thing--you know, I said after he did this, I didn't take the pearls away that night, they were then going to drill them and put them on a string and put a clasp on it. It was arranged that this minister was going to pick them up in a few days. And after we got out in the car I got scared about what I had done, I didn't know how much money it was going to cost. And I said, "My God,"

by this time I called the guy by his Americanized name, Joe, or whatever, "What have I done?" I said, "You know, I'm not made of money. How much money have I just spent?" And he said, "How would \$30 a strand do for you?" They're worth God knows what now.

But, he also got me some things that had been buried, that I bought, a cloissonaie vase about so, but exquisite, very, very old. Japanese tea cups, the kind of round ones with the cover on it, that sort of thing.

Anderson: So, the relationships that you had were....

Simpson: Excellent, excellent. One thing that I thought I might mention that I hadn't touched on, I think I stayed there about the right amount of time because when we went into Japan, General MacArthur's charge was contained in a message which was a page and a half. And that's all the guidance we had. He told us, or the word came down to us that we were embarking on an entirely new adventure, that no one had ever done this before and that we were going to make mistakes, and that what he expected was a good batting average. But that we were going to be working so directly with the agencies involved that if we made a mistake in the morning we were going to know about it in the afternoon and we should back off and try again. And that's exactly what we did. And the reason I say I left about the right time was because by that time we were beginning to get too much help. American civilians were arriving from the State

Department and other agencies and every military officer had a civilian sitting alongside of him and then the thing began to bog down. So, I was glad to come home not only because I'd been out for so for ever, but then we were getting big.

Well, as evidence of the case I gave you, the memo that I took in on the case of the coal that was acted on in a matter of two or three hours would have perhaps taken two or three weeks after we all had to get concurrences from all of our counterparts up and down the line. So, it was becoming pretty sticky and frustrating by the time I left, and so I left at a very good time.

Anderson: Okay, now in 1946 you went to Quantico, Virginia and stayed there for three years.

Simpson: Yes, perhaps one of the most pleasant times of my life. My memory of those three years in Quantico, everybody was a lieutenant colonel.

Anderson: No kidding.

Simpson: Not really, not really. But you see, we were a group of people who had survived the war, some great heroes; some seeing a great deal of combat; some, like myself, not seeing very much; but we all had varying experiences, but we all had survived. We were all of about the same time in grade. We'd all come in prior to World War II, and here we were back at Quantico. I was teaching logistics for the simple reason

that I had been in logistics section in Japan and they thought I was a logistics expert, which I wasn't, but I made myself one. Our families, we were reunited with our families for the first time, the war was over, we were grateful to be alive. The Marine Corps was a vibrant place, not a stagnant one, we were at the hub of things in Quantico because we were writing the doctrine for revising and refining everything that we'd learned in World War II in terms of amphibious operations.

We wrote the first of the landing force manuals at that period of time. We were busy....

Anderson: How did they change, how did the landing force manual change from before and after the war?

Simpson: They changed to reflect the, not necessary the innovations and tactics, Terry, but to reflect the equipment that we had. You see, we started World War II, as I told you, we were in Samoa, we were as well equipped as any American troops, but we'd never seen a jeep. We had a 3-inch mortar, we didn't have 81's, but we had gained during the war, we had gained 60mm A-1 mortars, 4.2 inch mortars, we gained a jeep, we got amphibian tractors during the war. The LST's came into being during the war. That changed a lot of things about amphibious operations.

It was also there, and as a during this period of time as we were writing manuals, that--now, a lot of people will take credit for this, but I'll tell you, the man Twining that

I mentioned before who had been my company commander, he was there. And he was the guy that was the first to foresee that you could not do another massive amphibious assault if the other side were armed with the atomic bomb because you couldn't mass those kinds of ships. And so he said, if there was to be an amphibious assault in the future and if the opponent has this, you've got to have some sort of tactics. That's where the idea of moving infantry and helicopters came from. It was conceived by this guy right there in Quantico. And the first troop movements of helicopters were made in Piasecki helicopters, the twin banana type of thing, right in Quantico. They got four of them there and started experimenting with that concept and that's where the whole idea of movement of infantry by helicopters came from.

Anderson: Airborne.

Simpson: And that's where the idea of LPH's, the helicopter carriers, that whole business. The Army, of course, picked up on it later, and the Army now has a great many more helicopters and whatnot and so on. But, the genesis of that theory of helicopter assault by infantry came out of the fertile mind of this one man right there in Quantico. It was a stimulating time to learn.

Anderson: What's his full name?

Simpson: Merrill B. Twining, Bill Twining. Remember, I said

he was the brother of Nathan Twining, retired as a lieutenant general, still alive on the west coast.

Anderson: Yes, yes.

Simpson: And he articulated this and he wrote it in the papers. And out of that came...and of course, what, six-seven years later, we were in Korea and we began to use the helicopters we had at that time in earnest to move infantry troops. And now, it's evolved into technology that everyone uses--I mean, all modern armed forces use that very, very well indeed. But, he conceived the ideas that the carriers could stand off shore and your initial wave could come in over the beach rather than across the beach which is now what we do in amphibious operations is combine all of these. And that's where we get into hovercraft and all the rest--we didn't have hovercraft at that time, but that's the way that amphibious operations have evolved.

Those three years were extremely pleasant. They were intellectually stimulating, they were pleasant companionship wise. As I say, they probably had a few generals around, but they didn't bother us and we didn't bother them.

Anderson: Yes, yes. Now, you said that it was a vibrant time, yet at the same time what was going on in America was a tremendous demobilization of the an armed forces of 12,000,000 down to a million and a half in just a year and a half. And did that have any impact on the Marine Corps?

Anderson: At this time, also, the military was decreasing the

Simpson: Oh, sure it had a lot of impact on the Marine Corps.

Anderson: Besides the size, I mean as far as....

Simpson: ...but not the Marine Corps in Quantico. The Marine Corps in Quantico is a school post. And it's not unlike a university. And we were engaged in analyzing a war that we had just fought and trying to project that thinking forward into a war that might be fought in the future.

Sure, we were aware of the fact that the size of the Marine Corps was being cut down. It would probably have not been nearly as stimulating had I been assigned to troop duty at that time, but we didn't have any troops. We had only our books, our diaries, our war legers, the kinds of things--that documentary stuff. We were impressed with the fact that we had to commit to writing what we had learned before it escaped our minds because we had revised any doctrine during the course of the war and we felt it imperative to put down what we had learned from the war diaries--now I'm using the diaries in the literal sense not the personal sense--but we had to reconstruct from the after action reports of the various operations what actually had happened, to analyze them to refine the doctrine if doctrine needed refining and that sort of thing. There again, I was very fortunate in being in the right place at the right time. I would have been probably very unhappy had I been somewhere else, but I was not unhappy. I was very happy there.

Anderson: At this time, also, the military was decreasing the

rank of some officers. Were you worried about losing a rank to a major?

Simpson: No, it didn't happen in the Marine Corps [Editor's note: the Marine Corps was doing this].

Anderson: Why not?

Simpson: I don't know.

Anderson: It did in the Army.

Simpson: I think probably because we had enough Reserve officers on active duty that had not been integrated that were sent to inactive duty that we didn't have to bring anybody down. I think there may have been some brigadiers that went back to colonel. But there were no lieutenant colonels that...now, that happened after World War I.

Anderson: Oh, yes.

Simpson: One of the great legends in Quantico, which was a troop post at that time, was what they still refer to as a "falling leaf party"--when the majors lost their gold leaves and went back to two bars and apparently a party lasted two weeks and that sort of thing. That didn't happen in the Marine Corps this time, none of us lost any of our rank.

We could have done so. Unlike the Army, we never stayed more--we didn't stay very far behind in terms of our permanent rank. We were usually temporarily promoted, but permanent pro-

motion based on a small cadre type of thing came along shortly thereafter. So you see, I was a permanent lieutenant colonel by this time. The guys at the bottom of lieutenant colonels might have worried about this because they were temporary lieutenant colonels.

Anderson: Also during this time you were integrated back into the regular Marine Corps. How did that come about?

Simpson: My application was solicited. I was asked to apply for it and did, when it was approved just like that.

Anderson: When you came back from Japan the first time, well, you'd been home only for a few months, seven months, during the entire war, now you came back, you could be with your wife. Did you ever think at this time that maybe you wanted to become a civilian?

Simpson: No, by that time I knew I wanted to stay if they would have me. And the first time they asked me I said, "Yes," and I did.

Anderson: Okay.

Simpson: No problem with that one at all.

Anderson: Well, you integrated in the regular Marine Corps, yet a number of people in the Army wanted to get into the regular Army who were Reserve officers before the war, wanted to get into the regular Army after the war and they were cut-

ting back so much that they couldn't get in.

Simpson: Oh, well, that happened in the Marine Corps, too.

Anderson: Okay.

Simpson: I had one of my friends, a complete rogue who ended up the war as a Reserve lieutenant colonel and he applied for integration and they offered him a warrant officer's commission.

Anderson: No kidding.

Simpson: That's right. He didn't take it, he went home. But it all depended on what you had done, or what your record had been.

Anderson: That was kind of slap in the face.

Simpson: Yes, yes, quite. But this guy had very few redeeming factors, very, very few other than being a charming rogue. A guy that everybody liked, but nobody had very much respect for. I can remember, he was in the Reserve battalion, he came from Hollywood and he was in the Reserve battalion that joined my battalion on the west coast. Perennial bachelor, but to show you what kind of guy he was, how well he managed his finances, he got paid everyday. They had a paymaster that was willing to do that. The only way that he knew he got promoted from 2d lieutenant to 1st lieutenant was when the paymaster called him up one day and he said, "Ron, today you are going to get \$9 instead of \$7." Charming, I mean, a guy you couldn't help but

like, but very, very few virtues as a Marine officer.

Oh, there were many that applied for it but were not accepted. They could pick and choose as they wanted to and did.

Anderson: Yes. Why did they pick you, because of your record?

Simpson: In its aggregate. No one thing. No great hero, but I think, probably, I had proved to at least some people that I had potential that they wanted for the future.

Anderson: During the second World War and before that, the military was racially segregated. In 1948 Harry Truman issued an executive order telling the military to integrate. Do you remember what your opinion was of that at the time?

Simpson: Well, prior to the war there were no blacks anywhere in the Marine Corps. We had no black Marines. During the war they organized some black organizations with white officers. Initially, they were port battalions and stevedore battalions and that sort of thing. Then they began to organize what the Marine Corps called Defense Battalions. These were supposed to be battalions that would be placed on islands which were already secured, but they would man anti-aircraft guns and anti-coast guns and that kind of thing. Not combatant troops in the sense of infantry. They had white officers, largely, white NCO's, not entirely, but the main enlisted population were all black. These were not successful. They did not prove to be effective units. I only saw one of those. One came to the

island of Funafuti, one of the Defense Battalions. They were the poorest unit that we'd ever seen.

Anderson: In what way?

Simpson: Inefficient, they just simply didn't know their jobs, they weren't too well trained. It didn't hurt anybody because we didn't get into any combat there. When the word came to actually integrate the Armed Forces, we sort of thought it was inevitable, and we also, at least I thought, that it would be better to have them integrated rather than segregated. That I had my questions about whether the rank and file of the black Marine could hold up his end of the stick, but I thought he might do it better if he were exposed to the challenges of the white Marines. And that proved to be true. We now have some outstanding black noncommissioned officers. We have one black general in the Marine Corps, who, by the way, was a 2d lieutenant with me in Korea.

Anderson: No kidding.

Simpson: Yes, an aviator. But, he was a air liaison officer with my regiment. But, we have some outstanding noncommissioned officers, particularly in staff noncommissioned officers.

They've earned their place, and they have it. It's worked out quite well. It took a long time.

Anderson: Sure.

Simpson: Took a long time. There are still instances of problems. We still have people that insist on flying Confederate flags from antennas of their tanks which the blacks properly resent. At least, I had some trouble with that. It didn't take long to clear up.

Anderson: When did you have this problem, during the '60's?

Simpson: In Camp Lejeune, yes. Not a serious problem.

Anderson: No. Okay, let's move on now. I was just wondering about your opinion because it was almost a revolution in the military, and one of the things that was resented by most of the military is that the population itself was not integrated very much at that time.

Simpson: That's correct.

Anderson: And many officers commented that the Marines, or the Army, Air Force should not accept a standard for society, but should be part of society--should not be ahead, but should be part of it. What is your opinion of that?

Simpson: I don't agree. I think in a cause like that, it's proven to be right, and I thought it was right at the time. The Armed Forces were in a position to do what the population as a whole probably couldn't do because the Armed Forces could be told to do this and they would do it. This country would not stand and has not stood and does not now totally subscribe

to anyone telling them what they're going to do, they have to be convinced. They knew, President Truman knew, the commander in chief, chiefs of Services all knew there would be resentment when this was done, but they thought they could cope with it and they did. To tell you the truth, the integration of the blacks into the Marine Corps caused less of a ruffle in the Marine Corps than the integration of women.

Anderson: Well, we'll talk women, the increases of number of women...Okay, in 1949 you moved to the Pentagon.

Simpson: Washington.

Anderson: There as Special Assistant to the Director of Plans and Policy. Who at that time was the director?

Simpson: Brigadier General E.A. Pollock.

Anderson: And what exactly did you do as his special assistant?

Simpson: Everything he could think of. One of the interesting things I did, I was the speech writer for the Commandant.

Anderson: No kidding.

Simpson: But I wrote staff studies for him on various and sundry things. Plans and Policy is a misnomer. That agency was essentially a staff section, but we had a 1, 2, 3, 4 within that. It was essentially the operations group. You know, during the war, the Army had an OPD as they called the Operations Plans Division.

This was sort of the Marine Corps' equivalent to that. It had to do with almost everything associated with development of policy and with planning and to the extent that Headquarters Marine Corps became operational, we were the operations center. Headquarters Marine Corps is not operational--a field operational entity. Its combatant forces are essentially assigned elsewhere. Marine barracks and shore institutions are under the control of the Commandant, but the Fleet Marine Forces are under the Fleet commanders.

It was a very interesting type of work, my first time in Washington, first time at the seat of the government. I was convinced that they made a terrible mistake. I was supposed to be a field soldier and commander, the very idea of putting me on staff in Washington was abhorrent to me and I refused to buy a house because I was convinced I would be transferred in six months and I stayed three years. And then went back for three other tours of duty. That was a very interesting time. I made colonel at that time.

Anderson: Yes, in November of 1951.

Simpson: And General Pollock after pinning on my eagles went down to command the 2d Marine Division and shortly thereafter, I've forgotten what date, he arranged for my transfer from Headquarters to the 2d Marine Division, the next month.

Anderson: I was wondering about a number of things that were going on. First; what were some of the major, as far as the

plans, as far as the operations went, where there new insights, new plans that were coming about at this particular time, were in Korea in 1950, did Korea seem to have an impact?

Simpson: Tremendous impact, tremendous impact.

Anderson: Okay.

Simpson: Sure, because we sent out the 1st Marine Division, 1st Brigade, then built it up to division, and in Headquarters, Marine Corps we were heavily engaged in trying to man that division. Everything we had was understrength. We had a lot of cadred units. And we mobilized the Reserves and brought them in and we were trying to flesh out these units and try to see that they were put into position to be transported overseas and then to support them and to work out some sort of rotation policy for those troops. We were determined not to leave them out there forever.

End Side 1, Tape 4

Begin Side 2, Tape 4

Simpson: ...we got home, if we were lucky, between six and seven at night. We always worked on Saturday mornings, sometimes all day on Sunday--Saturday--sometimes on Sunday, but not every Sunday and very seldom all day on Sunday. That was quite demanding. But it was very exciting, stimulating type of thing. None of us were bored, we had plenty to do. I'm talking now

Simpson: No, we didn't work that hard. We read about the routine once Korea started. I was not there too long beforehand.

Anderson: All of the military in Washington--Pentagon, Navy Annex, the like--worked awfully hard, awfully long hours. The longest that I've ever worked, except in combat, in Vietnam--Vietnam, of course, is a different situation, twenty hours a day--but even as a lieutenant general I worked a great deal harder in Washington as a lieutenant general than I did in Quantico as a lieutenant colonel--much longer hours type of thing. It was about a--essentially a 12 hour a day, usually ate at our desk, lunch in a brown bag. But, we were emotionally tired at night, not physically because we didn't have time to do anything physically to get tired. Fortunately, Washington was not all that big at that time and getting back and forth to work was not all that much of a problem, nothing like it is now. The work was interesting, it was stimulating, it was, we thought, worthwhile and it was worthwhile.

Anderson: During this time, of course, there was a tremendous increase in the amount anti-Communism in America and this is the time that we have McCarthyism, and I'm sure that McCarthyism, the anti-Communism crusade at home must have had some impact on the Marine Corps.

Simpson: Not a hell of a lot.

Anderson: You don't think so?

Simpson: No, we didn't bother about it very much. We read about it in the newspapers, no.

Anderson: Even when they attacked the Secretary of the Army in 1953?

Simpson: Yes. We were outraged, we were outraged. Of course, at that time in 1953 I was not in Washington.

Anderson: You weren't in...No, but what were your opinions of that?

Simpson: Well, we thought that he was what he turned out to be. And we felt that he would eventually come up a cropper, which he did. We read with a great deal of interest...What was the lawyers name who said to him, "My God man, have you no decency?"

(Ed. Note: Joseph Welch)

Anderson: Yes, I remember that.

Simpson: I remember that very, very strongly. I think he sort of reflected our own opinions of that sort of thing. Never saw any Communist problem or any anti-Communist problem within the Marine Corps. It was external to us as far as we knew. And I think it was.

Anderson: Yes. 1952, you go to Camp Lejeune as a regimental commander until 1953 and then you're off to Korea. Maybe we should stop here.

Simpson: Yes, we better break.

Anderson: Let's stop here and continue this.

End of Session.

Begin Session III, 22 September 1981, continue Side 2, Tape 4

Simpson: Did I talk about the regimental commander thing.

Where you interested in that?

Anderson: No. Yes, I am. So we should start right there with General Simpson as the regimental commander at Camp Lejeune which he had from 1952 to 1953.

Now, this is in preparation--was the mission to prepare for Korea?

Simpson: Well, that was part of it. We had multiple missions and that's what made this job so particularly interesting. I might preface all of this by telling you a little anecdote that had to do with it.

I was assigned to command the 6th Marines. In Marine Corps terminology, Terry, you know, the Army no longer has regiments, we do in the Marine Corps. And instead of saying the 6th Marine Regiment, we refer to them as the 6th Marines, the 5th Marines, and the 9th Marines, and 1st Marines and so forth, because we don't have all that many. And it happened that when I was commissioned in '36 and went to San Diego, as I told you earlier, after I got my uniforms and that sort of business and became reasonably useful as a second lieutenant, I was assigned to then the 6th Marines which was in San Diego in that time.

And the 6th Marines has a long history--the 5th and 6th Marines were the ones in World War I that went to France. However, they organized much earlier than that and they also fought in Haiti, in Nicaragua, and that sort of thing.

Anderson: During the 1920s they were in the....

Simpson: Yes, yes. Of course, the strength of the regiment went up and down through the years depending on the strength of the Marine Corps, but they kept the flag. In other words, they kept the regiment in business. And in the Marine Corps it's-- part of the tradition of the Marine Corps is for the battle flag, the colors of the organization to carry silver bands on the staff marking the battles that they've been in. Well, of course, the 6th Marines was rich in history and as a second lieutenant in San Diego in 1936, I was in that regiment, though I never met the regimental commander, Colonel Phil Torrey. He didn't deign to speak to second lieutenants and so we never met him. But they did take us one time--the second lieutenants--they took us to his office one time when he was away--this was deliberate. And the adjutant showed us the regimental colors. Habitually in a Marine regiment or battalion or division, for that matter, the colors are behind the commanding officers desk in a fan like that, you know. And so they took us up there one time when he was gone to let us sort of bow before the colors and to see them and to look at the rings and so forth and so on. And when I left shortly thereafter, as I told you, and went on to other

things. So, when I rejoined--when I joined the 2d Division in 1952, I was assigned immediately as the regimental commander of the 6th Marines. In other words, I started as a lowly second lieutenant and returned as a regimental commander. And sure enough, when I took over the command and went into my office there in Camp Lejeune now the colors were behind my...My predecessor had gone, so the office was vacant, but the colors were there. And I looked at them, and of course, it brought back many fond memories of the instance I was just telling you about and I began to examine the rings and I found out that the rings for World War I were correct--they're silver bands engraved.

(Interruption)

In any event, I looked at these colors and I found out that the bands for after World War I were homemade. A lot of them were copper, some of them were brass, the etching was obviously done free-hand by somebody who didn't know how to do it. One of them was even nailed on instead of screwed. They're supposed to have little tiny silver screws that you can't see. So, never underestimating the power of a senior NCO, I sent for the the sergeant major. The sergeant major is normally the custodian of the colors on behalf of the commanding officer. And I said, "Sergeant Major, have you looked closely at these colors?" And he said, "Yes, sir. I have." And I said, "What do you think of those bands," because there were a lot of bands from World War II by this time, you see, which were homemade, looked terrible. And he said, "The bands look terrible." And

I said, "Alright, get some new bands, Sergeant Major." He said, "Aye, aye, sir," and went away.

I was not sure what he was going to do, but I didn't ask him. And in two months, he showed up with a box of silver bands, the whole works going all the way back through the history, the whole thing. I think there are about 28 in all. See, for each band there is a streamer that goes on top of the color too. Well, rather than just have them put on there, I thought we should do this with some sort of ceremony. And by the time we got the bands it was in February and the weather was lousy and we couldn't have an outside ceremony, so we took over the post theater and we hung the colors by two wires from the ceiling with the staff horizontal and empty. And then we had a big table with black velvet and we lined up all of these rings on the table. And believe it or not, in that complex at Camp Lejeune, not in the regiment alone, but looking throughout the camp, I could find a guy who was in the regiment at the time each one of the bands were awarded. That is, for World War I on. Now, some of them were old grey headed colonels and so forth. And for example, one guy was a corporal at Tarawa who was now a first lieutenant in the 6th Marines and so forth. Extremely interesting to put it all together. And with that, I wrote a history of the regiment, well of course, there were many histories, but I wrote a condensed one, covering these major events. And I got all these people on the stage and the regiment was out in the theater, the theater was about

Anderson: That was an honor
the size of our auditorium, hold about 2,500. And I had the division commander there and all and his staff. Now, one of the interesting things about it was I handed my script--I had this stage party--and I handed my script to the adjutant and he was supposed to put it on the lectern. And then we paraded in with proper ceremony--the band playing and all that sort of thing. And I started reading this history and as I came to each one of these battles I said, "And then Colonel Joe Blow, who was then Corporal So and So in the 6th Marines in Chateau Thierry was there." And he got up and took the ring off the table and went over and slipped it on the staff, you see.

And one of the amusing things that happened was, I got to page six which got me through Haiti and Nicaragua and I looked and the rest of it was gone. And God, here I am with over 2,500 Marines looking at me and all the rest of these people. So, I had to make it up from that point on, but I didn't miss a one. It was a very impressive ceremony and, of course, the people got a big kick out of it. You see, among other things, the 6th Marines was awarded by the French--the entire regiment was honored with the Croix de Guerre, which meant that you could wear a fourragere. And even today, all members of the 6th Marines wear a fourragere while they serve in the 6th Marines. And those that were in the 6th Marines when they won the fourragere, if they were members at the time the unit was honored, then they can wear it for the rest of their life, and did. That's still true.

Anderson: That was an honor.

Simpson: Of course, they're all gone now. But, it was a fine ceremony.

But to get back to our mission, our mission was really three-fold. Yes, we had to provide individual replacements for Korea and this was a heavy drain on us personnelwise. We were training individuals not units for Korea and we received monthly drafts of how many corporals, how many privates, how many PFCs, sergeants, and so forth. Officers were ordered by name as were staff NCOs.

That was one thing. Then we had--the division had deployments that we had to keep up with. Battalion landing teams, that's the reinforced battalion--an infantry battalion, a truck company, a supply company, artillery, battery, that type of thing--numbers about 1700, amphibiously trained. The division had to keep one of those units in the Mediterranean at all times with the Sixth Fleet. Another similarly configured organization had to be in the Caribbean. Now there are three infantry regiments, nine battalions and so, two were gone all the time, two were getting ready to go, and then in the meantime, we were sending people to Korea.

The third component of the mission was to try to train what was left to operate as a division if we had to. This was sometimes conflicting, you see? The deployments to the Mediterranean were six months long and to the Caribbean, they were three months long.

It was a very interesting experience. We did a lot of training. I took the entire regiment down to Vieques in January and we trained as a regiment. They relieved us of other deployments, we trained as a regiment for three months and then what was left of the division came down and we were the aggressor force. We provided the defense of Vieques which is directly....

Anderson: Where is Vieques?

Simpson: Vieques is a small island, mostly owned by the Navy, immediately east of Puerto Rico.

Anderson: Okay, this is the one that's been in the news.

Simpson: Been in the news, that's right.

Anderson: Using it for bombardment.

Simpson: That's exactly right, that's the one. Good training area, we could fire artillery and we could fire naval gunfire and small arms, and of course, the weather was good. And it was ideal to leave Camp Lejeune in January and go down there and train for three months. We always contended that we won that "war" because we were in much better shape than the division was because they hadn't had a chance to train and we were out in the open and we were tanned and whatnot and so forth. But being a controlled war game, why, of course, we eventually lost it. But first time where we had an exercise

where we simulated the employment of the atomic bomb, which was extremely interesting.

Anderson: Really, this is the first time the Marines did that?

Simpson: No, it's the first time I did that. No, we didn't have any simulators, but cranked in to the scenario of the war game, I was given one and....

Anderson: You were given a scenario?

Simpson: Well, theoretically, I was given one bomb that I could drop, you see?

Anderson: Oh, I see. Yes, yes.

Simpson And theoretically, the division commander who was making the landing against me, he had one and you had to, in other words, we had to make our assessment as to when to drop that one bomb and where. And then the umpires assessed based on what we at the time--they assumed, the scenario assumed that if we said we wanted it dropped at 1630 or 0430 or whatever time at a particular time, it was assumed that the bomb was dropped at that point, and then using the data that we had, then they assessed the damage and whatnot. That was a fascinating thing. It was the first time that we'd ever done that. They do it as commonplace now.

Anderson: How do tactics change because of that?

Simpson: Dispersion, again, dispersion...Now, they would not allow me, as the aggressor, they would not allow me to drop that bomb until that opposing force was ashore, essentially ashore. In other words, had I chosen to drop it in the transport area I could have ended the exercise, except they wanted to play war for six days and did.

But, it was an extremely interesting and instructive exercise quite apart from the atomic play of the thing because our troops were in marvelous physical shape and we, of course, being greatly out-numbered, we fought a delaying action. We didn't defend the beaches, we pulled back and pulled back and then counterattacked, you see? But our tank counterattack was very successful, it got all the way to the beach.

Anderson: Just out of my own interest, when did you decide to drop the bomb, to use your one A-bomb?

Simpson: We found their CP and we dropped it on their CP and got a direct hit. And the exercise ended the next day.

Anderson: When did they use theirs?

Simpson: They used theirs the third day and they thought they had my CP and they didn't and they got--oh, they accessed us a certain number of casualties, but it did not influence the outcome of the battle.

Anderson: Not for them, but it did for you?

Simpson: For me it did, yes, yes.

Anderson: Sure. And did you say that you were the loser?

Simpson: Well, you always are. The aggressor always is. I mean, it's designed that way, you see. I remember in the critique, the division commander said that--all of my officers wore red tabs, we put red tabs on our utility clothes, and we didn't even sit with the rest of these guys at the critique, it was an open air critique, you know, and we sat over there and giving them a bad time about you guys wouldn't have on-if it weren't for the umpires and all that sort of thing. The division commander kind of cued the critique. He said he was well pleased, he felt like he had two sons that had fought valiantly and he didn't care which one won.

Anderson: Well, that's fantastic.

Simpson: So, it was a good exercise. I was determined--then we embarked, reembarked, and we all went to liberty ports. And my regiment drew Panama because we'd been away from home the longest period of time and Panama was considered the best of the liberty ports available at that time. Besides, it could absorb a large number and my reinforced regiment numbered about 5,000.

Anderson: Is that better than San Juan?

Simpson: Oh, yes, because there's too much Navy in San Juan.

I mean, all the ships of the fleet went in there, too much competition from the Navy. There was not... We had both sides of Panama. But, on a personal note, I was determined--when we embarked at Vieques, I was determined to be the last member of our regiment off the beach, and I was. I began to feel badly that afternoon that we embarked and I took this last boat out to the flagship. We had a fleet of about eight or nine ships, I guess, that carried the whole reinforced regiment. And I was feeling very weak indeed and I climbed the companionway ladder up to the quarterdeck of the ship and was met there by the commodore. I actually passed out right there on the quarterdeck.

Anderson: You were lucky you didn't fall back down the ladder.

Simpson: Well, I was on board by that time. And they carried me to this thing and the doctors all wanted to put me ashore and fly me back to the States, and I just couldn't put up with that. I told them, "Let me stay." They weren't quite sure what was wrong with me, really, I was exhausted, that was the first thing that was wrong with me. Had a hacking cough which was quite unusual because I felt wonderfully well in Vieques. And I persuaded them--it was a four day voyage to Panama--and I had persuaded them to let me stay aboard at least to Panama and if I was still ill at Panama, okay, then you can do with me whatever you want to. So, we took off, the ship took off and the fleet took off. And the gulf was a little bit rough and during the middle of the night they decided to take x-rays

and so they turned the whole fleet into the wind to steady the ship while they were taking these x-rays, and then they turned back again. By this time, I was running a pretty good fever, so they decided I had pneumonia and they said as soon as we got to Panama, they were going to fly me back to the States or put me ashore in that Army Hospital in Panama. None of which appealed to me very much because we were supposed to go back to the States and the entire division make a landing back at Camp Lejeune, which has a big fine landing beach. This was a free maneuver without aggresser forces. In other words, the whole division was coming home. And I wasn't about to miss that if I could. So, I worked on these doctors. I really took advantage of them because the senior doctor was my doctor in the regiment. And I told him--I've forgotten what the medical treatment was, but he said primarily rest. I said, "Boy, I get more rest here than anywhere else." I said, "I won't leave the flag bridge, I'll stay right here, never go below." Of course, I could eat right there in the mess and never go down the ladder. And I said, "I won't even go ashore in Panama if you let me stay with this outfit." Well, I could tell it was against his better judgement and I'm sure I leaned on him pretty hard, but he agreed. And we went to Panama, and I didn't, I never left--oh, I did. They took me up to the Army hospital where they had better x-ray machines. And they decided that I was better and that if I were to go back to the ship and stay aboard and not take any particular exercise but just rest, that I could go back to the States with

the regiment. So I did.

Anderson: So they did diagnose you as pneumonia?

Simpson: It was pneumonia, yes.

But, it was interesting the morning we left Panama--we were down in five days--and of course, it was a hairy operation in the sense of turning 5,000 Marines loose in Panama. Men had been training for four months, you know.

Anderson: Yes, and very eager.

Simpson: So, I had a conference over on the flagship the day before we sailed and our flagship was going to move out first. We were all tied up to the docks over there on the east side. And I told them to send a message over to me as each ship sailed as to whether they were missing anybody or not. No, we weren't the first to sail, we were about the fourth, but in any event, the first ship sailed and they sent a blinker message over and said, "Minus two." I didn't know really what to expect. I didn't know how many we would lose down there, how many would be in jail or whatever, even though we had MPs out all over the place. The next four sailed and they came up right on the nose. The flagship was next, we had all of ours. And then finally, there was one ship left at the dock and they were casting off their lines and over this levee we saw this Panamanian taxi coming to beat hell. And the taxi ran out on the dock out there and out jumps these two Marines and they had

already cast off all the lines, but they put a boarding plank over and these two Marines ran up there and they reported "plus two." So we had them all, two out of place, but we had them all. And it was kind of cute that next morning....

Anderson: That's fantastic out of 5,000.

Simpson: 5,000 and we brought them all out. Not that they didn't get in trouble, but we got them out one way or the other.

Anderson: Sure.

Simpson: And we had told the troops to always go at least in twos, wherever they went, never go by yourself. And that morning we sailed at seven o'clock in the morning, so it was a bright, clear morning in March, I guess it was, or April. And we were sailing back towards Vieques where we were going to rendezvous with the rest of the fleet to go back up north. I stood up there on the flag bridge that morning and watched down below, I could see the troops as they were coming out of the hatches and whatnot, bleary-eyed and whatnot, hung-over. Couldn't hear a word they said, but it was comical to watch. You could see them arguing about what they brought or their escapades or whatnot. And finally you see a guy go below, he'd bought something--you could reconstruct this whole thing without hearing anything. He'd go below and he'd come up with this great big package and he'd open it and they'd all look and they'd all laugh, and he'd throw it over the side. And I looked back down

the wake of the ship, the wake was just full of wrappings and paper and all this sort of stuff that looked pretty good when you're half drunk at midnight but in daylight at nine o'clock in the morning it didn't look very good.

And my corpsman that had been attending me--he was a Navy chief, wonderful guy, and he only left me one time and he went ashore one night, and I told him as the rest of them--I told him, "Now chief, for God's sake, don't go by yourself." So, he was with me the next morning out there on the deck with me watching pretty close and I said, "Tell me about your liberty last night." And he looked kind of sheepish and I said, "Well, damn-it. Did you stay with somebody else, did you all stay together?" He said, "Well, Joe and I went together." I said, "That's not what I said, I said, 'Did you stay together?'" I knew the guy didn't drink very much, so didn't really worry about him getting in trouble. And he said, "Well, we had a little mix-up." He said, "We were coming back to the ship and we were coming down this place in Colon--," and he remembered a package that he had purchased, but he left it. And he told Joe to wait there for him, he was going back to get it. So, he went back and he got the package and he was coming back up this dark alley to rejoin his friend and he was about 100 yards from joining his friend when he felt somebody tap him and he had his wallet back here or he had it stuck in his pants, and when he did that, he turned around and the guy had his wallet and was gone, he turned back around and his package was gone. So,

the supply base down at Albany, Georgia. And in order to

I said, "Okay."

We then came back to Vieques, then back to North Carolina and we landed in the rain over the beach type of landing. By this time, boy, I was really sick. And we were in maneuvers for three days and four nights and literally in my CP, they were carrying me around on a stretcher to keep me out of sight of the division commander because I wouldn't turn myself in--damned stupid foolishness. I stayed with them until the maneuver was over and then the doctor said, "That's much too far for you," and then he got an ambulance and they took me to the hospital and I stayed there 30 days.

Anderson: 30 days? You must have really been sick.

Simpson: It was silly. You know, I was young and I was determined to stay with the regiment and I did, but anybody else did that, I'd lock them up if I knew about it. I wouldn't allow anybody else to do it, and I wouldn't do it myself. But I did then. But it was interesting. The 30 days in the hospital and that's when they turned around and when I came out of the hospital I was G-4 and not regimental commander. But that was about normal. I had command for about 15 to 16 months, which was plenty long.

The G-4 type was interesting. One of the interesting things that I had during that time was, we were equipped with a total new fleet of vehicles. And the Marine Corps had opened a big supply base down at Albany, Georgia. And in order to

justify that base, they had all the vehicles for the division which...Well, there were 2,500 "steering wheels" as we called it, that is trucks of all size--jeeps all the way up to five tons, dump trucks and whatnot--plus innumerable trailers. And they were shipped to Albany, Georgia and we had to take delivery on that equipment in Albany and then move it by convoy from Albany to Camp Lejeune. It is a distance of about, I'd say, 450 miles, maybe, 550 miles. But, that was an interesting exercise for me because I'd never handled a motor convoy of that magnitude.

And we got transport aircraft from the Marines over at Cherry Point to fly the driver teams down. They were a convoy chief, an officer with a senior NCO as an assistant; 27 drivers for 25 vehicles--each vehicle had a tow, and the trucks had--the big trucks, two and a half ton and above--had trailers set inside. Everything was driven that had to be driven.

One of the interesting things that we ran into--now, we're talking about the "deep south"--and the convoy had to stop overnight. And of course, we had black Marines in there and the reconnaissance I sent down had just one terrible time trying to find any overnight accommodations. It was either the whole party could stay or nobody could stay. That was the ground rules I gave them, in other words, you know, if they would not accept black Marines in this motel, then nobody stayed there. And it took us a week to work out the route and the stops overnight in order to make sure that we had a place where these

people could be accepted for overnight accommodations and also in the dining hall. And we had to scout that whole route to include restaurants and that sort of thing. You see, we had to buy food commercially; we had no way of getting them meals en-route and that type of thing.

Anderson: Yes, sure. This was a major problem, then, wasn't it?

Simpson: It was a major problem, it really was. It would be no problem now.

Anderson: How long did it take....?

Simpson: It took us two weeks.

Anderson: Two weeks of planning.

Simpson: Two weeks of planning and two weeks of execution to get it all done, but we got them all back. And we only had one accident and this happened in a little town--I've forgotten what the town was--and it was not the fault of the Marines. But the town drunk, literally the town drunk so classified by the chief of police...See, we contacted the police at each one of the towns and where possible, we got an escort through town or around, however they wanted us to go. But we closed interval on the convoys and the town drunk at nine o'clock in the morning simply wandered out and broadsided into one of our trucks and it knocked him down. It didn't hurt him, he was drunk, but it

wasn't the Marine's fault and it took us no time to clear it up at all. But otherwise, we didn't bend a fender. And we moved 2,500 vehicles plus--well, more than that because I don't know how many trailers and all of that sort of thing.

Anderson: And how many personnel did you have to move 2,500 vehicles?

Simpson: Well, we had 100 driver teams--2,500, but a lot of those were repeats, you see. They'd bring the convoys in and then they'd be put on an airplane and fly back and they'd come back again. Two day operation from Albany up there.

It was an interesting logistical exercise; I'd never done that before or since of that magnitude. We had radio contact, but primarily, we were contacting through the highway patrol that was keeping up with them in all the states they came through.

Anderson: And of course, this was before the freeway system that we have today.

Simpson: No freeways, there were no freeways at all, just country roads.

Anderson: We were talking about country roads.

Simpson: Two lanes.

Anderson: Trunk highways, yes.

Simpson: We traveled about between 35 and 45 miles an hour. The interesting thing was all the equipment was all new, the vehicles were all new--M series vehicles they called them, they were all new. Each convoy team had a mechanic, but of course, the equipment was new to him too, and there were some breakdowns but they were all able to be repaired on the road. We didn't have to tow any of them in.

Anderson: Great.

Simpson: So, it was a very interesting experience.

And then, I went to Korea.

Anderson: Yes, let's shift to Korea. You're the commanding officer of the 1st Marines.

Simpson: Right, but again, I know you're interested in combat, and I have to tell you that I didn't see any combat as I got there just as the shooting stopped. But, we had a very interesting mission. This was the 1st Marines now, the 1st Marine Regiment. And we were just south of the Imjin River; Freedom Bridge was in our area and our task was--see, the DMZ was right ahead of us and the Chinese were just beyond--and so our task then, which made it very interesting, was to build the defense against a renewal of the attack. And indeed, the 2d Infantry Division of the Army is there now, and they have basically, the same defense plan. I guess, well, I'm sure they've improved our position, but we were putting in bunkers, a lot of bunkers,

barbed wire. I have never used as much barbed wire--well no, Vietnam we used more or as much, but of course, in Vietnam we had the new wire, you know, the ribbon wire. The wire we had in Korea was the old-fashioned just regular barbed wire. But we used hundreds and hundreds of miles of it. We built revetments and trenches on the far side of the hill, parapets, installed artillery...We were busy day and night, we never got to the point where the troops...and also, the threat for the first six months there, essentially all the time I was in Korea, the threat of renewed hostility was very real, very real.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: It never evolved. The closest we had and the biggest scare we had, as you recall, there were 22,000 Chinese that had fought against us and when the armistice was declared or the truce, they didn't want to go back to China, they wanted to go to Taiwan. And they took refuge out in the DMZ--there were 22,000 of them. And what to do with these guys. So, the American command decided--UN command--decided that they would go get them and bring them out south through us and into Seoul and then take them by ship. And Abrams was chief of staff of I Corps which our division was a part of--first contact I had with Abe. He was chief of staff of the Corps, and since my regiment was the one directly involved, I did a lot of the detailed planning with the Corps on bringing these people out.

We did it in two ways. We sent in truck convoys--400

trucks--and then we had trains. We backed the trains across Freedom Bridge and out to this installation--took the trucks across and loaded them. The Indian component of the United Nations force was the guardian of these 22,000 Chinese. Indians were very good, the Turks were better. The Turks were superlative. My God, those guys, they loved to fight with the bayonet. They'd really rather cut a guy up than shoot him. And when they brought that 5,000 man Turkish brigade into Korea and they put them in the line before my arrival--but I can certify to this--the Chinese attacked and the Turks counterattacked and cut them all to pieces, literally cut them all to pieces in hand-to-hand fighting. And thereafter, they brought the Turkish brigade in and out of the line and my predecessor told me down at 8th Army, they said you could watch the line, the Chinese line--and of course, their intelligence, they knew where the Turks were--and when the Turks would come into the line, the Chinese line would bow back around like that. As long as the Turks stayed there, they only got a shot at them. The Turks would pull out and the line would come back down. But the Chinese were desperately afraid of the Turks, and the Turks loved it chiefly because they were eating better than they could possibly do at home. They wanted to stay, everybody else wanted to go home, but they wanted to stay. They were doing fine.

Anderson: What about some of the other troops besides the Turks, all the other good troops?

Simpson: The British were good and some of the Koreans were good. They varied, the Korean Marines, I thought were very good. Some of the Korean Army I saw were spotty, some were excellent. I think now all are very good, but at that time they didn't have very strong--some of them didn't have very strong officer leadership. But the Turks, the Brits, and the Koreans were actually about all that I was exposed to. There were others there, but most of them were there in sort of token force.

Anderson: Yes. How about the relationships between all UN troops?

Simpson: Oh, we got along fine.

Anderson: Everybody seemed to get along well?

Simpson: Yes, yes, there wasn't any problem. Again, the matter of the Koreans was a little different from the other folks that we were involved with. I had been associated with some Australians in World War II, I have a very high regard for them. I never fought with them, but I knew a lot of Australian officers and I would choose them to be on my left or right if I had a chance--the Australians, yes. They're very rugged, they're very strong, they're usually very well trained.

The Koreans, as I say, were sort of a mixed bag. We had a little difficulty understanding each other quite apart from the language. Their idea of discipline was considerably different

from ours. For example, towards the end of my tenure as regimental commander, we had decided to start to retrain amphibiously. See, the division had been there a long time and no amphibious training, and we decided to do some. And General Taylor, Maxwell Taylor, was the Army commander, 8th Army commander--who, by the way, is one of the most fluent linguist I've ever seen.

Anderson: That's what I've heard.

Simpson: I heard him make a speech in Korea, down in Seoul, one day. And I took my interpreter with me and he spoke for 15 minutes in Korean and the interpreter was Korean--my interpreter was Korean though American educated, graduate of Harvard--but he told me that was the best Korean that he'd ever heard spoken by a non-Korean.

But in any event, we were doing these small landing operations right outside the mouth of the Imjin River and General Taylor wanted to go out and see one of them because we were mixing in Koreans--we would land a battalion of Marine infantry and we'd put one company of Koreans with them. We never landed a Korean battalion at that time, they weren't that far along. But they would sort of come along. It was kind of interesting, they embarked in the ships there in Inchon and then they sailed out into this bay out there, steamed out for 10 or 12 hours and then they came back in and simulated a landing.

My battalion commander told me an interesting story about the Koreans. They had these stand-up tables in the troop mess,

you know, that the Navy has aboard troop transport, you know, with the condiments down the middle and all that sort of thing. The Koreans went to the mess and they drank all the condiments, all the hot pepper and everything else, just drank it.

But in any event, we took a helicopter and I went down and picked up the Army commander, General Taylor, and we flew out and landed on this small island Tanwo-Do, where they were to make the landing--had a real fine landing beach. It was unopposed landing. It was just a drill, we were back to genesis in this amphibious training. It was essentially getting in and out of LVTs and small boats and LCVPs and that type of thing. No aggressor, charge in and get into the brush then disperse. Well, as happened in those days, the boat that contained this one platoon of Koreans had been circling out there for awhile, and everybody got seasick. And we had a Korean commander of a Korean brigade that I had taken out in the helicopter with me, and he carried a heavy swagger stick which most of the Korean commanders did. I mean a heavy one, not just an ornament. And when they dropped the ramp on this landing craft that had Koreans in it, they came staggering out there and they all fell on their face because they were seasick. But they had a corpsman with them and he for some reason didn't get seasick. And he was standing there trying to do the best he could for his troops and the Korean commander went over and with his stick he broke his arm.

Anderson: The corpsman's arm?

Simpson: Yes. And I said, "Well, for God's sake. What was that for?" He said, "He is a doctor, he's supposed to keep them well. They all got sick, so I broke his arm." So, I use that as an example that their kind of discipline was a little difficult for us to understand. We got along with them alright.

miles deep--and that was all done overland by jeep. And of
Anderson: If you can _____.

Simpson: Towards the latter part of my tenure as regimental commander, we had some run-ins with Korean prostitutes.

And sure enough, what was happening, they were shipping in magazines under special services type of thing.

End Side 2, Tape 4

Begin Tape 5, Side 1 (Anderson's #6)

Anderson: You couldn't keep them off the base?

Simpson: Oh, there weren't any bases, we were deployed.

Anderson: Oh, okay.

Simpson: We were spread out all over. You see, we didn't have any base. But, we'd round them all up and get them back to Seoul and they'd be back by the time the trucks got there, sort of like illegal aliens.

One amusing anecdote that has to do with this sort of thing; I got exasperated one day. As regimental commander, I went down--I was getting ready to get into a jeep and go out and look at the troops. We had some helicopters, but they were very fundamental, very rudimentary. And we were just beginning

to learn how to use them, and did in the Korean War. That's the first time troops had ever been moved by helicopter, were the Marines in Korea. So, I didn't have any helicopters attached to me, and so visiting my regiment, which was strewn out from --oh, our front was about five miles long and I guess about three miles deep--and that was all done overland by jeep. And of course, I spent most of my day on the road visiting these troops. And one day before I left, something struck me; I decided to go to regimental mail room and see what was happening there. And sure enough, what was happening, they were shipping in magazines under special services type of thing and the regimental mail clerks were opening the packages and naturally, they were skimming of all the copies of, you know, Life, Time, the goodies they were taking at the regiment and then they were shipping them down to the battalion, the battalion was skimming again, and then down to the company. So that the guy at the end of the line, I knew what he was getting, he was getting something like Argosy, or whatever what nobody else wanted at the other echelon. And I watched this operation, I didn't say anything, I watched this operation. But, I already made up my mind that I was going to one of the furthest outposts we had. And so I went out there and here was a sergeant with seventeen men. And they built this heavy bunker and then we had trenches that were embedded trenches, some of them covered some of them uncovered at the end of the thing with firing ports out over the river and out over the DMZ. But remember, everybody is

working from dawn to dark putting this stuff together--heavy timbers, 12 by 12, that sort of thing. It was heavy manual work. We only had engineer supervision. We didn't have enough engineers to do the construction. We only had engineer supervision, we didn't have enough engineers to do it, the infantry had to do it under engineer supervision. They did the blasting where it was necessary, we did the digging.

Anderson: Didn't you have any earth movers or anything like that?

Simpson: Well, in some places you couldn't get earth movers up, the crags were such that you couldn't have gotten a bulldozer up there even if you had one. But in any event, I found this group--I'd visited them before, they were a pretty hardy band of people--so I went in and spoke to the sergeant I knew by name by that time. I said, "Hey, by the way sergeant, you all got any magazines?" And they were living on C-rations out there, we took them one hot meal a day from the battalion mess, the rest of it was C-rations. I said, "You have any magazines?" And he said, "Hey, Joe, we got a magazine around here somewhere around here, haven't we?" Well, they went and found this damned magazine, I've forgotten what it was, terribly uninteresting. It was dog-eared, obviously been read a thousand times. I was gratified that they were getting their personal mail, but they weren't getting these freebies that were supposed to be coming down from Special Services. So, I said, "Well, Sergeant, I'm going

to fix that, I'm going turn this damned distribution system around. I'll see that you all get some first class magazines." He said, "Oh, hell, it don't make any difference, Colonel. It wouldn't make any difference anyhow you know; we work from dawn to dark and we don't have any candles. We've got one gasoline lantern that we keep over here by the radio, but everything else is gone. So we can't read anyway." I said, "You don't even have any candles?" "No, we don't have any candles." So, I came back to the company, and I said, "You know those guys out there don't have any candles?" They said, "We don't either." "What have you done?" "Well, we burned them all." Go back to the battalion, "What about it?" "No, we don't have any candles." Of course, they had a hell of a lot of lanterns. "Have you tried to get them?" "Yes." So, I followed this trail all the way back and I get to the division QM, and he said, "Oh, well, we've got them on requisition." I said, "Okay, when are you going to get them?" "Well, we don't know." Now, he's back there where they've got generators and they've got lights, and all the rest of that stuff. He's living pretty high on the hog. So I said, "Okay." And we had Special Service's money generated primarily through the exchange. And we couldn't spend it, there wasn't a damned thing to spend it on. And I think we had a bank balance of about \$10,000 or something like that, but there wasn't anything to do with it, you see. We were working all the time, and we couldn't recreate, I mean that sort of thing. That's what we were buying these magazines

with but that wasn't cutting into it at all. Post exchange was doing alright, I mean, it was stocked with just necessities of life, nothing fancy or anything. The guys just buying cigarettes and tobacco and that sort of stuff, generated some profit, which it was supposed to do. So, we had the money. So, I told regimental supply officer to take \$5,000 and go to Japan and buy miner's candles. He never heard of a miners candle, but I had. I told him to get big miner's candle, big heavy ones like those that burn for a long time and won't blow out in just a breeze type of thing. He said, "Well, I've got to go get permission from division to do this." I said, "Okay." So then I got a call from division supply officer and he said, "That's an item of supply. You can't spend your money for that sort of thing." And I said, "You tell me it's an item of supply, but I haven't got any." And he said, "Well, I can't sign this." And I said, "Well, you either sign it or I'm on my way back to see the division commander." He said, "How many candles do you need?" I said, "Hell, I don't know. We haven't got any, so I guess we need a couple of truck loads." He said, "Well, can you give me 48 hours?" And I said, "I'll give you 48 hours to get the candles here or I'll be back to see the division commander." 48 hours we had candles, we had a lot of them, and we didn't have any more trouble from that time on, we had a lot of candles. Times I thought we were getting a little too many. But he

Was an interesting time. One of the more interesting things unrelated to combat is that, we were in the center of

the line, it was regimental to the left, regimental to the right, and my regimental CP was in what had been the division CP during the combat and in the meantime they had moved back in about ten clicks and they set up a real nice fancy camp back there so I inherited a pretty nice place. But we were in the center and we had a sort of an amphitheater that they had built when it was a division when the Bob Hope Shows and that sort of thing used to come. So, I had a friend that I'm still in very close touch with named, Bill Jones, who was he division G-3. And lacking combat, the division G-3 handled these special visitors like that, you see. So, he called me one day and he said--and they usually sent these entertainers and visitors to my regiment because I was in center and the other two guys could come in and we had this--we were in a bowl shape thing, valley where we put a lot of troops--and he called me and boy, I could tell by his voice and said, "Now, this is really something that you're going to really like." Because I complained to him from time-to-time that we're getting too many of these guys and we weren't getting enough work done but I couldn't deny the troops the opportunity to come in. Never could we assemble everybody, you know, we had to leave people out on the line, but I wasn't going to deny them the opportunity to go if the entertainers came, but I did complain a little bit about sometimes I thought we were getting a little too many. But he said, "This one you're really going to like." And I said, "What is it?" And he said, "Cardinal Spellman is coming to say

Christmas Mass and he's going to do Christmas Mass at your regiment for the division." Everybody could get to it. I said, "Oh, that's great, I'd like to meet him." And I said, "Bill, I know you're Roman Catholic." He said, "That's right. That's one of the reasons I'm very excited about this." I said, "Well, let me tell you. I'm a Methodist and I'm not a member of your faith. But there is something about this Cardinal about all Cardinals that I don't understand and I want you to answer it for me." He said to me, "I'd be glad to." "I said, "Alright, his proper title as you know is Francis Cardinal Spellman." He said, "That's correct." And I said, "Okay, as a Methodist and not a member of your faith, I want to know why it isn't Cardinal Francis Spellman." I said, "We don't say Bill Colonel Jones, or William Colonel Jones, we say Colonel William Jones." And he said, "Oh, hell, that's just the way it is." And I said, "Well, that's the way it is alright, but I want to know why." And he said, "Well, you know, ever since...." I said, "Ever since when?" He said, "I don't have to answer that question." I said, "No, you don't. But I'm going to tell you what." The Cardinal was going to spend Christmas Eve back at the division, they were going to fly him up in helicopter the next day, Christmas Day. And I said, "Okay, you don't have to answer but if you don't give me an answer that I can accept by the time he gets here, I know you're going to make up to him when you get him back there for Christmas Eve dinner, but when he comes up here I'm going to ask him and I'm going to tell him you don't know."

And he said, "You wouldn't do that." And I said, "You're damned right I'd do it." And then he said, "I'll find out."

Our senior division chaplain was Roman Catholic. About three or four days later the division commander invited me back routinely for dinner one night, and when I went into the General's mess where all the colonels and Navy captains met and I ran into my friend as soon as I walked through the door and I said, "You've got the answer yet?" And he said, "No, and I've asked Padre so and so," as he called the senior chaplain who was a priest, and he didn't know. And he had called every priest, there were 13 priests in the division and none of them knew. And I said, "Okay guys, you've got three weeks til you get the answer or I'm going to ask him. I don't mind asking him because I'm not a member of his faith and I want to know why." And they said, "You really wouldn't do that, would you?" And I said, "I really would," which I was prepared to do. Well anyway, they couldn't find out. The Cardinal was back there on Christmas Eve and I was not there, the next morning here they came in the helicopter. The man had as much charisma as anyone I've ever run into in my life. It was cold, very, very cold, parka weather. I had assembled in my regimental mess about 25 officers and enlisted men that we knew were members of the Catholic faith. And I wanted to give the Cardinal--I wanted to warm him up before we went to this outside mass type of thing, and give him a cup of coffee and whatnot and I invited these 25 or 26 people there to meet him which was, of course, a great treasure

divided up and did different things. The one I thought was going to win was one section, the supply section, that put together a white cross made of these bunker timbers about 12 feet high, painted it white and then they conned some of their helicopter friends into lifting it off the ground and carrying it up to a mountain that was about 800 feet above the floor of our CP and they got a flood light that they stole from somewhere--battery operated thing, photo-electric cell--and that turned on at night. And the only thing you could see at night against the black sky was this white cross, you see. I thought that was going to win.

But, the intelligence section did them one better. They were down in the CP--we had snow about this deep--and down in the CP they got a table and they put a white sheet over it and they tacked it around so it wouldn't blow away. And then in the center of that table they put one of these miner's candles that I told you about--we finally got some, understand. In front of that, they took our uniform cold weather gear which were the thermal boots, the insulated trousers, the parka with the hood and that sort of thing, the heavy gauntlet gloves, and they stuffed all of this with paper to form a figure. You see, the parka was zipped tight and when you got in that freezing wind with this parka around you and you pulled the string on this thing the only thing that showed were the eyes, and we had goggles for that. So, with the gloves and everything, they didn't have to have any human skin showing. But they put this

figure kneeling in the snow in front of this one candle in this position like this. Boy, it just sort of took your breath away. So, we're coming down from the helicopter pad and the CP up on the hill, coming down this winding road to get down below, and we were going to pass this place and just instinctively, I stopped the convoy. I'm riding in the jump seat of the jeep and the Cardinal is up front and I said, "Your Eminence, I have something I want you to see." And he said, "Fine." He was in these gorgeous robes and all this sort of thing. And we stopped the convoy, the division commander is as mad as hell by this time--we've got 25,000 troops waiting down below and 13 priests to do the mass--but it was only 25 meters over there, so we walked through the snow over there, turned the corner of this hut and he saw this figure kneeling in the snow in front of this thing. And do you know what he did? Walked over and knelt down along side of it in the snow.

Anderson: No kidding.

Simpson: Most touching thing I've ever seen. Came back, never said a word, got in the jeep, went on down there, and he ran this mass with these 13 priests for 25,000 troops. Had a letter from him later--I always got letters from those people--but his was a personal letter, and he commented on that, he commented on Bill, he commented on other things. And no telling how many letters he had to write, but everybody got a letter that was a personal letter that only he could have

dictated. The aides couldn't have done it. I met him two years later in Washington and he remembered me by name and remembered all these incidents.

Anderson: Incredible.

Simpson: I went from regimental command back to--Bill Jones and I just flipped-flopped. I took over as G-3 and he was regimental commander. By this time, we were beginning to get into a little training. The fortifications were essentially complete. We had brought the Chinese out while I was regimental commander. We got them out without incident, by the way.

Anderson: No kidding? Down in Taiwan?

Simpson: Yes, the Chinese did not attack. It took us 48 hours to bring those 22,000 troops out of there.

Anderson: Why do you think the Chinese did not attack?

Simpson: I think at that time, we were a little bit too strong for them. And I don't think they really wanted to kill their countrymen. And their countrymen were between us, you see. We never did know for sure why they didn't come. Glad they didn't because there would have been a massacre. The division was on full red alert for 48 hours, everybody at their posts, nobody was sleeping when we brought the Chinese out. Everything was loaded and locked and all the ammunition was there, but no shots were fired and we brought these troops out.

But then I went back to division, by that time we were beginning to get a little bit into training phase. Our problem was training areas, because the country had been fought over--the area we were in had been fought back and forth, it had exchanged hands four times during the war and everybody put mines in it. And we did not know where the mines were. So, a lot of the areas that normally would have been good training areas, we had to abandon because the task of sweeping them all was monumental. We simply couldn't do it. So, actually we did very little training. We were able to establish some small rifle ranges and begin our requalification with rifle and as I mentioned, we did a little bit of amphibious training and that sort of thing. But by the time I left Korea, training was minimal, and the division essentially had to be retrained when when they came out. Of course, people were turning over rapidly and they brought some individual skills with them.

It was an interesting time to be in Korea. Met Syngman Rhee on two occasions.

Anderson: No kidding.

Simpson: Madame Rhee. Oh, I started to tell you a related story. I'm going back to the candle business and whatnot.

I assembled the battalion commanders that day and I was rather mean and nasty and I said, "It's about time we started taking care of these troops." I mentioned this one guy by name, I said, "You had no candles, you had no magazines, and

nothing else down there. I realize you tried to do through your supply channels, I realize that you were trying to do what you could, but you didn't come to me." And I said, "I want you guys now to start taking care of these people. Most of them have fought a hell of a hard war and they are entitled to be better taken care of." You know, I gave them....Well, two days before we, no two weeks, we had been told we were going to do this operation to get the Chinese out of there and we had a Korean battalion in the line. And I had one of mine back in reserve. And late one night, I got a telephone call to immediately relieve that Korean battalion. They were the ones right there at Freedom Bridge. American intelligence had it that Rhee was going to send those people across--American intelligence believed that Rhee was trying to create an incident that would rekindle the war and would cause us to drive the Chinese back into North Korea and out. In any event, it was suspected that this Korean Marine battalion that I had was the trigger and that they were going to cross Freedom Bridge that night. And so I was told to relieve them that night and to pull them back, pull them out of the line and put a U.S. Marine battalion in its place. And we did. We made a night relief of the line.

Anderson: Was there any problem?

Simpson: No problem. We were pretty good by that time.

Anderson: And what about the Koreans? Did they--did you get any feeling that they thought they were going to be moving

ahead into North--in across the DMZ?

Simpson: No, they're absolutely inscrutable. And see, what the Army commander did, he sent word through the Korean channel for that battalion to come out, so they didn't argue with us. And the position had been ours originally, so the battalion was familiar with it. So, a night relief was no particular problem.

But, the follow-on of this is that after this my session with the battalion commanders about taking care of the troops, I got a call from this battalion commander who had taken over the place there, and he said, "I remember what you told us day before yesterday about taking care of the troops." And I said, "Well, I hope you did." He said, "It may be that I'm taking a little bit better care of them than you had in mind." I figured there was a catch in this and I said, "Alright now, damn it, what have you got in that?" He said, "Well, when we relieve the Koreans up here," he said, "the Koreans had planted gardens," vegetables for their own food as part of their rations which was characteristic of all Oriental troops in fixed positions. They were expected to do it. So the Korean commander asked if he could send working parties up there during the day from their position about six clicks back to work on the gardens until harvest time came. And so for about a week or two some Koreans came up in the morning and worked on the vegetable patches and went back at night. And then he came back and said that they were a little short of petrol and would it be alright if they had a small detachment just camp

there to take care of it--put up in pup-tents. Battalion commander thought that was alright. He didn't bother to tell me, he didn't think it was a big thing. But the day he called me he found out they had something a little different and the night before he found that they had Korean prostitutes in these pup-tents and these guys were going in one end and out the other. Right in the main battle position. He said, "I'm taking care of my troops but I don't really think you meant for me to take care of them quite that well." I said, "No, that's a little above and beyond what I had in mind about magazines and candles." He was running a house of prostitution and looking at it all the time and the troops were laughing. They knew it and he didn't know it. It went on about ten days before he found out about it.

Anderson: Isn't that amazing. Ten days.

Simpson: But, Syngman Rhee was an interesting old man.

Anderson: Yes, tell me about that.

Simpson: His wife was more interesting than he was. She was reputed to have control of all the...bus lines were the only means of communication for civilians in Korea--and Mrs. Rhee was, by legend, was supposed to control all the commercial truck lines--the bus lines, I don't whether she did or not. She spoke excellent English. The old man was really dottering. I could see where he had been a great powerful figure in his

time. Never visited him in Seoul. I saw him twice at the division command post. Interesting, obviously a strong man, but by the time we knew him, in failing health. She was taking care of him and was really doing most of his speaking for him and she was right along side him all the time. She was an engaging woman, much younger than Syngman Rhee. I would guess by as much 15 years. Spoke fluent English, he spoke rather broken English. But you could tell that he had at one time been a very charismatic figure.

Anderson: I was wondering a couple of other people. Maxwell Taylor, could you describe him for me.

Simpson: Maxwell Taylor is a man of great dignity, tremendous personal bearing, physical fitness, that sort of thing. A good soldier, really a very good soldier. As I say, a linguist, as you know. I would not characterize him, Terry, as being brilliant, but a very knowledgeable man. Held the Marines in high regard, treated us very well, indeed. He visited us frequently, visited my regiment on several different occasions. He came up and spent four hours with me before we did this operation on bringing out the Chinese. He was interested in every particular of all the precautions that I'd made. He was familiar from the the corps area with the logistics that had been-- the corps essentially ran the logistics support; the trains, truck convoys, and that type of thing. But what he was interested in hearing from me was what plans I'd made, what shape

Simpson: Of course, the Inchon landing was one of the most daring feats in military history and I think even our own Marine commanders had their own, not expressed, but I think they had their own doubts about that operation but they had great faith in his strategic and tactical sense. And they undertook it and they won. It was a tremendous gamble against those 22 foot tides there at Inchon. I don't know of any other senior commander that would have taken that gamble. I doubt that the Marine Corps would have--the Marine commanders--would have, well, they couldn't have undertaken it on their own. I doubt if they would have sponsored it on their own. The idea of the Inchon landing was his idea. And of course, he was there for it. And it worked. The odds against it were terribly high because of inaccurate conditions, not necessarily the defense of Seoul but the tidal conditions there in the river, the Han River. But, they got away with it and that landing turned around the Korean War at that time.

Now, as to what happened later on, with the idea of going up into--the Marines going up on the east side, landing at Wonsan and going up there, I think General MacArthur's strategic sense again was right. I agree with him in that I think they should have bombed the bridges of the Yalu River. After all, we knew damned well the Chinese were fighting, would fight, we knew they were across the river. I do think he had some faulty intelligence. I referred earlier on as we were talking about the experience that I had on MacArthur's staff in World War II; do

you remember the group that he brought out at the time that were his old friends, Willoughby being one of them as G-2? They were referred to as, "The Bataan Bastards." He was loyal to these people to a fault. And Willoughby was his G-2 and I think his G-2 let him down in the case of the invasion of Northern Korea. I can't prove this, but my own supposition was that he led him to some false conclusions as to where the Chinese were and how many there were. So, as to say that he was wrong, strategically or tactically, I can't really say that because I don't know what he based that on. I never knew him to be wrong during the time I was associated with him. Given the correct intelligence, he was never wrong. So, I can only feel that in the case of the invasion of Northern Korea which ran a cropper, I can't say that it was poorly conceived because had it ended the war with a unified Korea, which he was intending to do, then he would have been the great American hero.

Anderson: Sure.

Simpson: And so, I can only conclude that his decision was soundly based on what he thought was the enemy situation, and I can only believe that he was misled in that regard. Now, there are a lot of people said that he didn't pay any attention to the indicators, but a lot of that's 20/20. Everybody can refight a battle after they know exactly what the enemy has and where they were, they can refight it and win it everytime.

Now, I think probably what you're interested in was what

followed on from there, his actions with the President and so forth and so on. Was that justified?

Anderson: His talking to the press and writing letters to Congress.

Simpson: Probably justified, actions justified. You have to remember a story I told you about my first arrival and landing in New Guinea and talking with an old friend about MacArthur in which he said, "He believes he's a man of destiny." I think that eventually led him a cropper, Terry, in that he believed so strongly that what he was doing was in the best interest of the country that he then finally stepped out of channels and wrote letters to Congress and that sort of thing which were adverse to the position taken by the President and the administration. I can't go with that.

Anderson: In other words, you think that writing the letters and the press was wrong on his part?

Simpson: I do, yes, I do. I have a very strong sense of chain of command responsibility and I have always considered it my responsibility as a commander that at whatever level I was to make my view known to my superior, if I felt it strongly to do it in the strongest possible terms that he would permit. But I also believed the other side of that coin is that, having heard my story and once having made the decision then I have always thought it was my primary duty then to say,

"Aye, aye, sir," and go ahead. This is what I followed and I think that's true of a theater commander as well as a battalion commander. And I think that MacArthur could have, had he chosen to stay within channels, had he been not quite so remote, he could have even done such things as, he could have come to Pearl Harbor, or even asked to be able to come to Washington and speak with the President. He never would do that, he sort of put himself above that sort of thing. Now, some of these petty things that you've heard about, his meeting with Truman at Pearl Harbor....

Anderson: Wake Island.

Simpson: Wake Island--you've read Manchester's book--I mean you've read....

Anderson: American Caesar.

Simpson: American Caesar, yes. As you found out in there, some of this stuff about MacArthur's plane, who's going to land, that didn't happen. MacArthur was on the ground, you know, and he didn't even....

Anderson: That was television.

Simpson: Yes, that's all for television.

Anderson: What about Truman and his action, firing MacArthur? Was Truman justified? This is a classic confrontation.

Simpson: Yes, yes. The commander in chief is always justified. Now, that was typical Truman the manner in which he did it. I mean, if I'd been commander in chief and had elected to make that decision, I would have done it entirely differently, and I think anybody else would have. But that was Harry Truman, that was the way Harry Truman operated. But was he justified in relieving MacArthur? Yes, overall, I think so, because he wasn't the commander in chief and the guy was going outside of channels to go around him to get his view expressed to other people in an attempt to get the President to change his mind, and I don't think that is the role of a military man as long as he is in uniform. Now, if you feel that strongly about it, you have another option, you know. You can always resign and then go public as some of our people have done. That is an option and I don't discount anyone for doing that. I mean a lot of people have done that. Some of them are doing it today, James Gavin is doing it today. But Gavin got out of uniform before he started doing it. And I think that's the responsibility of the military man to work within the channel as long as he wears the uniform and if his view is so strong and if he's been over-ridden and he feels so strongly about it, that he still thinks that the safety of the country is at stake, then I think his following action is to resign, retire, whatever, and then go public when he's no longer wearing a uniform. Put on mufti and then go and say whatever the hell he wants to. There's a lot of our people that have done it. I never reached that point in

my career, but if I felt as strongly as I think MacArthur did, I think he would have been better advised--and nobody advised him, nobody could advise him--but it would have been a better course of action if he felt that strongly. He after all, as anybody else, Terry, was not indispensable. He felt so, but Ridgway came along and did very well out there and others could have done the same thing in the same circumstances. So, if he felt this strongly as he did about it, then I think what he should have done is to re-retire and come home and get on the stump across the country and say what he wanted to say. That would have been the kind of action that I think is appropriate for a man in uniform.

Anderson: One of the problems with Korea was that, this was one of our first wars that was a non-win war. We didn't lose, but we didn't win. And it certainly was a tremendous difference from the Second World War, and I was wondering if this policy of no-win, no-lose, had an impact on the Marines, an outfit which is usually known as the most gung-ho military organization?

Simpson: Indeed. Indeed it did because--well, of course, the guy that's getting shot at is glad to see the shooting stop. But as a Corps, and as a Marine, we regretted it very deeply. Not as deeply as we resented Vietnam, which is later, but, yes. We felt let down overall, relieved that the killing had stopped, relieved that we hadn't lost the war, but bitterly disappointed that we hadn't won it.

Anderson: Did the Korean War and the fact that you didn't win have any impact on different strategies or tactics that the Marines adopted later on?

Simpson: No. We were still and are today determined to win any war that we get involved in.

Anderson: Okay, right.

Simpson: I think the biggest thing we learned in Korea was the use of troop movement and the helicopters, the biggest single.... (inaudible) (Interviewee's note: ...innovation).

Anderson: Another new aspect of the Korean War was this idea of brain-washing American troops. Certainly this happened a little bit, and this whole idea of brain-washing--of course, people think that this happened in Nazi Germany, and how could the Germans follow this man Hitler, but when our men were captured during the Korean War, there was an attempt by the Chinese Communist to brain-wash them. Could you comment on that?

Simpson: Very sophisticated. Oh, yes, they went to great lengths. One of my great good friends today who survived the war and one of the few people I know who was decorated for his conduct in prison camp, was a prisoner 22 months. 17 of those months he never saw the light of day. He was kept in a hole underneath of a house 4 by 4 feet and they brought him out at two o'clock in the morning and they passed the food down to him such as it was. He never saw the sun. They'd bring him out at

two o'clock in the morning, put him in a low chair and then they'd sit above him. He had served in China before the war in Shanghai. And these people went to the incredible extreme of locating his old houseboy in Shanghai and bringing that houseboy to this interrogation in North Korea to get this guy to break down and tell them what he knew. He never did break. He's a graduate of Georgia Tech, this guy I'm talking about, and I asked him--I was at Little Switch and Big Switch too, when the prisoners came out. He fell in my arms as he got off the helicopter, he fell in my arms and what he wanted to know--the only thing that really concerned him was he was afraid that his wife thought he was dead and remarried. And I was able to tell him that I had talked to her some three weeks before and everything was fine, she was waiting for his return. Later on I asked him a little--guys never talked about it a hell of a lot. I wanted to ask him, you know, how do you remain sane in this kind of thing. Well, he was trained as an engineer and he worked mathematical problems in his head, that was the way he did it. Other people did other kinds of things.

But you know, I have the greatest respect, the greatest respect for people like this friend of mine and people like Robby Reisner and some of these others that went through a great deal more, some like seven years, like Reisner did. I have an enormous respect for those people who came back and came back sane and came back and were eventually totally rehabilitated. My respect for them is in their great courage, personal courage that they

showed and that they must have had. You see, I along with....

End Side 1, Tape 5

Begin Side 2, Tape 5

Simpson: ...once my friend was crucified--suspended from a cross, but no nails, I mean they just spread his arms out like this and tied him there and it was 30 degrees below and they were throwing water on him. One of his friends and colleagues went outside and cut him down and brought him back in and the Chinese never did a damned thing about it. It was that kind of thing. Withholding mail, the day he was released, he got 19 letters from his wife, some that were as long as 18 months old that had never been delivered to him. That is a form of brutal torture, I think. In Korea, I don't think there was as much as physical torture such as the stuff where they broke their bones and put the racks behind their back and that sort of thing, as Reisner tells in his Passing of the Night. In Korea I don't think there was as much of that as there was in Vietnam. But of course, the guys in Vietnam, like Reisner, were there a hell of a lot longer--Jerry Meyer and the rest of the people--you know, seven years. Of course, all of those guys came back with all of their faculties, as you know.

Anderson: That's true. Now, I was wondering if the Marines responded by setting up courses or information or anything dealing with brain-washing. Is there any kind of training in

case a Marine trooper was caught--how was he supposed to behave or anything like that?

Simpson: Everybody tried their hand at that, Terry.

Anderson: Yes, that's what I thought.

Simpson: I'm not sure you can train a person for that. I think going back to the old West Point motto, "Duty, Honor, Country," I think you can instill pride, I think you can instill patriotism, I mean you can't instill it, but you can burnish it in, you can nourish it, and you can bring it to full life. You can train a man to be strong, you can train a man to be proud, but to say, "Now we're going to have a class and this is resistance and this is what you do," which everybody has tried their hand at--the Marines least of all, and none at all anymore. Now we do have as all people that have aviation resources, we do have escape and evasion courses, particularly for aviators that are shot down in enemy territory. You know, how to evade, codes as to how to get in touch with us, how to get back, and that sort of thing. But as to how to train a guy to withstand those kinds of pressures, I don't think that's effective. A lot of people have done it, a lot of people are still doing it. I don't set much store by it. I think you're more or less satisfying your own ego in thinking that you've trained people to withstand that. They're going to withstand it if they've got the guts and that's what's going to sustain them if they've got sufficient pride and moral courage and

personal courage, they're going to sustain it. If they don't have that, there is no training in God's world that you can give them that's going to make them resist it.

Anderson: Okay. One last question about Korea. How did you win the Bronze Star?

Simpson: I guess for being what they considered being a good regimental commander. It was not with "V", it was more or less for sustained performance. I think the withdrawal of the Chinese probably was the high point in that, and the defenses that we built.

Anderson: Okay. 1954, you moved to the Army War College as a student.

Simpson: Yes, tremendously rewarding year of my life.

Anderson: Okay, let's talk about that.

Simpson: We had, and I cannot recall his name right now--he later became four star, was the commandant of the Army War College, a great psychologist. Since you are a scholar, his approach, which I found fascinating and I think you will find it interesting. You see, people at this point of time, we were all veterans of Korea in one degree or another. All of us had World War II experience. Now, if you are going to educate that group of people, you have right much challenge because they already think they know a hell of a lot about the business that

they're in.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: So, if you're going to give them graduate studies in their own profession, you have to find some sort of a challenge. And I thought the manner in which he did this was extremely interesting.

I don't know whether you've ever been to the Army War College or not, but it's in Carlisle, an old fort about 250 years old. It was an Indian fort, and then it was the home of the Carlisle Indians, and that sort of thing. It's a postage stamp post, but just perfectly magnificent, in the Cumberland Valley there, a little tiny place, a little tiny post. That's the only thing that's there, the Army War College.

We had about 125 students, half lieutenant colonels, half colonels. But all having experience in two wars. We had a very fine lecture hall.

Anderson: Were they from all services?

Simpson: No, primarily the Army. There were six Marines, six Navy, and I think about 20 Air Force, the remainder Army. The Army War College is almost a must for an Army general officer.

Anderson: Oh, yes, I know.

Simpson: But, we had a wide variety of experiences, background. Incidentally, since that time, they've backed the rank structure

down. It's now majors and lieutenant colonels, which I think is wise because they get to hold on to them longer after they get the experience of this year. But in any event, this guys approach--we didn't really know what to expect except I think we were sort of determined that, well, we're not going to work very hard. So, the general assembled us there one morning at nine o'clock. Of course, the Army knows administratively how to run a school better than anybody else. No question about it, administratively, they know better than the Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, anybody, administratively, they know how to do a hell of a lot better. In our administration, logistics, moving into quarters, and all that sort of thing, beautifully done, no hitch whatsoever. Just great.

In any event, we assembled for the first time. The general's opening remarks were along this line. He said, "There are ten percent of you that shouldn't be here, the only problem is I don't know which ten percent." He said, "If I knew that ten percent now, you'd have orders now. But I don't know and I don't really care because the ten percent will surface after a while. Those that think they're on a total sabbatical, and he said, "I'm not going to worry about them, they can finish the course or complete it, I'm not going to worry about them because I'm going to worry about the 90 percent that would like to learn something." So, he said, "If you're here for sabbatical and don't plan to do anything, relax, you can finish out your nine months." He said, "We're not going to teach you anything."

Kind of strange. He said, "We're going to give you an opportunity to learn. Now, if you want to exercise that opportunity, that's fine, if you don't that's entirely up to you." Thought that was pretty good. And he said, "I'm going to have a guest speaker everyday." And he said, "For your own convenience, I've scheduled him for ten o'clock. He will speak for roughly an hour then he will respond to questions for about 45 minutes and then we'll be inviting about a dozen of you to have lunch with him on a rotational basis. But I want to make it clear that attendance is not mandatory. We'll have no mandatory formations at the Army War College. You come if you want and if you don't feel like it, don't come. But some of these speakers that are coming, such as the Secretary of State, I think you might find it very, very interesting. So, nobody will ever call roll while I'm commandant of the Army War College, but as I say, I've scheduled it for ten o'clock, a rather convenient hour, most of you are up by that time." And he said, "I think you would owe it to yourself to at least try for awhile, because I think you might find it of some interest to you."

And he went along about this line and by this time we thought, "My God, we have a bird's nest on the ground," and And he said some other things about his general philosophy about senior level school and that type of thing. And then he said, "Why don't we go out and play golf." We looked at him, it was about 11 o'clock now. He said, "That's all, I'm going to play golf, you all do what you want to." So, oh boy, we thought

this was really great. So the next day we assembled--he went along the same line again, magnificent speaker. And then he said, "And in a few minutes we're going to dismiss again because I don't want to work you all too hard in the beginning." We hadn't turned a hand so far. He said, "But, when you play golf this afternoon, sort of turn this over in your mind--" oh, he had already told us about the facilities of the War College, the Library. The Library was not very big, but they had for 150-135 students, they had 30 trained librarians. You see, the original library of the Army War College was taken over by the National War College because the Army War College used to be at Fort McNair, you know, and they took the library. So, they were building a library. And he said, "We don't have a large library in terms of volume, but we have access to many things and we get anything. And we've got catalogues of the Library of Congress and all the rest of the stuff. We have trained librarians to help you so we can get any reference material you want." Well, we weren't at all sure what the hell we wanted any reference material for at that period of time. But he said, "Have you ever thought about what the post World War III objectives of this country ought to be?" "No, to be real frank with you, I have not given it a thought." "And the reason I'd like you to give it some thought is because, a great country before they enter a war should try to figure out what kind of world they want to live in after that war. Because, if you can establish your post World War III objectives, assuming

World War III does come along, that will dictate your strategy as to how you fight that war. Now, if you don't know what you want that world to look like after that, then you make up your strategy as you go along. But if you have a clear concept of what kind of world you want to have after the war, it doesn't have to be a world war, it can be one of smaller configuration, but you do well before you enter it to figure out what you want it to look like when you get through because that will tell you the strategy you should follow to get there." Poppycock!

Well, we go out and play golf. We get to about fifth hole and somebody said, "Isn't that the strangest thing that guy said, have you ever thought about that?" "No, no, never thought about that." Well about the tenth or eleventh hole, we were in a violent argument as to what the hell this post World War III objective ought to be. Carried on over when we finished golf, we were in the club house having a beer and we're still arguing back and forth. And it turns out everybody is arguing about this thing. Well my God, he worked our tail off that day. We worked our tail off, he never told us to do anything. We were in there at that library asking for reference material and doing all this. Of course, we worked on other kinds of assignments, but this was a stimuli kind of thing. And this was the manner in which this guy operated. It was a very--you having done doctoral studies and that sort of thing, would have a real feeling for this sort of thing. It must have been fascinating to be on the other side of the fence and watched us

because, damn, we were in that library night and weekends and making notes and whatnot. We all lived on post, we all had quarters, walking distance to our quarters. So, we had more time with our families, even so, than we had any other time. But, one of the finest environments that I've ever seen. Like a Friday afternoon, a farmers market in Pennsylvania is a great thing, and my wife said at noontime, "Would you take me to Farmer's Market over at Gettysburg today?" "Sure," and I didn't have to call anybody up and check, just went. That's all there was to it. The guest lecturers were always in the morning, committee sessions in the afternoon. Of course, we did do a thesis type of thing. But I thought it was, certainly by long odds, the best academic year I've ever spent and in many respects, the most pleasant year I've ever spent, pleasant from being surrounded by intelligent people who were mentally active. The ten percent did evolve, they were identifiable by the end of three months. We just let them go, nobody paid much attention to them. They pretty much stayed to themselves after awhile, didn't enter into discussions, were not active in committee discussion where the real give and take came in. The committees were never active. The staff never appointed committee chairmen. for various topics on a rotational basis. The real work was done in the committees.

Anderson: And discuss a certain topic?

Simpson: Yes. You shifted committees every four weeks and

--never told us a damn thing about the CIA--typical of that group. Yes, it was a great year, very rewarding professionally and personally satisfying to be with my family.

Anderson: How did the Marine officers get along with the Army?

Simpson: Fine! We didn't have any problems at all, very nice, a lot of mutual respect there with that group of Army officers and that group of Marine officers.

Anderson: Sure, I would imagine.

Headquarters, Policy Analysis Division in Washington for the Marine Corps--you were there briefly, and then you were Secretary for the Commandant of the Marine Corps from 1955 to 1958. Let's talk about being in Washington again.

Simpson: Well, here we are again. The guy who had been my division commander in the 2d Division when I was the regimental commander and again he was the division commander in Korea when I was a regimental commander, was now three stars and was Chief of Staff of Headquarters, Marine Corps. Now, you get this distinction, Terry, he's Chief of Staff of Headquarters, Marine Corps, we have a Chief of Staff of the Army and a Chief of Staff of the Air Force and a Chief of Naval Operations, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Now, within the Marine Corps, the Commandant has a headquarters staff in Washington and he has a chief of that staff, but it should not be confused that he's Chief of Staff of the Marine Corps, he's chief of the

headquarters staff is what it is--three stars.

Anderson: And his boss is the Commandant.

Simpson: His boss is the Commandant. The Commandant commands the entire Marine Corps, but the Chief of Staff is chief of staff only for that staff in Washington, he's not chief of staff of the Marine Corps, but he's chief of staff to the Commandant.

I finished at the top of the Army War College class.

Anderson: Number one?

Simpson: Yes.

Anderson: No kidding!

Simpson: And I got word that they were going to ask the Marine Corps to...there was no Marine on the staff and they never had one of the staff and they decided they wanted me on the staff. And I got wind of it one morning. And he was in Washington and I went home at noon and on my own private telephone I called my friend in Washington and I said, "Don't let this happen to me." I said, "I love this place as a student but I don't want to be here four years." This is career-wise. He said, "Don't worry." He said, "You're not going to like this but you're coming to Washington." I said, "Well, I'd be glad to come to Washington rather than stay here." As an academician that may sound stange, but career-wise for a Marine that's not

good.

Anderson: No, to be under separation for four years....

Simpson: No, that's no good. So, what he did--this is a little condensed--I was in that Policy Analysis Division as a holding pattern only for about two weeks and then I became Secretary of the General Staff working directly for him. I was Secretary of the General Staff, which was an extremely interesting job. And then shortly thereafter, he became Commandant.

Anderson: And what was his name?

Simpson: Pate.

Anderson: What was his first name?

Simpson: Randolph McCall Pate.

Anderson: And he then became the Commandant?

Simpson: He became the Commandant.

Anderson: And you stayed on as his secretary?

Simpson: Well, no--yes, but you see, as the Secretary of the General Staff, I worked for the Chief of Staff. So when Pate moved up to be Commandant, he said, "I want you to come with me." And I said, "Well, I'm not the aide type, General." I said, "You've got a whole stable of lieutenant colonels to be aide for you, I'm not the aide type. And I don't want to be an

aide."

Anderson: Well, what did he say to that? Wouldn't most people consider it somewhat of a promotion to be right next to the Commandant?

Simpson: Yes. I said, "I'm not going to wear the [aide's] loops." He said, "You don't have to wear the loops. I want you to come up here and run my office and run my day for me and be a buffer between me and some of these people who want to see me." Not to screen out the generals of his staff, but some of the others. And he said, "I want you to essentially run the aide. I don't care what you call yourself." Well, I said, "What about being a Military Secretary?" And that's what the biography meant, that's supposed to be Military Secretary to the Commandant.

So, I did. And I was sort of his...well, in reality, I was his senior aide, but I was never called an aide and I didn't wear the aide's loops and I was never a social aide. He had four aides de camp; he had an appointment secretary, a confidential secretary...I sort of ran his suite for him, administered this, I did handle his schedule. The appointment secretary always cleared with me--she kept the appointments and produced it and sent it around to everybody, but I essentially ran his day. He wanted me to travel with him and I told him I didn't think that was right. I could serve him better by staying there and keeping things organized and talk to him on the phone

was capable of doing whatever, but I think he sensed that those eight years that he was President, '52 to '60, as I recall, that the country...that was a time in which Reagan could have served very effectively, too. Eisenhower was basically conservative, you see, and he didn't believe in any more government than was necessary and he sensed that at that particular time that not an awful lot of government was necessary. There were no great doctrines that he espoused, but if you reflect on that period of time, there was not trying requirement for bold initiatives on the part of the President--he took none, that I recall.

Anderson: What did he say about Wilson?

Anderson: How did the Marines get along with him?

Simpson: Oh, he thought Wilson was good.

Simpson: We got along alright. We wanted to be bigger, but we always wanted to be bigger. We figured we had done well in World War II and had done well in Korea. We had fought with Eisenhower beforehand. He had been opposed to our role in the defense structure, but when he became President, he never contested that. Given his choice in the Unification Act, he would not have chosen to give us the roles and commissions that we got, but he accepted that and he did not fight us in that role during that particular period of time.

No, I thought he was a good President for the time in which he served.

Anderson: During this time, if the focus is on the Air Force, did you have any quarrels with the Air Force?

Anderson: Okay. How about Charles Wilson, Secretary of Defense.

Did you work with him?

Simpson: "Engine Charlie."

(Interruption)

An industrialist, highly successful, very strong, dynamic man--I guess, somewhat along the lines of Mr. Bright, the present Chairman of the Board of Regents--had reached the top of his industry, his profession. Probably believed that "what's good for General Motors was good for the country," probably believed that. I would say a reasonably effective Secretary of Defense. One of my close friends became his Military Secretary and principle assistant.

Anderson: What did he say about Wilson?

Simpson: Oh, he thought Wilson was God.

Anderson: Inaudible

Simpson: Oh, yes, yes. He had great admiration for him. And he's a very bright guy, this Marine colonel that worked for him--very bright guy. So, I valued his judgement and he thought very, very highly of Wilson.

Anderson: During this time, in the 1950s, of course, is the rise of the Strategic Air Command and quite a bit of inter-service rivalry and not only between SAC and TAC and the Air Force, but also between who was going to cut a smaller defense budget. Did the Air Force and the Marines--were they at odds? Was this a particularly tense time or about usual for peacetime?

Simpson: About usual. We fought over dollars as they're still fighting over dollars. They will always be fighting over dollars. It's built into the system. Roles and missions pretty well accepted by that time. We didn't take any strong position at all regarding the SAC, Strategic Air Command, we had no aircraft that were in competition there, the Navy was not all that happy about it, I think, because they thought it would take away some of their carriers. The Air Force has always contended that the Navy never needed as many carriers as they had, the Navy always contended they needed more carriers than they got. In that role, we supported the Navy because the bigger Navy, bigger naval aviation, was beneficial to us. We fought bitterly and hard to maintain the identity of Marine aviation and to maintain its close support role. We fought off all attempts to have it absorbed by either naval aviation or the Air Force; we were successful in that regard.

Washington, Terry, in any time, built into the organization system is inter-service controversy, there is no way around it. As long as you're going to have a fourth, and only a Marine will say four separate services, but indeed there are four--the magazines say there are seven including Public Health and Coast Guard and the rest of them--but essentially there are three major ones, of course, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and then in a somewhat lesser role, the Marine Corps. But, the Marine Corps, while very closely associated with the Navy, does retain a separate entity as the Marine Corps and we are very fiercely

proud of that. The Navy sort of grudgingly proud of it, but we probably fought more with the Navy than we did with anybody else.

Anderson: No kidding?

Simpson: Oh, yes, fought over dollars within the overall budget. You see, the Marine aviation is a part of naval aviation, and aircraft procurement for the Marine Corps comes through the Navy procurement, naval aviation procurement. So, there is a continual battle there between Marine aviation and naval aviation for the dollars that can be allotted to naval aviation--naval as opposed to Navy aviation type of thing, who's going to get what type of aircraft. That's still going on today, that's where you get the F18, and that type of thing.

Anderson: I have another question. 1956, Hungarian Revolution, it's a big event, the Soviet tanks move in, did it have any impact on the Joint Chiefs or the Commandant?

Simpson: Shook the Joint Chiefs very badly, they felt, given the status of our...well, in the posture, there really wasn't anything we could do about it. And of course, we all felt terribly frustrated, I say the Chiefs felt terribly frustrated, but there wasn't anything they could do. There was really no way they could get at that thing--intervene militarily. So, there was a sense of frustration, of people wanting to do something, but realizing they were handcuffed and there was nothing they could do. Yes, we talked about it and we worried

about it, we looked at it very closely and we were terribly frustrated because there was nothing that we could do and, of course, we really did nothing during that particular period of time.

Anderson: Did you like being in Washington?

Simpson: Yes, I love the...Well, I have to answer that in several ways. It's, of course, always fascinating to be in where they're mixing the concrete even if they don't mix it to your specifications. But it's extremely interesting as I'm sure that it must be to people that are there now, to be in on what's happening, to feel that you've got some part, even though it's a minor part, to know what's going to happen, to know what the Washington Post is going to look like tomorrow and to know that today is kind of interesting. So, in one way, it's rather intriguing. The work itself I found to be utterly fascinating. In other senses it was sort of frustrating because, of course, my first love was to be with troops and in Washington you don't get very much return, personal satisfaction for the work that you're doing. You can write and publish all these directives and broadcast them world-wide to the Marine Corps world-wide, but you don't get very much playback on it, you don't get much personal satisfaction out of, you know, that you've done a real good thing or a real bad thing. When you're serving the troops when you make a mistake in the morning, you know about it in the afternoon.

Anderson: Yes, or when you do something right.

Simpson: Or when you do something right, the same thing happens, you've got the sense of personal accomplishment. You don't have that in Washington, you feel sort of divorced from the world, the real world, of troops and maneuvers and that sort of thing. You don't really have very much control over that sort of thing. You have an awful lot of work to do, we worked long hours, terribly long hours. But there is a lack of feeling of actual accomplishment, satisfaction of the fact of a job well done is missing.

In many years when I was there as a general officer, I did a lot of testifying before Congress which I found to be extremely interesting. As a colonel, Military Secretary to the Commandant, I did not testify even though I prepared his testimony and helped brief him or "hold school" for him for his appearances over there, went with him on that sort of thing, listened to his answers and that sort of thing. It was interesting to meet people like Carl Vinson and folks who were in that thing at that time. On the other hand, Washington duty is disillusioning to an idealistic young person in the service who has been led to believe that everything is--the people in Washington are supposed to be all knowing, that they are all wise, and that they are all honest. And you like to believe that, that's a good thing to believe, you know, you're comfortable with that sort of thing. And so, it is disillusioning to you to go to Washington, as I did on my first occasion--and by

the way, that's when my hair turned white. It literally did.

Anderson: No kidding?

Simpson: Oh, hell, yes.

Anderson: Tension and pressure?

Simpson: And disillusionment to find out that some of my great American heroes had feet of clay.

Anderson: Feet of clay? For example?

Simpson: For example, Omar Bradley. I heard Omar Bradley testify in 1949, when they were considering modification to the Unification Act, I heard him testify concerning the Marine Corps before Congress to things that I knew weren't true and I knew he knew they weren't true. This was a terrible blow to me, terrible blow to me. I had thought all of these great American war heroes were just that, I thought they were great American war heroes. And there were other instances, too numerous really, lots of cases. What I really found out was that there are no super human beings in Washington, they have all the faults that everybody else has. But I didn't want to believe that, I was young, I was idealistic, I wanted to think these guys were absolute pillars of towering integrity, and they're not. They weren't then, they're not today. I'm not there anymore, but I know that they're wheeling and dealing and cutting deals and doing all that sort of thing. I didn't want

to think that was happening. I got there and saw that it was happening and for a young man that would like to believe that those people had risen to the top of the profession and the great public servants that came in--"public servants" type of thing--that they were there indeed to serve the public. And all too often, I found out that they were stricken by "Potomac Fever," they had a sense of power given to them by being at the seat of the government, and they were serving their own interests rather than--meanwhile all the time thinking they were serving the country. And there were some great public servants, Robert Lovett, for example, Jim Forrestal, public servant, highest, highest order. Cyrus Vance, I think was a great public servant. The public servants that I admired the most--now I'm talking about the non-military--the public servants that I admired the most in my twelve years in Washington where those individuals who didn't need the job, many of whom came at a great financial sacrifice, were not impressed by the perquisites of the job and that's not as easy to do as it sounds. Even if you're making a half million dollars a year on Wall Street, you're still probably--I don't know whether they do it today--but you're still riding a train out to Connecticut at night. When you arrive at Washington as Secretary of Defense or Secretary of Navy or even maybe as an Under Secretary and all of a sudden you have instead of riding a train out to the suburbs of Virginia, you've got a big long black Cadillac with a driver, you've got a retinue of aides, you've got your own private

dining room, you've got people that really respond to every beck and call that you have. You can summon an airplane and fly away to go to distant places, your own private airplane, I might say, assigned to you--as we used to say, "dedicated" type of thing--airplane will take you anywhere you like to. You have to be a rather staunch person, to have your feet on the ground and not get carried away. Most of them do, people like Forrestal, Lovett, that breed never were. They accepted those trappings of office as necessary to go along with it, but they never fooled themselves that they were all as great as all of this stuff indicated, you see. We saw the instance of Carter trying to down-play all that sort of thing. It didn't work out very well.

But, I did admire some of the people who were indeed what I thought were great public servants who were there trying to indeed serve the great country that had been kind to them, at great financial sacrifice, upset of family, and that kind of thing. There are some great ones there, I'm sure there are some there now.

Anderson: In general then, would you say that your opinion of how our government works, that is, your opinion of the bureaucrats in Washington decreased with your years in Washington?

Simpson: Oh, markedly so. But, you have to remember that I came in as a very naive guy.

Anderson: Yes, okay.

Simpson: I guess all I did was face up to reality. It had been there all the time but I didn't know it and I didn't want to believe it. Oh, yes, oh, yes, tremendously so. The bureaucracy in Washington and it's not unlike bureaucracy elsewhere, except it's more entrenched and more pervasive. But the bureaucracy in Washington is a discouraging thing to tangle with. I made the mistake in my first tour of Washington, I tried to fire a GS-5 clerk, and I always regretted that, Terry. I spent five years writting letters of justification.

Anderson: To fire this person?

Simpson: Yes, totally imcompetent. And she won, she won reinstatement, back pay, I guess--probably, eventually became a GS-16, I don't know. After that I decided to play the system and the system is you don't fire anybody in civil service you transfer them; even if it is to a better job. That's the way it worked, that's the way civil service worked. To an extent, that's the way it works around here.

Anderson: The Peter principal.

Simpson: The Peter principal, absolutely.

Anderson: Now Vietnam, you weren't in Washington during Dien-bienphu in 1954, you were a student at the Army War College, but Vietnam was still a growing concern to the United States, John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower administration. During these years from 1955 to 1958, of course, we were getting involved in

a small way, not as far as the large troop movements, but we had our CIA and some military advisors in the country.

Simpson: Not very many military advisors.

Anderson: No, not many at all, not very many at all, but a few, a few people training. And I was wondering if Vietnam was a concern to the Commandant?

Simpson: Not at that time, no. We were not involved. We knew that the CIA was there and that conceivably, not to my knowledge, but conceivably, there could have been some Marines with CIA that were in Vietnam. They were in there as CIA agents and not as Marine officers.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: So Vietnam, to answer your question, was a minor source of worry but not at point of major concern by any means nor discussion.

Anderson: Okay, okay, that's all I wanted to know.

1958 to 1960 you move on as Chief of Staff of the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico. Now, what exactly was your job at Quantico?

Simpson: I ran the base.

Anderson: You ran it.

Simpson: I told you earlier about General Twining. He was

the three star commander. By the way I misquoted his name, I'll correct it in the text, it's Merrill B. Twining, M. B. Twining. I said William B., it's Merrill B. Twining.

Quantico is sort of the home post of the Marine Corps. It is a school post primarily. And when I say I ran it, I want to amplify that. Twining was an intellectual, he was intensely interested in officer schools, he was interested in the academic curricula of those schools. As the Commandant of the Schools, he was also essentially the post commander. Now, the Army does that a little differently, as you know. But Twining's job was also that of post commander.

End Side 2, Tape 5

Begin Side 1, Tape 6

Simpson: ...he never inspected the troops, I did.

Anderson: Okay, you did all of that.

Simpson: Yes, he never inspected the galley or mess hall or anything like that. He left that entirely to me. One interesting thing, Twining, outside of his working hours, loved to fish, he was an excellent fisherman. We had several lakes on the reservation, big reservation, about 90,000 acres--no, 60,000, but anyhow, big, enough to have several lakes. He thought fishing was great. He thought anybody that played golf was crazy and lazy, even though there is a little bit more exercise involved normally in golfing than there is in fishing.

I am a golfer, not a fisherman. Consequently, in that job, I didn't play very much golf, except on weekends. And I couldn't get any money from him to maintain the golf course with the way it ought to be. Until one day, I got a call from the White House.

Anderson: From the White House?

Simpson: "President Eisenhower is coming down to play golf." Fine. You know, you don't say, "It's not convenient." So, I walked into the General's office and I said, "We're going to have a visitor." He said, "We have a lot of visitors, what's new?" And I said, "This one's the President." "What the hell is he coming for?" He was not a great admirer of him.

Anderson: Why not?

Simpson: Because he had fought him during the Unification hearings. See, I told you, Twining was the architect of the Marine Corps' roles and missions and everything, so he never forgave Eisenhower for the position he took. He didn't have anything against his crusade in Europe, he thought that was a pretty good job. But, like a lot of real bright intellectuals, if he got down on the guy, the guy was dead, he could never redeem himself. "What the hell is he coming for?" "He's coming to play golf." "Golf!" He said, "What sort of shape is the golf course in?" I said, "Terrible." He said, "Fix it." That's all he said, "Fix it." The visit was three days hence.

Anderson: They didn't trust the Marines. Why not? Was that

I fixed it. I had a 300 man working party out there that afternoon. We did everything but air condition the damned place. Beautiful, we benefited golfers for all times at Quantico.

The President came, we had to clear the whole thing, nobody else could play--the Secret Service guys in the woods. That was my first real dealing with the Secret Service, you know, I never had contact with the Presidential detail. I had contact with them on other things, counterfeit and that sort of thing, never on the Presidential detail. So, you know, I thought they were like anybody, I thought you could negotiate with these guys. You don't, not with the Presidential detail. They came in and said what they were going to do, and I said, "Why?" Finally this guy, who was very patient with me, said, "Colonel, you don't understand." He said, "This is the Presidential detail. You don't negotiate with us, we'll tell you what you're going to do."

Anderson: That's what he told you?

Simpson: He told me, and we did. He said, "Let's see the golf course." So, we went over to the golf course. He also wanted to see where they were going to land. They were going to send the limousines down, they didn't trust anybody, send the limousines down to take them to the helicopter pad to the golf course.

Anderson: They didn't trust the Marines. Why not? Was that

just the way it was?

Simpson: Oh, yes. They were going to bring down his golf cart too. He rode an electric golf cart with a Secret Service guy driving it. I've forgotten who played with him, doesn't make any difference. The Secret Service didn't pay any attention to them. They were not within the honored circle that they had to protect. So, we got over to one hole where the tee was back up here and the hole came way down here, and the guy got out there and he said, "Can an electric golf cart go up there?" I said, "I don't think so, I've never seen one go up there." He said, "Well, I'll tell you what you're going to do. You pick out your best jeep and we'll inspect it and then you put it under guard and then we'll have a jeep positioned here." And we did just that, we got the jeep, checked it all out, he inspected it, then we put it in an enclosure--inside--and put it under 24 hour a day guard, and when Eisenhower came down we moved the jeep with a Secret Service guy driving it out here to this position on the golf course and when the President and his foursome got to that thing, Eisenhower got out of the electric cart, got into the jeep, Secret Service guy drove him up to the top, he hit his golf ball, drove him back down, got into the electric golf cart, and that was it.

Now, Nixon was Vice-President and he came several times, brought Bill Rogers with him, Attorney General, and some of those other poker playing friends of his. He used to come down on the Sequoia and they'd tie up at the dock. See, his detail

was little less stringent, we didn't have to clear the golf course for him, but we had to play in what they call a "five hole envelope." There was nobody three holes ahead or two holes behind. His foursome played around like that.

I was glad to have those visitors because it gave me the leverage to get the golf course cleaned up and repaired and maintained and that sort of thing. There weren't too many problems with it from that standpoint.

Anderson: Did you ever have an opportunity to talk with either Eisenhower or Nixon?

Simpson: I talked with Nixon several times.

Anderson: Later on when you were a general, though.

Simpson: No, at that time, at that time. I went out there to meet him, I felt like I had to be there, but also, I thought it would be interesting to meet him. And he was an extremely gracious guy.

One interesting thing that happened, we had one hole that all of us who played golf had cursed because it was a par five hole, sort of a hilly kind of thing like this. The third shot, there was a ditch that ran across right in front of the green that was about 18 inches deep--a drainage ditch. But, you couldn't see it until you got right on it, it looked like it was level. Eisenhower hit his third shot, which he thought was going to be on the green--this is a par five hole--and when he

it on. I mean, when he really wanted to turn that screw, as got up there, his ball was in this ditch. Well, the ground rule was that you could move it out of the ditch and play it, you see. That's the way we all played the thing. And I was along there and...Boy, he could cuss like a trooper and did, you know. He said, "Goddamnit," he said, "What's that ditch doing across there?" And I said, "Well, we play that as the local ground rule, Mr. President, you can pick it out of there." He said, "I know that, but you haven't got any reason to have that goddamn ditch in there." So, that night, we went out there, we cleaned it all out, took all the grass out, put in a drainage pipe, put the grass back on top--there no more ditch there now. He came down about two or three weeks later and played again and he remembered that thing and when he got to that thing he said, "That's great of you, that's great of you." And all the golfers on the post applauded because they were trying to get that ditch out of there for years, but we couldn't get the money out of it.

Oh, he was very pleasant, very affable. I've forgotten who played with him, but he was a pretty good golfer. He shot in the low 80's.

Anderson: Really? That's good.

Simpson: Yes, he shot in the low 80's.

Anderson: Especially for his age at that time.

Simpson: He didn't mix up his syntax, he--oh, he could turn

it on. I mean, when he really wanted to turn that screw, he could charm anybody, and he was feeling good, and he loved to play golf. He had a bunch of guys with him that he liked to play with and everything was fine.

Anderson: Now, as far as the Schools when you were there, what were the challenges?

Simpson: Well, you see, I didn't really have that much to do with the Schools. We had--there were two activities in Quantico, one called the Development Center and one the Educational Center. The Educational Center ran the schools all the way from The Basic School, which taught 2d lieutenants just entering the service, up to the Command and Staff School, which was not the level of the Army War College but one cut below that, see. That's the same level as Leavenworth.

I did attend several of the guest lectures over at Educational Center, but I did not attend those schools, though I had taught in the Command and Staff, as I mentioned before, when I came back from World War II. So, I was not intimately concerned since I was not on the educational staff. See, there was a brigadier running each of those two centers, the Educational Center and the Development Center. Twining was into this business up to his ears all the time. And he had let me understand that he would take care of that end of it and I was not to be involved and I was to concern myself with the logistics of running the post.

Anderson: Yes, how did you get to Duke?

Anderson: This must have been good duty, though?

Simpson: Well, I first have to tell you... Now, you remember

Simpson: Oh, it was outstanding.

Anderson: You were pretty much left to your own guidance.

Simpson: Sure, I did what I wanted to. I made up the budgets, and all that sort of thing. He looked over the budget, but his interest was in what we were doing educationally, and to some extent, into the development phase.

The development people had to do, in addition to developing equipment, they were also refining doctrine, manuals, and that sort of thing--training guides. So, yes, Quantico is the best post in the Marine Corps. That's the reason that I speak of it as a home town; usually everybody starts out there and they all want to get back there. We were there three times. It's a delightful place to be; it's just 30 miles from Washington, right on the Potomac--the post is--beautiful country, Virginia countryside. Yes, I liked it, my wife thoroughly enjoyed it, that was pleasant.

Anderson: And your affiliation with this post and its reputation for schools, did that have any impact on your moving to Duke University the next year, 1960?

Simpson: I thought we'd get to that. The answer to your question, Terry, is no. But you would like to know how I got to Duke University.

Anderson: Yes, how did you get to Duke?

Simpson: Well, I first have to tell you...Now, you remember my friend Twining?

Anderson: Yes, yes.

Simpson: During the time of '46-'48, when we were working on the Unification Act and so forth, he was the guiding light in what I call the military political business and I was working with him. I never really got close to Twining, but remember that I was his chief of staff--and I should tell you how I got to be his chief of staff. Not by his choosing. General Pate was appointed for two years. Very unusual, the Commandant is usually appointed for four, he was appointed for two.

Anderson: Why was that?

Simpson: Well, I don't know, but they were then thinking about going to two years for all chiefs of service and they did for a little hiatus in there. But then he was reappointed, so he served four years, but it had to be two appointments. And when he was reappointed, he was not sure he was going to be reappointed. But I had some contacts and I was reassuring, I had better contacts at that time than he did, and sure enough, he was reappointed. So, we were in his office there that night about seven o'clock when the word came in and he said, "Well, Ormond, we're good for another two years." I said, "No, not me, I've got to get out from under your wing." I

said, "You've got it made, you got your four stars. And I'm not going to stay here for another two years." I said, "I can't stay here for another two years. I'm dead in the water, I got a grand job but you're going to retire at the end of this time and I'm still going to be around trying to make one star.

Anderson: That's what you told him?

Simpson: I told him.

Anderson: You could certainly talk with him, couldn't you.

Simpson: Oh, I did, too. Well, I was very close to the guy.

Anderson: Yes, reading all the mail.

Simpson: 14-16 hours a day. And I didn't stand in awe, I was never disrespectful to him, but I said, you know, "You've been very kind to me, you've given me command of two regiments and you brought me to Washington, you've given me this good job and I'm grateful for it," but I said, "I would like to be a general officer and in order to do that I've got to get out and get out from under your wing because I'm known as a "Pate man" now. That won't sustain me after your gone."

He said, "What do you want to do?" He said, "You pick out any job in the Marine Corps for a colonel and you can have it, I don't care who's got it now." He said, "What do you like to do best?" And I said, "Regimental commander." He said, "Name

it, and you got it, which ever one you want." And I said, "No, I've had command of two regiments, one in Korea, one in Camp Lejeune. Most colonels don't even get one." And I said, "If I got another regimental command, it would be only because you directed it. And that wouldn't be any fun to me and besides, I have to live with my peers and they would know that's the way I got it because a lot of them are jealous of the fact that I've commanded two regiments much less three." So, I said that job would be no satisfaction to me. I said, "I don't want you to get me a job. What I'd like you to do is tell Director of Personnel that I will be available for reassignment in June and then let me take my chances." He said, "What do you think you ought to be doing next?" I said, "I want to be chief of staff of somebody." I'm pretty senior by now, you see. And he said, "Who do you want to be chief of staff for?" I said, "Did you ever let anybody pick your chief of staff?" "No." I said, "Well, don't thrust me down somebody's throat. Just tell them I'm available and I'll go down and talk to Director of Personnel, whose a good friend of mine and maybe he can let it be known that I'd be available in June and somebody that needs a chief of staff for division or post, why maybe they'll ask for me." The Marine Corps is small enough you can do that sort of thing.

Anderson: Yes, sure.

Simpson: So, he said, "Okay, I'll do it." The next day, in

his office comes General Twining from Quantico. Twining is already in Quantico and he said, "The boss wants to see me, do you know what it's about?" I said, "I don't have any idea." All of a sudden, I had sort of a sinking spell. In Twining went, out he came, he said, "Put on your hiking boots, we're going."

Anderson: That's what Twining said to you?

Simpson: Yes. I walked in to General Pate and I said, "Damn-it, General, I told you I didn't want you to get me a job." "Oh, oh," he said, "I thought you'd enjoy being with Bill Twining, he'd love to have you." I said, "Sure he'd love to have me, you told him that." He said, "Well, not really, I told him you'd be available, besides, there is an awful nice set of quarters in Quantico that I thought Marge would enjoy." That's the way I got to be Twinings chief of staff.

Anderson: That was great duty though at Quantico.

Simpson: Great duty, great duty, and I loved Quantico and I admired Twining very much. But, we had then seven, as we have now, lieutenant generals. And question was, who was going to be the next Commandant and everybody thought it was going to be one of these seven lieutenant generals. It normally is. For reasons that are still--that I can't identify particularly --the Secretary of the Navy reached down and picked David M. Shoup, Medal of Honor from Tarawa, then commanding, I guess

Parris Island--major general. And he selected him to be the next Commandant, from two stars to four. So, all seven lieutenant generals, including Twining, retired.

Anderson: They did? I don't remember this.

Simpson: Yes. Well, they had another motive in going, in addition to the fact that they were all passed over. There was a law at that time, that I think I mentioned to you once before....

Anderson: This is 1960?

Simpson: Yes, it was 1959 when the selection was made. But you remember I spoke about, when we first started talking, I talked about telephone book generals?

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: You remember there was a law, I told you at that time, that a guy who's had a combat decoration from any war in the Navy, the Marine Corps could be promoted one rank on retirement [Ed. note: Van Zandt Rider to Defense Appropriations Bill]. That law expired on 1 November 1959--now I could be wrong, between '59 and '60, but I think Shoup was to take office in 1960 and I think this law was to expire 1 November before he took office. This appointment was made in July.

Anderson: So, these lieutenant generals had the option to retire in the next three months with a fourth star.

Simpson: With a fourth star. So they had two motivations, one they were passed over and they bitterly resented--not many people liked Shoup then or today. They didn't particularly want to, but if they retired within the next few months they would get four stars on the retirement list. So, they all elected to go and all did go. And a new major general--Snedeker came to Quantico and he was promoted to three stars.

Anderson: What impact did that have on the leadership of the Marines, all seven of their three stars bailing out at one time?

Simpson: Not a hell of a lot because there were enough senior major generals that moved into those spots. It shook up the general officer rank quite a lot, but it didn't filter down to the ranks.

Anderson: Yes. Well, I bet you those two star generals were smug satisfaction about them.

Simpson: They were delighted, they thought it was great, you know, I mean, get out of the way and let us get in there and do some work. So, all of a sudden, I was working for Lieutenant General Snedeker and Twining retired, and Shoup was Commandant. Now, I never had anything to do with Shoup. I never served with him, didn't know the guy. I knew him, but like as a senior colonel, you get to know all the Marine general officers, we had at that time, but I mean I never served for him or with him or whatnot.

Anderson: You said people didn't like him, why was that?

Simpson: Oh, he's a self-centered, egotistical, nasty, son-of-a-bitch, that's the reason they didn't like him. Hard-nosed, irrational, rode that Medal of Honor for all it was worth, brilliant financial mind, was the first fiscal manager of the Marine Corps, a man who made a great personal fortune in investments and things like that. He was not a guy who would ever have many friends, nobody could ever be very close to him. I never knew quite why they made him Commandant, but they did.

The next spring, the colonels slate came out--I was due to stay in Quantico at least another year. Next spring, when the colonel's slate came out, I was on the slate to move early and to go to Duke NROTC. General Snedeker was astounded and he went to Washington and appealed this to Shoup, and Shoup said, "He's a Twining man and he's got to go and if he goes NROTC duty he'll never get selected for brigadier." And I was not the only one.

Anderson: That's just what I was going to say. You were identified as a Twining man.

Simpson: Everyone that he associated with being a Twining man was moved. We finally laughed about it. Somebody said if there had been a couple of billets on the moon, he'd have sent us there. Everybody went to duty stations that were not career enhancing.

Anderson: Yes, yes, because for a senior colonel going to Duke University, I would think, is sort of a dead end.

Simpson: That was what it was designed to be by Shoup. Nobody, Navy or Marine Corps, had ever made brigadier from ROTC duty. And he, Shoup, assigned me to that duty in the firm belief that that would be the end of my career, as far as making general officer. I knew it, I knew that was the reason.

Anderson: Did you think at the time you received that and after you had time to consider this and came with the opinion that this would be the end of your career, did you ever think that now was the time to retire?

Simpson: Hell no, Terry. I was going to come up for brigadier in a year and I was going to stand on my record. And I made the assessment that my record was good enough to be in a competitive position in spite of spending my last year in NROTC, and besides, I figured that everybody who sat on a selection board, all nine of which were general officers would know why I was there.

Anderson: Sure.

Simpson: And I was determined to take my chances because I worked a long time, about 24 years, to build this career record and I had to take one swing at it--I would never have forgiven myself. Now, there were seven of us that Shoup moved that way, but a year later I was selected for brigadier. Nobody else was, I was the only one of the seven that ever made it. And

I'm sure that that was a bitter, bitter disappointment to Shoup. I've often wished that I could have been in his office the day they laid the selection list in front of him and my name was on it; he must have thrown a tantrum because that was not what he had designed to do.

Anderson: Now granted, you were the quality for a generalship, but what about the other six? Did he destroy their careers, or did their record continue to remain a colonel?

Simpson: Well, I would have said that two or three of them were probably pretty competitive. Now, that's the break point, colonel to brigadier. And I should tell you that I have said many times that any colonel who expects to be selected for brigadier shouldn't be.

Anderson: Why do you say that?

Simpson: I say that because he's not realistic enough to know what the odds are and the odds are about four in a hundred. And you remember now that these people have already passed through seven selection processes. There are not many bums there.

Anderson: Yes.

Simpson: A selection board for brigadier in the Marine Corps can't make many mistakes and it's the toughest job in the world. You sit down and you're supposed to select seven brigadiers,

and you're looking at 150 cases, almost all of whom have been marked outstanding. Now, you're first time through, you drop out a few--a good many. They're good guys, but they're not destined to go on. From there on it's a soul-searching, soul gut tearing proposition trying to make the seven, trying to get the seven best that can serve the country and can serve the Marine Corps. And you got seven here and you got seven over here and you got seven more down here all equally good. That's the toughest job I've ever done. I sat on that board three different times, later on as a major general and lieutenant general. So, when I say a guy who expects to make brigadier is not realistic enough to be selected, he's not looking at the odds. Now, I think you can tell whether you're competitive or not. You know, there are some guys who say, "Well, I haven't got a chance," and they're right.

I figured I had a chance. I did not think I was any shoe-in but I made it from ROTC duty and I was the first guy ever to make--Navy or Marine Corps--ever to make flag rank while on ROTC duty. There had been a couple in the Navy that had served on ROTC staffs earlier in their career that eventually became admiral, but they never were selected while there.

Anderson: Tell me how you first learned about being selected and your response.

Simpson: That's supposed to be a very, very closely held thing until the President announces it. A selection board was

held in August, early August, and I had a friend in court, he was a brigadier, but not on the selection board. There are no brigadiers on the selection board, theory being that brigadiers don't select their successors. But he got the word when he was not supposed to have it, it was not released yet. And he called me at the office and he said, "I don't want to talk to you here, would you go home?" Well hell, on ROTC duty you can go home whenever you want to. So I went to my home on the Duke campus, I had a house...That was a wonderful tour at Duke, I mean just great, and a house on the campus on Myrtle Drive, great, well, it was great except I was under-employed--well, anyway, he called me back in 30 minutes at that house and he said...Of course, we were on pins and needles, you know. We knew the board was supposed to come out at anytime. And he said, "How's the weather in Durham?" And I said, "Oh, it's pretty good. Little rain outside today." He said, "Well, I just thought I'd tell you that the sun is shining brightly in Washington." And I said, "Thanks a heap, it's nice to talk to you," and I knew then that I was in. The next day, what we call an ALMAR, which is a world-wide despatch came out with the names on it and I was on it. I didn't tell anybody but my wife and then, of course, when the word finally got out, we were on the telephone all night long, literally. And our local friends came over and celebrated. The Dean of Liberal Arts, the Dean of Trinity College, who was my university contact, cute little guy.

Simp: This would interest you. His discipline or his particular interest was the history of Brazil, he had a PhD in history, but Brazil was the particular portion of history. Trinity College at Duke is the college of Liberal Arts, and he had no military background but he sort of volunteered to be the point of contact for ROTC. We had no corps or anything like that. And he came over to the house that night, I remember he had on a little bowtie, and Marge opened the door and this little guy said, "Hot-ziggity-dog," that's the most exhort he could come out with. But it was a tremendously happy time for all of us and particularly for me because I knew I had defeated Shoup. But he didn't quite let up. He wasn't quite through with me. Then I knew I'd be moving, see.

Simpson: She didn't, she could tell by the look on my face.
Anderson: Yes, you way too over-qualified for that job.

Simpson: Over ranked for that sort of thing. I didn't know where. So, his final swing was, the Director of Personnel called me on the 17th day of August. Now, remember, I had my wife and two children there on the campus in Duke and he called me on the 17th day of August and he said, "The Commandant told me to call you and ask you if you can be in Okinawa on the 30th day of August?" And he said, "I hate like hell to make this call and I think it is a great imposition on you and I know he doesn't need you out there that soon."

Anderson: That's what the Director, his own Director of Personnel said?
Simpson: Interesting assignment for a new brigadier

Simpson: Told me on the phone, and he said, "I think 15 September would be much more reasonable, give you a chance to move your family and what not." And he said, "That's what I propose to go back and tell him." And I said, "Gus, what was the question?" He said, "The question was, 'Can you be in Okinawa the 30th of August?'" I said, "The answer is yes." He said, "I think it's personally unfair." And I said, "I'm not going to debate with him, you just tell him that you called me and I said, 'Yes, I can be there.'" I went home, my wife was laying on the bed reading a book and I walked in, she looked at me and she said, "You're going to Okinawa."

Anderson: How did she know?

Simpson: She didn't, she could tell by the look on my face. And what a trooper she is, Terry, she got up off the bed, folded the book and started taking the curtains down. So, I got to Okinawa on the 28th.

I'm going to have to sign off here, Terry. That would be a good place to start with Okinawa because Okinawa is kind of interesting as a brigadier.

End Session.

Begin Session, October 8, 1981

Anderson: We were discussing your assignment to Okinawa, how you rushed off there, and your last comment was, I believe, that it was very interesting assignment for a new brigadier

general and I'd like to know why.

Simpson: Well, one, to keep it in sequence, I wanted to tell you....

Interruption.

...I wanted to tell you the great ceremony that was associated with me pinning on my stars which is something that you always look forward to all your life.

See, this selection board, as I told you, was in August, I mean its results were announced in August and I was given til the 30th of August to get there. So, I moved my family hurriedly to Texas and took off. I stopped in Pearl Harbor which is the headquarters of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, and I was still wearing a colonel's eagles, but I had "made my number," as they called it, as a brigadier general effective the 1st of July. And of course, I was going out there to assume a BG's job. And I had two days in Pearl Harbor complete with briefings on the Far East and that sort of thing, particularly the mission of the 3d Marine Division that I was going to join, and contingency plans and that kind of thing. And I was in the G-3 shop, going through the briefings and the squawk-box rang and it was Lieutenant General Shapley, who was the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, and he asked the G-3, he said, "Is Ormond Simpson in your office?" He said, "Yes, we're going to the briefing, General." He said, "Well, send him up here right away." So, I walked up to Shapley's office, man that I knew very well, and I walked in his office

and his deputy commanding general, a two star, Avery Kier, came in at the same time and they opened a box and one of them took one star and one took the other and they reached up and took off the eagles and pinned on one star and said, "Now you're a brigadier general, go back to your briefings." That was the ceremony associated with that. So, then I flew on to....

Anderson: I bet that made you feel good, though.

Simpson: Well, yes. So, I arrived in Okinawa with the stars on and they did it right on that end, that was my first set of honors with an honor guard and the guns and all that sort of thing.

But, to answer your question as to why I found it to be challenging and interesting, was because of the fact that I got to take the Expeditionary Brigade to Thailand.

Anderson: Yes, for four months.

Simpson: The assistant division commander's job is, in peacetime, not a very demanding one except to be very fast on your feet. And by that I mean to make sure you do not get between the commanding general and his chief of staff and staff, yet at the same time you've got to know everything that is going on because you're standing at the wings waiting to take his place if something happens to the commanding general. Or in this case, as it turned out in my case, extremely interesting, because we sent a smaller formation--we didn't send the entire

division to Thailand--that meant that we formed a brigade.

Now, the brigade in Marine parlance, Terry, is anything we want to call it, and they are sort of ad hoc forces, if you were, we don't keep brigades in being, normally, in the Marine Corps.

We do have one and that's on the island of Oahu, that's a brigade in being there, but for the most part, they are made and tailored for a specific situation. There's not a T/O for a brigade, it can be whatever you decide it to be.

In this instance, the brigade that I was supposed to take in there would have eventually, if we had filled it up and done what we planned to, it would have had a reinforced infantry regiment--an infantry regiment reinforced with a battalion of artillery, a company of engineers, medical company, and all that sort of thing--what we call a RLT, a regimental landing team and a Provisional Air Group--that would have made up the brigade or the Expeditionary Brigade.

And our going there was rather exciting because, you see, this was the time when there was a great deal trouble in Laos and there was a fear that the rebels would invade Thailand, which was a friendly country, and so it was decided to send American forces into Thailand as a defensive measure and as a show of force.

Anderson: And how many were in the brigade?

Simpson: Well, I wanted to tell you about this, I'm getting to that.

Anderson: Okay.

Simpson: It would have numbered, had we taken in what we originally planned to do, it would have numbered over 7,000. Now, Averell Harriman was our peace negotiator and he was in Geneva. And we were ordered in on--well, we left on 24 hour notice, no, on 36 hour notice, I guess, to go in there. Now, we had in the sea off Thailand, we had a Marine battalion landing team on amphibious ships. They had been moved around then and into the Gulf of Thailand as the tensions grew, even before we were alerted because that is the great advantage of the amphibious force being a show of force and being mobile and being in international waters, you can move them around, you can keep them in international waters and if the emergency subsides, they can disappear and nobody is hurt. It's not a question of landing rights and that sort of thing; or on the other hand, if they're needed to go in where they can land. Well, when we were alerted or given the first...Matter of fact, we were not alerted, we were told we were going to go and the question of how long it would be was a question of when they could get the airlift to us because the Okinawa elements were going by air. This Marine battalion landing team landed in Bangkok and then moved up both by air and by narrow gauge railroad to Udorn, 325 miles northeast of Bangkok in a very, very arid region, a very poor region. Its strategic significance is that it is 30 miles south of Vientiane. And there was a 7,000 foot strip of concrete that was put in during World War II; as it turned out, there were

many others put in in Southeast Asia as recovery fields that were planned to bomb China--our own planes, we never had to use them--but Air America was using it at that time, primarily, for helicopters. So, the initial increment of the ground component, as I say, came from the sea and came up from Bangkok. I went down and took the headquarters company and some signal units--signal augmentation and that sort of thing that formed the brigade headquarters. We also took a portion of the Provisional Marine air group. The tactical aircraft, the helicopters were aboard the landing ships. They flew up to Bangkok at the same time the ground troops landed. Another squadron, or a squadron of A4 attack aircraft flew from Japan by stages through the Philippines into to there. And I left from Okinawa, Naha Airport. It was an extremely interesting thing at that time because when we departed, our information--the communications were so bad that we knew where we were going, but we didn't know who the airfield belonged to. And we were strung out over the Pacific.

Anderson: A little nervous about landing?

Simpson: Well, yes, initially, yes. We had fuel enough to go into Bangkok, if we had to and had we not been able to establish satisfactory radio communications, why, we would have gone to Bangkok. But, there we were that night, we flew at night, across the South China Sea, across Southern Vietnam, which was not a problem at that particular time, and into northeastern

Thailand. And the pilot of our lead aircraft, in which I rode, established radio communication with the Marine A4s and they were talking from the cockpit of the airplane. They didn't have any landing tower or anything like that.

Anderson: But the A4 was on the ground?

Simpson: The A4 was on the ground.

Anderson: Okay. He landed.

Simpson: And he gave the word that it was--that the BLT was there and that everything was friendly and fortunately, the weather was good. So, we landed.

Anderson: (Inaudible)

Simpson: No, we landed in daytime. It was a long flight from Okinawa. See, we had to fly from Okinawa to Clark Field in the Philippines, and refuel and then go across.

So, it was a daytime landing, we planned it daytime, we couldn't have tried it at night, you couldn't have made it without some sort of landing equipment and landing aides. So, we ended up there...Oh, about the time we started to bring in the rest of the troops, then the negotiations were such that they put a clamp on the number of U.S. forces in there, so by that time I had 3,500 and never got any more than 3,500. It was a sort of lopsided outfit, but it was pretty well organized. We had the full battalion landing team, we had a Marine helicopter squadron of 20 aircraft, we had 18 A4s. We did not have, as a it turned out, enough engineering support to do

what we had to do.

We had to defend the airfield.

Anderson: That was your mission?

Simpson: The initiative, the primary mission was to defend that airfield. Then we had to be prepared to go to Vientiane and cross the Mekong River if required. That crossing would have been quite a chore, as it turned out, because you know, Mekong is one of the world's largest rivers.

Anderson: Absolutely.

Simpson: And the only river without a bridge that I know anything about. And at Vientiane across--Nankai is on the Thailand side and Vientiane on the Laos side--and the river is a mile and three quarters wide with a very heavy current. So, getting across--we had amphibious tractors--oh, no, we didn't, we couldn't get them up there. They were in Bangkok, but we couldn't get them up this narrow gauge railroad. Of course, we could have ferried our troops by helicopter, the ground forces, but it was essentially a sort of show-of-force thing. But we didn't know how long we were going to stay. And I went to call on the governor of the province in the little community of Udorn. He was about seven kilometers away from where we were. And I called on him that first day when we got in. Of course, they welcomed us with open arms because they were frightened.

Anderson: They were afraid of the Communists?

Simpson: Yes, yes, and insurgents and that sort of thing. They weren't afraid of a real massive invasion, but they were afraid of infiltration and the sort of thing we had in mission in South Vietnam with the Viet Cong.

But he told me that, we got there in May, and he said you have 40 days to build a camp. In 40 days your present campsite will have almost been emersed in several inches of water on it from the monsoon rains. We had to build it out of teak and mah-
agony, since that was the only lumber locally available. We had to build it--the Frontier Camp--off the ground to escape the monsoon floods.

End Side 1, Tape 6

Begin Side 2, Tape 6

Simpson: Our small engineer detachment could not do the job in the time required and did not have the equipment. I asked for the Seabees and was assigned a detachment of 78. To bring in those 78 Seabees, I had to identify to identify 78 people that could go out. And that's what we did. We brought the Seabees and their equipment in by C130s and with each plane load that landed, we had to count the guys that landed and then on that return aircraft we had to put the same number of Marines leaving. Now, those Marines were selected by a variety of reasons. Some were sick, others we didn't want to lose, but we had to get them out of the country at least for a while. Some we brought back later after the Seabees had finished their task.

Anderson: And how long did it take the Seabees to build?

Simpson: 40 days.

Anderson: 40 days.

Simpson: Well, that's all hands work, what the Seabees did was to make the jigs and do the cutting of the timber and then the Marines went to work and built their own camps. We had squad tents and we built the decks up one meter and connected them with duck boards and then we put the squad tents on there with framing on there, you know, just to frame the tent. But that had to be nailed down, we had to put laths on top of the top because of the high winds that came in with the monsoon.

While we were still in the process of building the camp, some troops were out--we built the mess hall that was up and screened it because we were terribly afraid of dysentery, which we got in spite of our efforts. But the first test to the monsoon came, I was still in the base camp--in the squad tent that I used as living quarters and an office--and out in front of the tent the ever present sergeant major had put a nice red lettered sign saying, "Commanding General" and that night, we got the first taste of the monsoon, which was a heavy wind and a drenching rain. And my tent collapsed on top of me and we had about eight to ten inches of water inside--and this meant that all my clothing and all of my papers and everything else--and I crawled out of this mess and went over and bunked in with the chief of staff who was next door and had an extra cot in

his tent. But, I guess it was a fortuitous thing because the next morning every Marine in the brigade was down there with a camera taking a picture of this crumpled mass and this sign saying "Commanding General," mine was the only tent that went down. Couldn't have planned it better. Talking about being with the troops, boy, I was with them, made a million bucks off that one and didn't plan it that way at all.

Anderson: Now, later, wasn't Udorn used by the Air Force quite a bit?

Simpson: Oh, my goodness, yes.

Anderson: It certainly was, and so was the camp that you built still there during the major use of it--well, when you were in Vietnam, '68-'69, that period?

Simpson: Well, I was told by the people that went in there when the Air Force took that over and used it as a base, that when they first went in all the tent decks were still there. They used those initially, but then they built a major airbase. They bulldozed that whole thing down there. They had an eight-story BOQ, if you can imagine--swimming pools and all the rest of the things. Some of the Air Force people in Da Nang were telling me about it and they had known that I had been there under these very austere circumstances and they wanted to fly me over to Udorn to see what it looked like--I didn't want to go.

But, it was a very, very interesting operation because I say the communications were so poor that we were largely on our own. And that was great. We could make our own mistakes, indeed, we could enjoy our successes, few as they were. We were never in combat, we never had a shot fired in anger, but we did have the adrenalin pouring at the possibility. We had all sorts of interesting...We did finally, when we got our camp built, we got into training--conditioning, physical conditioning first. Of course, the Marines were in good shape as far as upper body strength was concerned, but they needed to get their legs back in shape because they'd been building tent decks and not walking enough. The aircraft flew everyday that the weather permitted.

When the rain started, then a new horror developed in that we found out that as the amount of dry ground decreased with the rising waters of the monsoon, we were competing with the snakes of which there is every common thing in the world there. We'd already seen the pythons in the jungle and the hooded cobra. But the local people told us about the coral snake, the "ten step snake"--as they refer to it--meaning that the person who gets bit by one can take ten steps and is gone. We found out that the Pasteur Institute in Bangkok had developed serums that were effective against the four most common poisonous snakes in Thailand, but there was a trick to it. The serums had to--the administering physician had to know what the kind of snake was involved and administer the proper serum. If he

crossed it, it could be self-defeating and could be fatal. You had to know what the snake bite was. Now, there was a technique to that that the Pasteur Institute had developed and it could be learned by a trained medical personnel in two days. So, we cycled all of our medical personnel to Bangkok to the Pasteur Institute two at a time until all the doctors and all the senior medical corpsmen were skilled in this technique, which was simple one of observation. They did nothing initially and they reckoned that they had two hours in which to make their decision. We had 27 snake bites of various kinds, but no fatalities, and no evacuations. But this was due to the information that we got from the institute and the serums that we also bought.

Anderson: Now, what about the dysentery problem?

Simpson: Well, that was bad. Really, we didn't have too much dysentery, it was more diarrhea, acute diarrhea, some dysentery. I managed myself to contract moebic dysentery, which took a couple of years to shake off. But almost everybody had diarrhea; and it would have amused you to see the supply planes come in from Okinawa bringing Kaopectate in 25 gallon drums, if you can imagine. The secret to it, of course, is to get screens and sanitation. We knew all of this. We had to have screened mess halls, we had to have screened galleys, we had to have screened heads. All of this took time. We never had screened tents. We never got to that point, but

everybody had mosquito nets. And we insisted that they be used.

The snakes were terrifying. I woke one night with one in my sleeping bag, if you can imagine that. That was a horrible experience.

Anderson: What kind of snake was it?

Simpson: He was a small cobra, didn't bite me. I went to see the governor one time, at night. He sent a message that he needed to see me and I went to see him one night, and coming back along the road--the day had been very hot--and in the middle of the road--we were in a jeep--and in the middle of the road was a hooded cobra. The local wisdom had it that the cobra can rise off the ground one-third of its total length. And the largest cobra ever taken was taken there in Udorn and that was 19.9 feet.

Anderson: My goodness.

Simpson: Now, we were coming down the road and in the headlights we saw this hooded cobra which was spread out to at least 18 inches and his head was up at about well above the hood of the jeep, perhaps at about my eye level as a passenger, which I would have said at least five feet, maybe as much as six, but at least five, which if the local wisdom was right would have put the damned monster at least 15 feet. Well, the jeep driver swerved to miss the snake, and did; and then he

screeched to a stop and said, "General, get out and shoot him." Of course, I had a pistol, and I said, "Get out, hell. If you turn around, I'll shoot him." And we turned around and the cobra was gone. But, we had all sorts of interesting things. People began to get phobias about snakes.

We were trying to build a road. There is a soil composition down there called laterite, which if properly spread and rolled could make a pretty good roadway and pretty good runway-- well, not for high performance aircraft, but you can use laterite for helicopters and things like that. But, it's a hell to work in the raw state, it's more like a clay. And we were trying to build a road, and I was down there watching a guy on a road grader and he was going back and forth and all of a sudden, he cut away the side of this hill and he uncovered a barrel of snakes. I've always heard of a barrel of snakes, this is the only one I've ever seen. It was a great ball, at least 2 1/2 to 3 feet in diameter with literally thousands of snakes, and they're all just wriggling around like that. Well, this dozer operator or this grader operator uncovered this and the kid saw this stuff. God, he went wild and he ran this grader back and forth across this mass of snakes until he had made complete hamburger of all of them. We stood there in utter fascination and watched. Of course, everybody drew their pistol, but there was no reason to. The guy absolutely destroyed everyone of them, every one of them! And then we couldn't get him down, he froze on the wheel, and the guys had to crawl and actually

Well, he called me about ten o'clock and he said, "General,

unlock his hands and then sort of let him down. He was in some sort of trance. So, the doctors took him over to our field hospital. On the campsite were two buildings that had been residences at some time or another that were in good state of repair. And we put our field hospital in there. They had screens and we could at least get the kids out of the mosquitos.

Those were the only permanent structures there, everything else we made. So, the doctors took this guy over there and then I got a call about seven o'clock at night from the chief doctor and he said, "You're not going to believe this, General, but this kid has been bitten by a snake." I said, "Oh, God." Well, they had in one of the back rooms, they had a lot of C-rations stored--that's the only food we had at that station, no A-rations, no B-rations, just C-rations. And this kid didn't want to sleep in a cot, so they put a sleeping bag on top of several of these pallets of C-rations, which put him up about yeh-high--and he was content there. And he got up there in the middle of the night and started screaming and he said he'd been bitten by a snake, that's when the doctor called me. And he said, "Sure enough, there were two puncture marks on his finger." I said, "Well, what are you doing?" He said, "Well, I'm going to go through the regular routine, I'm going to watch him." We don't know what it is, we can't find anything here, but we'll administer whatever is indicated based on the symptoms that he shows." And I said, "Well, keep me advised." Well, he called me about ten o'clock and he said, "General,

that kid hasn't been bitten by a snake." He said, "We've been watching him closely for three hours now and he hasn't had any symptoms." They'd given him a mild sedative to quite him down. And they made the definite diagnosis that he had not been bitten and they gave him a heavier sedative to make him sleep that night and discharged him the next day. So, I went over and I said, "Well, look, what the hell happened?" Well, they had figured it out in the meantime. These C-ration boxes were banded to pallets and the bands had been stripped, but you know how they put a staple over a band like that, they stripped this thing off and they'd torn the staple apart, but those two prongs were still there. The guy had a nightmare during his sleep thinking about snakes, popped his hand out there and those two things--they're just far enough apart to be mistaken for a snake bite.

Anderson: Traumatize.

Simpson: Trauma, yes, trauma.

It was very interesting, the ambassador, the American ambassador to Thailand was a fellow named John Young. John was not a career diplomat, he'd been an executive of Far East Esso at that time, now Exxon, but he was a political appointee but a very, very bright guy. And he liked Marines, he liked the fact that we got in there first and got in there fast. I should have told you that there was great competition for the airplanes. See, the Army was going in and going southwards and there were

some Navy people that needed to go and some Air Force and what not. Well, we got the airplanes because we were the only ones that held up our hands and said, "We'll go tonight," when they said there would be 25 planes in that day. Everybody else said we'll take two days, I said, "We'll be there." And we did, that's the reason we got in first.

Anyway, the Ambassador had never had any experience with the Marines, hadn't been a Marine, but he came up in the embassy plane about three days after we'd been there and I guess he liked us, I mean, he liked what we were doing, liked the way we went about it. And he came back frequently. But then, bless his heart, he was a great friend of mine because on three occasions I got word from the embassy that he would like to see me at four o'clock on Friday afternoon. Now remember, this is a 350 mile flight and we could handle night operations, but we didn't particularly like to. We had Marine expeditionary landing field equipment, you know, and that kind of thing. But we didn't like to do night operations. Well, we were prepared to do night tactical operations, but we didn't want to do routine night operations, flight operations if it could be avoided. And I couldn't understand, the message from the embassy just simple said the Ambassador desires to see Brigadier General Simpson at 1600 on Friday, whatever day and didn't tell me any subject. So, I didn't know what to take or what it was about or anything. I had only seen him about a week before. So, I went there and the embassy sent a car out to Don Maong Airfield and met my plane

and--I took overnight gear because I decided whatever it was, I was going to stay overnight unless it was some crucial emergency that I think I would have heard about in which case he would not have called me away from there if it had been that crucial. So, I went to the embassy. It was the first time I'd been to the embassy, and I told the Marine guard who I was and he said the Ambassador was expecting me. The Ambassador was younger than I was, real bright guy, cunning like, and he said, "How are things going?" And I said, "Fine." I said, "What can I do for you?" He said, "Oh, hell, I thought you needed a bath, so I reserved a room for you in..." I've forgotten what the prime hotel in Bangkok was at that time. He said, "We're having a dinner party here tonight, but I don't think you'd like that. Why don't you go on down there and get yourself a hot bath and have a couple of drinks and a good dinner and you and your airplane go home tomorrow." And I said, "Is that all?" He said, "That's all. I just wanted to see how you're getting along." He did that three times after which I was extremely grateful because I could never have done it on my own, you see. I had to be summoned to go to Bangkok. I mean, I had the airplane, but I could not have left those kids there in the mud, you see, go down there and live it up for a night in Bangkok, but I didn't feel quite so guilty when the Ambassador sent for me.

Anderson: No.

Simpson: And he knew that and so he did, on three occasions.

Anderson: Now, how were the relations between the Ambassador and the Marines, pretty good?

Simpson: Just outstanding. I'll tell you how outstanding. He brought the King and Queen up there.

Anderson: No kidding.

Simpson: And that was a thrilling experience. Queen Sirit is by my own eyes the most beautiful woman I've ever seen in my life, I mean, baring none. Her husband is sort of nondescript, he's a kind of musician plays the saxophone. She is beautiful, engaging, she speaks five languages, better English than I have ever spoken, French, of course, Thai, and I don't know what else. But, we had heard about her and their pictures, the King and Queen's picture are everywhere in Thailand. It's ridiculous, every place you go into has got them. Like the pictures of Lenin used to be and the rest of this sort of thing. And that was one of the interesting things that the governor told me when I first met him was that when and if I decided to let the American troops to come into his little village, town of Udorn, to warn them, that under no circumstances must anybody say anything derogatory about the Queen and let it be known that what they meant by derogatory was jousing and joking things about what a beautiful gal she is and so forth and so on, or they'd be in deep trouble. Well, we spread this word and we spread it

nightly. We were very careful, we didn't let anybody go into town for three weeks. And then we let a few go in only from two to four in the afternoon and never at night and that kind of thing. Well, sure enough, there were a couple of guys that didn't get the word and they went into one of those Thai restaurants and were getting a can of Thai beer and here was this picture of this magnificent woman and this guy said something along the line that man, he sure would like to put his arm around that good looking thing. And boy, they put them in jail just like that and it took us three weeks to get them out.

Anderson: No kidding?

Simpson: But that incident cured them. There was never any more remarks. Anyway, the Ambassador brought these people up there.

Anderson: Was that the only bad experience you had with the Thai people?

Simpson: Yes, yes, the only one. And it was our fault, they'd been warned, they just didn't believe them or forgot about it. But we had great relations with them. They're kind, gentle people as evident by the fact that they have no word in their language that corresponds to "no," they don't have that word in their language. And I had a Thai interpreter, a Marine Thai interpreter, he was not Thai, but he was a Marine that was very, very proficient in languages. And he had told

me, he told me about this and he said, "Now, there will be times when the governor will be telling you no, but you're going to have a hard time recognizing it because he's going to sort of lead you "down the primrose path," but he's never going to say, no, you can't do this. But, you're going to learn how, what his technique is and when he really means no and then you got to back off unless it's something you feel very strongly about. Such things as you probably know, you can not sit like this is you're addressing a Thai person because showing the soles your shoes or your feet is an absolute insult. And there's no handshake even between males." The greeting is sawaio, with the hands here and the elevation of your hands is indicative of the regard in which you hold the person you speak to. If you and I are talking and we meet together and I consider you my equal, my hands are here, if I consider you inferior to me my hands are down here. If, on the other hand, if I consider you are in a superior position they are up here. And the higher they go, the more elevated your position is in my eyes, to the extent that when the King and Queen came, the Thai people were on their knees with their hands over their head and down with their face in the dirt like that. Total devotion. Well, the Ambassador came up and said, "How would we like to have the King and Queen?" And we said, "We'd love to have the Queen, and if she wants to bring the King, why that's fine." So, we set up as best we could a little bit of an air show and then we wanted to take them out to our infantry camp. They arrived in

three airplanes. The Ambassador and his wife were along, King and Queen, and then the rest were high military government and military officials of the Thai government. And we put on--one of the pictures that I love is, as the Ambassador told me later, he laughed, I gave him a copy of this picture because I went out to meet the aircraft and I had my staff with the chief of staff in front lined up just off the runway there and I wanted to take them over and introduce just the chief of staff. Well, she came down this ladder--they came in DC3s, Royal Thai Air Force. She had a star sapphire that was at least as big as a quarter--people had told me that it was absolutely priceless. But anyway, the woman was beautiful, I mean incredibly beautiful and very gracious. And my photographer took a picture as I was taking her over to meet the chief of staff and some of the staff. The picture of these guys is something out of this world because their eyes were all about this big looking at this woman. I gave the Ambassador a picture of it and he said, "Well, that was a first for me. That's the first time I've ever seen 3,500 Marines fall in love with a married woman with four children." His sense of humor was delightful. We did this air show and we did it according to what the people, my interpreter and the governor told us to do. We had a little sort of reviewing stand but we put a little raised platform this big and put two chairs in and put the King and Queen in on that, then we sat eight inches lower on each side. So, we went out in convoy to this camp, which

as I said was about three to four kilometers away. Put the helicopters over head and all that sort of thing. And of course, the Thai army came in force and they lined the road-- no one was really afraid of anything, nobody, no Thai would ever harm that pair. But anyway, we went out to this camp, it was a tent camp, they had mahogany tent decks and that's all. As a squad tent, we had about 20 bunks in each one. We didn't really have enough tents. And so, we had to crowd everybody up. But, I told the battalion commander, I said, "You get one and you really fix that one up, you get the floor scrubbed and get all the bunks lined up and I'm going to take the King and Queen in their and show it to them." So he did just what I told him to do. These's guys polished that mahogany and they shined the nail heads and they got a Marine who was about nine feet tall that didn't even belong to that outfit and he was supposed to be the squad leader and they put him at the door of this tent. We supposed, according to what the chief of staff of the Thai army told me, just drive them through the camp. Well, I didn't say anything, I was thinking, I had them in the jeep and--no, they had a little Rolls Royce Rover, that's what it was, and I was in a sort of jump seat behind them. And I was telling them what we were looking at and so forth. So, we got to this tent and this Marine was standing there and I said, "Your Majesty, I'd like to stop and..." or "Your Majesties, I'd like to show you a typical tent." "Good," the King said he'd like to see that, she said she'd like to