CHAPTER II

Troop Duty

A: Let me give you just a little bit of background which may be interesting to start with. The present National War College was old Fort A. A. Humphreys, named after a Civil War engineer of great repute. When, in the early 1900s, they did a revamping of the military and established the Army War College, Fort A. A. Humphreys became the Army War College and then the name of Humphreys was up for grabs for years. In any event, Fort Humphreys, as we then called it, was built in 1917 as a World War I cantonment and then, after the war, was designated as the Engineer School. At the time I reported in 1924 there was a rather poor two-lane macadam road that led there from Washington, but even that was of recent vintage because during the war the road leading south from Washington through that area -- Belvoir and down to Richmond -- was only a dirt road, and the traffic on it between Washington and now Fort Belvoir, then Fort Humphreys, became so heavy that the road was impassable in the winter and spring. There was a period during World War I when the only access to that post was by water down the Potomac, believe it or not, which, in the light of today, is interesting.

It certainly is a fascinating assignment to look back upon. I had been married at the end of that summer. I reported for duty three months after I graduated from West Point, which, in date, was September 12, 1924. My wife remained behind with her family in New York. I did what I assumed to be the correct thing then, because West Point had taught us to be very meticulous about our dress. So when I reported for duty that morning I remember that I was in dress uniform; in other words, blouse, Sam Browne belt, breeches, and boots. There was no assistance given to new arrivals as far as the post was concerned. You were supposed to get there on your own, which I did from the railroad station in Alexandria by taxi. I think it cost me $4.50, which a second lieutenant could ill afford. As far as anybody meeting you or helping you, there was nothing like that. You just got out on your own and shoved off. Maybe we would be better off if it were more like that today. We get over-serviced at times. In any event, I got there, and was assigned quarters. They were temporary, prefabricated quarters built in 1919 or 1920. They weren't much, but they were the kind that both my

contemporaries and even my seniors were living in, so I found no problem accommodating myself to them. They were not the equivalent of the kind of an apartment my wife had lived in in New York, but we were happy. We lived on Army pay of a second lieutenant of $143 per month with rations, which didn't take you too far.

As far as the life was concerned, it was extremely pleasant. There were 90 officers on the post. There were 19 from my class, as all new Engineers were sent there. We had a very happy and pleasant life. Actually, I stayed there three years: a little more than one on troop duty with the 13th Engineers; one as Personnel Adjutant with the regiment, which was really a regimental headquarters with one battalion; and the third as a student at the company officers' course of the Engineer School. Our only daughter and older child was born in Walter Reed, and we simply enjoyed three delightful years. The hunting was good -- ducks, turkeys and birds -- a lot of athletics, and good polo which I enjoyed. That really is the personal side of Fort Belvoir in those days.

My initial assignment, together with two of my classmates who later became general officers, Howard Ker and Herbert Vogel, was to C Company of the 13th Engineers. It was commanded by an officer, first lieutenant in grade, with seven years' service to whom a second lieutenant was more like a plebe to West Point. First Lieutenant Arrowsmith was a competent engineer officer. He did some things differently than we thought they should be done, perhaps, but I guess it was a different perspective between an officer of experience and young West Point graduates. I remember once he told me to go out and design a timber rack on which to place three garbage cans by the kitchen exit. Well, I didn't think this was too much of an engineering problem so I took one of the sergeants in my platoon who had about 23 years' service out there and said, "We want to put three garbage cans about ten inches off the ground on this spot. It will take a stand about so long and so wide, two-by-fours or other similar timber. Build it." He had it finished by noon, and I think we painted it the same afternoon. Two days later I was asked where my report was on the design of the garbage stand, whereupon I said that perhaps I had misunderstood, but I had already built the damn thing. Well, I must say, and I don't want to speak disparagingly of the officer in question, but he lined me out on the basis that I hadn't carried out his orders. Technically, he was correct. Actually, I

didn't think that a lieutenant needed orders on how to design a garbage stand for three cans, and so I had built it. This caused a little flurry at the time and pointed out areas in which we needed to be extremely careful in further dealings with our company commander.

But all in all, it was a great experience. We did command platoons. There weren't many men in each of them, probably 30. We did the usual close-order drill and other infantry training. One of the great advantages of the engineers, particularly the combat engineers, was that, while we had a great deal of infantry training, we also did a great deal of engineer work. This made it far more interesting than I think might have been true had I just commanded an infantry platoon. Maybe no, but I was learning two trades, and not only one, and I found it relatively rewarding. I admit I don't think our capacity was tested very often or very greatly. I can't imagine in these days spending as many months or years in junior assignment as we did then. To produce the best officers, we need more stimulation and more opportunity. Our young men today are getting it. As a matter of fact, they are getting it so fast that they don't really know the details of one job before they move to another. As they grow up, they know less and less about some of the details that are important in really mastering a profession.

By the time we left the platoon after a couple of years as platoon commanders, we certainly were, or should have been, masters of our job. As we went on to the next one, this was very helpful. In reverse, however, this teffific attention to detail and lack of incentive in those days was frustrating. For instance, I remember majors proudly going out to drill in the morning on their horses with their adjutants behind them watching three infantry companies in close-order drill and becoming very concerned if someone stepped off on the fifth count instead of the sixth or vice-versa. This continued up until World War II. You wonder how so many of those men were successful when they had large commands and had to delegate responsibility. To put it another way, it is surprising that more of them weren't failures.

Q: You talked about a relationship with your company commander, and I would like to ask you about your relationship with your NCOs.

A: They were great. They were very satisfying. For instance, as the senior of three very junior second lieutenants who reported, I was immediately made the first sergeant. I took no exception to this. My first sergeant in those days is still alive or was last year -- longtime retired, of course. World War I experience, great guy named Jake Dempsey. He let me sweat out all morning reports, rosters and details, the guard details, and all the rest, but he never really let me fall down. I mean, if he saw a place where I had missed a point, he told me. We always had a tremendous rapport. It was the arm's-length respect that always exists between a good officer and a good noncommissioned officer, but it was a healthy respect and a warm regard for each other, a good understanding. They understood it perfectly. As a matter of fact, they would have been amazed if there had been any other approach on the part of their officers.

There were no colored soldiers in this particular unit. I bring up that point because I had been a lieutenant in the 13th Engineers only about eight months when a bad situation occurred in the Engineer School Detachment. This consisted of perhaps 200 men, and there was within this school detachment a white detachment and a colored detachment. Let's say that the colored detachment was 75 men, the white was 125. Well, they ran into some severe problems because they were using a common mess hall and they would alternate cooks from white to colored. In those days the ration was around 17¢ to 18¢ a day. The running of the mess had to be done in a pretty efficient manner or else you didn't eat too well. In this particular case, the mess had been run by the negro mess sergeant for one month and things were in pretty bad shape for at least several weeks financially. So the white cooks were put in to get the mess solvent again. There were two wings to a common kitchen. The white cooks and the mess sergeant took over, but the situation was so bad that, in financially balancing the accounts, my predecessor directed that for the last six days of the month they would be fed frankfurters only, which were low priced. But if six days on these frankfurters was too much for the whites, it was absolutely impossible for the negro troops, who had been enjoying pork chops and kale. There was a hell of a bad situation there which probably had been agitated by other factors as well.

So I was put in command of the Engineer School Detachment (Colored). This was quite a job. Most of these were young negros from Washington, D. C., topped off by maybe ten percent of good old noncoms from the 25th Infantry and the 2d and 10th Cavalry (all Black). These old soldiers were good. None of them had less than 20 years' service, but the rest of the youngsters left something to be desired. We found that out in a number of ways. One of the problems, however, was that they were only being used for strictly menial labor. They had a minimum of education and training. They had a maximum of grooming horses for the rides of the students in the school and for polo, also a maximum of firing furnaces and things of this sort. These chores were absolutely essential. I'm not saying that they shouldn't be done, but there was little in the nature of reward coming to these men. So I took an old building the Knights of Columbus had used during World War I and renovated it as the Royal Social Club for the Engineer School Detachment (Colored). This was very successful in its purpose. Maids were so cheap at that time that most of the officers were able to afford at least a part-time maid, and the senior officers had a full-time maid. So, it being in Virginia country, there were plenty of girls around for these negro soldiers but they hadn't had any place to go. Here at least, while today we would say it was segregated, it was their club. They enjoyed it, and for the most part they respected what had been made available. I had one little problem over there one night, but we resolved that all right.

Another thing I did was to institute training and equitation, because, while they groomed the horses and rode them up to polo or whenever they were delivering them to the students, that was the extent of their knowledge of equitation. I gave them courses on equitation and took them out on rides. That improved the esprit a lot. We organized a separate mess where they could have the type of food they preferred as far as it could be obtained within the ration and the company fund. That was really my earliest experience with negro troops. Shortly after that I was called over as the Personnel Adjutant, which was a newly established job in the regiment. The next year I took the company officers' course.

Q: That is very interesting. I know that we are going to probably get back to the colored soldier when you later on became the Director of Training. I think you

were involved in some aspects, but we will save that 'til later. I think a criticism today is the fact that the individual is stymied, he is not permitted much freedom of action. I'm wondering, back in those days as a young lieutenant (now you have already talked about this garbage can incident) would you say that you were allowed freedom of action in the things that you did so that you could develop?

A: Not in the troop training schedules. Those were on a five-and-a-half-day basis by an hourly or half-hourly count and they were pretty well fixed. There were other aspects, though, where I was. One in particular was sort of an extracurricular activity. My commanding officer then was Major John Conklin. A new post commander arrived, Colonel Edwin Markham, who later became Chief of Engineers. He was very unhappy about the fact that, while we had a band, the 13th Engineer regimental band, the orchestra was so poor that for post dances they used to import the orchestra from the 3d Cavalry, which was stationed at Fort Myer. Well, of course, many of us didn't like this. Our new commander, in particular, thought it was an insult to the Engineers to have to go up to the Cavalry and hire their orchestra to play for our dances. Major Conklin, my regimental commander, made the mistake, or otherwise, of telling the colonel, "I've got a young officer here who used to play in the cadet orchestra at West Point." Markham said, "Well, put him to work." So the next thing I knew I was told to get an orchestra built, pronto.

I was authorized to expend $100 from the regimental fund, which was a lot of money in those days and the regimental fund didn't have too much. So I figured out what I could do.

I had been going to New York occasionally since my wife's family lived there, and I read about the resurgence of the North German Lloyd Line. I knew something about the interest of Europeans trying to get into the American Armed Forces. So I went to New York and went down to a liner of the North German Line that came into port. I wrangled my way in to get hold of a man I found in the orchestra. I asked him if there were any of the people in the orchestra who were interested in staying in the United States, and he admitted there were. I came back about two days later and he told me that there were three good musicians. He told me what they could do; each of them played at least two instruments. One of them, I remember, was

from Hungary and played a gypsy xylophone among other instruments. So to make a long story short (and I guess the statute of limitations has run out), I had them all jump ship and took them down and enlisted them in the Army at 39 Whitehall Street and had them shipped to Fort Belvoir. So I had the beginnings of an orchestra.

In addition, our assistant band leader was a man of accomplishment. He had played with Victor Herbert's orchestra. He was a Puerto Rican, Staff Sergeant Vega. He was a fine trumpeter, but his was about the only talent in the band, he and a chap named Huntington, who was a fine drummer. So we started with these three Germans and the drummer and the trumpeter, whom I made the head of the orchestra because he was a staff sergeant. We had the beginnings of an orchestra, but we were very weak on piano when a great break occurred.

I was an officer of the guard one day when the sergeant of the guard said, "There is a man who wants to see you." I said, "What about?" He said, "I don't know but he says he can play the piano." I said, "Send him to me when he comes in tonight." Our prisoners worked pretty hard in those days, harder than they do today. They slept on hard bunks, too. They took cold showers in the morning and at night. They all lived through it, and nobody was any the worse for it. As a matter of fact, we gave them parole when we thought we could trust them back to duty. Anyhow, this man showed up and this very interesting story developed. This chap was a Britisher and he had studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London. His name was Arthur Stone and he always wanted to be a band leader in the British Army, which he thought was great. So he decided he would enlist for a year and try it out. After he signed the papers, he found out that instead of signing the British short-term enlistment for one year he had signed the British long-term enlistment for 12 years. After one or two of those years, he had enough of it. So he worked his way to Canada on some ship. Then he decided Canada wasn't the place for him. He really wanted to go to the United States. So he came down across the border and enlisted in the 26th Infantry in Plattsburgh, New York. Well, that was fine except Plattsburgh was too cold. He didn't think Plattsburgh was the place for him, so he deserted. Eventually he was picked up in Washington, D. C. As they did with many people the MPs picked up, they put

him down in Fort Belvoir stockade, which was a break for me. So he told me what a fine pianist he was. I told him I'd give him a chance to prove it.

It was in the days of the old silent movies with two troop shows, one at 6:00, one at 8:00. We used to hire some gal to sit down and play. While she was watching that movie, she would pump the piano with no interest, but there was some tone coming out of it. Remember? So I excused her one night and marched my prisoner over and had the guard sit with his rifle between his knees back of the piano stool. Stone played the piano and just wowed them. As a matter of fact, when he would stop playing the audience would stop looking at the movies and applaud. So every night at a quarter of six we would see a sentry with a rifle over his soulder marching Private Arthur Stone over to play the piano at the movies. It didn't take long to realize that I had a find here as far as the orchestra was concerned. So Stone joined the orchestra, and we built a very good one.

What happened next was this: Major Conklin was a great friend of a Mississippi Congressman, Ross Collins. He had orders to build up esprit on the post from General Markham. We already had taken over from the Cavalry orchestra. We were playing at the post dances and other affairs; that is, the post orchestra was. I was the leader of the orchestra, but I didn't play with them except occasionally. I frequently took over the leader's job and once in a while I pulled out a soprano saxophone. I seldom played the banjo with them. In any event, we got an invitation through Congressman Collins to play before what is still the number-one radio-TV station in Washington, WRC, in the fall of 1925. (Congressman Ross Collins was trying then to get rid of horses in the Army. He didn't succeed until about 1940 or 1942, but that is another story.)

We apparently did well, because the next thing I knew I had a telephone call requesting a meeting with the president of the American Hotel Corporation. They were building the George Mason Hotel in Alexandria in 1925. He heard our orchestra and he thought it was a great orchestra. So, to make a long story short, we developed simple little uniforms, called it the Golden Castle Orchestra after the Engineer insignia, and took the contract. I was the leader of the orchestra and took them on a three-day pass to Alexandria, Virginia, ten miles from Fort Belvoir. We played for the

opening of this hotel. This seemed to meet with further approval. So, to carry on from there, the next year the orchestra played for the opening of the Shenandoah in Martinsburg, West Virginia, the Hendrick Hudson in Troy, and the Cavalier in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Then we had an offer to have the enlisted men bought out and for me to resign to play in the Roosevelt Hotel in New York, which was a part of this hotel chain. I turned that down as I didn't want to be a professional musician; I was just having a lot of fun. I took no compensation. The funds earned were distributed among my men, and they were always well taken care of at the hotels. In any event, the whole time that I am telling you about this orchestra was not over a year, because after that I went to the Engineer School.

It was a very interesting episode and was frequently used by General Markham in later years as an example of the fact that you could give a young officer, who could get something done, any kind of a job and he would get it done. You asked me about something like that earlier; in this case I happened to have some, but not much, musical talent. I can't read music. I never studied music; I refused, as most kids did in those days and more of them do today. I did have sufficient knowledge and ability to play a couple of instruments and it worked.

Q: Before we leave that, I discovered a 1943 letter that you wrote to the Special Services officer, which said that you wrote the Engineer song in those days.

A: Yes, I wrote it in 1925 and it was played for many years both here and in Hawaii where I was stationed later. I think I could still have a copy in my music file.

Q: I was very interested in looking through some of your papers. It was something one doesn't see very often for lieutenants, an invitation to the White House. President Coolidge invited you to the White House in 1925. What was the occasion, and was this normal for lieutenants in the area to be invited to the White House?

A: I think this was quite normal in those days. I don't suppose the total number of officers in the Washington

area then would have exceeded 500. We had 90 at the Engineer School. The total Corps of Engineers in 1924 was only 500 officers, U.S.-wide. They weren't worldwide but we had a few overseas stations.

Q: This must have been an impressionable moment for you. Did it have an influence on you? What I am really getting at is the relationship between the military, the government, the administration, and the people. We're talking about 1925 now. Accepted? Just what was the situation.

A: We didn't feel detached from the people. Of course, I was stationed in the heart of activities, including social activities, in Washington, being nearby. I don't know the feeling throughout the country, but I never felt antagonism such as seems to exist now. No, the uniform could be worn anywhere and the greatest respect would be shown for it. It is very hard to understand how far we have fallen, and how dangerously close we are to destroying the esprit of the military and the security of the country.

Q: Sir, to be specific, let's talk about a situation that occurred back then in line with this same feeling of the relationship. Billy Mitchell made an accusation against the high command. I quote: he said, "Incompetency, criminal negligence, and almost treasonable administration of national defense," and he was talking about the use of air power. He was court-martialed for a violation of Article of War 96, found guilty, and given a suspension of five years without pay and allowances. President Coolidge reviewed that and said that he would uphold the suspension but return half the pay. Obviously, you were very much aware of this. Was there a stigma against the military? What were your feelings about General Mitchell?

A: I don't think there was any stigma against the military. I think the problem was within the military: as between the Army and the Army Air Corps then on one side, and certainly the Navy on the other. There was a failure to recognize what Billy Mitchell did recognize, and they took stringent action to suppress it. The interesting thing is that this trouble with Mitchell was really intraservice friction (which is much worse). I would rather see the services stand together (against Fulbright and people who feel as he does) than to have an intraservice fight. I'm not sure but what one of the efforts today

is to cause more intraservice difficulties and contests. I hope that the Joint Chiefs of Staff never permit this to occur. A young lieutenant in uniform, I was a little isolated from the "civilian approach," if you want to put it that way. On the other hand, I don't think the civilians themselves understood enough about it unless they were strictly partisans on one side or the other, to show much interest. Of course, the problem today is to get the majority of our people to show any interest in anything. They are the most complacent people -- dozing in the face of all that is facing us -- that the world could possibly imagine. Not because they are ignorant, but because they are indifferent.

Q: Might we say that we need more Mitchells today? People who will stand up?

A: Well, we certainly need more people who will stand up. I don't know whether this is possible any more. I mean, the McNamaras and Yarmolinskis during past administrations cut people down who stood up. That, plus repercussions from the My Lai case and many others, are having a terrific impact on the willingness of the individual officer to accept great responsibility. This is not exactly new. We foresaw it when we had the trials of the Japanese in the Philippines, which we will probably come to later. We saw it then, and we used to walk away when we had a break in the trial and walk along that seawall behind the American Embassy in Manila where we were trying General Homma. Those of us on the tribunal used to say to each other time and again, "If we had been the losers, this would have been General MacArthur on the stand." We saw it when the Supreme Court said that Yamashita was responsible for any crime committed by anybody -- the least of his troops -- anywhere in the Philippines. You could see what was coming. Then Nuremburg proved it. Now we've got it down where we are court-martialing our own.

Q: Well, Sir, let's leave Fort Humphreys and the 13th Engineers. I understand that from there you went to graduate school. I'm intrigued with that. We have a graduate school program now. I suspect that you had a very limited one. Do you want to discuss it?

A: Well, in those days, in the early 1920s, from about 1920 on, all newly commissioned officers in the Corps of Engineers were sent to graduate school. Those schools, and I might miss one or two but generally

speaking, were RPI, MIT, Iowa State in hydraulics, Cornell, and the University of California at Berkeley. Certain graduates in other branches were also sent to schools, and here I speak principally of the technical branches: the Signal and the Ordnance. In my particular case I opted for the University of California at Berkeley to take an advanced course in civil engineering. I preferred civil to electrical or mechanical or hydraulics, which were the other major disciplines involved. So I went there together with five other Engineer officers and we had a perfectly fascinating and valuable year. It was very enlightening to live among our civilian counterparts. We were slightly older than many, but not older than some in the graduate school. However, we did take certain courses that were senior-coursed in the College of Engineering such as Foundations and Frame Structures.

In graduate work we all had original research to do. Mine was in quick-setting cement, which was new in those days (1927-28). Some of my other work revolved around the design of locks and dams, which was a perfectly natural problem for an Engineer officer. We had to get honors or high honors in all subjects in order to get our masters degree in one year. We all succeeded in doing so without too much difficulty.

I think what we noted most was lack of classroom discipline as far as students are concerned, or the exercise of it by instructors. Also the fact that, while we were trained to neatness in personal appearance, the college engineer senior disdained anything that appeared to be neat. As far as personal cleanliness was concerned, that was okay. They were not the hippies of today. They didn't wear their hair long, and they weren't a ratty-looking bunch. The mark of the senior in engineering was a light-colored pair of corduroy trousers where you had wiped your drawing pen and colored pencils and what-not on the front of them -- of course, unpressed. This became a little hard for us to adjust to, but we did. All of us made many friends who have been lifelong friends. As a matter of fact, when I take off for West Point this afternoon, one of the people who is going to be with me on the board is Dean O'Brien. He retired as the dean of the College of Engineering in California but was just starting as a young instructor when I was going into graduate school over 40 years ago.

When I graduated in May 1928, I was ordered to the 6th Engineers at Fort Lewis, Washington. There was one engineer regiment in the Northwest with headquarters and one battalion at Fort Lawton, which is near Seattle, and the second battalion at Fort Lewis. I was assigned to that battalion and became the adjutant. I also commanded D Company. It was a very interesting period of one year. It was a lovely post with great atmosphere out among those pines. There was good fishing and hunting, many friends, and very instructive. One of the jobs that I had to do there that was different than I had been concerned with before was in mapping the post. At that time we had just come to the use of searchlights for mapping, and it was greatly accelerating our instrumentation and control. I was able to play polo and built the polo field there. All in all, it was a very satisfying year of troop duty.

Q: I won't ask you about the techniques that you used in handling your men. I'm sure there wasn't much of a change. The point that comes to mind, though, is what was the role of the wife during those years? Did they get involved? You indicated that you were commander of D Troop. Did the wives participate?

A: Well, a post like Lewis was some distance from any city, and consequently the post life becomes important for the women. I think they gave our children a lot more attention than they do now. For instance, while many of these girls would play bridge in the afternoon, if they had time to, it was almost an unwritten rule in those days that you were home when your children came home so that you could be there to welcome them and give them an afternoon snack. They helped them out with their problems and encouraged them to do better and all that sort of motherly love which has completely gone by the board.

In 1929, I was ordered to Hawaii. I arrived there on May 1, 1929 -- May day, payday, and lai day. I had initial orders when I was at Fort Lewis to go to Panama, but those had been changed for one reason or another. We were not opposed to foreign service at all. We had one child, born in 1925. She was four years old, my daughter. We looked forward to it. My wife was well adjusted in this respect. She wasn't worrying about her mother's apron strings and that

sort of thing which caused a lot of fine officers a lot of trouble and got them out of the service when they would have done a lot better if they had stayed in.

I was initially in charge of the recruit detachment for the 3d Engineer Regiment and division staff units. In addition to the recruit detachment, I was the post engineer, had the war reserve stocks, handled maintenance of roads, and operated quarries.

In addition, my first year there I was coach of the Engineer Staff football team. This was one of those little sidelines you get, I guess, but a very interesting one and one I welcomed. I had no problem there. All relationships, officer-to-officer and officer-to-men relationships, were good. We had a terribly active athletic program right down my alley, all any man could want to get into. We kept our men busy, and as a result our problems were relatively small. There were always some disciplinary problems, but there weren't too many. It was a fine period of service. My son was born there in 1930. I will never forget the week I arrived there, however.

I was coming from Fort Lewis, and, as usual, only had a limited amount of clothing with me. I arrived there on "May day, lai day, and payday" in 1929, and the division maneuvers started about two days or three days later. So I had to go on division maneuvers in some of my best boots and uniform clothes. They weren't "best" for long, because I didn't have my field clothes and had to go on these maneuvers. We went over the toughest trails, some of which hadn't been gone over for years. I was made S-2, intelligence officer of the 3d Engineers, so we had to see whether these trails were passable and carry out certain other missions. In fact, you had to hack your way down some of those streams and through the jungle because nobody had been through there for a long time. So my first week or so was quite memorable, but Hawaii was delightful service. We worked pretty hard from 7:00 in the morning straight through to 1:00, but there was no afternoon duty then, as it was devoted to athletics. I was either coaching football or playing polo or golf. This was a very pleasant period of two years. Let me say this. I stayed there until 1931. As far as Hawaii is concerned, we didn't know what a depression was. We hardly heard about it. We were about a year and a half behind getting the latest dance tunes over there, but by the same token I guess

we were also about a year and a half late learning that they really were having a depression in the United States. It didn't take me very long to find out after I hit the mainland, though.

Q: While you were in Hawaii, were you conscious of the level of preparations in the Pacific as they might relate to Japan? Looking back in retrospect, were there any thoughts at that time that we were a decade away from a rather great conflict?

A: Not really. We knew that there were problems that might require U. S. troops over there. At that time we had the 15th Infantry and some forces in Tientsin, and we had the 34th and other forces in the Philippines. It is true that we recognized that, at some time or other, there probably would be some problems in the Pacific. The one before had been in 1924 or 1925 when they had the terrific Tokyo earthquake and the Japs were so scared that we were going to move in to take over that they even refused our aid. The next thing was this expeditionary force planning to go to China in 1930 which, I would say, was to counter some expected Japanese action. It wasn't until after I got back to the United States in 1931 and the Manchurian incident occurred in about September of that year that we became much more aware of what was ahead. From then on it seemed to be a question of time, particularly when Secretary Stimson tried to enunciate a Stimson doctrine and get something done to stop the Japanese in the early 1930s. Of course, nothing happened. Then, in 1936, they went into China on a big scale and the chips were down. It was just a question of when.

I was a fairly good rifle shot and I knew that I was being ordered back to Camp Perry for the Engineer rifle team; as a matter of fact, I left in April 1931. But what about my future assignment? I had been requested as an instructor by two departments at West Point. I wanted to get back to the East Coast. It may have been partly the influences of my wife because she lived in New York, but there was a job for an Engineer instructor in Englewood, New Jersey, with the 104th Engineers, New Jersey National Guard, that appealed to me. So it was a question as to whether I was going to West Point to teach in one of two departments or take this job which I was told by one of my friends in the Chief of Engineers' office could be made available to me. These National Guard people were all World War I and they really wanted an older,

World War I, officer with whom they could fight World War I over again. They weren't too keen on a young instructor coming. On the other hand, I knew that, come a war, you not only need to know the professional Army but you need to know something about the Guard and the Reserve, and I thought this was an opportunity. Also it would give me a flexibility that I wouldn't have at West Point, where I'd be teaching the same subject every day for four years. So preferring something new rather than something that was staid or fixed, as interesting as the former could be, I opted for the New Jersey Guard and I got it.

As I see it now, while as an instructor I was pretty well informed (I had had five years of troop duty by then) on my duties and could hold up my end, this can still be quite a job against the combined knowledge and questions of 35 officers who individually may not be as well informed but collectively can give you quite a challenge. However, I wasn't worried by that, and by the time I had been there two years the colonel of the regiment was right on my team. I was getting good armory instruction across and I was getting good summer training accomplished. He finally made them all enroll in extension courses which I was giving, so I felt that I was being successful in my assignment.

In the meantime, the Chief of Engineers had told me that I couldn't go to Leavenworth (the Staff College) because I hadn't had "River and Harbor" duty, so my career wasn't balanced. I decided to enroll in the Command and General Staff Extension Course in which there were then 700 officers in the 2d Corps Area enrolled and only some number like 15 or 20 had ever finished it. This course leveled out at 500 hours of work, so I had to push, as my Guard job required four nights a week, to complete this course in about ten months. At least I had that on my record if I had never gotten to Leavenworth (which I did do later for a short course).

As far as West Point is concerned, it could have been interesting, although I hate repetition. I like to feel that I'm moving on to something else. As the war came along, there were a great number of people who profited by association with many of our senior officers because they had been stationed at West Point and knew them, whereas I was in a somewhat isolated position as far as getting broad acquaintances in the Army. I never felt that it hurt me in the long run, however, and even if it had I was still happy with the

decision that I had made. I was only an hour and a half away from West Point. I got up there for all the games that I wanted to see. I had many friends and classmates there; we visited back and forth. Yet I didn't have the daily task of teaching another section of math or philosophy for four years.

At my National Guard office I was alone with one sergeant. It was an Engineer regiment without a college graduate or a graduate engineer in it except the colonel. There were some good people there. There were some hard-working people. There were some about whom I couldn't say as much. One of the great jobs I had was to break the barrier that they set against commissions for college graduates. Finally, in my last year there (1935), I succeeded in getting a graduate in marine engineering from Stevens Institute in as an officer of the regiment, so when war came, they did have one engineer. He made a good record, and he stayed in the Army for a while. I've lost track of him now. It is an interesting note on some of the old National Guard units before World War II.

Q: While you were there, in fact, I have a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Wilby of the Corps of Engineers who wrote you and it said that the Chief had received a letter from Colonel Wilgus, Director of the New York Public Welfare, in which he spoke very highly of you. What he wanted you to do was to find out if, in your spare time, you could continue your work on the Professional Engineers Committee on Unemployment. He wanted you to chair this committee. What I'm asking you is that it seems that Lieutenant Trudeau had other things in mind.

A: Well, let me say this. What was the date of that letter, do you know?

Q: The letter was November 3, 1934.

A: All right. Now from the beginning of 1931 to the middle of 1934 I was a volunteer worker for the Professional Engineers Committee on Unemployment, PECU, sponsored by the four founder engineering societies and operating out of the Engineer building at 29 West 39th Street in New York City then. I spent as much of my day as I could. I would go to the Armory in Englewood early each morning and mark extension course papers. I'd take a bus about 11:30, get to New York, and take a subway downtown so I'd be at the office by 12:30 and probably grab a sandwich on

the way. I'd spend my afternoons interviewing some 8,000 professional engineers we had listed during those years, giving them either relief funds or trying to get them jobs or what not. What they wanted to do at that time, and this is creeping up to 1935, was to make me the head of it, which would have taken my full time that I didn't have to give, because I decided my last year was approaching. I had my work in the armory; in fact, I had four armories to get around to at night. In addition to that, I was doing the Command and General Staff course, so I just said, "No, I cannot take on this much extra burden." The next year, of course, is when WPA came up and this is when this background of knowledge that I had acquired doing strictly volunteer work, non-salaried, started to pay off. That was one of the big turning points in my life.

Q: What was your motivation for the volunteer work?

A: Really, it was a service to people in my profession more than anything else. As I say, it was without compensation, so that certainly couldn't have been the purpose. There were no jobs. As I told you, in Hawaii I hadn't realized the severity of the depression, and I didn't understand it that summer when I was in Camp Perry shooting in the national rifle and pistol matches. When I got to New Jersey and started looking around, suddenly I found that even though our Army pay had been cut back and I was only a first lieutenant, I was fairly well off compared with thousands of high-grade, professional men. The committee said, "Won't you give us a hand," and I said, "Yes, I will." I started going over a couple of afternoons a week. First thing you know you get really intrigued with something, and I was over there every day. Then Wilgus wanted me to take the responsibility for it, and I know the engineers in this were the ones who put him up to it, you see. I just couldn't quite take it on.

Q: Did you get involved in the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps)?

A: Yes. As the summer of 1933 came along I was pretty available, being in Englewood, New Jersey. I suddenly got orders to Camp Dix, New Jersey. This is an interesting episode of what could happen to any officer. I went to Camp Dix, and here were a number of officers from that area who were organizing the CCC. The orders for Camp Dix were for 115 companies,

mostly to go to the West. These were 200-man companies with cadres of six, eight, or ten each from the Regular Army. So I walked in there and, as you see, 115 companies is 23,000 men. By the time I arrived there were about 9,000 men. So the colonel called me and brought in the adjutant and they made me the Mess Officer.

The story of the mess is simply this. They gave me a company of 343 teen-aged Harlem negroes to cook for 12 1,000-man mess halls, together with some privates, corporals, and a few mess sergeants who had been pulled in from various elements of Regular Army. The first thing I had to do was to run a large-scale cook and bakers school -- never mind the baking -- but the cook school primarily. I must admit, as those people poured in on us, I can't say that I was proud or would recommend it as the approved solution, but at least everybody was fed. They were fed under great difficulty, but they were fed. That was one of my first jobs. There was no talent whatever, no cooking talent or experience, in probably not over 13 out of 343 in my company. Of course, there were a lot of desertions in the camp. They would take off in all different directions. Eventually more people arrived. We got them well fed. I then took on additional personnel functions.

One fine day in July when most of these companies had been shipped to the West, I was informed that I was one of a number of officers who were going to Plattsburgh Barracks, New York, to activate a CCC camp for 13 veteran companies -- these are World War I veterans. They were the veterans who were having the greatest difficulty for a number of reasons, not excluding liquor, around Newark and New York. I was then a first lieutenant, but they figured that they needed World War I officers in command of these companies of wartime veterans, so I found myself as a lieutenant in a company. We organized 2,600 veterans who came in to Plattsburgh Barracks into 13 companies, and then on July 31, 1933, we were ordered to take them over to Vermont and detrain at Montpelier, Vermont, the capital of the state where my benefactor, Governor Weeks, was then the governor. I want to tell you about the movement of these 13 companies, some 2,600 World War I veterans from Plattsburgh, New York, to Montpelier, Vermont, where we were going to build a camp and an earth-filled dam. The date was July 31st, and that naturally was payday in the Army. However, realizing the fact that many of these veterans used to

imbibe in a little too much alcohol at times, and that money burned their pockets, it seemed wise to postpone paying them until we got over to Vermont, which was to be the next day, the 1st of August, to be sure we got them all there in fair condition. Our desires in this connection were circumvented by the Plattsburgh Chamber of Commerce, who insisted that they be paid before leaving for obvious reason that they wanted to get as many of those dollars as possible spent in Plattsburgh that night before the group left. Judging by the condition of the veterans that night when we got them back to camp, or rounded them up in the city of Plattsburgh, I think they must have left most of their dollars there, because it seems to me, and I don't think I'm exaggerating, at least 25 percent were completely inert, and had to be carried onto their trains. A terrific rain came up as we were leaving about 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning. We were feeding breakfast in the mess hall about 2:30, a final breakfast, and terrific showers and rain came up about midnight, so that the place was almost a quagmire. We had trucks round up these men in the bars and other places where we could find them . . . hideaways down in Plattsburgh. The power went off, and so the breakfast had to be held in candlelight, and to say that things were a mess in the mess would be underestimating the situation as it existed. We finally rounded up most of them, together with their baggage, although we had truckloads of baggage that were picked up later and tossed into the baggage cars. We got them down to the rail siding in Plattsburgh. It was in a deep cut and I remember we tried to line our men up on the bank, and some of them, either due to their condition or getting overly anxious, would fall down the slope in front of them, or roll down, a matter of 15 or 20 feet right down to the level of the cars. One chap, in particular, did this two or three times, and I sent him back each time because I was checking the men in my company onto the cars assigned to us. His name was Tony Vanelli. He was a little Italian bricklayer from the Newark area. So about the third time, I said, "Tony, will you get back." He said, "I've lost my baggage." I said, "We'll find it for you." He said, "I've got to have my baggage," and he kept accenting the importance of it. I couldn't imagine in his suitcase, or barracks bag, what was going to be of such tremendous value, because there was little that any of these men had, even collectively. In any event, Tony got back down and was checked in at the end of the company, when his came up at the proper time. Finally, when I

got him on the train, I said, "Tony, what have you lost?" and he said, "In my baggage is my union card, and I can't live without my union card." I said, "Well, at least for the next few months, that won't bother you much." But little did I know that during some of our construction, the problem of which union you belonged to or what you could do did come up. In any event, I assured him that we'd find his bag. We moved over into Vermont.

It was approximately 7:30AM on a beautiful August morning in Montpelier, Vermont, which was a little city of about 6,000, and people from far and near had come to see these troops appear. If there was anything a professional soldier was ever sad about it was the appearance of this absolutely terrible bunch of poorly dressed men, half of whom were drunk. Some of them were kept in the cars purposefully until later, hoping that the crowd would disperse so that we could move them out. It was a sad picture, but it was typical of trying to command, or exercise command of, a unit over which you had little authority, and of politicians who could get men paid when their commanders knew what was going to happen if they got a dollar in their hands that night. In any event, we moved in and got to work. We had some very interesting experiences. One of the assignments I had, being an engineer, was to build a camp. We had tents, but a Vermont winter lay ahead. It was a rather interesting job, but the majority of the men immediately went to work clearing the dam site and building the dam.

There were many amusing incidents that occurred. One of the very interesting ones was when Tony Vanelli came around and told me that he had gotten his bag. He thanked me profusely time and again, because his union card was found with his clothing.

Our camp didn't have any of the goodies that troops know today, and our cooking arrangements consisted of field ranges, a Number 1 and Number 2 field range. These are nothing except pressed iron frames as we knew in the old Army. No gasoline ranges, these were just pressed iron frames that you put usually on the ground or higher if you could, stuck some logs under it, and built a fire. You then cooked whatever you had on top in your pots. As we built the camp, I decided that we could do better than that, and I wanted to build a range so it could be at a height where a man could work on it instead of bending down

to the ground. Someone noticed some very good clay in a cut in the road that entered camp, and so I called Vanelli over one day, and I said, "Vanelli, that clay looks as though it would be excellent for setting up our ranges. You get some stones or whatever you can, build an oven under the range, and get it up where a man can really fry something on it at working level, 30 inches or so." He said "All right," enthusiastically. I showed him where to put it and talked with the mess sergeant. I came back in a day or so and here he was in the middle of building a beautiful field range. It was made out of brick, and on the top when it was finished, he put our field ranges.

Our kitchen became the pride of the camp of 13 companies. It worked fine and a I congratulated Tony, but I was soon called over to the commanding officer's tent one day and there was one of the sheriffs from Montpelier. They asked me all about our kitchen and had I had any bricks brought into my company and where did I get them? I said, "Yes, there were some bricks brought in by one of my bricklayers. He had gone out and found them, and he'd built a fine stove and oven." Come to find out, he found them all right, but he found them in a chimney of a very old Vermont farmhouse, and they can look old. It was vacant and the people were away for the month of August, so Tony had merely dismantled four or five feet of what he thought was extra chimney on top, anyway, and made me a beautiful field range. I got Tony off and myself off the hook by buying enough bricks to have him go back and rebuild the chimney. Eventually the farmer had a better chimney than he started with. This is typical of what happened.

It was an interesting experience. The younger officers, who were available and had served for long periods in company grade, were found by their superiors to be invaluable. Without being critical, we served under a pretty fair number of officers who had not served in the lower grades much, if ever, and their knowledge about the administrative and supply problems of running a unit were quite limited. Many of them had come from higher ranking staff jobs. As a matter of fact, I remember one man who was a major on the General Staff of the II Corps area in New York who said, "They can't send me to Idaho," but he was due to be surprised, as they did send him to Idaho. He just begged for about three lieutenants who had been close to troops. One of the big problems here, of course,

and it was quite a test for the Army, was in keeping this diverse bunch of people busy, and of trying to exercise command and control over them with very limited disciplinary powers. It was quite an experience in this regard. You learned then what the old Army hadn't known before; that you couldn't exercise only the discipline of coercion which was that of the martinet (the way the Army had been run before), but also there had to be the discipline of volition. You really had to get these men on your team if you were going to get any results. If you could succeed in doing that, then the small minority of real trouble-makers were taken care of by the majority, and you could operate at a fairly respectable level of discipline. It varied from what we thought we knew in the Regular Army, but it was certainly indicative of what we were to face in World War II.

Q: What authority existed and supported you, especially in the disciplinary area? What were your legal rights in dealing with these people?

A: They were very limited. If it was anything that affected the civilian community, then you were to turn them over to civilian control. I don't think we had any court-martial jurisdiction over them. It was either a question of turning them over to the civilian authorities, fining them, or, as a last disciplinary measure, having them discharged. We had quite limited disciplinary authority. It was all military. As a matter of fact, when we moved out of Plattsburgh we were under the commanding general of the II Corps area in New York City. When we moved over to Vermont, we were under the jurisdiction of the commanding general of the I Corps area, which then operated out of Boston, Massachusetts. In our area, in all of Vermont, there was a district headquarters, like a brigade headquarters. When it came down to our particular camp, we had a Camp Commander, a major. Under him he had 13 companies commanded by captains and, since all the men were combat veterans, the Army directed that all the commanders have combat experience. Most of us as lieutenants had no World War I experience. We were too junior. As early as the fall of 1933, it was decided that at least a minimum number of National Guard instructors should be returned to their units for duty. As a matter of fact, it had left the Guard in a difficult position because they had few Regular Army instructors who were with them during their summer camp, in that summer of

1933. In my particular case, while I expected to be with the CCC through that winter of 1933-34, I was relieved and returned to my unit, the New Jersey National Guard, in October. On return to my job with the New Jersey National Guard, I stayed there until the summer of 1935.

Q: I want to ask you a question, Sir. It brings us to the present, perhaps, but it has been said that the Army should concentrate its peacetime pursuits on projects for the public good, such as ecology, engineering, and so forth. Now, based on your experience with the CCC, do you feel that such tasks would be detrimental to the Army's primary mission, which is, in effect, the security of the country and the defense of the country?

A: Well, I'd put it this way. Certainly, the primary task of the Army is the defense of the country and maintaining such units as are authorized at the highest state of readiness as possible. Nothing should interfere with that mission. In addition to that, of course, we have the work that the Corps of Engineers has done since the founding of our country -- improving the waterways -- and I think that should continue. As far as the third function is concerned, or the area that we're talking about here, I can't think of anything that's better in the way of physical conditioning and, to some degree, mental conditioning for either young men or others who are out of work, who are physically fit, and who can go out as we did in those days with the CCC to improve the natural resources of our country. I think that the value derived from the CCC, not only in rehabilitating a lot of unemployed people by giving them something respectable to do but in preparing them to meet the problems that came along with World War II, was tremendous. And, today, I resent the fact that there is a growing number of able-bodied men, particularly youth, in this country, who are doing nothing except getting paid on the relief rolls. I think they should be put to work. Where they can't do work for other qualifying reasons, certainly, we're going to help them; we've always taken care of our own. But to let able-bodied men sit around and do nothing except get into trouble, to be frustrated by their inability to do anything, to me is inexcusable and I cannot support any administration in that approach.

Q: In your current associations, do you see any move under way attempting to bring the administration around to this type of thinking?

A: I really don't. As a matter of fact, while Mr. Nixon didn't make any references that I know of to the CCC as such, he did say that we didn't want anymore WPA, and, with all regards to the limitations of the WPA, I still think it made a real contribution in its time, 35 years ago. I'm not sure but what something resembling it, better operated if possible, would fill a gap that exists today.

Q: Unless you feel that there's more to be gained by discussing further work with the New Jersey National Guard, which you went back to for another year plus (and I don't want to go from there unless you're ready to) . . . you have mentioned the WPA, and that was, in fact, the next major role that you played . . . .

A: I don't think there's anything more to say about that period of my life. I will say that my experience with the National Guard as a young officer was extremely valuable as I look back on wartime requirements dealing with the citizen soldier.