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PROJECT 88-3

Mr. Joseph P. Cribbins

Interviewed by

Lieutenant Colonel Hawthorne L. Proctor, USA

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USAWC/USAMHI SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEWEE: Mr. Joseph P. Cribbins

[Begin Tape C-208, Side 11

INTERVIEWER: Good morning. This is the first in a series of interview sessions for the oral history of Mr. Joseph P. Cribbins, who is currently serving as the Chief of the Aviation Logistics Office and as the Special Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Department of the Army. I am Lieutenant Colonel Hawthorne L. Proctor, a student at the US Army War College. I will be conducting these interviews from Mr. Cribbins' office at the Pentagon. Today's date is 25 November 1987. Sir, you were born in

Millbrook, New York, in 1914. One of the many things that I've learned about you is that as a youngster you were very interested in horses. Could you tell me more about your formative years, especially growing up in and around New York.

MR. CRIBBINS: Well, Colonel Proctor, my father was a horse trainer, and in this capacity, he moved fairly frequently. As a matter of fact, we moved from Millbrook, New York to Morristown, Short Hills and Far Hills in New Jersey and eventually Old Westbury on Long Island. It was almost the same as a military career in that there were frequent moves and many schools. I am a first generation Irish-American. My father had become a horse trainer as a result of his experience as a youngster in Ireland. He was bound and determined that I would never follow in his footsteps because he did not believe training horses in those days was a very promising career. Accordingly, I did not ride as a very small child despite the fact that there were always lots of horses around. When I was about twelve or thirteen, I used to walk some four miles after school to the stable that was owned by a friend of Dad. When we were living in Far Hills, New Jersey I would always manage to get a ride on one of the horses. In

return, I groomed horses and cleaned tack; that is the saddles and bridles. Dad inevitably found out about this and I really expected to be chastised pretty severely. Instead, he called me in one Saturday morning and took me to a small stable in back of our house. He opened the door and there was a fourteen-hand pony. He said, "I guess it's in the blood and now it's up to you. You take care of him and make sure you do. He is all yours." I said, "OK." That was the only chastising he gave me. However, I will always remember a couple of things. This pony, we called Ebony, was really an interesting one. By the time I got him he was eight or nine years old. Another horse trainer and friend of Dads had been driving home from Newark, New Jersey. While driving up a hill, he saw this small pony pulling a furniture wagon. It was a very hot day and this pony would go for a fairly short distance then turn and lock the wheels on the wagon, stop for a bit, then turn and proceed on. He did this about three times while going up the hill. Of course this really interested Dad's friend because the driver of this wagon was fast asleep. The pony was doing this on his own. So Dad's friend followed the wagon and driver home, and he bought the pony. He thought that this pony would make an absolutely super

pet for the children of a wealthy family. As it turned out the children were not quite up to Ebony who was a character in his own right. So he gave the pony to Dad with the stipulation that he never sell him.

INTERVIEWER: With all of the moves that you had while growing up, did you get a chance to develop any interests other than horses?

MR. CRIBBINS: No, I'm afraid not. I played a little ice hockey. I seemed to spend most of my time in and out of splints from riding horses. One Christmas I broke a wrist playing ice hockey and I figured one hazardous sport was enough.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, you said that you went to a number of schools. Did you have a favorite subject?

MR. CRIBBINS: I guess that I was so entranced with horses that I really didn't think much about school. I found it very easy and didn't have to do an awful lot of homework. I would get up very early in the morning and take care of my pony. By the time we moved to Long Island, I had outgrown Ebony. We gave him to another horse trainer who had a youngster coming along. His

kid eventually became an outstanding jockey and Ebony had a good home. I began riding all the horses Dad was training as well as riding race horses, working them in the morning at the Whitney Estates in Long Island. So my career really was one of horses, horses and horses.

INTERVIEWER: When you completed high school what type of work did you do?

MR. CRIBBINS: I finished high school in Westbury, Long Island, New York in June 1931. The year before I finished high school, I spent the summer at Cooperstown, New York, with F. Ambrose Clark racing stable where I worked horses and trained to become an amateur steeplechase jockey. I was growing too large to become a flat jockey, which is really what I wanted to do. So, when I graduated from high school, we were in the midst of the worst depression. I became a professional steeplechase jockey riding for F. Ambrose Clark. At that time, of course, I was purely an apprentice, but I went full time with the racing stable where I worked horses and began to ride some races.

INTERVIEWER: Being a steeplechase jockey and working with horses has certainly made you a noted horseman.

I understand that you joined the 101st Cavalry Regiment, New York National Guard, which seemed right in line with your background. What prompted you to enlist? I believe you were about twenty-six years old at the time you joined that outfit.

MR. CRIBBINS: That's correct. Let's back up a little bit. I rode steeplechasing for about five years. I considered myself a very good horseman, but not a good steeplechase jockey. It is quite possible to be very good at equitation and horsemanship, but a poor jockey. I did have a stable on Long Island and we fox hunted three to four times a week. I rode in horse shows and trained horses. In the course of all of this, I had gotten to know members of the 101st Cavalry Regiment. Many of them rode horses as a sport rather than a living the way that I did. Since I was knowledgeable with horses, I was asked if I would be interested in joining the 101st Cavalry Regiment. It was known as Squadron A and was located in the old Squadron A building at 94th and Park Avenue in New York. So in October or November 1940, it became pretty evident that we were going to be involved in the war going on in Europe. Eventually I did join Squadron A. It is interesting that in order to join the regiment I had to

pass a board of five members because it was an affluent and a tough outfit to get into. As a result of having passed the board of five members, I became a private in the US Army National Guard at $21.00 a month. I was assigned to Troop A of Squadron A, a horse cavalry squadron. The other two troops in the squadron were Troop B of Genesee Valley and Troop C of Brooklyn. They comprised the squadron that I belonged to in the 101st Cavalry Regiment. The other squadron was mechanized and equipped with halftracks.

INTERVIEWER: Do you recall whether it was a single person or several people who were part of the riding club that asked you to join the regiment?

MR. CRIBBINS: There were three or four members of the regiment who asked that I join because of my knowledge of horses.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned the words "affluent outfit." Would you explain what you meant by those words?

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes, I think that I was one of a very few in the squadron who was working pretty hard for a

living. Most of the young men in the squadron were working on Wall Street or were from families who were extremely wealthy. Many of them were going to college. They belonged to Squadron A, because in those days it was a very attractive thing. It afforded them the opportunity to ride and meet a lot of people who were great fun to be with. Most of all, the squadron had the facilities which were not easily obtained in those days.

INTERVIEWER: What type of training did you receive upon joining the regiment?

MR. CRIBBINS: Well, the first bit of training I had was rather interesting. If I remember correctly, my first night of duty was 12 December 1940, just a year before Pearl Harbor. I recall being in this small platoon and being trained by a corporal who had us around the riding ring. He started telling me how to hold my hands, how to put my heels down, how to grip the horse and how to do all the things that corporals in the cavalry were told to teach new students. This went on for about three quarters of an hour when Lieutenant Fred Devereaux, one of the people who had asked me to join the squadron, came up and asked if he

could take me off for a few minutes. The corporal said, "Of course, sir." And Fred, whom I very carefully called "lieutenant," took me off and asked me if I would look at his mare. I looked at his mare as she was standing hunched up. He said, "What do you think is wrong with her Joe?" I said, "I think I know what is wrong with her. She has what we call azturia. It comes from being stable bound and eating too much feed resulting in a paralysis across the back. Fred said, "What should I do?" I told him to get her into the stall and keep her absolutely quiet, cover her up and give her some salt peter. I also told him that he'd better get a veterinarian the next morning. This took about half or three quarters of an hour. By the time I got back the corporal looked at me and said, "You're a wise S.O.B., aren't you? Who the heck are you?" I said, "Corporal, I am Private Cribbins, 101st Cavalry Regiment," and let it go at that.

INTERVIEWER: Sounds exciting. One of the things I would like for you to relate is how the training that you received in those days equates to the training that our citizen soldiers receive today.

MR. CRIBBINS: In those days, as I remember, we did some guard duty in the squadron on the basis of a guard list. We served two weeks at summer camp and drilled in the squadron on horses every weekend. It was not mandatory every weekend, but those who did not participate often enough during weekend drills were dropped from the rolls. The training was by the book. It was difficult to exercise cavalry in New York City and Squadron A was right in the middle of the city. We did have a riding ring, but that was the extent of the training, except for the summer training. I would say that the squadron was much more of a social and a riding club than a fighting unit at the time I joined.

INTERVIEWER: Well it seems that recruiting was not a problem in those days?

MR. CRIBBINS: No, recruiting was not difficult for the squadron. You could get in if you wanted to. As I mentioned earlier, there was a board of five members who screened prospective members. In fact, Mr. Henry Stinson, who became Secretary of War, was at one time a member of the board.

INTERVIEWER: How long did you serve with Squadron A?

MR. CRIBBINS: Well, I had a rather unusual career. I was a private from 12 December 1940, until 1 January 1941. We were inducted into federal service on 27 January 1941. I made Private First Class on 1 February 1941 and went on to become Stable Sergeant which was a "Rocker" sergeant. There were only two "Rocker" sergeants; a first sergeant and a stable sergeant. Today, a stable sergeant would be equivalent to a sergeant E-5. I remained a stable sergeant from March 1941 until February or March 1942. At that time, we packed the horses into porte' vans, which had been used on the Red Maneuvers in the fall of 1940. We took them down to the remount station at Fort Monroe, Virginia and turned them back into the Quartermaster Corps thus becoming a fully mechanized cavalry regiment.

INTERVIEWER: You know our policy today is that the "first to fight is the first to be equipped." You mentioned that one of the squadrons was mechanized and had halftracks. Did they really have equipment at that time and if so, was it very much or just enough for them to train?

MR. CRIBBINS: They had halftracks and motorcycles and some jeeps. I would say that none of us had the

equipment that we were going to fight with. For example, during the Carolina maneuvers, a jeep would come up and that would be an enemy tank coming over the ridge. We had a thirty-seven millimeter gun which was used as an anti-tank gun. Believe it or not, we were still equipped with Enfield Rifles. They were on the books before the Springfield Rifles. Those Enfields had a kick like a big Missouri mule. We did not have any of the modern equipment. Obviously, we were unable to do much of anything and we found that out pretty quickly.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, you mentioned that the regiment was federalized in January 1941. Would you elaborate a bit on that process? What did you go through as a unit in terms of mobilizing and getting everyone ready for war?

MR. CRIBBINS: We were alerted early in January 1941. I was immediately called up and placed on guard duty in the squadron building. We were really getting ready for war since it was still about a year before Pearl Harbor. We were told that we were going to be moved to Camp Devens, now Fort Devens, Massachusetts where we would be stationed and trained as a horse-mech cavalry

regiment belonging to, I believe, the VI Corps which was in New England. We would be the reconnaissance regiment for the corps. We got our horses together and assembled all of our equipment and on 27 January 1941 we loaded into rail cars. It was one of the coldest nights I can remember. Because it was so cold the eggs that we had in our box lunches froze and broke on the way up. Only the horses survived really well that night. The next morning we arrived in Devens and unloaded the horses into straight stall stables that had been erected, practically overnight. The stable crew was placed in a shack and the rest of the regiment was put in brand new barracks. Shortly thereafter we began to train as a full regiment.

INTERVIEWER: When did you leave the regiment?

MR. CRIBBINS: I guess for the first time in my life I was given an IQ exam. I found that I could qualify for military service as an officer, so I was given the opportunity of going immediately to the Infantry or waiting for the Cavalry OCS. I decided since horses were my thing, I had better wait for the Cavalry. However, I didn't think that horses were going to be around for very long since we had already lost ours. I

was selected for the Cavalry school, went to OCS at Fort Riley, Kansas and became one of what were called "90-day wonders." I left the squadron in July 1942, and was commissioned in November 1942.

INTERVIEWER: What type of training did you receive at OCS?

MR. CRIBBINS: They were still teaching a horse course and a mechanized course. Since I had spent my early life with horses, I chose to attend the mechanized course. Interestingly, despite the fact that I had attended the mechanized course, my first assignment turned out to be the 1st Cavalry Division, where horses were still being used..

INTERVIEWER: I believe the 1st Cavalry Division was stationed at Fort Bliss when you reported for duty.

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes, the 1st Cav was at Bliss. Its units had just been drawn in from places like Ringold, Brownsville, and Clark, where they had been patrolling the border between Mexico and the United States. For the first time in a number of years, the 1st Cavalry Division had been finally assembled at Fort Bliss.

INTERVIEWER: So you were a new second lieutenant with 90 days of OCS training when you reported to the division. What was your first assignment there?

MR. CRIBBINS: Well, I reported in and I was assigned to the 2d Squadron, 12th Cavalry Regiment. I think in large part because the squadron S-3 and the regimental adjutant were from the 101st Cavalry and I knew them personally. So I think that my name turned up on one of their lists and I was assigned to that regiment.

INTERVIEWER: Do you recall who your first boss was when you arrived in the regiment?

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes. My first "immediate boss" was the sergeant major of Company G to which I was assigned. Having been a rocker sergeant for well over a year, I thought it was probably the greatest single demotion that one could get in the Army. I reported in and the sergeant major said, "Lieutenant, a couple of things -- I understand you have a horse background so you're going to be the stable lieutenant." He went on to say that Captain Dykeman (Company Commander), will see you tomorrow morning. He also told me that he and the CO

expected me for drill and gave me the hour of the morning to report. After telling me all of that, he said he really didn't expect to see me around the company in the afternoon and that payday was a day of leave. He said, "Do you have any questions?" Of course, I was then dismissed after having no questions.

INTERVIEWER: When you reported in to the 1st Cavalry Division, it was ironic that a sergeant major told you what you were going to be doing. I know that you were not happy about that, but tell me a bit about the regiment that you had just joined.

MR. CRIBBINS: Well, as I said before, I thought it was the worst demotion that I had ever had in my life. I grant you that we were dressed pretty. We had britches, boots and Sam Brown belts and as officers in the cavalry we were part of an elite corps in those days. However, when I looked around and saw the caliber of the average regular Army soldier compared to the young men that I just left under the 101st Cavalry Regiment, it was like night and day. The old regular Army was not a very attractive place to be in those days and I'm afraid that it showed up in the rank and

file of the soldiers. As it turned out, the 1st Cavalry pulled people together and made absolutely super soldiers of them as it had done throughout history. As a matter of fact, they had a pretty rigorous screening process and got rid of the deadwood, but kept the good people. There were some super non-commissioned officers who had 15 to 20 years of service as non-commissioned officers in the Regular Army. I must say, it was an enlightening experience for a second lieutenant out of a relatively rout-order outfit like the 101st Cavalry Regiment of the New York National Guard. Although the 101st did very well on maneuvers there was an entirely different kind of discipline in the Regular Army.

INTERVIEWER: You said earlier that the 101st Regiment was somewhat of a different breed, i.e., rather elite. How would you characterize the rank and file of the 1st Cavalry Division when you reported in?

MR. CRIBBINS: Quite different. When I first reported in, we were just beginning to get draftees as a result of the Burke-Wadsworth Act which established conscription. Further, we still basically had the old Regular Army 1st Cavalry Division. It was, I was led

to believe, what you expected to find in a Regular Army Division. There were super officers who were West Pointers, ROTC cadets and young officers coming in with various skills learned in the civilian community. The noncommissioned officers were well versed and knew their jobs, but by and large had very little imagination. We had great difficulty getting them to pass their IQ Test of 110, which was a requirement to become an officer. We wanted to make officers of many of those men who were the stalwarts among their peers. The rank and file of the enlisted man was, if you were to categorize them today, considered to be mental Category IV.

INTERVIEWER: You said that the Division had the peacetime mission of border patrol. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, did the Division retain its mission of border patrol or did it start to train for war?

MR. CRIBBINS: When I reported to the Division it was really preparing for war. I think that between the Louisiana maneuvers in which the 1st Cavalry Division participated and the Carolina maneuvers in which the 101st Regiment trained, it was established that horses

would have little usefulness in World War II. So the 1st Cavalry Division was in the process of really winding down its era of being a horse cavalry division and was about to become an infantry division. Interestingly, we were also beginning to get draftees and my first job was teaching equitation to the draftees. I joined the division in late November 1942 and we didn't lose the horses till about February 1943. I taught urban or big city draftees how to ride horses during the day and I spent the night teaching Texans who had never seen water how to swim. Now that was quite a chore. I guess I taught more people how to ride horses than were in my squadron.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, earlier you talked about the Carolina and the Louisiana Maneuvers. You said that during both maneuvers it was determined that horses had no place on the battlefield of the future. Would you comment on your experiences during the Carolina maneuvers?

MR. CRIBBINS: I think the Carolina maneuvers were my first real experience with logistics. We had maneuvered and ridden all over New England prior to going down to North Carolina in August 1941. One of

the first things we had to do was load our horses and equipment aboard our porte' vans. A porte' van carried eight horses and a squad of eight men, and was pulled by a tractor. Each cavalry squadron was equipped with enough porte' vans to carry and mobilize the horses on the highway. The mechanized squadron drove halftracks over the highways or moved by rail. Because we were routed over the Skyline Drive, in Virginia, it was quite an experience. The tractors were underpowered and it made for a long trip. If you could imagine the tight quarters with eight horses who would stand all day side by side. There was no partition between them, only a partition between the four forward and the four aft. The eight troopers sat on a bench up on top of the trailer. When we finally got down to the maneuvers, we were given the job of reconnoitering or protecting a flank of the maneuvering Army. When other soldiers would rest for the night, we had to take care of our horses before we took care of ourselves. On the weekend, we would wind up on one flank of the Army, and before Monday morning exercise began, we would be on the other flank some 150 miles away. So by the time we finished the maneuvers, I think it had been proven that if you were going to use cavalry in that fashion, the horse had outlived his usefulness.

INTERVIEWER: Would you talk briefly about some of the training that occurred in the 1st Cavalry Division while it prepared for war?

MR. CRIBBINS: OK. The 1st Cavalry Division, as a Regular Army division, was far better trained than anything I had seen in the National Guard. Although the caliber of people may have been different, the caliber of training was also very, very different. The 1st Cavalry knew how to operate as a cavalry division. "Lee's Lieutenants" which I had studiously worked with in OCS at Fort Riley, Kansas, was still vital for the horse cavalry. When I arrived at the 1st Cavalry Division, I had a pretty good tactical background as a non-com in the 101st Cavalry Regiment and result of an excellent OCS at Fort Riley. However, I still had a great deal to learn. The way the 1st Cavalry Division rode, maneuvered, drilled and bivouaced in the desert at night or fought during the day was all new and most interesting to me. It was much more difficult to convince the cavalrymen in the 1st Cavalry Division than those in the 101st Cavalry Regiment that losing their horses was the right thing to do. I think that one of the telling things that really convinced the cavalrymen to become infantrymen was extended training

in the desert. During training exercises lasting several days, every trooper had to dig his horse in before he dug himself in. That tended to make infantrymen out of cavalrymen quicker than anything else. [End Tape C-208, Side 1]

[Begin Tape C-208, Side 2]

INTERVIEWER: Sir, you were discussing earlier the transition of the various Cavalry units. I'd like you to focus on the transition of the 1st Cavalry Division from the horse cavalry to infantry.

MR. CRIBBINS: Are you talking about the 1st Cavalry Division now?

INTERVIEWER: Yes Sir.

MR. CRIBBINS: The 1st Cavalry Division's transition from horse cavalry to infantry meant that we would take all cavalry tactics and convert them to infantry tactics by fighting on foot as infantrymen. Actually, other than the training on horses, much of the training that we learned in the cavalry really applied to the infantry. In other words, what we were doing was maneuvering very fast on horse instead of on foot. In

fact, we were fighting as true infantrymen. But it was a difficult thing to prepare for the tropics in the Pacific while training on the desert of El Paso, Texas. However, that was the only place we had because the transition went very fast. We actually transitioned in training by the simple expedient of removing the horses. We did not transition organizationally or otherwise. Let me explain very briefly. We lost the horses in March 1943. By May 1943, I set out with the forward echelon of the 1st Cavalry Division to Australia. We were put on railcars and sent to Camp Roberts, California. We then moved on, to the debarkation point outside of San Francisco where we boarded the Maui and sailed across the Pacific to Brisbane, Australia. We arrived in June 1943 and established a working camp consisting of tents, facilities and training areas outside of Brisbane at a place called Strathpine. Between June and December 1943, the 1st Cavalry Division really trained in infantry tactics, particularly in jungle fighting and in amphibious warfare. The training was done in the semi-tropical forest around Brisbane and near Newcastle, where we did amphibious training. Members of the Australian forces who had been engaged in jungle warfare provided the cadre for our training. I would

say that the real transition of the 1st Cavalry from horses to infantry was accomplished in Australia between the early summer of 1943 and December of 1943. Shortly thereafter, we deployed to Oro Bay, New Guinea and spent another two months training in New Guinea before we deployed to the Admiralty Islands for our first taste of combat.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, let me go back to the time that the Division got orders (in February 1943) alerting it of its ultimate assignment in the Pacific. What were people's attitudes like once the news of the deployment arrived?

MR. CRIBBINS: Unusual to put it mildly. Here we had a division that had been literally assigned to that part of Texas and the southwest throughout its lifetime, going back to the Civil War. There was the tradition of the Gary Owen or 7th Regiment and the job of patrolling the border and being a horse cavalry unit. Now an infantry division, it was about to be deployed to the Pacific in an entirely different environment and type of warfare. The division was made up, as I have indicated before of largely Regular Army soldiers, but greatly supplemented by draftees. Also, the division's

hierarchy, senior leaders and staff officers were changed. For instance, Brigadier General William C. Chase became the first brigade commander. We had a change in regimental commanders with Colonel (later General) Sadler taking over the 12th Cavalry Regiment. Major General Hoffman, then Colonel Hoffman, took command of the 5th Cavalry Regiment. General Innis P. Swift, who was the Division Commander, held a review on horseback. I guess it was one of the final ones and it was really impressive. It was held at Armstrong Field. Can you just picture a division, I'm guessing it was about 10,000 people, on horseback, on Armstrong Field? There was a battalion of artillery with mules and pack artillery. I'll always remember this particular formation because I was then a Platoon Leader and Stable Lieutenant. Sitting on a horse at the head of my platoon, I watched General Swift as he made a review of the division on horseback. The mounted review was the most impressive single thing that I've ever seen in my life. It was the end of an era for us, but I didn't recognize it then because I hadn't been part of the beginning of that era. It was a sight to see that whole field full of horses and mules with a division completely mounted with their guidons -- it felt, really like a different way of life. I wouldn't have

missed that review for anything. Let me pick up from there. We were alerted in February 1943. The division was dismounted, except for the division staff, the regimental commanders, and the division commander. We then had a dismounted review of the division and by this time General Swift had received his new staff members from Washington. Many of whom had probably not ridden a horse, or if they had, it had been many years since they'd ridden one. General Swift sat on his big thoroughbred while we were standing at attention. Then he conducted his inspection at a full gallop with the staff trailing. When he came around the second time, it was a sight to behold. General Swift was way out in front of the staff in a full gallop. The sergeant major of the division, who was carrying the guidon, was hanging on to the guidon for dear life with the colors trailing behind him. The G-3 had hit the dust about the time they came around the first lap. I remember one of the staff officers came around upside down with his two legs and his arms wrapped around the neck of the horse while facing upward. The rest of the staff never did appear. They'd all fallen off their horses. I think that General Swift enjoyed that more than any review he had ever held because he was quite a horseman. I'm sure that he enjoyed every bit of it.

He was showing what a cavalryman should be despite the fact that we were no longer cavalry.

INTERVIEWER: What do you recall most about General Swift? Obviously he was quite a horseman and I'm sure a dynamic leader.

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes. I saw a lot of General Swift mainly because I became an escort for the youngest Swift daughter. I rode in the coyote or fox hunts that we had on Sunday morning. Being a horseman with a lot of background, I fitted well into the hunt or what was really a drag hunt, one where animal scent is dragged along the ground. So I got to know the Swift family as well as a second lieutenant could have in those days. Occasionally, I escorted young Pamela Swift to some of the formal affairs that occurred in the Division. General Swift, as a Division Commander, was probably last of a breed of cavalry soldiers who had really been dedicated to the cavalry all of his life. He was a fine horseman, a great gentleman, a good soldier, a top-notch soldier. He certainly proved that in the war in the Pacific and eventually became corps commander.

INTERVIEWER: Since we are talking about the senior leaders in the 1st Cavalry Division, what would you say about the quality of the officer corps in the division?

MR. CRIBBINS: I'd say absolutely super. It was tough to become an officer assigned to the 1st Cavalry in the first place. One became an officer after completing OCS, West Point or ROTC at such places as VMI (Virginia Military Institute), The Citadel, or Texas A&M. Texas A&M provided a large number of cavalry officers to the 1st Cavalry Division. I believe it probably had the largest ROTC of any college or university in the United States. I would say that the officers in the 1st Cavalry Division were just the reverse of those in the 101st Regiment. For the most part, the National Guard officers did not have the training or the dedication to the Army that the officers in the 1st Cavalry Division had. The kind of officers who were in the 1st Cavalry Division, before and during my time, people such as General Creighton Abrams, or General Mike Davidson, or for that matter any number of officers that had been in the Army were absolutely top-notch and it was especially true of the officers in the 1st Cavalry Division. They had in large measure, made the

difference in the 1st Cavalry Division being the super outfit that it was.

INTERVIEWER: You stated before that there were people who came from Washington to staff the Division headquarters. Could you elaborate on who those people were and what they brought to the division in terms of capabilities and skills?

MR. CRIBBINS: Well, it was pretty evident that they all had an infantry background and were, I believe to a man, infantry officers. I'd say that the staff of the 1st Cavalry Division that resulted in the change over from cavalry to infantry was greatly enhanced by the caliber of the officers that were sent out there. To the best of my knowledge there was not one of those officers who fell by the wayside in combat other than being wounded. Certainly, none that I know of were ever relieved.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, were you still a platoon leader when you deployed as part of the advanced party that landed at Brisbane, Australia?

MR. CRIBBINS: Well, at the time that we went to Australia, I became S2/3 of the 2d squadron, 12th Cavalry Regiment. In fact I deployed to Australia in that capacity rather than as platoon leader. The squadron commander at that time was Lieutenant Colonel Tuckerman, whom we called "Tubby." He came out of the 101st Cavalry Regiment and I'd known him when I was a member of that outfit. He was put in charge of the entire advance party and when we got to Australia, he became the G-3 of the division.

INTERVIEWER: You were there approximately two months prior to the arrival of the remainder of the division. What kind of challenges did the division's closing present to the advance party?

MR. CRIBBINS: The biggest single challenge was one of construction. We spent two months really working around the clock constructing a camp for the entire division to occupy. The whole objective of the advance party was to construct a camp where the 1st Cavalry Division could fall in on since it would be there for some period of time while training before being committed to combat. Australia was in very rough straits because it was not the least bit certain that

the Japanese were not going to invade Northern Australia. They were already in New Guinea and had occupied the surrounding islands. There was every indication that their next thrust was going to be right into Australia. So our objectives, and I was not really privy to all of this at the time, I guess we had really two objectives. The first was to train ourselves just as quickly as we possibly could to accomplish whatever fighting was needed on an offensive operation, and second to be prepared to assist in defending Australia if that became necessary.

INTERVIEWER: So you saw the division having a two-fold mission -- act as a deterrent against an invasion while preparing for war?

MR. CRIBBINS: I believe that is correct because it was pretty evident from the newspapers that the Australians were very, very concerned that the Japanese were about to move in on them. The Australian armed forces had been in the desert fighting Rommel, but they were brought back home once the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

INTERVIEWER: You bring in a new chapter in training. You mentioned that the division trained in amphibious operations. Would you comment on who conducted the training and how well that training was received by members of the 1st Cavalry?

MR. CRIBBINS: The training was tough, but well received by members of the division. The Australians really conducted the training in amphibious operations down in a place called Newcastle in Australia. They all had had wartime experience as did those who conducted jungle warfare training. And of course members of the Australian divisions that had fought in Northern Africa during the early days of the war contributed to our infantry training.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, do you recall when the Division deployed to Oro Bay in New Guinea? Could you tell me about some of the highlights of that deployment?

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes. I recall exactly, it was December 1943. My element was placed on a liberty ship which was small by today's standards for a cargo ship. We were each given a six by two pallet of plywood which consisted of our bunk and our bedroll or whatever for

our 12-day journey. One of the things that I remember well was the fact that our 1st Cavalry Division was still largely Hispanic and Catholic. As it turned out, I was one of the officers who was Roman Catholic. Since we did not have a priest with us, I was asked by Colonel Stadler the regimental commander, if I would hold some sort of a service. I believe that most of our soldiers certainly felt the need for some sort of Sunday service. Recognizing my very limited capabilities in the religious arena, I did say Rosary with the soldiers. The first job that we had in Oro Bay was to construct another camp. We trained in New Guinea from late December or very early in January 1944, until we went into the Admiralty Islands which must have been in the February 1944 time frame.

INTERVIEWER: The troops must have sensed that they were getting closer to war as a result of the training in Australia and New Guinea. Can you describe what the morale, attitudes and feelings were like among members of the 1st Cavalry Division since they had been training intensively for over eight months and had not seen combat?

MR. CRIBBINS: Well the morale was super. For the first time, I think the troops across the board in the 1st Cavalry Division began to realize that they were in Australia with a purpose. When we arrived in New Guinea they knew that our engagement in combat was imminent since that was what we had been training to do. The training in Australia was tough. The Aussies were tough. Looking back at the Aussies, I have to believe that Australians in 1943, while we were there, really epitomized the type of Americans that I believe existed before the turn of the century. They were, as they put it, cobbers. They were tough cobbers, well disciplined soldiers and were probably the cream of the fighting men anywhere in the world in my estimation. Some of the training that we had in Australia was rougher than some of the actual combat that we had later on. We did lose a few soldiers during amphibious operations and jungle training. We did amphibious operations on a ship called the Westralia off the coast of Newcastle. We deployed in rubber boats and LCMs and learned how to prepare and make an amphibious landing under fire. I recall when General Chase had the brigade down in Newcastle where we were doing amphibious training. He made some comment during one of our night sessions when we had the officers together

running a pre-brief on the next exercise or a back-brief on the previous exercise. He told the Australians that he thought the amphibious training and operations could be greatly improved if some equipment available elsewhere were made available to the troops training at Newcastle. He wasn't being really critical, but was making an observation. Without hesitation, one of the Australian lieutenants stood up and said, "From my position General, if I had your stars and bars I'd make it happen." (laughter) With that, the General said that maybe he did have the requirement to make it happen. However, we got along great with the Aussies. I must say that the 1st Cavalry did fit in well with the Australian climate and people.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I'm going to bring you up to February 1944 or about the time the 2d Squadron of the 5th Cavalry Regiment was about to launch the initial attack on the Admiralty Islands. What do you recall about the preparation for and the actual attack of those islands?

MR. CRIBBINS: The 2d Squadron, 5th Cavalry went in as the assault element. I recall that the Admiralty

Islands were considered strategic in General MacArthur's campaign to regain control of the theatre. These islands commanded the sea lanes down toward New Guinea and other Japanese-held places such as New Britain and New Ireland. It was important for us to possess the Admiralty Islands to control the sea and air lanes. Moreover, control enabled us to establish an airstrip from which B-17s, our primary bombers and the B-24s could operate. I guess the B-24s were more prevalent than the B-17s at that time and the B-29s hadn't arrived yet. So the 2d Squadron, 5th Cavalry Regiment was chosen as the assault echelon to attack Los Negros Island backed up by the rest of the 5th Cavalry Regiment and the 12th Cavalry Regiment. As I remember, the 1st Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division was given the mission of taking Los Negros which was the Eastern most island of the Admiralty chain. Manus Island being the largest and most critical to General MacArthur's strategy, was to be taken by the 2d Brigade under General Verne D. Mudge. General Chase, went in with the 2d Squadron of the 5th Cavalry Regiment. It had been reputed, from the viewpoint where we were in the ranks, and later I learned from GHQ that it was going to be a relatively easy landing. It was an unusual amphibious operation since the 5th Cavalry was

deployed with a combination of destroyers and other craft and were actually landed in almost a non-combat role. It seems that intelligence had said that there would not be a great deal of opposition. But not too long before, the Air Force, either ours or the Australians had knocked out a ship that was taking some 5,000 Japanese and Korean soldiers off the Admiralty Islands to deploy them elsewhere. The ship was knocked out, but those 5,000 tough soldiers were still there. So it became a very tough operation on the 5th Cavalry Regiment. I remember they had a pretty rough time there for a few days while they tried to gain a toe hold on Los Negros. They had about a hundred yards of beach and that was about it. The Japanese were attacking 24-hours a day with ground Kamikaze (suicide) attacks and really trying very hard to run them off. The artillery consisted of Navy three and five inch guns. Knowing the trajectory and the flat beach you kept your head down or you got it taken off because the Japanese were right on top of us all the time. I know one of my friends in the 5th Cavalry said that he was sitting in a revetment one night and he really did not know if they were going to last through the night because they only controlled a small stretch of beach. While on the small stretch of beach, they were getting

pounded around the clock by the Japanese who had suicide squads coming in that either died or took the position they were aiming for. Fighting had been intense when some GIs who were dug in a revetment, had heard over a short wave radio that San Francisco had just got news that General MacArthur had landed on the Admiralty Islands and the situation was well in hand. One GI with a New York accent said, "Golly that makes me feel better. You know I was getting worried." The reconnaissance in force turned out to be quite a fight. Another thing worth mentioning concerned General MacArthur. The word had gone out that he was known by some of the other services as Dugout Doug. Let me assure you of one thing. I believe that the man was without fear. I don't think he knew what the word fear meant. He came ashore with his scrambled egg hat and his khakis while the Japanese were all over the place. We were all dressed without benefit of any insignia. Wearing insignia was sudden death. Carrying a Browning Automatic Rifle, or a .45 caliber pistol was sudden death. The Japanese were obviously instructed to take out people carrying those weapons. However, General MacArthur came ashore and walked up and down that place as if there wasn't a Japanese anywhere within miles. The people who were escorting him were trying, without

making a big issue of it, to stay far away from him while he walked up and down that beach and surveyed all he saw. Quite a man. Unbelievable!

INTERVIEWER: One report that I read said he was on Los Negros Island within six or seven hours of the initial attack.

MR. CRIBBINS: That's correct.

INTERVIEWER; I'm curious about the quality of intelligence. You said the Admiralty Island chain were of strategic importance; yet intelligence said that the enemy was moving on. What turned out to be a reconnaissance in force mission was really quite a fight.

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes. I think the intelligence was faulty. I'm saying this from all the word that we got as troops. Don't forget that I was still S2/3 of the Squadron Combat Team. I was not privy to the higher echelons of intelligence. The word that we got was that while the Admiralty Islands were important, Los Negros was going to be a relatively easy capture because there were administrative forces there. As it

turned out, the Japanese were there in force. They were tough and they were joined by some large Koreans who were also tough soldiers.

INTERVIEWER: One thing that you mentioned was the fact that you did receive tough training. Based on what you've told me thus far, I believe your training paid off extremely well. There was a lot of hard fighting on what became the first of many successful campaigns.

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes. Well first on the training. The training was tough. It was hazardous and didn't pull any punches. Training in some ways, as I said earlier was tougher than actual combat. During the early 30's when I was a steeplechase jockey I would run five miles a day, and really thought that I was fit as I could be. Looking back at that training I was in better shape when I went into the Admiralty Islands than I had been as a steeplechase jockey. We were trained physically and mentally in such a fashion that we were really prepared to fight when we went in. The training made the difference. That's what it was all about. I think it is important to note that the 1st Cavalry Division, a four-square division with two brigades, consisting of four regiments, hardly had two people in the same squad

with the same type of weapon. Everyone took the weapon of his choice whether it was a carbine, an M-1 rifle, a Browning Automatic Rifle, a bazooka, you name it. We had them all. It must have looked like a haphazard outfit. However, the people were well trained in jungle warfare and it seemed to work very well. Of course the American soldier, I do believe, has got a certain amount of individuality. If you give him good leaders, train him well and discipline him, he'll show a lot of initiative. It was very interesting as to how you fought a war in the jungle. I've often thought about it and remember one thing that in the jungle there was so little visibility. The Japanese were ever present and you could not spot them because they were super artists in camouflage. The toughest thing ever was to be on point in a patrol. We found out very quickly that if you wanted to survive as part of a patrol you better be prepared to react very quickly. One of the ways we found to react very quickly was to make the point man a left hander then make the number two man a right hander or vice versa. The reason being that no matter which side of the jungle the fire or the threat came from you had an immediate response without having to turn around. We found out very quickly it worked a heck of a lot better than putting two right

handed or two left-handed guys up front in a patrol since one of them may have to spin around in order to counter something that required an immediate response. Another thing we did which became standard was to take the clips from any of our weapons that had clips, tape two down and one up so all you had to do was flip around the clip and slap it in. These things were not in the field manuals, but the GIs devised them very quickly and they worked very well. Another initiative on our part that we really plagiarized from the Japanese was to use 60mm mortars as knee mortars. It was a matter of holding them in hand and pointing and using Kentucky windage and aiming them in the direction of the enemy. We also had 81mm mortars which was part of our artillery. They were not too satisfactory when we would try to lay them close to the troops because we were as likely to hit them as we were to hit the enemy troops. I can remember one time in the jungle fighting in Los Negros when we got cut off for several days and we weren't sure where the dickens we were. We had to call in artillery at night or the Japanese would overwhelm us at night. In order to call in the artillery, there really was only one way to do it and that was to call the first round in exactly where you believed you were and hoped you weren't too accurate.

I called in the first round as I say and hoped to goodness I wasn't all that accurate. But the reason for calling it in that close was that if it landed more than 25-50 yards away in the jungle you did not know where it landed. When we dug in at night, we'd call the artillery in and have light flak coming in over the foxholes to help keep the Japanese out of our lines.

INTERVIEWER: At the tactical level, you have shown that not only did the tough training pay off, but initiative that the soldiers showed paid off as well. With so many different weapons, was logistical support for the operation a problem?

MR. CRIBBINS: Not too long after our initial combat, I wound up being the only original member of the squadron staff who had not been wounded or killed. So I became the S-4 as well as the S-2/S-3. The requirements were not very many. Actually, the logistics support for the 1st Cavalry Division which was in substance a very light division was adequate. We didn't need any vehicles, at least I am talking about the squadron in which I served. Really what our logistics requirements consisted of was Class V (ammunition). Ammunition consisted of small arms, grenades, 60mm and 81mm mortar

and artillery rounds. There was hardly a need for POL (petroleum, oils and lubricants), except what we might have used to heat food. If we heated it, we didn't do that very often because it was in the tropics. Food, which consisted of the K-rations and the C-ration which we subsisted on mostly. Logistic support was really not critical. The replacement of weapons was always necessary and they seemed to be readily available. Food consisted of C-rations. [End Tape C-208, Side 2]

[Begin Tape C-209, Side 1]

INTERVIEWER: Sir, you mean, that even though you had different types of weapons, you didn't have problems getting the ammunition for those weapons?

MR. CRIBBINS: No, as I remember we didn't have the problem. There was enough ammunition for all the weapons that had been issued to the division. The fact was, we just didn't have any standard TOEs [Tables of Organization and Equipment]. When we went on shore, we still had farriers who were horseshoers. The farriers were still part of the division. Remember now, we had a square division with two brigades and four regiments.

We did not reorganize once we got rid of the horses. As I remember, since we really didn't know what to do with horse shoers, we gave them bazookas. I guess it was expected that we would sooner or later run into Japanese vehicles. Well, on the Admiralty Island Campaign, or at least part of it, we never did see a Japanese vehicle because it was all jungle fighting. However, the farriers with bazookas became targets for the Japanese. In fact, any person who had anything distinguishing such as a Browning automatic rifle or a bazooka, officer insignia, field glasses or a .45 caliber pistol, that person became an immediate target for snipers who were everywhere. As a result thereof, we very quickly depleted the farrier population because carrying a bazooka turned out to be very hazardous business. We didn't know that this was going to happen. It happened very quickly. The other thing was, since we had nothing except "C" or K-rations and didn't have any class A rations for a long period of time, our cooks fought along with everyone else. When we eventually did get class A rations to the cook, we found we didn't have any cooks left. Also, and this was very interesting, one of our best soldiers turned out to be Captain Williams who was a medical doctor. In this "dog eat dog" war no one recognized the medics,

certainly the Japanese didn't recognize them as being different from the rest of the soldiers. I remember lying along side of Captain Williams at one particular spell of combat and he was about as good a combat arms soldier that you could wish for and he was an honest to goodness medical doctor.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, can you draw some parallel between what happened during the Admiralty Campaign and the way we plan to fight the air land battle?

MR. CRIBBINS: I think one of the most interesting things about the Admiralty Campaign was General MacArthur's strategy, which I had the opportunity to observe first hand when I was assigned to his headquarters. The strategy was to by-pass strong points and critical islands where he could establish forward operating bases for the air corps and protect sea lanes. The way General MacArthur fought the war in the Pacific turned out to be a war of logistic deprivation of the Japanese forces by picking off places such as the Admiralty Islands, Biak and Leyte enroute towards the Philippines which was his goal at the time. A couple of things happened here though that I think were very important. First, casualties, using

General MacArthur's strategy, were really minimal when you compare them with the casualties that were suffered in the Central Pacific, particularly in places like Saipan and Iwo Jima. I am not qualified to be critical of how the battles were fought or why the same strategy was not used in those particular places. Second, as we moved up through the island groups under General MacArthur's command, the Japanese became very hard pressed to get petroleum and rubber from the East Indies which was their major supply source. I understand that the Japanese were dropping 55 gallon drums of petroleum into the current in Java hoping that the drums would get to Japan because they couldn't get a tanker through. Now to answer your question, if I look at the air land battle as I have seen it portrayed, I would suggest that we may very well be faced with having to fight in isolated pockets. In many instances what we may be doing is fighting out of those pockets and cutting off or getting cut off from our logistic support. I cannot envision any future war that is going to be pursued with any degree of success without recognizing the absolute necessity of getting logistic things in or around enemy-held territory. Every time I get another briefing on land warfare or warfare under the air land battle doctrine, it strikes

me more and more that it seems to be a repeat of General MacArthur's strategy in the Pacific.

INTERVIEWER: How did we maintain control of the air and sea lanes so that we could ensure that our forces were logistically supported, particularly the 1st Cav?

MR. CRIBBINS: I think that initially General MacArthur was not very enthused about the air corps as an operational element. It had become quite evident that the war in the Pacific was a sea war. After Pearl Harbor, almost all of the major battles occurred at sea. We controlled the air with a terrific air corps under General George Kinney. He really became very close to General MacArthur and convinced him of the great value of air power. Now General MacArthur may have been, and I am just guessing on this, turned off during the loss of the Philippine Islands when all the B-17 bombers or most of the Air Force in the Philippines was knocked out before it ever got off the ground. But General Kinney certainly brought him around down in Australia. By the time we were moving up through the islands, the first goal on any island was to seize or build an air strip to accommodate fighters and subsequently accommodate bombers. In the

interim, fighters from the navy carriers provided close air support. I remember well during fighting on Leyte for example, Marine Corps fighters made the difference between success and failure for the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, you left the division after the Admiralty Island Campaign. Where were you assigned?

MR. CRIBBINS: I was assigned to General MacArthur's headquarters. It was 30-60 days or maybe a little longer than that, after the Admiralty Island Campaign. At the time, I had amoebic dysentery and dropped down to somewhere around 100 pounds. In addition, I guess this old steeplechase injury, which occurred back in 1933, caught up with me and my days as an infantryman were numbered. I was evacuated to Oro Bay in New Guinea when my orders caught up with me and I joined General MacArthur's headquarters in late September or early October 1944, just before we went into Leyte. My regimental commander recommended me to one of his friends who was in the Transportation Regulating Office for the theater. That gentleman was Colonel Charles Unger.

INTERVIEWER: What were your duties?

MR. CRIBBINS: I was a First Lieutenant. My civilian background had been completely horse oriented. I had a high school education and had not been to college. I'd been a steeplechase jockey, operated a stable, had been in the horse cavalry and an infantryman. I was transferred into the transportation element at General MacArthur's headquarters and I literally became a transporter overnight. My duties were those of an air movements understudy. I believe it had been the desire for me to get an orientation in the Transportation Regulating Office, then move into one of the stations. The people who were already in the Regulating Office had been recruited from civilian airlines and had a great deal of background in air transport. At that time, the theater had a scheduled air transport system operating from Melbourne, Australia through New Guinea. As we moved forward, we would immediately establish another station and eventually we were running the longest scheduled airline in the world with some 125 C-47s.

INTERVIEWER: Would you explain the intra-theater air transport system which was something new to us. Also, talk a little bit about some of the challenges that were faced from your perspective.

MR. CRIBBINS: We had two kinds of intra-theater air transport at that time. We had about 125 Douglas-built C-47s which we called "gooney birds" that were operating on a scheduled basis from Melbourne, Australia with stop over points that were critical to the theater and within range of the gooney birds. The C-47 carried 5,000 pounds of cargo, 21 people or a combination thereof. I forget its exact range, but it was not very far by today's standards. Therefore, we had a lot of way stations along its route which eventually led to the Philippines. This scheduled air transport carried critical cargo such as medical supplies or anything else that could fit within the confines of a relatively small aircraft with limited capabilities in both cube and weight. In addition, the theater had some 600 Fairchild C-46s which carried just about twice the amount of cargo and had a larger body. The C-46s belonged to the Air Corps. The "gooney birds," and this is interesting, belonged to the Air Traffic Command, which was a predecessor of the Military Airlift command. The Fairchild birds belonged to the theater, but they were under the Air Corps which, of course, became the Air Force. It was interesting that General MacArthur's headquarters had absolute control of the scheduled airlines. We

designated where it went, what the schedules were and what the priorities were. The 600 C-46s were under the command of General Kinney, who was the commander of the theater Air Force. We could call upon those birds on a case-by-case basis to support an operation. There were only two modes of transportation in the theater. It was either sea or air or you didn't get there.

INTERVIEWER: What role did the Army element play in controlling what was being moved?

MR. CRIBBINS: Well, interestingly, the reason I wound up in the Transportation Regulating Office was the fact that it was run by a bunch of cavalrymen. At the head was Colonel Unger, his deputy Colonel Whipple, and Colonel Culp, who was third in line were all cavalrymen. So to answer your question, this scheduled airline was run by a bunch of cavalrymen with action officers who were conscripts from the commercial airlines. They were really the base of knowledge except for the chief for whom I worked. He was a Colonel Troutman, a Regular Army engineer, who had been with General MacArthur's headquarters from the time that it was established down in Brisbane.

INTERVIEWER: General MacArthur is considered one of our great captains. It must have been exciting working on his staff. Did you get to see much of him?

MR CRIBBINS: I didn't see that much of him, but I did meet him towards the end of my tour. But let me come back to that later. I'd like to say something else first. On 20 October 1944, General MacArthur landed in Leyte in the Philippines. He literally landed there and you will see pictures of him walking ashore with General Romulo of the Philippine Army. But anyway he walked ashore knee deep in water in his usual attire with the first half of one of the outfits that landed at a place called Tacloban. That really was General MacArthur's return to the Philippines. I am sure you remember his claim when he left there that "I shall return." At that time an essential element of his headquarters was moved into Tacloban and immediately set up a forward echelon. I remained back in Finschhafen with a colonel from the Transportation Regulating Office. I was the one person in the Air Transport element because the other two people who had air transport experience had moved with the forward element. I guess it was a week or two after they had moved forward when we received a flash message from

General Kreuger, Commander of Eighth Army. The message said that he was on Ormoc which was the western side of Leyte and that the First Cavalry Division was about to make an amphibious assault on a very critical place. The message went on to say that he had the absolute necessity to have amphibious equipment immediately to get his jeeps, 3/4 ton and whatever else he had ashore to successfully execute this amphibious landing. We were just preparing to move the rest of General MacArthur's headquarters forward so when this flash message came in I immediately looked for the colonel and couldn't find him. In fact, I couldn't find anyone. It seems that everyone had vanished except for the adjutant general who really had no idea of what was needed. Here I was a first lieutenant who knew nothing about air transport, but knew something about amphibious operations and ground combat and had to make a choice of what to do. We had just secured the loan of eight C-54s (a four engine plane which later became a DC-4 commercial airplane) from the European Theater. They were on loan for the Philippine operation to move General MacArthur's headquarters and to provide logistic support. Its capability exceeded that of aircraft we had in the theater. I believe there were four or five of these birds loaded and waiting to take

off with General MacArthur's remaining staff elements. I couldn't find anyone who was in a position to make a determination as to what should be done. So I guess figuring I didn't have much of a career in the Army anyway and knowing that General Kreuger really needed the equipment badly, I off loaded General MacArthur's headquarters. Later that night I went down to the air strip and helped them load all of this amphibious equipment on the aircraft and left General MacArthur's staff sitting back at Finschhafen. I guess the decision must have been all right because I never received a reprimand for it. I didn't get any accolades either, but General Kreuger did send a note of thanks stating that he did get his amphibious equipment and was able to conduct the operation. I often thought afterwards that if I had been a Regular Army officer with a career in front of me, I might have given it a second thought. As it was, I just did what I thought needed doing. Well, you had asked me a question that I didn't answer.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, did you ever get to see General MacArthur when you worked in his headquarters?

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes. I actually saw him twice. He was an unusual soldier, officer, general and gentleman in many ways. One thing was true, he manned the theater with a handful of people that were close to him. The first time I saw him occurred between the dropping of the first and second atomic bomb. I do believe that he did not know when the first atomic bomb was dropped. Project Manhattan was kept that much of a secret. When he gave a speech to the people assembled in the headquarters in Manila, he told us about the atomic bomb and what it meant. His delivery was very warm and eloquent, and he really came over as a much warmer person than I had believed him to be. I was walking down the steps at the Manila Post Office one morning when I saw him a second time. I looked and there he was coming up the steps. He stopped and I stopped, stood at attention and saluted him. He then came up and stood on the same step with me. I guess my greatest surprise ever was that I was just about 5'10" and so was General MacArthur. General DeGaulle was about 6'6" and certainly all the pictures I had seen would indicate that General MacArthur was just as tall. At any rate, he stopped, said, "Good morning, Captain." I said, "Good morning, sir." Then he said, "Things are looking brighter. How long have you been here?" I

told him that I had been a combat arms officer and had transferred to his headquarters about a year earlier. We must have talked, I guess, four or five minutes, very informally. Finally he said, "Well, good morning, Captain. Hope to get you home soon." I said, "Yes, sir, thank you." I ran down the steps, went to my office and told my boss, "Truck, I want orders home." He said, "What's wrong with you? Have you gone psycho on me?" I said, "Truck, I have seen him and I have talked to him." He said, "I have been in this headquarters since it was formed in Brisbane. I have never seen him or talked to him." He said, "I'll make out your orders right away." (laughter).

INTERVIEWER: I take it you really enjoyed working for Colonel Troutman. What type of officer was he?

MR CRIBBINS: He was the senior fellow in air transport in General MacArthur's headquarters. Truck was a great guy despite the fact that he was not an air transporter. He was a good manager and soldier. A Regular Army Engineer officer. He entered the Army in about 1936 or 1937. He was a full colonel when I worked for him. While in Australia, he joined MacArthur's headquarters. Truck told a wonderful story

about being up in Western Australia as an engineer where he was largely responsible for putting in air strips. I believe that was one of the reasons he had gotten into the air transport business. As the story goes, he was riding in a jeep with a couple of Aussies and were going over this bumpy hardpan and a big red kangaroo jumped up. Kangaroos just don't hop over big obstacles, they skip and jump all over the landscape. So Truck casually pulled out his .45 and shot the kangaroo right between the ears with one bullet. As Truck says, he instantly became "Dead Eye Dick" in the fashion of the Western Aussies. That reputation followed him all through Australia. The things that he made sure of, he never again carried a .45 nor shot a kangaroo again. Truck was a great guy. I really enjoyed working with and for him. I lost track of him after the war, but he stayed on and went into Japan with General MacArthur's headquarters.

INTERVIEWER I take it then that you did not go on to Japan with the headquarters.

MR CRIBBINS: No. By the time the second atomic bomb had been dropped, having served as a combat arms officer and with over three years on the theater staff,

I had enough points accumulated to come home. I had not intended to stay in the Army. I took the opportunity of shipping out to the states with a Navy lieutenant, a lieutenant commander, an Army major and an Air Force field grade officer. We got on a TU-2 tanker that was going back home through the Panama Canal. Since we had command of the sea transport out of General MacArthur's headquarters, we took advantage and shipped out of the Philippines on that tanker spending 36 days at sea before landing in Galveston, Texas.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, did you serve on General MacArthur's staff until the end of the war?

MR CRIBBINS: Yes. I served on General MacArthur's staff until the end of the war. Shortly after sending the amphibious equipment to General Kreuger, we got a message for me to go up to Leyte in Philippines. There was a Navy commander, who I had to replace because he was medically evacuated. I assumed his duties and remained in the Transportation Regulating Office for the duration of the war.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any other significant lessons learned that you would like to share with me?

MR CRIBBINS: Yes. A couple of things I believe Mr. Manchester's book about General MacArthur has brought to the forefront. That man just did not believe that a Japanese ever lived that could kill him. I think that he was probably as close to being fearless as any person could be. I believe that he proved it in World War I and certainly in World War II. In fact, I will tell you a story. General MacArthur would go up to the roof with his corncob pipe and watch the Kamikaze attacks and sometimes he would take his surgeon with him. General MacArthur's surgeon was a huge man who weighed about 250 pounds. One morning he came down and told my boss, "Truck" Troutman, "You know, Troutman, that man thinks he has a halo. I just hope that halo is big enough for me, too." I believe that the Japanese had come to the belief that General MacArthur was truly an immortal person and they dedicated themselves to finding a way to kill him. At that time I believe that they felt that if they could kill General MacArthur, they could stave off our offensive campaigns. For instance, we set up a public address (PA) system so General MacArthur could broadcast from

the bridge of a cruiser before landing on Mindoro. When the landing was made, this was the last stop before going into Luzon, which would bring General MacArthur back to the Philippines. We set the PA system up and for whatever reason at the last minute, General MacArthur didn't go. A Kamikaze plane struck the bridge of that cruiser killing a British Lieutenant General who was the British senior officer in General MacArthur's headquarters. I think an admiral who was in charge of the task force and several others who were on the bridge were killed. But General MacArthur wasn't there. I think the Japanese and some of us began to think that maybe he did have something going for him. After the war the Japanese, in my estimation, really held General MacArthur in high esteem.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that you had made captain while you were assigned to General MacArthur's headquarters. Were you still in the cavalry at the time?

MR CRIBBINS: Oh, yes. I retained the cavalry insignia even though I was on the J-staff. I finished the war wearing the cavalry insignia because we did not wear General Staff insignia as we would now. I made captain

in December 1944 and there is a story that goes along with that. I was in Tulosa on Leyte not long after I made captain and in walked a lieutenant of the WAACS. She said her name was Helen Whitbeck and that she had to get to the Philippines immediately or the war was going to come to a screeching halt. I asked her what priority she had. She said she had a priority two which was a high priority and that she had come up from New Guinea and Biak and was enroute to Manila where she was going to become cable censor for the theater. Well, I took a good look at her and I raised her air priority from a two to a four. [End Tape C-209, Side 1]

[Begin Tape C-209, Side 2]

MR CRIBBINS: I told her there was considerable difficulty getting into Manila. As a matter of fact, there was because we were operating a B-25 courier which landed on MacArthur Boulevard since we really didn't control the air strip at Nichols Field in Manila in those days. The Japanese also controlled most of the city. I invited Helen to dinner in General MacArthur's mess and it was probably the best dinner she had had since she had hit the theater. At the same

time, I bought a bottle of gin from Captain Bill Smith, my Aussie roommate because I thought it would be nice to have a drink before dinner. I had not had a drink, I guess, in three years. At any rate, we went down to a beautiful beach in Tulosa, where Bill and I had a tent. She took one look at this Aussie and myself and said, "Sorry, but I do not drink." We did have dinner and I got to see Helen several times during the two weeks that she remained in Tulosa before she left for Manila. Of course, I subsequently saw her in Manila. We waited until we got home before we were married in February 1946. Next February it will be 42 wonderful years of marriage for us.

INTERVIEWER: Congratulations. Now let's talk about what you were looking forward to doing once you got back to the United States.

MR CRIBBINS: Well, when I came back, I guess my first thought was probably to go back into the horse business except for one thing. I do believe the Army showed me something that I think it has shown many young people. That is, I realized that I had a capability which I don't believe ever would have come out if I remained with horses. Maybe it would have, but at any rate, it

certainly wouldn't have come out as quickly as it did. I found out that I could do things other than be a horseman. I found out that there was a world other than horses, horses and horses. I really think that when I came home, I gave very serious consideration to doing something other than what I was doing when I went into the Army which was running a stable and riding horses 365 days a year. However, it was taken out of my hands while I was getting out of the service at Ft. Dix where I was being evaluated for amoebic dysentery and whatever else that had happened to me during the war. I did get a clean bill of health. While I was doing all those things, I was staying with some friends in Red Bank, New Jersey. About 10 o'clock one night, I received a phone call from Leigh Parker, who was then Vice President of Traffic for Delta Airlines. He said, "Captain Cribbins I'm Leigh Parker and I'm Vice President of Traffic for Delta Airlines." He went on to say, "You came home with Oscar Bergstrom who is a special assistant to the President of Delta." Oscar was the Army major I spoke of earlier who was one of our station people in Manila. Leigh Parker said, "Oscar tells me -- and he stopped and said -- "Captain Cribbins, I'm going to level with you. We are going into Chicago. We haven't been in the territory North

of the Mason-Dixon Line and we need someone who knows air transport. We really need a damn Yankee and according to Oscar you qualify on all counts. Are you interested?" I said, "Well, I certainly would be interested in talking to you." I said, "I'll be getting out of the service and I'm on terminal leave now." So I arranged to go down to Delta and I signed with them in December 1945. I went to work after the holidays and spent a month down in Atlanta, Georgia with Delta where they taught me how to speak southern. Then they sent me up to Chicago where I became their traffic representative. In those days Delta was a very small airline, but that was before they joined with Chicago Southern to become the large outfit that they are today.

INTERVIEWER: Were you still holding your Reserve commission? Did you have a commitment of any type that required you to report to active duty for training?

MR CRIBBINS: No. I was walking out of the hospital when I was cleared physically and told that I was then out of the Army. I was about to walk out when an officer, I forget his rank, stopped me and said, "Captain Cribbins, I looked over your record and it is

a very good one. Frankly, do you want to come back into the Army if we have another war? Do you want to come back as a Private?" I said, "Heck no." Well, he said, "May I suggest that you sign out with a Reserve commission." He didn't give me all the specifics,but it appeared that since I was a captain, that it would be prudent if I signed a Reserve commission. There was absolutely no commitment. I was inactive Reserve and I never put on a uniform until I was called back to active duty.

INTERVIEWER: You were working with Delta after the war and then you moved on to Nevada. What caused you to return to your first love?

MR CRIBBINS: Well, two things, I guess. One of them was the fact that Chicago did not recognize people who couldn't vote in Chicago. Veterans of World War II who were not natives of Chicago did not get preference on housing, so I was living in a place called Fox Lake which took about two and one-half hours commuting each way. One morning Helen came in when I was shaving and said, "Honey, do you love me?" We had been married less than a year at the time and I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Honey, it is 2 o'clock in the

morning." We were getting up at 4 or 4:30 AM in order to get down to the Loop for me to go to work at 9:00 A.M. and I said, "Honey, I think we have had enough of this." But let me tell you something logistics-wise about Delta because this is important. One of the jobs I had was advertising Delta around town, that is, talking to people who would be interested. We were also starting the personal credit cards for the airlines. My job was to promote them, Delta and especially air transport across the board. That was the job and I guess I was fairly well suited for it by that time. But at any rate, I walked into the Chicago Mail Order House and talked to the traffic manager. Chicago Mail Order House was a catalog house that was competitive with Sears Roebuck, which was Chicago based, or Montgomery Ward, which was Baltimore-based. Both Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward had depots in the southeastern United States. If someone ordered from a Sears or Montgomery Ward catalog, they got about 48 hours service from any one of those depots. Chicago Mail Order House didn't have the wherewithal to place that sort of a facility in the southeast. However, they were very interested in competing. By the time they got a catalog request and sent it by parcel post, train or whatever means they were just not competitive.

There was no such thing as Federal Express in those days. The traffic manager and I talked about this. I went back to Delta and asked what kind of an arrangement we could make and guarantee the fast air transport service between Chicago and our hubs in the southeast, consisting of Atlanta, Savannah, New Orleans and Jackson, Mississippi. I drew up a memorandum of agreement or a contract with the Chicago Mail Order House. Without benefit of a depot in the southeast, the Chicago Mail Order House became competitive with Sears and Montgomery Ward. Now it is interesting looking back, and I have said this before when I have been out speaking, that we talk today as if the idea of using an air lines of communication to preclude the necessity of having inventories at several locations where needed is a great idea. This was 1946, some 41 years ago and Delta Airlines, through air transport, was able to make Chicago Mail Order House competitive with Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward in southeastern United States without benefit of having a forward depot.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get a promotion as a result of your actions?

MR CRIBBINS: No. After the early morning incident I told you about, I talked to Helen and said, "I have had to spend five and one-half years in the Army, you've spent three, this seems to be a heck of a way to make a living." It was an attractive sort of business because of all the young college graduates. I was one of the exceptions since I was not a college graduate. The pay wasn't all that great, but the future of the airlines looked good. However, we decided to call it quits. In December 1946, I told Delta that I had enjoyed working for them, but that I didn't intend to make a career in the airline business. Secondly, I had been offered a job as a station manager for a radio station in Boise, Idaho. So Helen and I packed up and since we had no family or anything to worry about, we moved west. Helen originally came from Minneapolis, but had lived in New York and Reno, Nevada before the war. She really liked the west and that's where we headed.

INTERVIEWER: Did you go to Boise or to Reno?

MR CRIBBINS: I was suppose to go to Boise, Idaho to this radio station, but Helen took me by Reno first. I must say, I fell in love with that part of the world, but particularly Reno. I found that there were some

good looking horses out there. After having been in Boise, I thought that Reno was more affordable, so off to Reno we went. What I really did was get back into the horse business. I thought that I could train horses and send them back east and sell them to the eastern market as hunters, jumpers, show horses and even race horses. We brought a very small place -- I called it the only farm west of the Mississippi. It was about seven acres and just six miles south of Reno. We had irrigation rights, and found some good looking horses, started working them and sent them back east. That was my career at the beginning of 1947.

INTERVIEWER: You were in Reno when the trumpets of war sounded again and it was off to Korea. What do you remember about your recall to active duty?

MR CRIBBINS: I was in Reno and I realized one thing that I was badly deficient in was a college education. So while I was working with horses I enrolled in the University of Nevada's Department of Agriculture. When I was a youngster I had always hoped to become a veterinarian. Well, I recognized that that wasn't in the cards, but I had a pretty good animal husbandry background with horses and other animals so I went on

to major in animal husbandry. I helped to establish a Nevada Horse Show Association and became its first president. I guess I was training about four or five horses getting them ready to send. I took 20 credits at the University of Nevada in the Animal Husbandry Department. After the first semester, I taught a horse course for three credit hours for juniors, seniors and grad students. The purpose of the course being to convince these people that putting a quart of oats into a good horse that could potentially be worth money, and use them on the ranch, was better than putting a quart of oats in a horse that had no potential. So I was teaching breeds and breeding, feeds and feeding and it was very interesting. I was able to write my own books. I was taking 20 credits, teaching three, running a ranch, establishing the Nevada Horse Show Association, putting on horse shows and having a ball. It was a wonderful way to live. Then the Korean War came along in June '50. I thought that since I was now 36 years old and as a former combat infantryman turning the wrong side of the 30s by age that I would not be recalled. You see by this time, the Air Corps had parted from the Army. In 1947 they sent me a letter and asked if I was interested in joining the Air Force since I had an Air Transport MOS.

I said no, because I really wasn't interested in coming back in the service. So in May 1951 nearly a year after the war was declared, I was recalled back to active duty with 30 days to report down to Camp Roberts, California. I got an extension of 30 days to finish the class I was teaching so that the students could get credit for that class. The University helped me get that 30 day deferment. On 5 July 1951 I reported to Camp Roberts as a combat infantryman.

INTERVIEWER: Did you go directly to the theater of war from Camp Roberts?

MR CRIBBINS: No. While I was in Camp Roberts a friend from Nevada was with me. He was recalled to the Pentagon as mobilization designee. This friend was one of the original army aviators. His name was Bryce Wilson. Bryce came back to the Pentagon and he knew I had this Air Force MOS and he knew the Army was building up its own aviation business. So he took action here in the Pentagon to have me transferred from the Cavalry to the Transportation Corps. That happened about two months after I arrived at Camp Roberts and I was transferred up to Travis Air Force Base, where I became Department of the Army Air Traffic Control

Officer between August 1951 and January 1952. I was then sent to Fort Eustis for an orientation on the Transportation Corps. In February of '52, I received orders to the Far East. Now I was in the Transportation Corps with an Air Force MOS.

INTERVIEWER: The Transportation Corps then, I guess, was about 10 years old, and you had been working in this business off and on for about eight years.

MR CRIBBINS: Yes, it was two years old. When I first became a transporter in General MacArthur's headquarters, it was just two years old. The Transportation Corps this summer celebrated its 45th Birthday. That means it was formed in 1942. I had become a transporter even though I had a cavalry commission in October '44 so I have now been a transporter for 43 out of the 45 years of the Transportation Corps' existence.

INTERVIEWER: You reported to Korea, I believe, in '52. Where were you assigned and what were your duties, sir?

MR CRIBBINS: My assignment was in Eighth Army with the 45th Movements Control Group at Taegu. The Army had

given up responsibility for air terminals so we were not in the air transport business by that time. The Air Force was running all of that. At any rate, I stayed, if I remember, no more than a couple of months with this outfit in Taegu when I was transferred to Eighth Army Headquarters in the Movements Control Division. In the Movements Control Division, I was responsible for air transport operations. Even though we were not running the air terminals, we were responsible for supporting the Army with all the things that came in and were shipped to the theater by air transport. Eighth Army was splitting up and leaving what became a Theater Support Command. The Theater Support Command remained in the rear, that is at Taegu, while Eighth Army moved forward to Seoul since we were still fighting a war. I remained back at Taegu as the liaison officer for Eighth Army for transportation and then I was made Chief of Movements Control Division even though I was only a captain. But I had had J-staff experience and probably more staff experience than anyone else in the headquarters. So I became Chief of the Movements Control Division or I guess the official title was probably Deputy Chief of Movements Control Division since I was only a captain. They allowed me to get whomever I needed and I was in charge

of Movements Control from around June-July 1952 until I left Korea and went to Japan in March or April 1953.

INTERVIEWER: Recognizing the importance of air transportation, how critical was it to the sustainment effort?

MR CRIBBINS: Oh, very much so. We moved a lot of things. We were not only responsible for the air transport priorities, but also for doing those things that ensured we got all we needed from Japan, Taiwan or intra-theater. C-134s had come along and were able to haul large amounts of cargo. It too was the beginning of Army aviation where they were using light helicopters which were mostly medical evac birds. So air transport was really coming into its own in the Korean War, especially since Army aviation was raising its head. Our principal means of movement in Korea was by rail. We had the 712th Battalion of the New York Central and the 724th of the old Pennsylvania Railroad. These railroads were run by people who had run railroads in civilian life and who had been recalled as mobilization designees as a unit to support the war. We moved the supplies from Pusan and other southern ports in South Korea to points north. We were

responsible for the priorities and for seeing that the rail operations supported the allied efforts by moving things forward as well as retrograding things. At any rate, one time we kept 60 flat cars loaded with selected types of ammunition in Pusan ready for haul forward so that we did not lose any time once word came that we had to move them. I am sorry to say that a lot of the retrograding included human remains. Another job was to control the movement of ships into the ports in South Korea and that included ships off Inchon, and the POL terminal, which was off shore in Inchon. Inchon had the highest tide of any place except the Bay of Fundy. We had a little ship, Czmavi that was it. It could fit into a basin and at high tide you would put it in this basin. It was like a dry dock with water in it and you would close the gates on that basin and keep the water at a certain level. You could only put the ship in and take it out when the tide was up. The tide could drop 25 or 30 feet at Inchon and obviously it was a heck of a tough thing, but the beauty of it was being able to get supplies and whatever were critically needed up North without having to ship them in-land from Pusan up through the peninsula to Seoul through the combat zone.

INTERVIEWER: When we look back at the Korean War, we were fighting the war in an undeveloped country. You mentioned the fact that we brought our trained people over to handle the railroads. What did we do to train the Koreans in handling some of the transportation responsibilities?

MR CRIBBINS: The Koreans were basically knowledgeable in maintaining track and some of the old equipment. When I went there, we still had steam engines that were converted to electric while I was in charge of the Movements Control Division. The Japanese apparently had never let the Koreans hold executive or management positions when they occupied Korea. The Koreans were used whenever possible, but all of the management was done by Americans.

INTERVIEWER: Do you recall what type of workload you had during that time?

MR CRIBBINS: Yes. We would get up at 4:30 or 5 o'clock in the morning and quit at 10 o'clock at night. Often we worked through most of the night and I would say a routine day was 6 o'clock in the morning till 9 or 10 o'clock at night.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any significant problems getting the right things to the right places to fulfill combat service support requirements such as ammunition, fuel, etc.?

MR CRIBBINS: Oh inevitably having to get the right things where required was tough. I said the logistic problems of World War II in the Pacific within a combat unit were minuscule. Logistic problems in Korea were horrendous especially problems with ammunition. Our consummation rates were out of sight because that was the one way you could avoid having to fight hand-to-hand with the North Koreans or the Chinese. It was a real lesson to learn that when fighting people who appear to have little regard for human life the one thing that you needed more than anything was massive firepower. Of course they, in turn, to the degree they could, used massive firepower. So all artillery was really important to avoid having hand-to-hand battles which resulted in large scale casualties, but did not result in either side gaining much ground.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, after you were assigned to Headquarters Eighth Army, you moved on to US Army

Forces Far East in Japan. What duties did you perform in that assignment?

MR CRIBBINS: In Japan, I had the Air Transport Branch in the Office of the Director of Transportation for the U.S. Army Forces Far East, headed by Brigadier General Sam Browning. I was in charge of the Air Transport Branch even though I was still a captain. The Air Transport Branch was the movements control element for air transportation within the Movements Control Division. In other words the division was broken out into air, sea and rail and I supervised the air part.

INTERVIEWER: How many folks did you have working for you? Evidently you were in a job that a lieutenant colonel or a major might hold.

MR CRIBBINS: Well, probably so. At Movements Control Division in Korea I guess I had 10 or 12 people, but four or five in Japan.

INTERVIEWER: I guess you remained in Japan until what about 1954. Where did you move on to after that, sir?

MR CRIBBINS: Well, I remained there until June of '54. I came home earlier than intended because Helen got Yokohama asthma and she just couldn't survive in Japan. Since I had had a tour in Korea and a year plus in Japan, I moved out in June 1954. I was then assigned to Brookley Air Force Base in Mobile, Alabama as a Department of the Army Air Traffic Control Officer.

INTERVIEWER: What could you have possibly been doing in that part of the country as an Army officer?

MR CRIBBINS: Well, I was the only Army officer at Brookley Air Force Base at the time. I was responsible for moving Army traffic into South America, North Africa and Spain from all the channels flowing into Brookley Air Force Base which was a part of the Military Airlift Command. Although it was operated by the Air Force, there were Army and Navy representatives to assist the Air Force.

INTERVIEWER: Was there very much business going into North Africa or South America?

MR CRIBBINS: Yes, a lot of business, but there was not a heck of a lot to do as the Air Traffic Control

Officer. In fact my predecessor, I think, spent his career down there playing golf. I, as a matter of fact, became so bored that when the Navy decided that it didn't warrant having a full time person there, I volunteered and the transportation office that I worked for over in Gravely Point, agreed. I then became the Navy Air Traffic Control Officer. The Navy was establishing a system called Quick Trans which was an airlift operation around the United States between the Navy repair facilities and the Navy depots in the United States to provide air transport. The Air Force had what they called LOG-AIR. Both of them are still operating. In fact, I have been wondering why the devil the Army doesn't take advantage of this. I helped draw up the contract with the Navy which operates all around the United States with commercial carriers on charter to move high priority cargo between the Navy repair facilities and depots. It was a very effective and efficient operation for making sure you didn't get depot lines stoppers or you had NORS (Non-Operational Ready Supply now called Non-Mission Capable Supply) items that you needed to move.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I guess we use the ALOC or air lines communication for our overseas shipments, but I see your point in using it within CONUS.

MR CRIBBINS: Well, we really weren't using ALOC then.

INTERVIEWER: Yes sir, but I believe we started in the'70s.

MR CRIBBINS: I think Wayne Smith was the guy who was doing most of that in the '70s. This was back, don't forget, in 1954, that is 33 years ago.

INTERVIEWER: I agree with you. The Army has now capitalized on this concept for overseas. I didn't mean to imply that we were doing ALOC in those days.

MR CRIBBINS: We still, I don't think, have capitalized on the capability today of doing this sort of thing between depots except that the National Guard does it with their Caribous. They operate 13 Caribous among the various Aviation Classification and Repair Activities at Groton, Connecticut, Springfield, Missouri, Gulf Port, Mississippi, Fresno, California and their other entities in National Guard aviation.

But the Army has really been slow on doing this and I never will understand why we didn't recognize the great potential earlier of moving high priority cargo by air over long distances.

INTERVIEWER: I agree with you that there is a great benefit for using ALOC. As I said, I don't think the AMC Community has capitalized on it at this point in time. You eventually wound up in Germany. How did you manage to land an assignment there after spending most of your Army life in the Pacific?

MR CRIBBINS: Well, I came up to Washington on a trip to see my rating officer. It was pretty nice to be in Mobile, Alabama while your rating officer was in Washington. I stopped in at personnel over at Gravely Point where the Transportation Corps had its offices as a special staff entity when we had the technical services. The young man, I think it was Major or Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Miles, said, "I've looked at your record and it is a very good one. You are a Reserve officer and we have not done this before. You are also over age in grade pretty badly. How would you like to go to Transportation Corps Advanced Course?" I was no youngster when I came in to begin with. I had

been out for five or six years. I said, "That sounds wonderful. I don't really have enough to do where I am and I would really like that." So I got orders and I was assigned to TOAC 9 (Transportation Officers Advance Course Number 9) in 1955. I reported to Fort Eustis for a one year course. I was one of the very first of the reservists to attend and it took two waivers for me to do so. One was for being a Reserve officer because I couldn't qualify to become a Regular and the other was for being too old.

INTERVIEWER: How well did you do in that course?

MR CRIBBINS: It may sound self-serving, but I finished number one.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I'm sure that you were able to teach as well as learn.

MR CRIBBINS: Well, I had a great advantage and I really mean this. I didn't go to college until I was 37. I managed a stable, had been in business on my own, served on a Joint Staff in World War II, had been on two staffs in Eighth Army in Korea and on the U.S. Army Far East Staff in Japan. I had gone to college

between 1949 and 1951, so I was just short of graduating from the University of Nevada. I had been a part time instructor there so I was very high on the learning curve. In other words, I still had a lot going for me the other students in the class didn't have. Many of them had been out of school for 20 years. I had been out of school for a very short period of time when I began the advance course. So I would say without qualification that I worked at it, I'll grant you that, but even so I think I had a leg-up on my classmates.

INTERVIEWER: Yes sir.

[End Tape C-209, Side 2]

[Begin Tape C-217, Side 1]

INTERVIEWER: Sir, in 1956, you got your first assignment to Europe. At that time, we still had the technical services in the Army. As a Transportation Corps (TC) Officer, how did you manage to land in the largest ordnance depot in Europe?

MR. CRIBBINS: This was truly a transportation assignment to begin with. The Mannheim Ordnance Depot had about 110,000 short tons of secondary items and spare parts. It was the largest ordnance depot in Europe. Some of the inventory was from World War II. For whatever reason, it appeared that they never had a Transportation Corps Officer. Yet they were getting as many as 75 to 100 boxcars a day in and out of that depot. My assignment was to be the transportation officer. I was a major when I arrived and was welcomed with open arms by the Ordnance Corps. I was given a small staff and if I remember correctly, I had a young Captain Dillon. I lost track of him since, but I had a very good master sergeant and some German local nationals and we established a transportation office. That job lasted from 1956 into 1957 until we received a new depot commander. Colonel Henry Ray Jordan, Ordnance Corps, came on board having served in World War II and with a solid background in the Ordnance Corps' depot operations. He was looking for an assistant for supply operations (ASO) which was the key job in the Ordnance Depot. As it turned out, it appeared to him that I was qualified to take that job. Accordingly, he made me the ex officio, ASO, of the largest ordnance depot in Europe. In other words, I

was the ASO because the Ordnance Corps officer who came in for the assignment became the deputy depot commander. This meant that I not only had the Transportation Operation, but had some 1800 local nationals working in supply, maintenance and storage now known as COSIS(care of supplies in storage), then known as maintenance in storage (MIS) of the ordnance spare and repair parts. It was probably one of the most rewarding assignments that I have ever had. The Mannheim Ordnance Depot in those days had both stock and supply control. In other words, they were really an inventory control center along with being a depot. It was equipped with some of the first generation IBM machines. We responded to requisitions and requirements from Ordnance Corps units throughout the theater. This assignment lasted from either late 1956 or early 1957 until the spring of 1958 at which time I was assigned to France. I went on to become a part of the Inventory Control Center that belonged to the Transportation Corps down in Olivet, France. Before I get to that, let me recount briefly what happened to the Mannheim Ordnance Depot. At the time that I was assigned there, we received word that the depot was going to be phased out. The purpose being to move all of those logistic facilities west of the Rhine.

Mannheim Ordnance Depot was in a particularly vulnerable spot. The thrust was to move everything into France. The biggest single job that we had during my tenure was to begin phasing down the depot and moving the operation into France. This was a major undertaking since we did have some 110,000 tons of spare and repair parts. Also, the supply control or what became an Inventory Control Center down at Olivet was moved before the parts were moved. My assignment was interesting in many, many ways. I was the odd ball Transportation Corps Officer in the sense that the rest of the officers at the depot were in the Ordnance Corps with the exception of the young captain that I had with me. Yet, I must say, I was treated as one of the family. It was professionally, as well as personally, rewarding and probably one of the best assignments I could have ever wished for.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, let's back up a minute. How did you get the 110,000 short tons of secondary items moved to France or had you transferred to the Transportation Corps Supply Agency before the equipment was moved from Mannheim?

MR. CRIBBINS: We had largely moved the depot by the time I had left. As a matter of fact, I think that I would have had difficulty leaving the Mannheim Ordnance Depot if we weren't phasing down and out. Although, Colonel Jordan had become a good friend as well as a colleague, and my boss, I do believe he was not about to break up the team that we had in the Mannheim Ordnance Depot until most of the operation had been moved. That was phasing out the parts, getting the supply control effort transferred into France, moving those parts that were not in excess and were needed by lower echelon units in Germany backhauled down to the two installations in France. If I remember correctly, primarily, Braconne which was at that time the largest ordnance depot in France and just on the upswing as we retrograded out of Germany into France. A couple of times I thought that I might be reassigned because of the phase down of the depot, but Colonel Jordan retained me as Transportation Officer and Assistant for Supply Operations. I must say that I enjoyed it.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, talk a bit about your assignment with the supply control agency for the Transportation Corps in France. You mentioned that the ICC, (Inventory Control Center), for the Mannheim Depot was

moving into France. Were those activities then colocated or were they separated?

MR. CRIBBINS: The inventory control elements of the Technical Services were colocated at a place called Olivet outside of Orleans, France. That is right at the head of the Loire Valley. It was actually a compound of inventory control centers for each technical service, one of which belonged to the Transportation Corps. The reasons I happened to get assigned to France may have been twofold; my experience in the Mannheim Ordnance Depot that was being phased out and the fact that I was about half way through a normal three year tour. A colleague and friend of mine, Lieutenant Colonel Howard (Howie) Schiltz, later Major General Schiltz, was in the 37th Transportation Group and lived on the compound with us. While I was assigned to Mannheim, Howie asked me if I would like to have an interesting assignment in France. He was going to France to become Deputy Transportation Corps Officer at the COMMZ at Orleans. I said, "Yes, I would be interested." Little did I know how quickly that would work because within the week, I had orders and was wrapping up what I was doing in Mannheim and heading for France on a split tour. It wasn't all that easy

because we had arrived in Germany without any household goods other than personal property. There were no provisions for any household goods in France so we were faced with going on the economy and buying enough things to furnish an apartment or one of those small duplexes that we were moving into in France. It was a burden on the pocketbook I must say. In the spring of 1958, Helen and I left for Olivet staying for about two weeks in a hotel in Orleans until we got settled in and I went to work at the Inventory Control Center. I was initially the Deputy Commander of the Inventory Control Center (ICC) when I arrived.

INTERVIEWER: As the deputy commander sir, what were your primary responsibilities?

MR. CRIBBINS: I guess, in looking at it, I was brought in with the idea that I was going to become the commander. I think that was the general thrust of bringing me into France. The Commander was a lieutenant colonel who was about ready to retire, but did not retire while I was there. I supported him fully and I remained as the deputy commander, but I guess I was pretty much Mr. Inside. In other words, I was the fellow who was principally responsible for

running ICC and the ICC commander was in substance the overall commander who was Mr. Outside. HE WAS A VERY ABLE OFFICER AND I would certainly say that I enjoyed working with him. It was a difficult position because I do believe that the transportation corps officer to whom the Inventory Control Center reported, really wanted me to take over. I was flatly unwilling to make any move toward replacing the lieutenant colonel for whom I was working.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, could you talk a little bit about command and control. Who did you work for and how did the ICC operate?

MR. CRIBBINS: The Inventory Control Center was actually what would now be considered a command element. It reported to the Transportation Corps Officer who was on the COMMZ staff reporting to General O'Neil. Our organization was fairly large. We had IBM keypunch card machines. We managed all the transportation corps materiel in the theater. The chain of command would have been the Commander of the Inventory Control Center, to the Transportation Corps Officer, to the Commander of COMMZ who was a two star

general. The COMMZ was responsible for all CSS operations in the theater.

INTERVIEWER: You did quite well at that job because I understand you were then rewarded with selection and then attendance at the General Command Staff College.

MR. CRIBBINS: Let me talk a little bit more about what happened in the ICC because I think it was an exciting operation. When I arrived, we were responsible for supporting the Transportation Corps' marine fleet down at LaRochelle, the rail system and equipment and all highway equipment. In other words, we managed all the transportation corps materiel. The Inventory Control Center for Army Aviation, however, when I arrived in France, was still at Coleman Barracks. In those days, it housed an offshore aviation depot maintenance facility with an ICC. After I arrived in France, I was told that our major objective was to merge the Inventory Control Center for aviation with the Transportation Corps ICC in France. That was no easy task because this was in 1958 and for six to seven years, that Inventory Control Center had been firmly established at Coleman Barracks which was outside of Mannheim. Unlike the Ordnance Corps, the

Transportation Corps had but one facility although there was some activity at Pirmasens. The facility at Coleman Barracks provided the primary support for Army aviation throughout the theater. The job was a tough one to tackle. In tackling this, we looked very critically at how we would go about doing it. I remember so well that Colonel Burt Miles, the COMMZ Transportation officer, was evidently getting pressure to get on with it. We were trying to figure out just how we were going to turn off the ICC in Germany and bring it into France overnight without having any way station as it were. For example, on the Mannheim Ordnance Depot move, there was an operational facility in France that had the capability for picking up all of the materiel management functions so it was a relatively easy phase over. Whereas, the ICC in France for the Transportation Corps was picking up a brand new account of considerable magnitude and practically doing this overnight. As a result of the necessity of getting this moved in accordance with the theater plan, we were given a drop dead date of early in the spring of 1959, that we would assume all the responsibilities for the Transportation Corps Aviation Program in Europe. Trying to hire enough qualified people was tough. The ones who were capable could not speak

English and there just wasn't a market for the kinds of people that we needed to run an Inventory Control Center. Accordingly, I asked for carte blanche approval to secure 50 soldiers with a high aptitude for the kind of work that needed to be done. I was given the go ahead to do this. I brought these 50 young men on board. To train them, we arranged for them to use cards that had been used previously for actual requisition flow for our inventory control and management. In essence, they practiced all the things that an ICC would do under normal conditions. We used those cards just as if they were the real thing. Here was an interesting exercise that I often thought about afterwards. It could have been a sheer disaster. On the other hand it probably wasn't the greatest success in the world either. The young men processed requisitions, issued MROs, detailed inventory control and management, brought in receipts, issued items and kept control of the inventory for about two weeks. At the bewitching hour one night, the pumpkin became Cinderella. Without saying a word to them, we put the real cards into the system. I was afraid that if I had told them that they were going for broke on that given night, we would have had a worse problem than we did. The next morning, they were working with live cards and

we managed to survive. I wouldn't say that it was the best operation that I had ever been involved with, but it worked. However, it was not the sheer disaster that we thought it might be.

INTERVIEWER: Let's go back then and talk about the aviation support. Did the aviation folks have their own stove pipe within the Transportation Corps?

MR. CRIBBINS: Aviation was entirely separated at Coleman Barracks from all the other commodities in the Transportation Corps. When we brought the aviation account down, that was the first time that aviation had actually been melted with the other Transportation Corps inventory control in the theater. Here we had a case of taking an entirely separate account as if it were a different branch of service and bringing it into the Transportation Corps.

INTERVIEWER: If I recall, the Air Force had a role to play in depot maintenance operations for Army aviation up to about 1961.

MR. CRIBBINS: Oh yes, very much so. For example, at the major air terminal in France and I am trying to

think of the name of it now, we had an element from Coleman Barracks assigned. Their job was to interface with the Air Force. You see, until 1961 or there abouts, the Air Force had complete control of research development, procurement, acquisition and depot maintenance of Army aviation. Such being the case, we were really challenged by having to interface the Army with the Air Force's depot maintenance system. That was quite a significant problem in itself in addition to speaking the same language.

INTERVIEWER: What type of aircraft was in the aviation fleet in Europe at that time?

MR. CRIBBINS: Interestingly, and I think I have some background papers that go back to 1960 on some of these--our fleet of aircraft at that time was about half fixed-wing and half helicopters. The fixed wing being primarily "01" or what we called in those days "L-19s" or "Bird Dogs" and "U-6" "Beavers" which were the single engine fixed wing as well as Otters, which were the larger fixed wing aircraft. For helicopters, we had CH-34s which were Sikorsky transports and we had OH-13s which were Bell and some OH-23s. I forget whether or not we had OH-23s there at that time, but

they were in the inventory and were Fairchild-built. I guess maybe we still had some H-19s in the theater, but we didn't have any H-21s in the theater. The H-21s, called the "Flying Banana", were in the Pacific.

INTERVIEWER: You not only had a problem transferring the aviation functions down to France, but there must have been problems associated with the Air Force trying to keep the fleet operational.

MR. CRIBBINS: I think the Air Force did well by us. It was well established with Wright-Patterson AFB being the principal center of activity for support. The Air Force, as I remember back in those days, had the Air Force Systems Command which brought aircraft into the inventory and then Wright-Patterson would pick up the fielding of the aircraft. I think that the Air Force had several air materiel areas. The air materiel areas were really MSCs (Major Subordinate Commands) of the Air Force Logistics Command. For the Army, we had the Transportation Materiel Command in St. Louis. It had moved there in the late '50s from Middletown, Pennsylvania. It was initially established as being the Army's interface with the Air Force. In fact, at major Air Force installations, we had an Army member

who acted as the liaison with the US Air Force. I know that we had one at each major installation where depot maintenance work was done on Army aircraft.

INTERVIEWER: Was this your first direct association with Army aviation in a management or a command and control role.

MR. CRIBBINS: I would say sort of. I was really pretty closely involved with Army aviation in my assignment in US Army Forces Far East in Japan after the close of the Korean War. That was probably my initiation into Army aviation. During the Korean assignment, I was pretty closely related to, but not responsible for Army aviation. In 1952, Army aviation was transferred to the Transportation Corps. I guess as a Transportation Corps Officer, and being in the air transport business, I was not directly involved in Army aviation to the degree that I became later. I was certainly involved to the degree that I was one of the few people who had had air transport experience. I was one of only two people that were recalled by the Army in 1951 who had an Air Force MOS when there wasn't such an MOS in the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Your Korean War experience then was a precursor to your direct involvement with Army aviation during your assignment to the European Theater.

MR. CRIBBINS: Another interesting thing is this. For whatever reason, there were not very many Army aviators who were directly involved in Army aviation materiel management. In fact, right into the '60s when I came into the Pentagon, a large number of officers who had never flown an aircraft were the materiel managers for Army aviation. That also included people at the top level because neither General Bunker nor General Besson were rated. In substance, the logisticians took over the materiel management of Army aviation regardless of whether they had experience flying an aircraft. I happened to be one of them.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I want to come back to that point a little bit later because you are not an aviator, but you have done rather well in the aviation logistics business. I want to come back to this point because I think that fact does have merit when we discuss the current vision for our log system. However, you are still in France and are making a concerted effort to bring the aviation folks down and make them a part of

the ICC in France. Once you got them down to France, what then were the challenges that you faced?

MR. CRIBBINS: The terrific challenges that we were faced with were continuing materiel management of Army aviation in the fashion that had been done in Germany without the benefit of the top level local national skills that had been working for us in Germany since shortly after World War II. We just didn't have the same capabilities in France. This is not being derogatory about the French people. France still had an agrarian economy. We did not have the local populace available so we were in large measure dependent upon green suiters with some Department of the Army civilians as the core for management of the Inventory Control Center. We were in the process of going to a stock fund in the Army. That in itself was quite an adventure. Also, we had support of SETAF which is still in being as a command down in Italy. I guess one of the things that I did once we transferred the Aviation account down in France was become a trouble shooter, because I had an assignment to go to Zweibrucken and to Seventh Army when Brigadier General Harold K. Johnson was the chief of staff, later the Chief of Staff of the Army, was very much concerned

about the lack of support for aviation programs in Germany. Seventh Army Inventory Control Center was located in Zweibrucken. I had a couple of trips up there. Then I had a very interesting one to Italy when General Daley called General O'Neil and said that he badly needed someone to come down and square away his aviation program which was not working well at all. It seems that General Daley was flying over the Alps in one of our early U-8s. The pilot made an incorrect procedure as I understand it and one of the engines apparently failed at about 15,000 feet at a very critical point. When he landed, the General asked him what had happened. The pilot came unglued and said, "If we could only get those damn repair parts, we wouldn't have this kind of problem." I don't think the pilot was exactly right although they were having a parts problem. Parts were not the problem with the engine turning off over the Alps. At any rate, General Daley called General O'Neil and said that he had just about had it. He needed something done. General O'Neil called me in and said that he wanted me to go down and fix whatever needed fixing and tell him whatever needed doing in order to get SETAF back on board. Well, I went down to SETAF to where they had a central location for managing the SETAF aviation

program. I found two things down there. They had a small population of aircraft with a very low demand and accordingly a lot of the items that were on their ASL were one each. Obviously when they issued one, they automatically had a zero balance. To me that didn't make any sense. The first determination that I made was that if any item warranted being on the ASL it would be stocked in a quantity of two so at least they had one when they issued one. The other thing and probably the most important thing we did was to give SETAF the opportunity to draw on their own stocks and then post-post. Post-posting was always a dirty word to a logistician. By the time that SETAF got a requisition off to Orleans or Olivet in France and then got the release, the aircraft would have been on the ground for a week when they had the part already on hand. I gave them the authorization to draw the item, make a post-post transaction and requisition a replacement item. It seemed to work because I went back down as a follow-up a month later and I had a personal one-on-one with General Daley. His comment to me was "What is a nice Transportation Corps major like you doing in a place like this?" At any rate, it seemed to work all right because we certainly supported his fleet a lot better. It was a good lesson to learn,

but when you have an isolated place, it is not necessary to hang tough on some regulation that may apply across the board yet does not apply to a specific place. For example, the fact that we were restricting them to what the demand base said without recognizing mission essential items or recognizing that if an item was needed for stockage based on demand, you needed to stock at least two. When you issued one, you then had an item remaining on hand. Here they had items on board, couldn't touch them under the regulation until we gave them the post-post authorization. These kinds of things, I do believe, make you recognize that some things being standard is not the way to go.

INTERVIEWER: When you look at a system, almost any system, it doesn't account for every possible alternative. Someone has to make, as you say, those systems flexible. I guess this was prior to the MILSTRIP (Military Standard Requisitioning and Issue Procedures) system. You had the manual system and I guess people were trying to live within the letter of the law. How good were the people that you had to maintain the aircraft? Were they trained properly in your estimation?

MR. CRIBBINS: We had some old timers down in SETAF. It was a very good assignment and they had been there for some time. I had no problem recognizing the competence of the people. It was the system that was causing them the problem. The system didn't recognize the uniqueness of a situation that was so geographically dispersed. Interestingly, as recently as early November of this year, (1987) I was in Europe with Major General Dick Stephenson, Commander of AVSCOM. One of the problems that Major General Jack Rozier, the DCSLOG of Europe brought up was the problem in SETAF and its desire to requisition directly from the states rather than come through Europe because of the delay in getting parts. Here we are 30 years later and there is still the same sort of thing cropping up. This may, I guess, happen 30 years from now as well. General Rozier recognized the problem. I am not being critical of Jack who is a good friend as well as a colleague. He recognized the problem. He was doing what I think needed doing and that was fixing the system rather than using a unique methodology. In our case, 30 years before, fixing the system consisted of giving some leeway to the standard system or giving some waiver to the standard system in order to accommodate a unique case.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, let's take a minute and talk about your transition from France to CGSC. Of course, from there you went on to Washington, DC.

MR. CRIBBINS: I will remind you that I was an overaged in grade Reserve officer on full time active duty. I was making a career of it and was unable to become a Regular Army officer. I fully intended to stay on and eventually retire from the Army. I was very much interested in doing my thing for the Army which I certainly have loved dearly every since I first joined. When I was in France, I did the best job that I possibly could. One of the visitors to France was General Frank Besson who was the Transportation Corps chief. I had the opportunity to brief and interface with General Besson. [End Tape C-217, Side 1]

[Begin Tape C-217, Side 2]

MR. CRIBBINS: After the briefing was over, General Besson asked me what I planned to do or what I would like to do? I said, "I would like to do something interesting." He said, "Would you be interested in coming to Washington?" I said, "Yes, I would be." He arranged for me to go to the Associate Course at Fort Leavenworth which was run in those days. Quite a few

of the officers like myself were Reserve officers who did not have a regular commission. In order to bring me into Washington, I had to have completed CGSC. He had me assigned to Leavenworth from July to December 1959 in the Associate Course. Then I was brought into Washington. I think one of the important things about the France assignment was that my wife, Helen, had done some post graduate work before World War II in the League of Nations School in France and Switzerland. She spoke French very well and knew the country and had a good feel for the people. She had been president of the German-American Wives Club in Mannheim, and had also picked up with Mrs. O'Neil doing very much the same sort of thing in France, although we were not accepted in France the way we were in Germany. Very interesting that here we were for the first time in the country of an ally verses two tours and countries that belonged to people whom we fought in World War II; first Japan and then Germany. In no time in Japan or Germany, did I feel unwanted. I really thought that our acceptance in both of those countries was just super. When we were in Japan, for example, Helen taught English to young Japanese college students. In Germany, she was President of the German-American Wives Club. We became friends of local Germans. In France,

in spite of the fact that Helen spoke the language about as well as you could without being a native, we certainly had no feeling of being wanted at all. In fact, Helen said that one of the real drawbacks about understanding French was to listen to some of the remarks made in public when French people were around who knew that we were Americans and did not think that we understood French. Also, Helen at that time, predicted that when General deGaulle came on board that we wouldn't remain very long in France. When we went down to France, she was certain that judging from what had happened to deGaulle in World War II that we probably wouldn't stay very long. Her forecast certainly turned out to be true because we had not been down there all that long before we went marching back up to Germany.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, after you moved out of France, went on to the Command the General Staff College, you then made lieutenant colonel and became the Chief of the Programs Control Office in the Office of the Chief of Transportation. Prior to that, you served as Deputy Division Chief and Chief of the Secondary Items Branch with the Office of the Chief of Transportation. I guess General Besson's vision for your coming to

Washington paid off and you eventually made it here. I am sure that the duties that you had in Europe prepared you for those jobs because they were jobs of increasing responsibility. I would like to hear your comments on your early assignments here in Washington.

MR. CRIBBINS: Colonel Schiltz was the executive officer to General Besson. He and General Besson were very close. I am sure that Colonel Howard Schiltz had a lot to do with my being brought into Washington when General Besson came back from Europe. Helen and I arrived in Washington 28 years ago today (23 December 1987) from Fort Leavenworth and we hardly expected to be here 28 years later. At any rate, I was to be assigned to materiel management in the Transportation Office at Gravely Point which was one of the technical service agencies belonging to the Department of the Army. When I arrived, I was skimmed off and for whatever reason, the personnel people decided that they could better use me in its operations office which each tech service had. Since they had the first call on it, they assigned me there. From the time I arrived in December 1959 until about April 1960, I was working in a job that I really had not looked forward to nor wanted, but I seemed to have had considerable

difficulty getting out of. I'll tell you a story about that. General Besson lived south of Alexandria, but just north of where we lived. We were living in a place called Waynewood. General Besson's secretary called me in one day and said that he was on the road and Mrs. Besson was having great difficulty because the water pressure had gone off and there was no water in the house. She knew that I lived nearby and asked if I would stop by and see what needed to be done to help Mrs. Besson. I stopped by the Besson's and Mrs. Besson told me what the problem was. As it turned out, my misspent youth as a horse trainer in Nevada paid off. I had owned a pressure pump while living in Nevada. The pressure pump worked out of a well and the pressure worked on the basis of having a tank full of compressed air. When that air eventually leaked out and replaced by water, you lost the pressure. When I found out that this was a sump pump, I went outside, found the sump pump, drained the water out, put air back in and by magic Mrs. Besson had her water pressure on. This was a very unusual achievement because if there is anything that I am not, it's well equipped to do plumbing jobs. When General Besson came home from temporary duty, he called me in and personally thanked me. General Besson, incidentally, is one of the finest persons I

have ever known in all my life. He asked me how I was doing. I looked at him and I leveled with him. I said, "Not very well." He said, "What's the matter, Joe?" I said, "Sir, I thought I was coming here to be in aviation and materiel management which are the things I wanted to do." I said, " I was taken out by personnel and I would really like to get back and do what I came here to do or what I had hoped I was coming here to do in the first place." He made no comment, but the next morning when I reported in, I was told that I was assigned to Materiel Management. That is how I became Deputy Division Chief and got back into the aviation materiel business.

INTERVIEWER: I take it that when General Besson was in Europe, he intimated that you would be going into the aviation logistics area.

MR. CRIBBINS: I must have been brought back on the basis of my knowledge of materiel management of aviation materiel and not on the basis of the personnel business. I could only assume that the reason I was brought to this Washington complex was because of my knowledge of inventory control, first at the Mannheim Ordnance Depot and then at Olivet, France. There

weren't that many around who had had that much experience. I guess General Besson was looking for someone to help run the aviation logistics out of the Transportation Corps headquarters.

INTERVIEWER: Do you recall when the old Tech Services were disbanded and we formed logistics along functional lines?

MR. CRIBBINS: I certainly do. I arrived here in December '59. In 1960, President Kennedy was elected and became President on 20 January 1961. I will never forget that inauguration day because we had the worse snow fall that we had ever seen in Washington and it took me from 3 o'clock in the afternoon until 2 o'clock the next morning to get home some 12 miles from Gravely Point. At any rate, Mr. Kennedy brought in Mr. McNamara who immediately established 101 issues. One of the issues was Project 80 which established the Army Materiel Command and got rid of the tech services. I was over at Gravely Point at the time. In the spring of '62, I was in the position of either going on a study group and then going wherever I would be assigned. A letter came in to General Besson from the DCSLOG here in the Pentagon that asked for me by name

to come over and work in the Supply Management Division. At that time, I had Programs Control Division for General Besson. General Besson called me in and showed me this letter which had asked for me by name. He said, "How would you feel about doing this?" I said, "Do you mind if I talk to Helen before I decide?" He said, "No, why don't you tell me tomorrow what you want to do and I will support whatever you want." "However, he said, may I suggest that it looks like I am going to be Commander of the new Army Materiel Command and I am going to need a friend over there. Joe, you are a friend and if you can see your way, I'd like to see you over there." I went home and talked to Helen and I said, "Honey, I know I don't have any career in the Army. I am an over age in grade Reserve officer, but this is a challenge and that is what it is all about." I said, "I'd like to take a crack at it and besides, I've got two and a half years under my belt and with two and a half years under my belt, it is only going to be a year and a half at DCSLOG. No matter how tough it is going to be over there, I think I can survive a year and a half. I certainly owe General Besson whatever I can do to help him. If this is some small way that I can, I'll do it." She said, "Well, it is your career. Go ahead and

do it." I came over and was assigned here to the Supply Management Division as a Section Chief. We in those days had directorates, divisions, branches, sections, etc, you name it. There must have been close to 1200 people here in ODCSLOG at that time. I found a real shocker when I arrived here. When I arrived in Washington in December '59, whatever the ODP (officers distribution plan) was in those days, did not have an opening for a major in the Transportation Corps with my qualifications. I was carried on the books all the time that I had been over at the Transportation Corps headquarters as being assigned to a Class II activity. On the record, I had never been assigned to Washington. When I arrived here at ODCSLOG at the Pentagon in May 1962, I was beginning a brand new four year tour which I found out after I was assigned here but not before.

INTERVIEWER: As the Chief of the Weapons, Automotive, Aviation, Electronics and Missiles Section, it seems as if you had quite a few responsibilities associated with the management of those systems.

MR. CRIBBINS: I am probably the sheer optimist of all time. When I look at the jobs that I have had here, I realize that I was probably way out of my depth. At

any rate, I did have the five major accounts. I also had the job of transferring the OMA account into the stock fund. My predecessor who had put my name in this letter that had come over asking for me by name was a gentleman who was also an alumnus of the 101st Cavalry Regiment of the York National Guard. His name was Chuck Haydock and he had been a long time friend. Chuck was a Reserve officer on active duty for four years because he had gotten bored with what he was doing or had not been doing in New York. Chuck had had an absolute belly full of what he was doing here in the building. He resigned and then sent my name over to be his replacement. It was quite an assignment. From May '62 until January '63, I was the Section Chief. I was responsible for those five major accounts that you talked to. I was also responsible for transferring OMA into the stock fund and any other duties that came along. I think one of the toughest things of all to encompass was the fact that I became a lieutenant colonel in December of '61. As a junior lieutenant colonel in the Pentagon serving as a Section Chief, I reported to a branch chief who reported to a division chief who reported to a director. Each one of whom had a layer of at least two, that is an exec or a deputy. By the time you got to a director, there was a layer of

two plus an exec -- both being 06s and the exec's being 05's or sometimes an 06. That meant before I got to see the first general officer here in the building in spite of the responsibilities I had, I had a layer of something like six to eight people to go through. Brigadier General Olie Hansen was that gentleman who later became a friend, a terrific guy and a great professional. It was quite an exercise and an interesting departure from where we are now where action officers go and talk to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of Army. In those days, if any action officer would talk to someone a grade above himself, he thought he was in seventh heaven.

INTERVIEWER: I take it that there was no such thing as "See Me's" in those days. One of the things that you mentioned was the level of responsibility. At the time, I know the military budgets weren't all that great. There had to be stiff competition for resources. Could you talk briefly about the challenges you had managing budgets and supporting logistics programs?

MR. CRIBBINS: The challenges were immense. However, we did have an advantage in that we still had the

residual from the tech services with all the knowledge of their particular commodities. We used them mightily even though the tech services in substance had been incorporated into the Army Materiel Command. In my view, and this may not be shared by others, General Besson, who was a great manager, officer and really a top notch logistician, took full advantage of the fact that he had been the Chief of a Tech Service. The other thing is, I did not in those days, although we had a lot of guidance from OSD, have the sensing that even though Mr. McNamara was judged to be a micro manager, the rank and file in OSD were not managing our programs nearly as closely as they seem to be nowadays. However, I did establish a very good relationship with a gentleman by the name of Cliff Miller who was from the Office of Management Budget which was then located in the west wing of the White House where the Vice President is now. In those days, the Office Management Budget and the Office of the Secretary of Defense really worked out of the same office in the Pentagon and what one agreed to, the other one would agree. It wasn't a case of having a defense budget go over to OMB and then get emasculated by OMB or changed at OMB before it went to Congress. In other words, what went forward was an agreed-upon budget. I can remember

several week-ends during the budget process that I would go over and sit down with Cliff Miller in the annex to the White House and work on budgets with him. When we agreed on something, it stayed put. There are ways of getting things done in spite of the layers of people. Let's say that was a very interesting experience and one I guess that has also put me in good stead since, but that was quite a different world from the one we are living in today.

INTERVIEWER: No question. I guess the Army has just gone through a scrub for a nine billion dollar cut in the '89 budget with OSD. You are saying that you had the opportunity to go over to the annex of the White House to work budget issues in the '60s. I know that kind of action is just not possible today.

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes, I was just a junior lieutenant colonel and I was able to go right over to OMB. This was in spite of the fact that in ODCSLOG I couldn't get to see a brigadier general without seeing six intermediaries. But I could walk in to the Office of Management and Budget and talk to the gentleman who was going to eventually put together the whole budget and he would listen to me! It worked out very well and

Cliff and I became hand-shaking colleagues and friends. When we agreed upon something, it stayed put. Also, this is very important now. The Congress had a very minimal number of staffers. There was very little or no micro management coming out of Congress. Very, very little, if any.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think is accounting for the congressional micro-management at this stage?

MR. CRIBBINS: Right now, I think we are badly outnumbered by the congressional staffers. When you hire staffers, you have got to give them something to do. When you give them something to do, they go out and look for work. I think what has happened, and I am not being critical of the democratic system, is that the Senators and Congressmen have gotten to the point where they are micro-managing the federal budget, not just defense, but every other element of the budget. They do it in a fashion as true staffers so that in my view, the staffers have really taken on the aura and often exceeded the very authority of the Congress.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, how did you become the special assistant for Tactical Air Mobility to the Assistant DCSLOG in 1963?

MR. CRIBBINS: I was doing this job in program and budget in the Supply Management Division. Lieutenant General Colglazier was the DCSLOG. He had known me from Europe because he had been a COMMZ Commander when I was the Transportation Officer and the ASO of the Mannheim Ordnance Depot. General Colglazier had known that I had had aviation logistics experience. In 1962, we were just getting into Vietnam and many, many problems were cropping up. General Colglazier called me in and said that he would like me to put together a program and present it to him of what I believed needed to be done in order to support Army aviation in Vietnam. It was pretty evident that there was going to be a sizable amount of Army aviation there. We weren't fighting over there then, but were still in the business of advising. In fact, an infantryman was not allowed in Vietnam at that time. I wound up with a special project which I called Air Vietnam before I knew that there was an airline called Air Vietnam. I went to General Besson and told him about the job that I was given. He gave me a lieutenant colonel and a

small staff out in the Transportation Materiel Command who had orders to report directly to me in the building. I put together a project with 48 issues that I believed needed to be done in order to support Army aviation in Vietnam. I was directed by General Colglazier to move out on this project. He had not consulted with my bosses when he had told me this. He also said that I was to report to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Army once a week on the progress being made. I was to keep him up-to-date before I reported to the Chief or the Secretary. About that time and this was in the early fall of 1962, some of my superiors down in the Supply Management Division came unglued about the fact that I was reporting directly to the DCSLOG on a separate project. In October 1962, Brigadier General Chesarek came on board from Europe to replace General Hansen. In fact, he was in the SETAF Chief of Staff Office and had made General. Then he was moved, I think, into Germany where he had commanded an element for which General, then Colonel Joe Heiser worked. At any rate, he called me in and asked me if I would like to come to work for him. I told him I thought that would be ideal because I would be back in aviation. It certainly looked like a much more interesting assignment since I did have

that special project which was in line with what he was talking about. He made the necessary arrangements. In January of 1963, I moved upstairs to become his Special Assistant for Tactical Air Mobility. At that time, the Chief of Staff of the Army, because of the increasing interest in Army aviation in Vietnam and the fact that we weren't really prepared for it, designated Major General Ed Rowney, now Ambassador Rowney, the DA Special Assistant for Tactical Air Mobility reporting to the Chief of Staff of the Army. He was located in what was then known as ACSFOR, now part of ODCSOPS. The remaining Army staff principals ODCSOPS, ODCSPER, and ODCSLOG were directed to establish a Special Assistant for Tactical Air Mobility and that was my job at ODCSLOG.

INTERVIEWER: Let me back up a minute, sir. There seems to be a great deal of emphasis being placed on Tactical Air Mobility at this point. What happened to cause that sudden interest of supporting the advisory efforts in Vietnam?

MR. CRIBBINS: I think it had become pretty evident that if we were going to get around in Vietnam since there weren't any good roads and there weren't any

adequate railroads, we were going to do it by air. It was going to be done through Army aviation and not through Air Force aviation. The helicopter was beginning to come into its own. We had H-34s in Europe and H-21s in the Pacific. In 1962, we had some UH1 Alfas upon which our people in Vietnam fastened some machine guns to and created the very first of what they called a utility tactical helicopter. They were really the first of the gunships. The Mohawk was in being and had been for some time. In fact, the Mohawk today is the oldest aircraft in inventory since it was first produced in the mid to late '50s.

INTERVIEWER: What aviation experiences did we have in Vietnam that led to the Air Vietnam program, and of course, General Rowney becoming the Army Staff proponent for Tactical Air Mobility?

MR. CRIBBINS: We had deployed five companies of CH-21s to Vietnam with 20 ships per company. Also, we had some Beavers, U-6s, some U-1s, OH-13s and as I said earlier, we had some of the very first Hueys over there at that time. There was a basis for recognizing that we badly needed to do something with the program. General Wheeler went over to Vietnam and while

inspecting the CH-21 companies which had arrived there about six to eight months before, he found that practically every aircraft in those companies was on the ground because of a lack of parts, people or something. It was evident that we had to take some drastic actions to support the aviation program for which we were not prepared to do. This was the genesis of the Special Assistant for Tactical Air Mobility. It was also the genesis for my job on this special project which I had picked up in mid-1962.

INTERVIEWER: Looking back, what do you feel caused us to miss the boat on anticipating the requirements for ensuring that our aviation program was on par?

MR. CRIBBINS: I think two things. I think that the President had declared that we would not get involved in the war in Asia. I think another thing was that when we got into Vietnam, we were hardly prepared for living in the modern day world where we had Army aviation. If we look back, and I had the personal experience of having been an infantryman in the jungles in the Pacific during World War II, that your ability to get around was very, very limited. Vietnam was a very long, but not a very wide country as you know. If

we were going to get around that country and influence anything, we needed mobility. We were there as advisors trying to influence what went on in the course of events to keep the South Vietnamese in command of the country, and Army aviation was the only way to do it.

INTERVIEWER: What would be your assessment of the Army's aviation logistics program at the time that you became Special Assistant?

MR. CRIBBINS: I hope this doesn't sound self-serving because it is not meant to be. In a way, Army aviation needed to be supported especially 8,000 miles away in a country like Vietnam. In fact, we weren't prepared to support it. Such being the case, it required some very specific actions such as doing what we now loosely call stove pipe. That is a term which I disagree with because to me, it is weapons system management that we are talking about, not stove pipe. What we realized was unless we took some unusual actions, we were not going to be able to support Army aviation in Vietnam. For example, I had made an analysis of the cost of a ton of ordnance items for ground vehicles versus a ton of aviation items for aviation systems and found that

the aviation items cost five times that of one ton of ordnance items. What did that say? It said that you better intensively manage or you can't afford it. It also said that you had better learn how to do things differently because of the safety of flight and other things that were associated with aviation. You had a very detailed inspection system to keep them safe and reliable and so forth. It was really a shocker to the Army to enter a different world of logistics support. We were charged with entering that world without much background other than the knowledge of aviation which said that "you could not afford to support jeeps the way you support aircraft" and I am darned if you can support aircraft the way you can support jeeps and keep them flying safely. Among the things we did and I can give you a statistical reference on this one. For example, engines for the Huey were just coming into the inventory in 1959 and 1960. In 1962, we actually had UH-1 Bravos coming on line which was the follow-on to the UH-1A. The engine cost $65,000. At the peak of Vietnam, we were using 16 engines a day. You will have to check my math on this, Peet, as I remember them. What we were talking about was a pipeline that was worth 1.1 million dollars per day. Even in those days, it was big money. Now when we went to Vietnam, we

honestly believed when we looked at the standard Army's supply system that we needed a 13 month pipeline. That was eight months which included the turn around in depot and a serviceable time in CONUS and another five months overseas. Overseas equated to roughly a month each way in transit and three months in country. All told, you have a 13 month pipeline. That 13 months translated into 1.1 million dollars a day -- big time money. You are talking something like, if I remember correctly now and you will have to check my numbers here, about 390 million dollars. If you multiply that 13 months times 1.1 million, that 390 million dollars would buy at those rates, 800 Hueys. This is the difference between the 13 months, which I didn't explain. Excuse me, let me go back. We didn't have 13 months worth. We weren't bright. We didn't know how the dickens we could live with less, but what we did have was the ability to live with six months worth. The difference between the six months worth and the 13 months worth was 390 million dollars which would buy 800 Hueys. That was the difference between what we wound up doing and what we thought we had to do when we went in there. What happened? Were we smart? I would say we weren't very smart. We just didn't have the assets. What happened to us was that in Vietnam we

were forced into a position with little knowledge of what we were going to be doing there and without understanding how it was going to be done. Overnight, we had to learn how to manage. Another thing and I am jumping the gun here a little bit, but please remind me that when we get into the 1963, '64 time frame to relate an experience that I had with Major Richard H. Thompson, later General Thompson, establishing a support base for what became the 1st Cavalry Division. To answer your question very specifically, we were not all that smart. What we were faced with was fighting an unplanned war without mobilization and with a brand new asset called helicopters. We were in a new environment, in a very difficult combat zone which was 8,000 miles away without a lot of enthusiasm on the part of the country or the industrial base or anything else. All of a sudden we were faced with eventually building up to a fleet of 4400 aircraft in Vietnam 4,000 of which were helicopters. We were faced with doing this in the very early '60s and then ramping up our inventory of aircraft through 1969 or 1970.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, now we are going to move into the initiatives that went into building a log system to support aviation. While I am focusing on your duties

as Special Assistant, you worked on a number of projects. One that comes to mind is Project 35 which I think was a follow-on to a DOD effort which looked at ways to improve aviation throughout the entire defense establishment. Would you comment on how the Army focused on what it could do to improve aviation support?

MR. CRIBBINS: Project 35 was a project that Mr. McNamara designated as being how we would intensively manage high value critical assets. It was a DOD project headed by Ray Clark who was a super grade in the Department of Defense. It had Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force participation. I was the Army guy on this project. Initially we looked at high value components and eventually refined it down to looking at aviation engines in all four services. We spent nearly a year on that project. Actually, I was a dual member on the project. I was designated as being the Army representative and also at the same time I was the representative for General Frank Besson. Even though I was assigned to the Pentagon, I never did lose the umbilical cord with General Besson because we had been close over the years and I had always been one of his guys. Without changing my loyalty to the man for whom

I worked in the Pentagon, General Besson used me for many things that he thought were useful to the Army at large. At any rate, what we did was go to Army, Navy and Air Force installations and find out how they managed aircraft engines. The Air Force managed them by serial number which was something that we did not do in the Army. The Air Force also negotiated levels. They maintained accountability for the engines at the Pentagon in those days and later on at the Air Force Logistics Command. The whole thrust was that engines were too doggone important to be managed like other items. So you knew where an engine was by serial number, both the spare engine and the installed one. Then you were able to track the life cycle of an engine. The Air Force, for example, not only was able to track the inventory of engines by serial number, but had borrowed the insurance companies' mortality formula to develop mortality data on engines. For example, the insurance companies can't tell that Jim, Sam, Joe or Pete will die at a given point in time, but they can tell a person that is in the same age group, background, profession, ethnic-you name it, as Colonel Proctor or Joe Cribbins what the probabilities would be. The Air Force was using this data in 50 hour increments to establish mortality data on engines. It

worked very well because they were able to establish when engines would fail and the degree to which they would fail. The Air Force then established a system which kept 80 percent of the engines flowing around below the depot level and only brought 20 percent of them back through the depot in such fashion that they were able to manage these very high valued engines and components. We have learned very well from the Air Force. We plagiarized mightily as a result of this study.

INTERVIEWER: I believe that during the course of Project 35, it was revealed that in 1961 roughly 45 percent of all aircraft were available at any given time for flying. In Vietnam, some of the problems in Army aviation were a lack of trained maintenance folks and a lack of a standard system for requisitioning parts, resulting in inadequate supplies to maintain the fleet. As a result of your work in the Air Vietnam project, what changes were made in the logistics system supporting Vietnam?

MR. CRIBBINS: We talked a little bit about the business of managing engines by serial numbers and the order of magnitude of doing that. Regarding other

things that we did let me talk first about supply and then I'll talk about maintenance. In the supply system for example, out of Vietnam, we established a system where all requisitions for aviation flowed to the Aviation Systems Command or at the time the Transportation Materiel Command. They either filled or forwarded the requisition to the appropriate source. This worked very well because there was a single manager in charge. That was the important thing. There was someone in charge to chase down requisitions because even the ones that were sent to another NICP the Transportation Material Command followed up on them. If Vietnam needed to know what had happened to a part that had been requested, they could go to one source. That was one thing we did -- that worked very well. This procedure came unglued when DOD or the Office of the Secretary of Defense said "Nope, you can't do it that way" as Vietnam began winding down. We then established a weapon systems management designator code which is still in use today. We used LCA (Logistics Control Activity) which was established in the late '60s the way we used the NICP at the Transportation Materiel Command. That was one of the key things that we did for supply amongst others. Another thing we did about the time of my first trip to

Vietnam in February '62, was to send an officer from St. Louis over to Vietnam. He was firmly convinced that the way to support Vietnam was to put every part that you could possibly think of over there. We did just that and quickly found out that what we did was saturate the supply system and inevitably we didn't have what we needed or we couldn't find what was there. The saturation surely didn't work worth a darn. General Joe Heiser later cleaned the whole thing up by drawing down the 17,000 lines to something about one-third of those lines and all of a sudden our readiness went up and our ability to find things improved. The system became more responsive because saturating it wasn't the answer. It isn't the answer today and we are finding that out again. Buying and stocking a lot of things isn't the way to do it. Buying selectively and delivering and distributing selectively is what is needed which requires management. We set up an element of the Army Materiel Command in Vietnam which had an MMC, (Materiel Management Center). The AMMC operation was separate from the First Log Command and its materiel management center. It managed all items that were peculiar to aviation. Initially, there was a great outcry about the fact that had a separate center. Yet, General Joe

Heiser, who was probably one of the finest logisticians I will ever know, even after he commanded the First Log Command, had to agree that the aviation system worked doggone well. He was not about to do anything with it when he later became DCSLOG. Yet, when he was Director of Supply and Maintenance, ODCSLOG he wondered why in the world we had a separate system. In other words, what we really did was set up an intensive management system which people called stove pipe. I call it weapon systems management. I do think it is more descriptive because what we are doing is managing a weapon system consistent with its supportability, its criticality, its mission support and everything you could think of. That was basically the supply part. If I missed any of that, maybe I will get back to it. Now on to the maintenance challenge. Let me talk a little about what happened in February '62. General "Red " Cooper was the Assistant DCSLOG of the Army. I was the Assistant for Tactical Air Mobility. I was a lieutenant colonel and he was a major general. General Cooper was a combat arms officer, a former division commander, who had become the ADCSLOG, probably serving for the first time in a logistic job. I guess it was in January '63 when I walked into his office and said "Sir, in looking at Project Air Vietnam, we have a very

major problem with the H-21s. They have wooden rotor blades that are coming apart in that climate. We've had to take off the horizontal stabilizer because of the density altitude and the aircraft won't fly. When you take those stabilizers off, you have to restrict the forward speed to something like 60 or 70 knots. The aircraft is old and tired. Unless we make a major effort, we really cannot support this aircraft and meet the missions that are needed in Vietnam." He said, "What's the answer?" I said, "Well, we have the UH-1B coming on which has a gas turbine engine and is the first of its kind. It is a new generation of helicopters. It's got all of the capabilities of an H-21 although not nearly the capacity. The UH-1 Bravo has a much smaller air frame than the UH-1H which succeeded the Bravo. It also had a 44 foot instead of a 48 foot rotor blade. The shaft horsepower of the engines in those days were I think around 900 shaft horsepower where now we have 1500 shaft horse power on the UH-1H. I did say, in talking to the operations people that we were in agreement and had to replace the H-21s. This went on during a one-on-one with General Cooper in his office. He said, "Well, what do you want me to do?" I said, "Sir, I would suggest that what you need to do is talk to the Chief of Staff and recommend

that we replace the H-21s. I have a multi-million dollar bill to modify the H-21s which I don't think is going to work anyhow. I think we should replace the H-21s with the UH-1 Bravos." He looked at me and said, "Joe, I don't disagree with what you say, but that is not within the terms of my job description. That is not really a logistic responsibility." I said, "Yes sir" and started to walk out. To my great surprise and I will never forget this because I liked General Cooper. He called me back. Here was a major general talking to a lieutenant colonel. We were about the same age or pretty close to it because I was an overaged lieutenant colonel and he was a major general. He looked at me and said "Joe, you are disappointed in me aren't you?" I said, "Well, I wouldn't put it that way sir." He said, "OK, Joe, I'll do it." That week, we had orders to go to Vietnam with a letter from General Buzz Wheeler to General Harkins who was then what eventually became the COMUS MACV. Colonel Frank Clay from ODCSOPS, who is the son of General Cassius Clay, Colonel Ed Neilsen, an aviator from ODCSOPS who later became Project Manager, someone from ODCSPER and I took this letter to Vietnam. Our first visit when we got to Vietnam was with General Ed Rowney who by that time had been assigned there as Chief of what I believe

was the Army Concept Team in Vietnam (ACTIV). General Rowney put us up in a suite next to his in the Rex Hotel in downtown Ton So Nhut. We told him what the proposal was and I remember very clearly that we were very fortunate. We had a clear day and we got a squad of very small Vietnamese and we put them in a Huey Bravo complete with packs and had them take off and said "See Sir, it carries a squad." Of course, we were carrying Vietnamese in those days. This was February '63 and it was very early in the game. At any rate, that was the initiation. Please understand now, I was not the only guy who drove the Huey Bravo's in, but my problem was that we couldn't support the H-21s and I wanted to get the logistics support to say, "If we can't support the H-21s what are the alternatives?" You either modify the H-21s or you replace them. The alternative was to replace them.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about the organization for maintenance support for aviation in Vietnam during this time?

MR. CRIBBINS: This was one of the things that we really came to grips with in the Air Vietnam Project. We found what a disaster the H-21 companies were in.

We looked at the maintenance concepts that they were using. When General Wheeler found that the H-21 companies were in such trouble, he directed a critical look to determine what needed to be done. The Transportation Corps was responsible for aviation maintenance. Out of that came something that I really believe is not only a thing that happened in the past, but a way of the future. I wrote an article last year on it. Transportation Corps had established TO&E55 Series, several which were for units which they call KD Teams for helicopters and KC or KE Teams for fixed wings. The purpose was to have a team associated with a particular mission design series or type of aircraft. For example, the H-21 maintenance team in this case, as I remember, consisted of about 56 people. It was complete unto itself with a team commander, a small administration section and personnel with the critical skills needed to maintain H-21 aircraft including running the aircraft peculiar supply system. What we did was to dispatch KD teams and colocate each with one of the H-21 companies in Vietnam. Those teams made the difference between success and failure because the basic H-21 company could only do what was known to the ground force as organizational maintenance. The KD teams could perform up to DS/GS maintenance. We called

it Integrated Direct Support Maintenance (IDSM). They made the difference and gave us the maintenance capability to do all of the inspections and the periodics. In those days, you see, we had a pre-flight, a post-flight, intermediate 25 hour periodic, and a 100 hour periodic inspection. For example, for a Huey, at 1100 hours a massive periodic, for the Chinook every 600 hours of massive periodic inspection. Lesson learned there was simple. I talked to General Wickham later on this concept and I have written an article about it, too. When General Wickham was Chief of Staff and was coming on board with the Light Infantry Division as part of the Army of Excellence (AOE), there was a necessity to slim down the operational units. I explained that we needed to look very critically at the potential of the KD team concept by weapon system so that if we deploy a Light Infantry Division, for example, and the division would be engaged in excess say of 30 days, you could have this team fall in on an aircraft system such as the Black Hawk and help maintain operational readiness. I think this concept has a lot merit. It certainly got us through Vietnam. The other thing, and I brought this up yesterday at a meeting with the Chief and Vice Chief, is that we had stronger TO&Es in those days than

we have in the Army of Excellence. However, we could not support those relatively simple birds in Vietnam in combat with the TO&E structures that we had then.

INTERVIEWER: What is driving you to say that those TO&Es were stronger? Have we not improved our capability to maintain equipment over the years by our efforts to design systems that are not manpower intensive to maintain?

MR. CRIBBINS: Let me give you a for instance. We were paying, let me use a Huey because that was the basic aircraft that fought throughout Vietnam once we entered it we were paying $250,000 for a Huey. The Black Hawk, for example, is not a big Huey. The Black Hawk costs over four and a half million dollars. It isn't just escalation. A Black Hawk is a very complex bird. It is a much more reliable bird, but it takes a whole lot of maintenance. There isn't any question about it. One for one, the Black Hawk would take at least as much maintenance and a heck of a lot more electronic maintenance and high skill maintenance than the Huey ever did. The Huey was a very primitive bird compared to the Black Hawk when you look at the systems to be maintained. Yet, in those Huey units, we not only had

the basic support element, but a KD team with some 56 people assigned to them as an integrated part. Eventually, it became the AVUM. Since then, the AVUM has been drawn down. In a briefing yesterday, BG Don Williamson, gave an evaluation of the Apache for the Chief of Staff. He pointed out that the TO&E, for a bird that is an electronically oriented bird has one electrician. What do you do when that electrician gets sick, lazy, on leave or what. You only have one. It is just like a zero balance when you have only one item in the inventory. Here we have a bird that requires more than one electrician, but the AOE has drawn down the TO&E to one. What I am saying here is that the TO&Es that we had in the days of Vietnam for relatively simple systems were much stronger in the numbers of people and skills than the TO&Es today. Even then we couldn't live, as I told the Vice Chief yesterday, with the TO&E as it was structured. When we had 4400 aircraft in Vietnam, we had over 2000 contract personnel who were working at the intermediate level and at the user or unit maintenance levels.

INTERVIEWER: I understand your point about the complexity of the new systems. If we look at what has been happening the last few years in the unit

productivity studies, it has been perceived that we get a better return on our investment by putting the sophisticated test, measurement and diagnostic equipment as well as some special tools, etc. that will give us improved capability with fewer people. You are saying that although we have more sophisticated weapons, we can't compare sustainment requirements of the older systems with our systems today.

MR. CRIBBINS: Let me compare the Hueys with the Black Hawk. Maybe that is the best comparison. We replaced 23 Hueys with 15 Black Hawks. That means the Black Hawk is much more productive. It is a bigger bird and it does things much faster and quicker. When we looked at the Black Hawk over the years, I think that man-hour wise, man-hours per flying hour, the Huey and the Black Hawk are fairly comparable which means that the Black Hawk is much more productive than the Huey. What happened is, that with the necessity of reducing the number of maintenance people, those remaining have to be much more able to diagnose and to do the things that are much more complex than with the Huey. In spite of the reliability centered maintenance and the improved productivity, the Army of Excellence TO&Es will not support what needs doing in combat. My analogy was

that when we had stronger TO&Es, that is with more people and skills, in the TO&Es with the simpler systems, we couldn't support aircraft adequate in combat without 2000 contractors supplementing maintenance people. The other thing is, my boss, Lieutenant General Ross, the DCSLOG of the Army, certainly feels strongly about this. I think that under the LUPS, which is the Logistics Unit Productivity System, that we have made many, many optimistic promises that may not be realized. In other words, we may have drawn down our CSS structure beyond the limit of productivity that will have a pay back, if you understand what I mean? General Ross is very much concerned about this. Promises, promises, promises are all the wonderful things that LUPS is going to do, but will LUPS do all of these things in combat or do you still have to go back to basic business. What we learned in Vietnam was that we have to supplement, manage and maintain. We did three things in Vietnam maintenance-wise. The first thing that we did was to move about 60 to 70 percent of direct support maintenance into the operational units using the KD Teams. We looked at the residual intermediate level maintenance where so much of the general support was beyond the capability of the units. We also looked at

this six month pipe line of engines. What it meant was bringing engines back to CONUS, repairing them and flying them on ALOC rather than trying to repair them in country. I will tell you something that is important on the logistics side in doing all of these things. We found that we had a hard core requirement between the operational unit and the depot, but that requirement was only about 30 percent direct support and maybe 25 to 30 percent general support. Then came the big question, "Why did we need direct support units and general support units? Why didn't we amalgamate them into an intermediate level?" Well, that is how the three levels of maintenance came about. Normally, I would say that we don't "do" things here in this office, but I will say this without qualification, the three-level maintenance concept took place right here in this building in what was then the Directorate of Aviation Logistics, now the Aviation Logistics Office.

INTERVIEWER: The three-levels of maintenance is still in use today.

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes, it is still going on today. We had a contractor do a study on it and we had the Aviation Logistics School look at it. We didn't do all the work

here, but we drove the program from here. I had the greatest support in the world which came from General Harold K. Johnson, the Chief of Staff, and General Creighton W. Abrams, his Vice Chief of Staff.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that you wanted to talk a little bit about the transition of depot maintenance for Army Aviation from the Air Force to the Army.

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes. That transition took place about 1961 when I was in T7 which was the Transportation Corps building located on the Gravley Point. What happened was that the Army decided that it needed an Aviation depot. We went through what turned out to be a very unnecessary exercise. What we should have recognized was that two contenders, Corpus Christi, Texas where there was a Naval Air Station and Brookley Air Force Base where I had been assigned at one time in my career, in Mobile, Alabama had some space available. We could have saved, as the saying goes, "our breath to cool our porridge" if we had only stopped to think for a second that in '61, the Vice President of the United States, Lyndon Johnson, was from Texas. Lyndon Johnson had been the senior guy in the Senate for many, many years and he did not come from Alabama. As it turned

out, I'm not saying that he was the only driver, but I would say that he certainly had a lot of influence because Corpus Christi was the eventual choice. I think that whatever influence Vice President Johnson may have had on this, it was a positive influence because it was the right place to go. Brookley Air Force Base was also a good place, but Corpus Christi offered many more things than Brookley did particularly a great work force. At any rate, in 1961, I was not the principal player, but I did participate in establishing what became known as ARADMAC which was the Army Aeronautical Depot Maintenance Center. General Besson said that he didn't care what the devil we called it so long as he could say the acronym. This was, don't forget, still in the days of the tech services. ARADMAC later became Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD). At the same time, there was an ongoing effort in the Transportation Corps to take over research, development and procurement of Army aircraft from the Air Force which was handled separately from the support side. They convinced the Office of Secretary of Defense that the Army should become independent and transferred those activities out to the Transportation Materiel Command. By 1961, we were

autonomously supporting Army aviation and the Air Force was no longer in our aviation business.

INTERVIEWER: What were some of your other significant duties and projects during the period 1961-63?

MR. CRIBBINS: Another really important one, and I am trying to think of it, was Project 65. That was on aircraft readiness. I found that our system for tactical air mobility was a little bit unbellevable in that we had a readiness system which was operating on a supply bulletin. The supply bulletin applying to readiness said that if an aircraft was ready for four hours a day or more, it was ready all day; or if it was ready less than four hours, it was down the whole day. That meant that if someone wanted to have a good readiness report, all they had to do was have an aircraft up on Friday afternoon and it would be up through the weekend. It was an unbellevably bad system. [End Tape C-217, Side 2]

[Begin Tape C-218, Side 1]

MR. CRIBBINS: I sent this group to St. Louis to take a critical look at how we ought to approach aviation readiness and recognized one time spot readiness wouldn't work. You really needed to look at readiness 24 hours a day 365 days a year. That was about as general as the guidance given these people out in St. Louis. Let me make something very clear, when I say "I", I was in the position of being a catalyst and other people did the work. Frankly, I borrowed ideas and put them together and acted as a catalyst. When I say that "I did this and I did that" please recognize that here in the building, one doesn't really do things so much as one initiates an idea or takes someone's ideas and makes them work. I had the great advantage of being able to see some of them through. At any rate, the team took a look at readiness and came up with what became AR710-12 in those days. Now it is a new regulation. It encompasses all readiness. By January 1964, we had established an Army Aviation Readiness System that accounted for aircraft to the nearest hour, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. It accounted for aircraft being operationally ready, down for supply or down for maintenance. It also accounted for aircraft by serial number wherever they were located and that became the Army Aircraft Inventory

Status and Flying Time Report. We had three outputs from that report which are still in being. We have a white book which contains the total aircraft population and a summary of where aircraft are. We have a gray book which more closely shows where the aircraft are by serial number. The gold book is the largest book which has several sections. I don't remember all of the sections, but you could find an aircraft by serial number wherever it is. If you know a given unit, and wanted to know the type of aircraft that a unit has, you look at a given section and it will tell you what the unit has. If you wanted to chase down the numbers of a whole fleet of aircraft by mission design series, you could do that using the gold book. In January 1964, the genesis of what is now the aircraft readiness reporting system has had a few refinements since then. For example, changing the terms from NORS and NORM to NMCS and NMCM and adding partial or fully mission capable to what was originally operational readiness. Basically, what we have had since January 1964 is a Department of Defense Aviation Readiness System to which all of the services adhere. Another thing that we did that was important and still applies was to establish standards of readiness. One of the things we thought out early was that when you establish standards

of readiness, you had to be very careful about what those standards were. The standard should be objectives or goals, and must be somewhere within what we believe to be about five percent of what is attainable. If you ask for more than what is attainable, one of two things will happen. Either the people in the field throw up their hands and say "The heck with it" or they get out the "Liar's Guide" then begin to dicker around with records. We found that after we established this system in 1964, one of the problems with the system was that we were asking for a monthly report known as the DA Form 1352. People were not keeping daily accounts and there was a great inclination of waiting until the last day of the month and then doing all of the bookkeeping and saying "Let me see now, aircraft serial number did so and so last month." What I did through the group that I had out in the Transportation Materiel Command, headed by Lieutenant Colonel Joe Healy, establish a DA Form 1352-1 which was a daily system which was auditable and tracked the status of an aircraft while the memory and the knowledge was fresh in everyone's mind of what happened the previous 24 hours. That is still in being today and that is the basis of our readiness reporting system today.

INTERVIEWER: Moving on to ALOC, earlier you mentioned that while you were working at Delta, you were able to establish an economic air line of communications (ALOC) between Chicago and several southern cities. I believe that ALOC is now used for support of units overseas.

MR. CRIBBINS: I told you about the experience with Delta Airlines. One of the very first jobs that I had when I arrived back in T7 was given to me by a long time friend, Major General Russ Lincoln, who was one of the bright and shining lights in the Transportation Corps over many years. General Lincoln asked me to take a critical look since he knew about my air transport background, at aviation with regard to the future of an air line of communication. I did an evaluation and don't forget this was in 1961. The first of the Boeing 707s, as I remember it, landed in Europe in 1958, so that the jet age was just upon us. In looking at air transport, it struck me and was shared by other people, that what we were doing was unnecessarily restricting ourselves to terminals on the coast. You see, I had been at Brookley Air Force Base where we had supported North Africa, South America, and such. Brookley Air Force Base was selected as an air terminal because it was as close to those places as you

could get because of the legs of the aircraft involved. Travis Air Force Base was established for the same reason because it was a 2300 mile leg to Hawaii from the west coast. The same was true up north where the Air Force had McCord Air Force Base in Washington for supplying the northern routes. In each case, the Army, and I am not being derogatory about the Transportation Corps, placed the air terminals with the sea terminals. In this study, I asked the question, "Why don't we just disassociate the air and sea terminals? Why aren't we flying from air terminals from the middle of the United States, now that we have longer legs for aircraft? We could assemble people for example and even cargo in places that were contiguous to our units or depots rather than bringing them all into a seaport such as New York where I departed for Europe by ship in 1956 and returned on an aircraft in 1959. Believe it or not, I went to Korea during the Korean War in an aircraft. I told General Lincoln of my concern right away, and he started the ball rolling. It was just one of those evaluations that you make and it wasn't all my idea by a long shot. I listened very well and I had a lot of experience with air transport by that time. Don't forget this was 1961 and by that time I had been associated with air transport for 17 years so I wasn't

exactly a newcomer to this business. In looking at the ALOC, it struck me that we weren't using ALOC the way we should. I still remember how the Chicago Mail Order House competed with Sears Roebuck without benefit of having a depot. I couldn't understand why we didn't have more use of air transport. It always came to the question of what you could carry, but the real question was the cost of what you were carrying. The fact remained that we had an Air Force with military airlift command and we were going to have to exercise it. The Air Force was using them and the Army wasn't. The Air Force was using a log air system in the United States as early as 1954 which I told you about. The Navy had a quick trans system, but the Army wasn't doing any of this. I really couldn't understand why we weren't doing more of it. It just struck me that we were behind the times and not taking advantage of moving selected high value items and certainly more people. As you know, nobody goes by ship anywhere today. Everyone goes by air.

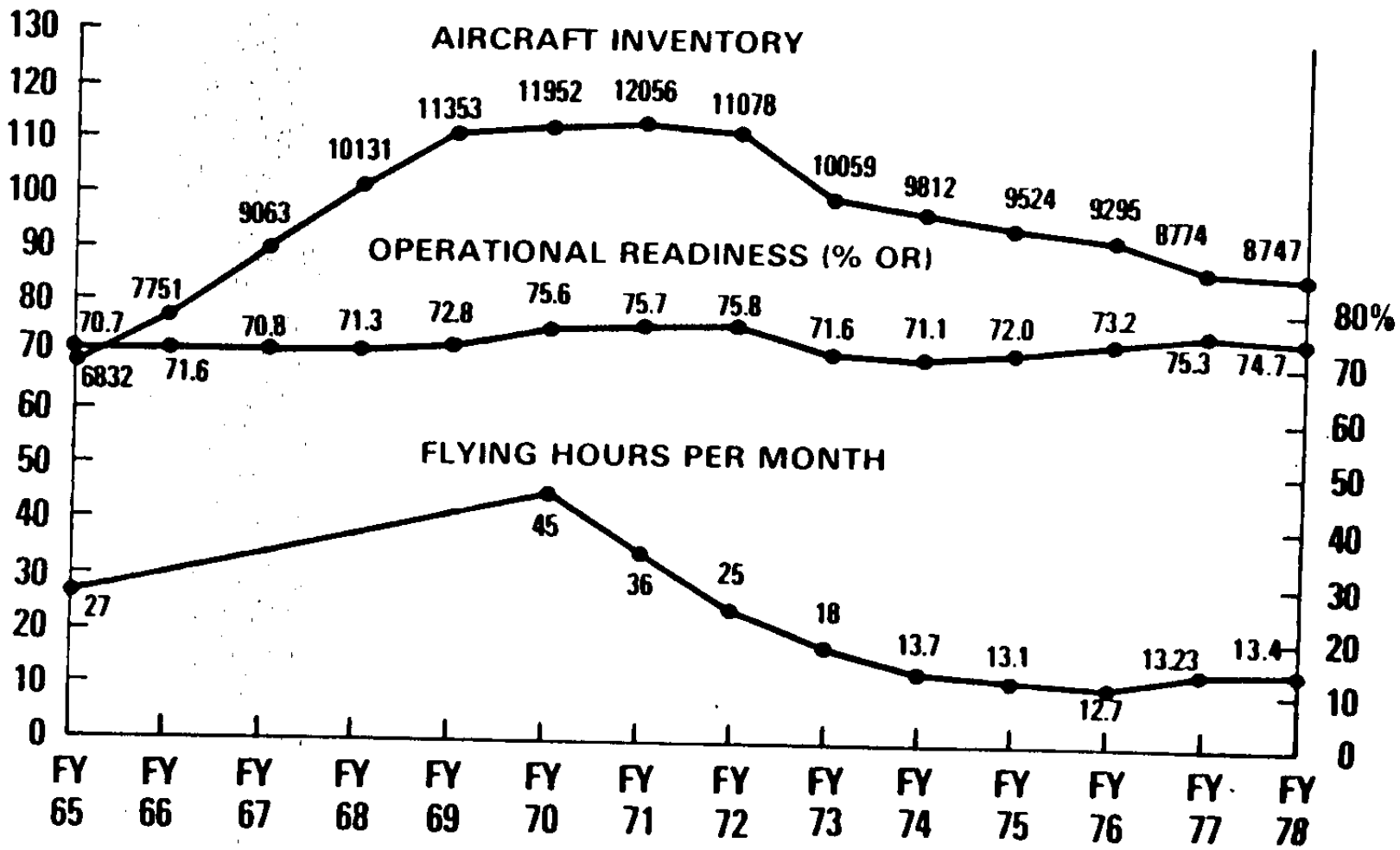
INTERVIEWER: I like your ideas. It seems as if you not only take those things that you see that will benefit the Army, but you happen to be at the right place to see those things carried out. It is not luck,

but there has to be a method to your success at getting things done.

MR. CRIBBINS: Let me put it this way. If I were to sum it up, and I do this when I talk to various groups about some of the initiatives we have had. Let me say that the driver above all else is being at the right place at the right time. For example, when I retired from the military, I had had an attractive career in the sense that I was an overaged Reserve officer. It is pretty obvious that I had no future in the military beyond age 52 when I would be forced to retire. I was hitting that age when I retired. I happened to be at the right place at the right time because Vietnam in 1966, when I retired, was warming up and General Besson asked if I would go to work for him as a civilian. I said, "I would love to." That is being at the right place at the right time. Getting the things done was the real secret in my experiences over the years. There was not just one thing, but imagination, innovation and a degree of optimism. I think I possess at least some of those traits. I think the important thing was reacting to an emergency. For example, it was essential to live with a six month engine pipeline instead of a 13 month one. The necessity of putting in

a KD Team to supplement maintenance and operational units in Vietnam was critical. The KD Teams were in being, I didn't design those teams. Just putting them in was the thing that made the difference. In each case, we had an emergency. When the response to the emergency worked, that became the normal way of doing business. That is the secret. I was not being smarter than anyone else. In Vietnam, we were faced with a helicopter war. We reacted to the emergency there and as I pointed out, improved readiness. I have a chart that I show on this. When that emergency worked, it became the norm. When it became the norm, everyone said "Boy, weren't they winners." Heck, we were just reacting to something that we should have foreseen in the first place and didn't. When we reacted to it and it worked, then it became the way of doing business.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I'd like to make that chart an official part of this oral history. Before we get too far along with the Vietnam era, you mentioned earlier that you had worked with a Major, later retired General Richard Thompson on a project which I believe was related to the organization of the 1st Cavalry Division.


AIRCRAFT INVENTORY
OPERATIONAL READINESS (% OR)
FLYING HOURS PER MONTH
6832
7751
9063
10131
11353
11952
12056
11078
10059
9812
9524
9295
8774
8747
70.7
71.6
70.8
71.3
72.8
75.6
75.7
75.8
71.6
71.1
72.0
73.2
75.3
74.7
27
45
36
25
18
13.7
13.1
12.7
13.23
13.4
FY 65
FY 66
FY 67
FY 68
FY 69
FY 70
FY 71
FY 72
FY 73
FY 74
FY 75
FY 76
FY 77
FY 78
80%

MR. CRIBBINS: This was in either late 1963 or early '64 and I was Assistant for Tactical Air Mobility. In early 1964, we were putting together the 1st Cavalry Division which was then the 11th Air Assault Division. We didn't know it was going to become the 1st Cavalry Division nor did we know that it was going to Vietnam, at least not officially. We knew there was going to be an air mobile division and Vietnam was warming up. There wasn't any question about that, but we did not know that we were going to be sending any division over there certainly not an air mobile division. I went up to see General Rowney, who was still the Special Assistant for Tactical Air Mobility. Let me get this sequentially correct. In '62, General Rowney was in ACTIV (Army Concept Team in Vietnam). He later became Special Assistant for Tactical Air Mobility. I became Assistant for Tactical Air Mobility in ODCSLOG in January of '63. In 1964, I walked in on General Rowney and said,"In looking at the 11th Air Assault Division, they have 400 plus aircraft." In those days, they had some Mohawks in addition to the helicopters. I said, "They have done a great job in figuring out how they will logistically support a division within the division." I said, "One thing that really concerns me in looking at it is that I don't see any way that we

are taking into account the fact that here we have a division that is going to be highly mobile, use an awful lot of things such as POL and we have not made any provisions for supporting it from the rear. In other words, we do not have the air mobility from the rear that is comparable to the air mobility of the division which is capable of moving around and operating on a very wide front." He said "Well, I heard what you said, Joe. What do you think we need to do?" I said, "What I think we need is to come to grips with this and we must do it right away because we are about to put this division together and we better be prepared to do something with it. With the state of things in Vietnam, I think all of us would agree that the possibilities are pretty good that it will end in that direction." Without saying anything to me, he picked up the phone and called the Assistant DCSLOG, who was Major General Horace Bigelow. He said, "Joe Cribbins is here. He is telling me that we have a real problem and I agree with him. I would like you to listen to what he has to say and then let's talk and see what needs doing here." He said, "General Bigelow wants to see you right away, Joe." I walked down the hall to General Bigelow's office. He said in substance "Ok, old friend, you don't like the mess. Now, you are

the mess officer, what do you intend to do about it?" I said, "Well sir, this is July. The 11th Air Assault Division is coming on line with the final TO&E which we had been working on, but hadn't looked into logistics support from the rear." He said, "What do you recommend that we do?" I said, "Well, I recommend that we pull together a small, hard core team and get them out of the building and work on what the air assault division needs, what the distances are, what are the people and things that need movement, how we are going to get there and how we are going to support them." He said, "OK, Cribbins, you don't like the mess and you are the mess officer." I said, "One thing that I would ask is that you give me carte blanche on picking the people that I need so that I can have some quality folk. The other thing is that if we are going to get this thing done, in six to eight weeks max, then we need to get out of the building." He said, "Agreed, you've got it. Now, who do you want?" The first person that I asked for was Major Richard H. Thompson. [End Tape C-218, Side 1]

[Begin Tape C-218, Side 2]

MR. CRIBBINS: There was a GS-15 (Jim Sales) who was with the Corps of Engineer and was going to do all of the air strip business for us. We got a lieutenant colonel from the Supply Maintenance Command headed by General Engler, who did a good job for us. We got a couple of other officers who I must say didn't contribute very much. We went out to the Research Analysis Corporation where they gave us space. The problem was that the Research Analysis Corporation didn't open up until 7 o'clock in the morning, but we could stay there until 10 o'clock at night while we put the program together. I had Major Thompson work all of the requirements. He was very well qualified to do that. This was all stubby pencilled. We didn't have computers or things like that in those days. We fought the 11th Air Assault Division in Vietnam and in Laos. We put together a document titled "Systems Analysis: Air Lines of Communications." If I remember, it has either 395 or 495 pages. We put that together and General Thompson did all of the stubby pencil work. I had dinner with him the other night. We went back over what had happened during that time because he and his wife and my wife were there. We remembered so well. Here is the way that it worked. I know how I worked it and he worked it just about the same way. I would get

up about 4 o'clock in the morning and review what had gone on during the previous day at home. I would then grab a bite of breakfast and at 7 o'clock, I would kick off the team at the Research Analysis Corporation. We would work right through the day and go home by 8 or 9 o'clock at night and get something to eat. Then I would pile into bed. I am an early bird anyhow. For six weeks, we kept that kind of a schedule. General Thompson put together every one of those requirements with a stubby pencil for the division and two different operations and different engagements of active pursuit and defense. It was a very comprehensive document. I think one of the most amazing things about it was that I went to Vietnam and visited the 1st Cavalry Division in November '65 or there abouts when General Kinnard had the division. I compared notes and we were within 10 percent of those requirements that Major Thompson put together, of what that air assault division needed in combat. That was pretty good going for that kind of a study. Interestingly, in 1964, there were two nominees for the Pace Award which you are probably familiar with. I got the Pace Award in 1964 and the runner up was Richard H. Thompson. He has never let me forget that. Tommy did a terrific job on this thing. It was pretty evident then that he was going to go

places. He was a super, super logistician and a very hard worker. To this day, Pat said as hard as he has worked over the years, that she never remembered a time that he worked harder than he did during that six to eight weeks that we spent together on that project. The other night she reminded him that he had come out one evening when she was waiting for him with three small children and said, "I'll be right down." Then he went back and began to work and forgot about them. At 9 o'clock at night, she was still sitting out there with those three kids and she reminded him about that in no uncertain terms.

[End Tape C-218, Side 2]

[Begin Tape C-219, Side 1]

INTERVIEWER: It has been said that when you stovepipe a portion of the supply system it is an indication that the system is not functioning well. I note that the Aviation Intensively Managed Items (AIMI) Program grew out of our efforts during Vietnam. Why do we have an AIMI program? How well is it working today and do you consider it as effective as it was during the Vietnam era?

MR CRIBBINS: First let me address the word stovepipe. I think it is a misnomer when used in the context that we have stovepiped the system that is known as the Army Intensive Management Item or Aviation Intensive Management Item (AIMI). The word stovepipe connotes that you are taking a telescope, looking at one segment and treating that segment uniquely, usually creating problems or becoming a liability to the rest of the system. May I suggest that I think that the word stovepipe should not be applied to AIMI and to some of uniques things that we have done in Army aviation. Most of them were initiated because we had a 10 year war in Vietnam which in substance was a helicopter war. The term that really should be used is weapons system management. When we began AIMI in 1965, it was known as closed-loop support and all systems in Vietnam were then affected by closed-loop support. The idea of closed-loop support was that we would track items from production to the user, and then from an unserviceable status through the depot system and back to Vietnam. Aviation was just one part of that system because the other commodities and major weapon systems were involved. When the conflict in Vietnam ended, we took a critical look at the effectiveness of aviation logistics programs and we decided to continue them.

That included two elements; one is the Worldwide Aviation Logistics Conference. It is involved primarily with aircraft, the overall aviation system and some of the major Class VII components such as radios and armament systems. Then there is AIMI which initially covered two categories. Now we are looking at three categories which I will explain very briefly. Category 1 of AIMI is a critical item which is in such short supply that it is necessary to intensively manage that item to assure equitable distribution in accordance with the DAMPL (Department of Army Master Priority List). Number 2, and this is a new one that I think will certainly be required, is an item that has $2,000,000 in annual demands and is considered of high enough value so that it must be managed and negotiated at periodical intervals so that we know where the assets are. These items are not managed by serial numbers. The other part of AIMI is known as AIMI-X or Army Intensive Management Item-Expanded. I need to talk a little to this because I think this has been one of the bones in the throat as it were of the disclaimers about aviation having a stovepipe system. In the early '60s, I spent a year on a DOD study group that had Army, Navy, Air Force reps working under Mr. Ray Clarke, who was a super grade in the Office of the

Secretary of Defense. As I said before, we were originally chartered under Secretary McNamara's major issue, if I remember correctly, Project 35. We were chartered to take a critical look at how we would intensively manage high value aviation engines and components. We found that our charter was too comprehensive to be accomplished under the terms of reference and the time frame we were given so we focused on aircraft engines. I was a lieutenant colonel on that study group for about a year and we looked very critically at how the Army, Navy and the Air Force managed their engines. As a result thereof, we in large measure plagiarized the system used by the Air Force in reporting the management and control of their aircraft engines. From this, we developed a system in 1963 called the Engine Reporting System. That system accounted for location, condition and status or any changes thereof by serial number for all the aircraft engines in the inventory. Now by condition, we mean serviceable or unserviceable and by location we mean whether it was in a depot, a unit, in transit or wherever it was. Status meant whether it was a spare or installed. Please note that in this case we are managing installed engines individually just as we manage spares. That system was really quite

successful. I guess it actually began about 1962, if I remember correctly. We developed several products from that system. Those products allowed us to know where our engines were, how much life they had in them, whether they were new, overhauled, and how many flying hours or operational hours since new or overhauled. Although we did know calendar time as well, we were able to track them through pipeline. Interestingly, in the Air Force system, they had a rather simple card which is issued along with the engine. When an engine is removed from an aircraft and is nonrepairable at location, it is turned into an intermediate level for repair or to a depot. The Air Force indicates on that card whether they need a replacement engine or not. This becomes a requisition for a replacement engine. It is a very simple, but effective system. We tried to plagiarize the Air Force system because it was evident that they had a lot of experience and had, in turn, gained a lot of this experience using the commercial air lines approach in tracking engines. The Engine Reporting System worked, I would say quite well for about two to three years, but then we were accused of having a unique system. That seems to be a no-no as far as the Army is concerned. In other words, it is better to be standard than to be good. So we were told

that we could no longer keep the unique reporting system or even if it wasn't unique, at least the specific reporting system we called the Engine Reporting System. We had to incorporate that system with what was then known as The Army Equipment Reporting System, I guess it was, TAERS, which was a forerunner to today's TAMMS, which is The Army Maintenance Management System. As a result thereof, we lost visibility over the inventory because it was taken worldwide initially and then maintained through a logic sequence of tracking serial numbers. We were able to follow a serial number and if there was a disconnect with one of the serial numbers when it was reported, the computers we had in those days would kick out that serial number and we would be able to track it down and find out what had happened. For example, if we had an unserviceable engine that had been reported as nonrepairable this station, in a short period of time the next report reflected that engine as serviceable and installed some place, we would immediately be able to track it down. It was a logic sequence, it made a lot of sense and it kept us going. But, the important thing was you couldn't have a break in that logic or then you would have to go back out and take another inventory. Well, that continued until we lost the

system in 1964 or 1965. We then managed engines the way we managed our other high valued components. By 1965, we had the AIMI system and the closed-loop support system going. The AIMI system, while it was part of closed-loop, was initiated with a closed-loop concept. AIMI manages high value and selected critical components and just about all of the high value repairable's whether they were procurement appropriation, or PEMA as we called it then, or stock fund. The closed-loop support system which now is known as the Worldwide Aviation Logistic Conference manages end items or Class VII components as I said before. At the moment, we are treating AIMI as items which transit in and out depending upon criticality and the AIMI-X items, some 60 items costing $6,000,000 which consist of engines, rotor heads, transmissions. Those we manage by serial number are under the aegis of the program we call AIMI-X or Army Intensive Management Items-Expanded. The other element that I cranked in on the $2,000,000 demand is a new initiative. We think that it's going to pay a lot of dividends because we need to manage these items in such fashion so we know where they are and what the actual usage is, not simply the demand for these items. Let me explain very briefly how the AIMI program works. The AIMI and

AIMI-X programs, and I am talking now, AIMI itself which currently encompasses only those two elements. This is a system wherein the participating NICPs or major subordinate commands of AMC, AVSCOM, CECOM, MICOM, and AMCCOM commit that they will support the semi-annual negotiated levels of support for AIMI items. I think there is a very grave misunderstanding and allegations that have been made about AIMI such as AIMI is a check in the mail concept. In other words, you are telling the user, "Hey, buddy, you will be getting yours." Nothing could be further from the truth. For example, if we have an item that is a zero balance and we cannot negotiate a level and say to the user that we will support that level by a month for that item that the user needs. We do not put it in the AIMI program. We put it separately and manage it intensively using a coding system at the Aviation Systems Command. I'll talk to that because I know a lot more about AVSCOM's management than the management of the other MSCs although they participate in AIMI. What we do is to manage those items so intensively that we issue them on an "as required" basis. Now for AIMI, the levels are negotiated at AVSCOM twice a year for a week in February and a week in August. The preparation is intense and the people come in from all over the

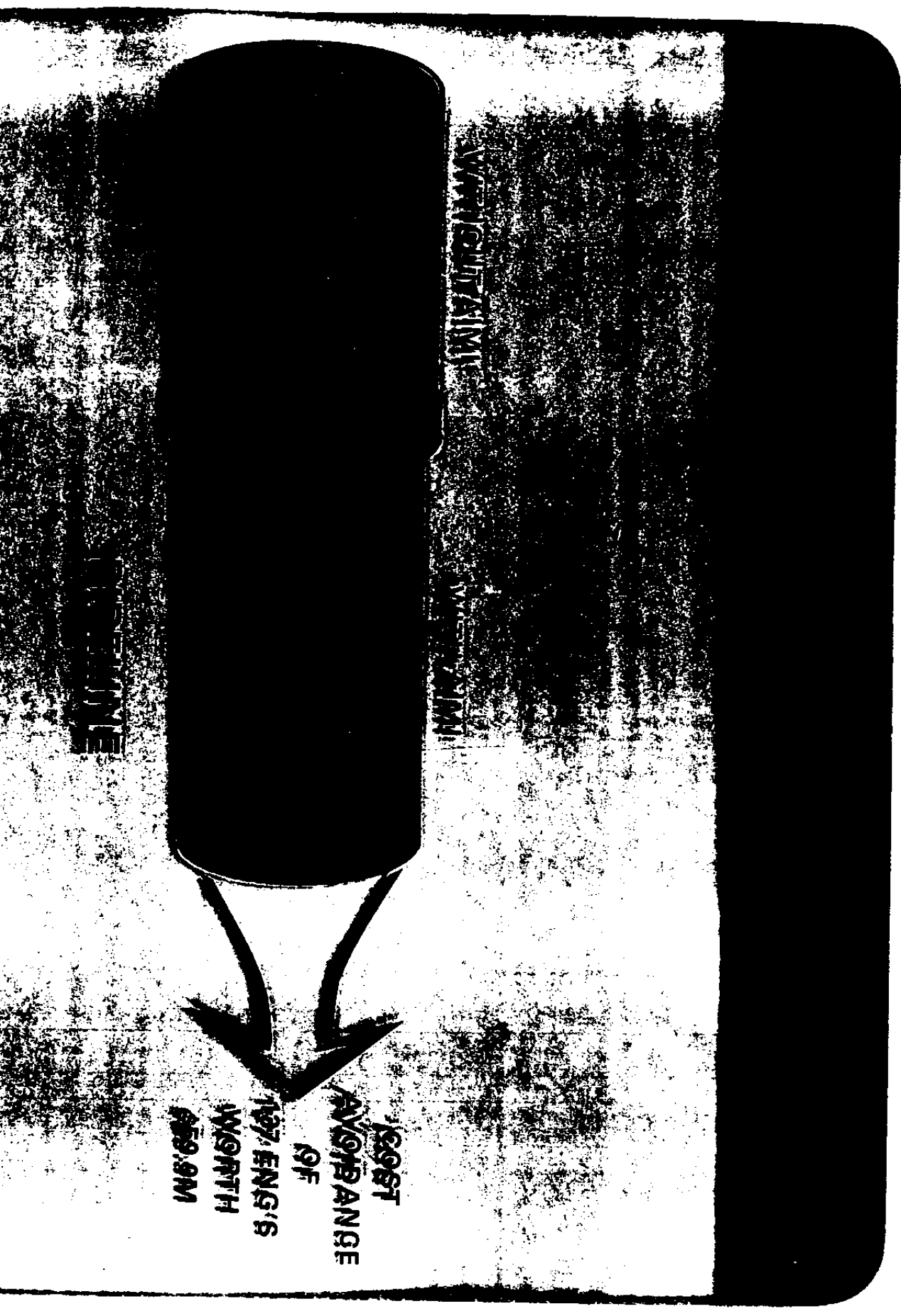
world who manage these items in the various commands. What we do then is to decide what items need to be AIMI and how we will manage them. We then look at demand and usage levels. In other words, negotiation goes something like this; the user may say, "I need 20 engines next month." The negotiator from AVSCOM would say, "Fine, you have been using 20, you have been turning in 20, I have 20 and you will get 20." Conversely, if the negotiator says for another item, "I need five of these each month for the next six months." Because you are really covering the next six months up front although you won't look out beyond the next AIMI planning meeting the negotiator and intensive manager from AVSCOM says, "Friend, I looked at what you have required. You have not used five per month nor have you turned in five per month. Somewhere out there are spares which I show as being in your inventory which you haven't used. Therefore, I am not going to agree that you need five per month." Then the negotiations start and they sort out where the inventory is between them. As a result thereof, they come up with, and I would say this, the understanding of how many of these particular items the user will need and will get. Here again, this is a commitment when the AIMI item is negotiated and it is decided that a command gets a

specific number of items per month. The command requiring an item requisitions 60 days, as I remember, before the month of anticipated need for the total requirement based upon the negotiated level. For overseas commands, the commitment is that the item will be delivered 30 days in advance. Items will be delivered 15 days in advance to units in CONUS. What you have done is cut down on the order and ship time at the negotiating level because under AIMI saying you will have an item on hand before it is required for consumption. That not only constitutes an order and ship time, but it also constitutes a safety level. If a command has an item on hand before the beginning of the month, that would be the same as having a safety level. There are quite a few things I am not going to try to address here. They are techniques that are used in AIMI. We have some AIMI items that we call safeguard. That means that we have enough supplies so that we could preposition those items in an overseas command so that when requested, the overseas command could get immediate delivery. There are other items which we call NMCS (not mission capable supply). That means that we are in such short supply and we will honor a requisition only for NMCS requirements. Our negotiations recognize this and the commands are told

not to requisition this item unless they have an aircraft down that would be NMCS or an anticipated NMCS as the result of having a TBO (time between overhaul) item the command knows that it has to remove at a designated time. As I said, some of those items that are in short supply are not put on AIMI. When the NICP does not have enough of an item to issue against monthly requirements, the item is not put on AIMI because AIMI is a commitment. AIMI is not a check in the mail!

INTERVIEWER: Two questions, sir. First, how many items are included in AIMI and secondly, have we really measured what impact AIMI has on readiness of the aviation fleet?

MR CRIBBINS: The number of items in AIMI will vary. The items that constantly remain in AIMI are, I believe, about 60 high value engines, rotor heads and transmissions. Those are the items that are worth billions of dollars of total inventory and are managed by serial number. Total number of items in AIMI including those critical items I believe is somewhere between 250 and 300. They bounce around somewhat and I am not sure how many items will be added as a result of


COST
AVOIDANCE
OF
137 ENG'S
WORTH
$59.9M

including the items with $2,000,000 or more in annual demand. Incidently, the items with $2,000,000 demand or more will be coded in two fashions. They must not only have the $2,000,000 in annual demand, but they must be repairable. They will be items that would ground an aircraft if they were unavailable. So I can't tell you how many items that will lead to, but now we are talking 250 or 300 items. It has gone over 300, but not greatly. We have found that if we get too many items in AIMI it gets tough to intensively manage them. AIMI, being a commitment, we make sure that the items that are placed in the program are available for that commitment.

INTERVIEWER: One final point, how would you say AIMI affects readiness?

MR CRIBBINS: From my view and I am sure that this is not a generally accepted one, I do find over the years that AIMI has improved readiness for aviation to a point that we would never realize if we didn't intensively manage with a system such as AIMI. There is no doubt in my mind that when you have critical items and you are looking at those items on the basis of actual usage or consumption with serviceable parts

going out and unserviceable ones coming back, the time in repair for the repairables the usage for the consumables, you're looking at usage rather than demand. When you're tracking items and negotiating multiple levels of usage with a high degree of accuracy, I do believe that you are significantly improving readiness across the board. We do negotiate. For example, in Vietnam we obtained the highest readiness when we had the highest flying hours in a combat zone and a very difficult area geographical and climatically. Yet we found that we were able to obtain the highest readiness while we were operating the most flying hours. To depart slightly, during the height of Vietnam there was a study by a major "think tank" here in the Washington area for the Secretary of Defense. I had a very bright young analyst with a PhD, who told me that he really couldn't understand why when we were flying the highest number of hours in Vietnam with helicopters, which were never really equipped to go there in the first place, we had the highest readiness. Well, I told him of the principles of supply, demand, high priorities and the fact that the concentration was on the war. I guess I talked about everything I could think of and somehow or another I wasn't successful to the degree that would really

convince him that the high readiness and the high flying hours in the combat zone were really consistent with one another and that we didn't have a disconnect. Finally I looked at him and said, "Let me tell you what I believe is probably very basic in addition to all the rest of the things that I have told you." I said, "Number one thing, a helicopter is designed to do only one thing in this world and that is to fly. On the ground it is a horrible looking mess. It doesn't transport worth a doggone on the ground and the one place it belongs is in the air. So therefore, when it's flying, it is doing what it was designed to do. It does that very well. What it doesn't do very well is take off and land nor does it do very well sitting around." I said. "Number two thing, while it is in the air, we can't screw around with it. The helicopter keeps flying because we let it fly and it is doing what it should be doing and the maintainers on the ground are not messing it up." With that he shook his head, but I think he came closer to understanding than he had with all the rest of the things I had been telling him.

INTERVIEWER: One other initiative that came out of Vietnam was the Closed-loop Support Conference that you talked about briefly. I guess it is now called the

Worldwide Aviation Logistics Conference. Tell me about its major thrusts and what it accomplishes over and above the semi-annual AIMI conferences?

MR CRIBBINS: The Worldwide Aviation Logistics Conference began in January 1967 with the first one being held in Hawaii. That was my first year as a civilian since I retired in June '66 and came on board in the Pentagon in January '67. The purpose was to manage the aircraft from production to Vietnam and return them back to depots for crash metal damage or major repair. We continue that program, but interestingly the first two sessions that we had were in Hawaii. It took two weeks and about 150 people. I did not attend the first one because I was putting the office together back here at the time. (The office that became the one I have today was formed in January 1967.) The second one was held in July 1967 and I did participate. I decided that the next one we had, and we were holding them at six month intervals, we would have it in St. Louis for a couple of reasons. I found that of the 150 people, not all of them were attending all the sessions. It appeared to me that we were spending an enormous amount of time on the beach so the next one I held in St. Louis. We had, I think, 55

people at the meeting and it took one week to do what it took two weeks with 150 people to do in Hawaii. A lesson learned, don't go to Hawaii to hold a conference if you want to get it done effectively and efficiently. At any rate, we continued on a six month intervals until the end of Vietnam. It worked out very, very well. The important thing, I think I need to get over here, is that units in the field do not requisition aircraft the way they requisition other items. They are authorized by TO&E's or TDA's and distributed through allocation. The DCSOPS serves as the prioritizer for operational requirements of the Army. The DCSLOG serves as the supporter of the Army with responsibility for distribution in accordance with the established priorities and capability to distribute. So between OPS and LOG, we come up with the requirements and then we sit down and go over our programs in detail to determine how many aircraft we had coming out of production or how many we had out in the field. We know where all our aircraft are because we have had a reporting system since 1963-1964. It accounts for every aircraft by serial number, condition, location and status. We pull our teams in on a Sunday, get them prepared and start off on a Monday morning with the Worldwide Aviation Logistics

Conference. Monday and Tuesday, we do an up front program of teams working on each major aircraft as a total weapon system with participants from the major commands and NICP who are knowledgeable about a given system. We look at armament systems, avionics systems and other items of interest that have been proposed by the user. On Wednesday morning, I will chair the Senior Officer Review Council which reviews each one of the team's work, in other words, by aircraft as a weapon system. The Senior Officer Review Council is at O-6 level and we look very critically at what the teams have come up with and either agree or have the teams go back and redo their work. That goes on all day Wednesday and we work into the night and then start out again on Thursday with the objective of wrapping up the first go around for each team by Thursday morning. During Thursday afternoon, we go back over each one of the programs to pick up the changes we made so that on Friday morning we have a General Officer Review, which I also chair. That General Officer Review then takes a look at the total program and from that we develop a book that covers each one of these systems of what is expected to happen for the next four years as we see it. The first year, I would say, comes very close to being executable. The second year and on out becomes a

plan. We look at production schedules, overhaul schedules, what is on hand, where the aircraft are and all the rest of it. We forecast the number of aircraft coming into depots, estimate how many crash/materiel damages we will have and what attrition rates we'll have. We look at all of these things and as a result thereof, we have a very definitive program which gives us a good indication of what's going to happen for the next four years, especially, as I say, up front for the next year.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, the major commands are represented plus you've got ODCSLOG represented. What other agencies attend the conference?

MR CRIBBINS: We have all the Army MACOMS represented as well as ODCSOPS, ODCSPER and now SARDA. The final findings of the General Officer Review are contained in a report that I mentioned earlier and is chopped off by all the participating commands and approved at Headquarters DA.

INTERVIEWER: Before I discuss the Aviation Logistics Office which you now head, I would like to go back and talk about the time frame that you retired back in

1966. I guess you and General Besson linked up again and you became a consultant for him while he was the Commander of AMC. Would you talk about the events leading up to your retirement and also your work as a consultant?

MR CRIBBINS: I was sure I would not appear in the zone for colonel by the time I reached 20 years. I had decided by 1965 that I really needed to take a critical look at retiring when I had completed 20 years and establish what I would do. Also, there was an absolute that I would have to retire at the age of 53 as a lieutenant colonel. Had I completed 20 years by age 52 and then become a colonel, I would have had to retire at age 55. Since I was approaching my 52nd year rather rapidly, I decided that I would retire when I reached 20 years. General Besson with whom I had been associated from the time that I had left Europe in 1959 was responsible for my being in Washington and responsible in large measure for my being over in the Pentagon. I had worked very closely with him all the time I was in the Pentagon. He had asked me to talk with him before I decided what I was going to do. In April 1966 I went to see General Besson and he asked me what I intended to do. I told him I was going to

retire and he said, "What do you plan to do?" I said, "Well, frankly, I have been too busy with Vietnam and other things to worry much about that." Well, I said, "I am going to have to come to grips with it come June because I was going to hang it up on 30 June 1966." He said, "How would you like to come to work for me?" I said, "Well, that sounds interesting." He looked at me with a big grin and said, "Tomorrow?" I said, "I'm sorry, sir, but I do have to complete 20 years and I won't complete 20 years until 30 June." And he said, "Well, all I am saying, Joe, its tomorrow, next month, 30 June, whatever." I said, "Well, sir, I certainly would like to give it a try." So he sent a memorandum to Mr. Resor, Secretary of the Army, asking for a waiver on my having to wait six months before I could be reemployed as a civil servant because I had knowledge of aviation which was critical to support in Vietnam. Secretary Resor agreed so I retired on 30 June and left the office at 5 o'clock on that day and reported to General Besson the next morning at 8 o'clock as a civil servant. I became his special assistant until January 1967 when General Abrams formed this Special Aviation Office in the Pentagon which became known as the Office of the Special Assistant for Logistical Support of Army Aircraft or OSALSAA.

INTERVIEWER: So what did your duties entail as a consultant for General Besson?

MR CRIBBINS: Well, I was doing the same thing for General Besson that I had been doing as a soldier. I was supervising overall aviation programs especially those in Vietnam. In fact, during the period between the time I retired in June and when I actually came back to the Pentagon as a full time civil servant, I was working as a Special Assistant with carte blanche from General Besson to do whatever needed doing. I came back to the Pentagon at least twice to brief the Chief of Staff, General Harold K. Johnson, worked with the Army staff and developed a line of balance type of management device for use in aviation. I followed up on the Air Vietnam project that I had been doing while in the military. Basically, I found that I was doing very much as a civilian working for General Besson as I had been doing while working in the Pentagon for the Special Assistant for Army Aviation.

INTERVIEWER: You are now the Special Assistant to the DCSLOG and the Chief of the Aviation Logistics Office. You said earlier that this office was formed in 1967 and has gone through several changes. I would like for

you to discuss your organization, its structure, its roles and missions as they have evolved over the past few years.

MR CRIBBINS: When I first came on board I believe it was 5 January 1967, I was on a special study group. This was another thing that I had been doing for General Besson. It was a special study group that was looking at intensive management of aviation systems in conjunction with the other services. Again, I was representing both General Besson as Commander of AMC and Headquarters Department of the Army. I was in Philadelphia with this Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Office of the Secretary of Defense group working on this study. Well, the group was taking a critical look at how all the services manage their aviation program to take advantage of each of the other. I was recalled to the Pentagon when General Abrams decided to set up this special office in ODCSLOG to intensively manage aviation. Incidently he did not call it stovepipe. He called it intensive management and the special assistant's office was established for that purpose. So I was brought back and given the job of putting together a charter in conjunction with the Office of the Chief of Staff Army and representatives from the

other ARSTAF agencies. The charter was chopped off by General Abrams and I became the Deputy as a civilian at the equivalent level of GS-15 because I did not get my civilian status confirmed until May 1967. We set this office up and our job was to see that the aviation programs worldwide, especially in Vietnam, were properly and intensively managed to keep readiness levels high and support the war effort in Vietnam. In putting together the initial charter, it was based on what I had been doing as Special Assistant for Tactical Air Mobility when I was in uniform at ODCSLOG, with some expanded roles and missions. We added a weapons systems manager for each major weapons system; for the Huey, the OH-6, OH-58, and the CH-47. Each aircraft system had its own manager as well as managers for avionics and for armament systems. We established two branches. I had a deputy who was a colonel and a lieutenant colonel was in charge of each branch with the appropriate administrative support. I remained the deputy at that time while they were looking for a general officer to run the office. General Jack Klingenhagen, who was then a Brigadier General working for General Besson over in AMC in research, development and acquisition became the first officer in charge of OSALSAA and remained in charge until December 1967.

General Engler called me in and said that in looking at the way the office was running, the experience and the need for general officers elsewhere that he was giving up a general officer's space to make the Chief of OSALSAA a civilian super grade.

[End Tape C-219, Side 1]

[Begin Tape C-219, Side 2]

MR CRIBBINS: He asked me if I thought I could do the job and how I felt about it. I said I thought it was a real challenge and the answer was yes. I believed that I could do it and I would be very pleased to take over. So General Engler made me Chief of OSALSAA, assigned General Klingenhagen to the Supply and Maintenance Directorate where they badly needed a general officer. Well, the office continued through 1968. At that time, I told General Engler that the Special Assistant title didn't lend enough clout to what we were really charged with doing and that was management of Army aviation. So we changed the name, the missions and functions of the office to make that the Office, I'm trying to think of the name or remember the name after all these years, "Aviation Logistics Management Office." It became

Aviation Logistics Management Office and remained that way and I remained at the GS-15 level although the position was authorized a supergrade. When General Engler was about to retire, he made a real issue of getting me a supergrade rating which he managed to do in August 1969. General Engler was replaced by General Heiser. I had worked for General Heiser when he was the ADCSLOG for Supply and Maintenance in DA, ODCSLOG. In the interim, he had been in Vietnam as a two star commanding the First Log Command and came back to become the DCSLOG of the Army. I told General Heiser that I would understand if he did not want to continue the aviation intensive management program the way it had been done. To my everlasting surprise, General Heiser said, "You aviation folk are way ahead of the rest of them. You just stay out there and I will support you." He then proceeded to make the office a directorate at which time he also gave us the responsibility for the acquisition of aviation. So for General Heiser's tenure from about September or October 1969 until December 1971, when he was replaced by General Kornet, this office was the Directorate for Aviation Logistics. I had the title of Director and I had support as well as acquisition of Army aviation which had previously been the responsibility of the

Director of Materiel Acquisition. That lasted until the war was over and General Kornet came on board in early 1972. There was quite a cutback in spaces and General Kornet said that he was going to move acquisition back into the Materiel Acquisition Directorate and felt that we were going to have to be reorganized. With Vietnam emphasis declining, the reason for having 25 people, I think that was how many we had at the time, had disappeared. General Kornet asked what did I believe we should do? I said, "I thought that we ought to continue intensively managing aviation." General Kornet agreed with that. He had just commanded AVSCOM so he had been well versed with the problems associated with aviation which were different from the other weapon systems in the Army. When he came on board, he gave me an open-ended wish list of what we should do with the office. I finally went back to him and said, "I thought that we could do two things. I thought that the number one thing if I were to be effective, was to report directly to him and not to one of his directors or to the ADCSLOG because the latter changed quite frequently. I thought the continuity of reporting to the DCSLOG was very important. The number two thing was that if I could retain a hard core of people that, at least on an

interim basis, we could phase down what we were doing so that we would move acquisition back into the Acquisition Directorate and then phase the office down." He agreed with that. I guess we phased down to about 10 or 11 people who were looking critically at the support of Army aviation and managing the AIMI program, in those days known as Aircraft Component Intensive Management System. That lasted through General Kornet's tenure, I guess about two and a half years, when he was replaced by General Fuson. By that time, General Kornet and I had agreed that we could bring the office down because we were losing many, many missions and functions especially spaces in ODCSLOG over that period of time. In fact, at its peak, DCSLOG ran from 1100 to 1200. Today they are down to 300 so it gives you an order of magnitude of the reduction in ODCSLOG itself. We finally arrived at the conclusion that I would be Special Assistant to the DCSLOG and Chief of the Aviation Logistics Office, which authorized a total of three people besides myself. Subsequently, we got a fourth and a fifth person and now we have grown back up to six people including the secretary. During General Kornet's tenure, which went from '72 into late '74, there really hasn't been any major change in the missions or functions of this

office. However, there have been changes in my job as Special Assistant depending upon the DCSLOG's personal desires, but the aviation logistics responsibilities have remained pretty much as is.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, two things. First, could you go into a bit of detail about the critical things that the Aviation Logistics Office was involved in, and secondly, what were some of the things you accomplished as the Special Assistant to several DCSLOGs?

MR CRIBBINS: Yes. During the time of Vietnam it was a case of not only being Special Assistant to DCSLOG, but also being Special Assistant for Aviation Logistics to the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Vice Chief of Staff. As Special Assistant and in charge of the Aviation Logistic Office, we did several things. We took a critical look at the supply concepts. AIMI was initiated in 1965. We brought the engine reporting system back on line in February of 1967, managing T-53 and T-55 engines by serial number. That eventually grew to engines, rotor heads and transmissions which exist today in the current program known as AIMI-X. We really refined AIMI. We were driving these programs from the Pentagon and working very closely with some

superb associates out at the Aviation Systems Command. We revised our maintenance concepts as I mentioned earlier. Adding KD Teams to operating units in Vietnam made those units pretty self sufficient in order to do the inspections and do all the maintenance necessary to keep aircraft flying in a tough environment. I would like to emphasize that in Vietnam where we had been flying a maximum of 20-25 hours a month, we were able to increase flying hours up to 140-150 hours a month per aircraft. The important thing we did here was to move some 70 percent of what was known as direct support, from direct support backup, right into the operating unit, and gave the operator the capability to maintain his own aircraft in accordance with his needs. I think one of the most important things, and I guess General Abrams said this better than anyone else, is that you were able to turn to the commander of an operating unit and say to him, "Alright, you have a mission. You've got a flying hour program, operational tempo or a readiness goal to meet, and I have given you the wherewithal to do all of that. It is up to you to execute." The commander cannot turn and say to someone else, "Friend, I have just flown my mission, now you take care of my aircraft." In this case you were saying to the operator you have both an operational and

maintenance capability and this worked great. We added about 175 people when we reorganized the 1st Cavalry Division for support of 400 aircraft. We attained an increase in readiness across the board of about 20 percent per aircraft in the division as a result of this realignment. But more importantly, we increased the readiness from somewhere around 55-60 percent to 75-80 percent and we raised the flying hours by 25 hours per aircraft a month across the board under the division. I don't need a cost effectiveness analyst to tell me that this paid dividends. This became the way of life in Vietnam. I really have to say that I would have to attribute the fact that we got there from here to the drive and the direction of both General Johnson and General Abrams. General Johnson was Chief of Staff until the summer of 1968. General Abrams was the Vice Chief until the spring of 1967 and then Deputy COMUS MACV until the summer of '68 and ultimately the COMUS MACV. We talked about this next program of looking at different maintenance concepts when I was still in uniform and was carrying the action here. I trust that this doesn't sound self-serving, but interestingly, the three-level maintenance concept came out of this office. I have to attribute that to the finest group of young officers I have ever seen in the Army. I told

them what needed doing and then turned them loose. I guess if there is any management technique I've learned over the years, it is if you're in the position, of course, get the best officers you can find. When you get them, bring them on board with the full understanding that they are on their own. You give them full authority to act and speak for you as long as they keep you advised with no surprises. I find over the years that if you stick with that sort of a management philosophy, it is amazing what you can get out of these fine young people. There is the real secret for whatever we accomplished.

INTERVIEWER: I am curious as to why we went to three levels of maintenance or what is now called aviation unit, aviation intermediate and depot maintenance. There has been recent discussions of the possibility of going to two levels of maintenance. I guess by the turn of the century we maybe looking at a throw away maintenance concept.

MR CRIBBINS: Yes. I explained to some degree that about 70 percent of the direct support (DS) maintenance we moved into the operational unit into what we called unit maintenance. Incidently, it was interesting as to

how we wound up with the term AVUM (aviation unit maintenance). Initially we called it integrated direct support maintenance, which is what it was. When General Heiser came back from Vietnam and became the DCSLOG of the Army, I brought up the subject of integrated direct support maintenance. General Heiser really came on like gang busters. He said, "Joe, this really gives me a problem, not a problem with what you are doing, but the way we say what we are doing. I have been telling a lot of the people out in the field that we have been moving too much maintenance forward and that we should move it back. Here you're talking about integrating direct support maintenance and I agree with it for aviation. I don't agree with it for some of the other commodities." So as a result, instead of integrated direct support maintenance, we called it aviation unit maintenance. But having moved 70 percent of the direct support forward, we also took a look at what was happening to the general support maintenance. In Vietnam we found that a large percent of general support maintenance was coming back to the depot because we were asking the units in the field to do more in combat than they were able to do. We never had the correct skill levels, tools, equipment, facilities, time etc., you name it, to do all the

things that the maintenance allocation charts required of them. Consequently, what we were doing was leaving a lot of unserviceable items out in the field when we should have been bringing them back to the depot. Having looked at that, I recognized that about 70 percent of DS had moved forward and maybe 60 percent of GS had moved back. Then came the big question of why do we need DS and GS units in the field? Plagiarizing to some degree the Air Force and the Navy systems, we then came up with an intermediate maintenance concept which we implemented. We ran a study out of this office. We contracted out and had support out of the TRADOC community and the Aviation Logistics School down at Fort Eustis and came up with the three level of maintenance concept which was approved. I also have to give credit to General Bonesteel in Korea. In one of my trips through Korea and looking at DS and GS units there, I found that the same thing was true in peacetime or wartime. I said to General Bonesteel, who was then the CINCUSFK, that I found the DS units were getting items that they believed belonged in GS or in the operational unit. DS units would transfer the parts down to the operational unit or back to the GS unit. When I got to the GS unit, I found that it was getting items that should have been maintained at DS or at

depot level and was transferring items back and forth. I guess I facetiously said that maybe we ought to put blanket TDY orders on some of these components the way they were moving in and out of units. General Bonesteel's comment when I said that I thought what should be done was to integrate the DS and the GS into a single intermediate level was, "Joe, I think that what you are saying makes so much sense it is going to be extremely difficult to do, but we will go ahead and give it a try." He gave it a try and the honest to goodness implementation of the three levels of maintenance was accomplished in Korea with the establishment of the 45th Aviation Maintenance Company. It integrated the DS and GS companies that had existed before to make an intermediate maintenance company. While I am on the subject, if I had to do it over again, I would have called it aviation user maintenance. It is user maintenance in the sense of what we are trying to do. We'll talk a little bit more this when we talk about two levels of maintenance. We were trying to dedicate maintenance to the user and make sure that the user was supporting the aircraft as a weapon system not supporting the supply system. To the degree possible, users did the maximum amount of on equipment maintenance, but maintenance that had to be

done off the equipment was accomplished at the intermediate or at the depot level.

INTERVIEWER: We are now looking at a concept called two levels of maintenance which is aviation user and depot maintenance thus eliminating the intermediate level.

MR CRIBBINS: The two level maintenance concept has received a lot of publicity with the advent of the LHX and thrust in the LHX concept that will make it a two levels of maintenance for aircraft. That is, design the aircraft for two levels of maintenance from the initial design, development, testing, procurement, production and eventual fielding. However, I say that it has a lot of publicity, but two levels of maintenance for some aircraft systems has been around to a degree for quite some time. For an example, operational units for the CH-54 Crane were so designed that we never did any intermediate maintenance work on a crane since we have had them. However, we only had 90 cranes initially and we have 72 of them now. We gave the operational units the capability of doing all the maintenance on the crane that was required in the field. What couldn't be done in the field was done

under contract at depot level. To some degree, the same thing is true for the CH-47. The CH-47 is a very complex helicopter and requires some AVIM)Intermediate Level) maintenance, but practically all that is associated with the air frame consisting of the sheet metal work rather than the components and the engines. Otherwise, what isn't done at the AVUM level the way we were organized under the old "H" & "J" series TO&E, was sent back to the depot. So we still have a two and one-half level of maintenance for these aircraft. Now in our concept for the LHX, we are looking at a capability at the user level. I will emphasize it is aviation "user" level rather than "unit" level, of doing all of the diagnostic, prognostic and on equipment maintenance work that an aircraft needs. What is taken off the aircraft then will be sent to another level to be repaired. That other level of maintenance would be depot. Now this doesn't mean that the depot level has to necessarily be in CONUS nor does it mean that it needs to be green suit. It could be contiguous to where the aircraft is located, off shore or in CONUS if need be. Although in CONUS with all our transportation capabilities, I would suggest that the depot could be located wherever most resource effective. It could be a total contractor operation or

a combination of contractor and AMC-run operation. What we are looking for when major components have to be maintained, and I want to emphasize the word maintain is an intermediate level of supply. Under our concept, maintenance would be done at depot level and that would take care of the two levels of maintenance. However, we must recognize that in order to do this it requires an extremely responsive pipeline for supply and support that will allow us to be parts changers based upon good diagnostics and prognostics on the aircraft at the user level. Therefore, I firmly believe that we need an intermediate level of supply. That intermediate level of supply will not help to maintain or repair the components that pass through it whether they happen to be mission equipment packages, engines, transmission or any other repairable components of the aircraft. The intermediate level will stock, store, issue and provide an upper level of diagnostics for those items that are removed from the units and make sure unnecessary returns do not get back to the depot. It would also be a responsible source of replacement parts needed under a throw away concept that we expect to use at the user level for the LHX. That, in my view, is truly what we are talking about in two levels of maintenance. Now one of the facts to

recognize in doing this will be that when the LHX comes on line, we will still have aircraft that are being maintained under the three levels of maintenance system. I think we need to relook at some of the things that we are trying to do in the field. For example, as recently as three years ago, I was in Europe and found that we had about 50 people in an intermediate maintenance unit that were trying to accomplish electronic avionics repair and maintenance. At the same time they were doing this, we had a contractor doing phase maintenance on Chinooks in another intermediate maintenance facility because we did not have the green suiters to do phases on the Chinook. Now the phase is "on equipment maintenance" that should be done by the user in operational units. The electronic avionics is the sort of thing that could be done best by highly skilled contractors or green suiters at a fixed facility. Intermediate maintenance units should have been doing the Chinook phases and the contractor should have had highly skilled people doing electronic avionics maintenance. These are the kinds of things that we have to clean up. I know our maintenance concepts must support the Army of excellence initiative and progress toward a two level concept of maintenance.

INTERVIEWER: Would you discuss the role that contract maintenance played in support of Army aviation in Vietnam? Secondly, where does contract maintenance fit into today's logistic support scheme for Army aviation?

MR CRIBBINS: Okay. We could not have existed in Vietnam without contract maintenance. At the height of Vietnam we had about 4,000 helicopters and about 400 fixed wing aircraft there. We had about 2,000 contract people in Vietnam who did all kinds of things for us. Initially we had one contractor, but later we had three. These contract folk were well versed. They did all kinds of jobs. I don't think that there was anyone who came out of Vietnam with any experience in aviation who was not a firm believer that contractor support was the way to go. They stayed on line with the operational units with very few exceptions. We found that they proved to be well skilled, reliable and above all else, able to dedicate fully their time to maintenance support. One of the major problems we run into with green suiters maintenance was the utilization rates that run something like 25 percent to 30 percent max. For a 40 hour week, that means that you are getting somewhere between 10 and 12 hours of work from

soldiers in their primary skills. With a contractor, you can obviously work them full time. So where are we in contract maintenance? I guess I would quote General Otis and I don't think he minds being quoted on this. I am trying to remember as best I can of what he said to me about three years ago when I was in Europe. He said, "Joe, we have always had, you know from your experience and I know from mine, contract maintenance in any war. I am really convinced that in the next war we will have more contract maintenance than any of the past wars." When I look at the complexity of equipment, the necessity of having people who know how to maintain this equipment and having them fully dedicated to support this high tech equipment that we are fielding, I am convinced that contract maintenance is the way of the future. We are now using contract maintenance to a considerable degree with the Black Hawk and the Apache having full time depot level contract maintenance for the first three to four years of the system being fielded. Right now, at our single site training for the Apache in Fort Hood the intermediate level of maintenance is being performed by a contractor. In Europe, we have just let a contract for airplanes and engines. We have been using contract teams for aircraft condition evaluations. Incidently

we need to talk about that because that is a major maintenance concept that we use called on condition maintenance. Another thing that we need to talk about is air lines of communication and how we made use of that in Vietnam. I think that is something that we have learned very well and we need to take advantage of it.

INTERVIEWER: Alright, sir, we will come back to ALOC. But first, after Vietnam, there was the need to modernize. Secondly, there were shrinking budgets and thirdly, there was a diminishing industrial base. So really there are three areas that I would like for you to discuss.

MR CRIBBINS: Alright, let me start with my favorite. Let me start with the user and come back up through the wholesaler and try to bring what we learned in Vietnam into focus. I think that since it was a helicopter war we learned a whole lot. I will say right up front that it wasn't because we were smarter than anyone else. What happened in Vietnam is we kept running into emergencies because we were operating helicopters in such a war that we learned as the war progressed. Being in an unusual war that was 8,000 miles away from

the west coast, it became a helicopter conflict. Let me relate that with the user we found it was necessary to give them the confidence and capability to keep his aircraft safe, reliable, maintainable and ready. We couldn't do those things with just the user even though they were dedicated and worked many, many hours each week. So we supplemented them with contract maintenance. That contract maintenance capability provided continuity beyond the one year tours and provided the confidence of highly skilled people. It also gave us a inkling of what contract people would do in wartime. They sat out rocket, missile and mortar attacks along with the troops. There was no mass exit of those people when situations were tough. They were dedicated to their jobs. We found out that we were asking the user to do too much. On one hand, we believed that we had to separate the fighter and the supporter. Well, we found that in aviation we had to combine them. When we combined them, it gave the fighter the capability to support his own systems. He began taking better care of them than when he did not have the organic capability. He couldn't turn to someone else. We couldn't ask him to do the many maintenance things that we believed he could do even with supplementing him with the KD teams and the

contractors without a responsive supply system. We gave him a diagnostic capability and then made him, what I believe is the way of the future, a parts changer rather than a parts maintainer at the user level. So at the user level, we put the operator in charge. We made him fully aware of what his responsibilities were as a logistician as well as an operator. We found that this system worked very well. That doesn't take care of user level, but it gives a pretty good summary as to what we found out at the user level from the viewpoint of establishing what the user should, could or needed to do in order to sustain a fighting effort at his level. If there is anything, I guess, we've learned is that there cannot be any real differentiation at that user level between the logistician and the operator. They have got to be the same.

INTERVIEWER: Next would be the intermediate level.

MR CRIBBINS: Oh, we found that we started out with too much user maintenance at the intermediate level in the form of DS. We moved it to the user level and supplemented the user with the people, skills and capabilities that were needed. We also found that we

asked the intermediate level which was originally DS and GS, to do more work than it could accomplish because of the necessity of providing facilities, tools, equipment, people, skills, etc. Therefore, the intermediate level was overburdened and a lot of work was going to depot level. What we did was, take the overflow from the user level and concentrated more upon aircraft and weapon systems readiness at the user level than upon the DS and GS levels that were adequately supported by the existing supply system. Now what did this mean? This meant that we had to establish a more responsive supply system than we ever had before. That leads us right into the air line of communications. We found that at the intermediate level, the most important thing to do was to be able to intensively manage and move critical parts; the unserviceables, the serviceables and the consumables. From the viewpoint of the ALOC, let me relate what happened during the TET offensive because it was symbolic of how we got much deeper into the ALOC business although we had been using it in Vietnam from the beginning. In February 1968 when the Vietcong celebrated the TET with an offensive campaign, we found that a large number of our critical engines and components were lost, destroyed, captured or disappeared during that campaign. As a

result, General Abrams, who was the Deputy COMUS MACV, told General Johnson, "I know that you folks have done everything you can, but if we don't get more engines out here quickly, this war is going to come to a screeching halt." He was talking about the T-53 engine for the Huey and the Cobra, T-55 engine for the Chinook and the T-63 engine for the OH-6 and the OH-58. They turned out to be the most critical items. Well, looking at where we were, we were thinking that we had done everything. When we sorted things out, we hadn't done nearly enough. So at that time, and I'll use the T-53 engine as an example, we were using 16 engines per day in Vietnam. Those 16 engines per day were worth about $1.1 million at $65,000 to $75,000 a engine. I'll have to go back and look at my arithmetic, but I think that is pretty close to the mark. That was not the problem. The money wasn't the problem. The problem was how do we supply 16 engines a day? There was no way we could do it without ALOC. [End Tape C-219, Side 2]

[Begin Tape C-220, Side 1]

MR CRIBBINS: We already had instructions in the field which stated that if an engine could be repaired at any level in Vietnam in 30 days, it was to be retained for

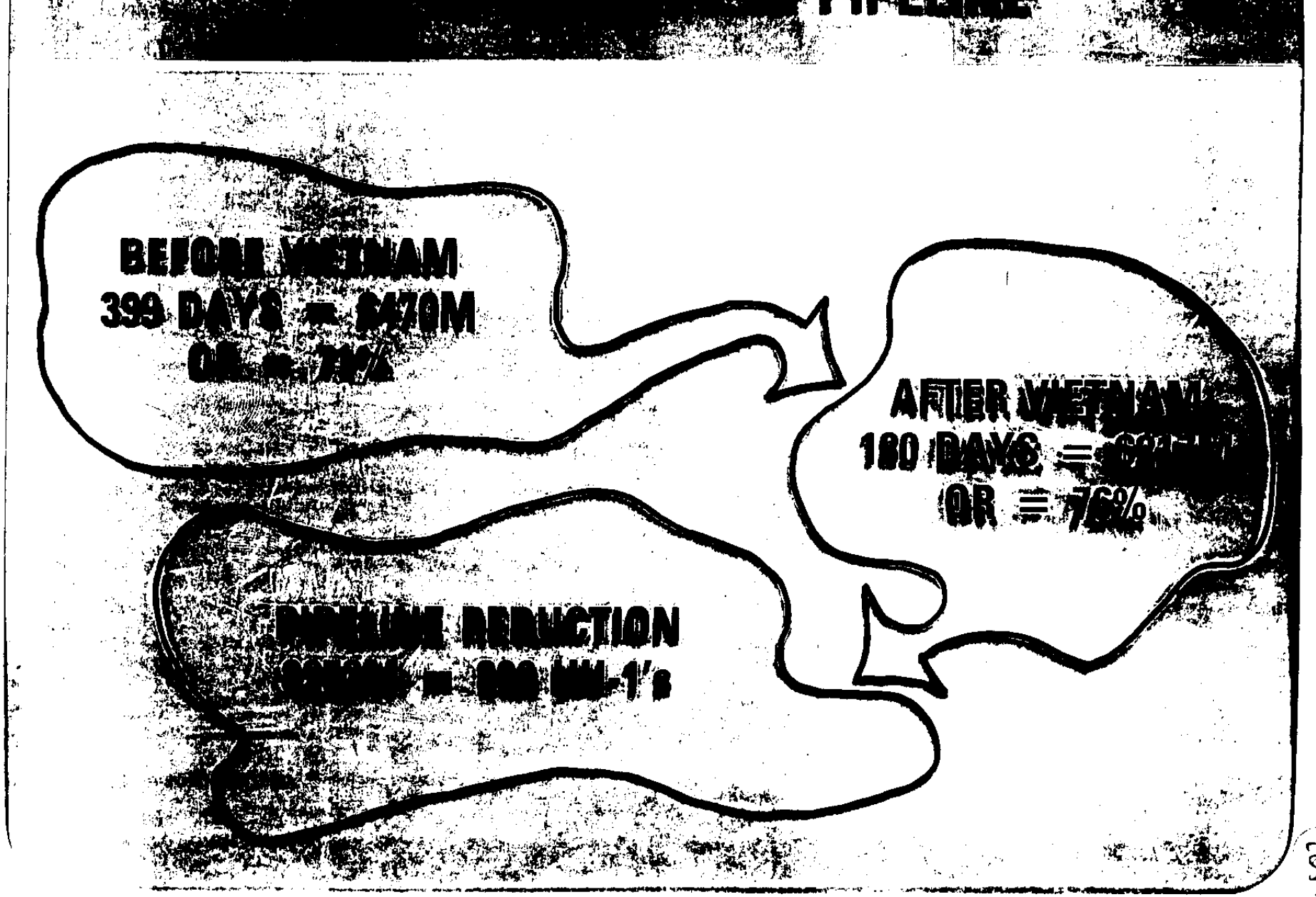
30 days, and all the rest of the engines would be sent back to CONUS for depot repair, overhaul or whatever was needed. As a result of General Abrams' message to General Johnson, I was called in and asked what should we do? I said, "Well, I thought that we needed to flush out the system." He said, "Alright, prepare whatever needs doing and I will sign the message." I multiplied 7 x 16 and came up with 112 engines. I prepared a message for the Chief of Staff's signature which said that, "For T-53 engines you can keep 112 serviceable or unserviceable engines in country that are not installed in aircraft. Any engine above and beyond that number whether serviceable or unserviceable will be sent back to the United States by air." At the same time, we established a 24 hour dedicated truck system that moved as needed between Stratford, Connecticut, where Avco Lycoming made T-53 and T-55 engines, Charlotte, N.C. where they had established an overhaul base, Fort Rucker, Hunter Stewart in Florida and Corpus Christi, Texas. We established a C-141 airlift three times a week to move serviceables and unserviceables. We told theatre what we were doing. General Bob Williams who was then the commander of the First Aviation Brigade also had the 34th Support Command under his command. Whenever an airplane came

in, General Williams had to personally report to General Abrams as to the number of unserviceable engines being retrograded. Inside of a month, we flushed out of Vietnam somewhere in the neighborhood of over 750 engines. The average time engines were being held in country was not 30 days, it was something like 80-90 days. When the people in Vietnam looked at an engine and they couldn't take care of it, they requisitioned the part. Once the 30 days arrived, they would take a look at it and say, "Well, I'm sure in another few days it will come." What had happened was that we had a stock of unserviceable engines in Vietnam that were really holding up the whole system. The dedicated truck was very efficient because it serviced us portal-to-portal. Airlift in CONUS will give you very fast service from point to point, but you have to get it to and from an airstrip and the loading and unloading ramps. So with that system we flushed out about 750 engines. Would you believe that we never had a NORS (Not Operational Ready Supply) at the depot level for an engine once we got those 750 engines back in the supply system. What did that say to us? It said that we had thought that we were doing a terrific job and we weren't. Another thing in spite of the TET offensive is that our readiness rates and we still have

them on a chart, will show that we had the peak in readiness of around 74 percent or 75 percent. We were flying the maximum number of flying hours, something like 45 hours per aircraft worldwide for the total fleet.

INTERVIEWER: I would like to make those statistics a part of this report.

MR CRIBBINS: Yes, I agree. Let me think what else was accomplished at the intermediate level. Another thing we found was that Vietnam was an unusual conflict in the sense that it was conducted in a very confined geographical environment. Accordingly, I am afraid that our logistic units became homesteaders and remained in one place most of the time. I think that the exception was the First Cavalry Division moving from An Khe down into the Iron Triangle. That was a major move for a large operational unit. Essentially, our intermediate level maintenance units stayed put throughout Vietnam. Another thing I think we have to recognize is that the enemy had few tanks and limited mobility. Although, there was lots of mortar and rocket activity, there was no enemy air activity over South Vietnam. Therefore, we had command of the air


BEFORE VIETNAM
399 DAYS = $470M
AFTER VIETNAM
180 DAYS =
OR = 76%
PIPELINE REDUCTION

and were able to move our helicopters wherever needed. All of these things would have to be considered in the proper context in any future war where we may not have the capability to move indiscriminately. Conversely, it was the sort of war that was analogous to some of the previous guerrilla wars including our own Revolutionary War. We owned pockets and the enemy operated around those pockets. I remember flying into An Khe during a period of heavy fighting on a C-123. We flew at 10,000 feet and then literally cork screwed right into the An Khe runway. If you came in on a glide path, you would get shot down. It was a very unusual war, but I would say that we learned more lessons in aviation because it was the first major helicopter war in history. I do believe we came out of that war being experts on helicopter utilization in a combat environment.

INTERVIEWER: I guess it was General Ridgway, who set the vision for the Army's future in aviation. Essentially he said he wanted "an Army that was hard hitting, streamlined and as much as possible be transportable by air between continents and on the battlefield." His vision came to fruition in Vietnam where we saw the 25th Division move one brigade by air

into Vietnam. Further, as you said earlier there were some 4400 Army aircraft in Vietnam at the height of the war. Coming out of Vietnam, we knew that we were going to have a period of constraints. I believe General Heiser had a vision and he started several initiatives to make sure that we had sound logistics program. More importantly, there was concern about the ability of the industrial base to support Army aviation. I would like to hear your thoughts on those concerns.

MR CRIBBINS: Well, coming out of Vietnam was a traumatic experience for the helicopter industry, but let me talk very briefly about General Heiser. Of the people who have influenced Army logistics, I have got to put General Heiser right up there near the top of the list. He was truly a "dirty hands" logistician. I mean that in the sense of being a logistician who had come up from the very basics of having his hands dirty doing unit level maintenance all the way to become the DCSLOG of the Army. One of the things that he came up with was called "Inventory in Motion," which other people may call stovepiping because it requires intensive management by commodity or weapon system. The concept he envisioned is the very inventory in motion that the Japanese use today on their automotive

production lines. They do not stock, store or issue inventory in large quantities. When a vehicle production line approaches that point where it needs an item, a truck pulls up with that item and it is put on the vehicle. That way, they cut down on inventories. There couldn't be any concept that's better suited for where we are today with the high cost of our inventories and the necessity to cut down on them. Such a program helps to cut down on obsolescence and the cost of buying things that we don't need. In talking about the industrial base where we had some very real problems, there were four major helicopter manufacturers; Bell Helicopter, Boeing Vertol, Hughes Helicopter and Sikorsky. Kaman was making helicopters and still is for the Navy. Right after Vietnam we were faced with a major problem of sustaining an industrial base to support post-Vietnam requirements and enable us to keep folks such as design engineers employed. Those fellows live in what we call the high rent district of salaries. They are not directly in support of the existing fleets, but design future fleets. As a result thereof, I think it was in 1972, I was asked to take a very critical look at what we needed to do to perpetuate a warm base for helicopters designed to go in production and support. That became a major

exercise and project at AMC and AVSCOM under the guidance of a two star general. A couple of things which came out of this was that there wasn't any doubt that the helicopter industry was in trouble. At the height of Vietnam the industry was producing as follows: 15 Chinooks, 115 Hueys, 35 Cobras, and 50 OH-58s per month. With those production rates obviously industry was on what we now call "on a roll". When we came out of Vietnam, we had more aircraft than we needed. We had a large stock of high value components and engines that would not be needed because we had based our stockage of them upon wartime requirements. Wartime flying hours at the height of Vietnam when we clocked 45 hours per aircraft per month, which consisted of a total of 6,000,000 flying hours, was drawn down to 1/4 of that or 1.5 million flying hours almost overnight. So we did not need to procure aircraft nor did we need the components so the whole industrial base was affected. It was decided that the only way we could perpetuate the industrial base was to put these firms in the business of overhauling rather than producing and the firms took advantage of that. Boeing Vertol was a good example because it had gotten to the point where they were below their warm base of sustainment level. What we

did was to induct aircraft in their overhaul line which sustained a warm base. We were not dealing that much with Sikorsky until later in '70s when we bought the Black Hawk, but the other manufacturers were involved early on in our efforts to sustain the industrial base for helicopters. I remember Jim Atkins, President of Bell, told me that 95 percent of Bell's work was for the services at the height of the war and not too long after the war was over, 95 percent of it became commercial. That was a traumatic experience. Lesson learned--I guess one of the things we need to look at very critically is that if we are going to get into an engagement in the future, is to level off to a degree if we can and recognize in advance that we must perpetuate an industrial base for support and development of new systems. One of the things the aviation community found out was that the most critical commodity is people. Once you lose people, you rarely get them back. It takes years to develop skills in aviation. You can make brick and mortar and build a house, but you can't build people.

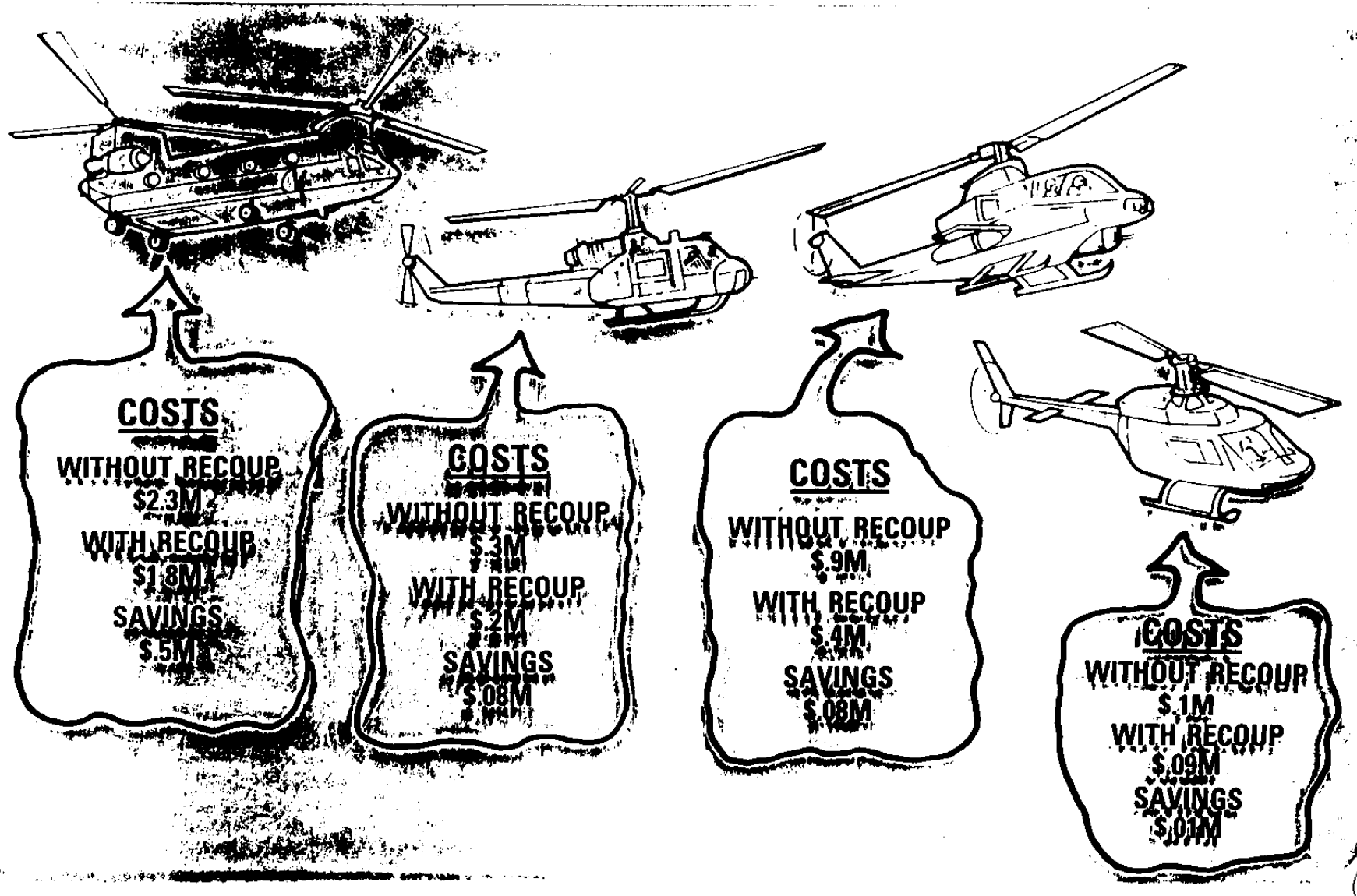
INTERVIEWER: Before we go on, I would like to hear your thoughts on lessons learned at the depot level.

MR CRIBBINS: In CONUS we were running a two horse horse race during Vietnam. Number one was supporting the war in Vietnam and number two supporting the training base at Fort Rucker and one out at Mineral Wells, Texas where we did the primary training for helicopters. At the depot level, we had one major organic facility at Corpus Christi Army Depot. We had a second depot level facility which was more of a job shop operation at the New Cumberland Army Depot geared to support the CH-47. At the beginning of Vietnam, we had the capability for aircraft maintenance at Sharpe Army Depot, in Atlanta and some off-shore depot capability in Europe. By the conclusion of the Vietnam War we had one organic depot facility which was Corpus Christi and some other capabilities for avionics, electronics, armament and mission equipment packages. In other words, Atlanta, Sharpe and Europe were phased down by the end of Vietnam. Later, New Cumberland Army Depot was phased out and we now have one organic aviation facility. I guess the greatest impact of Vietnam was about the time of the TET Offensive when it became evident that if we were going to survive and win the war in Vietnam, we had to have more helicopters. Mr. McNamara initiated a move toward increasing the production of helicopters. This created

a great strain on the whole industrial system. Let me give you some examples. We were producing five Chinooks a month and we went to 15 practically overnight; we were producing 65 Hueys a month and we went to 115 overnight; we were producing 15 Cobras a month and we went to 35 overnight. We went so fast that the critical item became the engine production. For quite a long time, we would take T-53 engines, and of course this exacerbated the engine shortage problems I talked about during the TET Offensive, off the production line at Bell and put them in a Huey. The Huey would be run through the production line, flown to Red River, put in storage, the engine pulled and sent back into the production line so we could keep production ongoing. We had a lot of Hueys stored without engines since they took longer to produce than the aircraft did. As usual, American ingenuity, production and large scale manufacturing capability came through and succeeded. It succeeded beyond anything we believed possible. I don't think we ever gave the industrial base that much credit because there has been so much acrimony about the Vietnam conflict. I think we forget some of the good things that were done in support of Vietnam regardless of the outcome of the Vietnam War. The wonderful things that many

logisticians did in order to make the system work seem to go unnoticed. By escalating the industrial base's production capability, it was tough to phase down after Vietnam. Because that escalation lasted for a relatively short period of time, I think somewhere between 1967 until 1972, the bottom fell out and we wound up with too many aircraft and components. One of the things that I pointed out was the fact that we had more engines, transmissions and other component parts than we knew what to do with. We came up with a project called re-coup. We had nearly $200,000,000 worth of engines and components for which we had no home. When we withdrew from Vietnam, we were still producing helicopters that we had ordered two years before. There was hardly any time to gradually reduce production. Under Project Re-coup, I took a proposal up through the DCSLOG, the Under Secretary of the Army, OSD, to Congress to use APA procurements funds for overhauling engines and components and use them as GFE (Government Furnished Equipment) for new aircraft. It was approved and we have a couple of Presidential Management Awards because the net result was a differential of something like $160,000,000. That was big money in those days. Carolyn has a chart which shows the differential, and you may have the chart,

that shows the differential of the cost per aircraft with Recoup versus the cost without Recoup. The cost was rather significant when you look at the differential of supplying those used engines and the components which had already seen service in Vietnam. Since we couldn't get the necessary OMA funds, we used procurement funds as an investment. There was a certain amount of trepidation in the building concerning our request to use procurement funds to overhaul items. When we got to the Congress, their comment was, "Hey, that's the greatest thing we heard of. Go to it." I think the lesson learned overall was that the same thing was true in World War II where we experienced terrific build-up of 40 or 50,000 aircraft per year and then having to let the bottom drop out of the program. It is necessary to keep our industrial base going. In order to do that, you also have to have in my estimation more contracting for depot level maintenance to sustain manufacturers. We supported three of them with overhaul programs for a considerable period of time after Vietnam. The only depot capability we have ever had for the OV 1 and RV 1 has been down at Stewart, Florida. We have maintained them over the years with overhaul programs when we couldn't sustain them with procurement programs.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[End Tape C-220 Side 1]

[Begin Tape C-224, Side 1]

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I don't wish to belabor a point, but do you see the KD Team concept becoming a part of the Army of Excellence TO&Es?

MR. CRIBBINS: I certainly do. I do believe that the KD Team concept could play a very critical role in our overall concept of lightening the Army. The Light ID certainly has to be the way to go and that is the way we're going. The question is, how light is light especially when you are talking about sustaining. When we had the KD teams many years ago, we used them to supplement organizational maintenance in units that had aircraft. I'll use the H-21 as an example. In the early days of Vietnam, we had the capability to operate and keep those aircraft in the air. We didn't have the capability to maintain them on the ground. We had to supplement the H-21 units. For 20 aircraft assigned to an H-21 lift unit TO&E, we supplemented it with a KD team composed of 56 people. The 56 people were by and large wrench turners backed up by some supply people

and technical inspectors. We had a hard core of weapons system maintainers keeping the aircraft safe, reliable and maintainable. The difference between units operating with those KD teams and those without were like night and day. The maintainers in the H-21 Companies without KD Teams were in substance service people. In Army aviation language, they serviced, did not maintain; they washed windshields, filled gas tanks and kicked tires. The KD team gave them the wherewithal to maintain and sustain operations with a high degree of readiness that could not have been achieved without them. When the 1st Cavalry Division was ready to deploy to Vietnam, there was a major exercise in the building which looked at the maintenance capabilities of the division to support 400 helicopters and some fixed wing aircraft. There was a Mohawk detachment assigned to the 1st Cav. We, being the logisticians, believed that we were short-changed on maintainers in the 1st Cavalry Division. We believed that when the division deployed to Vietnam, we were not going to be able to keep its aircraft operating the way they were capable of doing because of shortfalls in people and maintenance capability. The 1st Cav at that time was assigned four DS companies for support of 19 companies and detachments that had

aircraft assigned to them. Organizational maintenance in those units had service personnel rather than true maintainers. I guess it was in 1969 when the Chief and the Vice Chief of Staff were convinced that our KD team concept with its separate units had proved itself in Vietnam. Accordingly, aviation maintenance in the 1st Cav Division was reorganized under the KD Team concept. When we reorganized, we phased out two of the four direct support companies. By that time, we had removed the administrative spaces from the KD teams and integrated the maintenance capability into the operational units. We used the spaces to integrate about 70 percent of what was known as direct support maintenance into the operational units and gave the 1st Cav Division AVUM which we had already installed in our separate operational aviation units in Vietnam. The real difference turned out to be an increase in readiness by some 20 percent for aircraft per month. In other words, we had been running anywhere from a 55 to 60 percent operational readiness rate in the 1st Cav's aircraft. Subsequent to the reorganization, readiness rates increased to roughly 75 to 80 percent depending upon the aircraft system. Importantly, the flying hours for the 1st Cav increased by some 25 flying hours per aircraft per month across the board.

Accordingly, the 101st Airborne Division now Air Assault, was organized the way the 1st Cavalry Division was and is organized that way today. So, the lesson learned is that the KD team which we eventually integrated into the 1st Cav still exists in the 101st and certainly showed us the way to go for Army aviation. I am firmly convinced that the KD team concept could make a great deal of difference in both the Army of Excellence and a Light Infantry Division. In my view, the KD teams could be composed of green suiters, DACs, contractors or a combination of all the above. I think that is very important because the green suiters and DACs are not readily available nor are the spaces for those personnel. I see no reason why we couldn't use contractors for that kind of support. We might want to supplement them with some green suit or DAC capability if we felt that was needed.

INTERVIEWER: If we were to take the KD team concept a step further, I believe there is consideration of going to two levels of maintenance. How would the KD teams fit into this maintenance concept?

Mr. CRIBBINS: Two levels of maintenance, very simplistically is the wherewithal to provide enough maintenance capability at the operational unit or user level to do the on equipment maintenance to keep an aircraft safe, reliable and maintainable over a period of time. With the KD team concept, let me say that once we have that sort of capability in an operational unit, then comes the question of what do you need above and beyond that? I would suggest that what you need is the capability to do all the rest that is needed. Hence the two levels of maintenance which says that if you can maintain and sustain your aircraft safely and reliably at the operational level, then the next level could very well be depot level. I think that we must look very carefully at what we are calling the depot level. The depot level could be anything that needs repairing over and above the operational level to include the intermediate level of maintenance as it is known today. This means, however, that we have to relook our concepts of depots being in CONUS. In my view, depot level capability does not out of necessity have to be an industrial base. It does have to have the capability to do anything over and above user level. A depot level could very easily be off shore and could be relatively contiguous to the area of

operations so there isn't any long pipeline. At depot level, maintenance could be done incrementally with a forward echelon which would accomplish say about 75 percent of the things that needed doing with the other 25 percent going back to CONUS. I think the Air Force had a pretty good system going in what was called the Queen Bee concept for their aircraft engines. Under the Queen Bee concept which would be analogous to what I am talking about, there was a Queen Bee unit off shore through which all aircraft engines were processed once they were removed from an aircraft. That Queen Bee unit actually turned around 80 percent of the engines that came through it and sent them right back to the user. The other 20 percent went back to CONUS. In my view, that Queen Bee concept would really be the off shore depot turning around 75 to 80 percent of everything that came its way and the remainder of the depot support being back in CONUS. There may be the question of whether you are kidding yourself and calling an off shore depot an intermediate level? No, because I would say that the depot, in my view, would belong to the Army Materiel Command and not to the theater command.

INTERVIEWER: Could you visualize under an AMC depot maintenance umbrella a combination of green suit, civilian and contract personnel? In other words, a composite unit organized along the Queen Bee concept that was employed by the Air Force.

Mr. CRIBBINS: Right. There's really a precursor to this because I understand last year when General Otis ran into difficulty doing his Theater Army Repair Programs in Europe, General Thompson, then AMC Commander, agreed that he would pick up responsibility for a large part of the repair program right in theater. That also includes the ERF's (Equipment Redistribution Facilities) if I remember correctly. So, the precursor is there for doing this sort of thing. It is a case of how you do it. Now a word of caution; that is, when we are talking about the unit being self sufficient, we are talking about the unit having a very comprehensive diagnostic and prognostic capability so that the unnecessary removals and returns are reduced to the absolute minimum. Also, we then must have the capability to have components, engines and other major reparables readily available for replacement in operational units. Then there is a need for diagnosticians who can be parts changers rather

than repairers in operational units. Therefore, I would say that we need an intermediate level of supply. I will differentiate this supply from the second level of maintenance by saying that we can put in enough diagnostic and prognostic capability at the intermediate level of supply to preclude the unnecessary return of components to the depot. The operational unit with its high degree of mobility must not, of necessity, be encumbered with large pieces of diagnostic equipment. However, we are now getting down to the point where some of this equipment is in suitcase form.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned supply and I believe that we should tie in supply with transportation. If we are going to have the kind of system you are proposing, it seems that air lines of communication would be critical. The tonnages that have to be moved are going to be significantly higher. Your thoughts on integrating supply, maintenance and transportation in this kind of operation.

Mr. CRIBBINS: I would suggest that looking at the cost of supply pipelines nowadays, it is absolutely essential that we find a way to do what General Heiser

called "Inventory in Motion." That is, avoid having a stagnant pile of inventory any place where we can use transportation to move high value components and parts needed for immediate readiness. I think that over my many years, I can go back to Project MASS (Modern Army Supply System) in Europe in the mid '50's. It was a forerunner to the DSS (Direct Support System.) What this project set out to accomplish was supporting operational units in Europe directly with parts from the depots in CONUS. I worked on quite a few of the policy papers when I was in the Army Ordnance Depot in Mannheim. The real difficulty in the project was a combination of three things. (1) We didn't have a true air line of communication. (2) Communications were very limited compared to what we have now; and (3) the capability of processing requisitions and doing things with computers now, we did not possess then. The most sophisticated things we had were IBM key punch machines. We had a manual system supplemented by some mechanical capability. Project MASS fell by the wayside because we didn't have the resources that exist today. I think that with the Global Positioning Systems (GPS) we will be able to tell exactly where units are at any time. We should be in a much better shape of implementing direct supply support system in

wartime. One of the hang-ups with the direct supply support system was the fact that once the requisition was forwarded to CONUS and the part was put in the system, no matter how fast it was, came the big question "Where is the requisitioner?" Where do I deliver the item? With a rapidly moving army in combat, that might create difficulties which could be overcome by the use of the GPS which could be able to tell you where the units are located.

INTERVIEWER: Let's talk for a minute about modernization. In the decade of the '80's, we fielded the Black Hawk, the Apache, we continued to modernize the CH-47 and we've initiated the AHIP and the LHX programs. The latter two programs have come under close scrutiny within the defense establishment and in Congress. Yet both programs are still alive. Are both of these programs necessary in your estimation?

Mr. CRIBBINS: The LHX at the moment is alive and kicking but not quite so strongly as before since the utility version of the LHX has been deleted from the program. The program is in a state of flux, so please understand that what I say now could be changed later today or tomorrow. What we are looking at right now is

a light armed reconnaissance helicopter that will be an attack bird as well as an armed reconnaissance scout. We are talking about a helicopter in the 7,000 or 7,500 range of max gross weight. We are talking about a very well armed bird that will be less expensive than the original version of the LHX which kept growing to the point where it became so expensive that it was perceived as being unaffordable. The AHIP has turned out to be an absolutely super aircraft. I was on the Source Selection Advisory Council for the AHIP and when we began the source selection process, I do believe that of the two competitors-one being the OH-58D which is the current AHIP and the other being the Hughes helicopter called the MH-500, the latter would win. As it turned out, the OH-58D was such a super performer that we didn't have any difficulty in selecting it. Also, the OH-58D has the great advantage of the mast mounted sight which will help keep it from easily being targeted by the enemy. I have become convinced over the years that the way to make a helicopter survivable in combat is to avoid or preclude it from being targeted by enemy weapons. The important thing is to avoid getting hit in the first place. When you look at a helicopter and its necessity for visibility and lightness, the very nature of the helicopter leads me

to the analogy that hardening the helicopter against weapons such as missiles, cannons and heavy caliber weapons is like hardening a telephone booth. When we selected the Apache for example, one of the real drivers in selecting the Hughes bird which became the AH-64 was its greater survivability because of its high degree of flexibility and very rapid vertical rate of climb. In other words, we were selecting the aircraft that was less likely to get hit. The bottom line is we need both the LHX and the OH-58D.

INTERVIEWER: That leads me to my next question that concerns battlefield sustainment and ties into survivability. In one of your many speeches, you talked of your concern about getting the logistician involved early in the design of new systems. If the logistician is involved early in the life cycle management process he can influence that ability to sustain an end item or system once it is fielded.

Mr. CRIBBINS: I guess I would put it this way. I think the logistician not only has to be involved in the early design, he has to be involved in the basic requirement because that is where the design is derived. As I see it, the logistician needs to be

consulted and be able to influence the requirement to the degree that the mission and threat are fully recognized as well as the needs of the user and operator. Then the logistician can say, whether he can support it. With the logistician in that process, when the weapons system or whatever is being designed, he becomes an integral part of the design system to make sure that he influences the design so that it is not only supportable, but affordable. In other words, the words doable and affordable are part of a lexicon that we now must live with if we are going to have a capable army. I get very concerned about logisticians sitting back and letting the user come on line emphasizing performance and mission requirements and the logistician subsequently tries to figure out how he is going to support that weapons system once it is fielded. As I say, if the logistician has part of the action from the time that the requirement is developed all the way through, then he has a good opportunity to make sure that he is delivering the very best product that can be delivered in support of the very basic requirements. Please understand, I am not, repeat I am not, challenging the requirements. What I am challenging is our capability of meeting the requirement reasonably, affordably and in a timely

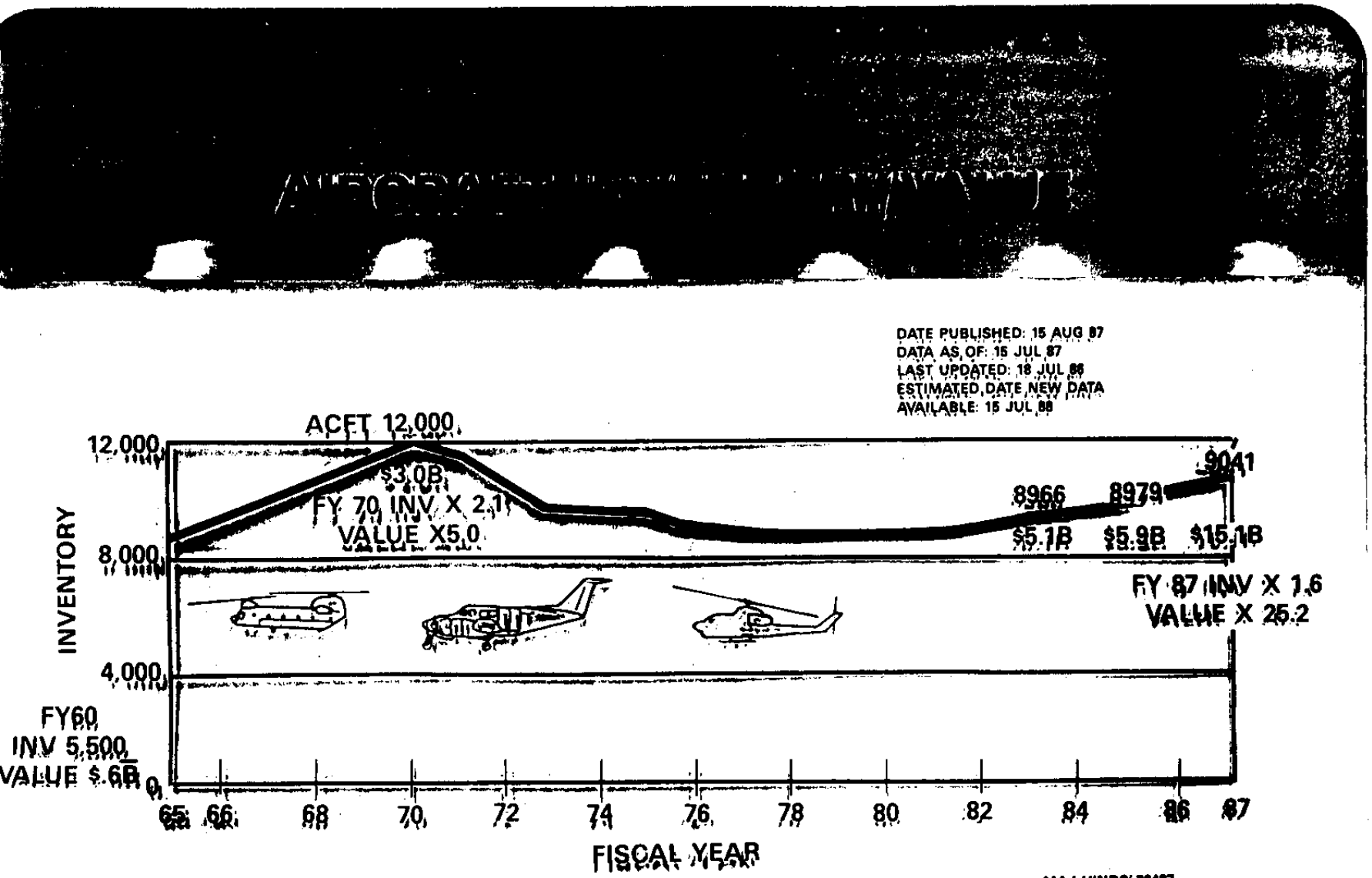
manner. For instance, when the V-22 first came on board as a potential system we were part of it at that time. In fact, we were the major part of the V-22 program. We established the fact that the logistician would be a deputy to the Project Manager and be on the same level as the Deputy for Design and Development and would have as much to say about how that system was designed, developed and tested as did the engineer.

INTERVIEWER: Did the logistician get the same status in other commodity areas such as in armor, automotive or missile systems, as was given for aviation systems?

Mr. CRIBBINS: I would say that for any system whether it is a tank, whether it is a missile, or a piece of electronic gear, if a logistician isn't there early on, I would suggest that we are looking for trouble somewhere down the line. Sooner or later, that system either will be nonsupportable or nonaffordable.
[End Tape C-224, Side 1]

[Begin Tape C-224, Side 2]
INTERVIEWER: You wanted to discuss more about supply and the costs of maintaining large inventories.

Mr. CRIBBINS: Certainly one of our most significant challenges nowadays is the cost of supplies. I was just working on some statistics. Since 1958, the aircraft fleet has grown from 5,000 to 9,000 in round figures. The value of that aircraft fleet has grown from $600 million to $15 billion; a factor of 25. The value of the spare parts, repair parts, and I am talking about the wholesale level because I haven't been able to sort out how much more is below that level, has grown in the same time frame from $250 million in 1958 to $4 billion in 1988 or a factor of 16. When I look at those numbers, I've got to realize that aviation is an integral, but an awfully expensive part of the Army. We've got to do everything possible to reduce those costs. Another thing that drives the Army's budget is the operations and maintenance cost which constitute one-third of the total budget. Big time. That is, one third of $79 billion goes into operations and support costs. To the degree that aircraft and aviation have become so expensive, I would certainly say that it is essential that we intensively manage all of these systems that comprise the aviation fleet. Here again, I will say something that I have said before that I resent and resist the idea that we have a "stovepipe" because we manage these items all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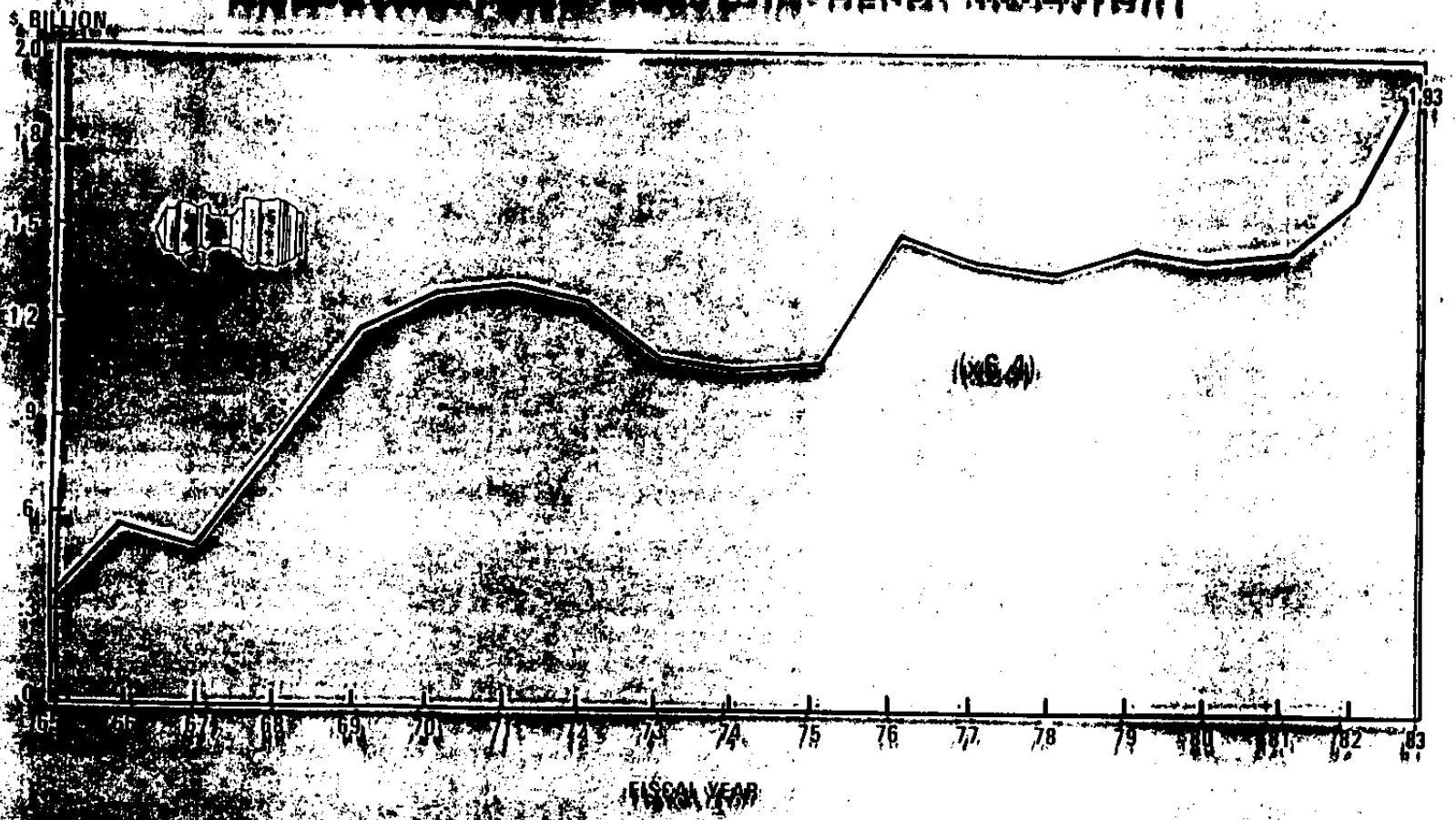
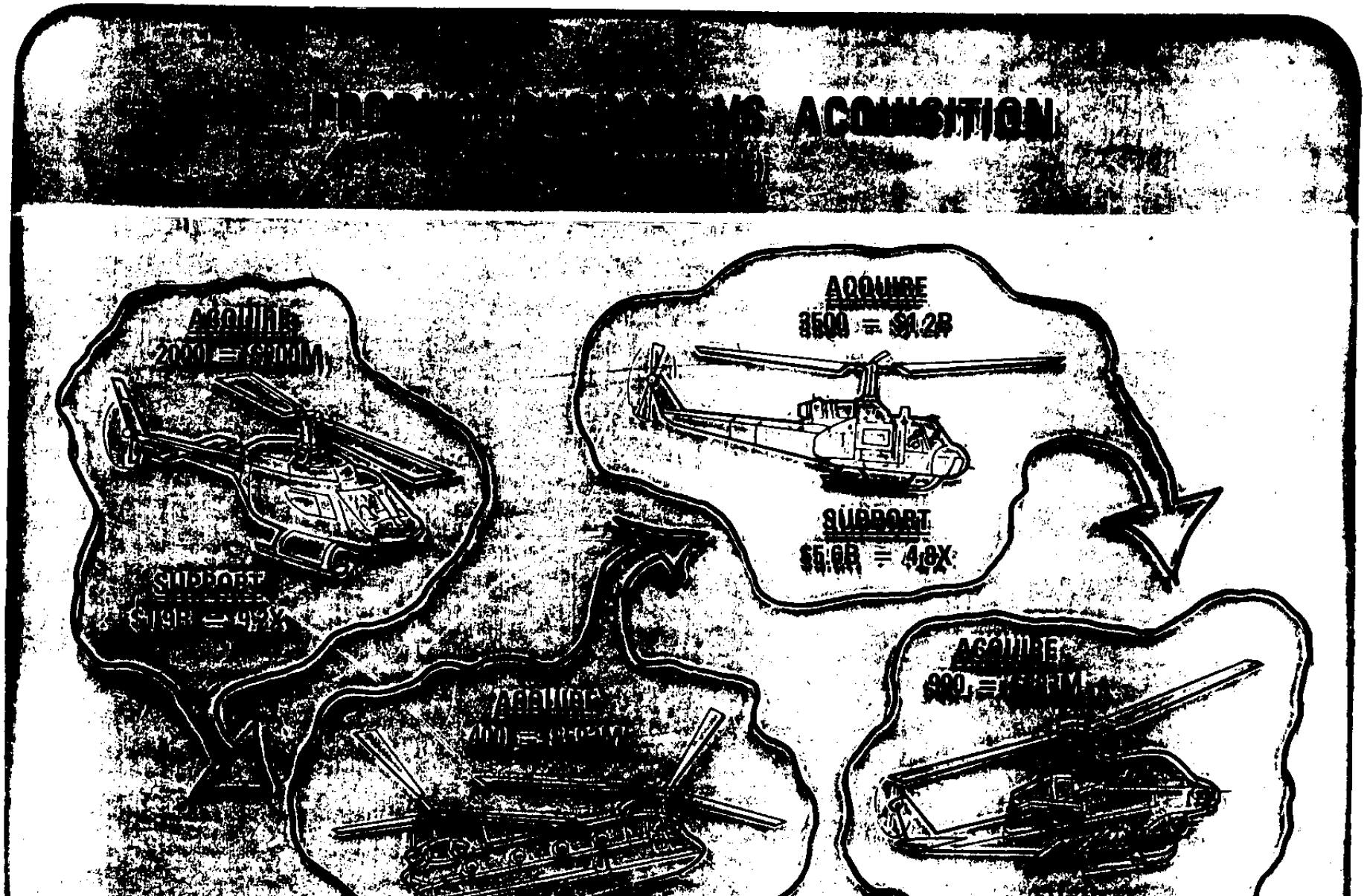
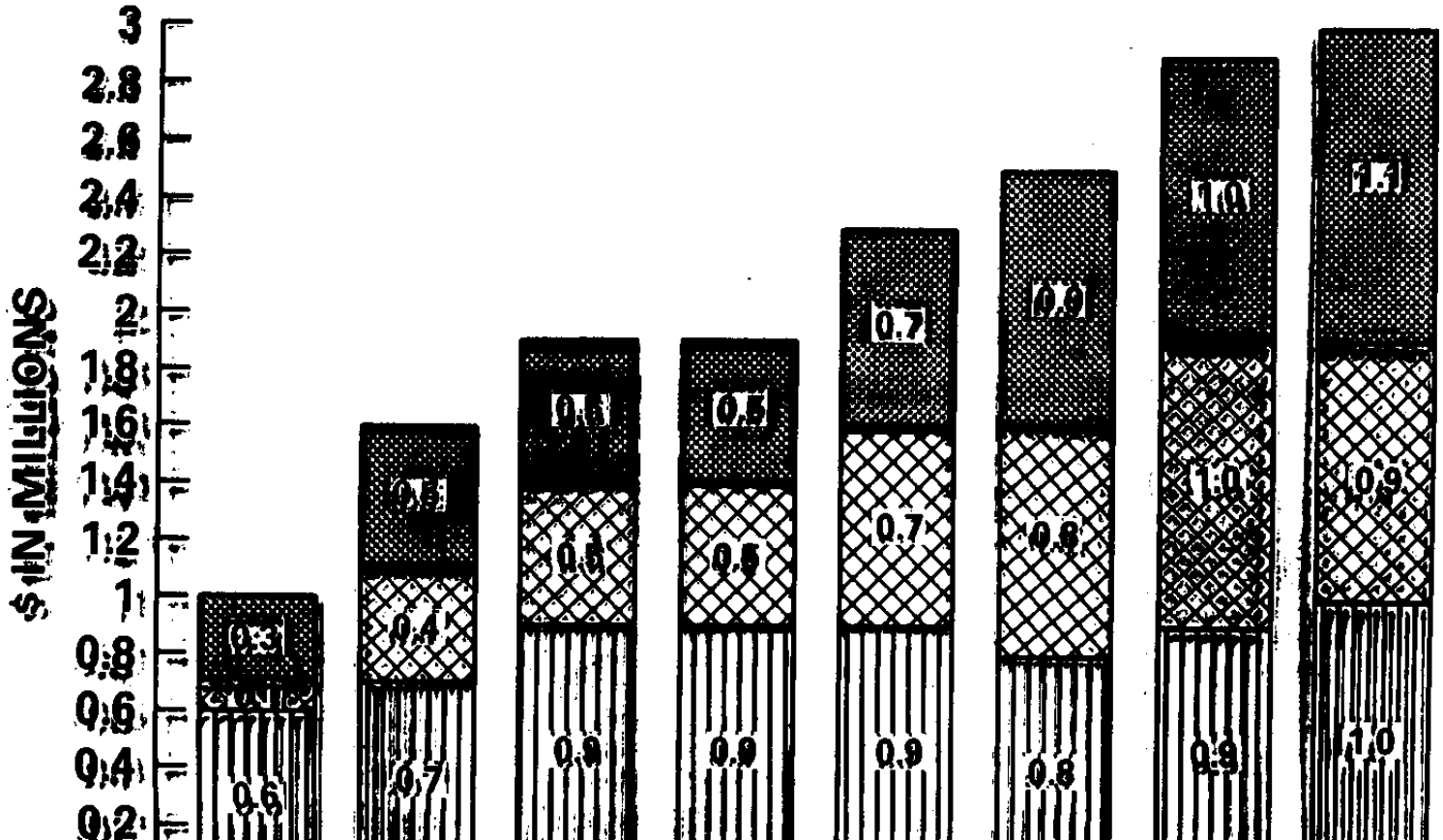
VALUE OF AIRCRAFT ARA SECONDARY AND STOCK FUND ASSETS IN DEPOT INVENTORY




ACQUISITION
ACQUIRE
3500 = $4.2B
SUPPORT
$5.0B = 4.8X

FLYING HOUR COST



the way down to the users. It is weapon systems management or intensive management of high value assets. The perception is that the aviation guys are going off on their own because they manage these items all the way down to user. This is an ill-conceived perception. We manage them because they are so costly. If there is anything that I would leave with you in this oral history is the fact that we have got to recognize the necessity for keeping the supply pipelines down to an absolute minimum. I know I talked earlier about some of the pipelines in Vietnam and how we used air lines of communication and such. The fact that we know, or should know if we don't, where each one of those high value components are -- by serial number, like a person by name, is important, components by line number, by serial number, where they are, their condition whether or not they are installed, whether they are serviceable or unserviceable, whether they are intransit or sitting someplace waiting to be moved is equally important. I think that if we don't know those things, we cannot chase those items down and there is no way that we can afford the program in order to support the defense of this country.

INTERVIEWER: Many logisticians contend that you can't manage the inventory unless you know two key things; the unit that an item is going to and where that item is at any time during its movement from origin to destination.

Mr. CRIBBINS: That origin to destination has to be just as flexible laterally as it is vertically. That is something that we do not do well at all. In other words, one unit can have an item so critical and another unit relatively close by may need the item and not know that the item is available. For those very high value items, I think the way to go is to keep them centrally located so that you can support many units with them. I cannot see the potential of placing the ASL or PLL of some of these high value expensive items in units rather than putting them on a theater-type stockage list where they can support many units throughout the theater.

INTERVIEWER: To paraphrase General Gavin who once said, "He who plans to fight the last war, will never win the next one." What you are saying if I understand correctly, that there were a lot of lessons learned from Vietnam and we should take them and project them

forward since we will not have an enormous amount of resources to prepare us for every contingency. If we have the capacity to get those things where they are needed, and turn that loop around a lot sooner, then we certainly can influence the outcome of battles or campaigns.

Mr. CRIBBINS: You are exactly right. For example, I think I told you that when we went into Vietnam we thought we needed a 13 month engine pipeline. When we came out of Vietnam, we needed a six month pipeline. I am firmly convinced right now that we should be looking at a two or three month pipeline with immediate delivery by air and just take the lessons learned and project them into the future because in Vietnam, we were paying less than $100,000 for the majority of the engines we had. Now we are paying $500,000 for the majority of the aircraft engines in the inventory. All that I can say is that we had better pay five times more attention or we won't have them.

INTERVIEWER: Some of the critics have said that the LHX is just too expensive. Because of the costs of LHX, I guess we will have to cut back on the number of aircraft being fielded. When and if we field such an

expensive aircraft, do you think we should train enlisted pilots to fly them? I didn't mean to wrap these two together, but first, your thoughts on the costs associated with developing and fielding the LHX and then the issues of enlisted pilots.

Mr. CRIBBINS: We've been talking right along about the affordability of support. The affordability of support is obviously oriented also to the affordability of the system. There isn't any doubt that during this time of budget deficits the LHXs has been viewed as too costly a program that would take too much of the Army and the Department of Defense's total obligation authority. But, I am not sure that the LHX is as costly as it is viewed. Here, I don't think it is so much a question of what the LHX cost as much as a question of the affordability of the LHX program. When we are talking of some $60 billion for the total program while we are faced with huge budget deficits, programs such as the LHX are viewed as being unaffordable. The aircraft is expected to do the job that needs doing. It may be very cost effective also. We expect to have a composite aircraft with a mission equipment package that will do many, many things that the current systems will not do. It will be highly survivable on the

battlefield and the attack version will give us a light bird that could very well replace many of the anti-tank capabilities right now. Interestingly, I noted in the Washington Post yesterday, that Mr. Ambrose, the Under Secretary of Army, commented that there is a good possibility that the tank itself may become a thing of the past and may not be the most effective tank killer of the future. That is still conceptual and subject to a great deal of debate plus a great deal of study. I think there isn't any doubt about it that the tank, a 67 ton vehicle does create some problems. Whatever the tank killer of the future will be, whether it is an LHX light attack helicopter, Apache or some other device, it must be survivable on the battlefield. Now, that is a rather long winded answer to your specific question about the LHX, but as we talk this morning on the 12th of February, 1988, the LHX program envisions a light attack and an armed reconnaissance scout helicopter. Since we are changing some of our views, rather radically on this program, it is a bit inappropriate to be more specific at this time.

INTERVIEWER: I appreciate your candor, Sir. You did raise a question before we get on to the enlisted pilot issue and that has to do with Under Secretary Ambrose's

comments in the Washington Post yesterday. The Air Force pilots, I've heard, are concerned about the threat of being replaced by remotely piloted vehicles. (RPVs) Do Army pilots share this concern?

MR. CRIBBINS: I didn't say this earlier, but a lot of Mr. Ambrose' interview with Mr. George Wilson, of the Washington Post, centered on what Mr. Ambrose believed to be the way of the future which was to avoid getting people killed on the battlefield through the use of robotics and such. Obviously, RPV is one way of doing that. I was on the original source selection for the Aquilla which was the RPV that the Army placed a great deal of stock in because we thought that it was the way to go. Unfortunately, the RPV has turned out to be another one of those programs that did not survive. It is evidently now being dropped out of the Army programs on the basis of affordability and I guess on the basis of complexity. I would think that on the kind of Army battlefield where the infantryman still has to gain an advantage, the RPV concept or unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) has to be something that we need to take full advantage of to keep our people from becoming what in substance will be Kamikaze pilots on a highly lethal battlefield. I am saying let us take a critical look at

RPV and not give it up on the basis that the Aquilla was not successful. There isn't any doubt that remotely piloted vehicles and robotics are the way of the future. We need to push the technical state of the art to get there as soon as we can.

INTERVIEWER: I would like to hear your thoughts on the Army's consideration of training enlisted pilots.

MR. CRIBBINS: This is one of those questions that if you ask 24 people, you get 24 views. Mine is one of the 24. I would view it this way. I have given you some statistics to talk about aircraft costs rising by a factor of 25 because of the highly technical capability and complexity of these aircraft. One thing I didn't say, which is very true of many of our new aircraft, especially the attack and surveillance aircraft, is that the mission equipment packages in these aircraft far exceed the cost of the aircraft itself. So, I would summarize very quickly my feeling about the enlisted pilots. If the Army is willing to go out and spend $15 million for an Apache, and four or five million dollars for any other aircraft that we are buying, then I firmly believe that the Army needs to face up to the fact that it needs to have pilots who

are the very best that it can get. I am not downgrading the potential of enlisted pilots. In my view, it would be possible to train enlisted pilots to fly these aircraft. Then comes the big question once you have trained enlisted pilots-how in the world are you going to keep them unless you make them either chief warrant officers or commissioned officers? So, what I envision is an enlisted man who is so expensive to train and becomes so qualified that he rapidly goes somewhere else to find a career rather than remain an enlisted man. Right now, the Air Force and the Navy have a horrendous job of keeping their commissioned officers in the service because of demands from the commercial market where they can earn a better living. How in the world could we retain enlisted pilots as such when the other services can't retain commissioned officers because we can't pay them enough?

INTERVIEWER: I have to agree, but I think that the Army's senior leadership is looking for measures to reduce the officer strength. I guess this is one of the initiatives that may be used to draw down the officer corps.

MR. CRIBBINS: This initiative keeps raising its head constantly. I can well understand what the problem is. We do get a reduction in officers strength and also I think that part of the problem lies in the basic concept that we have too many officers per enlisted. Here again, go back to your earlier statement about "He who looks at the last war is certainly going to lose the next one." Some of the people in Congress and elsewhere are comparing the numbers of officers to enlisted men in today's Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps to what went on in the past or compared with the USSR or other armies. May I suggest that with the technical competency required to be on the next battlefield, that using such ratios of officers to enlisted is an invidious comparison and really needs a relook. We in the Army have to suffer from this. The leadership of the Army is forced into the position at looking toward enlisted crews for its aircraft just to cope with the fact that we arbitrarily get told to reduce a certain number of officers in order to bring down the ratios of officers to enlisted men. I think that what is not understood is that with today's highly technical Army, we have arrived at the same place that the Air Force and the Navy arrived years ago. That is, we have equipment that is as technically complex in the

Army as it is in any of the other services. Please, I hope I am not misunderstood when I say this, because I know that it is always and still is the Army's position, with which I do not argue, the Army equips men, but the other services man equipment. May I just suggest one thing? I wish that I could somehow get this over better. The man on the battlefield is going to be a casualty without highly technical equipment. We must be able to equip men which is the very basic tenant of the Army and we also must be able to man equipment.

INTERVIEWER: Since we are discussing "the man", let's talk about the people in the aviation logistics business. Several years ago, the Aviation Branch was established. I believe at that time there was a great deal of concern particularly from the aviation logistics community as to whether or not the officers who were previously part of the Transportation Corps were going to survive in the aviation business. In your view, has the transition worked well for the aviation logistician?

MR. CRIBBINS: At the moment, the answer is no. We are very concerned about that. There is a major study

ongoing right now which is headed by Brigadier General Don Williamson, one of the alumnus of this office. He is Deputy Commander of AVSCOM. It is an unusual study. It is a study for which the DA DCSLOG is the proponent. It is a TRADOC study done by a AMC General but it cuts across all MACOMs. Don Williamson is a terrific guy and one of the finest young general officers in the Army. Right now, two of the major issues in that study are what are we going to do with the 15 Tango or Delta aviation logistics officers, whichever they are called at the moment, and who is going to be proponent for aviation logistics? The question of proponency lies between the Logistics Center and Aviation Center. The question of career potential is-where do these people have a potential? Do they have potential with other specialties in the logistics field such as Specialty Code 91, (Maintenance), 92 (Supply) since they are logisticians or do they now have an additional specialty in aviation such as a 15 Alpha or combat arms aviator or all the above? That also could be a possible solution while it may be viewed by others as giving them an unfair advantage. We have had six generals out of this small office compared to others in the building and just about every project manager for aviation systems. Many of these people have even

commanded combat arms units. Since they are basically aviators and aviation is a member of the combined arms team, I see no reason why a person who is an aviation logistician could not command a combat arms unit if he is adequately trained for it and given the opportunity.

INTERVIEWER: There is something else that you are involved in is called the LOGAMP. I believe that is the Logistic and Acquisition Management Program for Civilians. What role do you play in this program?

MR. CRIBBINS: I had this card which I prepared and I pulled it out so it is appropriate because LOGAMP, Logistic and Acquisition Management Program was one of the things I wanted to discuss. I wear two hats in the building for the DCSLOG. I am one of two general officer-level individuals in ODCSLOG who reports directly to the DCSLOG. Of course, the DCSLOG has an exec who's a promotable colonel that reports directly. In one capacity, I am a Special Assistant to the DCSLOG. I will talk about a couple of things that I do. I hope this doesn't sound self-serving, but it happens that I've been here for a long time. I have had the advantage of being a combat arms soldier and a logistician in the field for many years. Having spent

almost 22 years out of a career going on 48 years in the Washington area and in the Pentagon, I guess that it's the institutional memory, which in my case I not only know where the bodies are buried, but in most cases I know who the undertakers were. I act as the DCSLOG's eyes and his ears since some of the things that he is very interested in he does not have the time to pursue to the degree that he would like to. I would emphasize something, and this has been true of every DCSLOG and especially true of General Ross with whom I am working right now, I act as his eyes and ears with immediate feedback to him. He is the one responsible and he does not divest himself of any of that responsibility. In the capacity of Special Assistant, I will talk first of the Logistics and Acquisition Management Program for civilians. In looking at ODCSLOG over the years, we are in some ways unusual in our mix of military versus civilians. We have in ODCSLOG about one civilian for every military or vice versa. This is great for continuity and balance, but there are potential problems only in the sense of the drive toward the civilian continuity and what a civilian does versus what a soldier does. As recently as yesterday morning in talking to new members of ODCSLOG at an orientation, I suggested to the military

to please be understanding of the civilian work force here. "As you come in here for three to four years, you are heading out and up and you know you are only going to be here three or four years. You can do all sorts of things like working long hours every day pursuing many of the things you know you want to do while you are here. That is great. I would certainly encourage it but when you are putting in these 14, 16, 18 hour days, and figure that this is all part of the business of a military career, remember a couple of very basic things. After 20 years, you can retire. You will be in this building not more than four years. Your civilian counterpart who is just as responsive as you and just as responsible as you are, probably in equivalent grade, cannot retire in 20 years. They can only retire at age 55 with something like 30 years if they want to get full benefits. In that 20 to 30 years that they will be living here in this building, if they put in 14 or 16 hour days on a continuing basis, they will certainly not have much of a home life or any other life. Please be understanding of one another. You civilians, understand this. When that officer leaves here, he may go on a short tour without his family. If there is a war, he is going to be out there fighting the war with all the hazards that go with it.

He is going to be subjected to transfers at a moments notice any place; something that doesn't happen to you. He must be completely mobile. We have a saying in the military, "Tell your wife, don't hang the curtains honey because the moment you do I am going to get orders." I said, "Now be understanding on both sides of this." I think this is very important. As a result of looking at some of this, one of the things that I really felt I needed to do was to make the civilians more competitive with the military on a one for one basis. A good part of the problem with the civilian programs is that the civilians really had a telescopic career field. A supply person remained a supply person, a maintenance person remained a maintenance person and the transporter stayed a transporter. When these people work in the Pentagon with their military counterparts who are broadly trained across the board, they are not competitive with them. They should have been trained from a view point of being responsive to the needs of this wonderful business of logistics and of continuity. For example, civilians working in maintenance could be given an opportunity to learn supply. Those in supply could learn transportation and so on. Back about six years ago, we took a look at it and put together a program. I was the proponent for

the program that was called CAPSTONE. I had Mr. Bill Henne, who was the Deputy at LEA in New Cumberland, head up a working group. In CAPSTONE, we looked at supply, maintenance and transportation with the idea of multi-functional training for civilians. By the time we had finished the study some four years ago, AMC was concurrently looking at taking the military acquisition management program for military and making a program for civilians. We got together with AMC and developed a program which we now call the Logistics and Acquisition Management Program (LOGAMP).

[End Tape C-224, Side 2]

[Begin Tape C-225, Side 1]

MR. CRIBBINS: Right now, we have a logistics and acquisition management program with six career fields; supply, maintenance, transportation, contracting and acquisition, quality and reliability assurance, engineers and scientists (non-construction). When we look at this in totality, we have grades GS-12, which we brought on board just this past year, through GS-15. These people are selected very carefully by a LOGAMP board based on their qualifications. They have to

agree to certain things when they enter the program. It takes about two to three years to become certified in LOGAMP with multi-functional or dual-tracked skills. In other words, a logistician in supply, maintenance or transportation would dual track as quality assurance, contract an acquisition engineer/scientist. We find that this program has become a real winner. For example, I recently received a memorandum from Mr. Costello who is the Department of Defense Acquisition Executive pointing out that LOGAMP is a fine program for training civilians. LOGAMP also became the program that was the prototype for the new Army Civilian Training and Education Development program called ACTEDS by DCSPER. So LOGAMP is now well on the way and going great. General Ross has been a great supporter. He was part of the initiation of the program here when he was Director of Transportation, Energy and Troop Support, DA ODCSLOG. When he became Chief of Staff over in the Army Materiel Command, he supported the program greatly. The three proponents for the program were the DCSLOG, the DCSPER and the Commander of the Army Materiel Command. So, now as the DCSLOG, General Ross is one of the proponents for this program. We are really pushing this. We intend to keep it alive and well. It is doing very well at the moment. The

civilian work force greatly appreciates the opportunity to get the same sort of training that the military does.

INTERVIEWER: Does LOGAMP pertain to civilians who work in logistics throughout the Department of the Army?

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes, it affects civilians across the Army. Now, AMC has the largest percentage (about 75 percent) of these civilians in grade levels 12 to 15, but LOGAMP is in every MACOM. Ms.Melinda S. Darby is our executive agent for LOGAMP. We have a DA Board and I am co-chair for that board with Mr. Dick Heinbach who is the Assistant Deputy to General Hissong, Deputy for Readiness over at AMC. Mr. Bob Black, AMC, Mr. Joe Galbraith who is the civilian personnel chief in the Army Personnel Agency, and Ms. Marie Acton, who is the Deputy for Resources in AMC are members of the board. The board establishes the criteria for the LOGAMP. Programs are run by the executive agent on a day-to-day basis with the help of a capable staff. Ms. Darby has done a super job with this program.

INTERVIEWER: I want to cover something that I feel is everybody's business. You can't talk aviation or the

Army for that matter without talking about safety. I believe that you have been involved in some of the recent initiatives to enhance aviation safety.

MR. CRIBBINS: I guess General Wickham put it better than anyone when he came on board as the Chief of Staff. I've know General Wickham since he was a young field grade officer working for General Harold K. Johnson when the latter was Chief of Staff between 1964-68. When General Wickham was CINC UNC in Korea, Colonel Parker, now Major General Parker down at the Aviation Center reported to General Wickham. General Wickham turned to Colonel Parker and said, "Colonel Parker, who is the safety officer in Eighth US Army in Korea?" Colonel Parker started to turn and point to his safety guy in the aviation group. General Wickham said, "Colonel Parker, you are looking at the safety officer. It is me." I think I would say without qualification that the safety officer of the US Army when General Wickham was here was the Chief of Staff of the Army. With his great interest in safety, quite a few things were done here during the period of 1983-87 during which time he was the Chief of Staff. For example, we have a Crisis Action Team in the building. The Crisis Action Team has general officer level

proponents from each one of the major staff elements as well as the Commander of the Safety Center. Anytime that a question arises about safety, that requires across the board coordination, the Crisis Action Team meets and then makes recommendations to the Chief of Staff of the Army as to whether we should ground an aircraft or ground equipment supporting an aircraft if there is safety involved. It has worked very well even though we had to recommend a couple of decisions before they were completely staffed. This does not mean that in any way shape or form that we delay the grounding of the system while we go through a bureaucratic staffing process. For example, General Eckelbarger, currently the ADCSPER is the DCSPER's representative on the Crisis Action Team. General Eckelbarger and I sat here with the other members of the team and put in a conference call to the appropriate members of the Safety Center and Aviation Center at Fort Rucker and to the Aviation Systems Command in St. Louis. We made a determination as to the grounding of an aircraft system within an hour's conference call. We then presented recommendations to the Vice Chief of Staff. So you can see, we have an instantaneous means for taking care of safety issues. This is very important because the safety program of the Army has become a terrific driver

of what we do. We are succeeding in lowering the accident rates in the Army to the lowest ever. For example, in 1986, the aviation accident rate was 1.98 per 100,000 hours and in 1987, it was even lower. Accident rates have been lowered across the board. As Special Assistant for the DCSLOG, I am now Chairman of the Crisis Action Team which handles all safety issues for the ARSTAF. We have just changed the name of this Committee to "Army Safety Action Team" (ASAT). This will entail broader responsibilities in addressing safety and do what is necessary for safety of all people and equipment in the Army.

INTERVIEWER: As I sit in your office and I see the symbols of excellence that you have received over the past 48 years of distinguished service as a soldier and now as an executive within the Department of Army, I would like to hear your comments on the skills and abilities that you feel one needs to be a successful logistician such as yourself.

MR. CRIBBINS: I could answer that in two parts. Simplistically up front I will try to answer your question as well as I can. Then I would like to elaborate a little bit on some of the things that I

believe in. I have had the greatest good fortune that can happen to one. This greatest fortune of all was back in 1944 when I was in the Philippines and in walked one of the first WAAC officers I had ever seen in those days. I happened to be the key person in General MacArthur's headquarters whom one needed to see to get a priority for flying on our intra-theater air lines. This young lieutenant said her name was Helen Whitbeck and she wanted to see Captain Cribbins because I could get her to Manila. As I said before, she eventually did get to Manila where I courted her until I left the theater in September 1945. We got together in the States when Helen got home, I believe in November 1945. We were married February 8, 1946, and on February 8, 1988, Helen and I celebrated our 42nd anniversary. If there is anyone whom I would give credit to for whatever I have done in life, I give it to Helen. She certainly has made the difference. Helen married an uneducated, ex-steeplechase jockey and whatever I have to offer as a person, to this job, and to my career in the Army, I could not have done without Helen. If there is anything that I have found out over the years, there are no geniuses around here especially this fellow who is talking. But, a great advantage that I have had over the last 28 or 29 years and nearly

48 with the Army, has been continuity and the ability to get things done that one can't get done in a single assignment no matter what level the person is. With that continuity, I've had the opportunity of having blue ribbon officers in this office and sort of a standing room only line of people who would like to come to work here. My guidance is that when an officer arrives, as soon as they can, I tell them to get on board, find out what he/she is to do and how to do it. I have a great deal of patience with sins of commission. I don't like sins of omission, but regardless of that, once they get their feet on the ground, they are on their own. If they hit a home run or a run batted in, that is their thing. If they hit into a double play or a strike out, that is what I get paid for and I turn them loose and let them have at it. I find that these blue ribbon officers really produce mightily. The other thing is that I keep an open door all of the time. They always have access to me since I do not use a deputy in this small office. What I do is to allow them complete access to me anytime they need it. I do not try to lead them around by the hand. In fact, I don't even go with them unless they need me no matter what level they are talking to. For example, I don't hesitate to send one of these action officers to

answer a question from the Secretary, the Chief of Staff or Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. I don't do any prompting. I just ask that I am not surprised. About the only contract that we have is that I have asked them "Please don't let me get surprised on things that I should know-otherwise, you are on your own." I find that in that light, one becomes a perceptive hero and if I have any awards, all I can say is that the awards probably belong to the people out there who get the things done because I guess whatever value I have been to the Army has been principally as a catalyst. I am a pretty good innovator. I guess with that, we are backed up with people here -- that makes a difference, and here is the prime example. There is a young lady who has been with me now for over 24 years. Her name is Carolyn Chapman. She was first assigned to me as a secretary when I was still in uniform. She stayed with me from about 1963 or 64 until I retired in 1966. When I came back as a civilian, as soon as I could get Carolyn back, I did. Now, she has been with me about 24 years. She turned down promotion offers and lateral transfer offers which were really attractive. I tried to assure her that I would support her wherever she wanted to be transferred because she was so loyal and competent that I could do nothing

except hope that she would have the best of all worlds in her professional life. One time, for example, there was an arbitrary cut in grades and Carolyn had to take one. She was able to retain her pay level for two years. In that time, I tried to convince her to go find herself a job which she could have very easily done elsewhere in other agencies in the Army or in the other services. She said no, she wanted to stick it out and stay with Army Aviation.. We managed to get her grade and pay back. That kind of loyalty and dedication is one-of-a-kind. Since that time, she had learned and earned her way out of the secretarial field into a full fledged action officer. Carolyn Chapman acts as a guide post for all the young officers coming in here and she is looked upon and has become "MOM" to all of them. She certainly has become greatly respected and highly regarded throughout the Army Aviation program.

INTERVIEWER: Let's take a look at some of your other interests. I understand that you are intimately involved with Quad A, the Army Aviation Association of America. Could you talk about your responsibilities and duties associated with this organization?

MR. CRIBBINS: I am Vice President and National Board Member of Quad A. But before I go on, let me address a couple of the other things I do as a Special Assistant to the DCSLOG which may have led to the perception that I do a lot of things. I represent the DCSLOG with the Army Science board and we have had in the last five years three major logistics studies for the Army Science Board which have helped greatly. I am a member of the Federal Executive Board where we select civilians for training. This has been a big help because we have been able to emphasize the necessity for civilians to receive training and to make sure that there are logisticians who get training as well. I am the chair of a Military/Civilian Advisory Committee. That is a ODCSLOG Committee wherein we get people from each one of the directorates and offices in ODCSLOG together once a quarter and tell it like it is. We make sure that we know what is going on. Here again, I act as the eyes and ears for the DCSLOG. It gives him a good sounding board to find out how the people in DCSLOG feel. I am also on the General Officers Board called Career Program Policy Committee for the new Army Management Staff College for civilians which is now in being and has run its pilot course and is about to run its second one this year. I sat in on a meeting

yesterday of the civilian proponent management sub-committee. In this group, we look at civilian career programs for the total Army civilian population. I trust that this is of some assistance to the DCSLOG. It has certainly broadened my background and my experience and given me a lot of the things to do which I find very interesting and which are of major importance to the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Will the Army's Staff Management College train officers as well as civilians?

MR. CRIBBINS: It is principally for civilians,but in the pilot course, they had 50 people, 42 of whom were civilians and eight who were military. The reason for having the military in there was to give a war fighting flavor to the course itself which would not normally be, but after all, war fighting capability and deterrence is what the Army is all about. The eight military were all graduates of the Command and General Staff College. The next course should have the same number of people. We hope to broaden this course beyond 1988 and 1989. Right now, we still are looking at '88 for a 50 person course with 42 civilians and eight military. In 1989, I asked yesterday if the

policy committee would look critically at the potential for decreasing a couple of military as advisors and increase the number of civilians attending each course because this is the civilian version of the Command General Staff College. It is important that we have as many civilians attend as we can, and with our budgets reduced rather drastically in '88 and '89, we may be unable to have our goal of about 300 civilians per year trained. We are now looking at the potential of probably a maximum of three courses which would give us 50 people per course over the next several years.

INTERVIEWER: Would you tell me a bit more about your role and responsibilities in Quad A?

MR. CRIBBINS: Yes, I've been a member of the Army Aviation Association for many years. This is a super association which supports Army Aviation Programs and still keeps its identity separate from the Army. Therefore, it has the freedom of expression and still supports Army aviation. For the last three years I have been the Vice President as well as a member of the National Board. This last month, at a National Board Meeting, I was asked if I would consider being nominated for the next three years. I said that if I

could be of service I would do so. I am also a member of the Awards Board. I find that to be a help because each year we pick the Army Aviator of the Year, the EM of the Year, the DAC of the Year, and the Safety Person of the Year. I know a lot of people in aviation and in my capacity as an active duty member of the Army aviation program, I find it most helpful to see that people get recognized who we know have done a great job for the Army.

INTERVIEWER: What changes do you envision in the Aviation Logistics business? Specifically, what do you see happening to the Aviation Logistics Office in ODCSLOG?

MR. CRIBBINS: Well, I would trust that in some form this function would remain. I would think that it would be an awful shame after all that we have invested over the years if this office, as it is constituted, were to go down the drain. I am a firm believer that there isn't any one who is indispensable. I am among those. I believe that it is absolutely essential that we recognize that this office has a very important job to do in the Army. I know that the current DCSLOG does. I also believe the DA staff recognizes that, and

I certainly know the Commander of AVSCOM, Major General Stephenson recognizes that. So, looking to the future, I have not thought about retiring mainly because I have enjoyed doing what I am doing too much to think about retiring. I also recognize that we are all mortal. Therefore, I would say that I think it is very important that we look to the future. I am not sure how to answer your question, Colonel Proctor, as to what will happen to the Office when I retire. I am not looking forward to retirement, but I recognize that sooner or later, it is going to happen. I trust that it will be later. Certainly I want to serve throughout General Ross's tenure as the DCSLOG. That is what I am planning on doing.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, let me butt in. I understand that my last question is not an easy one to answer, but I think it is important for you to convey your thoughts having served the Army dutifully for all of these years. Your thoughts are important.

MR. CRIBBINS: Looking at how critical General Officer and Senior Executive Service (SES) spaces are, I don't know how the Army is going to treat my position when I leave. For example, when General Engler was the

DCSLOG, he traded a brigadier general slot in order to get a super grade position because of cut-backs. I have occupied that position for 19 years. I have actually been in this position since January '67 or 21 years. Now comes the big question, will the Army ante up an SES or a general officer to replace me? I guess that is one of the problems in talking about an SES. I had the great advantage of being a combat arms officer who had been associated with aviation. I have worked in aviation for a long time. I have served in General MacArthur's Headquarters and I've worked in the headquarters out in the Far East during both World War II and the Korean War. Further, I served in a major Army depot and an inventory control center in Europe. I came in here by virtue of my background and experience. So I was pretty well qualified for this job. I would say that one of the difficult things is going to be finding a replacement. Obviously, there are people out there in whom I have confidence, who could walk in here and do this job. However, they are either colonels or generals still on active duty. I don't know off hand of any civilian with the qualifications across the board mainly because the civilian that one would be looking for is someone with a military career in aviation who has become a

civilian. Now, with the problems of being unable to collect beyond a certain level of pay, may not be attractive for a colonel or a general to become a civil servant unless they have independent means and just want to do the job for the fun of it.

[End Tape C-225, Side 1]

[Begin Tape C-225, Side 2]

MR. CRIBBINS: Ideally, I would like an alumnus of this office to become my replacement and preferably a general officer because I think there isn't any doubt that it would make a lot of difference in perpetuating the things that we have done. I think that the probability of getting an SES in here would be much less than a general because of the qualifications needed and the problem of the cash flow for an SES who had retired from the military. I can't picture an SES coming in here and doing the kind of job needed without the proper qualifications and background. As a fall back, I would say that maybe General Stephenson and I need to talk about this. One might look at the possibility of having a very fine colonel come in here for a four year tour similar to a project manager backed up by a GM-15 for continuity. I think that

might work very well. That may sound self-serving in that Cribbins is saying that he needs two people to replace him. I don't think that is the answer. I think the real problem is getting one person in here. If we can get one person in here who can do the job, that would be great. The problem, as I see it, is that this office operates at a high level within the Army and I report directly to the DCSLOG. I would say that the broad range of things that are done here will certainly not be continued unless we get someone in here that the DCSLOG can look to as his aviation guy. If the DCSLOG wishes to perpetuate the role of the special assistant, that would be another factor to consider. I had the advantage of being here and having served here so long, it is going to be a tough job to find the right kind of person. As I said, without hesitation, I could find a small number of colonels or brigadier generals that could come in here and run this office without any difficulty.

[End Tape C-225, Side 2]

[Begin Tape C-226, Side 1]

INTERVIEWER: You raised the issue earlier of on condition maintenance. I believe you wanted to elaborate on its importance.

MR CRIBBINS: I do believe that there are misunderstandings about on conditioned maintenance. Maybe I can clarify it by talking in layman's terms. There are really three kinds of maintenance that we recognize. One being "hard time" maintenance wherein we have times between overhaul or finite life between overhaul or even finite life until disposal and that is known as "hard time" maintenance. There is "on conditioned" maintenance which is the maintenance that you schedule specifically. When you do the scheduled inspections, you only do that maintenance that is needed. Then there is "condition monitoring" maintenance, which is purely associated with monitoring the status of an item or materiel. It is important to note that the condition monitoring concept can only be used when safety is not involved or you are not concerned about safety or reliability and when you can visually inspect. Let me give you a for instance. If at every 10,000 miles, regardless of condition you change all the spark plugs on your automobile, that is a "hard time" maintenance concept. That says that

regardless of condition, every 10,000 miles the spark plugs will be changed. If conversely, you inspect at 10,000 miles and during that inspection, you decide which spark plugs need replacing, which need cleaning, re-adjusting or which ones may not need anything done that is "on condition" maintenance. Conversely, for "condition monitoring" you would merely wait until such time that the performance of the car started decreasing or began knocking like the anvil chorus, in which case the spark plugs would be removed, replaced, cleaned or whatever. Now there always appears to be a misunderstanding that "on condition" maintenance means that you don't do anything until something goes wrong. That is incorrect. There is timing of inspections to make sure that you spot something going wrong before it happens. The real thrust is that you do not have a "hard time" for removal or retirement. What you do have is a hard time for inspections with maintenance being done as needed rather than very specifically doing it regardless of need. I think this is very important because, as I say, there has been a lot of misunderstanding about what "on condition" maintenance really is.

INTERVIEWER: There have been comments made about the reliability of the Black Hawk as a result of the accident that occurred at Fort Campbell, Kentucky recently. I take it that the critics of the Black Hawk will at times make disparaging remarks about a weapon system when such unfortunate incidents occur. I would like to get your thoughts, because in the military community, the Black Hawk is considered a superb aircraft.

MR CRIBBINS: First on the accident, Peet, there has been absolutely no indication of materiel, maintenance or other failure. The unfortunate accident in which 17 people were killed when two aircraft collided is still under investigation. There was absolutely no lack of reliability or any problems with the Black Hawk as a result of that accident investigation and that is about as far as I can comment on the investigation. As to your second point concerning the reliability of the Black Hawk, you know I have been around a long, long time and have been looking at the Black Hawk since it was first fielded in October 1978. I really believe that the Black Hawk has been as reliable as any system that I have seen fielded during my time with the Army and that goes back a long, long way -- well, like to

the 1940s. During that time, as you know, I have progressed from horses into infantry and then into aviation. I have seen three wars and a lot of incidents. I think the Black Hawk has developed a reputation in the media through the fact that we have recognized problems up front and fixed them before they got out of hand. I think that sometimes with new systems, we have not always recognized the problems that we are faced with. I would call them infant mortality problems. That is, maintainability or reliability problems crop up from time to time in any new system. We have been very open minded and above board on the Black Hawk in publicizing the problems as well as fixes with the Black Hawk. Accordingly, it appears that the media has come up with a perception that the Black Hawk is an unreliable aircraft. Further, in the last three to four years we have developed a program we call the Flight Safety Parts Program. That program tests every part that could cause a critical failure or catastrophic accident from the very basic design through production and utilization in the field. It is tested and retested. We work with industry, the prime manufactures, the vendors, the subvendors, our own people, the people in the field and we chase down every one of those parts to make sure

they are going to be reliable and safe for operation as well as being maintainable for use in the field. Now, when one does this up front, then there is apt to be the perception that when you find that one of these parts needs fixing, what you have is an unreliable system. Nothing could be further from the truth. What we are really doing is making sure that the Black Hawk will remain the reliable system that it is. In my estimation, certainly it is both a reliable, and a very safe system. I think also there is the perception somehow that the Black Hawk is nothing but a big Huey. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Black Hawk is a state of the art utility helicopter capable of doing many, many things. The Black Hawk runs somewhere between four and four and one-half million dollars per aircraft. The single $65,000 engine in the Huey does not equate to the two $500,000 engines in the Black Hawk. In summary, I believe and I would firmly stand by this, that the Black Hawk is an exceptionally safe, reliable, and maintainable aircraft and we are making certain that it remains just that.

INTERVIEWER: I am glad you pointed out your proactive approach of dealing with the Black Hawk's reliability.

MR CRIBBINS: Someday I'll give you an analogy and it is worth giving, because it is part of history now. At the time of the Cuban crisis, the 2d Armored Division was alerted to move from Fort Hood to the east coast in preparation for the Cuban crisis. I'll use names because they are a matter of record. General Ralph Haines, later Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, was the Division Commander. General Haines quite properly grounded his aircraft fleet. In those days, the division had either OH-13 or OH-58s and if he had larger helicopters, they would have been CH-34s. At any rate, he grounded the whole division fleet. As a result of grounding the fleet and putting them through a periodic inspection, he turned up a lot of things that were wrong with those aircraft. As a result of that, in looking at the fleet, our inspectors from outside and I believe it was the GAO, but I am not dead certain about this, took a look at the fleet and made the comment that so many things had been found during that inspection that the fleet was unreliable because it had not been properly maintained. This was an interesting observation. I think in justice to whomever did the inspection, it was a reasonable assumption that since some of these aircraft had been inspected a very few flying hours before that they all

should have been in relatively perfect condition unless they were due for the next one hundred hour inspection, which was our periodic in those days. Well, I was given the action here to take a look at the reasonableness of these findings. I did. I took a very critical look at it. I knew what had happened. I think the real difficulty was the lack of communication between the people who were inspecting, and those who were being inspected. I had to testify over on the Hill on this matter to the House Appropriation Committee. I told the committee that I could understand why the inspectors arrived at that conclusion, but it was not a correct conclusion and they should have been told why not. I said that our hundred hour inspections were geared to make sure that the aircraft would operate safely until the next inspection interval of one hundred hours. That's the way we had geared our inspection intervals. It was based upon the very best engineering information and growth of demand data and experience with the system, modernization, modifications and all the rest of those things had gone in to help establish the intervals. However, what they had to recognize was that if an aircraft were inspected today, passed inspection and subsequently had flown for two hours, it might very

well have generated some faults that would have been found after the hundred hour inspection. Those faults were the kind of faults that would have not in any way impacted adversely upon safety until the next hundred hour inspection. As a result of this, we closed the book on the inspection and there was nothing further done about it. There was a satisfactory conclusion, I do believe, because I think for the first time that some of the people who had not been associated with our maintenance concepts understood how these inspection intervals worked. The analogy here is, again just like the Black Hawk, if you go looking for something, you will find it and that is exactly what we have been doing with the Black Hawk with the Flight Safety Parts and all the other things. We have been finding a lot of things before they cause something unfortunate to happen and we have not hesitated to publicize the things that we have found. When we have found things, we in turn have done something about it. But, what it means is that we have kept a safe, reliable aircraft and as I say, it was really analgous to what happened during the Cuban crisis some 28 years ago when we inspected the fleet and found that there were problems immediately after an inspection. Surely, you would

expect to find them, but you wouldn't find them unless you open the aircraft up to look for them.

[End Tape C-226, Side 1]

[Begin Tape C-226, Side 2]

INTERVIEWER: Recently, one of your mentors, General Frank Besson,was recognized by having a logistics support vessel commissioned in his honor. Did you attend that ceremony?

MR. CRIBBINS: I was there. I wouldn't have missed that for anything. Also, something else about General Besson. Yes, he was a mentor of mine. He brought me into Washington in 1959 when I came from Europe. He gave me a division when he was Director of Transportation. When he became Commander of the Army Materiel Command and I was asked to come to the Pentagon, he asked me if I would consider doing that. He said he needed a friend over here and I came here. I remained very close to him while he was in the Pentagon and while he was commander of the Army Materiel Command. As a matter of fact, General Dick Stephenson, who is now Commander of AVSCOM, was his

military aide and assistant in those days. Believe me, he was a lot more than a military aide because he was one of the best action officers over in T7 and the Army Materiel Command in those days. I felt very close to General Besson who was without a doubt one of the super people of all time that I have known. So I was at the commissioning. Also, I might point out that General Stephenson, who was much closer to General Besson than I was, looked upon General Besson as a surrogate father because General Stephenson's father had died when Dick was very young. We got together and three years ago, we nominated, and then the Awards Board for the Quad A Hall of Fame approved the induction of General Frank Besson into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame at Fort Rucker. I had the honor of inducting General Frank Besson since one has to be a member of the Aviation Hall of Fame to induct another member. When I did, I asked Dick Stephenson to come with me because I knew how strongly Dick felt about it and how much he had worked toward getting General Besson into the Hall of Fame. Certainly a well deserved award among so many others he had. A terrific man. One of the finest. I think when I look back at the top leaders of the Army, I've been lucky in knowing some of them. He was certainly one whom I would place way, way up there as

being one of the very best. General Creighton Abrams was another. General Johnson, the Chief of Staff whom I got to know very well during the days of Vietnam ranks at the top as well. General Shy Meyer who came in to see me the other day is another. I knew him as a lieutenant colonel. I have known General Wickham over a long period of time. General Richard H. Thompson, Commander of AMC, who I have known since he was a major. I must say that I have been very, very fortunate in knowing some of the top level people in the Army and having had the privilege of serving with them. If I were to sum up anything, Colonel Proctor, I would say that with all the awards, and other forms of recognition, the Army has done a great deal more for me than I ever could have done for the Army. It has given me a wonderful career and a wonderful wife. It is a wonderful organization. Helen and I were unfortunate that we never had any children. I must say that I have the largest family that one could ever wish for and that is the Army aviation family. I have been one of the luckiest fellows in the world. I said this to the Vice Chief, General Arthur Brown whom I travelled with the other day. He is a super person. I have known him for years as well as General Kickligher, the Director of the Army Staff and General Carl Vuono, now

the Chief of Staff of the Army. I was with General Brown and I said to him just out of blue, "You know Sir, I have got to be the luckiest guy in the world. I have an Army aviation family. It is worldwide. It is a wonderful feeling to know that you have that kind of a family out there." It is just a great feeling. When I look at my age, I was born in 1914 so I will be 74 years old in March. I would say Cribbins, "You have not only been lucky in sticking around for a long time, but when you look at what you have done, how you've enjoyed doing it, and the people you have worked with and the Army itself-how lucky can you be." I have been the luckiest.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I think I can make a comment that would be shared by many others. We are fortunate to have you influence our lives. I think if Peet Proctor, were to have a say, your legacy, in my estimation has been that you are the "classic" mentor.

MR. CRIBBINS: Colonel Proctor, I would say that's what it is all about; being part of the family, being a mentor when mentoring is needed, being a supporter, and taking responsibility when it is needed to be taken and not shoving off the problems when the going gets rough.

I trust that I have kept the faith and anytime that I felt that I wasn't keeping the faith, I tried to face up to it. I think what you have just said is what it is all about. Being part of a family; being a mentor, being responsible for your actions and making sure that the people who work with you and for you get their just rewards in the sense of getting promoted, good assignments, and being recognized.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, let me say that on behalf of the U.S. Army War College and the Military History Institute, thank you for allowing me to conduct your oral history. If time permits, I would like to continue your oral history after I complete my studies at the War College. I am really honored to have had the pleasure to come down and spend a few hours with you covering your life as a citizen soldier, a soldier and an executive within Headquarters, Department of the Army.

MR. CRIBBINS: Peet, to say what I've learned over the years is that "It always takes two to tango." I was so pleasantly surprised when you came in and told me that you were going to do the oral history. I knew you when you worked here in the building, I know your reputation

and I know what you are doing and how you have done it. I must say that your dedication to this particular task has been just great. For me, it has been a great pleasure to be with you. I do trust that whatever has come out of this will prove to be of some value to some people. It has been a great pleasure to have worked with you, my friend, and I would say thank you very much. You are a great guy and I consider you a super colleague and a good friend.

[End Tape C-226, Side 2]