FIRST DRAFT

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY
WILLIAM A. CONNELLY (USA-RET)

SERGEANTS MAJOR OF THE ARMY
HISTORY BOOK PROJECT

Center of Military History, United States Army
and the
United States Army Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer

Interviewer: SGM Erwin H. Koehler (U.S. Army, Retired)
January 1994

US ARMY MUSEUM OF THE NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER

SERGEANTS MAJOR OF THE ARMY BOOK PROJECT

INTERVIEWER: SGM ERWIN H. KOEHLER (U.S. ARMY - RETIRED)

INTERVIEWEE: SMA WILLIAM A. CONNELLY (U.S. ARMY - RETIRED)

Interviewer: Today is Monday, January 24, 1994. My name is Sergeant Major, retired, Erwin H. Koehler. I am in the home of Sergeant Major or the Army, retired, William A. Connelly, located in Monticello, Georgia. My interview with Sergeant Major Connelly will cover the time frame from his birth through his tenure as Sergeant Major of the Army. Sergeant Major, what is your date of birth and where were you born?

SMA Connelly: I was born on 2 June 1931, in Monticello, Georgia.

Interviewer: Where is Monticello located in the State of Georgia.

SMA Connelly: It's about sixty-five miles southeast of Atlanta.

Interviewer: Were you raised in a rural, small town, or city environment?

SMA Connelly: I was raised in the country, out of Monticello, really, until the second grade in elementary school. I was raised in the little community of Prospect, in Jasper County here, which is approximately nine miles from the city of Monticello. I lived there

until the second grade, then I came to Monticello and I remained here until I graduated from high school.

Interviewer: Where was your father born, and do you know his date of birth?

SMA Connelly: My father's date of birth is August 2, 1895. He was also born here in Jasper County, close to the Newton County line. His family ran a ferry across the Ocmulgee River, and that's the profession that his family was in.

Interviewer: Where was your mother born, and do you know the date?

SMA Connelly: Yes. My mother was born in a small place called Buckhead, Georgia, in Morgan County, which is in the neighboring county to this county, approximately twenty miles from Monticello. She was born on April 10, 1900.

Interviewer: When were they married?

SMA Connelly: November 18, 1920, in Jasper County. They were married in a small community eight miles from Monticello, actually where I was born.

Interviewer: Did you said your father's occupation was operating a ferry?

SMA Connelly: Really, my father's family operated a ferry when he was growing up. My father worked for the railroad prior to going into World War I. Then after World War I, he was a farmer, a carpenter, and also worked again with the railroad. I can remember, toward the end of the Depression, he was the distributor of welfare products. Later he became the clerk for the Draft Board, all through World War II, and then worked for the Veterans Administration as a Service Officer until about 1950. Then he went to work for the government in Warner Robbins, Georgia. He retired as a Civil Service worker.

Interviewer: You said that he served in World War I. Did he serve in France?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, he served in France.

Interviewer: Tell me a about his physical characteristics.

SMA Connelly: My father was approximately five feet, nine inches tall. I guess I'm a little higher than he. He was in good physical shape. He was not a heavy man; not as heavy a man as I am. He was a nice looking man. He had a tremendous sense of humor. He was a good father and a good provider, but he never made a lot of money.

Interviewer: What were your mother's physical characteristics?

SMA Connelly: I guess I am more like my mother. She was a stout woman, probably five three or five four. She always was a housewife and mother; she brought six children into the world. Most of the discipline I attribute to my mother; she was the disciplinarian. She took care of the children and took care of the raising of the children. She did what most housewives and mothers did in those days. She never worked outside of the home.

Interviewer: One of the questions we have here is "Since discipline is extremely important when raising a child, what were some of the thing that your parents forbade you to do, and what sort of punishment did you receive if you broke one of their rules? Do you feel that their form of discipline was too harsh or too lenient?"

SMA Connelly: I guess under today's terms, probably it was too harsh. My mother just simply did not tolerate lying to her or lying to the other kids in the neighborhood, or even to your brother and sisters. She believed that you should play together in a congenial way and she watched for those who tried to disrupt the play. She had no pretense whatsoever of just wearing you out with a switch, with a belt, with a wet towel, or whatever was available. If you broke the rules, you paid the price. I had three sisters and one brother older than me. Of course, I never knew that brother much, or I never knew that brother at all. I had one brother younger than me. My mother ruled us all with a strict hand, right up until we got out of high school.

Interviewer: What form of discipline did your father use?

SMA Connelly: Well, daddy was a little bit more... He did a lot

of talking to you, and I still remember some of his talks. He was good at that. He was not that strict, as far as being the one to discipline you with whipping, but he was the one that, I guess, talked with the girls just like he talked to the boys. He talked to us a lot about the things that you do right. Daddy taught little things, simple things that I don't know where children pickup now, about being respectful to older people; paying respect to authority; standing up when you're introduced; how to shake hands; look somebody in the eye when you meet them; squeeze their hand. When an older person says something or starts to talk, you be quiet and let that older person talk; say "Yes sir.", or "No sir.", to elderly people. If you have kinfolks, you address them as to what kin they were: uncle, aunt, cousin, or what have you. He was great at that. I didn't do that to my own children as much as I would like to have done. He was very great at that. My sisters and I always talk about that now. He taught us a lot about how to meet people and how to show respect to people.

Interviewer: That laid a good foundation for you when you got into the military.

SMA Connelly: Oh yes. Being respectful to authority, that was no problem at all when I got in the service.

Interviewer: A moment ago you mentioned your brother and your sisters. You did not get to know your older brother?

SMA Connelly: No. I had a brother that, I think he was the second child, and I never knew him. He died a young boy; that was before I was born. I didn't know him, but I do have three sisters that are older than me, and one brother that's younger.

Interviewer: What are their occupations and where do they live right now?

SMA Connelly: Let me see here. The younger brother that I had is deceased. Of course, the older one, I told you about that. So I only have three sisters living now. Two of those live in Macon, Georgia,

which is approximately forty-seven, fifty miles below here. The other one lives in Douglasville, Georgia, which is just above Atlanta.

Interviewer: What are their occupations?

SMA Connelly: Well, all of them had work. None of them work now. All of them are retired. Two of them's husbands have passed away and all of their children are grown. The youngest sister's husband is still living, but he is retired.

Interviewer: I don't think I have anything else to ask on early childhood here. Let me ask you about your elementary school years. What was the name of the elementary school that you attended and in what town or city was it located?

SMA Connelly: Monticello Elementary School, but it was Monticello High School then. In those days you just went from the first grade through the eleventh. We didn't have the twelfth grade them. I went from the second grade through the senior year, the eleventh grade, there at Monticello High School, here in Monticello, Georgia.

Interviewer: About how far was that school from your house, and how did you travel to school?

SMA Connelly: Oh, it was approximately three-quarters of a mile to a mile, and I either walked or rode a bicycle.

Interviewer: What about the school building itself? Did you have more than one grade in a room?

SMA Connelly: No. They have in the first and second grade, but no, I'd say we just had one grade per class, all the way through.

Interviewer: What time did your classes normally begin and end during the day?

SMA Connelly: They began at eight and ended at three.

Interviewer: About like it is today.

SMA Connelly: Yeah, about like it is today.

Interviewer: What was your favorite subject while you were in elementary school?

SMA Connelly: I always liked history, I guess, and government. I didn't get that much in elementary school, but I guess you did too in the sixth and seventh grades. That was my best subject and I enjoyed it more, and still do to this day.

Interviewer: Was there some subjects that you didn't like at all?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah, I never was fond of math and the sciences. But I guess math was the only one I disliked, and I never have done well in it. If I had liked it more I probably would have done a lot better.

Interviewer: Who was your favorite elementary school teacher?

SMA Connelly: Oh, I had so many favorites there that it would be hard to select one. But I think, today, if it wasn't for probably the fourth, sixth, and seventh grade teachers, I wouldn't exist today. I still remember those teachers. They're all dead now, but there's not a teacher that I had, coming up through school, that I don't still remember them very well, and I learned from all of them.

Interviewer: Was there any one certain teacher that influenced you the most?

SMA Connelly: Probably, Miss. Lizzie Ballard. She was a very strict teacher. She probably influenced me more. She made me want to do better than I did. She knew I had some capabilities, and she was about the best I knew in elementary school in drawing that out of me.

Interviewer: What actions did your teachers take in correcting any infractions of their standards of discipline, such as talking, not paying attention, running in the hallway, etc.?

SMA Connelly: Well, in those days, the teacher didn't mind really talking to you and making you stay after school. I think writing so many times "I will not talk" or "I will not cutup." I think that's how they started off. If you didn't get the message then, they didn't have any pretense of spanking you on your hand with a ruler, in front of all the other children, and then spanking you with a paddle in the cloakroom. Of course, sending you out of the class to stand in the hall. They knew if

you stood out there long, the principal would find you and he'd bring you in and if he didn't whip you, he'd talk to you. I'm not saying they straightened me out all that well, but it wasn't because they didn't have every method whatsoever to do it, and they did it in those days. I don't get in any arguments as whether it was right or wrong. But I've never been hurt by being spanked. I never got a spanking that I didn't deserve.

Interviewer: After you got disciplined in school, when you went home and told mom and dad, what was their reaction?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah, they supported the teacher one hundred percent. Some times, depending on what it was, I got maybe a whipping from my mother. If not, a whipping or a real talking to by my daddy, or maybe just a good shake. He could express disappointment in me so much that it was worst than a whipping. I even had my sisters to not talk to me because I had been in trouble in school. If I was mean in school and they heard about it, it embarrassed them. But to get in trouble in school, in those days, was a big event, and I do not know of the first occasion that my parents ever failed to support the teachers. Of course, that is what I notice so much now, that every time a teacher disciplines a child, the parents want to question what the teacher did.

Interviewer: What was your favorite sport?

SMA Connelly: My favorite sport was football, but I played all sports. There wasn't nothing for us to do but play sports, in those days. You played football in football season, basketball in basketball season, baseball, track, tennis, or whatever was available. You did it because there wasn't anything else to do. My parents encouraged me to do it because then they knew where I was. If I was on the ball field practicing, then they knew where I was.

Interviewer: During your summer vacations, how did you, your brothers, your sisters, and your friends spend your free time?

SMA Connelly: In those days this was quite a peach county. We had

hundreds of thousands of acres, I guess, of peaches in the county then. We had several "peach packing sheds," we called them. Most everybody worked the entire summer, just as soon as school was out, in some form of the peach packing business. Most of us, depending on what size you were, your capability, and your age, worked either as graders, or packers, or picked up from the floor, or loaded cars. I know all of my friends, whether they were much more well to do than my family or not, still worked in peaches. That's what we all did and that's where I made my little extra money. We did that in the summer months. Of course after I got older, thirteen or fourteen, I had to get jobs after school and what have you. I don't know when it get to here in our little guide, but I worked at a dairy farm from about the time I was thirteen, fourteen years old. It was out of town and I walked out there. After whatever sport we practiced, myself and another guy went out to this dairy. In this county, we were one of the first ones around here to start cooking milk and bottling homogenized milk. We actually boiled it. Homogenized milk is what we called it them. Of course we had raw milk up until then. We went out and bottled this milk after football, basketball, or whatever sports we practiced. We bottled that milk that night and put it in the cooler. Then we came out the next morning, at four of four-thirty, and delivered the milk, and then went to school at eight. We did that all the way through the senior year in high school; either he or I, one, did it.

Interviewer: From thirteen, right on up to seventeen or eighteen you did that.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. Yes. That's where I got my spending money. I mean I looked forward to that because, you know, with five children in the family, like I said, my mother and father couldn't be better, but they didn't have a lot of money. But that wasn't so bad; didn't anybody had a whole lot of money in those days. Mother and father bought us what we needed. You know, if we wanted whatever was in style, as way of

a shirt or a pair of pants, we had to buy it ourselves if we wanted to be that stylish.

Interviewer: Actually, clothes and everything mean more to you then when you had to earn the money to buy them.

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. I think about that sometimes. I'm raising a grandchild. He's been with me since he was four years old. He's a senior in high school today. I talk about that all the time. I just can't believe how casually he accepts a pair of new shoes, or a new suit, or something like that. Oh yeah, to have new clothes really meant something. What we got primarily for Christmas and birthdays was clothes to wear.

Interviewer: Did you ever have a chance to be a member of the Boy Scouts?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, I was a Boy Scout for several years. We didn't have that strong of a club here. I think all of my friends, all of us, became a First Class Scout, or whatever they called it then. In those days, I don't ever remember any of us becoming an Eagle Scout.

Interviewer: How do you think your Boy Scout years influenced your military career?

SMA Connelly: I don't think it did much. Not that scouting shouldn't. I guess scouting did... You know, we used to go on camping trips, and cook, but we did that even when we weren't scouts too. We used to hunt at night; we'd hunt opossum, raccoon. But I guess scouting did help some. It got you in the woods. You know, what I used to notice about people in the Army? They didn't know terrain. I can walk in the woods today and pretty well tell you where a creek is going to be. I can tell a little bit about the lay of the land. I can't do that as well now as I could when I first went in the Army. But I was in the Army with people that had never been in the woods. I guess being in the scouts and growing up in the rural South is what taught me that.

Interviewer: My hometown, there in Alabama, is about like

Monticello. I almost grew up in the woods, like you did, and it almost became second nature.

SMA Connelly: That's right. You know, boys couldn't walk in the woods without stumbling and falling and getting hit in the face with branches. He just never had been in the woods and didn't know how to conduct themselves.

Interviewer: They sound like a herd of elephants coming.

SMA Connelly: Yeah, that's right.

Interviewer: During your pre-teen years, who were some of your best friends?

SMA Connelly: Well I grew up with a number of them around here. There's a man by the name of Thomas Davis Tillman, who is still around here. Bill Richardson, Robert Minter, Theron Edwards, Donald Polk, Jimmy Readin, Logan Malone. One of them, Logan Malone, I just saw him the other day at his stepmother's funeral. He's an admiral in the Navy, or was. Most of those guys left here, but some are still around here. I had some close friends that I grew up with and played with, right on up to the day we graduated from high school. Then of course, most of us led different lives. I didn't go off to college with any of them. I went down to South Georgia to a college. I used to see one or two of them at other small colleges, but I never did chum with them anymore.

Interviewer: What I'm going to do right now is ask you about your junior high school years. Once again, many of the questions that I'm going to ask you and pretty similar to what I asked you about your elementary school. What was the name of the junior high school that you attended? Was it here in Monticello?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. Monticello High School.

Interviewer: Monticello High School?

SMA Connelly: We didn't call it junior high school or elementary school. You just went to school from the first grade to the eleventh grade, and if you were fortunate, you graduated.

Interviewer: We talked a while ago about your teachers. You said that all the way through, all of your teachers were basically your favorites because they made you learn and disciplined you well. Were the correction of infractions about the same during junior high about the same as in elementary school?

SMA Connelly: Yes they were. Of course, you teachers then didn't treat you like children. You know, they didn't paddle you on the hands anymore. If they had enough of your actions, they'd send your to the principal. They'd still send you out in the hall. I had my share. I was not that good of a little boy. I was a pretty tough, bad little boy in school. I spent my time in the hall, and I spent my time in the principal's office, and I got my share of whippings in school. But like I say, I never got one that I didn't deserve.

Interviewer: What did you try to do, just kind of see what you could get away with?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah, I just wanted to be funny and wanted to be liked. Some times I'd even get the teacher tickled. You know, if you could do that, you won. You probably wouldn't get sent out of school, but you used to try hard to do that. I was just a bad boy. But I never was a liar. When they caught me and asked me a question did I do something, I was the first to say, "Yes I did." I still got along with the teachers well, I think; the vast majority of them I did. But they knew I was a bad boy.

Interviewer: You said earlier that while in junior high, around thirteen or fourteen, right on up to your senior year, you worked at the dairy and also worked packing peaches. I think that everything else we have in this guide, concerning your junior high schools years, have pretty well been answered.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: We'll move on to your high school years. Once again, you went to Monticello here, where you completed your high school.

SMA Connelly: Yes.

Interviewer: You played all of the normal sports; basketball, baseball, football, or whatever was going on.

SMA Connelly: Uh huh.

Interviewer: Did you find out, as the years went on, when you compare discipline problems within the schools, say high school versus junior high and elementary, did the students behave better as they got a little older?

SMA Connelly: Do you mean in my time?

Interviewer: Right.

SMA Connelly: Oh yes. Our last couple of years in school, I think the teachers pretty well had control by then. However, we did cutup a little bit, but it wasn't anything serious. I never heard of anybody, in the whole time I went through high school, I never heard of anyone coming to school drunk. I certainly never heard of anyone having a weapon in school. I certainly never heard of anyone having any drugs in school, or alcohol. Now occasionally some one slipped a smoke and got caught. But not even much of that. We had a principal of the school that was the principal, the football coach, the basketball coach. He was the man that kept order and he didn't have a difficult time doing it.

Interviewer: I think also, he had the support of the parents

SMA Connelly: Absolutely. Absolutely. It was the parents teaching a child to appreciate authority, to respect authority, to respect an elderly person. That's what's wrong today with the people. It's not all of that, but you know, I say that we have done to our youth just what we did in Vietnam. We lost control of the troops.

Interviewer: That's right.

SMA Connelly: That's what happened. The leadership in the Army lost control of the troops in Vietnam. Your parents in America have lost control of the children.

Interviewer: Today it seems like your school teachers and law enforcement are being looked at as the adversary of the parents, rather than the ally.

SMA Connelly: That's right. I certainly don't know the answers to turn it around. I just think, some times we don't realize just how fortunate we were in the days that I was growing up. Right here in this town, we didn't have but two policemen, and they didn't work all of the time. They worked a shift, and occasionally they would have to hire an extra one, but we've got a police force that is probably adequate now, as far as number.

Interviewer: We've talked about your years in elementary school, junior high, and high school. Let me ask you a little bit about college before we get to the portion on the military. Did you have a chance to attend a college or university prior to entering the Army?

SMA Connelly: Yes. I graduated from high school here, and went down to Americus, Georgia. I had a relative there that had gotten me a job driving a high school bus; I had a rural route. I got up at four-thirty in the morning and drove a school bus and picked up children and took them to an elementary school that was out in the country. Then loaded up with high school students and took them into Americus, to the high school there. Then I went to college. I had to arrange my classes so the first one started about eight or nine, and then they ended about three. I did that for two years, at Americus, Georgia. Of course, that's what got all of this military business started there then. I joined the National Guard. I don't know if you're ready to go into that.

Interviewer: Before we do, what college did you attend in Americus.

SMA Connelly: Georgia Southwestern. It was a two-year college then, but it's a four-year college how. My grandson has got in an application there.

(**NOTE:** The interview was briefly interrupted.)

Interviewer: You said you went to Georgia Southwestern. What was your major?

SMA Connelly: I was majoring in agriculture. I intended to be a County Agent or in soil conservation, or something in that field.

Interviewer: You said at that time it was a two-year college. Right?

SMA Connelly: Yes. It was a two-year college then. I completed the two years, but I didn't get an associate degree then. I don't even know if they had it. I don't know if they had an associate degree. I had two years of college that I could transfer to a senior college, particularly if it was in the university system.

Interviewer: A little later on we'll talk about your continued education when you were in the military . Now, let's talk about you military service. Did you serve in the Army National Guard or the Army Reserve?

SMA Connelly: Yes, I served in the Georgia National Guard. I got in the Georgia National Guard down there in Americus. I got in, I guess, '49. I joined the National Guard and it did not have anything to do with patriotism. It didn't have anything to do with nothing but, they paid a private thirty-three dollars every three months, and you got paid every three months. My tuition is school wasn't but thirty-seven-fifty. I just got to thinking, "For thirty-three dollars all I've got to do is go up there every Monday Night and march and drill. I do have to go to summer camp, and then they pay me to go to summer camp. Plus, I'd get all of those hunting clothes issued to me." That's the reason I joined the National Guard, and that's the reason everybody else was in it, probably. But I liked it. I liked what I did. I liked the guys I was in there with, because they were the same guys I was chumming around with in school. We went off to summer camp and had a great time, and learned a lot. I didn't realize that I learned anything until after I

got in the Army. I was a leg up on everybody else that I went through basic training with.

Interviewer: About how old were you when you joined?

SMA Connelly: Nineteen.

Interviewer: What unit did you join?

SMA Connelly: I was the 190th Tank Battalion. I believe it was "B" Company. It was "B" Company, 190th Tank Battalion. Of course, in those days the Battalion Headquarters, I think, was in Forsyth, Georgia, which is not far from here; twenty or thirty miles. We had another company someplace else, and another company someplace else. You didn't see those people until you went to summer camp.

Interviewer: I guess you went to Camp Stewart then.

SMA Connelly: Oh yes, Camp Stewart then, and we went to Fort McClellan once or twice.

Interviewer: What ranks did you hold while you were in the National Guard?

SMA Connelly: Then you didn't think about rank much. I was a private when I went in, and it seems like, after the first summer camp, they made all of us PFCs (Privates First Class). Then I made, I think it would have to be, corporal. Then I think I was corporal, or maybe a sergeant. We didn't have the three stripes. I think a sergeant then wore what now a staff sergeant wears. Of course I won't try to explain the rank to everybody, but I may have made sergeant, as did everybody else that I ran around with, before I finished college down there. When I finished college, you never thought about the military. I was certainly not serious, but by then--by the time I was finished--the Korean War had broken out. I wasn't going to school anymore down there. I fully intended to go to the University of Georgia, or go to Macon and get in Mercer University. You know, they got a little serious about the war. Then I started getting letters from my unit down there in the National Guard, in Americus. "You're either going to have to transfer to Macon, or you're going to have to come down here for the meetings.

If not, we're going to have to turn you over to the draft." But I didn't believe they'd do that, you know. Damn, my daddy was in charge of the Draft Board, so I just didn't think that could happen to me. But I got several letters. I went up and talked to the National Guard people there in Macon and told them my predicament. I think I had started going to the meetings there. I was always good at the Army. I caught on to, you know, the weapons business, and the cleaning, and the statistics, and the characteristics of the weapon, and all of that; the weapons and tanks. I loved tanks. I loved to drive them. Everybody wanted me to be their driver when we went to summer camp. So I told them I was going to have to go in the Army. I think they promoted me, in the National Guard, but about that time I got drafted. I went on active duty as a draftee and went through basic training and everything as a slick sleeve private. I never bothered to look into that, but I think then that some law was passed where you could go in with your rank from the National Guard. I know no one was trying to not give me the rank when I came in. I think it was the fact that people just didn't know, in those days. Then at one point after basic training, I think it was during advanced individual training, the personnel folks got hold of my records and they said that I was supposed to be a sergeant first class. Of course that was E6 then. They said I was supposed to be a sergeant first class, and they owed me back pay. Hell, that's one reason I stayed in the Army. That's more damn money that I ever had.

Interviewer: That was a lot of money. That was in March of '54, so you were in the Guard from March '50 until March of '54.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: You said that you met every Monday night?

SMA Connelly: Yes.

Interviewer: How many hours did you meet?

SMA Connelly: I think two.

Interviewer: About two hours. What did you normally do during

your drill sessions?

SMA Connelly: Well, we did a lot of drilling; marching. We did a lot of that, I think, now that I'm older, I think we did a lot of that for the town people to see us and to make sure we were doing something. Of course, we cleaned a lot of equipment. You know, always cleaning up after having been at summer camp, and you're always getting in new equipment that had to be cleaned; clean off the cosmolene. We had some classes. I think that they used to take the NCOs (Noncommissioned Officers), in those days, and have classes. Of course I was a private and we did all of the cleaning. I think the NCOs were maybe in a class upstairs, over the Fire Department. That's where we met, there in Americus. The officers were probably having a class, or maybe they'd give one to the NCOs. But drills were mostly maintaining equipment and getting ready, but we did have some classes.

Interviewer: Based on your Army experience, when you look back at the National Guard, how do you rate the leadership ability of the NCOs that you had at that time?

SMA Connelly: Well, the NCOs that you had at that time were men that had been in World War II for two, three, four years. The only thing they knew about the Army, or about the military, was what they learned in that three or four years. But they were seven or eight years older than the rest of us. It didn't make amy difference if they had been in the Air Corps, or if they'd been in the Seabees, or in the Navy, they were now noncommissioned officers in the Army. They didn't know anything about, or there were very few that knew anything about the type of equipment that we had then. If it was a tank, they'd never been in... I remember our First Sergeant was in the Seabees during World War II, but yet he was our First Sergeant of a tank company. I don't think we had anybody that was actually in tanks during World War II; there may have been some. But there was a tremendous camaraderie there with the older noncommissioned officers, telling stories to the young officers

there. Maybe the Company Commander had some World War II experience as an corporal. Maybe he was a second or first lieutenant, but now he was a captain. I just enjoyed it.

Interviewer: So you had real good esprit de corps and the morale was great.

SMA Connelly: The esprit and the morale was great, and if they wanted the barracks cleaned up, or whatever they wanted, we'd do. There wasn't done in the best military way. In those days too, it didn't make a damn who the sergeant was or who the officer was, the best one that could get it done, did it. Shoot, we'd windup telling the sergeants what to do, sometimes. Then the sergeants windup telling the officers what to do. Like I say, somebody, maybe his father was president of the bank and he never had been in the Army or something, but he's a pretty smart boy. He'd...

(End Tape OH 94.1-1, Side 1)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-1, Side 2)

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, when the last tape ran-out, you said that in the Guard, of course the environment was a little bit different, but whoever could do the job best, did the job. I think you made the remark that some times the enlisted men told the NCOs what to do, and the NCOs told the officers what to do. Do want to go ahead and finish that?

SMA Connelly: Yes. And that was not done in a way to show disrespect to anyone. There wasn't a lot of ego in the particular National Guard unit that I was in, for who's right or who has the rank. Our purpose was to get a job done, and those who knew best how to do it and those who had the most influence, got the job done. We did that without anyone usurping the authority of someone else. It was just understood that, "Yes, old Sam, he knows how to do this better." And if Old Sam was a private, or a sergeant, or a lieutenant, Sam got the job.

Interviewer: It was one big family, really.

SMA Connelly: That's right. We worked hard together and played hard together. As I said, I didn't realize it until later in the Army that I learned a lot that way.

Interviewer: Under what circumstances did you become a member of the active Army?

SMA Connelly: As I said earlier, after I had finished the junior college there and left Americus, Georgia, I went to Macon. I got a job at Sears and Roebuck then. In fact, for some time I actually drove from Macon to Americus, and attended the National Guard meetings. I think I did that for the first year. I even went back down and went to summer camp with them. But I was missing a lot of meetings.

Interviewer: About how long of a drive was that?

SMA Connelly: Oh, that's about a seventy mile drive. Of course I missed some meetings, but I did go to some. I was going to enough to keep the heat off of me. Like I said, I was in a unit that was family. They knew what my problem was. And then, my Company Commander down there was Captain T.C. Tillman. I never will forget him. I think he ran a shoe store. Captain Tillman would tell me, "Bill, you're going to have to come to the meetings down here or we're going to have to turn you over to the draft." I said, "Oh Captain Tillman, hell you can't do that to me. I'll get it all straightened out one of these days." There were a bunch of us then that were going to join. We went over to Columbus, Georgia to join the Marines. We got accepted by the Marines and then this Captain T.C. Tillman declared us essential in the National Guard and wouldn't let us join the Marines. Well then, I guess when I finished college down there--the two years--then I went to Macon. Then it got on up to '53, and I finally had to transfer from the National Guard in Americus to an infantry unit, of which I can't remember the name of the infantry unit, in Macon. I went to several of the meetings there. I was trying to work and was trying to go to school too, at

night. After the Korean War continued to heat up, I started getting letters. I got married in the mean time there, and finally I just said, "The hell with it. I'll just go ahead and tell them to draft me." I went up there and turned myself in to the draft board and told them to draft me, and then went on active duty. Then, as I told you, after a while they told me I was a sergeant first class. That's how I got on active duty. I got on active duty, I think, in March of 1954.

Interviewer: So you actually volunteered for active duty then.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I volunteered for the draft.

Interviewer: You were employed and going to school. When you went in you were married too. Right?

SMA Connelly: Yes.

Interviewer: When you entered the Army, what was your initial term of service?

SMA Connelly: Two years.

Interviewer: At which installation did you enter the Army?

SMA Connelly: Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

Interviewer: When you went to Fort Jackson, was that a reception station or did you go there for basic?

SMA Connelly: It was a reception station then. I think that they sent us, as a group, up to Fort McPherson, which was more or less a screening place there. We stayed there one night and then the next day went by bus to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. That was the reception station. If I can remember correctly, it probably had been resurrected as a reception station for the Korean War. I was assigned to a unit which was a TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment) unit, but it was actually giving basic training. I was in one company of the 101st Airborne. Of course, we were not on airborne status. Then that's the unit that I went through basic training with.

Interviewer: Back then, since you were coming from the Guard, did they call it "basic training" or did they call it "initial training?"

SMA Connelly: They were just beginning to call it basic training. If I'm not mistaken, and I might be. It used to be ten weeks, I believe, of initial training. When you finished that ten weeks, you probably had your MOS (Military Occupational Specialty). I was in one of the first ones that went through basic training. And I think, along about that time too, they started that when you went into the National Guard you had to go to basic training to be in the Guard, but I didn't have to. Do you remember, during the Korean War, when they passed the law that you had to have so much basic training before you could be committed to combat? I think because of some mother of some soldier that was killed. I think back there, now that I'm older and have done a lot of reading, that we sent people into World War I and World War II inadequately trained and inadequately equipped, and people really didn't know how to defend themselves. A lot of the National Guard units were brought in, during World War II, and committed to combat.

Interviewer: When I was talking to Sergeant Major Copeland, at that time he was with the 8th Cavalry and went in with the first units. He made a remark that a lot of the replacements that were brought from the States were Guard units which were just activated and sent over without any refresher training.

SMA Connelly: That's right. That's right. In other words, I did have, I believe, eight weeks of basic training. Then I was sent from Fort Jackson--I think maybe I got a week, or several days leave--and then went from there to Fort Knox, Kentucky to enter in what we called "advanced individual training," (AIT) in tanks. I was in the 761st Tank Battalion. That was also a TO&E unit that gave AIT. They were just detailed; taken off of your list. You know, I went in there and before I finished my advanced individual training, I was actually a tank commander of one of the forty-five tanks. I got "Trainee of the Cycle," there. I guess I should have because I was a sergeant first class. I know that there was some resentment there, perhaps. Then I was held

over after that training. I was held over as permanent party. I was permanently assigned as a tank commander in that 761st Tank Battalion.

Interviewer: While you were in basic training, there at Fort Jackson, how long did you say you stayed there for basic?

SMA Connelly: Eight weeks

Interviewer: Eight weeks. Let me ask you some questions about your training. About what time did your normal training day begin and end?

SMA Connelly: Oh, it started at four-thirty or five o'clock in the morning. We got up early and did a lot of hurry and waiting. There was a lot of emphasis on the barracks being spick-and-span before you fell out. Basic training then was not necessarily given by the noncommissioned officers from that unit. It was given by a committee group. Our NCO was a corporal. He was the meanest young fellow I've ever seen in my life. He was a corporal that marched us...

(**NOTE:** The interview was interrupted by a phone call.)

Interviewer: We had a temporary pause and now we're back with the interview. Go ahead and tell me about your mean sergeant.

SMA Connelly: He was a corporal. I never will forget the day, when we first got there, how this young man started off. They told you everything had to be marked, and they gave you a diagram how you mark it. Mine was "C2799," the last four digits of my serial number then. It was supposed to be marked, as an example, on the left flap of your khaki pants, three inches from the band. And everything was like that. But I was going to play the part. Hell, I had a ruler and was trying to do it correctly. I may have had an inch-and-a-half when it was supposed to be an inch. But I never will forget that young fellow. He walked in and picked up a pair of khaki pants off of the first bunk. I think we had been issued three trousers. He reached down in the stack and pulled out one, and the guy didn't have it marked. No, he had them marked, but they were marked on the right instead of on the left, or whatever. He

said, "These pants are not properly marked." He ripped them and split them right down the seam. He said, "They didn't belong to anybody. We'll throw them over here." I thought to myself, "Well you little son-of-a-bitch. Are you really going to go through this." Well, I guess there was a purpose for that. He certainly got my attention. He said, "I'll be back." They did that, it seems, all Saturday afternoon and up into the night. I guess we all eventually got everything marked, but there were a lot of scratch-throughs. I kept some of that stuff for years and years and years. But I never forgot that. What I saying, those NCOs in the company, and we had two or three in each platoon, with the First Sergeant and the Company Commander, and maybe one other officer, their responsibility was to take care of us, administratively, to feed us, to clothe us, sleep us, and put us on pass and sick call and the administration behind it. But each day we were marched to a committee group who would teach us whatever basic training class we had, whether it be drill and ceremonies; whether it be maps; whether it be range firing; or whatever it was. That's how I went through basic training.

Interviewer: Did they call them "drill instructors" at that time?

SMA Connelly: No. In fact, they were referred to as "the committee group." Sergeant So-and-so, from the committee group, teaches infantry tactics. Sergeant So-and-so, from the committee group, is your drill and ceremonies sergeant. There were very few officers that did the teaching. I think officers taught map reading, and perhaps maybe an officer taught communications. But most of the instructions were by noncommissioned officers. A lot of those guys were people that had done well in Korea, and they were corporal, sergeants first class, and master sergeants, but they hadn't been in the Army but six or seven years. Some of those guys didn't even know how to makeup a bunk themselves. You know, not with your four corners and the tightness and all that, because they didn't have to go through that. They went into war to fight it,

they did well and liked what they did, and after Korea they stayed in the Army. But a lot of instructors on this committee group had been around for a long time and they knew their subjects well, and they knew a lot about handling soldiers.

Interviewer: We talked about the inspection of the marking of the uniform. What type of daily and weekly inspections did you have?

SMA Connelly: Well we had a morning inspection where you had to follow the SOP. I remembered that, years later when I would look at one's barracks. I never was a great guy, as Sergeant Major of the Army or FORSCOM (Forces Command) to go to visit some unit and inspect the barracks, but when I did I was surprised that after I got to be FORSCOM Sergeant Major, there were a lot of battalion sergeants major and first sergeants that were proud of their barracks and wanted you to see them. I refer to it as "standards." That's how I was taught. The standard of this barracks is that, "You will have your bunk made-up," and they described how it would be made-up. Of course, it would be stretched tight, but I didn't go through much of the "quarter flipping" on it. You would have your boots and low quarters under your bunk. We weren't allowed to display any civilian clothes. In fact, I don't think we had any civilian clothes. Your wall locker was supposed to be a certain way, and everybody's was the same way. Of course, everything had to be clean. The floors had to be waxed. The latrines had to be clean. That was inspected daily. These sergeants might turn you over to the committee group, and then they would go back and inspect the barracks. They would give you demerits. It was a lot like the NCO Academy, as I learned later. Of course the barracks were immaculate, but you couldn't live in it. You were afraid to live in it. You were almost afraid to sleep in it. You slept at attention, where you would have the least to do the next day. You sat out on the steps and smoked, and shined shoes, and shined brass, and marked clothes. You were all over the outside of the barracks. If we had a day room then, I didn't know where it was.

Interviewer: You had the standard, wooden, two-story, World War II-type barracks, didn't you?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. We had the World War II wooden barracks. I never will forget when I finally became a trainee squad leader, about the fourth week or so, and I got one of those cadre rooms, with another person.

Interviewer: Back in those days you didn't even have wall lockers. You just had the bar and the shelf.

SMA Connelly: That's right. That was the big thing that we had problems with. You had a shelf that your sleeping bag was supposed to go on it, and your helmet. Your sixty-six pounds of equipment had to go on that shelf or in the footlocker. It had to go in there a certain way and it was that way on the left side of the barracks, and reverse on the right side. These corporals and sergeants inspected that and if there was something out of place, it was just terrible.

Interviewer: Do you recall how your chow was back in those days, during basic?

SMA Connelly: I'll say this. It wasn't like home. There was plenty of it, but there was so much harassment to have to eat. You always had some old burly-ass sergeant telling you, "You can eat all you want, but you'd better eat all you take." You had so many minutes to eat and get out of there. The food was different. Some of the vegetables we had, I grew up with. There were no short orders then; it was all full meals. I never heard of "eggs to order." You got flapjacks one day. You got scrambled eggs one day. The next day they might throw in powdered eggs. You never got fried eggs. Well, I'll tell you what, I was going to say it before this is over, but I'll say it now. In the thirty years that I spent in the military, thirty-four with the National Guard and everything, the most significant improvement in the Army, while I was in it, was the chow. We've got some of the best chow in the world in the United States Army today. That was beginning to be true

before I left the Army.

Interviewer: Something else. I think a lot of the soldiers today, when they hear somebody say "KP" (Kitchen Police), they don't know what it means.

SMA Connelly: That's right.

Interviewer: Tell me about your days on KP.

SMA Connelly: Oh God! I caught the first one, my name being Connelly, when we went into that reception station. You know, I think we got there on a Friday afternoon, and then Saturday we were issued our clothes. We worked all that Saturday, as I was telling you, marking equipment and everything. I know I worked until past midnight getting everything done. We didn't know enough then to know to go down to the bulletin board and see who was on detail. I thought you had to be on detail, but I thought you had to be around a while. Well, sometime during the night, the CQ (Charge of Quarters) came in and woke me up and told me to tie a towel on my bed, that I was on KP the next morning. I didn't know what the hell he was talking about. I was half asleep but I did what he said. Then at four or four-thirty, they woke me, and everybody else that started with A, B, and C, and put us on a truck and took us down to this consolidated mess. I was the pots and pans man. I got up at four, I guess, and I guess I was down there by four-thirty. At five o'clock I knew what my job was. At nine o'clock that night I was still down there on KP. That was all day Sunday. Then Monday morning, at four or four-thirty, here I'm dead tired, and they wake us up and take us down to take these battery tests. Hell, I hadn't slept since Friday, let alone the confusion of coming in the Army. Let me tell you, I'm a couple or three years older than most of the guys I came in with, and I had been jerked around a little bit, you know, in my life. I don't think some of them had. So then we have to take all of these battery tests to classify you. Nobody can take a test after what we'd been through, at five o'clock in the morning. I think they started

issuing us other field equipment and stuff, that day, and then that night we had night classes, which were our first basic training classes. It seems like it went for a day or two there, and the next day they pulled about, ever how many, out of there as said, "You have to take some more tests." Well I found out much later that there were guys that made high enough on the battery tests to take the OCT (Officer Candidate Training) test. We went down there and we took the OCT test. I think about the fourth week somebody, some corporal or something, asked me if I wanted to go to OCS (Officer Candidate School). I told him, "Hell no. I want to serve my two years and get the hell out of here."

Interviewer: It's amazing, exactly what you described, describes to a "T" my encounter at For Jackson. Up early in the morning, the KP, taking tests when your half asleep, wanting me to go to OCS, and everything else. From '54 to '58, things didn't change too much.

SMA Connelly: No. No it didn't.

Interviewer: What were you fellow soldiers like during your initial training? When you entered the Army, did you go with a lot of guys from Georgia? Did you have a lot of friends there?

SMA Connelly: Well, there was a small group that I went with from Georgia. But once we got there, that was what was a big change to me. I never really had met a so-called "yankee." We had guys in that unit from New Jersey, and from all over the United States, I guess. We had a few Blacks in there that a lot of people resented more than I did then, coming from the South. There was a certain amount of resistance to eating, sleeping, and chowing with a Black, in those days. Not necessarily by me. Like I said, I was two or three years older that the guys that I was in there with. But with my upbringing, and what have you, if the military thought that's what I was supposed to do, if that's what the authority was, then I understood that and I was going to do it. There were a lot of things that I didn't like. I didn't

like that corporal tearing-up that paid of pants, and I could have physically whipped his ass, but I didn't do it because I knew better than to do it.

Interviewer: Then I guess your first impressions of the Army, after you came in, were a little bit different than those of the National Guard.

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. Yes, it was considerably different. I knew that. I knew it would be different. I certainly quickly learned that it wasn't family. That the noncommissioned officers there were not my friends. They were there to purposely give us a hard time, and I think that some of that was probably appropriate. The old term that "familiarity breeds contempt." You know, everybody gets in the grease pit. It doesn't make any difference if you're the preacher's son, the banker's son, the farmer's son, or the pea picker's son, you are all equal in that grease pit. You're all equal on KP. I think that was a shock to a lots of people, and somewhat of a shock to me. Being from the South, it was not as much as it was to some. I think back though, and I think it helped me later when I gave basic training. I was giving basic training myself, as a sergeant, before we ever heard of the drill sergeant. I think that one of the things was that maybe I was old enough and mature enough, and maybe the couple of years of college that I had helped me to quickly pickup. Perhaps it helped me in my military career, that you can learn from anybody. It's not necessarily the role model you learn from. You can learn from the little corporal that comes in and tears the trousers. There may be a place for that, but there's a better way to do it. Even people that did things poorly, I made a mental note that, "If I ever have an opportunity to do that, I'm going to do that different than he did." And those people that did things well... I was absolutely impressed with a sergeant's ability to give a class, to give a class on a mine, or give a class on disassembly and assembly of an M-1 rifle, or to teach you how to make all of the

mass movements in drill instruction. That amazed me, and I wanted to do that. They'd give us manuals, you know, and I used to read those things. And then I had one or two... Well I guess that was after I got in AIT. I don't know if I can skip to that.

Interviewer: Go ahead.

SMA Connelly: After I got to AIT, and did become a sergeant first class, I had one or two senior noncommissioned officers that knew the predicament I was in; that I was a sergeant first class, but I really didn't know that much about the Army. They would teach me, in advance, what I was supposed to know about whatever the training was going to be the next day, or two days, or three days out, and I really learned that. I really studied that. I would go into their room, at night, and tell them what I knew. I know that they were please with the fact that I did that. And again, I was a little older. I wanted to do good. I wasn't thinking about staying in the Army, but I said, "I'm going to do the best I can in this son-of-a-bitch while I'm in it." So that's how I got through training.

Interviewer: Back to your basic training. About how often did you do PT (Physical Training)? Did you do it every day?

SMA Connelly: No. Three times a week.

Interviewer: The "daily dozen?"

SMA Connelly: Yeah. We didn't learn all of those exercises. They not only placed the emphasis on you taking the exercise, a lot emphasis was placed on how to describe what the exercise was. That you was to stand at attention, initially, and then go to parade rest, with your feet spread such-and-such a distance apart. They'd make it a part of our test. Part of our test was to orally describe what a pushup was.

Interviewer: How often did you do dismounted drill?

SMA Connelly: About twice a week, I suppose. I guess the whole time we did it, we were doing it from the basic "step off on your left foot" all the way through mass movements, and it was for the parade that

you'd have when you graduated from basic training. I thought it was amazing. I was just absolutely amazed at the way the sergeants counted cadence. I wanted to learn that. I used to count cadence in chow, and I got pretty good at that. I never will forget the sergeant telling me, "Look, if you can't count cadence, you can't be bashful about it. You've just got to step out there in front of your unit and do it."

Interviewer: What about your chemical warfare training? Did they call it CBR (Chemical, Biological, Radiological), or NBC (Nuclear, Biological, Chemical)?

SMA Connelly: They called it CBR, then. Yeah, we had a certain amount of that. We went through all of the mustard gas; how you remove it. We went through the biological warfare training. CBR. The last one is radiological. Of course, it was mostly about the atomic bomb; when to mask, and how to disburse, and how to cover yourself with a poncho, how to get in a defilade position behind concrete. But we had several classes on that, throughout basic training; that was part of your basic training.

Interviewer: And the famous gas chamber

SMA Connelly: Yeah, we went through the gas chamber.

Interviewer: What type of weapon did you qualify with, the M-1 rifle?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, the M-1. Of course, we then crawled the infiltration course; that was the highlight of basic training. Everybody kind of looked forward to that, but some didn't want to do it, as I remember. That was about the closest to combat that any of us had ever come, and that's the way I looked at it. I thought that after I had done that I would be able to tell some of the same war stories that everybody else told after World War II.

Interviewer: You did that night and day.

SMA Connelly: Yes. We crawled it at night and day.

Interviewer: Underneath the barbed wire, with machine guns firing

over your head.

SMA Connelly: That's right. It was a water-cooled machine gun. I don't know if that was planned or what, but we had one guy that supposedly cracked-up over it. I think, maybe, it was probably planned to shake you up. Some of the noncommissioned officers there wrestled him to the ground, and I never saw him anymore, so that's the reason I think it was planned that way. They had our adrenalin going pretty good there with the day firing and at night. I never will forget. They told me, when you go through on the day, try and get on that same lane that night, if you possibly can; and I did. I didn't know how much it helped, but I was a little familiar with the humps and bumps as I was going through there. Then, the obstacle course that we had to run. That was difficult, but it was not as difficult for me and for those others from the South that grew-up swinging on trees, and riding pine trees, and what have you. We had some guys there that lived on asphalt and concrete all of their life. They didn't have any strength in their upper body, as far as climbing a rope. And then again, I'd done gotten old enough to get out of shape. I was a little older but I managed to get through that with no problem.

Interviewer: You were about twenty-three when you went through.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. That's right.

Interviewer: Do you remember any humorous things that happened during basic training?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah, a lots of humorous things happened. I don't remember any one in particular. Lot of the things the soldiers would say about the sergeants, that the sergeants never hear them say. I never will forget, we had one guy there... Hell, I never thought I would ever forget his name. He played a harp. When the NCOs would get out of the way, he'd say, "You'll want me to play the harp?" He'd pull out a little twenty cent harp. He'd say, "What do you want to hear me play?" "Oh, what ever you want to play." He'd say, "How about 'Old

Black Joe'?" Then he'd play it. I don't remember how it went. Way down upon the... He'd play that all through basic training. We went out on bivouac. Everybody got to know Harper, I think his name was. Everybody to know him then. "How about playing the harp." Okay, what do you want to hear?" "Whatever you want to play." How about old Black Joe?" I think the next two or three days after that, we were going to have a parade and everything. Finally Harper told us, "You'll know every time I used to play the harp, I'd always ask you what you wanted me to play, and I'd say how about 'Old Black Joe'?" He said, "That's the only damn song I know."

Interviewer: If you'd asked him to play something else, he would have been up the creek.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: How do you feel that your basic training prepared you to function as a soldier, when you graduated and went on to Fort Knox, and then later on in the Army? Do you think that your basic training prepared you pretty well to function as a soldier?

SMA Connelly: Oh, I think it served a purpose. It was not as difficult as I had always heard it would be, because everybody that I had talked to, that went through basic training, said it was tougher on us than anybody else. But I did not think that basic training was tough. I expected basic training to be the toughest, most difficult thing that I had done in my life. But quite frankly, the physical aspect of basic training was not as tough as my practice for football, right here in Monticello. But it served it's purpose, and it did help me, if for nothing else, it helped me to know what a young soldier goes through; and the fact that you get to meet people for the first time from different walks of life; and that you are equal when you're in the grease pit; and that the chow is not as good as the Army says it is; and that you did learn to march and the purpose of marching. Yeah, I thought that basic training was very good, and I was pleased with it, but it was

not as difficult.

Interviewer: It also taught you how to meet all of your physical and mental challenges, and you found out that no matter what, you could over come them.

SMA Connelly: That's right. That's right. It was good training.

Interviewer: What do you think was the most difficult thing that you had to do during basic training? Based on our conversation, do you think it was overcoming that mental attitude, the harassment, and everything? Was that the most difficult?

SMA Connelly: I think that was the most difficult. It was the never relaxing. You know, they made sure there was something to do at least eighteen hours a day. Once you got in the routine of that, you were able to cope with it. But that was what was most difficult thing for me, I suppose. The classes that were most difficult were map reading and compass reading; land navigation I guess we called it then. I think in basic training they tried to give us a little bit on... what did we used to call it? Presentation of instruction?

Interviewer: Something like MOI (Methods of Instruction)?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I was just wondering where that fit in basic training. Of course later I picked up that every soldier is an instructor. When I think back on the Army, and I didn't get a chance to reflect back on my Army until I was out at the Sergeants Major Academy, to just what have I been doing over the last nineteen or twenty years? And think back there then, you know we really didn't have a good Noncommissioned Officers Corps then. By golly, there were some officers too, that I thought were... I really didn't start seeing good noncom... Of course, I get my basic training and my advance individual training mixed up here, but they gave, in basic training and advanced individual training, the noncommissioned officers and the officers that were doing that kind of work were the people they could afford to do without in TO&E units.

Interviewer: That's right.

SMA Connelly: Hell in advanced individual training, which I'm going to tell that story, I had a company commander get relieved. I know that the Company Commander we had in basic training--a young first lieutenant--I know he had a drinking problem. He probably had a drinking problem the whole time he was in Korea. I know that our First Sergeant was living a double life. He was a married man and his wife wasn't with him, and he was shacking-up with some woman downtown. I knew that young corporal, that was taking care of us, was married and he was going downtown and doing something and getting drunk every night. We did not have the cream of the crop in basic training and in advanced individual training. And I'll tell you, that had so much to do with our problems. Like I said, when I was out at the Sergeants Major Academy, I never wrote about this on our research project that we had to do. I didn't write on this; my wife begged me to do it. But you know, I sat there at Fort Bliss, Texas and I had in my own mind, which I didn't put on paper, exactly what we went through in recruiting drill sergeants, and how you improve the quality of the force. Our biggest problem then was the quality of the force, retention, and getting people to come into the Army. I said then, "We ought to take the best people we've got in this Army and put them out on recruiting. If they were good noncommissioned officers, they could do it. If they couldn't do it, we ought not kill them, but we ought to give them a chance to do it. I even said we ought to take battalion and brigade commanders that successful commands and put them in recruiting, and that we ought to send a message to the Officers Corps that that's not the end of the world. It used to be the end of the world to be put on recruiting, or to be put on training the National Guard. For the Officers Corps, that was the end of the world.

Interviewer That was a terminal assignment.

SMA Connelly: That's right. And I said we ought to make a certain amount of them generals. They ought to pick a certain amount

of those lieutenant colonels and...

(End of Tape OH 94.1-1, Side 2)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-2, Side 1)

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, when the last tape ended, you were talking about the possibility of taking successful brigade and battalion commanders and put them out there on recruiting. I think you made the remark that, previously it was a terminal assignment and they didn't put the best people out there. You said you thought it would be good for the Army and to send a message to the Officers Corps how important that particular job is. Do you want to continue that thought?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. Those lieutenant colonels, some of them should be selected to the War College. That's the Officers Corps. I wasn't going to write so much on how to handle the Officers Corps. But noncommissioned officers the same thing. We ought to pick the "cream of the crop." We had them. We were getting some good noncommissioned officers in there. We were getting a lot of them who had some college. It didn't make any difference to me if he was infantry, engineer, airborne, armor, supply, or a motor sergeant. If he had the capability and we thought he had the capability to present himself well in the recruiting field, then we ought to tell him, "That's your job. You're going to do it. You're capable of doing it." And good noncommissioned officers, ninety per cent of them will do it. Maybe there would be some who couldn't make it, but like I said, we ought not kill them. The whole purpose in this thinking was getting back to what I was reflecting on from the twenty years that I had been in the Army, at that point, to what we were given basic training with when I came in. We didn't have our best soldiers giving basic training. We didn't have our best soldiers giving advanced individual training. Our best soldiers, if you didn't watch out, your best soldiers were at the Armor School, teaching officers at the Infantry School, at the Artillery School, out at Fort Sill, teaching officers. Then when you had to leave from that, if you

didn't watch out, you'd go to Vilseck and you'd be doing the same thing, with a tour overseas. Your good noncommissioned officers were not in TO&E units. I thought we were missing the boat. We missed the boat when you and I came into the Army. And then after you get your recruiting sorted out, and you've got those good noncommissioned officers that have done well out there in recruiting, they either go back to their field, or maybe that same good noncommissioned officer can be a drill instructor. That's where you ought to spend your money; on recruiting and on your drill instructors. Then you get your best quality person off the streets of America, with the best people you've got, because that's who they see. Then when you get them from the streets, you train them with the best noncommissioned officers and officers that you've got. Then the system gets to producing. Everybody can't stay in those jobs all of the time. Then they get to rotating through those TO&E units, and then you build an army. And that's what the Army did. Of course I'm not trying to say that I knew all of this. I didn't have the forethought and the ability to write about it. I would have written about what the Army is doing, while I was at the Sergeants Major Academy in 1973, if I didn't think that part of my score was going to be how well I researched some whiskey rebellion. I think that's what I wound-up researching. But I didn't have to research anything. I knew that, what I'm telling you. I'll tell you, I thought about it enough that I could have put it down on paper. I'm not the best writer in the world. But I could have done it. And what was so amazing about that thing is, four-and-a-half years after I graduated from the Sergeants Major Academy, I was Sergeant Major of the Army. When I was about FORSCOM level, that's what the Army started doing.

Interviewer: You know, later on we were going to talk about the comparison of the draft Army with All Volunteer Army, but I think right now would be a good time to continue this discussion. You were talking about the days when it seemed like the NCOs that the units could best do

without were giving the training jobs, when it should have possibly been the other way around.

SMA Connelly: That's right.

Interviewer: We had the same problems within the NCO academies, isn't that right?

SMA Connelly: Sure.

Interviewer: Why don't you just go ahead and compare the change in the Army from, say the day when you came in, when it was just about an a all draft army, to an all volunteer army. How did the quality of the NCOs improve and what changes have you observed over the years?

SMA Connelly: Well, I thought the stateside Army didn't have much to do. After I had been a platoon sergeant in the States for a while, and then went overseas, where I was a tank commander and platoon sergeant, over there was were I met noncommissioned officers that really knew their jobs. They knew their equipment. They knew how to employ, in my particular field, tanks in simulated combat. They knew how to read maps. They knew how to teach tank gunnery. They knew, not only how to do it themselves, but how to teach young soldiers how to do it. They knew how to maintain equipment. They knew the purpose of their unit and the mission of their unit. Then is when I started to like the Army, because it looked like we had a purpose. When I compare that to training in basic training, like you said, and with no disrespect to any noncommissioned officer that I had in basic training or advanced individual training, but I know that I said to myself, "If this is what being a noncommissioned officer and being a soldier is, it's not going to be much of a job." Because I had not seen the best soldiers. I saw the best soldiers when I went to my first unit in Europe, and I saw some good officers. I saw the purpose of the Army, and why it was necessary. Then I knew all about the Fulda Gap. We wasn't that far from it. We had alerts. We were aware of the world situation. We had troop information classes. We had current event classes. We had classes in CBR. We had

classes on how to mine a perimeter and how to secure a perimeter. We had classes on how to attack a position, and on mobile defense. Those were interesting things. The daily training was done in a way that makes soldiers want to learn how to defend themselves and do what an army is paid to do, which is to move to the field and fight if they have to.

Interviewer: Do you feel that when we went from a draft based army to an all volunteer army, that the Army also became a little more challenging to the soldier once that transition was made?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. Of course, I fell into the group that thought we had gone to hell in a hand basket, when we did that. I thought that we were going to... I know that the draftee soldier, many times in that draftee army, that draftee soldier was a peer that took charge and had a lot to do with some of the less than the best soldiers that were volunteers or RAs (Regular Army). We had some good leaders who were draftee soldiers. They were people who had two or three years of college. They would take over the platoon, or whatever, in not it's training necessarily, but its barracks life, its conduct in the club, its conduct in the day room. Although that guy was a peer, he was looked up to and appreciated. I thought when we did away with that draftee, that we were going to lose a resource there that we couldn't afford to do without. Of course I was wrong. But I don't think the volunteer Army would have been as successful at all had the United States Congress not provided us the money and the funds to go after it in the aggressive way that we did. The Congress is responsible as much as the leadership of the Army for the success of the volunteer Army, because they gave us the money to do it.

Interviewer: I remember Sergeant Major Copeland saying that when Nixon said that we would go to an all volunteer Army, one of the big concerns was, "Are we going to be able to do it properly." Like you said, it was successful because Congress gave the support and money

throughout that transition period. Also, congressmen became interested and would ask, "How are things going. How can we help you?"

SMA Connelly: I know you can remember as well as I can. When we came back after Vietnam and we were having darkrooms, and everything. What we were doing, to me, looked like it was lending itself to a drug culture. But yet, we had some generals thinking that was great. I remember one, in particular. We took him into a dark room where they had the incense burning, the black lights going, and the damn cushion that you sit on, and everything; the room was actually painted black. He said, "I think it's great." He was telling me what a great job I was doing. I was biting my tongue and thinking, "Not me. It's now me that's doing it. It's this damn young Company Commander I've got that's doing it." That general was wrong. That was not the way to go. They were taking advantage of us. We liked to have lost the volunteer Army then, because we got to trying to please the soldier too much, without taking into consideration what you have an army for. We don't have an army to please the soldier. We have an army to be prepared to go to the field and whip a potential enemy when we're called upon to do so. The people of America want an army for its ability to fight and defend their freedom, and that's the only reason they want one. We got to trying so hard to recover from all of the bad things that we got in Vietnam, that we almost went overboard. The troops almost won.

Interviewer: Then we had the saying "The Army wants to join you." I think that the powers to be kind of over estimated what they had to do to attract the young soldier.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. Yeah. You know, soldiers then, in my estimation, they wasn't looking for all of that permissiveness. They had never had a leader. They never had been told what to do in their churches and in their schools, and even in their homes. They were looking for directions by a responsible person that had some authority. They came into the Army hoping to get that, and we were doing the same

thing that they were doing out in the civilian world. That's not what they wanted, and they didn't know how to tell us. But along about '74 and '75, we started to get hold of ourself and we started tightening up on the Army. I can remember when it started. It started with Creighton Abrams, as Chief of Staff of the Army; he died in office. It continued with General Weyland, who took his place. You're not talking far back. Maybe Harold K. Johnson started it a little bit. But we realized we were in deep, deep trouble. I don't think General Johnson... I think that... Well, there's no need in me even talking about generals, because I don't know anything about them. I'm just trying to put it in the time that I noticed the Army starting to get hold of itself a little bit. It went right on through General Rogers. He and Bill Bainbridge were there together. General Abrams and Van Autreve were there before that. Then we started coming up with the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (EPMS). Our volunteer Army was beginning to work. The leadership of the Army realized that it was a good thing, but we could even make it better. We were still getting the money to recruit. We were still getting the money to advertise. We were doing those things that I was talking about. We were putting our best people in drill instructing and in recruiting. We had already made the decision now, by the time my boss came in, that we were going to have a small army, and a more high tech army, that we were not going to have a "hollow army" any more, and that we were going to replace some of this equipment that we had. I had been working with the same equipment that I came into the Army with, in 1954. In 1974, I was still riding on some of those same tanks, and I was still shooting some of those same .50 caliber machine guns. We were still driving almost the same jeeps and the same three-quarter tons. We had the same low-boy. We had the same vehicle/tank retriever. We had changed, just a little bit, a couple of personnel carriers and a couple of howitzers. We hadn't modernized the Army. We had been working with the same things we had for years. So

the volunteer Army, I think, turned-out to be better than anyone ever predicted that it would. I still say the reason is the United States Congress gave us the money to do it.

Interviewer: I heard somebody make the statement. "There is only two things we have to do to make the system work. Number one: Don't BS the soldier. Number two: Challenge him."

SMA Connelly: That's a good quote. I certainly didn't make the quote, but that's what I'm talking about. Talking about BS'ing the soldier. He's the first one to catch on to that. I was talking about some of the new equipment they got. We got some of our best feedback on that equipment from the individual soldier. He'd say, "Who's this guy up there that says this thing is better than what we had? Tell me how it's better." A lot of times we couldn't do it. We had to make some modifications on some equipment. I think that's what we learned with the volunteer Army. We always knew how to ask a soldier a lot of questions, but we never did know how to listen to what he said. We didn't even want to hear what he said. We asked him because we thought he ought to play a part of it. The only thing we could ask him was how often he got his mail and how did he like the chow. We never did ask him, "If you had to make some changes on this weapon that you're armed with, what would you do?" We never asked him that. We finally started asking those kind of questions.

Interviewer: A lot of times you would ask him and if he told you what's wrong with it. The response is, "Ah, you're wrong."

SMA Connelly: They don't believe it. They don't believe it.

Interviewer: I think we pretty well covered the information on your initial training. What I want to do is ask you about your additional military training. Then we'll discuss your units of assignment. During your Army career, you were assigned predominately in the combat arms. Correct?

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: You were with armor the whole time?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I was in armor and I never did anything but armor. As I used to say, "I was in everything from a driver on a tank to the Sergeant Major of an armored division."

Interviewer: Did you attend an NCO school or an NCO academy?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, I attended what we called a "leadership academy" there, when I finished my advanced individual training at Fort Knox. I went to a little "quickie course," I guess. I did real well in that course. Then, when I went to Europe, I believe it was the second trip to Europe, I went to what we called then, the "Seventh Army Noncommissioned Officers Academy," there at Fulda, Germany. I went to a CBR school somewhere in between that. The next school I went to was the Sergeants Major Academy. But I never went to a school unless higher headquarters, either at the local level or at division level, said, "You've got to do this before you get promoted." If it had been left up to my immediate commanders, I would have never even gone to the Sergeants Major Academy, and I was Mr. NCOES (Noncommissioned Offciers Education System) at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I was picked up on that immediately when we first started planning NCOES; PNCOC (Primary Noncommissioned Officer Course) and those earlier courses there, where we were going to grow to it. I just thought that was absolutely the way to go. I visualized the Noncommissioned Officers Education System that we have today. I even said then that the Sergeants Major Academy ought to be a year long. But I went to that leadership school because the outstanding trainee had to go. That's the reason I went there at Fort Knox, to the first one that I went to. When I went to the Seventh Army NCO Academy, that Commanding General, Bruce C. Clark, who had Europe then, said you wasn't going to make E7 in the Army unless you went to the Seventh Army NCO Academy. When I went to this CBR School, just a little CBR School, they passed the rule that I was to have the additional duty as CBR NCO. You wasn't certified unless you went to

that school; you didn't get the points. So I had to go to that school. That's the only reason the Company Commander let me go, because he had to have one certified to get IG (Inspector General) points.

Interviewer: You were one of the lucky ones. Normally, what the companies used to do is keep the ones that they had to have and send the ones they could do without.

SMA Connelly: Send the guy to school that you could afford to do without. That's who went to school.

Interviewer: He went to school dumb and came back dumb.

SMA Connelly: That's exactly right. And when he came back, he could do nothing with it. We thought we were doing the right thing. Even when I was selected to go to the Sergeants Major Academy, I had already made sergeant major. I already had the asterisk on my promotion orders to become a CSM (Command Sergeant Major). The guy who was my Brigade Commander then, who later became a lieutenant general, called me up and said, "Sergeant Major, there's no need in you going out there to that Academy. I want you to move up here as Brigade Sergeant Major." I was already sergeant major of a battalion. I said, "I can't do that, General." I said, "This is a chance of a lifetime." He said, "You don't need to go." I probably didn't, in the modern day Army, but I'll tell you what, if I hadn't of gone I probably wouldn't have been Sergeant Major of the Army. But that's neither here nor there. They always keep us good NCOs from going to school. "You can't go because we've got a field problem coming up." "You can't go because we've got the IG coming up." "You can't go because we've got this or that." So they send old Sergeant So-and-so, because they can afford to do without him.

Interviewer: Then when we went to the Centralized Promotion System, the guys that had their tickets punched had the points. That hurt the guys that worked their butts off, because they didn't have it marked in their records.

SMA Connelly: I tell you, Butch, I am a tremendous advocate of the centralized system, but it killed me. I'm one of the few guys I've ever known in my life that went through two wars and never got a promotion. I stayed a first sergeant almost thirteen years. Ten years of it in the lead. Of course, I did go to sergeant first class, because I could impress the people I was doing the work for. But when it went to the centralized system, I didn't have a prayer. I didn't have enough service. They were trying to make me a sergeant major in '64 and '65, down in the Dominican Republic. I didn't even have enough time to be wavered. I even had General Bruce C. Palmer try to get me wavered beyond the waiver, because he said, "This man ought to be a sergeant major." I had been a first sergeant so long, my daughter thought my nickname was "Top." When some of her friends' fathers would get promoted, they would ask me when was I going to get promoted. Some of those people used to work for me when they were specialist fives and I was their first sergeants or their platoon sergeant. I had all kinds of friends of Bennie and I. They had twenty-five years of service and had been to all the schools, and when they came out with the centralized system, all of them got promoted. Some of them were promoted to sergeant major four or five years before me, because I saw all of those people at FORSCOM, after I got to be Sergeant Major of Army. They wondered. Hell, I had been in many conversations with them. I said, "Well, when I came on I didn't have that much service." I said, "I had some National Guard time, but I just didn't have the service that you guys had." I said, "The centralized system, although it was a great thing for the Army, it hurt me and a number of people like me."

Interviewer: It took it a while to smooth out all of the wrinkles.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: You were in Class Two of the Sergeants Major Academy, weren't you?

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: When did you graduate?

SMA Connelly: In December of '73. Is that right, Bennie?

Interviewer: Tell me about your days at the Academy, in Class Two.

SMA Connelly: Oh, that's was the greatest. I had a certain amount of anticipation going out there, like going to any school. Of course, they had a pilot program out there. Nobody knew much about it. I was an advocate of the Army Times so the only thing I knew about what was out there, they called it the first, was what I read, and I knew who they selected. You know, they selected people with various IQs, from the lowest to the top, and from various services. It was a pilot program to check the program, was what it was. So I was in the first regular class. I think a lot of people went out there thinking that, "Man, if I don't make this, I'm dead in the water." Well, I said, and Bennie can back me up, "Look, you can't tell me that I've got twenty years in the Army, and I'm already a sergeant major, that..." There were two or three of us that were already sergeants major. "I have already been selected. You can't tell me that the Army is going to bring me out here to this school and if I flunk out, they're going to throw me out of the Army." I said, "The Army ain't that dumb." I said, "I'm not worried about that." I think I knew enough about the Noncommissioned Officers Education System to know what our intent and purpose was of the system, which was to broaden our knowledge and to see what we really needed to do in the Army with the Noncommissioned Officers Corps. The generals in the Army were beginning to realize that the noncommissioned officer was a much greater resource than we ever thought we had. We were become educated. We had made more improvement than the Officers Corps had, as far as the number of us that had gone to college. You know, then we had come up with a few of these new regulations. A noncommissioned officer used to have to get approval on a certain thing, by an officer, to do things. They gave noncommissioned officers the authority to approve those things, and not to have to have a second lieutenant sign his

marriage license or something like that. I went out there with an open mind, and I enjoyed every minute I was at the Sergeants Major Academy. I was a group leader, and some of those people that were in my group we still get Christmas cards from. I'm sure that no one out there then thought that Bill Connelly was going to be the next Sergeant Major of the Army. I wasn't anything outstanding, as a student. I was just a regular soldier, but I had a hell of a lot more experience than a lot of people out there. I used to be a tremendous correspondence course taker. I took the Command and General Staff College correspondence course. I used to do those things when other people went to the NCO club, or when other people read comic books. What do you need? (Responding to Bennie Connelly's signal. Bennie replied, "Lunch.") Okay, let's break it here.

Interviewer: Okay.

(**NOTE:** There was a pause in the interview, so we could eat lunch)

Interviewer: We're back again. We took a short break for lunch. Sergeant Major, we were talking about your days at the Academy. Also, you were talking about the correspondence courses that you took. Let's go ahead and continue with your days at the Academy, and whatever else you want to say in that area.

SMA Connelly: Well, I was beginning, for the first time, to realize how much some of those things that I did in my past nineteen or twenty years of service helped me out there. By that time I had taken a lot of those correspondence courses. I had been a long time as a platoon sergeant, and a long time as a first sergeant. I had already had a training battalion, as the Battalion Sergeant Major. I had been an operations sergeant of a TO&E outfit. I had been as operations sergeant in a training outfit. I had headquarters companies. I had had line companies. I had a lot of various positions. I had also been on advisor duty. I had a much better concept of the Army, as a whole, than I thought I did. I never realized that before, until I went out there to the Academy, and we got to studying some of these things.

I was completely satisfied that I was going to enjoy this school, as opposed for it being that difficult. What I was really surprised at is, they told us we had to make a five-minute talk to our peers and we could select the subject. That didn't phase me at all as being difficult. I did have to find a subject, and I thought that I'd better select a subject that I knew something about. But some people were selecting subjects that they thought would be interesting to everybody else, but it was nothing that they knew anything about. I knew they were looking for my ability to stand up in front of my peers and talk. They really didn't particularly care about the accuracy of what I said. I had just been in charge of an organization day at my battalion, and I had to brief the Brigade Commander and his staff on what our Battalion was going to do on organization's day. So I just took that as a five-minute talk and that's what I briefed on, and I got an outstanding report on it. It was because I talked about something I knew something about, and there were people there that I knew had as much, if not more, experience that I did. They were probably more educated and had a better command of the English language than I did, but made terrible talks because they didn't know what the hell they were talking about. I just said, "You know, if this Army was difficult, I would not have done as good as I have done in it." I looked at the Sergeants Major Academy really as a place to plan my next ten years in the service. "Where am I going from here?" And certainly, I expected to be a battalion sergeant major, but I never thought of being a sergeant major beyond that and really, quite frankly, if I had retired as a first sergeant, I would have thought I was completely satisfied and successful, because I never had a job that I enjoyed more than that. But now the Sergeants Major Academy can come sooner in one's career than it did in my day. If sergeants major would look at it in that respect, that it's a place to reflect on your knowledge that you've gained up to that point, and how you're going to take that experience and knowledge and let the Army benefit from it.

Now they all have even been able to go through all of these steps, through their training, up to that. We have absolutely the best Noncommissioned Officers Education System of any army in the world. It was what we always strived for in the Noncommissioned Officers Corps, and we cannot let it fail. We cannot let our bosses think that there's some other priority that's higher.

Interviewer: Do you think that the establishment of the Sergeants Major Academy, and also the product that has come out of the Academy, the past forty-two classes, has changed the way that the Officers Corps looks at the Noncommissioned Officers Corps?

SMA Connelly: Absolutely. Of course, it had some dips there. I think at one time, maybe, we had a certain group of officers that thought it was a threat to the Officers Corps, and that we were spending too much money, and that we didn't need sergeants major and senior noncommissioned officers to know about world affairs and that business. But I think our Officers Corps finally realized that that is the broadening of their knowledge, and if they understand what their particular commander is involved in, they can better support the commander. I think that the entire Noncommissioned Officer Education System has benefitted the Army, and will continue to do so. I think the Officers Corps realizes that now.

Interviewer: When you were in the Academy, of course you had a broad cross-section of people in your groups, etc. Did that give you a better appreciation for the Army and an understanding of the Army, in general?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. Yeah it did. Well, I understood that in the logistics field, and the engineer's field, and the communications field, that they had problems also, as I listened to those people discuss those problems. The exchange that we had was probably as much to our benefit as the academic work that we did, such as the discussions that we had on various approaches to the same problem, by different

people and different services. You have to be careful how you say that, but people in the administrative business, the logistical business, and the communications business, you know, they have a little better cut of soldiers then perhaps the armor and infantry. Sometimes they could use approaches for discipline and things with soldiers that the armor or infantry, or the combat arms couldn't do. Because the better the soldier, the easier he is to lead. I picked up a lot of that, and I think that those that grew up in those services picked up a lot of that. So that was one of the good learning points that they had there at the Academy.

Interviewer: How did it help you when you became Sergeant Major of the Army?

SMA Connelly: Well when I went to the Sergeants Major Academy, I had a pretty good grasp of what the total mission of what the Army is, and how each service, whether it be combat support, combat service support, or combat arms, how it fits into the big picture. We had some Command and General Staff type field CPXs (Command Post Exercise); field problems on paper. We did a lot of studying of foreign governments, and the political, economic, and religious aspects of certain countries. It didn't teach me that much on how to lead a soldier. Perhaps it taught me how to appreciate a soldier more, because that soldier had helped us do all of these things. And those soldiers, I thought, had made me good enough to be selected to go out there. I thought, "Now that I've come out here and I've gotten all of this knowledge, then I can spend the rest of my time trying to take care of the soldier, because it's the soldier that helped my record where I would be good enough to be competitive enough to be selected to come to this school."

Interviewer: When you became Sergeant Major of the Army, during your tenure, as you made frequent visits back to the Sergeants Major Academy, what did you see change, as far as the curriculum or maybe the way they were doing things?

SMA Connelly: Of course, with the changing of Commandants and the changing of Sergeants Major and faculty group members, I guess there was some changes. But from the time I graduated, in '73, until I really started coming back out there as FORSCOM Sergeant Major, in '77, so it had been four-and-a-half years, there wasn't that much difference in the way they did business then. They always had difficulty with facilities and maintenance. But the curriculum had remained pretty well the same. I think that the writing of this five hundred word monogram had changed. I think that perhaps we didn't have to do that. I don't know if we got that much out of it. I think they stopped it, but I thought it was alright to do that, because it was a challenge. I always wished that I had written on the subject that you and I discussed before, but I had that mixed-up too in what my priorities were. I thought they was going to be looking a lot at your ability to do research. What I wanted to talk about I had been researching for nineteen years. I just didn't know how to put it down on paper.

Interviewer: We've talked about your schooling, right on up through the Sergeants Major Academy. What I'd like to do is talk about your various unit assignments.

(End of Tape OH 94.1-2, Side 1)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-2, Side 2)

Interviewer: Okay Sergeant Major, we'll now discuss your unit assignments. After you took your initial basic training, you said you went to 761st Tank Battalion. What division was the 761st a part of? Was that the 3rd Armored Division, at Fort Knox?

SMA Connelly: Yes, I think it was a part of the 3rd Armored Division.

Interviewer: You said that when you got up there you started your training. That was your AIT, right?

SMA Connelly: Yes, that was my AIT. I was assigned there as a trainee for AIT. Then upon completion of AIT, I became a permanent

party and was assigned to the position of tank commander.

Interviewer: What rank were you then?

SMA Connelly: I was a sergeant first class.

Interviewer: What company were you in?

SMA Connelly: I think "B" Company.

Interviewer: How long were you assigned to the 761st?

SMA Connelly: I spent the next cycle, which is eight weeks, I suppose, as a tank commander. At one point during that, I became a platoon sergeant, and then at the next point I became the First Sergeant of the same unit that I took AIT in.

Interviewer: Did you do any instructing when you were up at Knox?

SMA Connelly: A little bit. A little bit on, believe it or not, first sergeant administration, which I knew the least about. Duty rosters. Telling soldiers how they were selected for duty.

Interviewer: While you were with the 761st, what was the mission of that unit? Was it a support unit?

SMA Connelly: Its mission was to conduct tank Advanced Individual Training, but approximately three months out of the year, you were taken off the training and then you had to go through your TO&E missions; fire all of the tables of the TO&E unit, field exercise, go through the annual general inspection, and become a regular TO&E unit.

Interviewer: So what they would do is rotate different units so they always had some training and instructing.

SMA Connelly: Absolutely. I don't know if you remember, or have heard of it in your career, but later, tanks in particular, trained in "packet platoons."

Interviewer: Right.

SMA Connelly: We went into that training. Say we would get a platoon sergeant and a platoon leader from somewhere in the Army. We'd take twenty-five of those men that were taking AIT and we would train them with that platoon sergeant and platoon leader. I don't think we

put other NCOs in there. We just took the better of the trainees themselves and made them the acting tank commanders, and we went through that TO&E three months of training. After all of them had their AIT, then that platoon went, as a packet, to Europe or Korea, and they could only break-up, I think, a certain percentage of it. Actually, a tank platoon in Europe, by that time, had twenty men in it, as opposed to twenty-five.

Interviewer: What they were trying to do is to ensure that as soon as they arrived in country, they were able to operate as a team.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: A tank isn't like driving a truck. The crew has got to know all of the jobs within that tank. In the 2nd Cav we had some packet replacements.

SMA Connelly: I gained a lot of experience there, as a tank commander, as a platoon sergeant, and then later on as a first sergeant.

Interviewer: Did you have very many discipline problems within the 761st?

SMA Connelly: Yes. You had your draftee then, and AWOLS (Absent Without Leave) were a real problem. Desertion was a problem. We had people come into the Army that didn't want to be in the Army. By that time the Korean War was over. They didn't have the necessity, as far as the young man, eighteen, nineteen years old was concerned. "Why should I be in the Army? We're not at war. I didn't want to be drafted. I'm not going to stay here." And particularly, they lived in Tennessee, Kentucky, and some of your northern states there. They would just go on pass and wouldn't come back. We had a tremendous problem with A-W-O-L. We had somewhat of a alcohol problem. An alcohol problem, not so much that one was over-indulging in alcohol to the extent that he couldn't work the next day, but we had some incidents in day rooms, and what have you, where people would destroy equipment or something. But I suppose alcohol, AWOLs, desertion, and as a result of alcohol, a few cases of

insubordination. Of course, I think we could have had a better handle on that if we had better noncommissioned officers.

Interviewer: Do you think that not only insubordination would have decreased, but the AWOL problem would have been reduced if there had been better leadership?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. Definitely. Well, I might as well say it now. I always have to say it about Fort Knox. Right on up until I got out of the Army, as Sergeant Major of the Army, I never thought Fort Knox put enough resources of any type, whether it be time, money, equipment, or personnel, into advanced individual training or into the TO&E units stationed there. I think the majority of the money went to the Armor School. That's what the Commander was called; Commandant of the Armor School. That's what the Assistant Post Commander was called; Assistant Commandant of the Armor School. I think that's where they've got all of the money. That where they've got all of the good NCOs. That's where they've got the good officers. They put the rest of them down there because it wasn't a prime assignment.

Interviewer: So they wanted the high visibility in the Armor School, and neglected the other parts of Fort Knox.

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. I can remember, years later, when I came back there as First Sergeant of a Reception Company. I was drawing proficiency pay as a tank company first sergeant. I'm First Sergeant of Headquarters Company of the Reception Station. So I started putting some pressure on some of those administrative people down there in the Reception Company about their soldiering abilities, and what have you, and they let Post Headquarters know that I was drawing proficiency pay and I wasn't supposed to be down there. I had an interview with General Patton, who later we discussed it and some big laughs off of it. But he called me up there and wanted to know if I wanted to be a master sergeant in the Armor School there, and be an opns sergeant and do some instruction. I told him, "No sir. Not under any certain terms." I

said, "I want to be a first sergeant." I said, "If my drawing pro pay requires me to be in a TO&E unit, I don't want to be there." I said, "I didn't ask to go down to the Reception Station. I was put there when I came here." I said, "A senior noncommissioned officer in the Armor School at Fort Knox, Kentucky, is the least effective job in the United States Army. If the Army doesn't have any more for me to do than that, I'd just as soon get out." I thought he was going to courts martial me before I got out of there. Hell, I said, "I can get up here at four-thirty in the morning and go to work and run my TO&E unit out here." I said, "This is not the first time I have even been station at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I've been coming here, back-and-forth, running units as a platoon sergeant, a first sergeant, and acting sergeant major, and everything, the whole time I've been in the service." I said, "I come by here early in the morning, there ain't a light on in this place, and I come by here at two-thirty in the afternoon and I see master sergeants cutting grass." I said, "These noncommissioned officers you've got here ought to be down there in those units, and we ought to have some PFCs up here cutting the grass." I said, "There's nothing to being an operations sergeant in this place." I said, "You work for nothing but a lieutenant colonel. The lieutenant colonel makes all of the decisions. He doesn't do anything but post the stuff with a black grease pencil on the board."

Interviewer: The colonel does?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. He said, "God damn you, First Sergeant what are you doing coming into my office and telling me that." I said, "Sir, I'm a tanker. I've been a tanker all my life." I said, "I'd give anything to one day be the Sergeant Major of Fort Knox, Kentucky." I said, "If I'm ever Sergeant Major of Fort Knox, Kentucky, the first thing I'd do, when I got settled down, I'd call up the personnel folks and tell them to bring me a roster of everybody in the enlisted force that has been at Fort Knox, Kentucky five years or more." I said,

"That's where I'd start."

Interviewer: You'd clean a bunch of them out, wouldn't you.

SMA Connelly: I said, "And I'd clean a bunch of them out." I said, "And when I send them out of here, they wouldn't go to Vilseck to be another instructor." I said, "I had some of your motor sergeants that were instructors up here, in motor business. I had them as a TO&E motor sergeant in some of my TO&E units overseas, and they don't even know how to order a part." Of course, I later became the Division Sergeant Major when he was the Assistant Division Commander of another division, and he was the Division Commander of the 2nd Armored Division, out at Fort Hood, when I became Sergeant Major of the Army. He used to tell me, "God damn Sergeant Major, you've got more God damn balls that any son-of-bitch I've ever seen." He just told me, "My whole damn life profession had been to be the Assistant Commandant and Commandant of the Armor School, and this guy tells me that we ain't doing shit."

Interviewer: That was George Patton's son, right?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, the III.

Interviewer: Was he anything like his dad?

SMA Connelly: Of course, I never knew his dad, but he certainly was the most profane man you've ever seen. He was alright around officers, as far as listening. But he didn't like to listen, but I got his attention that day. I'll tell you, Butch, I don't give a shit, you know. Hell, by that time, you know, back there that was just before I made sergeant major. That was just before I got started with the NCOES division. Shit, I had combat experience in the Dominican Republic. I had combat experience in Vietnam. I didn't even have quite twenty years of service, and I'd been drawing damn pro pay since pro pay started. I was making better pro pay tests when all of those son-of-a-bitches at the Armor School stole the test.

Interviewer: I heard about that.

SMA Connelly: Oh shit, I could tell you that. My wife and I was

walking down the damn street at Fort Knox, Kentucky, right there on main post, and I see a bunch of those guys in there studying around a table. They done stole the friggin test.

Interviewer: That's something how, supposedly, professional NCO could do that.

SMA Connelly: No shit. Hell, I'd probably done it too. I didn't know enough to do something like that. Let's go outside.

Interviewer: Okay.

(The interview was interrupted.)

Interviewer: We had a short break. Sergeant Major, let's go back to the 761st. At that time, how were soldiers selected for promotion?

SMA Connelly: Well, we'd get a quota down for, say your PFCs. The way we selected PFCs, we had a little company promotion board if we got a quota, say two PFCs, we'd take all of those who were eligible and run our own board. Those that we selected we turned them in, and most of the time they got promoted. We may occasionally get a corporal quota. Now that was before your specialist ranks. Specialist ranks didn't come in really until the latter part of '55. But we didn't get any other promotions; any staff sergeants or sergeants first class. That was after the Korean War and it seemed like there, for several years, someone had to die or retire to create a vacancy. Of course, that ultimately led, probably, to the grades of E8 and E9.

Interviewer: Do you feel that during that period of time, just because the promotion system was the was it was, like you said, it was pretty hard to get promoted, did that cause a morale problem?

SMA Connelly: Oh yes. Particularly among NCOs. I guess what did it among NCOs is what you get used to. Of course, the NCOs that we had in that unit, with the exception of myself, all had Korean War experience and they moved up pretty rapidly. But now the Korean War had been over for a couple or so years, and they were sweating out holding what they had. They wasn't expecting to get promoted. The leadership

kind of threatened you with that every time you said that you got a delinquency report, a "DR," as we called them then, what you was going to get busted. That's what was happening all over that post and I think one or two cases in our particular unit. But it was difficult holding on to your rank and it was difficult to get promoted.

Interviewer: That was back in the "blood stripe" days.

SMA Connelly: That's blood stripes. That's absolutely right.

Interviewer: I've seem a lot of times, particularly when I first got Germany, people trying to get their buddy in trouble so he would get busted and they could get the stripes.

SMA Connelly: Absolutely.

Interviewer: We were talking earlier about discipline problems, and I didn't follow-up on this, but you were saying that at that time you had a high rate of AWOLs and desertions. How did you handle those problems?

SMA Connelly: Of course, administratively, as soon as the guy has gone A-W-O-L, I think it's within twelve hours, you inventory all of his equipment and turn it over to supply. There were certain things you had to do. I think after seven days, maybe it was, you had to contact his parents, either by letter or phone. If we contacted them by phone, we had to back it up by a letter, to say that if he has not returned by such-and-such date, then his allotments would stop, his pay would stop, and he would be turned over to the FBI then as being a deserter, if he was gone beyond thirty days. Sometimes the mother and father would bring the soldier back. Sometimes they would come back themselves. Sometimes they never did come back.

Interviewer: You probably had a lot of "drop from the rolls."

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. Administration for the first sergeant, then, was difficult. That was long about the time, if you can remember, in units like that, those training units, they started assigning a warrant officer as a company administrative officer, to help the first

sergeant keep up with all that administration, because the first sergeant's position was designed to lead soldiers in training, and in field problems, and the old traditional things a first sergeant did, but the Army was getting a little bit too complex then and the first sergeant couldn't do it all. The first sergeant needed some help in the field, so that's how we came up with the old term "field first." It was never a recognized position, but your ranking platoon sergeant was more or less your field first.

Interviewer: Whenever they introduced the warrant officers, then the first sergeant could start doing much as the first sergeant is doing today.

SMA Connelly: That's right. That's right. It didn't last long, because all of the warrant officers then, the only one I ever saw, all of them were technicians; either administration, supply or maintenance. I think all of the administration warrants were alcoholics. I know the one we had was. He was smart and he knew administration, but he was a heavy drinker. I think W4 was as high as you could go, and it didn't make any difference if you were a W4 or a W1, you could still be assigned as a company administrative officer. They knew more than the company commanders and everything, and it was just not good. I think they had warrant officers there then that they didn't know what to do with.

Interviewer: What did most of your soldiers do during the leisure time, there at Knox?

SMA Connelly: Well, they didn't have the money then that they do now. They didn't have the automobiles then that they do now. There was a lot of activities in the EM (Enlisted Members) club, and there was more involvement in the service clubs. There was more involvement in post athletic activities, such as your post baseball team and post football team. Of course Fort Knox is a beautiful post, sometimes their families would come down and there were parks there. They would see the

museums and the gold vault. It was a wide-open big post. I think that soldiers probably were kept busier then than they are now.

Interviewer: About what percentage of your enlisted personnel were married?

SMA Connelly: About ten percent. Ten or fifteen percent. Probably the Noncommissioned Officers Corps wasn't thirty percent.

Interviewer: Those that were married, did they normally reside on post, or was there a mixture of on post and off post?

SMA Connelly: It was a mixture of on post and off post. I think you had to have quite a date of rank to get quarters on post. They just didn't have that many quarters on post. There were some very high ranking noncommissioned officers, I'm talking about master sergeants, that lived in Elizabethtown, and the surrounding cities all around Fort Knox.

Interviewer: What was the biggest problem that you noticed that your married personnel had?

SMA Connelly: Well, probably pay. A sergeant first class maybe got home with two hundred and thirty or forty dollars a month. He had a wife and two children that lived in Elizabethtown. He's trying to pay rent. He's sending a couple of children to school. You didn't have two cars then. You were lucky to have one. A lot of people didn't have any cars; they rode with somebody else to work. Keeping a family together was difficult.

Interviewer: I guess those people living off post ran into the same problem that is common today. The civilian community has a tendency to take advantage of them in rent, etc.

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. But see, where the difference was then, they were doing that to sergeants first class, master sergeants, and staff sergeants. They were having the same hard time then that PFCs and specialist fours and sergeants are having throughout the country today, because we wasn't paying them anything.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to mention concerning your first assignment to the 761st at Fort Knox?

SMA Connelly: Well, yeah. I would like to tell you about how I became first sergeant of that unit. We had a first sergeant who was also a sergeant first class. Again, we didn't have E8 and E9 then. His name was Harriman. A good looking guy. A big guy. He got orders to Europe and the Company Commander, I never will forget his name, but we won't mention names, he was a Coca-Cola sign painter, in the National Guard.

Interviewer: In other words, he painted signs for Coca-Cola.

SMA Connelly: He painted signs for Coca-Cola, or put up signs. He was a left-over from the Korean War. He was in one of those National Guard units that came on active duty, and he stayed on. He was my Company Commander. He was simply not a good commander, and there were NCOs that had some experience and knowledge, and were capable of being a first sergeant, better than myself. He got us all together; anybody that was a staff sergeant and above. He said, "I've talked to a number of you sergeants and I asked you if you wanted to be the first sergeant, and none of you wanted to be first sergeant." He said, "Now I'm asking you as a group, is there anybody here that wants to be first sergeant." And no one stepped forward. I was ashamed to step forward, because I had the least experience of anybody there, and was, by far, the youngest. But I honestly felt sorry for the lieutenant. He couldn't get anybody to be first sergeant of his company. I stepped up and I said, "Well lieutenant, if nobody else will take the job, I'll take it." He was glad to have me. I worked my ass off at that job. I had a battalion sergeant by the name of Crafton. I knew him well, right up until his death. He said, "I'm going to teach you how to be a first sergeant." He took me under his wing and he taught me about how to use a suspense file, with your thirty-one folders. One of them is "hold," and the other ones are by dates. He taught me everything you had to do. How to take notes, because you can't remember it all. He said, "Any

administrative problem that you've got, if you don't know how to do it, I'll teach you how to do it. I'll teach you duty rosters. I'll teach you morning reports. I'll teach you all of that." I was living in Elizabethtown, Kentucky and I was getting home at nine or ten o'clock. I was back on the road at four o'clock every morning. I'm telling you, I was really working at that job. I could never get ahead of the administration. I got so engrossed in the administration that I didn't know what was happening in other parts of my company. Probably Crafton, who was such a tremendous help to me in administration, was so inclined to be an administrative sergeant major that he didn't bother to look at the other things either. I was doing good and he was proud of me, and I was beginning to get a good reputation among all of the sergeants major and company first sergeants and the best guy on reports. My morning reports had the fewest errors and fewest complaints. The platoon sergeants and NCOs were beginning to gain a little confidence in me. But what I guess I'm getting at, what was such a tremendous education for me, I got relieved of the unit. I got relieved the same time as the Company Commander; this wallpaper hanger I had. I was relieved because of an AWOL. I had a guy that lived right there in Kentucky; Hardin County Kentucky. He had been AWOL about twenty-seven days, and we had properly inventoried his stuff. I found out later that his mother and father had called Regimental Headquarters. So that morning, about nine o'clock, the Regimental Commander and his Sergeant Major walked down to my barracks, and walked into the orderly room, where I was still struggling with the morning activities. I had the Battalion Commander over there before, but I didn't even know who the hell they were, but I knew what authority was. When they came in I stood up and I reported. He said, "Are you the First Sergeant?" I said, "Yes sir." He said, "I want to look at your unit." I said, "Yes sir." I think I said, "Where do you want to start?" That's not what you ask an inspecting officer. You start him where you want him to go, unless he tells you; so I

learned that. He said, "I want to start in supply." We get down to supply and he asked about this guy, by name. I had a damn corporal as the supply sergeant. I said, "Corporal, give me such-and-such's record." He gave me a record and it was blank. I said, "Where is the inventory and everything that's supposed to be in it?" He said, "Well he came back last night." Well it's nine o'clock in the friggin morning and I should have been told that when I walked in there that morning, by the CQ. They had issued the damn soldier his clothing and everything back. It's nine o'clock in the damn morning and here I am, the First Sergeant, and I don't know it. I said, "Well, the next dumb question is, 'Where in the hell did you assign him?'." He said, "Up on the third floor." So I go up on the third floor. We get past the second floor, and all the way up the third floor steps, all the trash was swept out in the damn hallways and what have you. But I blew the whistle early that morning and it hadn't been policed up. The Sergeant Major and the Commander had a lot to say about the dirty steps, on the way up. We got to the third floor, and here this son-of-a-bitch is, lying flat on his back on his bunk, asleep, and that shit that he had been issued was strewed everywhere. Of course, I kicked him on the foot and woke him up, found out what his problem was. You know, it's all down hill by then. We came back down and of course, the first thing the Regimental Commander asked me, "How old are you sergeant?" I said, "Twenty-three. Sir." He said, "You're not old enough to be a first sergeant." I don't know what all I said, but I said, "It's obvious some mistakes have been made here this morning." I said, "I think I can explain those." I don't know what else I said. But he just turned and walked off. The Sergeant Major held back and he got my name, rank, service number, how long I had been in the Army. And shit, it wasn't ten minutes and here comes the Battalion Sergeant Major and Clayton Tanner, the Battalion Commander. He was a big raw-boned guy.

Interviewer: Was that Town. T-O-W-N?

SMA Connelly: Tanner. T-A-N-N-E-R.

Interviewer: Tanner. Okay.

SMA Connelly: He was like a bull in a China closet. He walked over there and he said, "What's the problem?" I tried to explain it to him. He said, "Oh well. Shit." He said, "The Sergeant Major will talk to you." He said, "I just want to tell you, young man. What's going to happen here in this company is going to be a lesson for you." He said, "And I don't ever want it to hurt you." He said, "But you're going to have to take credit for some problems here that is a lot of people's problems, other than your's, but your ass is the one that is going to get canned over it." He said, "You're just going to have to be big enough to get over it," or some words to that effect. In other words, he was exactly right. I should have never been put in the damn company to start with. He and his Battalion Sergeant Major should have never let it happen. The Regimental Commander and the Regimental Sergeant Major should have never come down there and caught that. They should of caught it. And that Company Commander that I had should have never let troops leave the barracks until those things were done. Of course, I had some problems there too, because I didn't have control over my Charge of Quarters. Then I found out the Company Commander relieved him of his damn duty and took him to the field with him, so he didn't have time to tell me.

Interviewer: The Charge of Quarters for that night was taken by the Company Commander?

SMA Connelly: He was taken by the Company Commander and went to the field. He told him he could get some damn sleep out there. It was just a series of screw-ups. Actually, it was a tremendous experience, and I always said, "I love to be a first sergeant. I got relieved from my first company, but it sure made be a damn better first sergeant. I've never been relieved of another one."

Interviewer: Once they relieved you, where did they assign you?

SMA Connelly: Right there.

Interviewer: Right there?

SMA Connelly: Right there. He said, "There will be another First Sergeant and another Company Commander in here in the morning." They had an old Master Sergeant Allen that came down there. He weighed about two hundred and sixty-five pounds, and smoked a cigar. He was infantry and had been in the Army about twenty-six or twenty-seven years then. He came down there in good spirits and good everything. He said, "Oh hell, Sergeant don't worry about it." He said, "Shit, we'll get this company going." He said, "I'm going to use you ." He said, "All these guys tell me you're a good NCO and you've got a lot of potential." He said, "You're just young and you don't know a damn thing, and I'm going to teach you something. I'm going to teach you how to be a first sergeant." He said, "I've been a first sergeant for a lot of damn years." The Company Commander, he came in there and got his shit, and a Captain Jobson took his place. Captain Jobson is the one that finally made me put in for this Series 10, for a commission, and he made me finish it. About the time I completed the paperwork and everything for it, they stopped it. I was First Sergeant there for three or four months and as a result of that, I was, at one time, probably as good a first sergeant as anyone in the Army. I felt confident in that job. I knew that job. I was such a man for detail. I knew the unit orders. I knew administration. I knew how to organize your time. When you come into that unit, what you ask a CQ, what you check and what you do. You never caught my ass wrong. You NEVER caught me wrong again, as long as I was in the Army. I wound-up there for several years. Any company that was on its ass, I was the guy they sent in there to get it straight.

Interviewer: When Allen came down, did you just stay as the First Sergeant, or was he the First Sergeant and you was sort of the Field First?

SMA Connelly: I became the Field First. I took all of the formations. Allen had somewhat of a speech defect, not that you couldn't understand him, but he probably was a little embarrassed with it. He didn't get out in front of the formations and make talks' I gained a hell of a lot of experience. You know, at time I hadn't been in the Army long, and here, I had been a tank commander. I had been a platoon sergeant. I had been a first sergeant. And I had already been relieved. Shit!

Interviewer: You got more experience there than most people got in twenty years. Let's move to your combat assignments. You had two combat assignments. The first one was in the Dominican Republic, and the second one was in the Republic of Vietnam. What years were you down in the Dominican Republic?

SMA Connelly: I was down there in '65 and '66.

Interviewer: Looking at my notes, was that October '65 to July '66?

SMA Connelly: That's right. October to July.

Interviewer: Where were you assigned when you received orders to go to the Dominican Republic?

SMA Connelly: I was in Company "C," of the 4th Battalion, 68th Armor, of the 2nd Infantry Division, at Fort Stewart, Georgia. The 2nd Infantry was headquartered at Fort Benning.

Interviewer: Did they have just the armor units down at Fort Stewart at that time, and have the rest of the Division at Fort Benning?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. The only reason you had a tank battalion down there was because that's where all of your armor units, east of the Mississippi, came to fire their tank weapons and we ran those ranges, in addition to being a TO&E unit.

Interviewer: Give me a brief history of what led-up to the United States being called to the Dominican Republic.

SMA Connelly: I don't know if I can give you the historical aspects

of that. Then I was just a first sergeant that was given a job to do every day and forget. Of course you know, Trujillo was assassinated down there and that caused civil unrest.

(**NOTE:** The interview was briefly interrupted.)

Interviewer: We stopped for just a few moments. Sergeant Major, you said that Trujillo had been assassinated and you just started talking about the rebels, after the tape was stopped.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. They had the assassination there and the rebels, or the people opposed to Trujillo's way of government, just took over the city of Santo Domingo. I can remember a little bit in the papers about it then, certainly not thinking that we were going to have to put anything down there. But then the Eighteenth (XVIII) Airborne Corps went down there as part of the Organization of American States. The theater commander, appointed by the Organization of American States, was a Brazilian four-star general. A contingency of American troops from the XVIII Airborne Corps, primarily the 82nd Airborne Division, or portions of it, went down as the American force. They had a little fire-fight down there. In fact, we lost about thirty-five American soldiers down there. There was some sniper activity, and just unrest. The rebels took over all of the public facilities. The people there in the country just couldn't cope with what the rebels were doing. Really, I think the American forces were down there to establish stabilization, just like we're doing in Somalia and some of these places now, until we can get democracy reestablished and we can get leaders in office and take over the public works and what have you. They needed some armor down there as a show of force, because that talks. So they tasked the 24th Infantry Division for a reinforced tank company. And of course it was close to the port of debarkation, which was Sunny Point, North Carolina, or perhaps Savannah, and easier to get on LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) and go down there. It became the duty of the 68th Armor there at Fort Stewart. Well, I was First Sergeant of Headquarters Company. When

they started all of this shuffle there, I had been wanting a line company, but I had been back in the States less time than any first sergeant we had. I wanted to go from Headquarters Company to a line company, because I had Headquarters Company long enough. So then they selected "C" Company to go. Well the First Sergeant of "C" Company had high blood pressure, and he couldn't go. Now we were hand-picking... Now get this. We had to sent a reinforced tank company down there and we had to hand-pick, out of the whole tank battalion that had almost six hundred people in it, people that didn't owe any money, were not having any marital problems, that had perfect teeth, had nothing in their records that makes them a potentially bad soldier. Here I am, I'm sitting there, "Well hell, that can't affect me." I knew I was going to lose some men. So then they went up the line and they got the "B" Company First Sergeant and told him he'd go. Well, that first sergeant there, he owed everybody but the damn Postmaster; he just was in debt. Well then, the next guy that took the Headquarters Company from me, when I went to "A" Company, he was going through a divorce. So the Battalion Commander, Claude O. Shell was his name, he called me over and he said, "Top," and he explained all of this to me. Of course I knew that happened and...

(End Tape OH 94.1-2, Side 2)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-3, Side 1)

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, when the last tape ran out, you were talking about how you were selected to be the First Sergeant of Company "C". You were telling about the requirements that soldiers had to meet in order to go down to the Dominican Republic. Continue on, how you were selected to be the First Sergeant of Company "C."

SMA Connelly: I was about the only one that didn't have some health problems, financial problems, or marital problems, so I was the one that had to go. Colonel Shell, I think, just called me over and told me all of this story. He said, "You're going to have to take the

company down there. You know it's been training. There's been some intensive training going on. But our last message says that you're going to have to leave within seventy-two hours." He said, "It's classified where you're leaving from, but you'll be ready to go within seventy-two hours. So you move on over to Charlie Company and do what you've got to do." And I moved out. Of course, we did form-up there in that seventy-two hour time. Chartered busses were there to take us to Sunny Point, North Carolina. We left early in the morning and moved in there, I suppose around noontime or shortly thereafter. We got off the busses and got directly onto LSTs. Our tanks had gone the day before. We took a reinforced tank company. A tank company, then, had about eighty-five troops in it, and seventeen tanks; three tank platoons, with five tanks in each platoon. There were two tanks in Headquarters, and you had a vehicle/tank retriever. Our maintenance section was reinforced . In our communications and administration, we had our own personnel group that went down with us. That was the difference between eighty-five and one hundred ten, one hundred and twelve men.

Interviewer: "Reinforced" simply means you had all of your support with you. Is that correct?

SMA Connelly: Yes. Yes, we were a self-sustaining company-size unit. Our tanks were being loaded, primarily, by civilians. I think that perhaps we did sent drivers with the train to physically drive the tanks onto the LSTs; there were two LSTs. Of course, I was involved with the manifest and everything to make sure that I got the men on the LST that their tank and equipment was on. I split-up my NCOs, and the officers were split-up. All of this was classified. It was very interesting, because we had some noncommissioned officers there that had had some combat experience in Korea. None of the officers had combat experience. I had none. It was quite an experience; the secrecy of it. The things that probably most of us enjoyed about the Army and wanted to

be in the Army for, we were doing. So we got on an LST, and we're out in the middle of the Caribbean. My Company Commander didn't even know when we were supposed to land. Of course we were receiving messages and that we would get the final message of when we were to land. And we proceeded. I can't remember exactly how all those messages came in. But then we were told by the Captain of the lead LST how difficult it was going to be to make the turns to give us the room that was necessary to hit the beach hard enough with the LST to go far enough to get the tanks off. Well all of that was interesting. Here we are, we're fixing to make a landing. We didn't know what the rebels were going to do. We didn't know if they were going to meet us or not. There were intelligence reports. You know, after all, it's just a tank company. Hell, nobody in the Pentagon is worried about a tank company. The 82nd Airborne is already down there, with the XVIII Airborne Corps. The whole division is not down there. The XVIII Airborne Corps Commander, General Bruce C. Palmer, is the American officer in charge. I don't know how many troops were down there; I guess it was seven hundred to a thousand.

Interviewer: Had the 82nd sustained casualties before you got there?

SMA Connelly: Some. There had been a couple of fire-fights. You know, what rumors we were getting, they were all probably bigger than they were. But my men, to include myself, were quite excited. I was thinking, "You know here we are, going to make an amphibious landing and it's the first time one has been made since World War II, in the Pacific." That's quite something. I thought it was great. So it was difficult, from a navigation point of view, as far as the ship, I guess, to get in there. But once those gates dropped, we were sitting there ready to go. The men just did wonderful in driving off of there. Those young fellows hit the beach. I think we had ten tanks on the first LST and seven on the second. I was on the first LST. I went with the Executive Officer, after the first five tanks, in a jeep. We were in

separate jeeps, I believe. Then the Company Commander came with the last five tanks. Of course the platoon leaders were in tanks. Then we got that one out of the way and immediately setup the perimeter. Of course we met some of the 82nd Airborne that had secured the so-called "Beachhead." The officer there, in charge, was telling us what part of that coconut grove there that we were to occupy. We pulled that seven tanks off. Before night was there, we had a perimeter setup, and our tents setup, and we were ready to go to war.

Interviewer: Did you have any kind of instructions related to the firing of your weapons?

SMA Connelly: Not at that time. Not that I knew at the time, but in retrospect, I think the 82nd Airborne and the XVIII Airborne Corps had communicated with our Commander to tell him that it was secure. However, we did have all ammunition loaded. We had our .50 caliber machine guns in the half-cocked positions, so to speak, and the .30 caliber ammunition, in the tanks, in the breach. Our ready racks were ready. We had not loaded any service ammunition. But we were loaded for bear. But that's about all we got, as far as instructions. Our big objective then was to get in, get off the ship, setup the perimeter, secure that coconut grove, and disburse in the perimeter where, in case we were attacked that night by rebels, we could defend ourselves.

Interviewer: Then, a little later on, you had a restriction on the use of weapons. You had to get permission if you wanted to shoot different type weapons. Right?

SMA Connelly: After we secured the coconut grove, I guess in about a week we got instructions that we were going to move out of the coconut grove. We were going into the capital city of Dominican Republic and we were going to run the rebels out, and we would be the lead force. Of course we had our routes, by platoons, down through town. As the First Sergeant, the Executive Officer and I led the Headquarters group, a distance of four or five hundred yards between the three line platoons

that were going down certain streets. When we left early that morning, that's when we received the instructions, in a group; it wasn't the whole company. In other words, the Company Commander got the Platoon Sergeants and Platoon Leaders--the key people--together and told them what our instructions were, and then we had to play it by the book. Then we informed out troops, just like you got an attack order. The tanker is armed with a .45 caliber pistol. Our instructions were, "All of you armed with .45 pistols, you can return fire with that .45 pistol if you are sure that you were fired upon, and if it is a reasonable target within the distance of the .45. But it would be better if you had a witness that would witness the fact that you were fired upon." Not that that was a binding thing, it is just suggested. Each tank had a .45 caliber submachine gun in the tank. They also had carbines. That's what the loader stood in the loader's hatch with. The tank commander had access to a carbine. Before we could shoot those, we had to get permission from the Company Commander, because we could put out more volume of fire, at a distance, with the carbine than with the submachine gun.

Interviewer: The submachine gun. Is that the one that we called the "grease gun?"

SMA Connelly: The "grease gun" is what it was commonly called, but it was a .45 caliber submachine gun. Before we could fire the .30 caliber machine gun, we had to get permission from General Palmer. That's the coax (coaxial) .30 caliber that works with the gun turret as you move it for reconnaissance-type fire. It puts out quite a volume of fire.

Interviewer: In this case, General Palmer was the XVIII Airborne Corps Commander.

SMA Connelly: He was a lieutenant general; the XVIII Airborne Commander. He was the senior American general on land, or down there. He was in charge of all American troops. Now I'm sure that all your

other units--there was no other tank unit--had the same instructions, depending on their weapons. I'm just speaking about our weapons. The .50 caliber is on the turret and has got three hundred and sixty degrees that you can crank it around. That's a crew served weapon and it puts out a tremendous volume of fire. It's one of the better weapons we've ever had. Before we could fire the .50 caliber machine gum, we had to get permission from the Theater Commander, which was a Brazilian four-star general, to shoot that weapon. And we had received instructions how to do it. Certainly, an individual tank commander or platoon sergeant would not call up the General, but it had to go through channels. In other words, our Company Commander would have to request from General Palmer. Then General Palmer would notify the Theater Commander that we needed to shoot the .50 caliber, and then he had to come back down. To shoot your service ammunition, which we had for the 90mm gun on the tank, to get permission for that, the Brazilian General had to go back to the Pentagon to get permission to shoot. That's how we went into war that morning, and we were supposed to win this sucker. We were supposed to win the war and run the rebels out. But I'll tell you what, all of those restrictions were not on the Brazilian Army. They were not on the other countries that had troops there. They didn't have all those restrictions. The United States was down there as a show of force. When those tanks started rolling, I'm telling you. Over the routes they had picked for us, we heard a few shot fired, but I think it was just people accidentally shooting weapons to get the hell out of there. We drove up to where they told us to go. I'm sitting there talking to one of my soldiers. I just pulled up in a jeep and stepped out of the jeep onto the tank. I was just talking to the soldier. He was telling me, he said "God damn, I don't know why we've got all of these restrictions." He said, "Watch this. Watch this, Top." There was this Brazilian guy and there was this woman that came down a stairway. Buddy, he ripped that woman's ass with his automatic weapon

and just blew her ass everywhere. When they tore off her dress, she had ammunition, grenades, rifles, and everything all up under there. She would have come out there and killed some of my people, if that guy hadn't shot her. They didn't have the restrictions. But they were doing all of that. We were the show of force. We did what we had to do. We stayed in the town about three more days and quieted everything down and got somewhat control of the rebels and got them into one position. Then the XVIII Airborne Corps setup positions to keep the rebels there. We stayed there about three more days. And when we moved out of there, we didn't go back to the coconut grove. We moved into this villa area, which was just above the site where Trujillo was assassinated, and we was to stay there. The mission of the Organization of American States, there, was to maintain control until they had the election.

Interviewer: What kind of tanks did you have? M-48s?

SMA Connelly: Uh huh. Gasoline powered M-48s. I had been on that tank almost since I'd been in the Army. We were still using it. That's what was in Europe, at the time too.

Interviewer: So you set your perimeter up at this villa.

SMA Connelly: We stayed there, and our mission then was to maintain control until they had the election. I think Juan Bosch was one of the candidates, and he was the one that got elected. He had said, from the beginning, to the Dominican people, "If I am elected president, we'll have the American troops off the island within seventy-two hours after I'm elected." And then we sat there... Let me see. We went over there in October... Uh...

Interviewer: You got there in October of '65, and then left in July of '66. Wasn't it?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. We sat there for six months, in this villa area, and that's when the real challenge to leadership became, because there was nothing to do. They were having the election and there were a lot of newspaper reports. There were a few fire-fights. The rebels

would get loose in one place and we had to send out patrols a couple or three times. But we really never got into a fire-fight. Every time a fire-fight started, they would move a platoon or so of tanks as a show of force, which in most cases, stopped the rebel activity.

Interviewer: What did you do to keep your soldiers occupied during that period of time? I guess that was a challenge.

SMA Connelly: That was the best challenge I've ever had, in leadership. Oh, I did a number of things. We had a real problem there with venereal disease, and we did have some problems with our troops going over the fence at night and contacting the local people. We did have a certain number of cases of venereal disease. We stopped that. I, and the noncommissioned officers of the unit, decided that the best way to stop that is to get some of the women that wanted that type life, and we'd take them down to the dispensary to make sure that they were clear of disease. Then we'd let the men fraternize with them, up until a certain time in the evening. We got control of our venereal disease problem that way. But we had a very close knit unit. All of them were in tents. I know at my hometown here in Monticello, during World War II, we had a prisoner of war camp. It was quite something to see, the way the German prisoners of war planted flowers around their tents and the way they beautified the outside area. I thought of those things and we sent back to the States and we got all kinds of flower plants and shrubbery. I had a contest where the people would beautify the area and we would get the local nationals in to select the tent that had the prettiest flowers, and ones that were most difficult to raise. Then we'd give some incentive for those people that inhabited that tent. Maybe they would sleep until breakfast on Sunday. Maybe go by truck down to the beach on Sunday to swim. It was a constant problem to take one hundred and ten men, on approximately five acres that's surrounded by concertina wire, and tell them they can't go outside that wire without permission. It took every bit of leadership that every leader had to

do that. We had some tremendous platoon sergeants. We had some good officers and some good soldiers. We, all-in-all, did an excellent job.

Interviewer: During the break, you were talking a little bit about your stay down in the Dominican Republic. I think you named some of your platoon sergeants. You made a statement about the outstanding NCOs that you had.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I had a platoon sergeant, who was a master sergeant, by the name of "Rossada." He was our third platoon sergeant. He was a tremendous noncommissioned officer. He really knew his tanks and really knew his job well. He was a good leader and his soldiers liked him. He was the only master sergeant we had there, other than myself. Of course, I was the First Sergeant. I think he was an E7, but wore master sergeant stripes, if you can remember that. I was an E8 and wore the first sergeant stripes. Rossada was a master sergeant, but made E8 while he was down there. I had a Sergeant First Class Green, who was a sergeant first class E6. He made E7 while he was down there. I believe Sergeant Goodworth also made it. Most of my noncommissioned officers down there got promoted; we had a lot of promotions down there. Of course that was before your centralized system. We came back from down there with a lot of rank. I think all of the officers that were there were second lieutenants when we went, they all came back as first lieutenants. I think it was just the time for them to make first lieutenant. It was now just platoon sergeants. I had staff sergeants and sergeants that just were good tank commanders. Like I said, we hand picked out of six hundred and something troops, back at Fort Stewart, to go down there, so I had the "cream of the crop" while I was down there. And all those sergeants did well in the Army. Like I said, a lot of them had much more service than I did. I would say, when we got back to Fort Stewart in July, that unit wasn't there but about thirty days and then they shipped the whole unit from there to Fort Knox, Kentucky. So I stayed there, with that unit, and went in as the Operations Sergeant

to make that move. Then I became the Operations Sergeant at Fort Knox. There we worked as a TO&E unit, which was part of the 16th Armor Group, which supported the Armor School.

Interviewer: Was that the original Charlie Company then?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I think on that move it was redesignated to the 66th Armor.

Interviewer: When you left the Dominican Republic, other than the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, did any of the members of the unit receive any other special recognition?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. We had one lieutenant get the Bronze Star. I got the Commendation Medal. I think Sergeant First Class Green got the Commendation Medal, and maybe one or two soldiers, and maybe the Company Commander. But we sure as hell didn't get many, and it was difficult. I think that the problem with the Battalion Commander was instrumental in that. It was just too hard to select someone that deserved any. It had to be given to somebody. This Lieutenant Hinnie, I believe, is the guy got the Bronze Star; he later got killed in Vietnam.

Interviewer: Now we have finished talking about your first combat tour. What I want to do is ask you about your second combat tour. I know we're kind of moving ahead, but we want to keep your combat tours together. Your second combat tour was in Vietnam, from October '69 to November '70. Correct?

SMA Connelly: That's correct.

Interviewer: Where were you assigned when you received your assignment orders for Vietnam?

SMA Connelly: I was assigned as an advisor to the National Guard, here in the State of Georgia.

Interviewer: Where were you assigned in Vietnam?

SMA Connelly: I was assigned to Troop "B", 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, stationed at Quan Loi.

Interviewer: You was First Sergeant of "B" Troop.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: You was there one full tour? Right?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. One solid year in that same unit. That unit did move from there, after about nine months, down to... Damn, I didn't think I'd ever forget that place.

Interviewer: It wasn't Lai Khe, was it?

SMA Connelly: No. Down below there. I'll think of that in a minute.

Interviewer: The 1st Cav was about the most traveled division over there, wasn't it?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. Now we had setup I don't know how many firebases there, but our base camp remained at Quan Loi. We did move some troops down to Phan Thiet. There was a base down there for a while. I was back and forth from there. Was there a place called "Bearcat?"

Interviewer: Bearcat. Right.

SMA Connelly: Okay, that's where we moved from, out of Quan Loi.

Interviewer: The Thai had their headquarters at Bearcat.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: Phan Thiet was south of Nha Trang, on the ocean.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. We flew missions out of there, and had a base camp setup. Well that was a fighting unit, that Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav. I don't know how that come out, but at one time I heard "B" Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry was one of highest decorated company/troop size units, it not in Vietnam, in the history of the military. But I'm not going to fall on my sword on that. But we had some very big battles there and some brave soldiers, just during the time I was there. And of course, before I got there and after I left.

Interviewer: Had the 1st Cav moved out of An Khe by the time you got there?

SMA Connelly: We had one unit there. I believe our "A" Troop was

in An Khe. We had "B" Troop in Quan Loi. "A" Troop was in An Khe. "C" Troop, "D" Troop, and Squadron Headquarters was a Phoc Vhin. I never was all that good on all those Vietnam names. I was the guy that had six hundred and something troops in a cav troop and it took every day, twenty-four hours a day, to keep up with that many troops, and fifty-four warrant officers.

Interviewer: Particularly as fast as they moved all of the time.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: How would you compare the leadership of your NCOs, when you were with "B" Troop, to the ones you had in the...

SMA Connelly: Dominican Republic.

Interviewer: ...Dominican Republic.

SMA Connelly: There's no comparison. I didn't have any experienced... I shouldn't say any. I had a few noncommissioned officers who had some in-country experience, more than myself. But they were not old enough or seasoned enough to know how to handle the experience that they had gained over there. I did have a platoon sergeant by the name of "Charles E. Weaver," and one by the name of "Jackson." Oh, what was old Jack's name? I had a guy named "Aruda." I had some noncommissioned officers in maintenance there that had a tremendous amount of experience. But I think Weaver was the only one that had any combat experience from Korea. He was a tremendous soldier.

Interviewer: Don't you think that most of our problems in Vietnam was, once again, the young inexperienced NCOs?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. Hell, my "Blue Platoon," or infantry platoon, had a young staff sergeant, a Spanish fellow, a good person, a good man, trying to run an infantry platoon. He did a great job, but it was just too much for him. And I had a captain that was a helicopter pilot who had a tremendous amount of combat hours flying helicopters. He wanted an infantry platoon and we gave it to him, but he was really not trained for it. He was a great guy and a brave guy. And this young

platoon sergeant we had, yeah, he had six or eight months experience, but he was about to burn out. His squad leaders were men that we had made sergeants from PFCs and Specialists Four, and some that had come out of what we called "The Instant NCO" and it was just not enough experience in the field. One time we had a platoon leader that got shot when they were repelling in, and this assistant platoon sergeant, the platoon sergeant was either shot or had a broken back, or the platoon leader had been shot and had a broken back. But anyway, we were down on the ground and we had come in under heavy fire. We didn't have anything but an experienced specialist four on the ground, to get forty-five or fifty men back to the position where they could be extracted. My Troop Commander was telling me, "Top, you've got to go and get them back to where they can be extracted." You know, I'm a guy flying around up there with a .50 caliber machine gun, because I'm a tanker and I know how to shoot a .50 caliber machine gun. And I've got an old armor officer there that loved me, but he's telling me I've got to jump out of this damn helicopter and get these guys back. And I did that. Of course everybody, including myself, were scared to death. There was all kinds of fire and there was noise and everything, but I didn't do anything but really calm down this young specialist four. He got those troops back. Quite frankly, I didn't know where the extract area was. I asked him and he showed me on the map. I said, "Well I'm going back that way. I'll stay ten or fifteen yards back of you. You guide me which way to go and I'll gets us back there." And he moved the troops. This young man didn't know what the hell he was doing. He was young enough, he didn't even know the danger. All of our asses were fixing to get killed and I think I'm the only one that knew it.

Interviewer: So all you did was stayed back and let him do the work.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I certainly didn't want to usurp him. I'll tell you, when they came down, and I'm not saying that to make me feel

good, but when they came out with the impact award for that particular trip, I made damn sure that young man got one. God, I think he got the Silver Star for that. But little fights like that break out all of the time. But in that "B" Troop, 1st Squadron, the noncommissioned officers, I didn't have many. I named them. And some of those that I named... I don't know. It's just, everything that I have ever been taught to do, I was a gung ho combat arms NCO. I loved when I was a platoon sergeant with tanks. I loved that field. I knew tactics. I knew weapons. I knew how to attack and how to withdraw and passage of lines. I could write the scenarios. I loved it. I lived it. I knew how to do it. I got to Vietnam and the soldiers that I had, God damn, the first time I went out with them they had on head bands and no hats, friggin t-shirts and damn ammunition across their chest. They looked like Pancho Villa's God damn outfit. I asked my Company Commander, "What and the hell have we got here?" That's when I quickly learned that fighting a war is a young man's job, you know. They didn't need a thirty-nine year old First Sergeant out there. Fighting a war is a young man's job. I couldn't have fought it any better. I would have probably gotten killed wrapped up with the discipline. But I was certainly disappointed. But we lost control or our troops in Vietnam. The leadership of the Army lost control. The noncommissioned officers, just like myself, the company commanders, the division commanders, the general officers, the colonels, there's no one that's not at fault. We lost control of our troops, and we lost it over several reasons. I know you can talk about the helicopter flying and the battalion commander trying to telling the squad leader what to do. The lieutenant doing what somebody else ought to do. All of those things are true. But the biggest thing was trying to give everybody three or four to six months command time. We wanted to get an army that had combat experience. We wanted to do it for the future. But what and the hell were we doing at the present? Those people wasn't going to get killed

flying around up there. I know you've got a lot of your younger helicopter pilots, and I know we've got some banged-up lieutenant colonels and colonels, but those were by stray bullets. They were unfortunate. Now I don't mean to belittle anything or anybody. I, fortunately, didn't get wounded over there. It wasn't because I wasn't there.

Interviewer: At the battalion level, the short command times really hurt the Army during that period of time.

SMA Connelly: Well, it is today. It is today. I used to talk about that when we used to talk about stability. I know that the reason we want that. We don't have enough battalions in the Army to give the number of people the battalion command time that we would like to have. We don't have enough companies. We certainly don't have enough brigades or enough divisions. Maybe they are now, but I used to stress that the biggest problem a soldier has got and the biggest problem that a first sergeant, the platoon sergeant, the platoon leader, right down to the lowest private in a unit, is to change company commanders. All of the leaders have got to change their personalities. You've got to inventory. You've got to change policy and learn policies. You've got to change your personality. That's all right, we can live with that in peacetime, but you can't do it during war.

Interviewer: It's too disruptive.

SMA Connelly: It's the most disruptive thing you can do to soldiers. Shit, how many times in peacetime have you been in a unit... You know, you and I can go to a unit in Germany and you're never going to serve three years in a unit that don't change company commanders at least once, or maybe twice. You're going to probably change first sergeants once, or maybe twice, and you can live with that in peacetime. But you ought not have to do that in combat. Well hell, I had three troop commanders over there, in a year.

Interviewer: What was the biggest problem you had with your

soldiers, as far as discipline is concerned?

SMA Connelly: Oh hell, drugs. Drugs and alcohol. And damn, leadership by noncommissioned officers. They didn't know how to lead. Not that they didn't want to, they didn't know how. Hell, anybody that had any experience... Look at... How can I say this? Here I was, a first sergeant with fifteen, sixteen years of service. I'm the first sergeant. I've been one a long time. And you know, most of the people who had as much service as I had were already sergeants major, or he had his ass wrapped up in velvet somewhere down in Ben Hoa, or in a club, or in the United States. I'm the guy that's right on the tail end of all the experience we've got in the Army, and I'm with troops. And anybody else that's got any experience has got less than I've got. That's what was wrong. Hell, I should of had that damn bunch of platoon sergeants that I had in the Dominican Republic. They were still capable. Where the hell did they go? We never had brought in the Reserves and National Guard, except for a few select units We continued to retire. We never mobilized. Anybody that had any damn influence whatsoever didn't go to "B" Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry. I probably wouldn't have had to go, if I didn't want to. I didn't know how not to do it. I was just a guy that did what the hell I was told to do.

Interviewer: You didn't have a guy up at Branch to take you off orders.

SMA Connelly: Shit, I never talked to anybody in the Pentagon. I've got a big story to tell about that. Do you know the first time I ever talked to anybody in the Department of the Army?

Interviewer: When you went up before the board for Sergeant Major of the Army?

SMA Connelly: No, it was when they called me and told me I was selected as the FORSCOM Sergeant Major. I said, "The hell you say. What the hell is that?" I didn't know what the hell FORSCOM was. I said, "Where is it located?" He said, "Fort McPherson, Georgia." I said,

"God damn, I'll take that. That ain't but sixty-five miles from home."

Interviewer: How did you deal with the drug problems in Vietnam?

SMA Connelly: Illegally and unlawfully. Yeah. I just walk up to them and say, "God damn it, I've been looking at you under this starlight scope. You smoked two damn marijuana cigarettes. Don't tell me that you're rolling your own, because I know that you smoke ready-made cigarettes. You haven't been rolling your own cigarettes. Now you give me your shit." I had one or two of those sergeants with me. I took his weapon and I shook his ass down and took his shit away from him. I brought him over there and put his ass under guard. The next day we either gave him an Article 15, or if he wanted a courts martial we give him that. If I give him enough of them, I'd put his ass on a helicopter, fill out the paperwork, and send his ass down to Phoc Vhin and get rid of him. We'd walk into a damn tent and shake the son-of-a-bitches down. "Probable cause, my ass." I didn't know what probable cause was. Probable cause to me was, "I'm probably going to get my ass killed over here if I don't get some of these son-of-a-bitches off drugs," if that's the way I've got to go. I told the whole damn formation. I said, "Look, if this is what I have to contribute to this Army and to the efforts of this war is to get killed by my own people, trying to keep you from smoking drugs and putting other people's lives in danger," I said, "then God damn it, that's the way I'll have to go, because I am not going to slack up on your ass. I'll tell you that right now." You know, those son of a bitches believed me. I had a troop commander that was the same damn way. I don't know why in hell one of us didn't get killed, or both of us. And I know we had...

(End Tape OH 94.1-3, Side 1)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-3, Side 2)

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, when we ended up the last tape, we were talking about how you handled discipline problems within "B" Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav. Is there anything else you would like to add

concerning dealing with discipline problems?

SMA Connelly: Well, I shouldn't get so emotional over it. We had a good system there. We used all of the tools that we had to try and straighten out our soldiers. I was quite aware that there was a lot of peer pressure on a young man to experiment with marijuana or other drugs. I tried to get to them as soon as they got to the unit and get them with the right people. I spend a lot of time counseling soldiers. But when I saw that a soldier had been in trouble more than once, I really centered in on him to get him for something serious enough to get him out of there before he contaminated more soldiers.

Interviewer: With which unit did you serve your first non-combat overseas tour?

SMA Connelly: The 826th Tank Battalion was my first overseas tour, and it was in a TO&E unit.

Interviewer: So then you had four overseas non-combat tours. Where was the 826th Tank Battalion located?

SMA Connelly: It was located at Hammelburg, Germany. That's the old prisoner of war camp, in World War II, where General Waters was a prisoner of war. General Waters was General Patton's son-in-law. It was a good post. It had the tank battalion there. I think it had an artillery battalion there, and some other support units.

Interviewer: What was the major headquarters for the 826th?

SMA Connelly: We were attached to the 19th Armored Group, which was in Mannheim, I believe. But there were several tank battalions around there. The 826th, the 510th, I think the 46th Armored Infantry Battalion. There four or five battalions assigned to the 19th Armored Group and they were in that general vicinity.

Interviewer: You got there in January of '55, didn't you?

SMA Connelly: Yes. January of '55. Of course that was quite an experience. I was assigned, initially, as a tank commander. I was a little reluctant to take that job, because I had been in the Army a

while and had not had lots of experience as a tank commander, particularly in a TO&E unit. I knew we had to do a lot of firing. I knew I was responsible for that tank. I think one of the best things that they used to do then was, as soon as a platoon sergeant or a tank commander got to Europe, in tanks anyway, as soon as they could they sent him to Vilseck, Germany to about a four of five week course on the tank itself; tank gunnery, the employment of tanks, the maintenance of tanks. I was so glad I went to that school because that gave me confidence to come back to my unit. When I came back to that unit, I knew that tank as well as any one of my crew members, and as well as any of the other tank commanders.

Interviewer: Coming from the States, that's probably the first time you got to fire all of the tables, up there.

SMA Connelly: That's right. We used to go to Belsen-Homme, later renamed Bergen-Honne, I believe, up in the British Sector. We were firing over the Black Sea, I believe. But that's where we did most of our tank gunnery then, as opposed to Grafenwohr and Hohenfeld, where they do it now. But we went there for tank gunnery, and I think our field training exercises were at Grafenwohr and Hohenfeld. Then you had "free maneuver rights." That was before Germany regained its sovereignty. Of course, if we were going to make a cross-country road march, we just went on a cross-country road march. So you got a lot of experience how to employ tanks. All of the maneuver restrictions were not on then. But I worked my way to tank commander for quite some time. Then I did get a platoon and I was platoon sergeant. When Germany did get their sovereignty and actually started their own army, that was one of the posts that they gave the Germany Army. My unit moved from there to Schweinfurt, Germany. We had been at Schweinfurt for approximately a year and then the 826th Tank Battalion was selected as the first battalion size unit to gyro back to the United States. That "gyro" then was a term "gyroscope," I believe it was. That was a system whereby you

move entire units, instead of individuals. We had done that with a division, I think, and perhaps a regiment. I don't know what the Army did, I just wasn't that knowledgeable about the Army. But our battalion was to exchange positions with the 714th Tank Battalion, from Fort Benning, Georgia. In other words, we were moving out of our quarters and leaving our equipment in good shape. Everything was parked in the motor pool at Schweinfurt, Germany. The 714th Tank Battalion was doing the same thing at Fort Benning. We moved our of our quarters one day and, supposedly, those families moved in our quarters that same day. I don't know why, but I think that system, after that, kind of petered out. I don't know what the Army thought about it, but we thought it was a pretty good thing at the time. We stayed intact for quite a number of months, before they started splitting us up. We stayed pretty well intact until other reorganizations were made in the Army, and then we got to splitting up. By that time it was time for other people to start getting assignments to other places.

Interviewer: So you came back to Fort Benning in November of '56, right?

SMA Connelly: Uh huh.

Interviewer: When you were Sergeant Major of the Army, did you get a chance to visit Schweinfurt?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. I went back to Schweinfurt a number of times, as Sergeant Major of the Army, and I think, ever as the FORSCOM Sergeant Major when we had troops over there. I went on a field problem over there. That's when I met my old buddy again; General Patton. He and I discussed some of the things that we used to do at Fort Knox.

Interviewer: Also, during the period of time you were there, in '55 and '56, what was the most common problem that the soldier living in Germany faced?

SMA Connelly: During that first tour over there in Germany, we had a few NCOs that were married. Not all of them, but a lot of NCOs that

were married, we didn't make enough money for our wife to travel with us. A lot of them went on an unaccompanied tour. Again, quarters were not available, like at Hammelburg. I did take my family with me. Not concurrently, but they joined me later. But my quarters were in Bad Kissingen and we had to drive from Bad K to Hammelburg, which was twenty or thirty miles every day. The automobiles wasn't that good, plus the roads were just as slippery then as they are today. It was difficult to get about over there then. But we had problems with the soldiers there then. You still didn't have a desertion problem. But you still had soldiers to go out and get too much to drink and stay out over night, or maybe two days, shacked-up or whatever they would do. But I would say the soldiers were not that much of a problem, but then we were still getting draftees. The vast majority of the soldiers that came in then wanted to serve their two years, do the best they could, and leave. Of course you always had that certain five or ten percent that gave you most of the problems. Most of our disciplinary problems was with the five or ten percent of a unit.

Interviewer: They probably occupied a good percentage of you time.

SMA Connelly: That's what I say. They occupied your time. And then you couldn't eliminate a soldier. Our stockades over there were full. They were full in the United States. The big business then was visiting soldiers in the stockades and going through courts martials. It couldn't put a percentage on it, but a large percentage of the time was spend with the very small percentage of the troops. But we didn't have any violent crimes. Pilferage and barracks larceny was a problem then because money was a problem.

Interviewer: How about black marketing?

SMA Connelly: Black marketing was a problem. Drugs were not a problem. I never heard of drugs. Alcohol wasn't a great problem, but that was involved in a lot of automobile accidents. You know, in those days you had to be a sergeant E5, or higher, to own an automobile. To

own it then, you had to have a good reputation. Your company commander had to give his approval for you to have it. If you got married, you had to get permission. You know, you and your wife to be had to be interviewed by the Chaplain and by the Company Commander, and paperwork had to be completed before you could be able to marry. I know that had a purpose, at the time. If I had ever thought about marrying a foreign national, then that certainly changed my mind, if I had to have all that approval to tell me what kind of wife I had. I certainly wasn't planning on getting one. But I didn't have to worry about that.

Interviewer: On your second tour in Germany, you were stationed where? Furth?

SMA Connelly: In Furth, Germany, which is right out of Nurnberg, Germany.

Interviewer: Were you at Montieth Barracks?

SMA Connelly: Montieth Barracks. Then, I was in the 67th Armor. That was a bastard tank battalion too. I forget what my higher headquarters was, but... huh...

Interviewer: Wasn't you under the brigade that was headquartered in Erlangen? You were in the 4th Armored then, weren't you?

SMA Connelly: It may have been. I guess it was the 4th Armored Division. That's right. That's right.

Interviewer: At that time, I think your battalion was the one that was experimenting with the heavy tanks that had the big 105mm main gun.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. We had one tank company with the 103. That's exactly right. I was in "B" Company and "C" Company. I went into the unit as a platoon sergeant, but my platoon leader was also a sergeant first class. His name was "Fred Bramlett." He was a good guy and a good soldier. But that really didn't work for me. I believe that's the first year that they came out with pro (proficiency) pay. I was the only one in the unit drawing pro (proficiency) pay. I told the Company Commander, "If anybody was going to be a platoon leader in this outfit,

it's probably going to be me."

Interviewer: You got there in August of 1958. Is that right?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, I believe so. August 1958 through September '61.

Interviewer: I think during that time the 67th Armor was under the...

SMA Connelly: 4th Armored Division.

Interviewer: ...3rd Brigade in Erlangen.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I think you're right. The reason I'm getting mixed-up with that, you see when I went back there on another tour, I was the Battalion Sergeant Major of the 3rd Medium Tank Battalion at Erlangen, Germany, under the 1st Brigade of the 1st Armored Division.

Interviewer: That's when they changed the divisions over there.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I was back in my stomping grounds there. But anyway, that's like anything else, everybody knew they was going to have that pro pay test, but they didn't think anybody was going to do anything about it. But it came out and I was drawing pro pay, and Fred wasn't. Of course Fred and I talked about it. I had a Company Commander by the name of "Chester Clark." I was platoon sergeant and I guess the Company Commander could pick who in the hell he wanted to, to be platoon leader; we didn't have officers. Well, what it ended up is, they had to solve that problem. They just put me in another company. That's when I went to "C" Company. I went there as a platoon sergeant, with no platoon leader. I would never ever let myself be called a platoon leader. I said, "I'm a platoon sergeant, without a platoon leader. I'll do the job of the platoon leader until I get one." I think that it never did work to have two sergeants first class; one the platoon sergeant and one the platoon leader. That's bull shit. It don't work. It didn't work then. I told Captain Clark, and I told Fred Bramlett, and a good friend of mine, Jack Conroy; he had the 1st Platoon. But anyway, I didn't get in any trouble over that. I just

told them, "If I'm going to be the only one in this Battalion that's drawing pro pay, then I ought not be working for any sergeant first class." I said, "It doesn't have anything to do with Fred being more knowledgeable than me, or anything. But it ain't going to happen that way." And it didn't; not long.

Interviewer: Did you remain as a platoon sergeant the entire time you were with the 67th Armor?

SMA Connelly: Yes.

Interviewer: You left in September of 1961. Correct?

SMA Connelly: Yes, and I made E7 during that time frame.

Interviewer: Earlier we were talking about when you went to the Dominican Republic. You had only been back in the States for a short period of time when you got orders. The same thing happened to you on your third tour.

SMA Connelly: That's right. Thirty damn days.

Interviewer: You was back for your third tour in less than thirty days. This time you left from Fort Stewart. Is that correct?

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: Then you went back to Germany during the Berlin Crisis. What unit were you assigned to then?

SMA Connelly: I was assigned to the 3rd Medium Tank Battalion, 32nd Armor, which was attached to the 24th Infantry Division. We were attached to them for training. That was our higher headquarters. But then again, I spent a lot of time in bastard tank battalions. That's what we referred to them. On these two tours, by that time I was really getting a lot of experience in tanks platoons and tank companies. I mean I spent a lot of time in the field. I spent a lot of time on tactics, and I spent a lot of time with the M-48 tank. I never saw an M-60 tank until I got to Augsburg, Germany, later on in that tour. Then we got in brand new M-60 tanks. You know, when I first came into the Army, I was on the M-46; that's what we had in the 761st Tank Battalion.

When we got to Germany, the first time, we had some M-46s and some M-47s. But we got the M-48 tank there, about 1955, and I stayed on that M-48 tank until, what was this? 1962?

Interviewer: When you went back for the Berlin build-up?

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, 1962. That was almost like going to a Cadillac, wasn't it?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. Absolutely. I never seen the morale of a unit increase as much as when we got seventeen brand new M-60 tanks. It was like every soldier had a new Cadillac. The maintenance was so much better on those. They were so much faster. You couldn't fuel them with the five gallon cans, like we used to. The fuel tankers came with them. Hell, I thought it was going to be easy then; being in tanks. It improved things so much. But I served with some great noncommissioned officers, and officers. Right here, in this 3rd Medium Tank Battalion, 32nd Armor, I had two company commanders in that unit. One of them became a brigadier general and the other one became a three-star general. They were my first lieutenant company commanders. Lee D. Brown and Gerald I. Bartlett.

Interviewer: Did you say one was Lee D. Brown?

SMA Connelly: Lee D. Brown. When General Brown made brigadier general, I was Sergeant Major of the Army. I talked to all of the newly appointed brigadier generals. That was part of the Sergeant Major of the Army's job. I used to have a great time doing that. I never made a prepared speech. There would always be somebody in there I knew. I remember General Brown was in there. I came in the back door. Some of them had already been promoted and some of them were promoted there, whatever was on the list; twenty-one or thirty. I peeked through the glass and found out where General Brown was sitting. He wasn't going to say anything to me. I walked in there and I looked out there and I found him. I just walked right up to him and stuck my hand out, and I

said, "Who would ever thunk it?" I said, "Here you are, a brigadier general, and I'm Sergeant Major of the Army." I said, "All of the damn battles that we used to have over Hohenfeld and Seventh Army." I said, "Oh man, those were great days." But talking about training and talking about NCOs. Now that's when we were about to have an army. Now this was before Vietnam. We had our problems, in the Army, getting over Korea. We were getting a Noncommissioned Officers Corps that had about the same amount of experience that I was telling you that I had. Some had more, because some had been around longer than me. And we wasn't moving that fast. There wasn't that many people retiring, because we all came in, in the '50s. Here it is, '62, so we've got a lots of experience. We had pretty well stabilized the Army. You wasn't jumping from one branch of the service to another. Of course there were always things coming open, like airborne. They wanted more people to go airborne. As helicopter became prominent, they wanted people to go into helicopters. But you were still around the Army. We had a lots of experience, like these company commanders we had, that later became generals. You know, we can pick a good noncommissioned officer to give the soldier a class on elevation, and how to bore-sight and zero the 90mm, or give them a class on basic map reading, first aid, or whatever. But these commanders would take the officers and the senior noncommissioned officers, down to maybe assistant platoon sergeants, and give them classes. The first sergeant would get in those classes. We'd get motor sergeants in those classes, and supply sergeants. The company commanders would teach the finer points of map reading. We would teach things about the "existing elevation" on a tank. All of them have got certain formulas that you can do, but there's a certain amount of existing elevation. We'd teach things such as what a 90mm has a uniform right-handed twist, and why your bore sight up in the left-hand corner and those things to take care of that. We'd study what's the purpose of a mobile defense; it's to get your enemy into the "killing zone." We'd

study map reading. We wouldn't just learn how to read right and up, but we'd teach what you call "declamations" of a map, and how to take an older map and aerial photos to update the map. It would get interesting. You know, if we wanted to stay in the day room and we wanted to start teaching at 9 o'clock. They'd get to asking questions and we'd go from, say 9 o'clock until lunchtime. We'd get talking about all kinds of stuff. There wasn't anybody sleeping in class. We'd get to talking about radio-telephone procedures. We'd teach an SOP (Standing Operating Procedures). How many units have I've seen that has got an SOP and never have time to train on their own SOP. We had SOPs what we should do when we go into the field. We'd teach the supply sergeant how to read a map. Shit, you know, they'd follow along behind somebody and if they'd take a wrong turn, we got one tank and the whole damn supply section and maintenance section sitting off somewhere, because one friggin tank commander made a wrong turn. "You guys are noncommissioned officers. Somebody has got to be reading the friggin map." Oh, we had good training. That was the kind of training I spent the rest of my time in the Army trying to get implemented. Talking about training, after the war I had got into this tank battalion in the 35th Armor and Brigade Sergeant Major, and Division Sergeant Major, that's the kind of training I was telling the company commanders they ought to do. Hell, I used to go up to Fort Knox, Kentucky and get an advanced officers' class. I said, "What are going to do when you become a company commander? There's no way you're going to teach noncommissioned officers how to shoot Table Seven." I said, "Hell, if I've got a platoon sergeant that don't know how to shoot Table Seven, I get rid of his ass. He was supposed to learn that when he was a corporal." I'm telling you, I don't know where those generals were. I don't know where they were in Vietnam, because that's not what they were when they were younger men. That why I say, all of them wasn't that way.

Interviewer: Somewhere along the way they let it slip by them.

SMA Connelly: I guess so. I guess so. If you've got a priority higher than training, you simply have got the wrong priority.

Interviewer: Whenever you went over with the 3rd Tank Battalion, 32nd Armor, from Fort Stewart. Did you go over to pre-positioned equipment, or did you have to take your equipment with you?

SMA Connelly: Of course my outfit had already gone. I followed thirty days later. They took everything, but tanks. They were going to give them M-60 tanks. They were supposed to pickup M-60 tanks, but it was a number of months. You know, they never get things timed like that, so we sat on our ass. They didn't get those M-60 tanks until about sixty days later; they got new tanks. They took all of the TO&E equipment, except their own vehicular equipment for tanks.

Interviewer: Where was the 3rd Tank Battalion stationed over there?

SMA Connelly: Where were we stationed?

Interviewer: Yeah.

SMA Connelly: Augsburg.

Interviewer: What rank were you when you were assigned?

SMA Connelly: I was an E7 platoon sergeant. That's when I had old First Sergeant Ledford T. Barrow. The platoon sergeants there was myself, Shipman, and Burt Skinner. That was three good platoon sergeants. We knew our business

Interviewer: That was Shipman and Burt Skinner.

SMA Connelly: Uh huh. Ledford T. Barrow was the First Sergeant. A guy named "Whittingham," could do anything. God damn, he could fix anything.

Interviewer: While you were over there, didn't you become the Operations Sergeant and then the First Sergeant.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. That was when promotion began to open up a little bit and me, Shipman, Skinner, and all those guys went before boards. We came out high on the boards. They knew that we was going to

get promoted. They sent me down to the 34th Armor, in Munich. I went there as a platoon sergeant, but they knew I was going to become a first sergeant pretty soon, so I took one of the companies there, The Battalion Commander there wanted to make me the Sergeant Major, as a sergeant first class. But somebody finally got to him. He shouldn't have done that. But anyway, I was First Sergeant of the 34th Armor. Then I think they closed that post. The 34th Armor was renamed the 35th. No. The 32nd Armor, 5th Battalion, I believe it was. Or was it the 3rd Battalion, 32nd Armor. We redesignated it and moved it to Henry kaserne.

Interviewer: That was in Munich, right?

SMA Connelly: That was in Munich. We went from Henry kaserne to Will kaserne. It was redesignated, but with the same people. I was first sergeant there for a year or so. I'll tell you, they had been on my frame about coming up as Battalion Ops (operations) Sergeant. I didn't want it. I loved being a first sergeant. I liked that job. I think Colonel Stanfield called me up there and he said, "Look, I've listened to the reasons why you didn't want to be ops sergeant, on several occasions, and I understand that." He said, "Now you can go and get drunk. You can do whatever you want." He said, "Today is Friday. But when you come back here Monday morning, you're going to be the Battalion Operations Sergeant.' He said, "You just got promoted to first sergeant." He had a set of first sergeant stripes and a set of master sergeant stripes. He said, "When you get back Monday morning, you sew those master sergeant stripes on and you'll be my Ops Sergeant." I said, "Well alright. I'll do what the hell I'm told to do." So I was the Ops Sergeant. Like I told you before, I didn't like the job that much. I was never as good at that job as I wanted to be. I was never as good at that job as I was a first sergeant. But the whole world knew I was a good first sergeant. But a lot of people in my world thought I could be as good an ops sergeant as I did, and I didn't do badly. I spent a good time as an ops sergeant and never regretted it.

Interviewer: After you graduated from the Sergeants Major Academy, you went back to Germany for the fourth time. This time you went to the 1st Battalion, 35th Armor, 1st Armored Division, in Erlangen.

SMA Connelly: That's right.

Interviewer: That was a nice area there, wasn't it?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I enjoyed that. That was a real outfit. Let me tell you about getting in that outfit. Of course, you know, I used to tell them, and I really wasn't that way, I think when the first few classes got out of the Sergeants Major Academy, they thought when they got to their next assignment, wherever it was, there was going to be a big neon sign flashing there saying "Bill Connelly, Sergeants Major Academy Graduate, Command Sergeant Major." I didn't think that, and I didn't look for that, but I really had a lot of confidence in myself, after having graduated from the Academy. I was one of the first ones that came out of there. In fact, they actually put command sergeant major stripes on me there at graduation. I got in on a Friday and a guy named "Curry," he was a first sergeant, but he was acting sergeant major of the battalion. He was a young, clean cut, nice looking fellow, and very capable of being a sergeant major. I think he was on the promotion list, which it would take about a year to get to him. Of course, you know, he and his wife picked me and my wife up. He did have my quarters and I went right on into my quarters. Of course, it was Saturday and they took us to the commissary and we got a few groceries. He had ridden me around and shown me where the Brigade Sergeant Major lived. I think on Sunday I walked over and introduced myself to him and had a short conversation with him. Monday was a holiday. I had a Battalion Commander, whose name was "Frederick B. Hull. H-U-L-L. He was a Black guy. That's the last time I'll say "he was a Black guy," because that doesn't have anything to do with what I'm saying. But I had figured out, in my conversations on Friday, when we were driving from Frankfurt to Erlangen, and on Sunday, and again on Monday, in my conversations

with Curry. Not Curry. That wasn't the first sergeant's name. I'll think of it in a minute. A short name. "Ferry." I could feel that he and the Battalion Commander were pretty tight, and I had heard a lot about Fred B. Hull, from the scuttlebutt; people in my stairwell. Even the Brigade Sergeant Major said, "You'll like Colonel Hull. He's an interesting fellow." He told me he was Black. I said, "Yeah, I've seen a picture." Well, I came to work Tuesday morning, and I hanging around out there in the hall, where they had the Sergeant Major's desk here, the Adjutant's office was here (indicated by motions that they were next to each other) and right across here was the Battalion Commander's office, (indicated by his motions that the office was across the hall) and right here (indicated by his motion the office was next to the Battalion Commander) was... Shit, I don't know who was there. Here was the stairs and immediately by the stairs should have been the Sergeant Major's office. That's the first thing I thought, but I didn't say anything. Well to make a long story short, I went in after the morning meeting. I didn't even come in to the morning meeting. The acting Sergeant Major went in with the Company Commanders for a morning meeting. They didn't invite me in there. Well anyway, I go in after that and report to the Battalion Commander and all those things. He said, "Well Sergeant Major, I've read your record and I have your orders." He said, "You know, First Sergeant Ferry is my Sergeant Major. He's been here for six or eight months and he'd been doing a tremendous job. He's on the Sergeants Major list, so I really have a Sergeant Major and I don't need you as my Sergeant Major." I said, very, very politely, very courteously, "Well Colonel, I don't think that the First Sergeant has given you the benefit of his knowledge, or perhaps he doesn't know it, and no one else at Brigade has told you, but you're not selecting me as your Sergeant Major." I said, "I was assigned here, as Sergeant Major of the 1st Battalion, 35th Armor, by the Department of the Army. Those are Department of the Army orders on your desk." I

said, "I'm afraid that I'm your Sergeant Major, whether you like it or not, and it's not up to me to get the orders changed." He said, Well, perhaps you just don't understand what I said." I said, "No sir, I understand exactly what you said, and I can appreciate that." I said, "I'm just telling you that I am the 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Sergeant Major, effective yesterday. That's what the orders says, and I'm here and in fact, I'm signed in. If it's been done correctly, I was picked up on the morning report, as that, this morning." He said, "Well, you're not going to come into my Battalion and tell me any information like that." I said, "No sir, I don't intend to." I said, "What I'm trying to tell you, sir, is the orders tell us." I said, "There's no need for me to border on insubordination or to get all upset." I said, "I don't have any pretense of being Sergeant Major of this particular Battalion, certainly if you don't want me." I said, "But what I'm telling you, you're going to have to get the orders changed. I can't get the orders changed and I'm not going to try." I said, "What I'd like for you to do is go over and talk to the Brigade Headquarters." What I wanted him to do is let somebody else go over there and explain to him the friggin assignment system, you know, and he didn't know it. Well, you have to know Fred B. Hull to know what a hard-headed man he was. But he went over there. He grabbed those set of orders and he took off. He came back in about thirty minutes and he said, "Well, I stand corrected. You are the Sergeant Major of this Battalion." He said, "Although we've gotten off to a rocky start, I'm going to give you the opportunity to be a good Sergeant Major of this Battalion." I said, "Well sir, I thank you for the opportunity." I said, "I really didn't come over here to learn how to be a sergeant major. I came over here to be a sergeant major." I said, "Now I'm the guy that wants to get right at this job and get started in it as soon as possible." I said, "I'm going to be moving the first sergeant out of here just as soon as possible." He said, "Well, I'll leave that up to you all." I went

across the hall and I said, "First Sergeant, how about getting both your personnel equipment and anything you've got in the desk, and pack it up, and get out of here right away. I'm going down to the mess hall, I'm going to have some coffee, and when I come back in thirty minutes, I want you gone." He said, "Where am I supposed to go?" I said, "You go ask the Battalion Commander. I didn't assign you up here and I can't reassign you. But this is my office and I want the son-of-a-bitch vacated." If you think I didn't hit that damn outfit like a damn dose of croton oil. Old Fred B. Hull will never forget that as long as he lives. He and I are pretty good buddies, but I had a lot to do with that young man never making general, just because of some stupid things like that.

Interviewer: Was he was a lieutenant colonel?

SMA Connelly: He was a lieutenant colonel then. And that guy... Pull was that guy's name. He wound up as the Sergeant Major of the 9th Infantry Division. He was a good guy.

Interviewer: You're talking about the acting Sergeant Major.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. He went to a company in the 2nd Battalion of the 81st Armor. That's where he came from. Colonel Hull liked him because he was an "ass kisser." That Brigade Commander that made that decision and told Fred B. Hull what to do, he later made general and I went to the Seventh Army Training command with him.

(End Tape OH 94.1-3, Side 2)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-4, Side 1)

Interviewer: Today is Tuesday, January 25, 1994. This is a continuation of the interview with Sergeant Major of the Army, retired, William A. Connelly, from Monticello, Georgia. Sergeant Major, when we ended yesterday, you had just finished talking about your assignment to Erlangen with the 1st Battalion, 35th Armor. In June of 1975, you became Sergeant Major of the Seventh Army Training Command. Where was the headquarters for the Seventh Army Training Command located?

SMA Connelly: In Grafenwohr, Germany.

Interviewer: What was the area of responsibility for the Seventh ATC (Army Training Command)?

SMA Connelly: We had Vilseck, which was also under that command. The Seventh ATC had become a general officer command at that same time. So he was Commander of the Vilseck portion, and the overall command. Of course, they had a colonel that was in charge of Vilseck. Also the Hohenfeld training area and Wildflicken were under the Seventh Army Training Command. He had community command responsibility for Bienlach, which is where they had some of the cav units. Several other areas around there was the Community Commander's responsibility. So there was a wide area under the command.

Interviewer: How did you come about being selected as the Seventh ATC Sergeant Major?

SMA Connelly: That was not a nominative position at the time, as well as I remember. The gentleman that made brigadier general and was selected as the commander by the USAREUR (United States Army, Europe) Commander, which was General Blanchard at the time, he was my Brigade Commander. I had acted on several occasions as his Brigade Sergeant Major. He wanted to know if I would go to Grafenwohr with him. I told him, "Yes I would if I could get transferred." So the 1st Armored Division had to go through the administrative procedures with MILPERCEN (Military Personnel Center) to release me from Sergeant Major of the Battalion and the acting Brigade Sergeant Major, to go to Grafenwohr. They approved that change and I moved with him.

Interviewer: How long did you serve there?

SMA Connelly: I served there about a year and a half. Then I was put in a packet to be looked at for the Sergeant Major of the 1st Armored Division.

Interviewer: While you were the Sergeant Major of the Seventh ATC, what occupied most of your time?

SMA Connelly: Well, the community activities occupied most of the time. The commanders really didn't have the time to spend with those outlying communities. We had some funds then for the rehabilitation of barracks, recreation facilities, and dining facilities. We were trying to put that on certain priorities. I was the Commander's link to that; to the commanders. I let him know what was happening, what was taking place, and how it was progressing. I kept him informed about some of the discipline problems that they had on those areas. I looked at training to the various units that came there. I would go to Hohenfeld and spend three days. Maybe I would spend a day looking at the cantonment area and the problems that they had. Then I would get that sergeant major and we would go out to visit a unit that was either on maneuvers or on the ranges. I would talk with soldiers and talk with commanders, trying to really determine... We were beginning to look at a more realistic way training. We were getting a little bit of money then and we began to pay a lot of attention to simulators for training. We were trying to conserve ammunition and we were trying to conserve energy; we needed more simulators to do that. Of course, I was picking up the soldier aspects as to what they would like to see in training. I learned that the soldiers really wanted to train and they wanted to train hard, but they wanted realistic training. They were tired of simulating. They wanted something other than to say, "You're dead." They wanted, what turned out to be, that "Train Fire." Those systems then came on line. We had just started, in Grafenwohr, putting some money in building ranges that we had been piece-mealing and putting together during the entire twenty-something years that I had been going to Grafenwohr for my field training and range firing. We were beginning then to put some real money in to those ranges to make them much more realistic.

Interviewer: When you went back as Sergeant Major of the Army to visit Europe, I'm sure you went out to Grafenwohr, Vilseck, and Wildflicken. How had things changed and what was the progression of

those particular training areas?

SMA Connelly: Oh, you couldn't believe it. I didn't know it all then, but that's why, when I became Sergeant Major of the Army, I felt so much a part of what the Army was doing because of some of the ground floors that I had been on. But we had starting doing that--improving those ranges in Europe--and all the time they were going through all the political aspects and the money raising and the appropriation of money through Congress to get permission to start the National Training Center out at Fort Irwin, California. We really hadn't started spending money into that yet, but it was part of the big plan. And those ranges and some of the things that they wanted to do in the National Training Center, they did on a smaller scale with the Seventh Army Training Command at Hohenfeld and Wildflicken, as far as ranges and type targets. Those things were being experimented with, plus we were improving and putting a lot of money into the ranges. We used to put up tents to warm up in; warm-up tents. A unit would come in at Grafenwohr and they would have to send an advance party a week in advance to put up warm-up tents. If you moved them from one range--at night--to the next one, you had to move a detail in front of you to put up warm-up tents. In all this business, all of your time and energy was spent in preparation of the range. When you got there to fire you had to load ammunition and you couldn't train well.

Interviewer: You also had an opportunity to talk to the soldiers, after the ranges had been upgraded. Did you see a change in their attitude?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah, because when I was over there we had to do all those things. But when I went back, they had built buildings on each range and they put heaters in them. They then had a unit that was assigned there to put your ammunition out. The unit that came there, and the soldiers in that unit that came there to fire the range, that's what they did; they trained and they fired. They didn't work themselves

to death in getting ready to fire and cleaning-up after. Of course, your unit would also have the opportunity to deliver the ammunition and all that support at some later time. So it really worked great. I know it wasn't a "piece of cake," but compared to what it was when I was in units that came up there and had to do all those things, it looked like a "piece of cake," as far as the soldier was concerned that was in the unit that was doing the firing and doing the training. The soldiers did like it and it was absolutely the thing to do, because they were really learning how to maneuver; they were learning how to fire their weapons; they had the time to fire; and their accuracy was better. It just made it better training.

Interviewer: All of the time was meaningful time, not wasted time.

SMA Connelly: That's right. Well, the time wasn't wasted before, but it was things that had to be done. But you can't expect the soldier to do all of that and then get in a tank and fire well.

Interviewer: Let me ask you some questions about your various duty assignments. What we'll do is zero in on specifics, such as platoon sergeant, then first sergeant, and right on up to...

SMA Connelly: Can I go back...

Interviewer: Yeah.

SMA Connelly: ...to this battalion that I was Sergeant Major of in Erlangen, after the Vietnam War?

Interviewer: Sure.

SMA Connelly: I had been a platoon sergeant and a first sergeant in battalions in the United States, and about three of them over there. Some of the best training, and maneuvering, and tactics, and firing that I had ever seen in the Army, I had learned in those units. But when I had that battalion, after the Vietnam War, I had a group of noncommissioned officers that had never done that kind of thing. They had done well in Vietnam in their various commands. I had a few that were tankers in Vietnam, but most of them was out of their MOS over in

Vietnam, even though they may have had an armor MOS. But when we moved to the field for maneuvers the first time, that tank battalion hadn't been out of the motor pool in four or five years. I couldn't believe how untrained the Army was in those soldiering duties, and maneuver capabilities, and knowledge of tactics, and firing weapons, that I saw in that battalion. It took us the first field problem--about three weeks--to teach out soldiers how to keep up with their weapon, their mess kit, and their personal gear. When it came to digging slit trenches, and where you put a mess hall, and how you eat; tactically, that's just something that we just didn't do and didn't have to do in Vietnam. We had very few of us that knew how to do that. It seemed like I was starting over in the Army again. Of course, we worked with that unit for two or three years. In fact, that unit... This is no reflection on the National Guard, but you know you take a National Guard unit and you move to summer training. About the first three or four days into their first field problem--they hadn't done that since last year and you have a lot of changes in personnel--it takes them a while to get used to doing those things again. That's what my tank battalion looked like. It looked like a National Guard unit that had gone to summer camp for the first time.

Interviewer: You're talking about the 1st Battalion, 35th Armor. Is that right?

SMA Connelly: That's right.

Interviewer: Okay. That was for the record so we know which unit you were referring to. Go ahead.

SMA Connelly: But of course, after several maneuver exercises, and field problems, and battalion tests, we were beginning to do the same things that those units, that I had served in prior to that, had been doing. We were beginning to forget some of our bad habits that we had picked up in Vietnam. Soldiers were wearing their steel helmet. They knew where their weapon was. They could keep-up with their gear. They

knew a little bit about light discipline and noise discipline. But it was starting over again. As we move on there then to the Seventh Army Training Command, it just wasn't my units--that I was talking about--that were making these improvements, you could see it starting to improve all over Europe. Of course, I was looking at every combat arms unit that came to Grafenwohr, whether it be it infantry, armor, artillery, or what have you.

Interviewer: Why do you think there was such a problem in that area? Was it because people were just coming from Vietnam? Actually, Europe became almost like a replacement depot for Vietnam, didn't it?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. That's exactly right. We were just maintaining the force in Europe in accordance with the Status of Forces Agreement over there. These units wasn't trained and prepared to move out. We wasn't spending a lot of money over there either. We didn't have the money to train. By that time, the Germans were beginning to be more conscious of the maneuver damage and it was costing a lot of money. Germany's economy was doing well, but they were beginning to be more demanding of what was theirs. Of course, Europe was having some real racial problems and drug problems, itself, by then. We had an Army that was pretty well trained up until about '62. Then we went in to fighting the Vietnam War, for about ten years, and all those who had been trained--prior to that--were gone from the Army. What was left where those who had some great training, but had fought a different war than they had ever been trained for. That doctrine for fighting the Vietnam War could not be applied to still the Army's "Fulda Gap Plan." We didn't have any trained commanders, from lieutenant colonel, down. We had captains, as company commanders, that did not know as much as a twelve-month second lieutenant knew in the late fifties and early sixties, as far as maneuvering a tank company. That same captain that was a company commander, he may have been a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and knew that business well, and was a brave, highly-decorated, and

intelligent. But he had an armor MOS, and the only thing he had done in that armor MOS was go to the Basic Armor Course. Then he went to flight school, and then fought a ten-year war. Now he's a company commander, with seventeen tanks, and he doesn't know what the hell to do with it. That's what you had in Europe. You'd have a battalion commander that the last time he had been in a tank was when he was a company commander. How he's the battalion commander and he doesn't know what the hell to do with the battalion.

Interviewer: It worked the same way with the NCOs.

SMA Connelly: Yeah, it worked the same way with the NCOs. So we had an untrained Army that we had lost control of, and now we were trying to get in control of our troops, through training on drugs, race relations, equal opportunity, the organizational effectiveness that we started. We were searching in the dark. You know, we grappled with that, and we didn't start grabbing a hold of the Army until about 1975. Then we were getting into what we had discussed before, about putting your good recruiters out there. We were beginning to get quality soldiers in the Army. We were beginning to start improving on the number high school graduates we were getting. All of this time we were working with the Noncommissioned Officers Education System. The Army was really moving. But it was into your middle-seventies before I could see that we were starting to improve. Back to the Seventh Army Training Command then. Of course, I was there about a year and a half, and then I got selected as Division Sergeant Major of the 1st Armored Division. That division was the most spread-out division in Europe. In addition to having the 1st Armored Division, we had Brigade 75 assigned to us for training: it was stationed at Grafenwohr. I had been a part of that unit from the beginning, because it came to the Seventh Army Training for its permanent quarters when I was Sergeant Major up there; I knew all of the people. When I went to the 1st Armored Division, they were assigned to the 1st Armored Division for training and administration;

we supported them in that area. I had a commander there, a General William E. Webb, that just gave me absolute support to go out and to look at training and go wherever I needed to go, whether I needed a staff car, a helicopter, or went in my own car. I went all over our area for a year and a half. I was beginning to see that we were getting better soldiers. We were getting control over drugs. We were getting control over alcohol. We were getting some recreation facilities open. We were improving our community relationships with Germany. We were getting down to some good training. But it was taking a lot of people's time. We were working twelve to eighteen hours a day, every day, including Saturday and Sunday. That entire tour that I had from '73 over there until '77, I think it was when I came back to the States, was a long hard tour.

Interviewer: But you saw a lot being accomplished.

SMA Connelly: I saw a lot being accomplished, and that's what made it so interesting. You could see the accomplishments. You could go to a unit, an infantry unit in one of the other brigades, and you could see that it had good people, it had good commanders, but they were struggling. Everybody was working as hard as they can, but there was so much confusion and there was so much knowledge that was not there. Then you could go back six months later, to see that unit, and they had made a one hundred percent turn-around. I know that wasn't just true in the 1st Armored Division, that was true all over Europe.

Interviewer: Were you able to work with the Infantry School, the Artillery School, and the Armor School here in the States, to maybe change the way they were trained to fulfill the needs of the Army?

SMA Connelly: No. I think, perhaps, our feedback at Grafenwohr level, through the USAREUR Commander back to the States, some of that was taking place. But as far as the Sergeant Major, I wasn't getting involved in that. But yes, I know those things were taking place, because the Army was beginning to get on the same sheet of music. We

were trying to standardize the Army. After I became Sergeant Major of the Army, that was one of the big efforts and emphasis that General Myer was working on; that was standardization. If you got on an M-60 tank, in Fort Hood, Texas, as far as that equipment that is on that vehicle and where it's put and its loading plan and what have you, there ought not be that much difference from the one in Erlangen, Germany. Now that's starting at the bottom with standardization. But that standardization that General Myer was working was working all the way to the top. The training in the United States should not be that different from the training in Europe, and it used to be considerably different. They didn't train in the States. The States was nothing but a Repo Depot (Replacement Depot) to supply Europe and Korea with people. When you went back to the States, you did AIT and individual training. You pulled details and went to parades. You did that kind of business for three years and then, a real soldier... I hated to serve in the States. We didn't do anything in the States. We didn't train. We didn't play soldier in the States. We did all those things that are necessary to have an army. But a soldier wants to soldier, and Europe and Korea was the only place you could do that.

Interviewer: Just about the only division in the States that really trained all the time was the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions.

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah, those units. The elite units that had missions trained. But it was somewhat different in divisions, but in a tank battalion, I always wound-up in some bastard bank battalion that was assigned to Fort Knox, Kentucky or down at Fort Stewart, or wherever and we were doing nothing but providing tanks for units to come through and fire and then it would be our time to cleanup the post. Well, at Fort Knox, of course I said that all my life, all the money went into the Armor School at Fort Knox. All those bastard tank battalions out there, on the other side of Wilson Road, just had to fight for whatever they got. If they were giving training, they would get a little bit of

firing, but if you were just out there and supporting the Armor School when they went to the field for training, whether basic officers or advanced officers or some class in the Armor School, wanted to train on your tanks and you had to have all the equipment there. You were nothing but a training aid. I know that had to be done, but there never was enough good noncommissioned officers and soldiers. The "cream of the crop" went to the Armor School, and the majority of the money went to the Armor School.

Interviewer: While we are talking about Fort Knox, when you were a platoon sergeant for the first time, you were assigned to the 761st Tank Battalion there at Fort Knox, in the 3rd Armored Division. This was shortly after you joined the Army, wasn't it?

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: You came into the Army and after your initial training you moved up to that position.

SMA Connelly: Really, I spent, other than advanced individual training and basic training, I spend over thirty years as a platoon sergeant, first sergeant, sergeant major, operations sergeant, and advisor to the National Guard, and every day of my life--when I got up--somebody was depending on me to do something. Every day I was depending on someone else to do something. I had soldiers that I was responsible for; ever how few or ever how many it was. I spend better than thirty years in the military responsible for somebody--some soldiers--and a certain amount of equipment. I wouldn't have had it any other way.

Interviewer: As you start looking at the changing leadership styles and the changing leadership abilities of junior NCOs, kind of compare the first time you was a platoon sergeant to the period just before you became first sergeant. How did the leadership ability of those younger NCOs change?

SMA Connelly: It changed considerably, because the first

noncommissioned officers that I had were men in their early thirties and most of them had been to Korea and worked out of their MOS, or since Korea had trained in an armor MOS, or were back in armor after having worked out of his MOS during the war. As far as a goal to become a leader, and a goal to become a professional soldier, and the knowledge of the Army to really make it a career and a profession, they just didn't have it. I could not see that. They were existing from day to day. They must have been that way, because I spend thirty years in the Army after that and I never saw any of them anymore. Maybe one or two and he hadn't progressed much further than what he was at that time.

Interviewer: Also, the age of your junior NCOs started getting a little younger.

SMA Connelly: Yes. Of course my next assignment was in Germany and there--in Germany--I saw about the same age group of noncommissioned officers, but they were much more professional, much more knowledgeable. But we were going through a period then and by that time it was up to 1955--through there--that they were trying to do something about progression and trying to energize the Army. I learned later that in Congress' infinite wisdom, they decided that our soldiers to leaders ratio was out of balance and we should come up with a specialist rank. That, I thought, was absolutely the worst thing we have ever done. I spent the next twenty-five years trying to turn that around; and I got it turned around. I'm the "daddy" with doing away with the specialist ranks, which we'll go into later. But at that same time, you had some knowledgeable, experienced, professional noncommissioned officers, but they were at a dead end. Someone had to die or retire to get promoted. We wasn't promoting anybody from about 1954 up until '58, '59, or '60. You were dead in the water wherever you were. It didn't make any difference how good you were. If you had a buddy that got drunk and reduced or did something, we were hanging around like vultures to see who was going to get his stripe. Of course, we've talking about the

"blood stripe." That was a period that we went through there, until they came up with the E8 and E9. I don't think that the specialist ranks that we instituted in the Army was a bad idea, because I could go into a lot of them I'm thinking about. We need to have an army that pays you for what you do and not necessarily pay you for the rank that you have. We might need a technical army and a combat leader army, but the Army just screwed-up the specialist ranks. Even the plan that we had on the books, commanders didn't do. We came out with that specialist rank and I had a sergeant in my outfit that had been a tank commander, a gunner, and a driver in Korea. He wasn't the smartest guy in the world, but he was a sergeant. When he happened to be a gunner on my platoon leader's tank, when they came out with the specialist rank, they made him a specialist two and then said he couldn't go to the NCO club because he was a specialist. We did dumb things like that. We changed it after we had hurt a lot of people and after he discouraged more. The flat-peters up in Washington had a great plan how to do that, but the commanders out in the field never implemented it and it never was signed-up. If you had a specialist five in your outfit, when you had a lot of soldiers in there, if you didn't have a lot of sergeants, you used your specialist five as the Corporal of the Guard or Sergeant of the Guard. But then if you got a lot of sergeants, you put that same specialist five on KP. You might say, if you were going to promote a guy to specialist five, he didn't have enough rank to get anything done and he had too much rank to do it himself. So nobody knew what the hell to do with him. I said if I ever got any authority whatsoever, I was going to do away with the specialist ranks. I started when I was at Forces Command and I got the ball rolling. It really happened under Glen Morrell, but I'm the daddy that made it happen. Right now they're talking about. The last meeting I went to, I had the present Sergeant Major of the Army say, "I wonder who and the hell did away with the specialist rank?" He said, "I think we need it." He's absolutely

right. We do need something like that, but we don't need the system like we had before unless we're going to make it work.

Interviewer: Did you know Colonel McDougal?

SMA Connelly: Yes.

Interviewer: He was working on that four-tier specialist system. It was not the same system that we had, but similar to the foreign armies.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: It makes more sense that the specialist system that we had.

SMA Connelly: You know, the Marine Corps they take a guy at staff sergeant and they call it the "administrative route" or the "command route."

Interviewer: Right.

SMA Connelly: Whichever way he wants to go. They're much smaller. They have less than two hundred thousand people. They'll probably will do that in the Army. I don't know what its got now, but when we had seven hundred and eighty thousand people, that was too big an army to do that. I don't know the plan, but I'm telling you, nothing works forever, you know. It doesn't mean when something didn't work one time, it won't work the next. It may have been the right thing to do at the time we did it, but as far as I'm concerned, at the time we did away with the specialist ranks it was the right thing to do. That's been twelve years ago and they've got another time now to take a look at it and do it again. I certainly wouldn't be opposed to that, but if you are going to do that you've got to make it work. We got to sign-up with that in the Army like we did with "Air-Land Battle." Everybody from the private to the four-star general in the Air Force, the Navy, and the Army has got to know about. Congress has got to know about. The Secretaries of Defense and the Army have got to know about. If you're going to have specialist ranks or some other type thing, we've

all got to sign-up for it to make it work.

Interviewer: I think another thing that would be extremely important is to go back out to the retired ranks and pull the people in to a seminar as advisors, and say, "This is the problem we have." and take advantage of that knowledge so the system will work if they decide to do it again.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. We just backed-off on it. It's just like when we came out with the E8 and E9, oh yeah, we had our growing pains with that. People did come out of the woodwork and wanted to make E8 and then wanted to make E9; some of that happened. But we said we was going to grandfather. Like if a guy was a master sergeant, he could wear master sergeant stripes for two years, I think it was, and then he was going to have to take one off. But nobody ever took off a stripe. We just didn't have guts to make that happen, and maybe that was the right thing to do; we lived through it. But that's not the way to do something. You've got to make a rule and you've got to it stick.

Interviewer: Earlier we were talking about when you became first sergeant in the 761st Tank Battalion, in the 3rd Armored Division at Fort Knox. Over the period of time, how have you seen the role of the first sergeant change?

SMA Connelly: You know, right there when I was first sergeant, I told you about the unit administrator that we had. That wasn't a bad idea, probably. I don't know if they ever had those in TO&E units.

Interviewer: Are you talking about the warrant officer?

SMA Connelly: The warrant officer you had there. That was good and that freed the first sergeant to go out. Then, I think we did, after a while, get the first sergeant too involved in administration to where he couldn't get out and do the training; a good one could. Then they got so strict about people working in their MOS. Some of the best clerks I ever had was somebody that I snatched out of a tank platoon. If he could type and if he had a GT (General Test) score about

110, he was destined to be a clerk for me. My best clerks were the ones that I trained myself, anyway. But when you got the first sergeant to where they couldn't do that because everybody had to be in their MOS, they became too tied-down. About the time I was leaving the Army, and I don't know what they're doing now, I forget what we call it, but we had the "shadow clerk" down in companies. I thought that was tying the first sergeant's hands. I would hate to have been a company commander that when I wrote a letter I would have to send it up to battalion to get typed.

Interviewer: Up to the PAC (Personnel Administration Center).

SMA Connelly: To the PAC. You know, I went through that and I tried to do that with the best face I could. I was Division Sergeant Major, I think, when we started that. Then, of course, I went on up to Forces Command and I didn't have to fool with it that much. But as the Division Sergeant, I never really had my heart into that. I tried to support the system, but having had the experience that I had as a first sergeant, I thought that was a damn fool way to go.

Interviewer: The most dominate first sergeant in that battalion got things done for his company and the other ones had to wait in line.

SMA Connelly: That's right. That's right, and it became who battalion headquarters liked, and battalion headquarters never liked me when I was a first sergeant. I always thought that higher headquarters was screwed-up, and I used to tell them that. I used to tell that story. When I was a platoon sergeant, the Company Headquarters kind of screwed-up every once in a while. Then when I was first sergeant, I thought the Battalion was. When I was Battalion Sergeant Major I thought it was Brigade. When I was at Brigade, it was Division, and then all the way up. I said when I got to the Department of the Army, I found out that, by God, we were screwed-up.

Interviewer: What we'll do is discuss a few more questions here concerning specific assignments. Most of these items, as far as first

sergeant and platoon sergeant, we've covered. Let me ask you about your assignment to Reserve Component duty. When were you assigned to Reserve Component duty, and where?

SMA Connelly: I was assigned in about December 1966. I was assigned to a unit down here in Macon, Georgia. I can't remember what that unit was, but it was a.....

Interviewer: Was it armor?

SMA Connelly: No, it wasn't armor. I was assigned there on a compassionate reassignment. Yes, yes it was. It was a tank battalion. I'm trying to think of the number of it. But I wasn't there long. I soon moved from Macon to Griffin, Georgia, and I had the 196th Cavalry Squadron.

Interviewer: How far is Griffin from Monticello?

SMA Connelly: About the same distance as from here to Macon.

Interviewer: About forty-five or fifty miles.

SMA Connelly: Forty-five or fifty miles. I was assigned there, well I really would say in January 1967, by the time I got checked-in and everything.

Interviewer: That was the Georgia National Guard, right?

SMA Connelly: That's the Georgia National Guard. It was in Macon, Georgia, initially to a tank battalion, that I was going to take the place of some master sergeant and I worked with him for a while. Somehow he got extended, so they transferred me to Griffin, Georgia to the 196th Squadron. One of their units is a cav unit. They had one unit in Newton, Georgia. One unit in Jackson, Georgia. The headquarters was in Griffin, and one unit was in Eatton, Georgia.

Interviewer: You were actually a dedicated advisor, correct?

SMA Connelly: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay.

SMA Connelly: I didn't have an officer with me. They used to put a major and a sergeant first class or above in those, but I never

had an officer with me during the entire time.

(End Tape OH 94.1-4, Side 1)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-4, Side 2)

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, when the last tape ended we were talking about your assignments. You said that the cav squadron that you were an advisor to had four outlying units. What I would like you to do now is just tell me a little bit about your assignment to the Cavalry Squadron of the Georgia National Guard.

SMA Connelly: Of course, you were there as an advisor to that unit. In those days you spent a lot of time checking payrolls when they had a formation--when they had a drill--to see if everybody was there that they were going to pay to be there. You had to watch that a little bit, not that I went in with the intention of catching fraud; that was not my purpose. But there were a lot of people that didn't make meetings and we'd give a lot of... What did we called it? You know, you had to bring them in during the week, sometimes, and you'd give them credit for drill. It was very seldom that they were all at drill, because a cav squadron... We'll just take the cav squadron shortly after I had it, say in January of 1967. We were starting to prepare then to go to summer camp, which would be at Fort Stewart, Georgia, in May or June. You were getting a lot of equipment ready to go and there was a lot of people that didn't make the meeting on Saturday and Sunday, but they had worked on Wednesday afternoon or Thursday, or some night, or what have you. Of course, after about three to six months, I had probably met most of the noncommissioned officers that would be taking the unit. Then I realized that what I had was noncommissioned officers that were so real fine men, older than your average active duty noncommissioned officer, that had established themselves in the community. They had good jobs. Some had influential jobs. Some where there because they genuinely liked what they did. There was a certain amount of patriotism. There was a certain amount

of "Going to the meetings will be enough to pay for my extra car. It's enough to buy a boat. It helps me with my note payments on my house." Most of those noncommissioned officers had some active duty. A lot of times, probably just two years as a PFC or specialist four. Now they were staff sergeants and sergeants first class. Some even had experience in Korea. Maybe there were a few there that had World War II experience. But no one was in there that had any extended length of active duty. In most cases, they were in a cav unit, but was in some other type unit in an entirely different MOS when they were on active duty. Those National Guard units there changed with the wind. They were a cav squadron one year, then an engineer unit the next year, the next year a straight tank battalion, the next year armored infantry, so there was a lot of disruption there. But your noncommissioned officers were good men, but they were older. Most of the people who were coming into the National Guard then were in the National Guard to keep from getting drafted into the Army. We had a waiting list and I don't know how many times I was offered bribes. Influential people would call me about getting people into the unit. I just turned that off, but I know they were putting pressure on me and I'm active Army. You can imagine the pressure that they put on the commanders, and what have you, in the unit in that local community to get some people into the National Guard. I don't doubt but what some of that happened, and I didn't want to know that it did happen and I didn't try to find that out. We had a lot of young soldiers, that that was the only reason they were in there. It may have been a handful of them that liked it and tried to be the best they could, but they were not trained. Remember, I used to be in the National Guard and yeah, I did pickup some things that helped me and I'm sure that it would have helped these guys had they been on active duty, but I sure as hell wasn't trained to go to war. You can't train a soldier thirty-eight days a year to prepare him to go to war. I thought we were wasting a tremendous amount of money with the National Guard that I saw as an

advisor to the unit. We had officers, particularly at lieutenant colonel level and above, that maybe had some World War II experience or maybe some Korean War experience, as a second lieutenant. Then we didn't place the emphasis on their education--on the officers' education--that we do now. It was a place to hold-up until things bigger and better came around. Now I don't want to be disrespectful to many. There were some real professionals there, but there weren't enough of them to make a unit. There weren't enough there that you could depend on to go to war. There wasn't enough leaders there to have a nucleus of leadership if it had to go to war. The big emphasis in the National Guard was saying then, "Let us go as a unit and fight as a unit. Don't use us as fillers like you did in World War II." The active Army, Congress, and everybody else made commitments to do that. I went to about three or four summer camps with those units. Every summer camp that I went to it was like starting over again. People then had either gotten out, they had gotten promoted into another slot, or their civilian job had caused them to move and they had transferred to another town. We had had people to move into Griffin, Newton, Eatton and Jackson that transferred from another unit, and that unit may have been an engineer unit, and now they're in a cav unit. So every year when you went to summer camp, it was like going through basic training again. It would take you the first week to find out who the hell was doing what. I said, "Gee whiz. This National Guard hasn't changed a bit since it was in '49 and '50, when I was in it." In fact, some of those guys that I was seeing in the National Guard, was in the National Guard when I was in the National Guard. When we'd go to summer camp I'd see some lieutenant colonel or something that used to be a corporal with me, or I'd see some master sergeant that used to be a corporal with me. Hell, they spent a lot of time in the National Guard.

Interviewer: What rank were you when you were assigned there?

SMA Connelly: I was a master sergeant. I had come out of an

operations sergeant's job at Fort Knox, Kentucky when we moved the unit up there. I took off my diamond and came there as a master sergeant.

Interviewer: How long were you assigned to Reserve Component duty?

SMA Connelly: From 1967 until October of '69.

Interviewer: What did you find that was your most rewarding part of that assignment? Also, tell me what you thought was most frustrating.

SMA Connelly: The most frustrating was trying to put up a face to my superiors that we had a trained unit, and it was a good unit, and it had a successful training exercise; it was a lie. It was not a successful year, because they were not anymore trained when I got there than they were when I left. It didn't have anything to do with me, it was the system; you couldn't train. That was the most frustrating. My most rewarding thing, I guess, was to see the dedication of some of those people, particularly commanders and senior NCOs that came in and did their dead-level best to make that unit as best they could and worked a tremendous number of hours to make it as good as they could, with no pay. The dedication of the commanders of the units and the senior NCOs that had a lifetime invested in their unit and they, themselves, didn't know enough about the Army and enough about what a unit had to do to exist in combat even though they wasn't trained. They actually thought they were trained. That was rewarding. Of course, my most rewarding thing was when I met my wife, back in my hometown, and we married. That was rewarding.

Interviewer: That was a big reward. Let me ask you about your promotion to E9, and then we'll talk about your assignment as a command sergeant major and also when you went up to FORSCOM and became Sergeant Major of Forces Command. On what date were you promoted to E9?

SMA Connelly: In March of 1973.

Interviewer: You were a E9 when you went through the Sergeants Major Academy.

SMA Connelly: Yes.

Interviewer: In fact, you told me that people were telling you that there wasn't a need for you to go to the Academy because you were already an E9 and you were a CSM designee.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. That was the first time that particular board that met was trying to cut down on the number of boards, so they selected people for E9 and at the same time, when you came out on the promotion list they had as asterisk by your name if you had already been designated as a CSM. In other words, when you came up to being promoted you could be appointed to a CSM. That's what was going to happen to me, because I was already had a battalion. I was an acting Battalion Sergeant Major, as a first sergeant, when I came out on the E9's list. Then I had the asterisk. I was one of the early ones. In fact, I was already an E9, I think, by the time they got the order published with my date of rank. You went on the list according to your date of rank. I believe I was number six on the list; I can't remember that exactly. But about that same time is when I got orders to attend the Sergeants Major Academy. I came out on the E9's list; I got the asterisk; and I got orders to go to the Sergeants Major Academy. I had been a first sergeant so long that my daughter called me "Top," because she thought that was my nickname. All of my friends had been promoted to sergeant major years ago, that I used to be in charge of. I used to tell my wife, "Oh well, the Army will recognize my talents one of these days, and I'll move right along." I never had a discouraging moment about getting promoted. I wasn't a guy who got discouraged. I knew I was a good first sergeant and I loved what I was doing. I had all the prestige that I needed. If I was in a brigade, I was a good first sergeant and everybody in that brigade knew it, including the Brigade Commander. If I was in a battalion, they knew it. I had been a first sergeant so long that other first sergeants used to come to me about things. I wasn't worried about that. But anyway, when it starting to happen, it start happening. I had a brigade commander who I loved and he told me

"Sergeant Major, I can get you out of this." I said, "Colonel, you know, I've been going all over Fort Knox here, talking about the NCOES and the Sergeants Major Academy. I'm one of the guys that was put on the Study Group at Fort Knox to meet and study the NCOES. I sign-up for it on the ground floor." I said, "I'd like to do that. I think that is eventually going to be what's its all about, and I'd like to go." He said, "Well, okay. If you go, I'll get you back to Fort Knox." He said, "You can come back here as the Sergeant Major." I said, "That will be fine." Shit, I didn't think he could do that, but I didn't worry about it.

Interviewer: Where were you assigned when you were promoted to E9?

SMA Connelly: Like I said, I was a first sergeant and the acting sergeant major of a battalion. When I was promoted to E9, I just stayed there, because at that same time I had orders to go to the Sergeants Major Academy. I was going to stay there until I went out to the Academy, and that wasn't but about three month.

Interviewer: About how much time did you have in the service when you were finally selected for E9?

SMA Connelly: I had nineteen years. Eighteen or nineteen.

Interviewer: You was the Sergeant Major of the 1st and the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Training Brigade there at Fort Knox.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: So you had quite a few years at Fort Knox.

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. I spent my entire career either in Europe, Fort Knox, or Fort Stewart.

Interviewer: I don't know if we've got it on tape, but we were talking about General Patton, whenever he said that his number one goal was to be the Commandant of the Armor School, and you told him that wasn't such a great deal.

SMA Connelly: I told him I didn't think so, as far as a noncommissioned officer was concerned.

Interviewer: Let me ask me about first and only assignment as a

MACOM (Major Army Command) sergeant major when you were selected as Sergeant Major of Forces Command. Tell me how that came about.

SMA Connelly: Like I said, I got out of that Academy out there and I went to Europe and had that battalion over there. I did alright with the battalion. Then I acted as the Brigade Sergeant Major several times. I don't know what happened. I think there was a big spread between us losing a brigade sergeant major and getting a new one in, so I acted as the Brigade Sergeant Major there for a good while. Then of course, I told you about going up to Seventh Army Training Command. Then I got selected as the Sergeant Major of the 1st Armored Division. I had the 1st Armored Division for about a year and a half. I hadn't been there a year and I came out in a packet for Sixth Army Sergeant Major, I think it was. General Webb said, "You know, your in a damn packet for Sixth Army Sergeant Major and you haven't been here but about a year." I said, "Yes sir, that's right, and I told you that I would extent a year to be here." I said, "That's still good for me. I want to do what I said I'd do." He said, "Well, I think that you're going to get selected as the Sixth Army Sergeant Major." I said, "Sixth Army? Where the hell is that?" He said, "That's in Persidio, California." I said, "Oh Shit!" I said, "Well, you know, I don't want to screw-up my career, General. I don't know all about that stuff." I said, "I've been talking to Sergeant Major Robinette, who is in charge of AG, and old Sergeant Major Robinette, he's always telling me about talking to people up there in the Pentagon and MILPERCEN." I said, "You know, these flat-peters all know each other and they're always getting all kind of assignments." I said, "There's some guy up there by the name of "Phil Ragsdale" that runs this Command Sergeants Major business." I said, "Why don't you just tell them to take me out of the packet?" I don't know what General Webb did, but General Webb got me out of the packet. Well, I learned this later. When I came out of the packet there were several other packets that I should have been in, and I should have been in the

FORSCOM packet, initially, but Phil Ragsdale--that's after I became Sergeant Major of the Army--said they were afraid to put me in a packet because General Webb raised so much hell. The General said, "I've got the best damn sergeant major I've ever had," and he said, "Hell, I haven't had him a year and you guys want him to go somewhere else. T That's not right." But anyway, they took me out of the Sixth Army packet. After they had selected somebody for Sixth Army, old Robinette came over and told me, "You know, we may have screwed you up." I said, "Hell, I ain't worried about it." I said, "I'm happy where I am, as Division Sergeant Major." I said, "I can't extend anymore over here. It'll work out."

Interviewer: That was as Division Sergeant Major of the 1st Armored.

SMA Connelly: Yeah, I was the Division Sergeant Major. Then the Command and General Staff College, that I think was telling you about, contacted the 1st Armored Division about having a division commander, a a brigade commander, a battalion commander, and maybe a G3 or something coming back there and talk to the Command and General Staff College, but we were on the "Reforger Exercise" at that same time, or was going to be, and we just couldn't afford to let anybody go. He wrote the Commanding General of TRADOC (Training and Doctrine Command), I guess it was, or the Command and General Staff College out there, and asked them if he could send his Sergeant Major of the division.

Interviewer: You're talking about General Webb.

SMA Connelly: General Webb, who was my Division Commander at the time. I guess he told them that I had a lot of training. I had been a battalion sergeant major, a brigade sergeant major, Sergeant Major of Seventh Army Training Command, and had been a division sergeant major for over a year, and he just thought that I would be able to present their side of a story, and training in Europe as good as anybody, so he sent me back. Evidently I made a good talk. General

Kreosen, who had been the VII Corps Commander in Europe during the time I was over there, and who had been promoted to his fourth star, was Commander of Forces Command. He was at this seminar that they had at the Command and General Staff College, along with most of your corps commanders and division commanders that were in the United States. He heard me make this talk and that night he asked me if I wanted to be in the packet to be considered for FORSCOM Sergeant Major. Of course, we discussed it a little bit at the stand-up cocktail party; we couldn't talk much. I didn't feel that serious about it because things said at a cocktail party don't usually workout anyway. But, sure enough, I was put in the packet and, of course, found out later that General Kreosen had actually setup a board of nothing but generals in Forces Command.

Interviewer: I think earlier we were talking, during one of the breaks, that at that time you didn't even know anything about Forces Command.

SMA Connelly: No, I didn't know what Forces Command was. I didn't know it as FORSCOM; people kept talking about FORSCOM. I knew, just from reading the Army Times and kind of keeping up with how the Army changes, that we had a Forces Command, but I really didn't know what its mission was. I couldn't imagine something that big being at Fort McPherson, because Fort McPherson is a little post sitting in the middle of Atlanta, of course not realizing then that it was the largest headquarters in the world, and the commander of that commanded more troops. He commanded every division size TO&E unit in the Continental United States, and at the time, plus the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii, Panama, Puerto Rico, and Alaska, and all of the divisions in the United States, plus he commanded the Reserves and was to command the National Guard if they were mobilized, so that's the biggest command in the world. Of course, I didn't know all of that then. The only thing I knew was that it was in Atlanta, and that wasn't but sixty-five miles from where I was born and raised, and where my wife was born and

raised. By then I had about twenty-four or twenty-five years of service and I said if I could stay there three years, I could stand on my head for a year somewhere, and I can retire with thirty years. And Atlanta, Georgia, shit, that sounded like the only good deal that I had had; I didn't know what a good deal was. That's how I got the job. There was a lot of competition for that job, as I learned after I got back to the States.

Interviewer: When were you assigned to FORSCOM?

SMA Connelly: I was assigned there in May of 1977. In fact, I actually went to work on June 2, 1977, which was my birthday.

Interviewer: You were assigned there when you were selected as Sergeant Major of the Army, right?

SMA Connelly: Yes.

Interviewer: How long were you assigned to FORSCOM?

SMA Connelly: I was there two years. Then in June of '79, I was selected as Sergeant Major of the Army and I took office on July 1st or 2nd.

Interviewer: What occupied most of your time when you were the FORSCOM Sergeant Major?

SMA Connelly: Well, General Kreosen, he told me later that one of the reasons that I was selected--and there were several reasons--was because of the tremendous amount of leadership positions that I had been, with all my time as a platoon sergeant and a first sergeant in the combat arms and in different places in the States and I had the advisor duty, I had the operations experience, and the fact that I had been in the National Guard, myself. He said of all the people that they looked at for the FORSCOM Sergeant Major, I had more time as a first sergeant than most of them, put together. It's not that there wasn't some fine men. I can tell you some fine people that was in contention for that job, because all of those who were in contention for that job were later also in contention, two years later, for

Sergeant Major of the Army, but that's neither here nor there. I got selected because that board thought I was the best one qualified for the job at that time. But General Kreosen said he was impressed with the fact that I was in the National Guard myself, that I had been an advisor to the National Guard, that I had a battalion and a brigade, the Seventh Army Training Command, and a division in Europe--in recent time--and one of his biggest jobs was to develop and just find out what he had in the Reserves and National Guard. He thought that I would be an asset, having been an advisor and having been in the National Guard. He told me he wanted me to spend a lot of time with the Reserve Forces. He said, "Go visit them and when you're there where they are, you visit the active Army. When you go visit the active Army, you seek out the National Guard units and the Reserve units in that vicinity and spend some time with them and get to know them and find out what their problems are." He said, "You know, I can put you on TDY (temporary duty) tomorrow and you can be gone for three years and still will not have visited every unit that we've got." He said, "I don't want you to burn yourself out. I want you to get a good schedule, but I do want you on the road and I want you seeing those people." He said, "I don't want you worrying about TDY (Temporary Duty) pay. When you feel that you need to see me, you come see me." Well, shit, the first thing I've got to do is find out where to start. I knew what a battalion was. I knew what a brigade was. I knew what a division was. I didn't know what all the Major Army Commands were, and he told me that each major Army command has got some interface with the National Guard and the Reserves, and maybe that's the place to start; I did. I went to most of the Major Army Commands and met my counterpart there and talked to them. If it was TRADOC, I talked about training. How does this affect the National Guard, etc? But I just spent a tremendous amount of time on the road. Then I got to know those sergeants major and we had our conferences. I could not invite them all. That's when we had the

Readiness Regions. I'd go visit, say a sergeant major that had Readiness Region so-and-so, in such-and-such a state; maybe he would have three or four states. I visited every major National Guard and Reserve unit in that state, or those states, with that sergeant major. I did that in the first year. After that I brought all of the active duty division sergeants major, and up, and as many of the National Guard and Reserve people as I could to a conference. I filled-up a whole damn hotel there in Savannah, Georgia, and had a three-day conference down there. I invited General Kreosen down to speak. I had a great exchange and got to know all those folks. Then I spent the next year doing other states and I was getting a lot of publicity. I energized, I suppose, the sergeants major. It's not that I did it. I was the second Sergeant Major that Forces Command ever had. Ray Martin had Forces Command and I know he did a lot of traveling, and he did a lot of good work. But Ray was on the ground floor of forming Forces Command and a lot of his time was spent in other areas. So I don't mean any reflection on what he had done, but I was gaining a lot of praise from the National Guard and Reserve generals, with the impression that I was making on their sergeants major that I was bringing them into the family of the Total Army. We didn't know anything about the Total Army. Shit, I had never heard about the Total Army in Europe, and I knew the USAREUR Sergeant Major and the Corps sergeants major over there; those were my best buddies. Ken Tracy and Rolland Williams and those guys, those were my best buddies. So I went over to Europe and I made talks over there to the senior NCOs. I told them, "Whatever you do when you come back to the States, you're going to be involved with the National Guard and Reserves, and you need to know something about it. This is our Total Army. This is the way we're going. This is what we're doing." It was happening too. Every time one of them would come back to the States, he'd wind-up as one of those Readiness Region Sergeants Major, or Sixth Army Sergeant Major, or whatever sergeant major; then he was under me.

What was happening to him, was what I had been telling him.

Interviewer: You are talking about "Operation Steadfast," aren't you? It started around '73.

SMA Connelly: That's right.

Interviewer: Also the "Round-Out" system.

SMA Connelly: The "Round-Out" system. I was in on the ground floor. That's what I was talking about and I was telling them what they had to do. I told anybody who wanted to listen to me, and I told General Krosen--I hope in the next year or two I have a chance to talk with him --I used to tell him, "General, I don't know what the damn answer is, but I'll tell you what." I said, "Those National Guard units are not any more trained than they were when I was in the National Guard in '49 and '50, and they are not any better trained than they were in '67, '68 and '69, when I was an advisor." I said, "You've still got the same people." I said, "I'm seeing the same damn people. They're just getting older, but they're not getting any better trained." I said, "And the Vietnam guy coming back, he's either not getting into the National Guard, or if he's in, he's getting in there because he needs the money, and he's not our better soldier that we discharged." I said, "You can not get a damn army ready to go to war in thirty-eight days. We're going to have to have a better system." I said, "You've got a place out here in Nebraska, that if they mobilize that unit the damn Army would have to take over the public affairs." I said, "Everybody that in the National Guard is either a policeman, a fireman, or works at the water works or the state highway, or whatever." I said, "Hell, the Army would have to run the city if we mobilized the unit." I said, "You've got battalion commanders whose battalions are spread-out in three or four states. He's in command for two years and there's no way in hell that he can even visit all his units in that amount of time." I said, "The only time he can see them is when he goes to summer camp." By this time I had twenty-five years of service and I had all this experience that

we're talking about, with the National Guard. Hell, I'm seeing the Army from a broad view. I had been up to the Pentagon to all those briefing and I was beginning to get a picture of the Army. I use this term with reservations, but I was seeing the Army like a general see's. And nothing any noncommissioned officer couldn't do that had the experience that I had and the things that I had been tasked to do. General Kreosen put some tasks on me that lots of generals don't get. I was seeing an army that just might not be as damn good as we think it is.

Interviewer: What general made the remark about the "Hollow Army?"

SMA Connelly: That was General Myer, my Chief of Staff. You know, General Kroesen was the one that put me in for Sergeant Major of the Army. General Shoemaker took his place about six months before they had the board and General Kreosen went up as Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. General Shoemaker, naturally, did what General Kreosen told him to do. But the knowledge that I had there and the knowledge that I shared with General Kreosen, I would share it with anybody. I could tell a National Guard general that he wasn't trained to go to war in way that wouldn't piss him off. I got into the noncommissioned officer business. I remember one time when I was out in Seattle, Washington, or somewhere, and I'm visiting a National Guard unit and the general gives me all this personal attention and everything. We were walking into a big armory and we were going to eat lunch there. He was talking to me. "What can I do for my noncommissioned officers. I want to be a noncommissioned officers' general. I want to improve them." I said, "I'll tell you general, one of the first things I would start with, you see that latrine back there that says 'Officers Only' and this one over here says 'Enlisted'?" I said, "If you can't piss with your noncommissioned officers, I doubt if you can lead them." He didn't know how to take that, and I laughed, and finally he did. He said, "I see your point." I said, "Of course, you don't have to change it today." I said, "We've done away with that. When you used to go on the range there used to be

an officers' latrine and an enlisted latrine." I said, "Now we've even complicated it more. We've got females and we've got males." I said, "That's all you ought to have; a male latrine and a female latrine." I said, "As an officer, if you want to know how a soldier thinks, you've got to know how he stinks. That means that you've got to get down there with him." You know, those things would get back to General Kroesen, The Reserves and National Guard had a lot of conferences; they thrive off of that. Hell, several times when they had conferences, they asked me to be the keynote speaker; not General Kreosen, not the deputy--General Shoemaker--but they asked me to be the keynote speaker. I didn't change a damn thing. I told them all up there, "I don't want to see anymore damn officers latrines and enlisted latrines. We have two latrines, or if your fortunate, you've got four. They all ought to be either titled 'Male' or 'Female,' and that's all it is, gentlemen." I said, "When you go to the field, the officers and NCO eat last. And after a certain amount of training," I said, "they're tell us that we are supposed to be able to move to the field and whip a potential enemy as a combined force in a Total Army." I said, "We've got to get that way." I said, "You've got to read the same regulations that I'm reading and the same manuals that I'm reading." Of course I was raising hell with the Army, and I go out to a damn National Guard unit and I pull out a manual there and it was on the damn M1 rifle. I asked, "Why and the hell do you have this in here?" "Well, that's the only one I have." "What are you armed with?" "We're armed with M16's." "What the hell don't you have an M16 manual?" I would raise hell with somebody at Forces Command. I said, "How and the hell are we going to get a Total Army when we can't even get the damn publications out there for them to read. Like I said, by this time I'm the FORSCOM Sergeant Major and everything I ever got--above corporal--was a damn surprise anyway. I wasn't bucking. I honestly swear to God, I was not bucking to be Sergeant Major of the Army. I figured if they wanted me to have

that, it'd be like I got all of the rest of them, and I was not bucking for it. Even when I went up there, I didn't think I'd make it. I went on up to Alaska, and a trip. Shit, I didn't even slow up. There were seventy-seven people that they put their name in for Sergeant Major of the Army. From all of those that I had met, and I had met every sergeant major in the Army that was remotely in the running. I knew every sergeant major in Europe, before I even came to Forces Command. After having spent two years in Forces Command, I knew all the high-knockers; all the major command command sergeants major in the States. I knew every division sergeant major in the States; I could pick him out in a crowd, because I visited his unit. I knew a lot about the Army. Of course, I wasn't the only one. The TRADOC Sergeant Major, he was doing his traveling, but he was looking at the schools mostly. Of course, that's the best training ground in the world for the Sergeant Major of the Army, is to be FORSCOM Sergeant Major. I don't know if you want me to go into the selection, but I will say this, and I don't say it boastfully, but I said to anybody that would listen and anybody that had any authority that I thought I could talk to--mainly the FORSCOM Commander, the Deputy, and the Staff--and I continued to say it after I became Sergeant Major of the Army. I said, "The "Round-Out" and all of that is good, but I think that the United States is making one hell of a mistake if we mobilize the National Guard and immediately send them to war. You know, we talk about not being prepared for World War II. We were inadequately trained, inadequately equipped, and we sent people into war, and we paid for that mistake with the lives of the American soldiers." I said, "One of the reasons is that we did that to the National Guard." General Kreosen was the kind of guy, I love him, if he just told you "I hear you," every once in a while, you knew you were getting your point across to him. You look at the Gulf War.

Interviewer: We had National Guard units at the National Training Center that couldn't get trained in time.

SMA Connelly: They couldn't get trained in time. You're looking at one of them that I was in and you're looking at one of them that I advised.

Interviewer: The Georgia Guard.

SMA Connelly: The Georgia Guard.

(End Tape OH 94.1-4, Side 2)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-5, Side 1)

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, I think we finished up on your assignment as FORSCOM Sergeant Major. I did skip over your assignment as the Division Sergeant Major of the 1st Armored. Maybe we ought to talk about that before we proceed on, because I don't want to cheat you out of an opportunity to talk about the 1st Armored. First of all, when were you assigned as Sergeant Major of the 1st Armored?

SMA Connelly: I think I was assigned there in about May of '75. Boy, I'll tell you I was moving fast then. Bennie and I went up to Graf and I was in Graf about a year and a half.

Interviewer: Yeah, you went to Graf in June of '75

(NOTE: His wife Bennie commented that they were there about a year.)

SMA Connelly: June of '75. That's about right; June of '75.

Interviewer: So you were there until '76.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: You said that General Webb was your Division Commander, right?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. William E. Webb

Interviewer: Where was your headquarters located?

SMA Connelly: In Ansbach.

Interviewer: You had units scattered all over Germany, didn't you?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. That was the division that was spread out more than any division over there as far as its area of responsibility. The 1st Brigade was located in Erlangen. The 2nd Brigade was located in

Bamberg. The 3rd Brigade was located in Ilisheim. Division Artillery was right out of Nurnberg. The Support Brigade was at Montieth Barracks in Furth.

Interviewer: I guess you spent a lot of time on the road.

SMA Connelly: Lots of time on the road. I didn't travel very much with my commander, but I did travel with the commander, particularly by helicopter. In other words, the way he would do that is: say he was making a trip on Monday by helicopter. He would stay out until about Wednesday. I'd fly, say from Ansbach down to Bamberg by chopper. There the Sergeant Major of that Brigade would have a vehicle and we would visit all his units. Most of the time I would fly back with the Commander. Sometimes I'd just get another helicopter somewhere and get back up there. Other times I traveled in my own car. Of course, I had a sedan and a driver that I could use.

Interviewer: What was the biggest problem that you encountered while Sergeant Major of the 1st Armored Division?

SMA Connelly: Discipline problems were great then. We still had some drug problems. We had some race relations and equal opportunity problems. We had equipment problems. Of course, that's when I realized that we had lived in Europe for thirty years, one day at a time or one year at a time. We had motor pools there at Montieth Barracks and Erlangen and all these other places where I had served previous tours. We had tanks parked in the same motor pool with the same mud that I used to change tracks in as a sergeant first class. We were still working in the same mud. We had done nothing to the motor pools. We were beginning to put a little money in there--German money--into rehabilitation of the barracks. But that was an on-going project and the motor pools and all that was next. Some of that rehabilitation was beginning to start. But we were discovering tremendous problems when you were going into a motor pool, to build a new motor pool. You realized all your plumbing and all your drainage underneath the ground was what the Germans built in the

'30s. It wasn't going to support a new facility. So we were having those problems. Training was a problem. The Germans were beginning to take away our training areas, like your home training base. Each Post, particularly in armor and infantry--the combat arms--had ranges that they could go out on and fire and make small maneuvers. They were what we called the local training areas. But the Germans were recalling that so you couldn't do it. So everybody was having to go to Hohenfeld, Grafenwohr, and Wildflicken to train. This was a tremendous schedule problem. You couldn't get everybody there and there was a certain amount of training that you had to train commanders to do in those local training areas. Always that was a problem because they wanted to wait until they got to Grafenwohr to do it all. But you had to do some of it in your local training area before you went to Graf. But then they were taking these local training areas from us and we couldn't do that training so it was becoming very constrained. When we made movements on the highway and autobahn, and even the railroad, the Germans were beginning to complain about that. We still had a certain amount of drug problems, race relations problems. But you were far enough ahead of the power curve to see that we were making progress.

Interviewer: I guess you had some pretty good brigade sergeants major.

SMA Connelly: We were beginning to get a Noncommissioned Officers Corps then, with the centralized system of promotion. We were getting some advanced NCO class graduates. We were getting a few Sergeants Major Academy graduates. We were really working with your noncommissioned officer's professional business at USAREUR level. We were beginning to see results of that. Our Noncommissioned Officers Corps was getting better everyday. That's when I began to realize that the Officers Corps was beginning to recognize that, "Yes, we do have some great potential in the Noncommissioned Officers Corps and we need to give them more responsibility and the latitude to do more things." Our USAREUR

Commander, General Blanchard, was the one that had a big screen of all your regulations as to what noncommissioned officers could do and what they were having to do that they shouldn't have to do. This relieved such things as the Officers Corps having to sign to pickup ammunition to fire on the pistol range; you used to have to have a commissioned officer to sign. Why couldn't you have a noncommissioned officer sign for that? That just one that comes to mind. But there were things like that throughout our regulation system. We started that over in Europe and it dwindled right on down. Our divisions were also given the mission by the USAREUR Commander to also come up with those suggestions, and we did. We were working with the Noncommissioned Officers Development Program (NCODP) in USAREUR long before we were trying to do it Armywide. Of course I got in on the ground floor at trying to do it Armywide. We were making a lot of progress in that division and it was a good division. It was a fighting division. It was ready to go to war.

Interviewer: Let me move on, now that we've talked about the 1st Armored Division. Let's discuss a subject we've talked about quite a bit, particularly during the breaks, and that's the family. Of course, the family has been a very important part of most of our lives. Let me ask you about your family. First of all, when you joined the Army you weren't married at that time, right?

SMA Connelly: Yes, I was.

Interviewer: You was?

SMA Connelly: I was married. I've been married twice. I was married when I went into the Army, but I wasn't married long. I didn't remarry until 1968.

Interviewer: So in 1968, you married Bennie.

SMA Connelly: Yes.

Interviewer: What was Bennie's maiden name?

SMA Connelly: It was Newton.

Interviewer: Newton.

SMA Connelly: N-E-W-T-O-N.

Interviewer: Where was she born?

SMA Connelly: She was born in Shadydale, Georgia.

Interviewer: How far is Shadydale for Monticello?

SMA Connelly: That's a little community about eight or nine miles from here. I had known her all my life, I guess.

Interviewer: What Bennie's parents occupations.

SMA Connelly: Her father was a rural mail carrier. They had been in the sawmill and logging business and they owned a drug store.

Interviewer: Where and when were you and Bennie married?

SMA Connelly: We were married there in Shadydale, Georgia--at her home--on December 28, 1968.

Interviewer: How did you meet Bennie?

SMA Connelly: Well, like I said, I had known her since she was a little girl. When I was here on assignment with the National Guard I just met her again and asked her for a date. We went together for a year or so and then married.

Interviewer: The first quarters that you lived in when she joined you after your Guard assignment, where were they located? On what installation?

SMA Connelly: At Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Interviewer: Did you have on-post or off-post quarters?

SMA Connelly: On-Post. Right there on main post in what they call the "400 Block." I was probably the only first sergeant around there, because I was the only one that had date of rank enough to get one of them.

Interviewer: Where they good quarters?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, they were good quarters.

Interviewer: When you take a look at the enlisted quarters when you first came into the Army compared to the quarters when you were Sergeant Major of the Army, I guess there has been quite a bit of

improvement over the year

SMA Connelly: Oh, Yeah! There been a tremendous improvement and not just an improvement in the quarters, but in the number of quarters that we have. Of course, naturally, when I came into the Army we didn't have that many soldiers married as we do now, or as we did when I left. But the quarters they had, quite frankly, some of them were just barracks that were converted into quarters and had plywood partitions between a set of quarters. They put on a porch and put in a bathroom, a kitchen, a bedroom, and a small living room. We had much better quarters in Europe than we had in the United States. But we just didn't have enough quarters; that was like everything else in the Army for a long time. You'd go to a housing area and you'd see company grade officer quarters, field grade officers quarters, general officer quarters. Then down here were the enlisted quarters. That went from the sergeant major to the private; there wasn't that much difference in the type quarters. If it had anything to do with the difference it had to do with the number of children you had, not with the rank you had. Normally, a young sergeant didn't have as many children as the master sergeant, who got more quarters simply because he had a lot of dependents and not because he had more rank.

Interviewer: Then concurrent travel was almost unheard of.

SMA Connelly: That's absolutely right. You had to put in for that. Here you are, you get orders in the United States to go to Europe and you were authorized to put in for concurrent travel. You would wait and wait and wait, and it was just two weeks before you were to report to Europe and you still hadn't been approved for concurrent travel. Then you have to go and leave your family, and their half-tight. They don't get orders until after you're over there. There was chaos there for a long time.

Interviewer: In what type activities did Bennie get involved when you were a first sergeant, and then up the line.

SMA Connelly: Well, when we got there at Knox, Bennie took on to that just like she had been doing it all her life; like she grew up with it. There were wives that had been following their husbands twenty and twenty-five years that still hadn't picked-up on the Army; what it was about and what its mission was. Bennie just picked-up on that real good and was a tremendous asset to any unit and to that commander, from "day one." When she went with me to Fort Knox she was a tremendous asset to the unit and an asset to me in the way that she volunteered, the way that she attended the meetings. We used to be quite instrumental in chapel church services. She was instrumental in those aspects. She'd visit the wives. She knew what she could do and what she couldn't do and how not to impose on a family; she could very quickly detect if they didn't want your support or they didn't want your help. She was able to quickly detect those that wanted it but didn't know how to ask for it. She got involved in the Wives Club at post level. I guess she said "If I'm going to have to do this, I might as well get the most out of it." I don't doubt at all that it helped my own career.

Interviewer: That also carried on when you were Command Sergeant Major of the 1st Armored Division.

SMA Connelly: Absolutely. Right out at the Sergeants Major Academy; she did it there. When we went to Europe, to Forces Command, right on through when I was Sergeant Major of the Army, she was a tremendous asset.

Interviewer: How many children do you have?

SMA Connelly: Just one daughter.

Interviewer: What's her name?

SMA Connelly: Carol.

Interviewer: Was she born in a military or civilian hospital?

SMA Connelly: She was born in Wurzburg Army Hospital. Of course, that was the child by my first wife that was with me in Europe; she is from Savannah, Georgia. Carol was born in July 1955.

Interviewer: How did she adapt to the frequent moves?

SMA Connelly: She didn't have that many moves because after we came back from Germany, she lived with her grandparents until 1966. When I came back from Europe I gain custody of my child and she lived with me here in Monticello until Bennie and I married. She didn't adjust to it because by that time she was twelve of thirteen years old. Her personality I guess, or whatever you want to call it, was already formed as far as Bennie being able to influence that. When we moved from here to Fort Knox, after I came from Vietnam, she did not want to make that move because it was a bad time for a teenager in high school. When she got to Fort Knox she was in school there. Then we went to El Paso, Texas, she did not want to make that move. She was a senior in high school and she went to live with her aunt in Richmond, Virginia; that's where she graduated from high school.

Interviewer: Let me ask you about your civilian education. A little earlier in the interview we talked about the two years of college that you completed here in Georgia before you went into the Army.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: You continued on after you got into the Army. What was your major? After you joined the Army, did you continue with the same major?

SMA Connelly: No, I took courses, like a semester at the University of Kentucky. I was getting some of my mandatory subjects out of the way. I guess that I was really working for a degree in education or industrial management. I have an associate degree in industrial management from El Paso Community College. I've got about 195 or so semester hours toward a degree in education, but they're sporadic. I took some from the University of Maryland, University of Kentucky, Georgia Southwestern, El Paso Community College, some correspondence courses from, what do they call that?

Interviewer: USAFI (United States Armed Forces Institute).

SMA Connelly: Yeah. And then there's another test we had to take to go out to the Academy. You can take five tests. I don't know if they still make students do that, but I had to take five tests. (NOTE: Bennie remarked, "You don't have to take it. You can take it and not take that subject.)

Interviewer: I'm trying to think of what they call those tests.

SMA Connelly: It's the CTAP, or something like that. I had to take those tests and if you passed all of them, you could really get up to about 18 semester hours.

Interviewer: They were the CLEP (College Level Equivalent Program) tests, right?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, CLEP. That's what I'm trying to think of.

Interviewer: My mind went blank too.

SMA Connelly: That test was mandatory. Unless you had two years of college, you had to take the CLEP test before I went to the Sergeants Major Academy. It was a question whether or not I had that. I didn't know how many hours you got for two years of college. I was right there by the CLEP test thing and I took all those tests. I got some semester hours there; I didn't pass them all. I sure as hell didn't pass math, but I did get some credits there. According to my military records, I don't lack but about 20 semester hours for a degree.

Interviewer: Now let's get into your tenure as Sergeant Major of the Army. You served as Sergeant Major of the Army from 2 July 1979 until 1 July '83, is that correct?

SMA Connelly: That's correct.

Interviewer: Okay. Who was the Chief of Staff of the Army at that time?

SMA Connelly: General E.C. Myer

Interviewer: When you were assigned to Forces Command, you said General Kreoson had recommended you. At the time that you were selected, General Kreoson was the Assistant Chief of Staff.

SMA Connelly: No. He was Vice Chief of Staff

Interviewer: Okay, Vice Chief of Staff.

SMA Connelly: General Shoemaker was the FORSCOM Commander. He was the one that actually signed my recommendation to be considered as Sergeant Major of the Army.

Interviewer: Do you remember some of the other command sergeants major that were considered, along with you?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. Ray Martin.

Interviewer: Ray L. Martin, right? Ray Martin, he was your predecessor at FORSCOM.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. He was the FORSCOM Sergeant Major that I replaced. Then he went as the 25th Infantry Division Sergeant Major, in Hawaii.

Interviewer: Right. In fact, he was the Division Sergeant Major when I was with the 25th.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. He was the Division Sergeant Major then when he competed for Sergeant Major of the Army. That was about the third time Ray had been up for Sergeant Major of the Army.

Interviewer: He was the one that later took over MILPERCEN.

SMA Connelly: I pulled him in for that job. I called him on the phone and asked him if he'd take that job; I needed him in there. He took it and did a good job.

Interviewer: So we had Ray L. Martin.

SMA Connelly: Let me see here now. Now what I'm giving you here is the final five.

Interviewer: Right.

SMA Connelly: I guess there were seventy-seven. In the final five there was: Ray, Jack Heath. I never did hear much about Jack Heath after. He had Fort Benning at the time. Jack was a good sergeant major. Bennie, help me. (Bennie asked, "Who had TRADOC?) Frank Wren had TRADOC. USAREUR was...

Interviewer: (After a long pause.) Was Tracy in on that?

SMA Connelly: No, Ken wasn't in it. Ken had about thirty-five years of service, or thirty-four and a half years service. He wasn't eligible to be in it. Let me see. I didn't think I'd ever forget that. (Bennie asked, "Was Bill Tapp one of them? Maybe Bill Tapp was later). I don't think Bill Tapp was one of the final five. Me, Ray, Wren, Heath. What's that guy that had DARCOM (Department of the Army Rediness Command). (Bennie answered, "Shedd.") Herb Shedd. (Bennie answered, "Uh huh.") The Black guy? (Bennie confirmed by saying, "Yes. Herb Shedd.")

Interviewer: How do you spell his name?

Bennie Connelly: "S-H-E-D-D."

SMA Connelly: That doesn't sound right, really. I missing somebody. I missing the guy that might have gotten that thing. Of course, everybody thought that Ray was going to get it, including me. I don't think Herb got that far; I know he didn't. I'm trying to think of that guy's name out there that had the Artillery Center at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. There wasn't anybody from Europe. Jack Heath, Ray Martin, Frank Wren.

Interviewer: What we can do is later on if you think of the next one you can tell me.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I could go back and look at the pictures, I guess. I'll think of them in a minute. But anyway, it was a... There was actually ten of us. You know, there were seventy-seven guys who were put in.

Interviewer: Uh Huh.

SMA Connelly: That the commanders put in for. They had a screening board and they screened it out to ten. I purposely... You know there's a lot of politics. I call it politics. There were a lots of phone calls. Man, they burned that phone up. Sergeants major trying to find out who, you know how that works, they were trying to find out

who the ten were. Of course the Army Times said there was going to be ten finalists; they could find out more than anybody else could. Well, I took off to Alaska and I was up there when I got a message up there that I was in the finalists; one of the finalists. I didn't know if that was two, five, ten, or what. And hell, I came on back, and of course I didn't interrupt my trip up there. But I was one of the finalists. Of course, we celebrated a little bit that night; Jeff Green got about half drunk. It was supposed to be classified as SECRET. Jeff Green was Sergeant Major up in Alaska. Then when I got back down to Forces Command I finally got a call from Bill Bainbridge and he said it would be followed by a letter that we were going to have to come up to personally appear before the board on such-and-such a date. I didn't know at the time, and he didn't tell me, but you know who sits on the board for the Sergeant Major of the Army is the incumbent Sergeant Major of the Army, plus you have a lieutenant general as the president of the board, and three of four major generals. It was classified even as to who was on the board. I did not know who was on the board and I did not try to find out. But I'll tell you, I bet I was one of the few that didn't know. I wanted to play dumb. In the first place, I'll tell you by this time, I'll tell you the truth--now this is the truth--I didn't think I'd get Sergeant Major of the Army. I thought Ray Martin would get it, or perhaps Frank Wren. But I wasn't worried about it because I knew that if I wanted to stay around for three or four more years that I'd be considered the next time, because I didn't have but twenty-five years of service. So I wasn't really worried about it. I knew I had the best job in the Army, and I was really doing what I thought I could do well. So I really was not concerned about being Sergeant Major of the Army. I wasn't concerned about not getting it. As far as being disappointed, I couldn't have been disappointed because I didn't expect to get it anyway. I had less service than anybody up there being considered and I knew that was not an asset, because

I knew too that if I got selected, I wouldn't have thirty years even if they extended me a year. I knew that it was an unwritten rule that once you served, you had to go. And I told my wife that. I said, "It don't make a damn." I said, "I could sit here as FORSCOM Sergeant Major for another three of four years and then if we get orders, I can either go somewhere for a year or a year and a half." By that time they had that over thirty selection. I just wasn't concerned about it and I went on with my duties. I purposely did that. But anyway, there were ten finalists. I just don't know why I can't name them. My mind has just gone blank. Probably last week I could have told you all nine of them, other than me, that went up there. But there was ten of us.

Interviewer: Tell me about the selection board.

SMA Connelly: Well I went before the selection board. It was easier than some of the PFC boards. They asked intelligent questions. They asked, "If you were selected as Sergeant Major of the Army, what do you think is one of the most challenging problems that the Army has right now?" In my case, it was recruiting and retention, training, and equipment; those were the major problems. Of course, you had to come up with something how you would deal with that. They asked you questions--maybe--about training. They were the type questions that you were living with everyday. If you were a reader of current events, or if you were a reader of the Army Times or some of your professional magazines, or if you listened to the briefings at that level, you knew what was going on. They were not questions that had a right or wrong answer. They were questions that would give you the opportunity to express your opinion about; there wasn't a right or wrong opinion.

Interviewer: It was to see how you react to questions.

SMA Connelly: That's right. Your military bearing and all that had something to do with it. But you see, you went there already with a reputation. Everybody that was being looked at were working for a major general or higher, probably. I just, for the life of me, can't come up

with that final ten. That just really disturbs me. Those guys I lived with a long time, but I can't think of any of the major commands. I know Frank Wren had TRADOC. We had Donald Devaney that had the CID (Criminal Investigation Department) Command. You had Herb Shedd who had DARCOM (Development and Research Command). Bill Tapp had Korea. You had Ken Tracy who had Europe. Yeah, the fifth man was Walter Kreuger.

Interviewer: Walt Kreuger, from USAREUR.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. Walt Kreuger had a corps then. A few months after that Ken Tracy retired and Walt took his job. So that's the five. It wasn't Herb Shedd. Herb Shedd may have been in the final ten. Bill Tapp, from Korea, was in the final ten. This guy out at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, was in the final ten. On this board that we went up to, they cut it from ten to five.

Interviewer: So they cut it to: Ray L. Martin, Jack Heath, Frank Wren, Walt Kreuger, and yourself.

SMA Connelly: That's right. That's the final five. That was the first time, when I went in for the interview, that I knew that the Deputy Commander of Forces Command was president of the board; General Forrest. So I was surprised when I went in and saw him. I thought I was in a little trouble with General Forrest. General Forrest was a great guy and traveled all the time. He had eleven children. He was a real nice looking man, but he had a bad habit, I guess. Like if you'd go in to brief him, he'd sit at his desk and he'd actually close his eyes after you had talked with him a while, well I guess with my slow talk. I went in to see him one time and he went back like that (NOTE: Sergeant Major Connelly leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes.) and I punched him on the arm and I said, "General. Are you awake? I said, "Hell, I'm talking to you." Hell, I didn't know. I never had briefed him but once, and I woke his ass up then. He got tickled at that. So I said, "Oh my God, here I am. I done woke up the damn president of the board." Before I went in there that morning, I had

been in Chicago visiting Fort Sheridan and the Recruiting Command. They took me through where they bring people in the Army. When we came out of that place, you know how the wind is in Chicago? Boy we got in a dust storm there and I turned around on the street there--I didn't wear glasses at the time--and dust hit me in my eyes and just filled up my eyes. The next morning I had to leave to go down there to go before this board and they took me over to the dispensary and rinsed my eyes out, and everything. They were still giving me real trouble. That day I got into Washington and they picked me up at the airport and they took us out to some hotel way out where nobody knew. That's where I saw the other nine people. We laughed and talked. I looked like I had been on a six week drunk. My eyes were red and they wasn't much better the next morning. We could really tell some tales about that night. That night in the hotel, there were a bunch of kids on tour; a bunch of high school kids in the same hotel. Man, they were running and playing out in the hall, and I was trying to go to sleep. I couldn't go to sleep with all these things I had to do the next day. My damn eyes were hurting. I was in my drawer-tails and I went out the door to stop those kids playing out there. I said, "Damn it. Stop running up and down this hall. Get in your rooms." I said, "It's one o'clock in the morning. Who's the hell is in charge of you kids?" The door slammed and I'm standing out there in the middle of the hotel in my drawer-tails. I didn't care, I just walked downstairs--about two stories--right up to the loddy and said, "Give me the key to room so-and-so. I locked myself out." I had nothing on but a pair of drawers and I go right on back up and get in my room. But anyway, we had that meeting and they cut it down to five. I think it was the next day, we met that day, all day, and we went out to a little cocktail party. Bill Bainbridge, he knew all this was happening but he was quite a guy. He didn't tell us anything. But we had gotten the message that we had to be at the Pentagon the next day at nine o'clock to meet the president of the board. Well, the president of

the board was to call in all ten of us and tell us whether we had been cut or whether we stayed. We did everything alphabetically. I don't think I was the first one to go in on the cut. But anyway, I did go in and when I went in there, old General Forrest was standing up behind his desk. I never will forget. He was the kind of guy that really didn't look at you in the face. He called me by my first name and he said, "Bill, you know, this is one of the hardest things that I have ever tried to do." You know, I felt sorry for him. I was really fixing to say, "Look General, if you're having a hard time telling me that I've been cut, don't sweat it. I'm alright." He said, "But what I have to do, you know I've, I've got to tell five that they haven't been selected for the final. I've got to tell you." He said, "Now, you've been selected as one of the five finalists." I said, "Damn, you sure went around and around the world to get to that. Because I almost told you, hell don't worry about me, just tell me whether I'm been cut or not."

Interviewer: Maybe he was getting even with you for waking him up.

SMA Connelly: Yeah, I was thinking that. But anyway, that was the final five. The way that went after that, I think we stayed up there... I think we left then. That was the end. Wasn't it, Bennie?

Bennie Connelly: I don't know. They called at some point and checked on me, I know.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I guess they did. That's when they got down to the nitty-gritty. Then they had about a ten thousand dollar background check on everybody; on that final five. That included the family and that took several weeks. At the same time, of course, it was every day it's going to be somebody else as Chief of Staff. It was going to be General Vessey one day, then it was going to be General Kreosen. Then the President of the United States calls in General Vessey. At that time Mr. Carter wanted to take the troops out of Korea and General Vessey was opposed to that and he told him he absolutely could not support it. So General Vessey didn't get selected. Then General Myer

was a lieutenant general in DCSOPS (Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations). All the General selection was going on at the same time and the reason they was holding up on the Sergeant Major of the Army was because they hadn't selected the Chief of Staff yet. So they were having this background check. I guess if you got selected as Sergeant Major of the Army, I guess they wanted to wait and check with who was going to be Chief of Staff.

Interviewer: Because the Sergeant Major of the Army serves at the pleasure of the Chief.

SMA Connelly: Yes, that's right. I didn't know General Vessey. I had never heard of him. General Myer I had met one time. I had met him at one of these Reserve Component meetings and I knew he used to have the 3rd Infantry Division. I knew he was a big, tall, young, fine looking man. I knew that he was very religious. Of course, I wondered later if he was very religious, I just wonder what it takes to be religious. I guess you change a little bit when you become Chief of Staff of the Army. Anyway, I guess that's just small talk. I guess what I was thinking, along with everybody else, it didn't make any difference who General Rogers wanted as Sergeant Major of the Army, he was going to discuss it with the new Chief of Staff. Maybe the new Chief of Staff would want to interview. But then they called us and told us all to come up to be interviewed. So I thought, at the time, that maybe they had selected a Chief of Staff of the Army but they hadn't let the world know about it. So then the five go back up there and we were interviewed by General Rogers, who was the sitting Chief of Staff of the Army, who was getting ready to go out of office. He had been named as SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Personnel Europe) Commander. General Kreosen, I knew he was out then because he had been named as the USAREUR Commander. We thought it was going to be General Vessey, but the papers had leaked that he and Mr. Carter didn't see eye-to-eye on troop withdrawals. I guess maybe I had heard about

General Myer. I don't know, but there were some other four-star generals around. So we went up there and we went in for a briefing. Now this is the humorous part. Again, we do things alphabetically. I went in; I was the first one. I went in and sat down and talked with General Rogers. I was very comfortable with him. I had never been in a conversation with him, but I had met him as FORSCOM Sergeant Major and had been in his presence. He was a real gentleman's gentleman. We had a very good forty-five minute talk. We just sat down. He was sitting in his chair and we just talked about the Army. He asked a few pointed questions. He asked me a few questions about my family. Of course, he had a narrative there. Then I came out and whoever was the next one went in there. I'm standing over there talking to Bill Bainbridge, across the hall in his office. As....

(End Tape OH 94.1-5, Side 1)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-5, Side 2)

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, when the last tape ended, you had just completed a description of your meeting with General Rogers. You said you spent about forty-five minutes talking with him, and then when you left General Rogers' office you went over to Bill Bainbridge's office. Do you want to pick up from there?

SMA Connelly: Yes. We were just standing around there, in Bill's office, waiting for the other candidates to get their turn to see General Rogers; four more had to go. As soon as I came out, the second one had gone in there. Bill slipped me this little note and he said, "General Kreosen, who is the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, wants to talk with you. Don't let the other guys see you going over there." Well I told you that General Kreosen had just that week been named as the USAREUR Commander, or maybe it had been several weeks. I went over there. Of course, I had worked for him as FORSCOM Sergeant Major. When I walked in his office, his executive officer and everybody was expecting me to come over, and I just said to them, "General Kreosen

wanted to talk with me." He heard me; he was sitting in there at his desk. He said, "Yeah, Sergeant Major. Come on in." When I walked in he said, "Close the door." General Kreosen was not the type commander that I became... I loved him, but he was not the one that I ever became familiar with or was really familiar with. So I just walked up to his desk and I was standing there, not at attention, but at parade rest; just standing there. He said, "Look." I think that was the only time he called me by my first name. He said, "Bill, I know you're being considered for Sergeant Major of the Army. I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "General Rogers is interviewing all of you today. I don't think you're going to get that job. Well, you know, I've told you I didn't think I was going to get it either. He said, "I'll tell you what. You know I've been named to go to USAREUR." He said, "I'm going to be leaving in a week. If you will go over there with me and be my Sergeant Major, I'll fly you and Bennie over there on the same plane I'm going on. I'll have you a set of quarters there that are as good a set of quarters as a sergeant major could have, if you would just go over there and be my Sergeant Major." In the first place, I didn't think Bennie would want to do that. But it wouldn't have made any difference, really, if I had thought that I wasn't... I said, "I wouldn't mind doing that, but I would like to wait and see how this is going to come out. I don't want to call up for orders now for that." I said, "I don't think it would be right." He said, "I don't think it would be right either. But we'll find out about that pretty quick." He said, "I think we'll know in a few days. If you don't get selected, I want you to do that." Well, to make a long story short, they did finish the interviews that day. When we went back, again they had not named the Chief of Staff. But finally, the President appointed General Myer as Chief of Staff of the Army. Of course, General Myer met with General Rogers. Then Bill Bainbridge called me and he said, "You were General Rogers selectee and General Myer agrees with that. You're going to be the next Sergeant

Major of the Army." That wasn't really until Monday or Tuesday. When I got selected, I was FORSCOM Sergeant Major and I was down in Shadydale at Bennie's mother and daddy's home. On Saturday morning, I don't know, standing out in the yard or something, when General Shoemaker called me at the home there. He said, "Sergeant Major, I just wanted to ask your advice. Who do you think that I should start looking at for my next FORSCOM Sergeant Major?" I said, "You mean you're firing me or something?" He said, "No, I think I'm telling you what you already know. You just got selected as Sergeant Major of the Army." That's how I... It's funny. General Kreosen, he thought like I thought, that Ray Martin was going to get Sergeant Major of the Army. Bill Bainbridge is the guy that knew what was going to happen. Of course, Rogers had worked for four years with Ray. Ray is a great guy, but Ray, a lot of times told you what you wanted to hear. If you ever asked him a question, the damn answer would never stop coming.

Interviewer: I think you've already mentioned it, but what was the length of time between the time that you were selected until they notified you?

SMA Connelly: I think the final decision up there... After this interview that we had--the final five that went in--it was about three weeks, I guess.

Interviewer: Because they were waiting for someone to be named Chief of Staff.

SMA Connelly: Chief of Staff. Then that developed rather quickly. After about two weeks, I think, the word was out in the Army that General Myer had been selected as Chief of Staff. Then I think the "rumor mill" was telling us then that "Well General Myer, he'll come back in there and he'll convene another board and then we'll have to go through all this again." I didn't think that at all. That's an advantage that I had. I just didn't think the "system" worked that way. General Myer, in the first place was going to take that; I didn't know

who it was. General Rogers was his boss and General Rogers had to recommend General Myer to the President of the United States. General Rogers had done the interviewing and General Rogers was going to make up his mind who he wanted and General Rogers was going to tell Myer that's who he would recommend and that's who General Myer was going to take. I didn't know who it was, but I didn't think another board would convene. I'm sure that's the way it happened. Of course, General Myer didn't know me from Adam, but I don't think he knew any of the rest of them either.

Interviewer: What was your reaction when they said you had been selected?

SMA Connelly: Oh, I was just absolutely ecstatic. It dawned on me then, you know because I kept telling myself I really... Well I think I called Bennie up there when I was in the final five. That's when I realized that I might get selected, because of the four that I'm looking at, I knew that I was better qualified for the job than any of those four. Then I said, "It is not as difficult as it was when it was seventy-seven folks. If I've gotten this far, evidently the number of years of service that I've got doesn't make that much difference and I have a better background, with the exception of Ray Martin." Ray had spent a lot of time at Forces Command, but he hadn't spent much time anywhere else. So I called Bennie and I said, "You know, I'm in the top five here." I said, "I think I've got about as good a chance and anybody else." I still wasn't going to be disappointed. But I was beginning to think then that I might get selected. But when they called me and told me I was selected, I mean I can't explain it. In Monticello, over here from Shadydale, I saw some of my friends and told them. Of course, they didn't know what the hell it was. I was happy and Bennie was happy. We knew we was going to have to move to Washington. We thought it was a great thing. Then after I got back to work on Monday, things started. I started getting interviews and phone calls from every general that I have ever known, and every sergeant major that I

had ever known, and people I didn't know, and people that were wanting to be on my team, who had always called me a son-of-a-bitch and everything else. You start getting a lot of friends right quick.

Interviewer: When you got to the job, did Sergeant Major Bainbridge give you any special advice or recommendations, or kind of alert you on some of the problems.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. Yeah, he did. He had been doing a lot that none of us realized. But in our conversations up there, in between going before boards and in the evenings, he was telling us a lot of the contemporary problems with the Army. When I was actually selected I didn't have, I don't think, about two weeks to get ready to move. Bill was going to move from the quarters over to the Soldiers' and Airmen's Home where he had a job, and he was getting out of there as soon as he could. So we arranged it and I came up and spent about a week with him before we moved into the quarters. I went to work every day in the Pentagon and spent all day with Bill. He introduced me to all the people I'd be dealing with. The DCSPER (Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel). He showed me where the executive latrine was. He was telling me about the problems and he had his own things that he wanted me to think about continuing to do. I just couldn't have asked for anything better. The only problem that I thought that Bill left me with, and we discussed it later... Of course he had to do what he had to do, but I said immediately that I would never do it. When Bill left he took everything that was in there. I mean all personnel that was in there left; his administrative assistant left. After I was selected, I had to select an admin assistant. I didn't grow up in the Army to know anybody that was capable of doing that job. He turned me on to a good one, you know, which was Don Kelly. Don was then in USAREUR and I knew him from having been over in USAREUR and I knew him as a young sergeant out at the Sergeants Major Academy when I went there. Everybody said he could do the job. I would not have known who to select, because I had grew up in

the Army in the tanks, in the combat arms, like I said I'd had never called the Department of the Army. I never had talked with them on the telephone until I became FORSCOM Sergeant Major, and I didn't spend a lot of time in Washington, D.C., then. I just didn't know anybody that could handle that job.

Interviewer: So really, most of the institutional knowledge was gone.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. So Don Kelly and I... Don knew a lot of people in MILPERCEN and he came from that mold of people because he had been in that type work. He had been the administrative assistant to General Blanchard over in Europe. He handled a lot of Ken Tracy's scheduling and itinerary and money and all that business. So I said, "Yeah, if he's the best one I'll be glad to have him because I don't know anybody better." Only one I knew that was any better or who could take that kind of job was a clerk--a company clerk--or something.

Interviewer: What about your civilian secretary.

SMA Connelly: Well the civilian secretary. They had one secretary that had been with every Sergeant Major of the Army that they had up until about a year before I got there. Then the secretary had gotten married and left. Raylene was her name. Bill had a lady by the name of "Joy." I can't remember her name, but anyway, she was there and had the job so I didn't have to select one. But she hadn't been in the job about a year. She was a lieutenant colonel's wife and I didn't know how that was going to work out. She wasn't with me but about a year before she and her husband began to have marital problems, I think, and she left. I had some difficulty there. I think I had to select two secretaries while I was there. In personnel, we were lean and trim there then. The only people they gave me was the admin assistant and a civilian secretary. I didn't have anybody else. I was the only one that had that short of crew.

Interviewer: Did that situation remain throughout your tenure?

SMA Connelly: No. It remained as long as Mr. Carter was there. Of course, after two years Don Kelly came out on the list to go to the Sergeants Major Academy. He wasn't going to go but I said, "No." I said, "You know, not after as much hell as we have raised up here about people turning down the Sergeants Major Academy." I had a bunch of MILPERCEN sergeants major and DCSPER sergeants major that had been selected for that. They were some of my best friends and then they turned it down. They said they didn't want to go out there; they didn't want to go through it. They knew they were going to make sergeant major anyway. They just didn't care anything about being a CSM, because they were in the "flat-peter clique," as I call it. I told Don that he was going. I said, "I want you to go, not that I'm making you, but I want you to go with a good attitude." By that time I knew some people. Dale Ward was really as good in that job as--not staring off--as good as Don was. But he turned out to be better than Don, because he was quicker and better educated. Dale and I clicked better together. Then we got another sergeant first class in there by the name of... Oh, what's my favorite. (Bennie remarked, "Fred.") Fred, uh... (Bennie answered, Le Blanc.) Fred Le Blanc. Old Fred. Dale had made master sergeant and then I got SFC (Sergeant First Class) E-7 Fred Le Blanc in there, and the civilian secretary. That's about what we needed. Of course, those guys since then, they've got people working at their quarters and everything else. I'll tell you, I cut my own grass. Bennie cut the grass.

Interviewer: Describe the ceremony when you were sworn-in as Sergeant Major of the Army.

SMA Connelly: We had a very small ceremony for the swearing in. General Myer told me to invite some of my closer friends if I wanted to. He said, "The way I want on this, we'll have a kind of personal small swearing-in ceremony. Then we're going to have parades and everything when we go out of office." So I just had my wife and

one or two of my friends from here in Monticello and their wives, and General Webb. He was working in the Pentagon and I invited him. Then there was the staff. We just had a swearing-in ceremony in the Chief of Staff's office.

Interviewer: When you took office, the Sergeant Major of the Army actually had a three-year term then.

SMA Connelly: Yes, it was a three-year tour.

Interviewer: Then you were extended, right?

SMA Connelly: I was extended.

Interviewer: Give me the background concerning that, and maybe your feelings. Do you think the term should coincide with the Chief of Staff or do you think it should be shorter or longer?

SMA Connelly: I think when it was originally started, I think Bill Wooldridge will bear me out, I think it was... You know, the Chief of Staff is just a two-year appointment. I don't know how long it's been going on, but I don't know of one in recent history that has received a second appointment; a second two-year appointment. But the Chief of Staff is a two-year appointment. When the original selection of the Sergeant Major of the Army was made, I think the rules were "to serve at the discretion of the Chief of Staff; the current Chief of Staff. So Bill Wooldridge served two years and then went out. General Harold K. Johnson was on his second two-year tour when Bill was selected as the first Sergeant Major of the Army. When General Harold K. Johnson left office, so did Bill. General Westmoreland came in and Dunaway... Well, I better not go in to what the others did. Maybe I won't be able to quote that correctly. But it was originally at the discretion of the Chief of Staff, and then later it became a two-year tour. At Copeland's time, I believe it was changed to three years. Copeland served three years. Van served three years. Bill was extended to the fourth year, because General Rogers wanted him, because I think General Rogers was extended a year. Bill was selected for a three-year tour, but served

four. I was selected for a three-year tour, about two and a half year, as it came up to my tour being over, it was not a question as to whether or not you was going to be... I remember the position paper that came out of DCSPER. "Do you know that the Sergeant Major of the Army's appointment will be up in six months? You have the option. If we are going to have a board, we need to start such-and-such a date. You can exercise several options." I saw that position paper. I didn't know what the Chief of Staff was going to do. A few weeks after that, General Myer--he just walks over, he'd walk over to your office every once in a while--he just came in and closed the door and said, "Bill, we're going to have to select another Sergeant Major of the Army." He said, "You know, I've worked hard here to put together a team. I've had to make a few changes in my staff because of various reasons. We've got a good team going and I've discussed it with the Secretary of the Army and we want to keep the team together as close as we can. I'd like to extend you for another year if you want to stay." Of course, I said, yes, I would stay, but I said, "You know, we going to start a precedent that is really going to hurt the Army, compared to the other services. The other services serve two years; some of them serve two." I said, "Two years in this job is not enough. Four years may be too much. Three years is about right." I still believe that. I spent the last six months of my fourth year trying to appear not to be tired. I was absolutely burned-out, worn-out. I had gotten to where I was short tempered with my audience that I had. In many cases, I was reinventing the wheels. I'm going out and some of the problems that we had solved, now it had been three years, and they was starting to come back up again and I'm getting the same complaints, from a different soldier, that I had three and a half years ago. What making this problem come up is because someone hadn't informed him what the hell is going on. I really think that three years is enough. Two years is not enough. Four years is too much. It does, over a period of time, over a twelve year period

of time, and that what it's been now. I served four years. Glen Morrell served four years. Bill Gates served four years. We've cut one sergeant major out; one that will never get the chance to serve. By the time Richard Kidd serves his four years, the Army's got one more man that we didn't give the opportunity to be Sergeant Major of the Army, and that continues to grow.

Interviewer: What were some of the major guidelines given to you by the Chief of Staff when you took over?

SMA Connelly: Before he ever got in the office, he was still DCSOPS. I went down to his office, I think on a Thursday before he and I were to be sworn-in. He was to be sworn-in on Friday and I was to be sworn-in the next Monday. I believe the next Monday was a holiday and I was sworn-in on Tuesday. He was still busy. He was trying to wrap-up his DCSOPS work and fixing to go in as Chief of Staff of the Army, he had a thousand things on his mind. We just sat down in his office and closed the door. He told me, "You know, you and I both came up the same way. We spent a lot of time in the armored divisions and infantry divisions; in TO&E units." He said, "And we know that and we know how it works." He said, "There's one thing that I want to do while I'm in office and I want you to help me do it. The majority of the Army is not in the divisions." He said, "They are all over the world." He said, "I want to visit as many of those soldiers as I can, and I you too." He said, "We've got these artillery units and missile sites..." I didn't even know we had them all. Some of them were in Greece and Turkey, and all over the world. Missile sites, you know; a highly classified business. He said, "I want you to visit those soldiers. I don't care how many work there. When you go to a division, make sure you visit the support sections. Go to the communications and the engineers." I knew what he meant about the combat support and the combat service support. I agreed with that. I didn't know the magnitude of my job right then because I had Forces Command and I hadn't been there two years and I

hadn't got around there yet. So here I am taking on more. He also said, "I know you've been doing a lot of good work with the Reserves and National Guard. I want you to continue to do that. You continue to work with TRADOC and FORSCOM and other Major Army Command Sergeants Major and I want you to conduct yourself, as Sergeant Major of the Army, about like you've been doing." He said, "I want you to write a regulation that gets us in a Noncommissioned Officers Development Program. Don't write the program. I want you to write the regulation that causes Subordinate Commands, Major Army Commands, to write the program." He said, "That's a difficult job. It's not going to be written overnight." He said, "We're going to have a lot of people that will tell us that we don't need it. We're going to have a lot of people that will tell us that we've already got it. We're going to have a lot of people that are not going to tell me, but who are going to tell you that I'm full of such-and-such, because I don't have general officers in this Army that knows what I mean by a Noncommissioned Officers Development Program." He said, "I want something on an Armywide basis like the NCO Development Program that we were trying to put together in Europe, under General Blanchard." I didn't fully understand what he wanted, but I knew that was not the time to start asking for details; I just figured that would come later. Of course, it never did. The details never did come and I did a lot of reading between the lines. I never was particularly satisfied with the regulation that the Army Staff helped me write, but what was finally put in print, I would say that my office--Don Kelly and Dale Ward and a sergeant major down in DCSPER--wrote ninety per cent of the regulation, because I never could get the Department of the Army to understand what I thought the Chief of Staff wanted. Then I thought it would bounce finally, when I sent it over to the Chief of Staff. He came back and he said, "That's absolutely on target. That's what I want. Put it out." I was hoping it would come back with more guidance, because I never did understand it my damn self.

Interviewer: But it got the Army off its butt, I'll tell you that.

SMA Connelly: Yeah, it must have been more effective than I thought it was. I guess I sat down with my stubby pencil and wrote most of it.

Interviewer: I remember when that draft came over when I was at Davison Airfield. I read it and understood exactly what you meant. In fact, as you know, we had a sergeant major of the airfield that didn't think he was supposed to get involved in NCO training. So he said, "I quit." The colonel said, "Good. You quit. I'll move Koehler over here because he's promotable to E9."

SMA Connelly: Yeah, I remember that.

Interviewer: What were your perceptions about what you would do and how you would go about doing it when you first got into that office? I guess you had a lot of soul searching.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I guess I figured, from what General Myer had said, and what General Kroesen had said, and General Shoemaker, and some feedback that had gotten back to me over the past two years, I guess I realized that I had established a pretty good reputation as FORSCOM Sergeant Major. So what I figured what I had to do was to capitalize on those strong points that evidently I was doing right at FORSCOM. I just had to broaden myself as the Sergeant Major of the Army, and I was going to continue to do that, but I had to be a little more discrete about what I was doing. I wasn't going to be able to spend as much time in the club talking about it after we had been out looking at it all day. I knew I had to clean-up my act a little bit. I was hoping that I had the capability. You know, nobody knows how to be Sergeant Major of the Army because no one has ever been one before. When you get the job, the only people that understand the job at all, and what you're going through, is somebody that just left it. You don't have to be four years out. Even that sergeant major that just left it, it's not the same because you've got an entirely different new staff you're working with.

You've got an entirely new boss. When that new boss comes on, he changes your Vice. He changes the director of the Staff and the DCSPER, and all those people. They know they're on their way out when they've get a new Chief of Staff. So you don't have anybody to talk to. Although the Chief gives you all kinds of guidance. "Come across and see me whenever you want to." The Secretary of the Army comes down and shakes your hand and says, "We're going to do fine working together." You think, "What does he mean by working together with the Secretary of the Army. What the hell do I know about working with the Secretary of the Army." So if you don't watch out, you'd get overwhelmed thinking about what you do. I guess I just said, "Well, I'll take it one day at a time." I hadn't been there in the job a week, of course the Chief said he didn't know how to be Chief of Staff of the Army either. He didn't know what the hell the Sergeant Major of the Army. Nobody would give you any guidance. The Chief of Chaplains, on about Wednesday or Thursday, came up and he said, "I've got all of the major Army command chaplains over at the Sheraton Hotel on Monday. I want you to come over and speak to them." Now here I am, I grew up in combat arms, and you know a little bit about me, and my first talk as Sergeant Major of the Army was going to be to all the chaplains in the Army. Talk about cleaning up you act. I was going to have to start. I went in there with no notes because I didn't know what to talk about to chaplains. I don't know what I did talk about. There were one or two things I said there that really cracked them up. I said, "I was a first sergeant about five years before I realized that the chaplain was on my side. I though they were always on the soldiers' that had screwed-up side." I told the chaplains how to work with their first sergeants and commanders. All these chaplains were colonels; they were from major Army commands. I said, "I'll get the word to the sergeants major and the first sergeants throughout the Army that we're on the same side, and it's the soldiers' side." I don't know what all I said. But anyway, I couldn't wait to get on the road. I

just figured when I got out of the Pentagon, I wouldn't be as tight as I was. I never have been a great driver in a city. I still drive a tank. I don't stop at stop signs. I hated driving back and forth to work. I did not like the Pentagon. I had heard so many stories and I had never visited anybody that said anything about "This is the Pentagon. This is where I work." They said, "This is the Puzzle Palace. This is the son-of-a-bitch where I work," or this is something. They never referred to it as anything nice. There were so many people and there was so much work. I wanted to get out and get in the field. I was gone in about two weeks. I didn't come back unless I had to.

Interviewer: While we're talking about traveling, let me address the questions about travel. What percentage of the time were you in your office in the Pentagon?

SMA Connelly: I was traveling sixty percent of the time, if not more. Even when I was in town, I was going out to Walter Reed Hospital to speak to a graduate class; of course, that doesn't take all day. Or I'm going out to DARCOM, or I'm going down to Natick Laboratories, or getting in a helicopter and flying down to Richmond, Virginia to talk to the Rotary Club, or to talk to the chaplains. I'd go over to that Industrial War College there at Fort NcNair, or you're going out to your own post at Fort Myer to look at the company you're assigned to. There are just so few days that you can spend in the office, that's why you've got to have a good group of folks and you've got to stay in constant contact with them. That's what so easy for these guys today. They've got cellular phones that they've got in their briefcase. Hell, we used to stop on the side of the road and use a public phone to call the office to find out what's going on. Or you get in a meeting and you can't be in a meeting without somebody calling you on the telephone. Another thing General Myer told me. He said, "I want your wife to travel with you as much as you want her to." He said, "It is good for the Army for them to see her and it's a comfort for you to have her with

you. It's a comfort for her to know where you are and what you are doing." He said, "I don't want there to be any restrictions on that. She can go with you anywhere she wants to, anytime you want to go. I don't want to see your schedule." He said, "I want you to tell me when you come back, not in an official..." He said, "I don't want you to have to come back to your office and make a written report." He said, "You come in my office every morning when I get all my staff together and you and I will find time to be together." He said, "I don't want any restrictions on you to travel."

Interviewer: That was a departure from a lot of former Chiefs of Staff.

SMA Connelly: Absolutely. I'll tell you what. When a lieutenant general or a four-star general is not commanding something and can't take his wife with him, he gets upset when the Sergeant Major of the Army can take his anywhere he wants to go. The Deputy Commander down at Forces Command, he can't take his wife with him. The division commander can't take his wife with him. A corps commander can't take his wife with him; there are some places she can but there are some she can't. But I could take my wife to a sergeant major's funeral in Wewokaswitch, Oklahoma if I wanted to. If I was going down there and it was official business for me, I could do that.

Interviewer: Believe it or not, it is hard for those people to realize that your protocol level is a little bit higher than their's.

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. I never did know exactly what that was. You know, General Myer never discussed that protocol. I think that the Chief of Staff, General Rogers, I think he got some flack from generals over that. I think Van Autreve and Bill Bainbridge really did move to develop that protocol. Those two followed each other; Bill Bainbridge followed Van. They set that up, but I think in doing it, they made some generals mad and General Rogers got some flack about it, but he stood by the Sergeant Major and he said whatever that protocol was...

See, I didn't know those arguments then. I didn't know the scuttle butt that went on before you went somewhere. But if you were going to Eighth Army and you've got, say a commanding general of one of your armored divisions at Fort Hood, for example, or Fort Lewis, or somewhere, who had to take care of some business over there in Eighth Army, as Sergeant Major of the Army I got a better set of quarters than he got. If I'm in those quarters and a lieutenant general comes over, I don't move out of them; I stay in them. Now, he wouldn't move out of them either, and he could out-rank me out of them. I never did read all that stuff. I told my people, I said, "Let's don't get wrapped around the axle on that business." I used to tell my people this. I said, "Don't let me become a controversial Sergeant Major of the Army. We don't need that and the Office doesn't need that. I don't want some general officer coming up with that." I said, "When you get that reputation, then they start looking at your travel pay and everything." I said, "Don't you ever let me put in anything at all erroneous on travel pay." See, the instructions that came out about my wife traveling with me everywhere I went, the first trip we made together they paid my wife TDY pay. I went down to get about three or four hundred dollars; whatever her travel pay was. I ended up with three or four thousand dollars. They were paying my wife the same thing they were paying me. The lieutenant colonel at finance said, "These where my instructions." He said, "This is what my boss told me it would be. That's what everybody in the office said." I said, "Well damn, I'll just have to talk to your boss." I said, "I don't think General Myer knew that. He said to take my wife with me when I traveled. He meant that you buy her ticket and that her lodging would be paid for, but they aren't paying her mileage and they're not paying her per diem like they are me. He didn't mean that." I didn't go back to General Myer, but I had to go back to the Executive Officer, who was then Colonel Burber, do you remember him?

Interviewer: Yes.

SMA Connelly: He became a four-star. That's who the Executive Officer was; General Burber. But anyway, we had card blanche there to travel.

Interviewer: How often did Bennie travel with you?

SMA Connelly: If I said I was on the road ninety percent of the time, I'd say she went thirty percent of that time with me; about half the time. Every trip that I made overseas, not every trip, but I used to go to Europe once a year for about thirty days--three weeks to thirty days--and she'd go with me. She'd go with me to Korea. She went with me to Hawaii one time, and all over the United States. She did a lot more traveling that most little Georgia gals, and any of them from Shadydale.

Interviewer: I guess she made quite a few speaking engagements also.

SMA Connelly: Well, yeah. Bennie used to speak out at the Sergeants Major Academy. She'd go to Europe. One day, that morning at eleven o'clock, she'd have a luncheon with the officers' wives. She'd speak to the officers' wives at lunch. The next day with the NCO wives, or vice versa. That evening she'd visit the Community Center. She was a volunteer and knew more about that than some of the people that wrote regulations. She was a lot of help to people there. She was becoming pretty good on the speaking circuit herself.

(End Tape OH 95.1-5, Side 2)

(Begin Tape OH 95.1-6, Side 1)

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, when the last tape ended we were talking about the role of Bennie. You said that she got to be a real speaker on the speaker circuit and that she accompanied you on many of your trips. Tell me about Bennie's role when you went out to visit. I know you said she spoke with a lot of the wives, etc. She became an extension, really, of your office didn't she?

SMA Connelly: Absolutely. It got to the point after about two years and some of the verbal reports that I made to the Chief in some areas like "Women in the Army," the barracks where they live, and some of the items in the PX (Post Exchange), and those things that they didn't have for women, and when it came to some of the orphan homes in Korea, and some of the problems in Community Services, General Myer came up with the idea that maybe on some of the trips that Bennie would meet with the.... I'm trying to think of the agency that worked out of DCSPER that the Army Community Services and all that's under the portion of the MILPERCEN group over there. If she could meet with those people and give them some of her ideas. Of course, after a trip my office would make her an appointment with the people in the AG's (Adjutant General's) office and who ever the colonel was that was in charge of the Army Community Service. I can't think of the title of all those places now that had to do with the Army Family. She would meet and tell them about what she learned on a certain visit. There were some problems about the grade and rank of the people that we were hiring. We were hiring more people in Army Community Service and she had some ideas on that. She became a source of information. On the way back from a trip, when I was trying to get in my mind what she had seen and what she had done, some of those things that she'd tell me about I would tell the Chief of Staff.

Interviewer: We had a question concerning the family programs that the Army came up with. I think that one of the questions was concerning... I'm trying to find it here in my guide. Yeah, here it is. It's concerning the family policy and the support system. One of the questions here is, "Would you assess the effectiveness of the family policy and the support system and how important is that program to the soldier today?

SMA Connelly: Well, it's becoming more important. You know, about the time I was in there, it was when we started realizing that we

had about fifty-five percent of the Army married. Maybe that percentage has changed some, either higher or lower; I don't know. Particularly we were beginning to realize that a large portion of our specialist four and below were married. I didn't coin the phrase but the old term came up that "You recruit a soldier, but you re-enlist a family." So some of the things that a family looked at is your schools that you had, and your recreation facilities on-post, and how the new family that was coming in was supported, or if you got domestic problems in a family, how those problems were taken care of by the Army; if the Army is going to take care of its own. Bennie became interested in that, and of course, I was interested in it. I visited those areas and would find out things and I, quite frankly, would ask Bennie to look at those places, and so did the Chief of Staff, to put a woman's touch to that. Of course, a lot of the information that she got, too, was from the officers' wives and noncommissioned officers' wives and enlisted wives, because they would talk to her better about those problems then perhaps I could talk with them about. Along about that time, we did have, under my tenure as Sergeant Major of the Army, the first "Army Family Symposium." My wife was one of the front-runners of that and was there the day we had the first one. We've had them periodically ever since. It's grown into a major part of what the Army does; taking care of the family.

Interviewer: Now that you have the opportunity to go back to the Major Command Command Sergeants Major Conferences and keep in touch with what is going on in the area of the Family Policy and Family Support System, have you been able to sit back and say, "I think these are the areas that need to be improved?" Can you think of any areas in the current system that you might think need improving? One of them that comes to mind is the way that the Army handled the large number of dependents during Operation Desert. Large units were activated leaving a large number of dependents back at a certain military installation and

the problems the Army had coping with the support of those dependents.

SMA Connelly: Well, yeah. I've been to a lot of those briefings since then. As you know, I'm co-chairman of the Chief of Staff of the Army's Retiree Council. Quite frankly, we are discussing, and will be discussing more in detail in March, that a resource the Army has that we did not develop at that time, but it certainly was a good resource that we have failed to tap, is the number of retired people that we have and to call on them to render their support on occasions such as that. Even to the extent, not that we, as retirees, would want to be paid for that but it may be a requirement to pay their travel to a location in case of an emergency, such as Homestead Air Force base down there when it was blown away. Maybe your retired people can render a lot of support to those things. I think that the lessons learned from the Gulf War and the fact of what that does do to families, unfortunately there's going to be more opportunities for that to take place again, because of the very dangerous world we live in. I think that the retiree and a better plan as to how we would do that again should be explored as a lesson learned. Even though they did a great job with it during the Gulf War, I think we could do a better job if it was better organized.

Interviewer: Would you include the spouse of the retiree as a team?

SMA Connelly: Absolutely. Because no one understands what they need better than the spouse. You know, we've got more people drawing retired pay than we have people on active duty receiving active duty pay.

Interviewer: That's right.

SMA Connelly: That's a resource that we shouldn't forget. If we could get close together it may give us a better speaking voice in the Congress of the United States.

Interviewer: I think also, you have a lot of those retirees that would be glad to be of assistance in that area.

SMA Connelly: They'd be glad to be a part of it.

Interviewer: Was Bennie included in the official government and military functions that were held in Washington?

SMA Connelly: Absolutely. She received almost every invitation that I did. When we went, the protocol, the seat was provided with her name on it. In fact, they can do that better in Washington that they can do at some of your local places. The smaller the post, the more that they may be likely to forget your wife.

Interviewer: Was you and Bennie invited to the White House by the President? If so, to what type functions did you attend?

SMA Connelly: No, I don't think we were ever invited to the White House. I went to the White House once or twice myself with a military contingent, but we were not invited to any official function of the President.

Interviewer: Sergeants Major Dunaway and Copeland were invited to prayer breakfasts by President Nixon. I was just wondering if you were during your tenure. Jimmy Carter was President at that time, it that correct?

SMA Connelly: Yes. He lives just down the road and he never has invited me to his house.

Interviewer: He didn't invite you to the big house, so why should he invite you to the little one. Also, as far as the family, you only had Bennie up there because your daughter "Carol" wasn't in that area. What did Bennie do to cope with your heavy travel schedule when she couldn't go with you?

SMA Connelly: Of course, Bennie has always been the type of woman she didn't have to have me around to be entertained. She got involved in the Community Service: she worked in the Community Service. You know, there are about seven funerals a week at Arlington Cemetery and the wives of the Sergeant Major of the Army get on a list to attend. She was one of those ladies, along with some general officer wives, that attends

the funerals and presents the flag to the next-of-kin. Those duties she continued while I was gone. She was always involved in some meeting pertaining to military families. Of course, there was the Army Community Service that she worked at on a regular schedule, and the NCO Wives Club that she was instrumental in getting started and keeping alive. There were several of the major command sergeants major wives that lived there on post and they did a lot of things together. Being occupied and having something to do while I was traveling with her was not a problem.

Interviewer: While you were in Office, I'm sure you received a number of complaints from the field that were sent to your office. Do you feel that a lot of those complaints that you received from soldiers could have, or should have, been handled at the lower command level?

SMA Connelly: I'd say that ninety-five percent of them should have been handled by the commands. I don't blame the commands for all of those things that got forward to my office. Sometimes you could tell from the letter that they just wanted you to know about it and that the command had already given an answer. Many times the answer wasn't sufficient to that person, as far as they were concerned, and they wanted to tell the highest headquarters about it. I didn't let those things get under my skin much, because after all, that's what the Sergeant Major of the Army is for. To represent the soldier at the highest level and I wanted them to feel free to let me know. I saw to it that one never got in trouble by writing me or complaining to me and what ever way. I got some onymous letters, too, about various things. Even those I looked into, in my way. I didn't go across the hall and get it into official channels, however, some of them I had to. But it's just like a soldier going to an IG (Inspector General) and ninety-nine times out of a hundred it's because the command didn't give him the proper answer. You've got to give them an answer that they can live with. Now I know you've got some that

no matter what you tell them, they're going to run the full swing. I've had people take a taxi cab from the airport and go out to the Pentagon. Somebody would get him up to the Sergeant Major of the Army's office and he's standing right there in front of my admin assistant and telling him, "I've got orders to Germany and I don't want to go." You get hold of his command and the command says, "Hell, he signed out of here three weeks ago and he's supposed to be over there." But you can't stop something like that.

Interviewer: About how many complaints do you think you averaged a week or a month?

SMA Connelly: A hundred.

Interviewer: Is that in a week or a month?

SMA Connelly: A month. Your staff can handle ninety percent of that by telephone. A lot of them they could handle themselves right there, over the phone because some of the things a soldier is asking he could have found out in his unit, if he had asked, but for some reason he didn't ask. A lot of people just wanted to talk to the Sergeant Major of the Army. I've had soldiers walk in the office and say, "I heard you speak over in Europe and I'm stationed here in Aberdeen Proving Ground now. I'm on a three-day pass and I just wanted to come down and see where you work." I thought that was great that a soldier feels the freedom in the Army to do that. I was Sergeant Major of Forces Command and I didn't even want to go to the Pentagon. I was afraid that somebody would ask me something I didn't know.

Interviewer: How often did you receive Department of Army briefings, and normally, what information did you receive during those briefings? We're talking about either regular scheduled briefings or possibly special ones that you requested from MILPERCEN, DCSPER, etc.

SMA Connelly: Well daily, General Myer--I don't know if all Chiefs of Staff do--at eight o'clock General Myer had his principle staff in, if he was in town; he spent more time in town than I did, because he had

to. He had a meeting at eight o'clock every day and that was with the principle staff; eight or nine of us went in there. Every day that I was in town I went to that meeting. He sat away from his desk in the outer portion and he'd take his seat. He was not a guy that had a particular seat. He would sit down wherever he wanted to. He'd prop his feet up on the coffee table, I don't care how nice and polished it was, and completely relax. If I came in the door first, I sat in a certain seat. I'd sit to his right or sit to his left. He would start off the meeting. Maybe he'd say, "Well, what have you got, Sergeant Major?" Then I'd start it off. Maybe he'd start on the other side. "What have you got, General Thurman?" Then it would come on around. My usual talk with him would be about a recent trip. I gave just the highlights. I wouldn't give him a detailed briefing. He put out a lot of guidance there. He would tell his staff certain things. We always had the Legislative Liaison General over there. He brought us up to date on the political aspects of certain bills that were going on and how Senator So-and-so or Congressman So-and-so thought about a particular bill. Maybe DCSPER was going to be getting a call about a certain policy that we have. Or Senator So-and-so would like a briefing on a certain piece of equipment. It would take about an hour or an hour and a half, depending on how much time he had. Sometimes the Secretary of the Army would come in to the meeting. So that took place every morning. Then we had a weekly, I believe it was, the Army Policy Council which the Secretary of the Army conducted; I had a standing seat there. I went to that every time they had it when I was in town. You always got... Even though it was set for a certain day, the way things run there you can't set anything. There's always something more important that interrupts it, so you have to reschedule it. You were always notified in advance when it was. I was told by the Chief of Staff of the Army that any briefing... He said, "I don't have a briefing that so classified that you can't go to. Any briefing that I go to, if you want

to attend, just tell my staff." I didn't have to go over and ask, "General Myer, can I attend this briefing?" That not the way I did. I'd just tell the executive officer, Colonel Burber, "I understand that they're going to be talking about the M-1 Abrams tank today with the Chief of Staff. I would like to sit in on that." He'd say, "Sure." When I got there, there was a seat for me. The Secretary of the Army pretty well gave me that. I was always treated professionally there, at those meetings. I always felt that I was free to give my opinion, or my advice, or a lot of times I would just listen. At the end, as a matter of courtesy, the Secretary of the Army, who was conducting the meeting or who was the principle at the meeting, he would say, "General Myer, do you have anything to add?" "No, sir." "Sergeant Major, do you have anything?" "No, sir." "Anybody else?" Then the meeting would end. You could spend a whole day, every day, in the Pentagon going to meetings. Particularly if you had card blanch like I did. I could attend any of them that I wanted to, and if I didn't attend them, no one ever told on me.

Interviewer: You said something earlier that was quite interesting about your relationship with the Chief of Staff where you could just walk in and sit down and talk to him, particularly after a trip. He didn't require a formal report, right?

SMA Connelly: He made it a point to tell me that he did not want me to spend my time making formal reports. He said, "I know how it's going to work, Sergeant Major." He really was telling me something. He said, "If you were to sit down and write an official report. Then you took it over and turned it in to my XO (executive officer), he going to read it and he's not going to understand half of it. So he's going to get the staff down here to find out what you mean. And then one of them are going to have to come up and find out really what you were trying to say. He said, "Hell, the subject will be forgotten by the time I got your report." He said, "So just don't write it. You come over here

and you tell me what you want to tell me, and I'll give you an answer I want to tell you, and it's between you and I. If we decide, while we're talking, that it ought to be looked into by the staff and we ought to have more information gathered about it, then I'll task it out to be done." He never forgot that. It's worked that way on a number of things. Just like I was telling you about the National Training Center. I came in and told him some things about that and he tasked them out. Some heads rolled about some things that were going on there that he hadn't been told about.

Interviewer: You just mentioned the National Training Center. You were telling me, during one of our breaks, about that. Why don't you go ahead and elaborate on what you told me during the break about that.

SMA Connelly: The first time I heard about the National Training Center, believe it or not, I was with the Seventh Army Training Command. They were talking about Fort Irwin in the Mojave Desert. I just thought, "That ain't worth me listening to." Then when I get to Forces Command that was one of General Kreosen's main projects. You know, several of those commanders wanted that to happen on their watch. What we were talking about there was an international training center. We were going to have a training center in the United States where, for the first time, the Air Force could drop bombs on, the Navy could shoot their guns and make the shells fall right there, and we were going to be able to train the armor, infantry, and artillery like in live combat, shooting live ammunition, with targets that record hits, and all this business that was so far removed from what I thought would ever happen. It was so high tech that I didn't even want to listen to it, because I didn't think it was going to happen. In the first place, I thought it was about like "Star Trek," the movie. But the closer I got to the end of my military career, the closer it got to being "fact." Before I got out, it was "fact." Here, almost twelve years later, it's even more so

than I had thought it would ever be. But, by the time I got to Forces Command with General Kreosen, I had been out there by then. I think I made a trip with him, or maybe General Shoemaker when he was Commander. We looked at the ranges and got briefings in the main building there, where they controlled all these targets, on how it was to be scored, how the attack phase would go. They were really testing the Air-Land Battle tactics and manuals that they had written. They were testing them with high tech equipment. For a lack of more knowledge on what it was, it was a computer battle. Of course, General Kreosen had told me several years before, "Now one thing you're going to have to watch here,..." I just heard him say it. I don't think he s particularly said it to me. "...we're getting all this done out here and we don't have a school house here. We don't have a chapel here. We don't have a PX. We don't have barracks for soldiers to live in. We don't have quarters for our families. And it's forty miles to the next Coke machine. I hope somebody at the Department of the Army is looking at that." That wasn't Forces Command's responsibility. We were working with the tactical side of that, as was TRADOC. That other part belonged to the Department of the Army. Well, you know, I get to the Department of the Army--I'm not in Forces Command then--and I'm not going out there and seeing what all they were doing, but I never did forget that. When I became Sergeant Major of the Army, we were moving in our first troops out there to test the equipment; we were permanently assigning people. I went out there and looked, and sure enough, we had a little old PX annex there that wasn't much bigger that my dining room and den here; it was all crowed up. We still didn't have any quarters. We still didn't have a chapel. We just hadn't done that. As Sergeant Major of the Army, you sit on the PX Board and the Commissary Board. Then they were trying to send soldiers out there that wasn't married. You know that will never work. We know it doesn't work and I got into the personnel assignment. I'm talking to sergeants major and first sergeants down

there that were having all kinds of problems with troops. I said, "Did anybody check the records on these troops?" I said, "Get the AG Sergeant Major over here. Get me fifteen records, E5 and below." "Here, top, you take five. Sergeant major, you take five. I'll take these five. Let's go through them." I'm looking at their records and they've got three of four Article 15's. One was not but twenty-nine years old and he had been married three times.

Interviewer: A dumping ground, huh?

SMA Connelly: Dumping ground. A dumping ground is the first thing that pops into your mind. Well, MILPERSEN was sending those people out there. Of course I don't know what happened when I was at Forces Command. But again, I'll never forget it. I'm the Sergeant Major of the Army and I go out there and I ask, "When is this chapel going to be open, General. Do you know." "Well, it was supposed to be open soon but they slipped that date to such-and such." I said, "Have the people said anything about a PX?" "Well, they were going to build a building but now it's going to be a much larger Quonset hut." You know, you just don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure all that out. I had been there too many times. I had been to too many temporary places that gets built as temporary and never becomes permanent. The longer my trip was, the madder I got. By the time I got back, I just unloaded. I just unloaded on the Chief. I said, "The damn Department of the Army is not fulfilling their part of this deal." I said, "We're going to have ranges out there that are second to none in the whole world, and we've got folks living in a damn base camp." Well, I'll tell you what, some damn heads rolled. But I wasn't privileged to all that, but there were a lot of people who knew who started it. I'll tell you, we had DCSPER, THE DCSPER, THE G3 (Operations), THE Department of the Army personnel folks. We had the "principles" in logistics, and everything there to find out about these things. As it turned out, it took a major effort to get that part of Fort Irwin, California caught-up with the ranges. I

know that I was instrumental in that happening, because that's a long ways from the Department of the Army. You send a Department of the Army staffer out there, he knows these things are going to happen, but he doesn't know when it's going to happen. I know that if it don't happen now, it's going to be too late. I'm not blowing my horn there, but that place out there took a lots of growing pains and a lot of people were beat over their heads and shoulders about that place. It took Major Army Commanders to make that place happen out there. But I still say, having said all of that and having improved it from what it was about to become, it's still lacking; they still don't have a school out there. I think that a lot of it is because of California law. But I believe if we put the right people there, we could get the law changed.

Interviewer: You had a chance to go out there during "Operation Desert Storm" when General Vono recalled the former Sergeants Major of the Army, right?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. They took us all out there and there has been a tremendous improvement. They had all their equipment. I just think it is absolutely the best training that you could have. I have never seen more professional sergeants major, noncommissioned officers, and officers out there. It is certainly not a dumping ground now. There are some highly professional people out there, and as the soldiers' say, "That may not be the end of the world, but you can sure see it from there." But most of the people enjoy their tour out there. They leave them out there a couple of years, and most of the senior NCOs that leave from there get good assignments.

Interviewer: Now that you had a chance to go out there and look at the National Training Center, do you think that realistic and intensive training at Fort Irwin has improved the combat effectiveness of the Army?

SMA Connelly: Absolutely. I think it had a lot to do with how well we did in the Gulf War. If it's not good, we must be doing

something wrong, because there isn't anything better. It is absolutely the best training vehicle this Army has ever had, in my opinion. As long as we keep updating it, I just think that, you know, like the next war, we have got to continue to put more battalions through that thing and that's got to be an on going thing for the active Army. We ought to be able to do that even better because our army is getting small. I know that we are sending some Reserve and National Guard units out there, too. We've got to find time to put more out. I don't know what they're going to do about "Round-Out" now. As I understand it, they'll have "Round-Up," instead of "Round-Out." For example, in this particular state of Georgia, maybe the 3rd Brigade of the 24th Infantry Division, stationed in Georgia here, would be called up on active duty at the time the rest of the division is sent to a war. Then they go out there for intensive training, for about ninety days, and then join their unit. I don't know how that concept is going to work, but I think that we need to employ National Guard and Reserves by unit as much as possible. If we're going to call them by unit, we should keep them by unit, then we should fight them by unit, and we should certainly train them by unit. We should send them out there and train them, then they will be up to speed.

Interviewer: What do you think was the major problems that the Army faced during your tenure?

SMA Connelly: Well, during my tenure, in the beginning, our major problem was accession and retention of troops. Of course, maintaining a quality force and equipping a quality force. I came along at the time when we had to have some new equipment in the Army. Our infrastructure was in bad shape. We had spent some lean years. We had, what our Chief of Staff had described, as a "Hollow Army." A Hollow Army immediately meant to me... I could remember those years when you had seventeen tanks in a company and your TO&E called for ninety soldiers and you didn't have but sixty, and you were still trying to maintain tour

seventeen tanks. When you wanted to go to the range to fire, you'd get cooks, mechanics, first sergeants, clerks, jerks and everything else to go down range. I don't want to see us have a Hollow Army again. I know that we're going to draw-down the Army, but we ought to draw-down an Army in accordance to the people that we have. We ought to be able to draw it down without it becoming "hollow." In other words, if we're going to draw it down to a damn squad, it ought to be a full squad and it should have all its equipment and resources to maintain it. I would say that getting people to come into the service, and keep them in the service, that was a major problem, I guess and, recruiting the force; maintaining the force; equipping the force; and the force structure. We were lucky on that the whole time I was there. We had started to make a big difference in recruiting; we were meeting our objectives. I think my first year, it was something like less than fifty percent of the Army that we were recruiting were high school graduates. Then it moved up to fifty-four percent, and it moved up to eighty-five percent. I think it got to over ninety percent. I think, since then, we did as much as one hundred percent. You can see it. You can see it in the airports. You can see it in the bus stations. I can see it as I travel around the United States now. You can see that we look better in our uniforms. Our soldiers conduct themselves better in public. A few of them smoke. I don't hear as much profanity. They look sharper in their uniforms. And they appear to be proud of what they are. If you talk to one of them in the airport, he's very glad to tell you what unit he is in, and he knows a little about the unit. You ask him how men are in the unit and he knows. You ask him, "Do you have any discipline problems now? When was the last time you heard of somebody going AWOL (absent without leave) from your unit?" He'll say, "I don't think anyone has ever been AWOL in my unit." Hell, we had AWOLs in the Pentagon while I was up there.

Interviewer: Did you ever get a chance to testify before any

congressional committees?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. Yeah, I testified before several. It got to be an annual thing. I think I went before the Senate Armed Service Committee once. I got called by a number of congressmen, not just from my state. I got them from several states and they wanted to discuss the the noncommissioned officer leadership in Europe; that was one in particular. I went over and had an hour session with Congressman Nichols from Alabama. I had Senator Nunn contact me on several things, and Newt Gingrich. Yeah, I went as the Sergeant Major of the Army before several committees and my counterparts of each of the services went before committees several times a year.

Interviewer: Who normally prepared the briefing or got the information for you?

SMA Connelly: Well, when you get something like that, it's not just the Sergeant Major of the Army, any general over there that gets a message that they want him to come over to brief a certain committee, that's high priority news. You've got to let the Chief of Staff know and you've got to make sure what this general is going to say and it's the same thing as the party line is. "Don't embarrass the Chief because the Chief said something about this three weeks ago in his briefing." So you've got Public Affairs and you've got the Legislative Liaison folks...

(End Tape OH 94.1-6, Side 1)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-6, Side 2)

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, at the end of the last tape, you said that anytime that you had a briefing, of course you got the Public Affairs people involved and the Legislative Liaison, to ensure that what you were saying was the same that possibly the Chief of Staff had said a week or two before, or to make sure there is continuity as far as the Chief of Staff had put out. Why don't you continue on with that.

SMA Connelly: What I'm saying, really, is when anyone had to go

over to the Capitol, the flag went up. A nerve was struck. Of course, no one got that call except general officers, and it was always about a particular subject. We may have a colonel in a particular spot when they had asked for just A BRIEFING on something. We may have a colonel or something that is better informed. But anyway, everybody got concerned about it. Well, the Legislative Liaison said one morning at a meeting that they wanted the Sergeant Major of the Army to come over....

(**NOTE:** The interview was briefly interrupted by a telephone call. After his conversation was over, the Sergeant Major listened to the recording so he would know where the interview was interrupted.)

SMA Connelly: All right.

Interviewer: Yeah, go ahead.

SMA Connelly: I think the Legislative Liaison had told them one morning, at the eight o'clock meeting, that they wanted the Sergeant Major of the Army to make a briefing. I don't know how soon it was. No, it was to come over and testify on barracks construction progress and what have you. Well, I was on a trip. I think it was about a week or so when I was supposed to go over there. As well as I can remember, as it was told to me later, the Chief said, "Well, when is the Sergeant Major due back?" I think he said it to Colonel Burber. He said, "I don't know, sir. I'll check across the hall." He did, and of course they alarmed my people. "The Sergeant Major has got to appear before congress." He got hold of me, wherever I was. I said, "Hell, I'm going to be back Friday. I don't have to be there until Thursday." He said, " Well, I think that they think you need to come on in because they've got to get it all squared away." I said, "Well, I think if they really want me the Chief of Staff will call me, or tell Colonel Burber what I said. If they think I ought to come back on in I'll just cut the trip short and come on back. But I would rather not do that because I've got a schedule and they plan for me to be here."

I said, "I'm giving a talk that I'm already scheduled to be there." I don't know what it was but I said that I'd rather had not come back. So when he went to Colonel Burber, and Colonel Burber immediately went in and talked to the Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff said, "I think the Sergeant Major is right. When he gets back here Monday morning, I'll talk to him and by that time we might have a little more information. See if you can find out more about whatever he's got to talk about." And then I did come on back. Then I had everybody and his brother in the Pentagon that had anything whatsoever to do with any kind of construction, they wanted to get me to talk about it. They wanted to tell me the status of it and they wanted to make sure that they didn't get their ass in a crack. You know, that's what I loved about General Myer, he knew all that stuff. The Public Affairs, I mean the brigadier general, he was up there with pad and pencil, with his staff; he wanted to know what I was going to say. I said, "General, I don't have the foggiest damn idea what I'm going to say." I said, "I need point papers. On anything that these guys are talking about, just get me a talking paper, a point paper on it and I'll come up with it." I go in to the Chief that morning at the eight o'clock meeting and I said, "I understand that I have to go over there, sir, and I understand that the staff is going to help me." He said, "I'm going to talk to you later about that." When that meeting was over I just stayed back. He said, "Bill, don't let them give you a damn statement, a printed double-spaced statement that you rehearsed and know how to read and continue to make eye contact." He said, "I don't think they want that. I don't have to worry about what I said two weeks ago to get me in trouble. I think that you and I know we need the barracks according to the plans that we have. We got so many troops still in temporary barracks. We got so many at Fort Bragg and down at Fort Polk. You know the things that we have discussed." He said, "Just tell them with the same emphasis that you come in here with me about and get pissed off and

say 'God damn it, you've still got soldiers living in the same barracks you was living in thirty years ago'." He said, "Don't piss the Staff off. Let them do what they have to do, and get the point papers." And I did. I went over there and I did a good job. I know I did a good job because the Secretary of the Army got a call, and the Chief of Staff of the Army got a call. Hell, everybody was talking about it, and it was in the Army Times. You know, I'm not smart enough to get scared. I'm smart enough not to lie, though; not to congress. I was smart enough to know that I didn't have to know how much it cost and many of those things. I was selling that we didn't need "pie in the sky." "What we need, if we were going to recruit the best soldiers in America on the streets of the best cities in America, and you have given us the money to do that and you have given us the money to advertise that, now we need the money to take those good soldiers that we've recruited and we need to put them in barracks and give them the quality of life that's commensurate with the society from which they come. We need it at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. We've still got troops living in World War II barracks that some of you lived in, probably as privates or whatever you were." I said, "In some of those building that we don't inhabit troops there now, we still have offices in them. We still have Department of the Army civilians in them. We still have ladies working there that have their own heaters that they brought from home to keep their feet warm. We need our infrastructure and we need barracks. We've got to modernize." Just like we were talking about out there a while ago about equipment. If you're going to have all these fine things, you know, that's the way I approached it. Now I had, at the time, all the statistics in my mind. What percentage of our troops on various posts who were still living in World War II barracks. I said, "I don't know anything about the plan, the Five Year Plan, or what's going to take place or the status of where it is now. I just know that it's not completed and I know if it was completed tomorrow, it would have been

ten years too late." That's the way I went over there and that's the way I was expected to go over there, and I got those people's attention. No, I didn't leave with any money and we still have troops living in those barracks. But it taught the Department of the Army Staff something, and it didn't mean that you could send the next general over there and do that. But it did mean that Sergeants Major of the Army are not supposed to act like generals. I was supposed to go over there and tell them like it is. That's why they asked me to come over there. They got tired of listening to generals. I went over there one time, on another occasion, and I got some good credit for handling that well. The first guy, he was a congressman out of Maryland; an old fellow. He was really pissed-off about the hostages that they had and the big reception that we gave them when they came back. He said they were victims. They weren't heroes. Hell, I agreed with him one hundred percent but I didn't tell him. Well, he started off that morning, I think some general must have made him mad. He said, "You know, Sergeant Major. Is that what they call you? Sergeant Major." I said, "Yes sir." He said, "Sergeant Major, we come over here all the time and the generals tell us how the soldiers are doing. They tell us all about the problems and all about the problems of the soldier and with the soldier and everything." He said, "How about you telling me a little bit about these damn generals we got. What kind of men are they? Are they any good?" I think he said, "Tell me about those officers." I said, "Well, yes sir. I think by in large they are." I said, "I think we've got a good education system for our Officers Corps. I think they know the intent of an army and the spirit of the regulations and the intent." I said, "I think they're going to make it fine." He really liked that.

Interviewer: You put it in his terms.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I went over there and I think the Sergeant Major of the Army goes over there often now. I don't know if I was the first one to go over there or not. But I know that after that... Well,

Bogin was one of the guys from this state. Bogin was running for governor of this state and I was one of the ones he contacted to come to work for him is he got elected governor.

Interviewer: What was your relationship with the Secretary of the Army? You had two, didn't you?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, two. I got along with Secretary Clifford Alexander very well. Mr. Alexander was not as relaxed in his job as Secretary of the Army, I don't think, as Secretary Marsh was. And I don't think that Mr. Alexander, of course he wasn't working for the administration that Secretary Marsh was, and I think Mr. Alexander felt that the military could help solve more of the social problems in America than it was doing. Although I individually and personally got along with Secretary Alexander well and every time I asked him to speak to the Major Army Command Command Sergeants Major, he always did that and he always gave us an excellent talk. I didn't make any trips with Secretary Alexander, but I was asked upon occasions to make them with Secretary Marsh. Secretary Marsh and I got along real well. He understood the Army. You know, he was a retired colonel--a lieutenant colonel--I think, in the Virginia National Guard and all of this family was military. He was quite a history buff, particularly on the Civil War and the Revolutionary War, and just history in general. He often asked me my opinion of things that were somewhat out of my ballpark, but he wanted to hear my opinion of it. He never said that he liked my opinion or disliked it, but at least he listened to it. When he had some association with an enlisted member of the service or received a letter, he never turned it over to me to solve but he would always make me privy to what his answer was going to be, what the question was, and he always did that in a way that wouldn't get the soldier in any trouble. He asked my opinion about people that he met on the road. If he went to a certain military installation and saw things that may not be exactly in his ballpark or something that he wanted to attack or find out more,

he would come to me and say, "On your next trip down there, but don't make a special trip, would you look into such-and-such for me, and come back and tell me about it." I always did that. And sometimes it was on something that he wanted to fix and he fixed it, in his way. I know that I never went to the Secretary. I never had to go to the Secretary for anything, but I did go to him when I was going to retire from the Army. You know, any time you go anywhere in the Pentagon, you're in a hugh line. And I know that the Secretary of the Army's mess is close to the Secretary of the Army's office, therefore it's close by. But I wasn't a member of the Secretary's mess. That was for, I think, three stars and above. I don't know exactly who is a member, but I knew that they made a wonderful ham sandwich. You could eat breakfast there at certain times. It was a quick place to go. It was always difficult for me to eat lunch in a short period of time when I was in the Pentagon. So I went to him about a week before I retired and I explained this problem to him. I asked him would he think about making my replacement a member of the Secretary of the Army's mess, and even give him the privilege to invite a reasonable number of guests in there sometimes when he's got a sergeant major that is visiting him, or anyone of some reasonable importance, to go in and have lunch with him. He said, "Why didn't you ask me this before?" I said, "Well, I didn't want to do it during my tenure. I figured that probably that you would approve it but I didn't want to put that on your plate. I knew you had enough." He said, "I certainly will take it into consideration. I'm disappointed that you didn't ask me before." I didn't tell him, but I had talked with his aide about five times to mention it to him. I told the aide I didn't want it to start during my tenure because I didn't want him to think that I wanted it necessarily for myself, however it would have been a tremendous advantage. I hadn't been retired two weeks when he wrote me a letter, here in Monticello, and told me that he approved that. That's still standing procedure up there now.

Interviewer: Did you normally go up to his office or did he stop by your office or was it a combination of both?

SMA Connelly: I don't know if I should tell this on Secretary Marsh. He was having problem quitting smoking then as I'm having now. He couldn't smoke at home and he'd make it through most of the day up there without a cigarette. Finally, when he had to have one, he would just walk down the hall and walk in my office, with trembling finger, and close the door and get a cigarette off my desk. He'd smoke it and we'd sit there and talk. He walked down a lot of times, on a Friday afternoon, just walk in and close the door and say, "How are you doing, Bill? Where did you go on your last trip?" He always liked a good joke. I'd tell one every once in a while. I thought he was a great guy and I still do.

Interviewer: He was Secretary of the Army for quite a while, wasn't he?

SMA Connelly: He became Secretary of the Army when Mr. Reagan came in and he left out several months after Mr. Bush went out of office, so that's twelve years. He was there twelve years.

Interviewer: What about the Secretaries of Defense during your tenure?

SMA Connelly: Well, I met Secretary Wienberger and that was primarily because of Secretary Marsh. I think it was on pay. Well, I had written an article in the Soldiers magazine, the Green Book, or something, about pay. Mr. Wienberger mentioned it to him and Mr. Marsh said, "You don't talk about the Sergeant Major of the Army." He told me, I said, "I told him you got all your shit in the same rucksack." So I think he got me the first appointment. I went up to see the Secretary of Defense and we sat in his office and talked with him just like you and I are talking. It was supposed to be for thirty minutes but I was there forty-five and I had all kinds of people as nervous as hell. Particularly after he got up and closed the door and there weren't any

strap-hangers in there with us. Then after that... I forget what we call that guy that rotated by services. We had a lieutenant general that coordinated all service problems. I forget what his title was, but he handled some things that pertained to all of us, like pay, certain benefits, travel, and those things; he coordinated that. He got together all of the Senior Enlisted Advisors of the services: the Sergeants Major of the Army and Marine Corps; the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force; and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. We went up there maybe, twice annually. We'd just go in and sit in a circle around the Secretary of Defense's desk. He would talk to us about our problems. The main things that he was trying to get at was some of the problems that affect all of the services and that he thought he ought to look into. Of course, we always told him that we thought he was doing a good job. But we would meet a day or two before that so we all would pretty well be on the same frequency, where we didn't waste time with what we were saying or that there was not a duplication of it. We worked it out between ourselves as to who would discuss this problem and who would discuss this one. It always worked fine.

Interviewer: When you were out on the road, did you normally take one of your administrative assistants with you?

SMA Connelly: Most of the time. Yes.

Interviewer: Most of the time was it Don? Don Kelly.

SMA Connelly: When I had just Don, he went with me all the time until we realized that was getting him out of the office a good bit. Of course, that's also when we realized that we needed somebody else. I think we did get Fred Le Blanc up there before Don left. Then I got to where a lot of the trips I made myself, depending on what kind of trips they were. If I was going to have to do a lot of travel connections and some coordinations like that and we had some main projects that we were looking into where we had to make periodic calls back to the Pentagon, I'd take him with me to help me sort out all of

that. But if I was just going, say down to a military installation to visit the installation for two days and speak once or twice, I'd just go down by myself, or sometimes my wife went with me.

Interviewer: Did you call back to the office every day?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, I called back every day, or Don would call me. We tried to work it out. He knew my schedule and we both had "Red Lines," as we call it, in our homes so he could call me at home at night when he thought I would be in my quarters. And at that installation that I was visiting, they kept track of me all the time and knew where I was. I don't know, but I think the military police or CID knows where you are all the time.

Interviewer: How did you determine your travel schedule? Where you would go? When you would go?

SMA Connelly: A lot of it was by request. Then some of it was to look into certain areas that I wanted to, so I could get the best picture of it or information about it at a particular post. But I never was able to go to all the places that I was invited to go to. I never was able to visit all of the places that I needed to visit.

Interviewer: How was your interaction with the National Guard Bureau and OCAR (Office, Chief of Army Reserve)?

SMA Connelly: I had excellent communications with them, and not just with their chief Sergeants Major. I worked very close with the generals themselves; General Walker of the National Guard and I can't think of the general from OCAR, but he was originally from California; his name slips my mind right now. I saw them in a lot of meetings and we talked and of course their sergeants major were at most of the conferences. They traveled a lot too and were at most of the conferences that I talked at and I always included them in the meetings that I had. I always felt that I have a very good working relationship with their offices in the Pentagon and with their sergeants major. I always knew that they were a part of our Total Army and I treated them that way.

Interviewer: Who was the Sergeant Major of the National Guard Bureau? Was that Don Ingram? Was he there them?

SMA Connelly: Yeah, Don Ingram.

Interviewer: Cornelius Boykin had OCAR, right?

SMA Connelly: That's right. I worked with both of them and they were both outstanding sergeants major.

Interviewer: I guess when you went out on the road whenever you could you tried to visit your Reserve Component units.

SMA Connelly: Oh, yeah. Even as Sergeant Major of the Army, I continued to have a working relationship with the Readiness Region Sergeants Major in Forces Command. I did that in conjunction with the Sergeant Major of Forces Command. Like the Sergeant Major of Forces Command, we would meet, say in Boise, Idaho. He would be out maybe a few days before that and I would come out and he and I would fly to a couple or three of the states out there. He may have something out there that he wanted to show me. Then, of course, it was good for me to be able to see it. That was one reason why I kind of picked up that I didn't have to have a staff follow me, like taking Don and Dale out of the Pentagon. They always had a lot to do back there and that office was getting bigger. People were depending on it and wanting opinions on certain position papers; it was more and more every day. I told the major Army commands that if I'm visiting your command, I want you to take care of me; help me by giving me somebody that can take notes for me, and they were glad to do it.

Interviewer: So that allowed your staff to concentrate on the office work.

SMA Connelly: Yeah, concentrate on what was at hand. You take some young, bright staff sergeant or sergeant first class that works over in AG or somewhere, he looked for the opportunity to spend three days with the Sergeant Major of the Army. I'd get to know him and get to know his family. Sometimes I would talk with him about his own

career. It was good for them and they always did a good job. If they didn't do a good job, I didn't tell him. He always thought that he did a good job, whether he did or not.

Interviewer: I don't think I asked you earlier about your normal routine when you were in the office in the Pentagon. I think you said you started the day with the Chief of Staff meeting. Is that Correct?

SMA Connelly: Yeah. And after that Chief of Staff meeting, I handled my appointments. I had an appointment calendar that listed my appointments. The whole time I was out of the office, of course my people knew that if I was going to be back on Friday, I would be in the office on Monday. Maybe I had called somebody on something that needed an answer on Friday, they would give me that at the airport when I'd come in. Sometimes I go straight to my house and use my phones. I had phones at the house and I'd make a lot of phone calls there. Each morning at ten o'clock, after the meeting with the Chief of Staff, maybe my schedule started at nine thirty and I'd have somebody from DCSPER who wanted to brief me on E4 promotions, or whatever. I usually had a basket full of stuff and they wanted my opinion on something. By that time, whatever the position was, my staff had given me a talking paper they had researched and what their opinion was. If they didn't know it and if it was in the DCSPER, they would have talked to the DCSPER Sergeant Major, or if it was under promotions they would talk with whomever they needed, but they had a little narrative of what was the guts of this paper they were trying to get my opinion on. Then maybe I would ask them a few questions. Maybe sometime I would ask them a question that they hadn't explored, and while they were getting that, I would just jot down something like "I think we ought to go with what you've got here in Part B on your paper, but include such-and-such and such-and-such." Maybe in the next hour or two it would be back to me with the position I would sign and send.

Interviewer: Did you get a quick reaction from DCSLOG (Deputy

Chief of Staff for Logistics), DCSPER. etc., once you sent a paper down there for either their action or information?

SMA Connelly: I could not have asked for a better response. Of course I am sure I didn't get as quick a response as the Chief of Staff, or the Vice Chief, or even the Director of the Army Staff, but I bet it was as quicker than anybody else received; I was the next one in line. I sat on the Uniform Board and a lot of other boards there. Every board that I sat on the Principle Staff Officer sat on one of those boards, and a lot of times a question that I was asking pertained to something that Principle Staff and I had in common. I had established a rapport and they knew me well enough to know that I wasn't trying to get the information for me, personally. They knew it had something to do with what the Chief of Staff wanted, or they knew that some commander had asked for it. After a while when you work with somebody up there, you know personalities. If I knew that paper had gone down there, maybe if I met somebody in the hall or saw the general in the latrine, I said, "General, I sent a paper down there on such-and-such and such-and-such. I sure would appreciate that getting your attention when you get back down there and if you could punch it up a little." "I sure will." Hell, I've had the Executive Officer call me back and say, "Sergeant Major, you got my ass hung this morning." I said, "Damn, I sure didn't expect to do that. I wasn't trying to get you into trouble. I don't think that got you into trouble." I don't think the general sent down there and said, "Damn it, there's a letter down here from the Sergeant Sergeant Major of the Army. Why didn't somebody give it to me." You'd be surprised how sensitive people can be. You know, the Sergeant Major of the Army in the Pentagon, he carries a lot of weight. That's what you have to watch in that job. You can't just casually drop names. You can assassinate someone up there if you get to talking about them. I never said anything derogatory to anybody about anything because it could be taken the wrong way.

Interviewer: Let's face it, who else had the ear of the Chief of Staff.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. I used to say, "When you select the Sergeant Major of the Army," like I said before, "nobody knows how to be the Sergeant Major of the Army." A year after a Sergeant Major of the Army goes out of office, he doesn't know how to be Sergeant Major of the Army under that group that he's in. But you've got to pick a guy for that job that doesn't necessarily know how to it, but who is ever selecting, you've got to find a man that has the capability to grow into it within a reasonable length of time. It doesn't mean that he has to be smarter than any other sergeant major in the Army. You just have to have a man that can handle that and grow into it, and you can't get a man that let's it go to his head, and you can't get a "Yes Man." If you get a "Yes Man," you don't have anything. You don't have what the Chief of Staff wants. Hell, I've had the Principle Staff to come in and say, "Sergeant Major, General Myer is dead set on doing this, that, and thus on such-and-such a project." He said, "Sergeant Major, we just can't do that. This is the reason we can't do it." He said, "You're the only one that can get to him and tell him that he's going to have to back off of it. It just can't be done." Then I said, "Now wait a damn minute." I said, "General Myer doesn't like to be told he can't do it." I said, "If he can't do it, who in the Hell in the Army can do it?" I said, "I've got to have more than that. I'm not going to go in there and tell him 'you can't do it'." I knew that general emotional enough to know that he don't want me to go in there and tell the Chief he can't do it. I'm really picking him; I'm trying to learn more about what he's talking about. Sometimes I've gone in there and kind of took a "dumb boy" attitude about it. I say, "You know Chief, on this problem, I was talking to some of the commanders out there." I might tell a white lie. "They think that we've fixing to do something up here on such-and-such a problem and they're reluctant to come to you

about it. Is there anybody on the Staff I could tell to have a different look at that?" You know, sometimes I changed him on it. And sometimes he's told me, " No. God damn it, I've got some up here on the Staff that wants me to change my mind, but I'm not going to change my mind." He said, "Whoever is pumping you full of crap, you'd better tell them." General Myer was no damn fool. It's a matching of wits up there, I'll tell you.

Interviewer: Let me ask you some questions reflecting back on your military career, and some of your observations, and later on, your opinions. When did you first make the decision to make the Army your career, and how did you arrive at that decision?

SMA Connelly: Okay, I've got a good one on that. You know I told you that I was turned over to the draft, because I didn't go to the National Guard meetings. I came into the Army because I had to. I was there and I wasn't there three months before I liked what I saw. Then when I went to Germany, I just thought that was great. Going over to Germany, that was the first time I had ever been out of the state of Georgia, except on my class trip to Florida. I thought that soldiering in the field and that maneuvering and that tanking and that firing was just right down my alley. Then I gyroed back with that unit and by that time I had about six years in the Army. I didn't have to worry about promotion, because I was already higher than most people that had been in there for twelve, fifteen, or even twenty years. I wasn't disappointed in that, but I just felt that I was at a dead end. I wasn't going to get promoted; somebody had to die or retire for me to get promoted. I was having some marital problems at the time, also. I had always wanted to be a mortician, so I enrolled in Mortician School in Cartright, Tennessee; I was fixing to get out of the Army. I was working as an apprentice with a mortician in downtown Columbus. I had gone to Savannah, Georgia to a mortician there--Fox and Weeks, which is still there--and I could serve my apprenticeship with them if I went to

school under the GI Bill. The only requirements then that you had to have to be a mortician was to have at least a high school education, which I had. I also had about three years of college. So that's what I was going to be; I had made up my mind. I had even gone to the Transfer Point and I was waiting to be discharged and would be in the school in two weeks. Then the Lebanon Crisis, in 1958, broke out. My unit was selected to go over there, and I was going on the advance party. They wanted me to go up on main post and report to Post Engineers to learn how railhead tanks and attend Air Mobility School, and to give classes on how to do that. They told me if I would reenlist they would make me First Sergeant of the unit and send me on the advance party to Lebanon. My battalion commander and company commander told me that. I really gave that some serious thought, for about forty-eight hours. Then I decided that maybe the Army is what I want. I was really having reservations about leaving it, because I did like the Army. I just thought that, for that time, I had turned down going to OCS (Officer Candidate School). Then this Captain Johnson had talked me into taking that Series 10, which I had taken and passed it. I was going to put in for a reserve commission, concurrently with active duty. About the time I got ready to do that, they eliminated that program. Then I put in to go to OCS and they said, "Yeah, but you've got to wait until your tour in Germany is over. You can't put in for it until you get back to the States." So when I got back to the States, they moved the age limit from whatever it was, back. By that time I was too old; twenty-six, I believe it was, or twenty-seven. So I missed out on that. I was kind of disappointed in the Army and wanted to stay, but then I said, "Well, yeah. I'll do all of that." Of course, the only thing that I got out of that deal, out of all of those promises, I did go up there for that Air Mobility School and I did teach classes, on main post, to a bunch of "hob-nobbers" on how to tie-down and load aircraft and all that business. I became an instructor up there for

about a thirty day period. Then they pulled us off alert. That was about the time that our stabilization period was over, and the next thing I knew I was on orders to go to Furth, Germany on my second tour, as a platoon sergeant. I had just reenlisted for six years.

(End Tape OH 94.1-6, Side 2)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-7, Side 1)

Interviewer: Continuing our discussion. Sergeant Major, what was one of the most difficult decisions that you had to make as a command sergeant major?

SMA Connelly: I think, probably, it was to be instrumental in relieving a fellow command sergeant major that I thought a lot of, and that I thought was a good sergeant major, but he just had gotten into something that he couldn't get himself out of. I couldn't help him and I couldn't support him; I had to be against him. I had to tell the Commanding General that he could have gotten out of it if I had supported him, but I could have never lived with myself if I had of supported him, and I don't think he could have lived with it, not with me knowing what I did. I went to him and told him that I wasn't going to support him and I was going to see the Commanding General. I told him if he didn't put in for retirement, I was going to break his back. I had to do that.

Interviewer: What about the most difficult decision you had to make as the Sergeant Major of the Army?

SMA Connelly: I could get myself in a lot of trouble here, but I think the most difficult was to openly support, in good spirit, having women in the Army in the number that we have. I was wrong, fortunately, but I thought that was going to ruin the Army.

Interviewer: Why don't we just continue that part of the discussion. Over in the section of this outline, under "Observations," one of the questions is "What effect has the increasing number of women in the military service had on the Army?"

SMA Connelly: I've often said, and I don't know why I didn't think of these things before because I guess they had to prove it to me, but what has made our Army better is that I think now you have a true reflection of society in our Army. We've got some good people. We've got some bad people. We've got far more good people than we've got bad. We've got minorities of all classes that are doing a good job, and that includes women. That gives us a truer reflection of society, and that's what an army ought to be about. But I thought that women in the Army would take out the masculinity of the Army. I will never forget the time when I had a guy on the plane tell me once, that he was so proud of his son because he was in the Army, and what all he was doing. He would get out in the yard and he would tell the neighbors about what his son was doing in basic training, the training he was getting, how many miles he was running, and everything. He said a family moved in next to him and he was bragging to them about his son. They said, "Yeah, we've got a daughter in there doing the same thing." He said, "You know, I never went to a neighbor and said it again." He said, "I figured if this man's daughter could do it, anybody could do it." That always stuck with me. That's when we were having a tough time, and that's when I told the Chief of Staff, when he asked me one time, "What percentage of women do you think we need in the Army?" Do you know what I said? I said, "I don't think we need any women in the Army." I said, "The damn society might suggest that we should, and maybe we should. But God damn, we sure don't need them." He said, "Damn, I hope you don't say that publicly.

Interviewer: But you've seen things change thought.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. But things have changed. They've cleaned up the Army a good bit. They taught us a lot about race relations, equal opportunity, if you will. Through a lot of hard knocks, I think the Army is further advanced than any other institution on sexual harassment and those things. And they did convince us that women can

do certain jobs. They can do some jobs better than men. Now I think I would rather have women in some jobs than men. But I thought the way the Army was going about that, that it was going to destroy the Army. It was difficult for me to muscle-up enough guts to get out and publicly say that, and express to the women that we were glad to have them. I guess I'm a male chauvinist; I tried not to be. Even though I did it, but I was lying to myself. My principles could not bring me to fully support that and I can't, until this day. I think there are more problems. The taxpayer will never know what it costs and they still can't do the damn job. Nobody can convince me that they can. I know a damn woman can fly a helicopter over the enemy and punch a button and shoot it, but if she's living when she hits the ground, she's in big trouble. I try to stay away from it. But to openly and freely support that when I was Sergeant Major of the Army. . . . . that's when it all came about. . . . . that was the most difficult thing for me to do and still hold my head up.

Interviewer: How have you seen the role of the women in the Army change over the years?

SMA Connelly: Well, when I came in the Army I never saw a female soldier. At Fort Knox they were up on main post. I guess they worked in some of those offices up there; in AG. Most of them were administrative people at higher headquarters; post headquarters. We didn't even have them down at brigade level then. They were all in administration, nursing, logistics. They were far removed from me. I never saw a female soldier. I knew we had them. If I saw one, she was in civilian clothes at the club and I didn't know what she was, and didn't want to know. I think maybe we did have some in Third Armored Division Headquarters when they had in the AG classification, but I think that was run by main post. I said I never seen one, but I guess I saw a few. I came up in combat arms, and like I said, most of the time in a bastard tank battalion somewhere. I never saw a real woman

in the Army until I was a brigade sergeant major, right there in Erlangen.

Interviewer: Do you have any comments on possibly some changes you feel should still be made concerning women in the Army, based on the information you from the news, etc? There's a move afoot right now to open a lot more of the so-called non-combat jobs, but a lot of them can put them in grave danger.

SMA Connelly: Well, it looks like I'm against society. I still don't think that's going to work. See, it never stops. I'm still saying that anybody that thinks a woman can perform in combat is wrong. In the combat that I've seen, bullets that were fired and missed me, hit some of my friends and they died. And bullets that had missed me, some of the men that I was in-charge of died. I don't think that our society should put women in that position. Anyone that thinks a woman can perform in the combat that I look at as combat, simply has never been in combat. I don't think a woman can go through that. You could see right there in the Gulf War, God damn, we had one truck driver that was missing about three days and we had everybody in the United States upset. They wouldn't have even mentioned it if she hadn't of been with that dickhead that she was riding with. Maybe I'm just an old fogy, but I think that if we increase it any more, and if what we've got is working, why change it. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. We're letting a few women, and a very small minority of people... We've even got women thinking now that they can play in the National Football League, and somebody going to try it some day. They're trying to but together a baseball team out there in Colorado. But maybe I wrong. They have done better than I thought they would do. I don't think it has weakened our Army and you can say that by what happened during the Gulf War. But I'll tell you, I don't think that the generals and the knowledgeable people and the people that know as much and more than I know about women, they are just... But see, I can't criticize them, because I

didn't have the guts to do it either when I was in the Army. I didn't figure that it was my place, but I couldn't support women in the Army then and I can't support women in the Army now, not in any magnitude whatsoever. I don't think there ought to be as many as they've got there, but there certainly shouldn't be any more.

Interviewer: What did you find most rewarding about being Sergeant Major of the Army?

SMA Connelly: Well, whether anybody else knows it or not, I left the Army thinking that I had made a difference. I got a lot of gratification in representing the "total Army" in many meetings. I got a lot of satisfaction out of being the one that got more ribbons on a soldiers' chest. There were three of four there that I did everything but design myself. I'm proud of the fact that I almost completely eliminated the specialist ranks. I just think that to have the opportunity to serve the soldiers in that capacity, and do the best you can, I'm just glad that I had the opportunity to do it and I feel that I made a difference for the average soldier that comes into the Army every day, and those that are still in there.

Interviewer: What did you find most frustrating?

SMA Connelly: For things not to happen fast enough. The Army is just so big and the bureaucracy is so big. There's not a soul that would tell you, that knew anything about the military, that the weight allowance shouldn't be increased; that your travel pay shouldn't be increased; that COLA (Cost of Living Allowance) should be maintained; that we don't have adequate medical facilities to take care of even our active duty and dependents; and all the things that we have deceived the soldier about that everybody that is anybody knows and agrees that it ought to be changed, and we just can't change it. The frustrations that you have with not being able to get off the dime on some things, I guess was the most frustrating think that got me. Why does it take so damn long to change the uniform, or why does it take so long to do what

everybody wants to do?

Interviewer: You learned to see what the Army bureaucracy is like.

SMA Connelly: Yeah. What is really frustrating, I guess, and confusing is once you get up there and learn that, and these things are happening, you can even understand why. Why should you have to understand it? I don't know what answers the others are giving to those things, but that's the best I can give.

Interviewer: Where there any goals that you failed to accomplish and when you looked back you said, "Maybe I could have done that."

SMA Connelly: Yeah, I wish that I had the ability to be more sensitive to a person's dilemma that raised when he or she expresses the problem, and I know that problem is there because it was meant to be there and although it might be confusing to them, it's best for the Army and it's not going to ever change--there's no need to change it--and someday you'll have enough experience to understand that it shouldn't be changed or is not going to change. I never had the ability to listen to that long enough and pass it off as "Well, we're going to look into it. We're going to try to change it." No, I didn't do that. I said, "The reason we don't change it is because we don't want to change it. It shouldn't be changed. If you had the experience that some day you will have, we wouldn't have to change it." I didn't have that ability. I thought that Bill Bainbridge was great at that. I was too honest, I guess. I never will forget. I sergeant asked me once--when we were pushing education, pushing education, pushing education, and he had a degree--"When do you think the Army will ever accept a noncommissioned officer that has just as good an education as an officer. When do you think we will ever be respected and accepted for our education as the officer does? I said, "I don't think we ever will be." I said, "If you want that kind of reception, you ought to become an officer." I said, "There's nothing wrong with having an educated noncommissioned officer, but if you've got an education to be treated

and have respect as an officer, while you got your education you should have gotten a commission." I didn't know what he wanted to hear.

Interviewer: How has the role of the Sergeant Major of the Army changed over the years?

SMA Connelly: I've interviewed Bill Wooldridge and the rest of these guys. I know them all and I've sat and talked with them over the period of years as long as you and I have talked over the last couple of days. I think we were all confronted with the same problems, of course at different eras. We had different Chiefs of Staff, and different generals and different people that we dealt with. I think the Office of the Sergeant Major of the Army has become more complex over the years. It requires a larger staff to do what it has to do, but I think that probably Dunaway and Copeland had a larger staff during the Vietnam War than maybe we got, or maybe they have now. I think the role of the Sergeant Major of the Army is about the same, but I think Bill Wooldridge and George Dunaway established the Office of the Sergeant Major of the Army, and that Copeland maintained that establishment, plus went through the early rigors of the "All-Volunteer Army," and did a great job of that. Van Autreve and Bill Bainbridge maybe established the Office as an institution and a place in the Pentagon of knowledge inherent to the Enlisted Corps, and put the finishing touches on the Noncommissioned Officers Education System. I continued the institution which was established, and the transferring to the "All-Volunteer Army," and the institution that Bill did, I think I continued that institution, and pioneered the incoming of the new equipment. I think Glen Morrell continued those same things and I think Bill Gates and Richard Kidd have taken an Army that was well trained and highly equipped and made them proud of themselves. I think we all did a good job in supporting our Chief of Staff as what was prevalent during his tenure, in our roles as the Sergeants Major of the Army.

Interviewer: Originally it was intended that the Sergeant Major of the Army be an advisor to the Chief of Staff. Do you think that now that Sergeant Major of the Army sitting there has more influence at places like MILPERCEN, DCSPER, DCSLOG, etc., and is look upon as an advisor to more than just the Chief of Staff of the Army?

SMA Connelly: That's right. That's what I mean. The first two established the position of the Sergeant Major of the Army. A lot of people didn't want that.

Interviewer: Right.

SMA Connelly: They did good jobs in it. Regardless what people want to say about Bill Wooldridge, I know what he did as Sergeant Major of the Army and I know what kind of Division Sergeant Major he was. The Sergeant Major of the Army's Office has been institutionalized as a source of information. You've got Major Army Commands, you've got Department of Army staffs, and you've got a lot of people that come to that office and come to that Sergeant Major of the Army to get his professional opinions about things they are interested in. We seem to always have a Sergeant Major of the Army that has the ability to grow to that and the three years of his tenure is really spent supporting the Army. He's a Principle Staff and he's got a big part to play in the Army, and they play it well.

Interviewer: We were talking earlier about the importance of NCOES, and you said how you were involved up at Fort Knox. I think you said you got involved with the Advanced Armor Course, is that right?

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: Give me an evaluation of enlisted training before NCOES and under the current system. What is good about each, or what bad about each?

SMA Connelly: Of course, the few schools that we had in the Army before NCOES, I think all of them were good but they weren't standard. If you had a division NCO school, it was cutout for that division. Some

of them were actually learning the Division SOP. There's nothing wrong with that, but a lot of that was how to shine shoes and brass and how to look like a "tin soldier" or a "toy soldier." Hell, you ought to be able to do that in the unit. Of course, a guy who never did go to any of these schools... I went to more that some of my predecessors did, but the Noncommissioned Officers Education System is a "system"; We never had a system before.

Interviewer: In other words, now we have a structured education system.

SMA Connelly: That's right. We had a spotted, sporadic education to teach those soldiers that we could afford to do without in our units; we would send them to school. Sometimes I think we had it go give other people in the Army a job. But now we have a structured educational system that progresses all the way to the ultimate, and it's working. You don't have to be in the Army even to know that it worked in the Gulf War. You know it works when someone like you get the job that you've got. You see sergeants major get out of the Army and they're doing everything from teaching school to Chief Executive Officers of large organizations. They're bank presidents and they're a lot of things, and the Army helped them get that. They got a lot of that through the structured education system.

Interviewer: Earlier we were talking about leadership training and how that has changed over the years. During Vietnam, because of our large turn-over of NCOs, the Army adopted a program to train some newly drafted enlisted men, right off the street, to be fire team leaders and also to be squad leaders. They sent through basic training, then they trained them as squad or fire team leaders, and then they sent them directly to Vietnam to, supposedly, operate as fire team leaders and squad leaders. We called them "Instant NCO" and some people called them "Shake and Bake." Give me your opinion of that program and what do you think were the advantages and the disadvantages? Also, how did that

program affect the Army during the Vietnam War?

SMA Connelly: Well, you know that the young men that we put into that position did a tremendous job, but we got a lot of them killed too. It's the Army's fault and it's the Congress' fault for an army to get into a position where it has to do that. That's what your "Hollow Army" is. You should never have to put the soldiers in "harm's way" that way. That's almost as bad as we did in World War II. We didn't have enough rifles for people; we trained them with sticks. We had aircraft dropping flour sacks for bombs. But that squad leader puts himself in a position to get other soldiers killed too. I don't have a better solution, at the time, but to do that. But we, as an army, ought not to have to do that. We ought to be able to see our needs sooner and convince the Congress sooner that we need to have a trained force before you send a man into combat.

Interviewer: We were also talking, during the break, about unit training. We were comparing unit training in the National Guard. During Vietnam we had a big training problem.

SMA Connelly: Yeah, we stopped training during the Vietnam War.

Interviewer: When we came out of the War, what do you think was our biggest challenge as far as revamping our training to get it more in line with the needs of the Army?

SMA Connelly: Well, it was the quality of the force. We didn't have a quality force when it ended. We had lost control over a period of years. Then when we wanted to start, we had enough leadership structure that knew what we had to do, but by then, we didn't have the money to do it and we didn't have the equipment to do it. Before we got that, they said "If you're going to have an army, it's going to be a volunteer army. Well, then we had to jump out of a war into having a entire volunteer army. We've never had once since when, the Revolutionary War? We didn't know how to do that. The damn Congress of the United States is the one that is responsible in the Constitution

for raising an army. They didn't do it and they didn't let the military leaders do it. The military leaders rolled-over, played dead, and stuck their heads in the sand. That would have been the most vulnerable time for Russia to jump on us, and they would have kicked the shit out of us, you know it?

Interviewer: That's right.

SMA Connelly: I hope we never get ourself in that position again. But we might do it again. We're the only army in the world that I know of--there may be some now--that the noncommissioned officers actually lead people into combat. We don't pay enough attention to that. And to have to "instantly" train a noncommissioned officer that going to lead your soldiers that your draft--your sons and daughters--that you draft out of the cities of America and give them to an untrained noncommissioned officer to take into combat, I think that's damn murder. That's what the most civilized, most industrialized country--the United States--has done, and we've done it more than once. If we don't watch out, we'll do it again.

Interviewer: Once you cut down the size of your force and you have to react to a situation, sometimes your pressed into that type of action.

SMA Connelly: We were teaching that fire team leader and that squad leader, that so-called "Instant NCO"... I don't like to call them that because that's more personal and it was not their fault. In fact, it was nothing but their bravery that did it. To train them in however long it took us, it's just like taking a National Guard unit that untrained and sending their ass to war; you know they aren't trained. We did it and was proud of it. Hell, I've had those squad leaders in my outfit in Vietnam. Shit, I could have hugged their neck and I could have done a lot of things. I can remember when one of those bullets that missed me hit that soldier. You picked up that nineteen year old fire team leader or squad leader and he's bleeding out of his ears, his

nose, and his mouth, and in a gurgling voice he tell you, "If I had to do it over, I'd do it again;" that ain't fair. That ain't fair, but that's what we did to the American soldier, and these sons-a-bitches here don't know it happened.

Interviewer: Starting shortly after World War II, we started integrating our military. I think you could say that the Army has been on the "cutting edge" for social change, etc.

SMA Connelly: Yeah.

Interviewer: Give me your assessment of the Army before integration and then after integration.

SMA Connelly: Well, I just think that we were absolutely, the Army in particular--the military--we pioneered equal opportunity and race relations. I think it's made our Army stronger by integrating. It goes back to what I said a while ago, with the women. I think we still have about the same percentage wise of Blacks and minorities in the Army that we have in society. I may have bitterness about women in the Army and it's not because they're women, but it's because they're in a profession that I don't think they can perform in combat in. But I think that our integration went well for a good purpose, and I still think it's good. You can get right to putting gays in the Army. If we want an army that's truly reflective of society, then we will have gays in the Army. We've got them now. We just don't know who they are and we're going to be directed not to find out. I don't think that's going to destroy the Army. I think soldiers will take care of that. I don't know if you've had the opportunity, but I'm living here in a small town where I grew-up with Blacks; a lot of Blacks. I spent thirty years in the Army and I may have had some prejudice feelings in the Army when I first came in, but I saw our Army institutionalize or pioneer race relations and equal opportunity. I have seen some great Black soldiers and I've had some real fine friends that are Black. It may have taken several years in the Army for them to get that way, but it has improved

a lot of white people too. If all of society can do as good a job as the Army, this would be a better America to live in. But I come back to this town, and this town is more prejudice than it was forty years ago. They haven't progressed that far. They aren't as open with it, but they are more sincere in their prejudice, and they mean it more than they ever did before. But the Army has been on target and that's why I can't understand why I can't live with the women in the Army, because I know that I kind of speak out of both sides of my mouth when I say that I think the Army ought to have what is a reflection of our society, but women just can't perform in combat.

Interviewer: We always have people that almost make their living studying the change in demographics throughout the United States. How do you think the changing demography of the United States has affected the Army, as far as the makeup of the various ethnic groups and the social-economic groups.

SMA Connelly: I think that it's probably made our Army better, because the Army, again I use my term "the Army should be a reflection of what's in the civilian world." Then, if you have an army that is a reflection of our society, then you get more support from that society. Most any article that you read, when they talk about racism and prejudice throughout the country, most of them will tell you that--with the exception of the military--we haven't done much. I think that is one reason that we get support from our society and our Congress. It's because we do pretty good with all the different type people we have in the Army.

Interviewer: How do you think the quality of the soldier has changed over the years?

SMA Connelly: Oh, I think it has changed tremendously. The Army used to be made-up primarily of the South and it wasn't middle income; it was lower income. It was people looking for a place in the world. I think now we are getting our fair share of the best quality of people

that are graduating from the high school and the colleges. I think that we've got a quality of force better than we ever had before.

Interviewer: What affect do you think the transition to an All Volunteer Force has had on this change in quality?

SMA Connelly: I think that it has been good. It has been good for the reasons that we have discussed before. They gave us the money to do it and they're already working on some of that and they're going to cut that money on advertising. If you're going to continue to put more women in the Army, and if you're going to put gays in the Army, and if minorities get out of balance--I don't know what the balance is--this good Army that we've got and this quality Army that we've got now, coupled with the deterioration of benefits and the deterioration of all the low pay and the changing of retirement... You've got three or four retirements going now. You've got a medical care situation. The military's system is one of the largest systems in the United States. Our medical care system, it's certainly going to be looked at. If these thinks don't turn-out to be a benefit to the Army, we're not going to be able to continue to enlist the quality people that we are doing now. I still associate with young people. I've got a grandson that has been living with me since he was four years old; he's eighteen years old now. He's beginning to wonder and beginning to figure out that I wouldn't have the quality of life that I have now had I not worked at a good job ten more years after I retired. You get young people now that are starting to look at men that have retired from the Army and who are sixty-five or seventy years old and the quality of like that they have. They're saying, "Wait a damn minute. I don't know if I want to be in that Army or not." I used to think, twenty years ago, we had a pretty good deal, but I don't know if we've got such a good deal or not now. If I had to live on just what my military retirement was, I wouldn't have the quality of life that I've fortunately have been able to have.

Interviewer: Have you seen a change in the attitude of the

soldiers over the years?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. I've seen the attitude of the Army change even since I retired. I've seen the Army's attitude change about three or four times.

(End Tape OH 94.1-7, Side 1)

(Begin Tape OH 94.1-7, Side 2)

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, when the other ran out we were talking about the change in attitude of the soldier. You said that you've seen it change since you retired and you ended up with the statement, "You saw it change three or four times." Would you please continue.

SMA Connelly: Well, yes. You know, when I first came into the Army it was right at the tail end of the Korean War and the draftee soldiers that were coming into the Army then, the ones that I took basic training with and AIT, the draftees attitude was "I didn't have anything else to do. I didn't have enough money to go to school. I didn't have a job. I came into the Army just to grow up and have a place to hold up while I could figured out what I had to do." Of course, every draftee that came in had a job that paid three times more than he was drawing in the Army, had an automobile that would run ninety miles an hour in second gear and his wife or girlfriend was a model, to hear them all tell it. They didn't like the Army and didn't know why they had to come in it. We were not going to have any more wars. But then the large percentage of them said "I do what I've got to do for two years and get out." They were not bad soldiers. They were soldiers that complained a lot. That's about the way the Army went. Then the Army had discipline problems, we had stockades filled up, we had AWOLs and desertions. Those things disrupt the attitude of the rest of the Army a good bit. Noncommissioned officers were spending a lot of their time with the ten percent that were screw-ups. Then during Vietnam, the attitude of the soldiers changed a good bit then. The ones that had

been to Vietnam didn't want to go back. Those that were coming in knew they had to go. Of course, we had difficulties with attitudes and attitudes reflected on their conduct. Then we started building our Army back, in 1973, with an All-Volunteer Army. You still had those in the Army that didn't think we should have an All-Volunteer Army and who thought it would never work. We had those who couldn't live with the more liberalized permissiveness that we had when we were trying to attract the soldier. We made some mistakes there, and of course attitudes of soldiers were different during that time. Then '76, '77, '78, and '79, during that time frame, we started to get a better quality of soldier that we were recruiting into our All-Volunteer Army. The soldier's attitude was changing then where he wanted to be told what to do in self-rewarding, self-satisfying jobs by competent authority. The Army got in good shape and we went in to the Gulf War with a good Army; their attitude was good. Now the attitude is changing to, "Well, what the hell are we going to have, an Army full of women and queers?" The benefits are decaying. They're changing retirement. They're talking about doing away with the cost of living allowance until you're sixty-two. "I can retire at forty-seven or fifty. What am I going to do after that?" Dependents are going to have to start paying for health care. So attitudes change with politics.

Interviewer: That's right. How do you think the reason for a soldier enlisting or reenlisting has changed over the years?

SMA Connelly: Here for several years, before the Gulf War and up to perhaps about now, people were wanting to come into the Army because they saw it as a good institution. It was paying enough for it to be a reasonably good job. They could get an education and they could learn a trade; they were coming into the Army for that. I hope that we can maintain that, but these outside things that are beginning to deteriorate is going to change that attitude and that reflection if we don't watch out.

Interviewer: Why don't you compare the enlisted leadership of the Vietnam War era with the post-Vietnam era. What differences have you seen in the leadership?

SMA Connelly: When I came into the Army we did a lot of leading with rank on our arm. We had a society then when people's values were a little different. Their raising, that we were talking about the other day, such as respect for authority and what have you, the young person would take orders and keep his mouth shut and do what he was told to do. But now you've got a more sensitive soldier. You've got a more knowledgeable soldier, a more intelligent soldier, and a more informed soldier. Your leadership styles have to take a different approach now to get the same effect. I think that the people are basically the same but we've got to be smarter than the soldier. We've got to lead them differently than we used to. We've got to encourage them to take orders, not just give them and expect them to do the right thing. I don't think the principles of a leader or the traits of military leadership have changed that much. It just that soldiers recognize quicker those leaders that don't have all of the principles of leadership and all the traits of a good leader. They are more informed now and they detect that more sooner, and unless they see that in their leader, then they don't respect him. If they don't respect him, they don't answer their call.

Interviewer: Do you think the change in the manner in which we train leaders since Vietnam, that our leadership training produces a better NCO?

SMA Connelly: Oh yeah. That's what I mean by being smarter. Soldiers want to do what's right, and will do it if they're told and they know what they have to do. If we teach them what their job is and they know you have the knowledge and the authority to tell them, they'll do what has to be done.

Interviewer: Since your tenure as Sergeant Major of the Army, of course we had Desert Storm and a few of the other combat operations. In

Desert Storm we had the Reserve Components pretty actively involved. Compare the Reserve Components now, or even in your tenure, to the Reserve Components during the time you were in the National Guard, to include such things as: training, equipment, mission readiness, etc.

SMA Connelly: You know, for years we gave the National Guard what equipment that was obsolete. When we had worn it out, we gave it to them. We may have had to rebuild it, but it was still obsolete. Some of the equipment that they had when I was in the National Guard, they had already stopped making parts for them. We did that up until, what? '73? We've gone into what we put out there to train them. We put officers out there on terminal assignments and noncommissioned officers on compassionate assignments to train them. We didn't mention the "Total Army." If fact, we spoke little of them. We called them "Weekend Warriors" and other slang that you could use to make them unwanted and uncomfortable. In those units that went to the Gulf War, I bet the morale in those units now, wherever they are, is sky high. Of course it will soon fade out. I think that within its self proves that they can do the job if they're trained to do it. I think we've got to be smarter about when we activate them. We've got to train the units better before we send them into combat. You know, we've never won a war without them.

Interviewer: That's right.

SMA Connelly: We've never won a war without them.

Interviewer: Some of the other big changes that came about in the Army, such as the Enlisted Personnel Management System, when we finally got that lined out. We knew that NCOES was a big benefit to the Army. What are some of the strong points of the Army's Enlisted Personnel Management System? How did it help out in the management of personnel in the Army and what impact has it had?

SMA Connelly: To me it looks like, even by the time that I was getting out of the Army, that the logistics folks, the personnel folks, the training folks, and your units were all trying to accomplish the s

same goal and they got on the same sheet of music. I think that our personnel management system and our training system is trying to put the right people in the right MOS and in the right job. The training folks are trying to train them to do that and that's what we're sending to units. It's up to the units then to give them that unit training and that unit cohesiveness. I think that the personnel management folks in the Army have done a tremendous job, but they had a wide open way to go because we certainly didn't start doing that until in the late '70s.

Interviewer: What about the change in basic training over the years? What changes have you seen in that area?

SMA Connelly: Like I told you, when I came into the Army I don't think basis training was that challenging, and I think it got worst. I know when I was FORSCOM Sergeant Major, and even Sergeant Major of the Army, soldiers were telling me that basic training was a piece of cake. Basic training should not be a piece of cake. That should be the most challenging, rewarding, self-satisfying thing that young man or woman has done up to that point in their life. That should be tough and they shouldn't be able to say that it was a piece of cake when they got out of it. We had basic training down to, what? Six or eight weeks, at one time? We didn't have enough money to train as long as necessary. It still takes about ten weeks, to me, to give a soldier the basic training that we need to give him, and then eight to ten weeks, depending on what MOS he's in. A soldier should spend about twenty weeks in nothing but training; that includes his basic and his AIT. Some AITs are probably going to have to take longer. I hope that part of the Army's plan, as we get stabilized and we draw-down to what we're going to do, that we do spend a little bit more in training. I don't even know what basic training time is, but I know if we got it raised a couple of weeks, I think from six to eight, and we were going to try to go to ten when I was in the Army, but the pipeline was just too long and you would have to grow to it, you can't do it that quick. But we ought to be able to

grow and should have grown to about ten weeks now, I don't know. If you're going to spend the money that we're spending to recruit a soldier, we ought to spend that money as necessary to give him the best basic training and the advanced individual training that we've got to get that soldier trained and then start worrying about how we are going to retain him.

Interviewer: We were talking about the Sergeants Major Academy and I think during one of the breaks you said that you though maybe the Academy would be better if it was a year long course instead of six months

SMA Connelly: Yeah. It was six months when I went and we were talking about going to nine months. They are to nine months now, aren't they?

Interviewer: No, they're going to go to nine months.

SMA Connelly: They're going to go to nine months. Well, I don't know about a year. We ought to go to nine months first. Maybe nine months is enough. But with the amount of money that we have invested in a soldier up to that point in his training, I just think that nine months is appropriate. I would have liked to have had about three more months when I was going through. Maybe we would have had to slow it down a little bit, but there were other subjects that we could have spent a lot more time on.

Interviewer: Why don't you assess the impact of the Sergeants Major Academy on the Army, as you see it.

SMA Connelly: I think the Sergeants Major Academy is what made the rest of it work, particularly when we got far enough out there to link promotions with schools. I don't know if I can name all the PNCOCs (Primary Noncommissioned Officer Course), and the ANCOCs (Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course), and all that now, but when you have to successfully complete a course to get promoted to the next, and before you can become a command sergeant major you've got to go to the

Sergeants Major Academy. Those things are on the right track. When we started with the Noncommissioned Officers Education System, you know I was in the second class, and when that class hit the fields out there, we had some good sergeants major; they did some good jobs. You can just take a guy like me. When I went up to battalion sergeant major and I hadn't been there long before my Brigade Commander pulled me up as Brigade Sergeant Major. They had sergeants major down there that had been sergeants major for a long time before I was, but he pulled me up to be acting Brigade Sergeant Major in between, for about three month there. Then when that guy made general, he took me up there to Seventh Army Training Command and then I was selected as the Division Sergeant Major. You know, there wasn't many sergeants major that were graduates of the Academy out there then. Then I, as a graduate of the Sergeants Major Academy, got selected for Forces Command. Then I was the first graduate of the Sergeants Major Academy to get selected as Sergeant Major of the Army. You don't think that every sergeant first class that knew how to read a damn Army Times couldn't figure that out. Those things is what started it. I don't mean me, but those other sergeants major. It wasn't long before I had a division full of graduates from the Sergeants Major Academy out there, because we were putting them out about every six months. By the time I got to Forces Command, we had some Major Army Commands that had graduates of the Sergeants Major Academy. Some of them were my classmates. I'm talking to old fellows like Ken Tracy and all those guys who said, "I wish that they had something like that when I came along." That's what got their attention; I don't mean that boastfully. "Hell, look at this guy Connelly. That son-of-a-bitch graduated from the Sergeants Major Academy four and a half years ago and the bastard is Sergeant Major of the Army. So what the hell are they teaching out there? I don't think I need to go to school to learn how to be a sergeant major but God damn if that they way you go, I guess I'm going to have to do it."

Interviewer: It's been that way since.

SMA Connelly: Yeah, it's been that way since. Then the younger sergeants says, "Hell, they must be serious. I'm going to have to pass PNCOC. I'm going to have to pass ANCOC. I'm going to have to go to that First Sergeants school." Look at all the hell that I raised about first sergeants. I tried to get the Army to make it mandatory that if you tell a master sergeant that he's going to be a first sergeant and he says that he doesn't want to be it, I wanted to kick his ass out of the Army if he had twenty years service.

Interviewer: That was the next question I was going to ask you. What are your feelings concerning the senior NCOs that are selected to attend the Sergeants Major Academy and decline, or the senior NCOs that want to get out of an assignment that they do not like, or NCOs who refuse to become a first sergeant and find some way of getting out of being one.

SMA Connelly: He would be dead in the water. I would mark his records with big red stripes and he could spend the rest of his damn life in the Army and he wouldn't go a bit further than he's gone right now. I almost got the Army to do that. The damn flat-peters up there kept me off of it. I had General Myer fired-up with it. Hell, I went toe-to-toe with some general officers over that. I almost won that battle. Maybe I was a little bit too hard. Maybe I wasn't seeing the compassionate reason. We give, until this day probably, soldiers, particularly professional soldiers--senior NCOs--we give them the option to do all these things and then we get pissed-off because they exercise their option. The damn answer was never to give them the damn option. You don't have a damn option to retire. You know, you get twenty years in the Army and it ain't your damn right to retire; that's the Army's option whether we want you to retire or whether we'll let you retire. It doesn't become your right until you get thirty years in the Army. That's what I kept saying. Those sons-of-a-bitches that's got twenty years of

less of service is going to tell me what he's going to do in my Army, so to speak. God damn, if I want you to go to Wewokaswitch, Oklahoma, that's where you're going. We ought to be able to say, "I don't know if you're going there yet, sergeant, but your next damn paycheck is going to be sent out there. If you want it, by God you had better go out there and get it."

Interviewer: What about the Army's "Up-or-Out Program?" We've had a lot of people criticize it. What are your feelings about the Up-or-Out Program?

SMA Connelly: I had different feelings about it. I know that you can make a case for the soldier that gets to be a staff sergeant and he's a good cook, he's a good aircraft mechanic, he a good this, he's a good that, and we ought to let him stay there. Well, I'll tell you what you're going to have when you do that. You are going to have exactly what you and I sit here and discuss; you're going to have what's in the National Guard. You've got a forty-five year old squad leader in the infantry that can't crawl on and off a friggin box. They can't lead troops, and that's what you're going to have. Now you can make a case for anybody, but there's so few of them that they shouldn't have the option. In those cases, maybe somebody should quietly give them an exception, but it shouldn't be a damn policy. If you can't cut it, you've got to go.

Interviewer: When you take a look at our Army today, what do you see as the future of the Army? We're also talking about down-sizing and all this other stuff we hear about.

SMA Connelly: I see the Army...

(NOTE: The interview was temporarily interrupted.)

Interviewer: We had a slight pause there while the Sergeant Major answered the phone. Go ahead and continue.

SMA Connelly: Well, I guess we are going to draw the Army further down. I don't know what the plans are, but I think we ought to get

ready. From the last Sergeant Major of the Army's conference that I went to, and what I heard with the AUSA (Association of the United States Army), and I still read a lot of correspondence that I get, that the Army is going before Congress daily, almost, and has a lot of support to let the Army draw-down to whatever figure that they are going to give us--around five hundred thousand or four hundred and ninety-five thousand--over a period of time, but maintain a force. Draw it down where it's not a "Hollow Army," but we continue to keep the high-tech equipment and the elite units that we've got. We're going to draw-down to about ten divisions. We might have to do that, but I think we ought to keep an Army of about five hundred and eighty or six hundred thousand, and we ought not to have to go below more than twelve divisions. An Army that big doesn't have to move every day, but we still have to be able to fight almost two wars at a time, or a war and a half at a time. You saw what it took to put the Army over there in Desert Storm, and the length of time it took to do that. We don't need to bring our Army so far down that it takes us a long time to ramp-up. I just don't know how we can sit here and have the history that we had 0after World War I, when we depleted our Army down to the "bare nothings" and then had to ramp-up again in World War II because we didn't have an Army. Three months before the war started, we passed the "Draft Act;" it didn't pass but by one vote. We sent people, as General Abrams used to say, "We sent people to war inadequately trained and inadequately equipped and we paid for that with the lives of American soldiers." We didn't give them their rifles until they got on the ships; we didn't have enough to give them. We depleted our Army after that and we almost got in serious trouble at the beginning of the Korean War over there. Of course, we ended that by just agreements to stop firing. The politicians wouldn't let us win in Vietnam. Then after Vietnam we build-up an army and we proved that we need an army that size. The Army did great and now we're going to pull it down. Just what in the hell

does it take to convince the Congress of the United States that our country didn't become a great country because we've got great farmers; we grow cotton well, and wheat and all these other things. We didn't become a great country because of our industry and our manufacturing ability. We became a great country because we have a great military. No one can jump on our ass and whip us. That's what it is going to take for us to continue to be a great country. Now we do have these abilities to do all these other things. The great industrial complex that the United States has can come up in a quicker time than any other country, but we shouldn't have to buy the time to do that because it will cost us a lot of American lives. For a lay person like me, and knowledgeable a little bit about the military, I just can't understand why and how we can repeat for the third time, since 1918, and here it is 1994 and we're going to do the third or fourth time what we done before. I can not understand how... Well, yeah I can understand how. I guess you've got about twenty percent of the Congress and the United States Senate that's never had on a uniform. They've probably got a staff working for them that's less than that. But I know that the military is going to have to do, ultimately, what they're told to do. I just hope that they can convince the Congress to let us draw it down over a period of time so we can maintain some kind of place for all those people who have spent their life in the military and not have to kick them out. We can draw the military on a scheduled basis to where it will be a "Solid Army" all the way down.

Interviewer: They say that the Cold War is over. I like to say that it's "apparently over" or "it may be over," but in any case, what changes do you see in the global role of the Army?

SMA Connelly: Well, I don't know about global. With what I hear all the time, we live in a very dangerous, complicated world. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to read some of the things, you can turn on the TV this afternoon. You'll find that we've got troops in

fifty-five different countries; about twenty-five or thirty thousand folks, not counting the ones that are in Europe and Korea. We've got Yeltzen here that we're supporting and should support. In those fifteen different republics over there, there's no stabilization. One day Yeltzen is in charge and the next day he can't even get in his office. We've got North Korea over there building an atomic bomb. We can't really figure out if he's got one, building one, or going to build two more. We've still got a peace force over there in the Middle East. Sadaam Hussein is just waiting to when he's going to harass us again some place else. You've got China that we can't deal with. You've got Somalia, Bosnia, and names I can't even recall. We live in a dangerous world and it's popping and happening every damn day, and the Congress of the United States still wants to cut twenty billion more damn dollars from the Department of Defense. No wonder you can't get anybody to be Secretary of Defense. He ain't going to have a damn salary when they get through.

Interviewer: What affect do you think the news media had during the Vietnam War on the soldier, the country, and the government? Maybe take a look at what kind of affect the news media has had on the same way the civilians looked at the military after the Vietnam War.

SMA Connelly: I think we brought a lot of that on ourselves. But the media did what we let them do. We hung our ass out over there so we had to let them look at it. Of course, the media hurt us. They did bring the war right into your living room, but we let them take the pictures. I think the media is one of the big problems with contemporary America. I don't know the answer to it. I think the media depicted the worst soldier that they could find in everything that they did. I think that they jumped on every mistake that we made. I think that the Vietnam War soldier that got out and still paraded around town with his camouflage fatigues on, or his jungle fatigues on, with all his ribbons didn't help us much. The media knew it wasn't and they took advantage of

it. It's a liberal media that survives off of sensational stories. But, having said all of that, we let it happen. We invited them in. They didn't print the good battles; they printed the ones we lost.

Interviewer: We were talking about down-sizing. Back when the Army had the RIF, or the Reduction in Force, remember when they used to take all of these officers that were going to lose their commissions and made them noncommissioned officers and let them occupy noncommissioned officers' slots. What affect did that have on the NCO Corps at that time?

SMA Connelly: I saw a little of that. I think that that's what helped clog the system after the Korean War. I think that the Army realized that was a mistake and they didn't do it again. They did it to some extent after the Vietnam War, but not at the magnitude that they had done it before. I think that set the noncommissioned officer back a good bit, but I don't think that our Army would do that again; I don't think they would let that happen again. I certainly won't happen again as long as we have the professional Noncommissioned Officers Corps. If we maintain the professional Noncommissioned Officers Corps that we have today, I don't think the noncommissioned officers would let it happen.

Interviewer: During one of the breaks we were talking about the changes in noncommissioned officers. Out at the Academy we often talked about, what we called the "quitting time NCO." He's the kind of guy that as soon as five o'clock rolls around, or four-thirty or whatever quitting time is, he goes out and gets in his car and he goes to the club, or he goes home. He leaves the company area and usually doesn't come back until the next morning, or until he has to come back for some reason. Years ago, you used to have that NCO that after quitting time, he would kind of swing by the barracks to talk to the troops. I guess you would call him a "foot locker NCO." He would sit down and talk to them. He would come by the barracks on the weekends and see how his troops were doing. It seems like that "foot locker NCO" has kind of

disappeared and it has become a eight to five job. Give me your thoughts on that.

SMA Connelly: You know, I still live by the old rules. If you want to find out what kind of unit you've got, you visit it after retreat and before reveille sometimes; you can see what kind of outfit you've got. That noncommissioned officer that does that, doesn't care anything about his troops, or either he doesn't have any troops. His soldiers know it. But the successful noncommissioned officer that takes care of his soldiers, his soldier are going to eventually take care of him. That sergeant that is living that life that you're talking about there now, I think that the system will eventually catch him, because that's just not the professional way. No one ever became successful working forty hours a week. Not in the military; not in the civilian world; not anywhere.

Interviewer: The extra effort is always the cutting line.

SMA Connelly: That's right. If you're interested in your outfit and you're interested in your soldiers, you'll be interested enough to find out what they do between retreat and reveille. You'll be interested enough to sit down on that foot locker and talk with them.

Interviewer: What do you think the relationship should be between a Command Sergeant Major and junior officers?

SMA Connelly: Naturally, it's going to have to be professional. But I think that you can--in our modern day world--be not quite a stiff lipped as you were in my bringing up. I don't think that anybody should get drunk together anymore, if I've ever thought that. I think that too much familiarity breeds that contempt that we've spoke of. You know, that's one of the things that I always taught. I guess that one of the biggest satisfactions that I got being a platoon sergeant, a senior NCO, first sergeant, and sergeant major was the knowledge and experience that I thought I had and that I had, was for me to be able to pass that on to a younger noncommissioned officer, and particularly to young officers.

I, as a platoon sergeant, if I had a platoon leader I wanted my platoon leader to be the best platoon leader in the company. I didn't want him to be laughed at by the other NCOs for his inability to be a good tank commander or for him not to know something. I used to teach my platoon leaders everything that I could. I'm not saying that I didn't have some that I didn't like. I had some that I didn't like that well, but I tried to like them. I never have wanted one to fail. I always felt that I knew that I had more experience and more knowledge that this second lieutenant that I got. But I knew that lieutenant had the ability and education to someday know more that I do. Part of my job was to pass on my knowledge and my experience to him. It wasn't something sacred that the Army gave me. That's the reason I have this experience. When I became a first sergeant, I felt the same way about my captain. I didn't want my captain--my company commander--to be a screw-up. When I became a battalion sergeant major, I used to go in and talk to the company commanders. I would talk to my battalion commander. I didn't want my battalion commander to be a screw-up. If I had any knowledge and I had any experience, I wanted to let him know it. I didn't care if he did it my way; I'm trying to give him some information. I think the Noncommissioned Officers Corps had gotten off on the wrong foot on that at one time, and of course, I think we got a little pissed-off with our Officers Corps from Vietnam, but I didn't get pissed-off with the Officers Corps, because I still tried to do that in Vietnam. I did have some officers that didn't know what I was trying to do. I don't know where the line is as to how familiar you should be with your junior officers, but I think that sergeant major, and I think that senior NCO, ought to have the confidence and ought to avail himself to his junior officers so they can come to him and ask him questions about soldiers, and questions about anything. He should not take advantage of their lack of knowledge or their lack of experience. That senior NCO should be able to give that young officer as much guidance as he can his young

NCOs and his young soldiers; he's just got to elevate it a little bit.

Interviewer: Sergeant Major, I've gone through my guide here. Right now we have done right around ten hours, a little over ten hours. It's been really enjoyable; really outstanding. I would like to say, on behalf of General Nelson, Major Kelly, Doctor Dray, and all the people from the Center of Military History, up in Washington, from Colonel Van Horn and Command Sergeant Major Strahan, at the Sergeants Major Academy, and Mr. Larry Arms, Director of the NCO Museum, we would like to thank you for participating in this very important project. I would like to add a personal comment. I would like to thank you and Bennie for your fine hospitality during the time I've been out here. Also, I would like to express, on behalf of the Noncommissioned Officers Corps, our appreciation for your thirty years of outstanding service and your tremendous accomplishments and what you've done for the Corps.

SMA Connelly: Well, I thank you for that.

(End of the interview.)

ANNEX A
DOCUMENTS

REMARKS BY
SMA WILLIAM A. CONNELLY
17 JUNE 1983

WHEN I CAME IN THE ARMY SOME THIRTY YEARS AGO, I DIDN'T GIVE MUCH THOUGHT TO LEAVING. OF COURSE, AT THAT TIME I DIDN'T THINK THE ARMY WOULD PLAY SUCH A MAJOR ROLE IN MY LIFE. LEAVING THE ARMY HAS BEEN ON MY MIND CONSTANTLY FOR THE PAST SIX MONTHS, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE THIS DIFFICULT. IT'S LIKE LOSING SOMEONE YOU LOVE.

I'VE SPENT THIRTY YEARS WITH AN IMAGE OF BEING SOMEWHAT OF A TOUGH GUY. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO MOVE ALONG WITH WHAT I HAVE TO SAY, OR I'LL DESTROY THAT IMAGE.

AS I SEE AND HEAR THE UNITED STATES ARMY BAND (PERSHING'S OWN), I REALIZE THEY REPRESENT THE PRIDE, ESPRIT, AND PATRIOTISM

THAT I HAVE TRIED TO DISPLAY OVER THE YEARS; JUST AS THE THIRD UNITED STATES INFANTRY (THE OLD GUARD) AND THE MAJOR ARMY COMMANDS WHOSE COLORS ARE PRESENT HERE TODAY, REPRESENT ALL THE SOLDIERS WITH WHOM I HAVE SERVED IN PEACE AND WAR. PERSHING'S OWN, THE OLD GUARD, AND ATTENDING MAJOR ARMY COMMAND COMMAND SERGEANTS MAJOR, I THANK YOU VERY MUCH, NOT ONLY FOR WHAT YOU MEAN TO ME, BUT WHAT YOU MEAN TO OUR GREAT ARMY. ONE DOESN'T OBTAIN THE RANK AND POSITION OF SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY, OR SPEND THIRTY YEARS IN THE ARMY, WITHOUT OWING SOMEONE. NOTHING MONETARY, NO FAVORS, AND NOTHING YOU MUST PAY BACK, BUT NEVERTHELESS YOU HAVE OBLIGATIONS. I HAVE WRITTEN LETTERS TO MOST OF THEM IN AN ATTEMPT TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION FOR HAVING LEARNED FROM THEM, BECAUSE THAT IS THE LEAST I COULD DO.

A-2

I THANK ALL OF YOU FOR COMING HERE TODAY. I KNOW MANY HAVE COME A GREAT DISTANCE AND AT GREAT EXPENSE. I ESPECIALLY THANK MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS FOR BEING HERE. I THANK MY FELLOW NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND OFFICERS, SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS. WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION FOR YOUR BEING HERE.

I'VE TRIED TO BE A GOOD SOLDIER, BUT AT TIMES I'VE HAD DIFFICULTIES. THE ONE PERSON I OWE FOR BEING ABLE TO HELP ME OVERCOME THOSE DIFFICULTIES IS MY WIFE, BENNIE NEWTON CONNELLY. MARRYING BENNIE WAS THE BEST DAY'S WORK I'VE EVER DONE. WITH ALL THE DIFFICULTIES I'VE HAD BEING A SOLDIER, SHE HAS MADE IT ALL WORTH WHILE. THE ARMY IS BETTER TODAY THAN WHEN I CAME IN, AND I THANK THE LORD FOR HAVING HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE IN SOME SMALL WAY. I KNOW THE LEADERS OF THE ARMY WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE CHANGES

FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF THE ARMY AND TO PREPARE OUR ARMY TO BETTER DEFEND OUR NATION.

I ASK THAT IN MAKING THOSE CHANGES, WE KEEP UPPERMOST IN OUR MINDS THE FACT THAT OUR BUSINESS HAS ALWAYS BEEN - AND ALWAYS WILL BE - SOLDIERS, SOLDIERS, AND SOLDIERS.

RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER
WILLIAM ARTHUR CONNELLY, SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY

Sergeant Major William A. Connelly has served in the United States Army for over 30 years, first as a National Guardsman in Americus, Georgia, and since 1954, on Active Duty in positions from Tank Crewman, and Tank Commander through Platoon Sergeant, First Sergeant and Command Sergeant Major. His career has taken him through many CONUS assignments, and four tours in Europe as well as service in the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Vietnam.

Sergeant Major Connelly was born in Monticello, Georgia, 2 June 1931, where he attended grammar and high school, graduating in 1949. His military service began as a private in the 190th Tank Battalion in Americus, Georgia, in March 1950.

Ordered to active duty in March 1954, he completed his initial training and then served as a Tank Crewman, Tank Commander, Platoon Sergeant and First Sergeant in the 761st Tank Battalion, 3d Armored Division at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

The first of his four tours in Europe was with the 826th Tank Battalion at Hammelburg and Schweinfurt, Germany, from January 1955 until November 1956. The 826th returned to Fort Benning, Georgia, where Sergeant Major Connelly served as an Operations Sergeant and Platoon Sergeant until August 1958.

He returned to Europe, serving as Platoon Sergeant with the 2/67th Armor, 4th Armored Division in Furth, Germany, from August 1958 through September 1961. He was back in CONUS at Fort Stewart, Georgia, as a Platoon Sergeant with the 3d Medium Tank Battalion, 32d Armor for less than 30 days when that unit was sent to Germany as part of the build up during the Berlin Crisis.

Sergeant Major Connelly remained in Augsburg serving as a Platoon Sergeant with the 3/32d Armor until November 1962. He then moved to Munich, Germany, as a First Sergeant and Operations Sergeant in the 32th Tank Battalion, and 24th Infantry Division.

Back at Fort Stewart, Georgia, in August 1964, Sergeant Major Connelly served as First Sergeant of Company C, 4th Battalion, 68th Armor, 2d Infantry Division. In October 1965, his company was ordered to the Dominican Republic and remained there until July 1966. The Company returned to Fort Stewart, only to be moved, with the entire Battalion, to Fort Knox, Kentucky, in August. In January 1967, Sergeant Major Connelly assumed duties as Chief Enlisted Advisor to the Cavalry Squadron of the Georgia National Guard, headquartered in Griffin, Georgia.

His combat duty in Vietnam was as First Sergeant of Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division from October 1969 to November 1970. From then until May 1973, Sergeant Major Connelly served at Fort Knox, Kentucky as First Sergeant of the Reception Station and several companies of the First Training Brigade as well as Sergeant Major of the 1st and 2d Battalions.

In June 1973 he entered Class #2 at the Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas. Graduating in December that year, he was appointed to Command Sergeant Major and was commissioned as a Captain in the Armor Branch, United States Army Reserve. On 30 December 1981 Sergeant Major Connelly was promoted to the rank of Major, United States Army Reserve.

Upon graduation, he was assigned to Germany for his fourth European tour. Sergeant Major Connelly initially served as Sergeant Major of the 1/35th Armor, 1st Armored Division at Erlangen. In June 1975, he became Sergeant Major of the Seventh Army Training Command at Grafenwohr and in July 1976, became Sergeant Major of the 1st Armored Division at Ansbach. From that position, he was nominated and selected to the position of Sergeant Major of the United States Army Forces Command, Fort McPherson, Georgia, in July 1977. On 2 July 1979 Sergeant Major Connelly was sworn in as the sixth Sergeant Major of the Army and has been subsequently extended in his tour of duty by the Chief of Staff, Army to 1 July 1983.

Sergeant Major Connelly holds an Associates Degree in General Management from El Paso Community College. He has accumulated over 3 years of credits toward a Bachelor's Degree in Education through attendance at Georgia Southwestern College and the Universities of Kentucky and Maryland.

Sergeant Major Connelly is married to the former Bennie Newton of Monticello, Georgia. Their daughter, Carol, is their only child.

Sergeant Major Connelly is a member of the following Boards and Committees:

Board of Advisors - Army Club System
Board of Directors - Army and Air Force Exchange System
Board of Commissioners - US Soldiers and Airmen's Home
Board of Managers - Army Emergency Relief
Army Subsistence Review Committee
Army Policy Council
Army Staff Council
Army Clothing and Equipment Board
AUSA Convention Planning Committee
Board of Directors - USO
Member of Command Sergeants Major Retention Board
Drug and Alcohol Review Board (DARB)
General Staff Council
Morale, Welfare, Recreation Review Committee
Army Advertising Policy Council
Army Housing Committee
Army Planning Committee for Physical Fitness

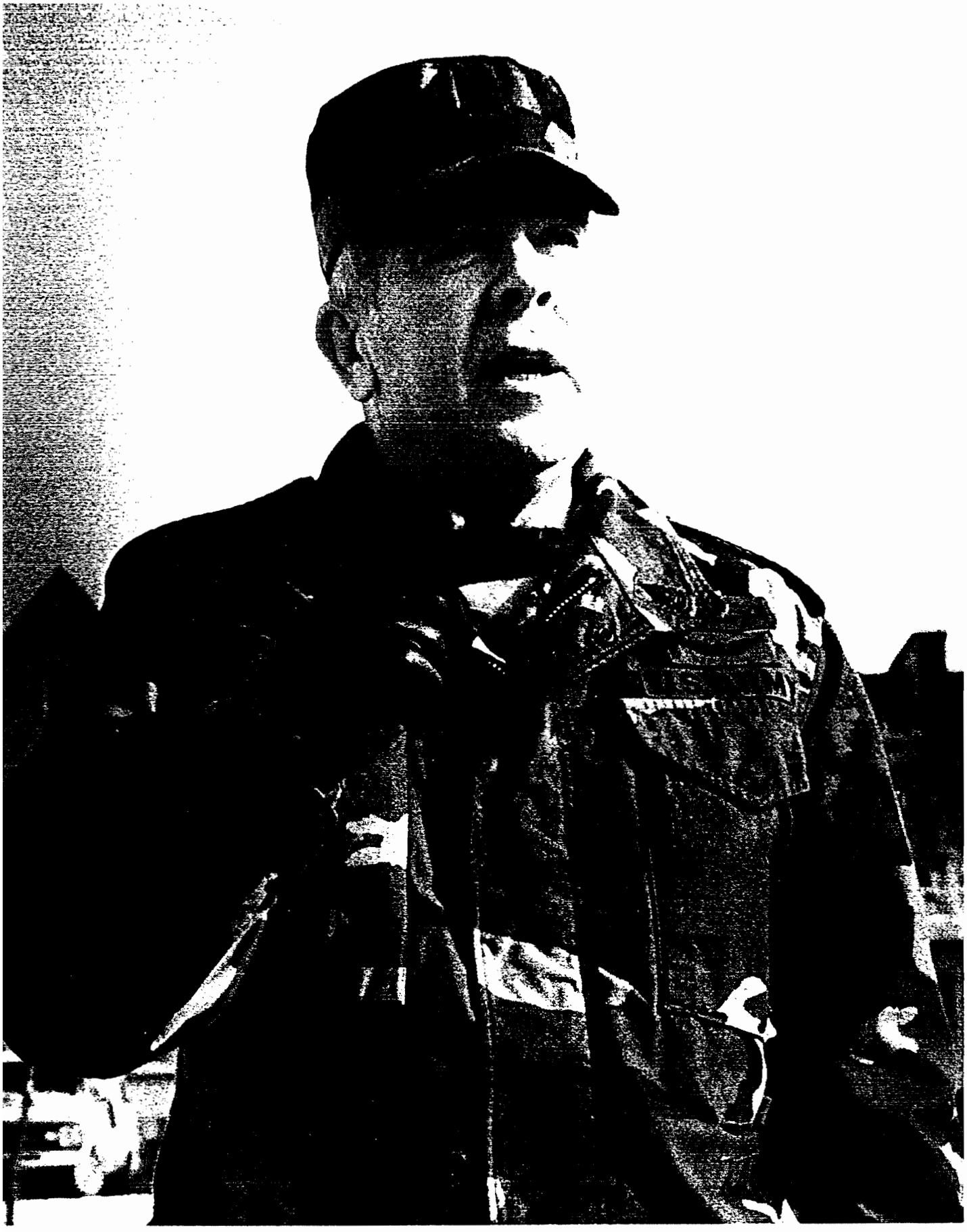
Sergeant Major Connelly has earned the following awards: Bronze Star Medal for Valor with two Oak Leaf Clusters; Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Air Medal for Valor with Two Oak Leaf Clusters; Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters; Combat Infantryman's Badge and Aircraft Crewman's Badge.

ANNEX B
PHOTOCOPIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS

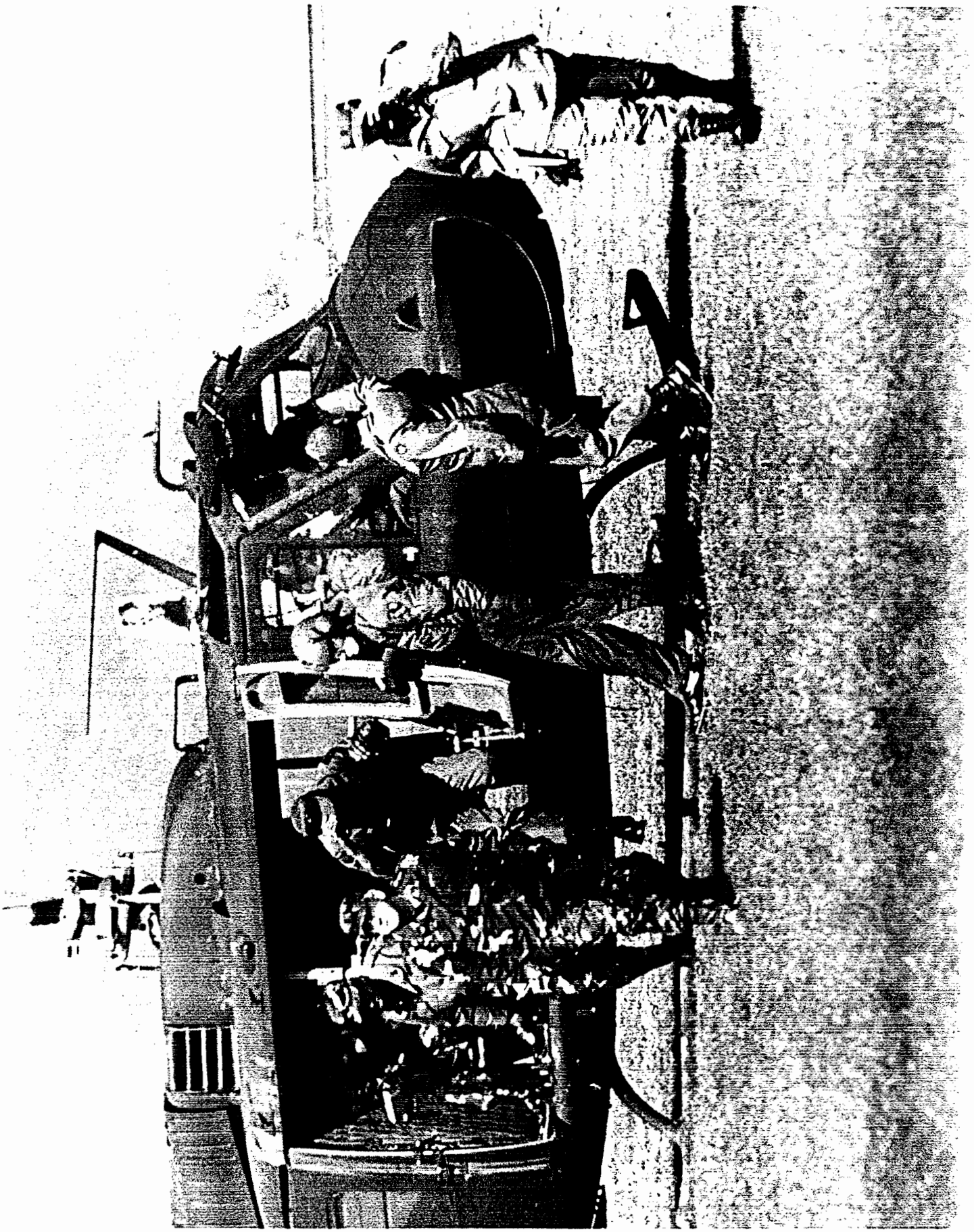
NOTE: The photocopies in this annex are provided to inform interested persons of the photographs are available in the U.S. Army Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer, Biggs Army Airfield, Fort Bliss, Texas. The photographs were provided to the NCO Museum by SMA William A. Connelly (U.S. Army - Retired).

Official photograph of SMA William A. Connelly (July 1979 to June 1983)

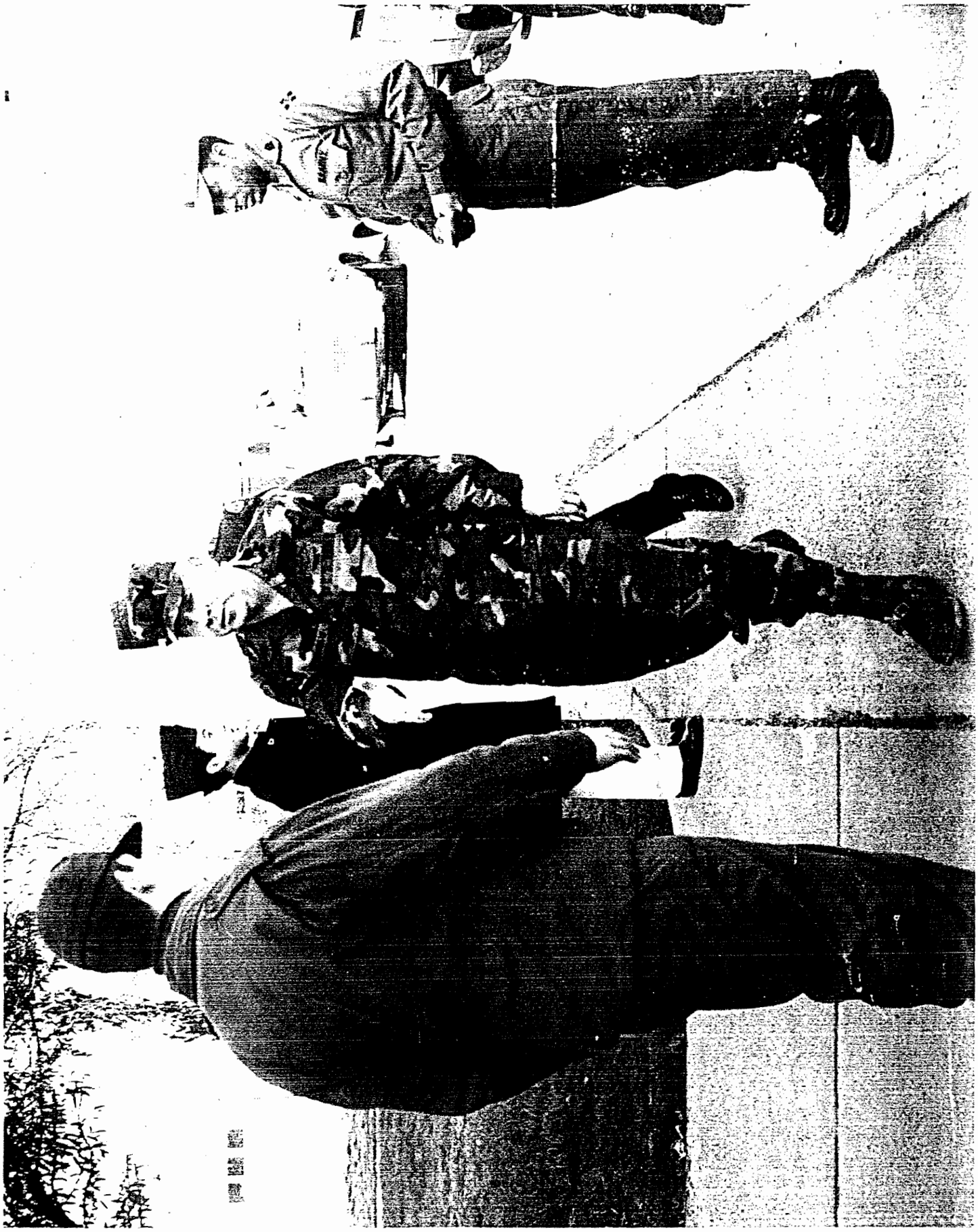
Official photograph of swearing-on ceremony for
Sergeant Major of the Army William A. Connelly (July 1979)



SMA William Connelly shows off the new B.D.U. field jacket to the 54th Engr. Bn, 130th Engr. Bde. soldiers in Wildflecken, Germany



SMA William Connelly exits from a helicopter in Bad Gersfeld, Germany after visiting a 11th Armored Cavalry border Camp



SMA William Connelly extends a hand of greeting to a 7th MedCom soldier in Wiesbaden, Germany

SMA William Connelly addresses soldiers of the 8th Infantry Division during his April 1982 visit to Wildflecken, Germany.

SMA William Connelly observes armor training in the field during his April 1982 visit to Germany.

SMA William Connelly observes armor training in the field during his April 1982 visit to Germany.

SMA William Connelly discusses training with a platoon sergeant during his April 1982 visit of Germany.

SMA William Connolly talks with a tank commander during his 1983 visit to the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California.