Q: I note from Army records that you were assigned as administrative officer, Headquarters, 2d Port, Pusan, Korea.

A: That was simply a way of assigning me somewhere until I arrived at Fort Benning.

Infantry School

Q: I note from Army records that the first thing you did at Fort Benning was to go to jump school.

A: Yes. This was one of General Young's requirements. All instructors at Fort Benning had to be jumpers. I had always wanted to jump anyway so this was no big problem. However, I was in my mid-thirties and most of the students were in their early twenties. It was a rigorous schedule. It made me wish I had taken the course as a young lieutenant.

In jump school a humorous incident occurred. While we were still in the combat phase in Korea, the 2d Division had conducted a bloody operation which turned out well. It succeeded largely because a sergeant took over when his platoon leader was killed. He rallied the men and stormed the hill. I commended the sergeant and told him he deserved an award for valor. I told him I had seldom seen anyone do a better job of turning certain defeat into victory. The sergeant said, "Of course we took the hill, don't you know who I am?" He said, "I'm Lou Jenkins, the ex-welterweight champion of the world. What else would you expect from me?" Later, Sergeant Jenkins came to Benning to work for me. I told him he had to take jump training, the way I had. "I can't," he said. "It's my back." He pulled up his shirt and undershirt and asked me to take a look.

"I don't see anything wrong with your back," I said.

"Don't you see the big yellow streak?" he asked.

At this point I have a comment to make. General Bruce Clarke, a former engineer officer who rose to four-star rank, once said: "We've never won a war since the Airborne took over the Pentagon."

I got to know Bruce Clarke quite well. He considered himself the best trainer in the Army and was interested in my ideas about training. But he had several idiosyncrasies. One of them was that he didn't like elite units, and this included jumpers. He felt all soldiers should consider themselves to be elite troops.

Q: What did you do at the Infantry School?

A: My work at the Infantry School was of two types: official and unofficial. Officially, I headed the group of instructors who taught the infantry regiment in the attack. I redesigned the course and incorporated the lessons we had learned in combat in Korea. The instruction included the use of helicopters for reconnaissance, attack, logistics, and evacuation of casualties. It also stressed how to maximize the use of firepower. We taught that infantry has to move in very rapidly as soon as supporting fires are lifted so as to maximize the shock value of the fires. Several of these ideas were new to the extent that new weapons and new methods of mobility were available. But for the most part, the new equipment brought old ideas back into prominence.

Colonel Edward Rown y, March 1953.

As for my unofficial job, I had become quite interested in new regimental infantry tactics. It was contrary to Army policy to teach anything but approved tactics at the Infantry School. The fundamental idea was that Benning was to indoctrinate and not innovate. I thought that Benning should do both and received permission to hold courses where attendance would be voluntary. We called these unofficial instruction courses PROFIT: professional improvement time. One of my ideas was to assist ground attacks with nuclear weapons, a new and controversial subject. At that time the possession and use of nuclear weapons were the sole prerogative of the Air Force. The idea was to use helicopters in combat to exploit rapidly a nuclear attack. The concept was to drop a nuclear weapon in the enemy's rear. Before the enemy could react from the shock, we would land troops, dressed in protective clothing, from helicopters. I called this the "swarm of bees" concept. I also developed concepts of moving troops in helicopters behind enemy lines. I had experimented with helicopters in Korea and was convinced that the mobility and discriminating fires they afforded could be used in counterinsurgency warfare.

My PROFIT courses became quite popular; there was standing room only. At one session, a young captain began asking me some very intelligent and provocative

questions. In desperation, I said, “Captain, you obviously know a great deal about nuclear weapons and how they might be used in ground warfare. Why don’t you come up to the platform and let us ask you questions?”

Unabashed, he did so, and for the next hour or so performed brilliantly. I invited him home for dinner and we talked into the early hours of the morning. It was only then that I learned that the young captain was a reserve officer performing his two weeks of annual active duty. He was Congressman Henry M. “Scoop” Jackson from Washington state, who later became a United States senator.

The next day I was called into General Fritchie’s office, the acting commandant of the Infantry School. He said the chief of staff of the Army wanted to see me in Washington the next day. He had been called by Congressman Scoop Jackson.

Elated, I traveled to Washington, believing that I would be commended for my innovative ideas. Instead, I was taken to task by the chief of staff, Robert Stevens, for having “exacerbated the services’ roles and missions fight.” The Army, he told me, had no interest in nuclear weapons. The same went for helicopters, he said; they were the province of the Air Force. Moreover, he admonished me for “putting Jackson up to calling him." I told him this was not so, but he said he didn’t believe me.

That marked the end of my unofficial teaching. I was ordered not to hold PROFIT sessions, not even on an unofficial basis. There was simply too much interservice rivalry over the use of nuclear weapons and combat helicopters. Accordingly, I was silenced for the remainder of my stay at Benning. As for Scoop Jackson, the episode did not faze him at all. More than once, at later times, he egged me into sticking my neck out.

Jackson urged me to push both ideas: the use of nuclear weapons and combat helicopters in the Army. He was instrumental in getting me assigned to Vietnam where I introduced helicopters into combat and helped develop the Army’s air assault doctrine. My work with helicopters resulted in setting back my Army career. Later, Jackson had me assigned as the JCS representative to the SALT II negotiations.

It came about this way. In 1972 Jackson decided that General Royal Allison, the Air Force general representing the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the SALT II talks, was not doing a good job. Jackson felt Allison had undermined him when Allison pushed hard for approval of the ABM treaty [antiballistic missile] and interim accord on strategic offensive arms, SALT I. Jackson engineered a deal with Henry Kissinger. Jackson told Kissinger he would vote for the ABM treaty and interim agreement only if certain demands were met. One of these demands was that I

would be put into Royal Allison's place. It was a job I didn't seek and didn't want. I thought it would set back my **Army** career, which in fact it did. But Jackson always lectured **me** on "Duty, Honor and Country." I knew in my heart he was right and couldn't say no to him. But I'm getting well ahead of my story.

Q: To get back to Fort Benning, did you look for officers who had tours of duty in Korea to be instructors at the Infantry School?

A: Yes. I inherited a number of good instructors but got others through a very elaborate screening process. Teaching at Benning was a very popular assignment and many good officers wanted to teach at the Infantry School. As a result, the Infantry School had an outstanding group of instructors. One, the head of the weapons department, was Frank Mildren. He had been my regimental commander in Korea. Another was Bill Lynch. Still another was Fred Weyand, a contemporary of mine, who went on to become the chief of staff of the Army.

We completely rewrote the Army field manuals for the regiment and battalion in attack, and regiment and battalion in defense. It was a busy and fruitful time. This helped push into the back of my mind the fact that I had been silenced and that my career might suffer. The courses of instruction were completely turned around during the couple of years I was at Benning.

Q: How long was the course at the Infantry School?

A: The regular course of instruction was nine months. But we also conducted refresher courses for officers being assigned to Korea since the Korean War was still going on. General Young convinced the chief of staff of the Army that all future battalion and regimental commanders should take a month-long course to familiarize them with the unique problems of Korea. This meant extra work for the instructors, but we felt it very worthwhile to have newly assigned commanders oriented before they left for Korea.

Q: Did you get any feedback from them?

A: Yes. All battalion and regimental commanders, upon completing their tours in Korea, were ordered to Benning for a two--week debriefing session. We told them our new ideas and asked them to critique what we were teaching at Benning. It was a dynamic learning experience. It also gave us a chance to size up the better battalion and regimental commanders for teaching jobs at Benning. It was a good

way to inject realism into the instruction. Instructors were not teaching out of a book, but from their own combat experience.

Q: I don't seem to remember anything like that going on during the Vietnam War.

A: I don't either, but there should have been. There probably wasn't one because they didn't have a General Robert Young, an officer dedicated to the notion that officers should learn from the experience of others. Moreover, Young greatly streamlined the review process that instruction had to undergo before the instruction was approved. His idea was that the best is the enemy of the good. The normal one-year review cycle for new instruction was cut to three months.

Q: When you left the Infantry School, did you feel you had left your mark on the school?

A: **Yes,** I had a feeling of satisfaction about the job I had done there. We were able to rewrite the infantry instruction manuals, bringing World War II tactics up-to-date to reflect the lessons learned in Korea.

Essentially, these lessons were that infantry tactics could benefit from more mobility and greater fire power. Mobility and fire power were always a part of infantry tactics but now they got more emphasis. The main idea was to avoid set-piece operations, to get away from the idea of slugging it out with the enemy. The object was to out-maneuver him, to move around the enemy rather than hit him head-on. By using either more mobility or greater fire power, or a combination of both, the object was to destroy the enemy and capture the high ground more quickly. Importantly, it would be done with a minimum of friendly casualties Korea had also taught us the value of paying more attention to logistics. It takes good logistical support to achieve more mobility and greater fire power. We taught that we were trying to avoid the set-piece tactics of World War II which resulted in so many casualties. What we were seeking was the combination of the shock effect of superior fire power and the surprise effect of moving quickly against the **flank** or rear of the enemy.

Besides, I was able to see two of my basic concepts advanced. One was to see if we could use tactical nuclear weapons in our infantry doctrine. The second was to use helicopters to achieve greater mobility and deliver more accurate and discriminating fire power. We tried to improve on ground cavalry by utilizing helicopters to create sky cavalry. The two concepts really dovetailed. A tactical nuclear weapon exploded in the rear of an enemy could be exploited by moving troops into the area of the explosion. If we could move our troops quickly into the

area while the enemy was still in a sense of shock from the nuclear explosion, we would be able to exploit his temporarily weakened condition.

Rewriting the manuals and teaching the students new ideas gave me a great feling of satisfaction. I felt we were contributing in a major way revolutionizing the thinking of our younger officers and advancing the Army's professionalism. We got the Infantry School out of the rut of simply indoctrinating officers by encouraging them to think for themselves.

Q: How did you deal with the students who were concerned that teaching tactics applicable to Korea was not the type of war they might have to fight in the future?

A: You've raised an important question. The answer is that we had to hedge our bets. We had to admit we didn't know what kind of wars we would have to fight in the future. The more probable wars we would have to fight were the kind we experienced in World War II. Therefore, we had to pay a lot of attention to possibilities of a return to set-piece warfare. But we were concerned that the lessons learned from Korea could be put to great advantage in other wars. More fire power and greater mobility were basic elements which could enhance all types of operations.

At the same time, we were thinking about the kind of warfare we later encountered in Vietnam. I don't want to claim that we predicted what was going to happen in Vietnam. But we did pay a great deal of attention to the use of helicopters in guerrilla warfare situations.

Armed Forces Staff College

Q: When you left the Infantry School, I take it you went to the Armed Forces Staff College. What was that like?

A: The Armed Forces Staff College was a breeze. It was like a vacation to me because I was the senior officer at the course. The relaxing atmosphere gave me an opportunity to get to know officers of the other services. I was also able to read a great deal. It was a broadening experience, a break from the intense period at Fort Benning and a welcome sabbatical. I had few responsibilities and could just sit back, think and enjoy life.

Q: Did you have any contemporaries or friends at the college?