UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON PROJECT

Interview with: Lieutenant General Arthur James Gregg
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Date: July 27, 2007
Transcribed by: Suzanne Mascola
Topic: Black Officers, Vietnam, 858MOS, OCS

IH: Today's date is July 23, 2007, and I am on the phone with Lieutenant General Arthur James Gregg, and he is at his house in Dumfries, Virginia.

AJG: Dumfries is about 30 miles south of Washington.

IH: So, General, I would like to start with talking about your childhood and what you remember about growing up. Are you originally from South Carolina?

AJG: Yes. Florence, South Carolina. I was born in 1928, the last of 9 siblings of my father, Robert L. Gregg, and my mother, Ethel E. Gregg. I was born on a farm. My family owned the farm and that farm provided a reasonable livelihood for us. I attended Mount Zion Elementary School which was about 3 miles from my home and we walked to school each day. There was no bus transportation as would probably be the case today. It was a 3-room school with 3 teachers and we got a reasonable basic education at the grade school level. My mother passed away when I was 11 so when I finished grade school, I relocated to Newport News, Virginia, lived with my oldest brother, Joseph, and attended Huntington High School in Newport News. I graduated from high school in

1945 and attended Chicago College of Medical Technology and became a medical laboratory technician. This was not a degreed program. It was a 6 month program of very intensive study but I finished before my 18th birthday. It was my intention to open my own clinical laboratory but once I graduated and surveyed the opportunities, it just was not realistic: 1) I did not have experience; and 2) I was 17 years old. So, I reasoned that it would be smart to enlist in the Army and gain some experience in medical lab work and once my enlistment was over, I would then be in a better position experience-wise and age-wise to open a laboratory. And that led me to enlist in the Army in January of 1946.

I took my basic training at Camp Crowder, Missouri, and was tested while there and for medical laboratory proficiency, passed the examination and was awarded out of basic training an 858MOS which is a medical laboratory technician I was then assigned to Germany. The problem was that this was 1946 and there were no medical units or hospitals in Germany with a black staff. Therefore, I spent weeks in a replacement training pool but no assignment. The Army was not ready at that time to assign a black soldier to a white unit. So, I did not get an assignment as a medical laboratory technician. Instead, I volunteered for a Quartermaster transportation truck company and became a supply sergeant. And that began my shift from medical to logistics.

IH: O.K., wow, what a shift! I was doing some reading on military strategy and tactics. One of the guys said, "Well, anybody can do strategy but a real genius can only do logistics."

AJG: Well, logistics can be challenging but, you know, most military careers are challenging. There are some differences.

IH: General, before we get too far ahead, I would like to face back to your childhood for a minute or so. Now, I know that you said you lost your mother when you were very young.

AJG: Yes, 11.

IH: Now, coming up during this time, did you have any type of relationship with your grandparents or anything like that?

AJG: No. Remember, I am the last of 9 children. I saw only 1 grandparent - my grandmother on my father's side. I remember her. I remember her very fondly, from her visits with us but she passed away when I was about 6 or 7. She was 92 years old.

IH: O.K. So, coming up, was there anybody in particular in your community, a special mentor or anything like that? Did your father instill anything in you coming up that you carried with you throughout your military career or anything like that?

AJG: Well, my father was a great role model and I had a great relationship with him. I also had two uncles who served in World War I. I knew them and was greatly impressed by their uniforms and their exploits. During my high school years I became a little bit closer to the military. Remember, this is 1941-1945 when I was in high school - the

height of World War II. And, you know, at that time, you could go to your local movie house and see movies and film strips of military actions. I was just tremendously impressed. Also, walking the streets of my then hometown of Newport News, Virginia, you always saw military and you had to be impressed with their dress and conduct, and it did occur to me many times that I would certainly like to be a soldier . I became interested in becoming not only a soldier but an officer of the Army.

IH: O.K., so things like your uncles and those war films were really influential on you then?

AJG: Oh, absolutely. You know, I had many mentors during that time -- teachers who certainly showed an interest in me and the parents of my best friend in high school, Dr. and Mrs. McEachin -- were outstanding mentors, and I benefited greatly from that.

IH: O.K., great. So, I guess getting back to when you started your transportation sergeant . . .

AJG: No, I was in a transportation truck company. I was the supply sergeant. I joined that unit that is the 3511 Quartermaster Transportation Truck Company in Staffelstien, Germany, located not too far from Bamberg. I remained there for 6 months. In December of 1946, I was ordered to Mannheim, Germany, to join the 510th Military Police Platoon. We had a significant concentration of black troops in Germany in the 1940s. We also had a significant disciplinary problem, and a lot of those disciplinary

problems were the result of tension between white and black, and the presence of all white military police unit aggravated the problem. And the Department of Defense reasoned that the formation of two black military police platoons working along with a white company would help ease the tension. So, the 510th was formed in Mannheim, the 511th was formed in Giessen, Germany. Now, these were oversized platoons, 54 people each, and very selective. You had to have a GT score of 100 or above, a clean military record, and reasonably tall . . . I think 5'10" in height or better. So, we were a very select group. Those two units performed superbly well. But I will focus on the 510th, my unit, just an outstanding group of young men, and I was asked to join with them in forming the 510th platoon. I became the supply sergeant immediately after arriving, so I did not perform patrol duty. I did my thing as the unit supply sergeant. The unit just had a great record and the members of that unit still get together every 2 years. We are meeting this October in Atlantic City. Now, remember, this was 1946, so the members of our unit, the young ones are in their late 70s, the others are well into their 80s. Also interesting, we had a large number of men from that platoon who became commissioned officers. By the way, our commander was Lstey (in auditable) William King from Waco, Texas.

IH: O.K., right up the road from us then.

AJG: William King from Waco, Texas. Was our commander. We also had second Lieutenant Horace Elliott, who is still alive and is 85 years old living in Detroit, Michigan.

IH: O.K., that is impressive that your group is able to keep those meetings going. That is great. So, in Germany off post, did you run into problems with racial tension in your free time and stuff like that or anything?

AJG: There was obviously racial tension and we tended not to go to the same places. As a matter of fact, we could not. We had our clubs, the white soldiers had their own clubs, and we did not go into theirs, they did not go into ours. That spilled over into the German community and typically a beer hall or restaurant that catered to blacks, whites did not go there. If it catered to whites, blacks did not go there. So, the enforced segregation in our military environment spilled over into the civilian environment, and was evident in choosing friends. Germans very quickly picked up that if they are friends of a black soldier, they are not going to be friends of a white and vice-versa. So, you know, you just cannot live one lifestyle in the military environment without it spilling over into the civilian environment.

IH: Did they bring over special entertainment for the black soldiers or things like that?

AJG: Not in the sense that I am gathering from your question. We had entertainers coming over and typically, they would be scheduled to appear separately before black groups and whites. Frankly, I cannot recall many entertainment groups appearing during that period, 1946 to 1949, when I was there.

IH: The only one I can think of - maybe Count Basie came over there or somebody like that.

AJG: Well, you know, it may have occurred. I just cannot recall. I guess the only thing that I can recall that was not segregated was the USO club and the movie theaters.

IH: O.K. Now, during this time, there were probably very few black females in the Army, is that true?

AJG: Very few. I cannot recall seeing any in Germany during that time. I am sure there were but I did not come in contact with them.

IH: That is interesting to be over there that long. O.K., so after your tour of duty in Germany, how did you make it to Benedict College . . . how did you get your commission, I guess?

AJG: When I finished my first enlistment in 1949, that was January of 1949, well, I had decided that I enjoyed the military and I wanted to stay, so once I made the decision to remain in the service, I reenlisted and applied for Officers Candidate School and was selected, entered Officers Candidate School in October of 1949 and graduated on the 19th of May of 1950 just before the Korean War started if you recall on 25 June 1950.

IH: 25 June or something?

AJG: Yes, 25 June.

IH: You had perfect timing.

AJG: Well, interestingly, when I finished, I was commissioned Quartermaster Corps consistent with my logistics background and posted to Fort Lee, Virginia to attend a basic Quarter Master school and in October 1950 I was assigned to the Leadership School at Fort Lee, Virginia and taught leadership and methods of instruction for 3 years. I did not go to Korea until 1953. But it was a defining assignment for me because as a young officer I shared the responsibility with the other company officers of taking the brightest graduates of the basic and advanced training courses at Fort Lee, and bringing them in for an intensive 4 weeks of leadership training, and then assigned them to the basic training companies as cadre, young NCOs. So, it was just a wonderful opportunity to practice good leadership and to gain experience in leading and motivating and developing young men so that they were able to become junior leaders in the basic training companies.

IH: Now, did you find that your enlisted experience gave you a better insight or a different feel . . .

AJG: Oh, definitely.

IH: So, that helped give you a lot of insight into understanding the enlisted side, is that correct?

AJG: Yes, and, you know, the experience of the OCS was tremendously important and supplemented my experience as a noncommissioned officer. I had been a staff sergeant for 3 years. That experience was great but if I had been commissioned directly from my enlisted status without the OCS, I would have lost a great opportunity. OCS puts the finishing touches on my experience and leadership.

IH: Where was your OCS at?

AJG: Fort Riley, Kansas. The Army had only one OCS during that time and that was at Fort Riley, Kansas.

IH: Was it integrated, the OCS?

AJG: Yes, it was. That was the first time that I was assigned to an integrated unit. There were about 110 cadets, including 3 blacks in the 110, and we graduated about 52 and 2 blacks finished and were commissioned. While the OCS class was integrated, the posts and the surrounding communities of Junction City were not. As an example, I could not get a haircut on post. The barber shops at Fort Riley, Kansas at that time would not cut the hair of a black soldier. You had to go into a black barbershop in

Junction City for a haircut. Now remember, this was already 1949 when I started, 1950 when I finished, and the Executive Order to integrate our forces was initiated in 1948.

IH: So, you obviously did not see the effects of Truman's Executive Order for several years?

AJG: Not only did we not see the results, we did not even know about it.

IH: It is funny. The history books have it really beefed up like it was such a huge breakthrough, there were major celebrations, but you are the second person I have talked to that said when it went through, it was like nothing really happened.

AJG: Well, nothing happened. I remained in the segregated unit until I left Germany in October of 1949. I did join an integrated unit at Fort Riley OCS but the facilities on the posts were not integrated.

IH: O.K., now, after you were commissioned, did you ever have any encounters with white enlisted who had a problem with the black superior or anything?

AJG: You know, I have heard about things or read about things but I did not have that experience. I found that the black and white soldiers responded in a very soldierly and proper manner.

IH: That is, I guess, positive. After Fort Riley, what happened after that? Where did you go next?

AJG: I went to Fort Lee, Virginia and attended the Quartermaster Basic Officers Course. And following the Basic Officers Course which was 3 months, I was assigned to the Quarter Masters Leadership School and taught leadership and methods of instruction.

IH: Did your wife, did her and General Becton write that book about the black officers at Fort Lee?

AJG: No, not General Becton's wife, General Gaskill's wife.

IH: What year did they write that book, or time period? Was that in the 1960s or 1970s?

AJG: Oh, no. They started this book about 2000 and published it in 2005.

IH: O.K., so it is very recent then?

AJG: Yes.

IH: And the time period they were looking at, was it the 1950s and the 1960s?

AJG: Primarily, yes.

IH: I am in the process of trying to get this book, by the way. General Gasgill, is he still alive?

AJG: Oh, yes. He and Mrs. Gaskill.

IH: O.K., they are both still alive?

AJG: Yes. I will give you a telephone number

IH: O.K., fast forwarding to the 1960s during the Vietnam era, when the Vietnam War started with the advisors and things going over there, what was your appraisal of the situation when Vietnam began?

AJG: Well, let's see. Where was I at this point in time? I graduated from the Command and General Staff College in 1964 and if I recall correctly, that is when we started sending significant numbers of Americans to Vietnam. I certainly supported our involvement to assist the South Vietnamese government in defending itself against the Communist North and in April of 1966, I took a battalion to Vietnam, the 96th supply and support battalion, and we were based at Cameron Bay, Vietnam. The battalion was a normal-sized, 900 folks when I went into Vietnam but over a very short period of

time, we became one of the largest battalions in the United States Army with 8 companies and 8 detachments - a total of 3,600 officers and men. It was our mission to provide logistical support to all of the forces operating in that zone.

IH: O.K., that would have been quite a job, all the supplies coming in. Now, during this time when you got there around 1966 . . .

AJG: I got there in 1966, yes.

IH: This was in kind of the midst of the Civil Rights era happening then. Did you witness anything in particular within your command with the black soldiers showing solidarity or looking at the situation that, you know, we are here in Vietnam fighting for the country but we have not secured total social and political rights back in the United States, we are still fighting for that?

AJG: No, I did not observe anything but remember, this was 1966. While there was tension in the U.S., there was very little spill over in Vietnam. But I did not see an impact on soldiers then serving in Vietnam. We had a totally integrated organization, a great organization, and it performed superbly well.

IH: And the black soldiers that were there, no similar disciplinary problems that you mentioned were in Germany?

AJG: No. I had almost zero disciplinary problems with 3,600 officers and men. I had one special court martial during my year of command. It was a great organization of young men who performed extremely well.

IH: Now, you were a lieutenant colonel at this time?

AJG: Yes.

IH: Let me ask you, once you made it into the field grade ranks, you are starting to gain leverage and become certainly more influential, I guess at what point in your career did you begin to feel that you had a responsibility to the race or did you feel any type of added pressure as having any type of authority?

AJG: Had responsibility to the race?

IH: Yes, to African Americans.

AJG: I always felt responsible, that I had a responsibility to the race but my first responsibility was to be a good soldier and then a good officer, and I think there is plenty opportunity to be a good officer and, at the same time, recognize that we did have some differences in blacks and whites and they had to be recognized and addressed. I am not sure that I am answering your question.

IH: It is fine.

AJG: In order to be a good officer, you take care of those racial things, and you take care of them in a way to promote respect and equality among the members of your command.

IH: Did you have any type of . . . like, when you come into a new command situation, did you ever address anything like that to your senior staff or to your NCOs . . . if you see any problems, nip it in the bud, come to see me, or anything like that?

AJG: You know, as I said, we are still in Vietnam now. No, I did not find it necessary to do it. I think my presence alone spoke volumes. Likewise, the totally integrated makeup of each one of my units spoke volumes and I just made it a part of my routine to have a significant presence in each unit of that command on a continuing basis, and there was not one incident that surfaced to me that had any racial connotation.

IH: O.K. Now, we are still in the Vietnam era. After you left Vietnam, did you come back to Fort Lee?

AJG: No, I went to the Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. I must say that I became a little bit more conscious of the Civil Rights Movement during that period because, well, you know, I was back in the United States and you had a greater flow of information on what was occurring at college campuses, off college campuses

and in cities like Detroit. You became very, very aware of those civil rights activities ongoing at that time, far more than was the case in Vietnam.

IH: O.K., with the media and everything right there.

AJG: Right.

IH: In your back door.

AJG: Yes, and, you know, you had time to think about those things and to discuss them with your colleagues and others. I think America was caught up in that Civil Rights Movement.

IH: Now, around this time, this is when the Black Power Movement came out with the Black Panthers, Stokey Carmichael, Cleaver, Hughey P. Newton.

AJG: Right.

IH: When that started to happen, what was your impression of this thing about Black Power going on and things like that?

AJG: Well, I guess I had two reactions. One, those efforts to instill black pride, I embraced and felt very comfortable with it, but there was also the element that I became

concerned with which was negative. I did not feel comfortable, for example, with destruction of property and the burning of cities. I felt more comfortable with the student nonviolence activities. I felt very comfortable with Dr. Martin Luther King. I believed that those powerful, moral and peaceful movements had the greatest impact in changing America.

IH: Concerning Malcolm X and his message, and things like that, did you see any substance to his . . . [end of side 1]

AJG: I think Malcolm X made a tremendous contribution.

IH: But in your circles, probably most of black America then, King was definitely more accepted, from what you saw?

AJG: Oh, not only more accepted but I think he was more powerful in bringing about change. What we will never know, Mr. Hampton, is whether or not the destructive approaches used by some which resulted in destruction of property and death, had a positive impact - maybe the reality of the destruction and the potential of that destruction growing bigger provided greater willingness for people to pull back and to listen carefully to the message of Dr. Martin Luther King.

IH: Yes, that makes a lot of sense because the alternative, they certainly did not want that.

AJG: That is right. And we will never know the answer to that but I think we have to recognize that it probably had a great impact on facilitating change.

IH: O.K., now when Mohammad Ali came on the scene, I mean, to a lot of young black men, he was a sign of masculinity, male prowess. When he decided that he was not going to serve in the military, what was your reaction to that?

AJG: I was a soldier. I was not comfortable with that. But I have a high regard for Mohammad Ali.

IH: O.K. Do you have any recollection of the 1968 Olympics when Tommy Smith . . .

AJG: Yes, I recall. Yes.

IH: And when they did the Black Power sign on the podium in Mexico City, was that a sense of embarrassment for you or sense of well, it is a world stage of bringing African Americans' problems out?

AJG: I cannot say that I felt comfortable with their actions but again, I do not want to underestimate the impact it had on saying to America - look, the denial of opportunity and the segregation of America is destructive to our society, and maybe that out of a very negative action came a positive reaction where it helped us along that path.

IH: O.K. So, let me ask - this idea of the Black Power Movement and the paucity of violence, again, the alternative was much better?

AJG: Yes. Well, not only the alternative is much better, the alternative is the right thing to do, and most people, given the right environment, want to do what is right. I will say to you that even during our period of rigid segregation, that there were many Americans who were ready for an integrated society if the law had not been there to preclude it. I can tell you, integration in the Army went more smoothly than even I imagined once the legal barriers were removed.

IH: Now, in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s - 1963, 1964, 1965 . . .

AJG: Early on, O.K.

IH: And we have Vietnam just getting ready to take off, did you or any of your colleagues ever sit back and think, well man, you know, I am wearing the uniform, I am serving the country, fighting for the country, ready to die for the country or be horribly wounded; however, my people still do not have a equal source of civil rights. Did that ever cross your mind? How did you rationalize that, I guess, is what I am getting at?

AJG: You know, the predominant view was that if we serve well, that we would make the environment better to achieve equal rights. There was never, among my colleagues,

a discussion that said I am not going to serve honorably because I am not being treated or my people are not being treated well.

IH: O.K. Excellent.

AJG: I will speculate a little bit though.

IH: All right.

AJG: If we had not moved to integrate the Armed Forces, I think we would have had a significantly greater problem as we got into the Vietnam War.

IH: Oh, yes, absolutely.

AJG: Significantly different. It helped us to position ourselves to better cope with the environment for the Vietnam War years.

IH: Yes. If that was going on, it might have torn itself apart. With integration . . . some of the officers I spoke with, the drug problem that was there among the enlisted in the . . .

AJG: The drug problem, believe it or not, started to become very visible in 1968, 1969, along with the racial tension. I said that I commanded a battalion in Vietnam in 1966,

1967 - almost zero disciplinary problems. In 1970 and 1971, I was commanding the Nabollenbach Army Depot and it was also the a senior military commander for that area and was the U.S. representative to the city and county governments. I had 800 troops at that time and an equal number of civilians. I had more of a disciplinary challenge with my 800 troops in 1970, 1971, than I had with 2,600 in Vietnam. And a number of the challenges were drug-related and race-related but I will say to you that the fundamental problem at that time was a loss of discipline in the Army. We cited racial and drug problems, they were there but fundamentally, we had a disciplinary problem. A well-disciplined organization can easily deal with the drug problems and the racial problems. They just do not surface in a very dominant way. And it took the United States Army from 1968 to the early 1970s - I would say 1973, 1974 - to really regain a high state of discipline. And once we got that done, the drug problem and the racial problems went away. Went away is perhaps a little bit too strong. They substantially subsided.

IH: So, once that was restored, then that . . .

AJG: Yes.

IH: O.K., let's change gears to talking about one of my favorites which is the promotion and the OER system. During the Vietnam era, what do you feel were the biggest problems for blacks concerning the OERs and the promotion system in general?

AJG: Well, you know, I will take the OER . . . I think the OER system, by its design and intent, is a very fair one but remember that when you sit down to write an evaluation report, you are influenced by many things. You are influenced by the quality of that person's performance but you are also influenced by your association with that person. Let's look at the officers. A white officer being rated has a high probability that he or she may have come from the same community, may have come from the same school, may have had reasonable opportunities to get to know and to socialize with his rating and reviewing officer to a larger degree than a black officer would have that same opportunity. Not likely to have come from the same community, not likely to have come from the same school, and perhaps have had fewer opportunities to get to know his rating and his endorsing officer on a social basis. How much that influences the rating, it is difficult to measure. I will say this: I believe that most rating and endorsing officers really address that high responsibility in a very thoughtful and caring way and did his or her best to do the job properly. But you are still influenced by the circumstances that I just described. We are also inclined to put value on things that we are familiar with. You are inclined to be influenced by appearances, you are inclined to be influenced by the lifestyles, and you tend to look for appearances in lifestyle that are fairly consistent with your own. How much those things impact the rating, again, we will never know precisely, but there is sufficient evidence, as was the case in the Butler study, that they do impact the ratings that officers receive. I say, officers, enlisted as well. But the design of the system and the intent of the system is one to promote objectivity and fairness, but it is because of our total life experience and experience of America that you get a difference in the rating.

Expectations. You know, when you sit down to write the efficiency report of an officer, when you get ready before that, just how you evaluate that officer, you have to watch that you do not fall into the trap that the expectations in our society are different from the white West Point graduate than it is for the Prairie View graduate. So, expectations can color your evaluation. Now, having made those observations, let me say that I believe that most officers really take that responsibility seriously and try to be objective and fair.

IH: O.K. Now, you were with the first group of generals that were promoted in 1972?

AJG: Yes. There was V.O. Davis, of course. That was World War II. And then, during the Vietnam War, Freddie Davidson. And then, in 1971, we promoted three blacks to brigadier general. And then, in 1972, we were promoted five - I was one of the five.

IH: Do you remember who were the three in 1971? Was that General Becton?

AJG: No, no. General Becton was on my list.

IH: Oh, he was on your list? O.K.

AJG: Yes. It was General Becton, General Brooks, General Greer, and General Scheffler - also from El Paso. He is deceased.

IH: Yes, I saw his picture.

AJG: And the three that I made reference to were Jim Hamlett . . .

IH: Cartwright?

AJG: Cartwright. And one other. His name is not surfacing with me now. (Ollie Dillard was the name Gregg was trying to recall.)

IH: I am not sure either.

AJG: I will think of it before we finish.

IH: So, it was you, Becton, Brooks, Greer and Scheffler.

AJG: Yes. George Scheffler.

IH: He was in that group of 1972. I always thought it was kind of ironic that once Dr. Butler's report came out, I just wondered how much influence that had.

AJG: How much impact it had on our promotion?

IH: Yes.

AJG: Oh, I do not think any. Let me go back. Butler's report that was released in the 1970s?

IH: He started the study in 1971. That is when he started making the briefings . . .

AJG: The research.

IH: Yes.

AJG: No, I do not think it had any impact on our promotion to general officer but it has had a tremendous impact in the Army subsequent to that. We just became more keenly aware of the differences.

IH: O.K., now, did you sit on promotion boards afterwards?

AJG: Yes, many. I served on many promotion boards and I can tell you, Mr. Hampton, that the promotion boards in its structure and its guidance, just tremendously fair and I have great confidence in our promotion boards as structured but you have the problem again that when you sit down to look at files, there is a tendency to . . . well, first of all, you are going to evaluate what is in the records -- the efficiency reports, the decorations, and that sort of thing. So, the fate of that officer is substantially sealed before he comes before a promotion board. It is also true that black officers tend not to get the most

career enhancing jobs that would help them as they compete for a promotion. If you, as a young captain or major, get to be an S3 rather than S4, you obviously are going to appear more compelling when you are evaluated by a promotion board. So, promotion boards must be conscious in their recognition of the fact that assignment opportunities and evaluations are not always equal, and you have to account for that. And it places a tremendous responsibility on the members of that promotion board. It places a tremendous responsibility on the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Army to provide guidance to the board that would help them to recognize these differences and to deal with them without sacrificing quality. And I tell you, on most boards that I served on, that was done. I had occasion to address my concerns to individual members of the board.

IH: What kind of concerns would those be, just off the top of your head?

AJG: Of not recognizing that assignments tend to be less favorable for black officers. They are more likely to be the supply officer, the mess officer, the motor officer, than they are to be an operations officer.

IH: O.K., so if there was no black representation on these promotion boards, that would have been just swept under the rug and it would have kept on going?

AJG: Well, probably but, you know, most white officers are just as interested in being fair as you and I, and I think the fact that the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of

Staff of the Army made a conscious effort to populate boards with one or more black officers was the right thing to do. It helped the system.

IH: Now, do you remember there was a Secretary of the Army that after Dr. Butler's study came out, he said, well, he told the boards to, hey, remember the findings of the Butler study, take those findings into consideration when you make your decisions -- promote the best officers but remember the Butler study. Do you have any recollection of anything like that?

AJG: I do not recall that specific guidance but certainly, the Butler study influenced the guidance to the boards.

IH: O.K. As far as bringing more equality to the military, do you think Secretary of Defense Laird played a key role in that?

AJG: I just do not know.

IH: He was in when a lot of this stuff was instituted. No one has said anything so far. It just came to me, since you were close to the situation, if that was your impressions.

AJG: I just do not know. But before we leave the subject, let me say again, I think that our ratings systems and intent of the ratings system is commendable, and most people try to be as fair and objective as they can, recognizing the high responsibilities that they

have. But we are certainly influenced by historical circumstances. And the same thing is true for promotion boards. The structure and intent - commendable, and most officers serving on that board really tried their best to live up to the high expectations.

IH: O.K. Duly noted. We are coming to the end of the questions.

AJG: But you cannot erase the impact of coming from a fairly privileged community, West Point, versus coming from a less privileged community, Prairie View. I think though, in time, the Army began to appreciate the outstanding quality of officers coming through not only Prairie View but all of the historical black colleges. Really quality people who have made great contributions to our military.

IH: That was great. I made some good notes on that. Moving on again, we are coming to the end of the questions. As an officer, what strategies did you develop to become a more effective leader as you began to gain rank and momentum in the military?

AJG: Well, you know, my philosophy is with every assignment, to do the very best job that you can, to never spare yourself but do whatever is necessary to have an impact in the job that you have; to respect, coach and encourage your subordinates; to help them to be more productive, help them to find satisfaction in their work and to grow personally and professionally; to maintain cordial relationships with your military colleagues and the civilian communities, and I think if you do those things, you are likely to be effective.

IH: O.K. Did you have a particular mentor that really was an impact to your career or mentors?

AJG: You know, I had many mentors along the way, from the time that I was a non-commissioned officer to the time I became a general officer. I have always had good mentors and those mentors were across racial lines. I cite very often General George Blanchard as being one of my most admired and effective mentors, and I served under his command as a brigadier general, major general and I was still with him when I was elected for lieutenant general. A great officer and I certainly learned from his example, and that benefited me. But I had mentors at every stage and multiple mentors at every stage of my military career, and I tried to mentor others in a way that was meaningful.

IH: O.K., now from your experience as an African American, what were the biggest problems in the military, again, in relation to being a person of color throughout your career?

AJG: That is a very broad question. I think you had to be aware that you had to be an effective officer in order to compete in the system that you had to set a high example and as many of us say, you have to be better than the next guy in order to be competitive. I am not sure that that was always the case but you certainly started from that position that you have to be better than your table mate in order to survive.

IH: O.K. and this is pretty much the last question: What do you feel people need to know about African Americans' military service during the Vietnam era that has not been told or written about in the history books?

AJG: Well, I think it has been written about rather broadly. I am not aware of any writings though that single out African Americans for their Vietnam service. Maybe there are some things out there that I just do not know about. But remember, this was perhaps the most integrated army that we have ever fielded. The percentage of blacks at that time was at the high point in our army and their contribution was enormous. But I am not aware of anything that singled them out for their service during that time other than perhaps some statistical data of how many served, how many were killed and that sort of thing.

IH: I keep thinking of the added burden of the Civil Rights pressure and how African Americans still served with valor even under . . .

AJG: I think that that had many impacts. For one, I think blacks more than anyone else felt the pressure from home and communities. You know, why are you serving when your people are being treated so badly? But in spite of that, black soldiers served in great numbers and with great distinction.

IH: A question that I had that I made a note of but I failed to ask you when we were talking: What is the major difference between the Command General Staff College and the Army War College?

AJG: Oh, a huge difference. The Commanding General Staff College is a mid career school that teaches officers to do staff work and command. Typically, you go there as a junior major and about 50% of the officers go to the Command General Staff College. The War College, only about 2% of the officers get to go and you are a mid to senior lieutenant colonel and in some cases, a full colonel. It is the graduate school of the Armed Forces.

IH: O.K. Is it one year?

AJG: One year. The Command General Staff is also one year but much different level.

IH: What kind of subjects do you study there for that year in particular?

AJG: You can study nation building, for example. You study economics. You study the political structure of government. You study the integration of the military with its civilian components.

IH: Do any civilians attend this War College or is it just all Army staff?

AJG: No, we always have some members from the other military services and the civilian agencies of government.

IH: And how large would a class be?

AJG: About 300. I do not know what it is today. When you talk to General Gasgow, he can tell you more precisely. He was the assistant commandant for the War College.

IH: Was he the first African American with that position?

AJG: Oh, yes. First and last.

IH: First and last? It has been a long time.

AJG: Well, I should not say last. Last up to this point. But I hope someplace in the future, they will be.

IH: O.K., well, I am going to stop the tape recorder now, General.