

## Oral History with Colonel Kelley - Tape

Dr. Ernst: The following is an oral history interview with Colonel Art Kelley on August 4, 1997 in Frankfort, Kentucky.

Dr. Baldwin: Colonel Kelley, we really appreciate you allowing us to interview you today about your experiences as a career Army officer and about your involvement in Vietnam and your involvement at Morehead State as the head of the ROTC Department. We'd like to begin the interview by having you tell us a little about yourself and your army career.

1. Colonel Kelley: Well, thank you, I'm a country boy at heart. I was born in Springfield, Kentucky and raised on a farm. I went into the Army in 1944, volunteered to. I was going to be drafted, so I wasn't really a volunteer, but I went overseas and served in the Philippines. Got out of the service, came home and went to work at Kelley Lumber Company and with the intention of eventually owning part of the business. From there, I joined the National Guard. The National Guard was called up with the unit I was with 623<sup>rd</sup> **Filler Tour Detab** was called in January 1951 and I went on active duty. I went to Korea. I was in Korea for a year from December '51 to December '52. While I was there, I made a decision to stay in the service, and integrated into the regular in 1957. Artillery was my branch and I served as a foreign observer in Korea. I had one or two close calls, while I was a forward observer. Then I served in various capacities as you would in a career and went to normal schools: the basic, the advanced, and the Marine Core of Command Staff College which is a little different. I served in Germany, then in 1966 after I got out of the Command Staff College at Quantico, I went to Vietnam and took over the first of 77 artillery battalion with the First Cavalry Division which is primarily an air mobile organization with some 400 some helicopters and all of our movements were made by helicopters. And, one of the other things I did while I was in the service. I served as a professor of military science at Morehead State University from '69 to '73, and at that time I was on campus was during the student unrest. The student unrest was quite intense and grew to or exploded after the Cambodian Intrusion which

occurred about late April of '70. And, I think about May the 4<sup>th</sup>, the National Guard was called out at Kent State University. There were shots fired and four young students were killed and a few others wounded. And that set off a fire storm resulting in ROTC buildings being burned to include the ROTC building at the University of Kentucky. Several other incidents—one case a fire bomb was thrown at one of the military science instructors at the universities and I don't remember which one at the moment. A military science instructor's house was fired upon. So there was a lot of tension, and we felt it. We felt the tension. Everybody in the academic community, but especially the military science personnel. As a matter of fact, there was a rumor that they were going to kill one of the military science instructors. I tried to squash that rumor, we didn't spread that word. We got the word, but we didn't spread it and decided not to .

Dr. Baldwin: Tell me before we get into that, tell me a little about your own academic background before. Had you completed college before you went into the military?

2. Colonel Kelley: No, I --- whenever they want my transcripts, it's a nightmare, because I went to about twelve or thirteen different schools. But my education, all of it and my secondary .... College education was while I wand in the service. I went to the University of Maryland while I was in Germany and one of my final test was taken in a tent in the winter time with a stove burning. They flew the instructor up and that's the way we taught graphically – we were out in the field. He agreed to come.

Dr. Baldwin: Did you go all the way, when you went through a master's degree?

3. Colonel Kelley: Yes, I got my Bachelor degree from the University of Omaha and then they had a program for men like me that were, needed a place to trickle eight and get within six months of your degree the Army puts you on leave. So, there are a lot of military people who have graduated from the University of Omaha. Are you aware that ....?

Dr. Baldwin: Unhuh!!

4. Colonel Kelley: They had good programs there. They're designed especially for that. Then I got my master's while I was at Morehead. I have about three degrees and I have a lot of credits beyond the masters, you know I enjoy the academic world.

Dr. Baldwin: And, you have an honorary doctorate, is that right?

5. Colonel Kelley: Yes, Dr. Dorn had the Board of Regents award me an honorary doctorate and that was essentially for the service rendered during the unrest we did have to deal with and we were successful. A lot of that credit goes to Dr. Dorn of course and his leadership because he stood behind us. Some of the universities, you know, were ... did not do that. In many cases, you know the president himself was against it and they closed programs on about five institutions of higher education and Harvard I believe was one of them. Harvard or Yale, I forget – I believe it was Harvard. I think Princeton closed theirs and that was a big loss to the military to lose that source and that academic background that they could offer. But, some of the things if you want me to talk about the unrest, some of the things that happened on campus ....

Dr. Baldwin: Yeah, I want, I want to put that sort of in chronology though as we get to it. I think it might fit , it might fit a little better. I know that you also wrote some articles that were very well received at the time by the military community and have been important since. Did you write those articles as a part of your academic work or more as a part of your military work?

6. Colonel Kelley: Professional, from a professional point of view.

Dr. Baldwin: Did they, did any of those articles put you at odds with the ....

7. Colonel Kelley: Administration?

Dr. Baldwin: Yeah.

8. Colonel Kelley: No!

Dr. Baldwin: So, tell us then about your experience in Vietnam. And, if you like to do so you may compare it with your service in Korea. If you think that's appropriate.

9. Colonel Kelley: Well, I'd be glad to do that. And, if you would like after I do that I might talk a little about the support and the cultural and social aspects of it.

The Korean War was like all wars with changes of time. Initially it was very fluent when North Korea struck and pushed the South Koreans back quickly. We, the American forces that went in there when President Truman decided to permit them started out with just a battalion size force reinforced facing the whole army and got overrun almost immediately when they came in contact with them. Then there was Peace Meal buildup and in that process practically a whole division was wiped out—2450 Division. It was very critical at that time because people were thinking, you know, we were going to have battle. So they rolled the forces back and the Americans were being sent in and eventually they stabilized you could say at the **Kruson** perimeter which was a small area. Soon there after there was McArthur who conducted an vigorous operation up around **Swell**. And that broke that. Soon the forces were in exploitation and some of them were even on the **Yai** border between China. Then the Chinese came on rolled down and then it roll back above the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel district on quick and some rise occurred. Then it settled into a trench set peace war. When I got there there were bunkers and drenches. I was on, I served as a forward observer for about a little over 2 ½ months. I was on the front at that time. There wouldn't be much activity except in spots. You had Heart Break Ridge where there be a battle for the hills as they called it and it would be quite bloody. As a matter of fact on a mountain right adjacent to me one of my friends that I didn't know at that time who became a friend of mine served together several times and was right next to the hill where they hit that hill and overran it and the forward observer had just come into Korea, just gone up on the hill. He was overrun and then the Americans counter attack overran him again. The bunker had already been fallen down

and he was kind of trapped in the bunker from artillery from both sides. A couple of more grenades had been thrown in on him. So that's what happened to him, see. Me, in the meantime, over not too far away, I was sitting there with a stove in a bunker doing just fine. And, generally, that's the way it was. So there weren't very many targets. You know, you had to really search for targets. And, we didn't move, we, we, I got there, we didn't move out of that – we got there in December and we didn't move out of that position until July – six months. Then we moved over to what they called Smoked Valley. Again we were bunkered in. We got quite proficient at building bunkers. We did get artillery fired in occasionally and when I was on the OP I got shelled a few times. And coming off the OP I had one experience where I thought I was going to lose my life where I was going to be killed. I was walking through kind of a no-man's land and shouldn't have been doing it and I knew it. But, I had been up there like a long time and I was tired of sea rations there were having fresh turkey. We ate real well in Korea which was a big difference between World War II. And as I was walking through that no-man's land I could see more and more points where I knew there were enemy OP's (observation posts). Eventually they opened up with machine guns, just about the time I had gotten more than half way through. Well as I was getting half way through that's about the time I realized I had made a mistake, and there was nothing to do but to continue on. And, I did that and I was walking as fast as you could walk if you can imagine. When a machine gun hit, opened up on me, well then I dropped to the ground real fast, and I knew who they were shooting at. When you're the target, and you know it, it's a different kind of fear. There's degrees of fear. If it gets bad enough you know you could lose your mind, and you can get, you become stiff as a board. I ran into one case where that occurred. And, then, of course, you can lose control of facilities. So, you can get into the panic and just do all kinds of things. But, you can control fear to a certain extent, but when it comes to you – the high level fear – I can assure you. And right after that they dropped a mortar and a mortar hits as close as to that door over there to me. And, I thought the second was surely going to wipe me out. So, I had time to do a little thinking while I was waiting for the second round to come in with no place to go. I did kind of crawl up against a little foundation of ruins – a stone wall there if hit on the other side it might have helped me. It might of sent more rocks at me, but in any event. And I was

laying there thinking well they're going to kill me and I'm going to, nobody's going to find me. That was kind of a demoralizer, to say the least. Then, I thought well the worst they'll mane me, and I'll lay here and suffer. And, being a country boy you've seen buzzards over old dead animals. I could see those buzzards (laughter) flying over me. Of course, I was married and had two children, and I was feeling sorry for my wife, who died later at a young age of 46 while we were stationed at Fort Knox. But, I thought well, you know it's really going to be hard for her to raise those two children and how's she going to do all those things. And, then all of a sudden, I figured I better do some moving and I started crawling and the ground was very hot and I crawled, I also left my rifle along with my carbine. And, you don't like to be separated from your carbine, but I was going to do that to make it easier to get out of there. The instinct compelled me to go back and get it. I got it and crawled along. It was so hot in those tall leaves that I decided, no I'm going to get up and make a and so I did run for it. And I figured they were looking at me and they were loading the mortar while I was running. In my mind, I could hear them loading it. I was going like I was trying to win the Olympics. I had about 300 yards to go. I finally, you know how a runner will 100 yards and there's nothing left. I ran about 200 yards and there was nothing left. So, I kind of wobbled into a little gully-like and had some cover. Also, there was a lot of shrubbery there, so I was out of sight I thought. No birds were singing or making any noises and I was sweating – I was wet. I wasn't shaking at this time – I had been shaking, I was shaking when I was on the ground. I could feel my .... I could feel the tremble. Then while I was sitting back there I thought about the folly of war, which is kind of strange to do. One of the reasons I was doing it, because I knew they were trying to kill me. And, that morning I had tried to kill a guy with a machine gun. I shot at him and he was running like I was. I don't think I got him. But, in war you know you wanted to get them, kind of like having a cobra snake around. But anyway, I did thing about – kind of silly you know – me being in that predicament and not really thinking about this guy being in a predicament this morning when I was shooting at him. So, I finally I decided well, I'll get up and get out of there. I got up and I couldn't run, I was still too exhausted to run, but I was walking as fast as I could. When I got to where the Chief was going to meet me around observation of the front line in that area, the driver was standing there and he said,

“Jesus Christ, Lt. What happened to you?” I don’t know for sure whether the expression was one that – people who have been through, who have seen the angel of death – it’ll do something to them. And, they’ll look different for awhile. It will take them awhile to get over it. I don’t know if I was in that shape or whether it was because I was soaking wet and my hair was wet and I took off my helmet and was throwing water over my wrists and I said to him, I didn’t want to talk about it – so I just said to him, “Oh, nothin’!” and we got in and drove off. I lost my billfold with all my picture and everything in it. They were having a fresh turkey dinner. I got there in time for it, but I wasn’t hungry.

Dr. Baldwin: (Laughter)

10. Colonel Kelley: But, any way, the fear thing is common in all the wars and common in Vietnam. I probably may not get into that just right now. I got into that in some detail in my interviews. I’ve interviewed about 125 to 130 lower two people. I just did the combat. I didn’t do any of the social the cultural the leaves, family – just the combat. I took the individuals and took them all the way through the war. I was going to interview a guy, he was in Omaha. I started out right on the beach or maybe in England and just would go from those places that he went and things that he did. Well, that was Korea and of course, we were road bound we were in mountains, it was hot and wet and cold and snow – the coldest I ever been in my life. And, I never had that problem in Vietnam of course. Although you could get cold in the highlands. I was surprised when I first got there. I landed at Pleiku. I was in fatigues. It was raining which I expected and it was cold which I did not expect. It was chilly I’d say, I had to get my field jacket out. So, you had the front line and you knew where it was – you could see it, you could see the trenches. In Vietnam we never had a front line. You were subject to being hit from all points from many directions. It was an insurgency and counter insurgency kind of war. And, of course, the North Vietnamese came into the picture in mass. It started in late ’64 and early ’65. We eventually ended with several divisions down there and probably a couple hundred thousand troops. In the First Cavalry Division we fought mostly MVA’s. Now, I’ll let you tell me where you, which way you want me to go.

Dr. Baldwin: I like to hear more about your experience in Vietnam and if you want to continue to compare it to Korea, I think there's some really useful comparisons there. My colleague has done some recent work with the Korean War so you might want to pursue that. When you – do you remember what it was like when you came into Pleiku? What was it like in Vietnam? Do you remember how you felt about it and what the countryside was like? And, what your estimation of the circumstances of the situation was?

11. Colonel Kelley: I got on a plane in California, getting ready to head to Vietnam. We had, we had a lot of training on insurgency and counter insurgency, Marxism, Communism, and Minism. I had heard from when I was Quantico Command Staff College we heard on major issues and about Vietnam in particular from the academic expert and Streets Without Joy the guy that wrote that came and talk to us for example. Quite often we get both the both sides. In '66 there wasn't too much opposition, hardly any. By the way, comparing it to Korea, as far as public support was concerned about two thirds of the people supported the Korean War and most of the way through the war. The support declined later on but not much. About two-thirds were supporting us when we, when I went over. So, I had a feeling for what to expect as far as the fighting was concerned. I had not been in air mobile. I had not been in that situation. I should say in preparation for Vietnam we had expert noted people who had been there who taught us classes, who knew about what was going on. We heard from all the commanding generals of all the major commands and even heard from the Secretary of Defense. So, we would get a good read, we had a Marxist to come in and talk to us, that could tell us how those guys were thinking—see and it did shed a little light, although I had read everything I could get my hands on, because you know we were dealing with it, and I was a professional soldier doing it because I needed to do it and because I wanted to do it.

Dr. Baldwin: What was your rank at that time?



12. Colonel Kelley: When I went to Vietnam, I was a Lt. Colonel I was going to take over a battalion. I was at Marine Core Command Staff College with orders to go to Vietnam. So, I knew I was going about mid way through. I knew a little about the country and a little about its history not a lot. I knew a good deal about insurgency and the different places in different time and read a lot about it and was required to. We had a very good program as a matter of fact, they had the officers to select a certain person – might be Castro, might be Mao, or something and they would become an expert on their writings about insurgency and counter insurgency and so on. We had these big debates and also we wrote a little summary and every officer got a summary. So, the business about we didn't know what we talking about when we went over there is a myth. The Army, the military Officer Core was highly trained. So were the enlisted men. So, when I got there like suspected the heat and got that little chill. The, there was kind of a red clay there at Pleiku where we landed. I'll back up just a little about my experiences in heading out. Right before I left I called the family and to say the final farewells you know. I talked to well, before I left to get on the plane to get west. I was married and had five children. They were lined up on the street, a friend was taking them to Louisville. I started out with my wife and down the line with my children and I picked up my little two year old baby and by that time I was kind of an emotional wreck. I had to get on out of there without shedding too many tears in front of the little guys, you know because they were having a bad time anyway. I went to California and before I got on the plane called back and was yeah talking to Ollie and all the children. I got down to Christy and she said, "Somebody broke the car." Ollie got back on the phone and said, "Yeah, we weren't going to tell you about that, it was parked on the street and somebody sideswiped it." But anyway, as we were crossing the Pacific, we got word that a plane went down. Well, let me back up just one. We were sitting on the end of the runway in the airplane. It was a military airplane, a big jet, full throttle and we started off and all of sudden, all the throttle comes back and full brakes. And we, Holy Mackerel, how close are we to the end of the runway. We were delayed and they supposedly repaired whatever the problem was and at this time we don't know what it is. And, we do it again, and the same thing and we get a little concerned about it. Eventually, we get off and we learned that it was the lock on the door and they fly at 25,000 or 30,000 feet going over

and if that thing breaks it the door and just explodes. They did lose a person from that we learned. Also, while we were over the Pacific we learned that an airplane had gone down. And, planes were leaving before us and we thought WOW, that 's it was going to be bad. Folks back home were going to think it was us. As it turned out, I think it was General Stillwell in that C47. Anyway, I wanted to make sure, I was hoping we had an experienced pilot. Before we got on the plane a guy came out he had an old beat up hat and he was gray. I thought to myself, "That's nice." Then in the Philippines we got to Clark Field, we picked up a good crew. I went up to see the crew. And, there they were two new 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. right out of college. I thought my goodness, a big old jet going into Pleiku and going there they went in kind of high and wounded their way down. So, I was a little concerned about this, but not too much. We get there and we get in another plane going to An Khe which is a of, Pleiku was on the western side of Vietnam and **Flutter** in the middle maybe a little closer to the north to the DMC. An Khe is right in between the Cambodian border and the China Sea. So, we were flying in this two engine propelled army aircraft. Some of the troops that were on there had been picked up by the units and they were carrying their grenades and helmets. They looked like fighters you know. When you look at that and you also see if those grenades are hooked well in that plane. Somebody points out to us the site where the famous ambush occurred with the French and it's called Mobile 100 or something like that. Where they wiped that Korean/Italian Plus out. All the vehicles were rusted you see. So, we looked at that pretty hard. And, you go to An Khe it's almost like a sea. It's a great big place. It probably had one brigade was on duty there with this. So, there's lots of helicopters, and there's an air field. By the way, a tiger ran through that place one time while I was there. And, that tiger was scared to death, and we were too (Laughter). But, we kept going. At An Khe you know we had good mess and we had an Officers' Club. You know kind of temporary structures and some of them were tents. Eventually I had a real nice little bunker. So, when I got there they gave us an orientation before we took over the battalions. There were about three or four of us that would be battalion commanders. We went all through the two core area. We went to the little outpost like Duc Co and there were a couple, I can't remember the other one right now. Those were scattered along the western frontier to, with uh, they were barbed in, dug in, highly fortified

positions with special forces, advisors and local Vietnamese soldiers. They lived in the ground except for when they were out manning the weapons which were in bunkers. And because they were all alone, they were way out there and when they were hit you know it would take sometime to get to them. But, I went into one and in a room as big as this and that clay was pretty solid. So, it was dry and reasonably nice. There was twins. They looked like they had just been born, and they were in a (have every seen a wire rat cage/trap). Have you ever seen those? It looked like that and I said what are they doing in that. They said that was to keep the rats off of them. The they told me, they said the father got killed on a patrol and the mother committed suicide. A sergeant was telling me this. And he said I am trying to adopt them. Back when I was in Korea, I mean in Morehead I got a the letter from the Special Forces and there was a picture – they were triplets not twins. There was a picture of them and they were about three or four years old. They were the little kids all dressed up – a big change. Well, that was one kind of activity and Special Forces were involved in. Did you hit any of those in Duc Co? Did you talk to any of them?

Dr. Baldwin: No!

13. Colonel Kelley: So, that's a different world see and what their jobs were to kind of patrol and keep up with the North Vietnamese movement across the border. It was kind of a risky business – dangerous business. We did have artillery pieces there and sometimes it was out of triangular shape. In my little piece that I wrote you might remember me talking about feeling sorry for that little guy who was coming off there with his mother to feel a husband who was on duty, on a machine gun. That was their life, and that was going to go on forever. I admired those Vietnamese people. I admired their struggle, their struggle was such a terrible thing for them. There was the valance that they had to be exposed to and there was just living under the ground out in the jungles. One mountain top where one of them was located was just kind of frightening, you know. Just a terrain and the jungle and all that stuff. You know they depended on supplies being flown. So we, we got to see that, we got to go to the headquarters. We went to the different units. We went to the different battle fields that the fueled and was

briefed about what happened. By the of, the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division had been engaged in and the **I Drain** Valley was where they had a real big battle and several books have been written on that. We looked at that in some detail. It wasn't too long until we were there in the same spot. Well then I, then after I get through this little orientation I go to Pleiku and for the change of command ceremony and I received the – went through formal ceremony that you do in the change of command where the old commander hands the awarding commander the guide on and then he hands it to me. And when he handed it to me I could feel the weight of the responsibility commanding a battalion and insurgency situation. Most of the men were new because it had been the end of the rotation. So, we were all well trained. I mean I was in artillery and had been in artillery. I knew how to be in artillery. I knew how to command a batter and had commanded battery as a matter of fact for may be three years. I knew the fire direction. I knew everything you needed to know to be a good battalion commander. That's the technical part of being a soldier. And enlisted men were the same way and all the other officers were the same way. We were trained. The difference was that we didn't have our own trucks and we were going to connecting air and mobile operations. So, a little adjustment there and I felt uncomfortable by not having my own vehicles, having to depend on the aviation assets that belonged to the division. One time I got in trouble by not having them. So, that night and am I going into too many details for you?

Dr. Baldwin: No!

14. Colonel Kelley: That night I got a notice and see we know that the night they strike you can little rounds being fired now and then in some distance. We really don't know how much of a threat that we're are in There was a brigade up around Pleiku. We out in a kind of attachable formation and batteries are all laid and ready to fire. And, I get the word to go down to the guard headquarters that the guarding commander wants to see me. I hardly know where it is. They jeep driver comes along and they put another man in there as kind of a guard. So, I don't know if I'm going to run over a mine or whether I'm going to get lost. It was raining and darker than the devil. I get into that command

post there and he greets me and I greet him. He sits me down and he starts a long dissertation on the upcoming plans that are going to be executed starting tomorrow.

Dr. Baldwin: Do you remember who the Guarding Commander was at that time?

15. Colonel Kelley: I can't remember his name at this moment but it will come to me probably in the process. He was a fine fellow and a good commander. So, he was of up on a map and pointing to the map and he was pointing to it pretty fast see and I'm trying to keep up with the pointer. We ran into a high drain area it was the same place they'd had a big fight. The plan was there was going to be part of the recon outfit going to be on the ground. And we were going to be required to support those and we were going to support several different insurgencies. I guess about three. We were eventually going to have the main part of my unit was going to be on an air field. That the air field they used during that first thing there. He is just really whipping on me and I'm overwhelmed really about all the things that are going to happen this next day. When he gets through he ask, "Do you have any questions?" I said, "No, (laughter) no, sir!" And he said, "Have you got anything to say?" Well, I said, "It's my birthday!" (Laughter). It had just turned 12:00, you see. I said, he said, "Well, Happy Birthday." Now, we talked a little while and didn't have an op order from him at the time, but I had enough information to go to work. So, I headed back and went to work. And, working with all new officers, hardly, I hadn't met a lot of them. We crank up and we headed out next morning and eventually I moved into this forward – this afternoon - a lot of things have already gone on in support of getting into the farther south, I kind of looped in to getting down. And I get in there. I'm on the ground and have a 105 batter, I was a 105 Battalion Commander. I had a 155, that was in general support and I had two batteries, no I didn't, not yet, I had just the one battery in there. I was getting reading to fire preparation for the next insurgency on a new landing zone farther in. And so we brought in a good deal of ammunition and we wee busy getting the weapons ready, getting the ammunition broken down and getting ready for the mission. Of course, the 105's were fire in with the **Shonut**. And I went in with a **Hygy**. We were ready to shoot and I got a message that the brigade has been of, is changing directions. They had located a North Vietnamese

forces in a different place from where they thought they were, so they change and moved that direction changed that division, that brigade while they were in the air. Went into another LZ which really requires a lot of training and perfection of ability and so on. Now, most of Infantrymen were in condition as the artillery was. The artillery had many casualties. It had casualties in that year so there was continuity. We were brand new so to speak. While I'm sitting there normally at a landing zone at an LZ we have a company of injuries. A lot of times they would be guys that had had a hard time when they're back kind of catching their breath. Then gathering the replacements and so forth. The company around artillery battery is if they decide to hit you, they're going to penetrate and we had an experience of that. I'll tell you that later on if you want to know about it. Anyway, while I was sitting there all the action and tension was going the other way and I'm just sitting there and they're taking – they suddenly start taking my company away and leaving me with a baton. Could I take a little break here?

Dr. Ernst: Unhuh! This is a good spot to break.

## Side Two of Arthur Kelley

8-4-97

### Dr. Arthur Kelley:

1.) So my support is leaving me and we know that there, we are going in there bigtime, because we know that a division is across that border or parts elements of them are. I don't know what exactly the new direction is, and I don't know what is heading my way. The other time, they did go right by that, across the border, and I was right up almost against the border. There was the platoon, and I put parts of them on either flank, and I told them, I would take care front and rear, with the artillery. And if it had hit us, we would have been in good deal of trouble, because we weren't dug in.

2.) Now I taught tactics at Fort Sill. OK. And I studied the Korean War, and studied **re-grade**, and northern defense. And looked at what happened to the artillery units when they were overrun, and about to get overrun, and how the ones succeeded in not getting overrun, how they did it and so forth. So I would had pretty good knowledge on how to do, a defense. And I will tell you about it later on, because there is a lot of power in a artillery battery position. If you bring the bearer, immediately, you can carry the day, in almost all cases. Matter of fact, wrote an article, while I was there, on the defense, and sent it to Fort Sill, so people could have it--officers coming over. And they published it.

3.) Then we had an attack, and it was like, forth of July and we turned the fires on so fast, that they left, and they left part of their equipment, which was kind of unusual. Matter of fact, the Base Commander told me they had hoped they had hit me, and they came down I told him how we were going to do it.

4.) But to get back to my training, my situation is getting, the combat power, to deal with, my situation is going from quite a bit to zero. I'm in a new setting, and the only direction I get is some directions from the Brigade Commander, "Just want you to know, glad I got it, it was kind of late, we are changing directions, get out the best way you can, that is all the information I have for you." So I don't know where am I going to go, and how am I going to get out of here. There happened to be one of our aviators that had just landed there, for some reason or another, I don't know what it was, he was in the **light** helicopter. He was from the **lift** battalion, from the, I don't know if it was, the

huey, the chinook, or both. But anyway, he was with nature and I said, and cursed a little bit, and said “you get your . . .” and I told him I needed some lift to get out of there, and he said “we don’t have one sir,” he said “sir everything we have is committed. We are out of business we can’t pick up the units, the things we were are suppose to be picking up at Bay Chu.” And I had part of my unit back there, and we had to cancel that. I said “you get in the air and get me some lift.” He got up and took off. And pretty soon here comes hueys, before we’re ready, not hueys but chinooks. They are great big things, and it is raining, like pouring something out of a boot, and I am looking out there, and I think *good gosh, how we can’t afford to have these guys sitting here, a great target for the NVA and they would hit it I am sure, and it would do damage to the division.* So, but, as it was raining, most guys were sitting down in that small space and there were, just a few feet between those propellers. I thought man, *that is training*, cause it was hard to see it was raining so hard. Dark, and those guys were good! And that’s the way it was. Always, the forces and troops, as far as I am concerned, when I was there, they were all skilled in all these various skills.

5.) Well anyway, you sit down. So what I did, I fired the, instead of tiring to load that ammunition, I just fired it out of there. And you know, it was like, the war was really bombing, cause we fired at max. rate. And we didn’t know exactly where these other guys were, and I had, had one of my arrow observes, was there, with a fixed wing airplane. I seen him up, just to keep, to try to keep us from hitting somebody. We did fire on the land zone that we were suppose to go into, so we figured that was safe, and we let her go. And, just a short period of time, we were lifting out of there.

6.) Mean time I had gone over to the Oasis, what was called the Oasis, which was a little east of the Cambodian border. There was a special forces unit there. As it turns out, that is where a lot of the other division forces were going to be. So I get the battalion in, and snipe before we get in there, and get out of that situation. Well that’s a stride for me. Well one other thing happened too, while I was in that unit I get a call from my battary battalion executive officer saying we’re up here, something happened, he said “the helicopters that were coming to pick us up, turned around, and took off.” And he said “we are out here by ourselves, we don’t feel safe here.” He had been there a while and I said “are you familiar with that road between here and Oasis.” He said “yes I had



been on it before.” Well I said “do you think you can get the squad down it without getting caught or ambushed?” He said “yea, I think I can.” And that was it, what was the remnants or what was left of the battalion and I said “good.”

7.) And that was calculated, that was before, that was when I was out of contact with the world. It was a risky decision and could have been a serious problem for that little convoy. But anyway I did that, and the next day the commander came to see me and he was challenging my judgment on firing the ammunition in particular. And I explained it to him and he said “yea you did the right thing.” So that was the way we started off.

8.) The Air Mobile operation was a thing to watch. Took a lot of coordination, and, a lot of, well I won't go into it because it all is in that paper, and I did it in detail so that people would have it, unless you want me too?

**Dr. Baldwin:**

No that fine I have looked at it. You are describing a situation in which the troops are very well trained, the equipment is there, and the capacity is there and yet things don't really happen . . .

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

9.) OK, I will talk about that a little bit, and how we lost the war. To what ever extent you want me too. And I said that in my paper. I said that in the early 1950's, Ho Chi Minh told the reporter that they would be able to fight a modern army, a French army, because he had two secret weapons, the jungle and the impatience of the western mind. And later on I want to get into it a little bit. I want to talk about from the **Clausiwitz's** point of view and strategic failures. Tactically we won every battle. They, in the first cav division, overran the platoon while I was there. But in that process and I had that in there right? We reacted in just the short period of time. We had, mass, and more combat power then they had, and they had to, and they cut it mad, and they ran across the border. And that's another thing, that was a major problem for us. Here we are, we have them, and they get across the line, it's like playing hide and go seek and getting to home base you see? It is kind of frustrating, and this was early in the war for

me.

10.) But the jungle. The jungle contributed to extending the war. Because it was a terrible task, a major task, to find the North Vietnamese. We were dealing mostly with the north Vietnamese, we are not talking about the insurgency. It is easy to camouflage, and the earth is your protector. So they were good at digging. They had tunnels, that they could get too when we hit them and often did get to and that made a big difference. But in that jungle, when we found them, it was usually in their kill zone. And that is how the platoon would take casualties early on. A lot of times they would be dug in a L-shaped formation. They would be located as such so that your movement would take you right into the showing. The two legs showing and then you would be right in there. Now we did have a lot of artillery fire going with them, and a lot of times there were just as far as they went and we would bring that fire in heavy. They would try to get as close to us as they could, to try to neutralize that. But anyway, back to the jungle. They could put a large force and manage to mobilize and strike, the landing zone, like they did **LZ Bird** and almost wipe it out. It was easy to do. It was not a difficult thing for them to hide, not a difficult thing for them to mask, and not a difficult thing for them to strike, where they would have the proponderous of power, but with our mobility, we would soon change that. But anyway, it was a technical problem.

11.) I will bring this up now. I went to Lindenmore laboratory, I was assigned, I didn't want to go to the pentagon after I left Vietnam. I asked them if they could get me a high level assignment someplace other than the pentagon, because I had two kids getting ready for college. And they said we have just the thing, and we have a need for you in this job because its Lindenmore Labortory. It was at Aberdeen Maryland. Ever here of it?

**Dr. Baldwin:**

No, never

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

12.) See the strange thing, because it was put together specifically to solve the technical problems in Vietnam. It was not a commodity laboratory, you know like some

of the other laboratories, one might be for clothing, another for food. This covered the whole field. The defense department picked the best of the litter, in civilians. They picked their finest in engineers, and in all the different fields, to represent all the different fields. There were about 150 of them. The senior civilian was a public law 313, it had to have that public law to attract that kind of person do to it. It was a special kind of law. Because he wouldn't have been able to pay him enough on the others. Those numbers. We had about a half a dozen GS16's, we don't have any at Fort Knox. And maybe 10, 12, TS15's. So it was a high powered organization, with a good deal of brainpower. And to take a look at the technical problems and try to solve them. One of the most difficult problems is, to try to spot an ambush in the jungle, solving it. It was a critical problem for the forces. In an independent debate, one time a bunch of these guys were talking about it. Talking about it from several angles and did a lot of things to try to solve it. They say it was more complex then putting a man on the moon, or Mars. And we tried radar. The bushes and things would exclude you from being able to use radar. We tried all the different technologies that were available at the time, we were on the cutting edge of them. We even tried bed bugs, and bed bugs would work. But they were logistically were hard to keep alive and take care of. And also the wind had to be in the right direction and there were problems with it. So the bed bugs didn't work.

**Dr. Ernst:**

What do you mean by the bed bugs? What do they . . .

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

13.) They will react to human influence.

14.) And we trained dogs that would locate a mine and a boobytrap. We trained them differently then you would normally train a dog. Usually you would reward them, what we did, in order to eat, they had to do what we wanted them to do. Because finding a mine is not a natural thing to do. But we got them so that they could smell the mine apparently. They would walk up to the mine and start doing this and walk right to it. We would train them to sit down and where to sit down. We trained them to be concerned

about the bobby trap. How to locate the booby trap and they would locate it and go down the wire to the end of it. And we had a whistle that a human ear could not hear and they could hear, and you could blow that twice and then would stop, three times and turn right, four time, turn left, and they would do it. Something to watch them.

15.) We tried the human influence ammonia as one. What we would call a people sniffer, and we developed it to the point that we sent it to Vietnam. And eventually the scientists said that it won't work, it didn't work, it's not working. The guys in the field said it was working. Big argument, over do we go on with it, or do we say stop now and cut your loses.

16.) We worked with light spectrum so that if it hit ammunition that it would change, when it was reflected back. It would change it and you could run it through a machine and it would tell it. We used all sorts of things. Inferred, we used. W

17.) Well right when I left, we were using a microorganism that came off of a plant off the coast of Japan. Somewhat like a lighting bug, it had lighting capability, but it was so tiny that it almost takes a microscope to see them. But billions of them together and you could get a finger. And we figured out how to put them in a capsule, not a capsule. You've seen these long containers, about as big around as your finger, and you can put a stopper on them. So that you could kind of freeze dry process like and preserve them and send them to Vietnam and put them in a microwave-like thing, not a microwave because they didn't have microwaves, and activate them and put them on the helicopter. They were sensitive to the human fluent, but not to the gorilla or the monkey, which helped. And we were having some success with that thing when I left. It may have been warranted shortly there after, so I don't know what happened to it.

18.) Anyway great advances had been made on finding, finding the man in the jungle was just a job that was impossible. And usually we had company sized men doing what the Gulf War, Desert Storm and Desert Chill, we had a lot of things that were doing the job, that had been developed. A lot of progress in that area. So there was a serious technical problem, and the jungle was a factor, an important factor. It helped them delay the war. By nature the insurgency is a protracted war. And they played that, it was part of the strategic center of gravity, and they used that. Another one of course, strategic center of gravity, was opinion of the people—politics. And they played that. They played

those two very successfully. But as far as the tactful end was concerned, even though we had that problem finding them, we did find them and we did destroy them when we got them. And we won, and it was just routine when we did it. It was something to watch that outfit operate. I mean it was so impressive.

19.) **Idrang Valley Paul Revere Two Operation**, a lot of foreign officers watched it and they were very complementary and amazed that we could have a training base, that could bring in all those people without that continuity and conduct that kind of mission successfully. And at one time, you know, at the max., we had about 500,000 people there. Which meant we were bringing in and out, we were moving a million people in and out. In all the skills, feeding them, housing them, clothing them, supplying them with ammunition. All those things were being done. But again the business of protracted war was a big factor.

20.) Then you have your opposition coming in, they have opposition to any war, at any time, for any number of reasons. For good reasons. People ought to be opposed of war and not go into it, without having to go into it, and as it prolonged, more and more people wanted to get out. As it becomes more painful, more people want to get out. Initially, you had the business of, you had that unstable situation in the south and you had the opposition in the south. Naturally you would have an unstable situation because a lot of the guys down there were from the north and had chosen to go down there, a lot of them Catholics, because of the brutality that communism has always had for religion. But anyway, as this delay goes forward, you can see people having more and more reasons want to get out. Some of them say you can't win the thing. And that is what you were saying that we go in there and do the same thing again. Unwinnable, immoral, not worth saving--the south Vietnamese were not. And eventually, a lot of them had moral thing. And I guess I better not get into that too much it is a long subject. If we had more time, I could. But later on when we were on operation, there, back in the same area we had been in. I said something to the commander, I said "you know we did this once before, what kind of progress are we making." That is a dissertation in itself. It would take a couple hours to answer that question so I don't think we should get into it.

21.) You had **Tet**, maybe I could hit the high points for you. Tet came in 1968, February, 1968. In 1965 the North Vietnamese were moving through divisions through

the central highland, to cut off, to cut the South Vietnamese in half. But the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry division stopped that, that didn't happen. Then you had **Tet**, by the time you had **Tet**, you had a lot of opposition. 1968 was one of the worst years in our history. You had Kent, and that was sad and traumatic to the nation. The photos of those young kids laying there dead, with blood surrounding them. Then you had the assassination of Mr. Luther King, the assassination of Bobby Kennedy. You had **Chaisson** coming in, and you had major riots in the cities.

**Dr. Baldwin:**

You were home by this time?

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

22.) Yes, and I was going to be on campus next year. I was at Lindenmore Laboratory when all this was going on. So we were, there was a possibility to stabilize our own government. And you could feel it. I don't know where you were or how much you remember about that, but there was a lot of tension in the nation and on the campuses, in particular.

**Dr. Baldwin:**

So you stayed at Aberdeen for . . .

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

23.) Two years, but anyway, the **Tet** thing was a tactful victory for the South Vietnamese. Because the North Vietnamese lost about 85,000 people, which is equivalent of us losing about a million. It really zapped them good. And the South Vietnamese fought well. They hadn't gone through the **Vietnamesization** yet. Therefore they weren't as equipped as well as they should have been or trained as well as they should have been, but there was progress there, and they fought well. They did a lot of the fighting. And after that was over, they were able to go into areas that they weren't able to go into before. And the communists were losing their infrastructures and they lost a lot of them. A lot of them had been identified as a result of that. And the countryside

was fairly safe after **Tet**, but by then you see, the thing that **Clauswitz** caused, the strategic center of gravity, which was politics, And they knew this, they knew **Clauswitz's** Theory and they knew that was a weakness of the alliance, and the political situation in the United States and they were playing that. That card. And a lot of that, most of the things that they did, were based on those assumptions to achieved what they wanted to achieve. On the other hand, we did not do that. We did not get to the strategic center of gravity, we were fighting the symptoms, We were fighting the insurgency. We were fighting to prevent the spread of communism. And in the progress, we were fighting a limited war, we were fighting a lot of it in secrecy, which was a big mistake. The public was not brought into the war which Clauswitz had a lot to say about that. But the people were not brought into it. And it was Nixon's war and Johnson's war.

**Dr. Baldwin:**

Going back to where you were at that time, did you think at that time that the United States could still win the war?

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

24.) Yes, one time I was sitting close to the border and we knew there was a division over there, and we were like sitting ducks. And I felt that restraint, on giving them the sanctuary, and denying us a opportunity to deal with it when it was threatening us. Was a big mistake. I would say this was one of the three big errors of the war. So I felt that limitation. As far as I was concerned I could see progress. And I could see that I could do the military aspects of it, but I wasn't into the strategic end of it and the debate of it. And there weren't many debates, on the strategic necessities. And this process and the weakness of the politics and our fear of the Russian and Chinese might come into the war, and I was aware of that, I was aware of the necessity of being concerned about that. Oh.. What was I going to say, I lost track of it.

**Dr. Baldwin:**

We were talking about whether you thought the war could be won at that point, and you said you did, did you come to a conclusion somewhere down the road that could

not or was not winnable?

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

No, I did not.

**Dr. Ernst:**

Did you think that there was a real threat that the Russians and Chinese could come in?

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

25.) That what I wanted to talk about. I let it get away from me. I did think it was a possibility, and I did not blame the president and others for being careful with it. But at that time, China was having a Cultural Revolution and they were torn asunder, and that was about all they could deal with. And Chinese-Russian relationships were breaking down, so that threat was not there, not serious. But in that process, in lying to the public, because the opposition and trying to keep the opposition from getting out of hand, and always trying to negotiate a peace. We tell the North Vietnamese that we are not going to invade North Vietnam and when we tell them that, they send those divisions down south. If we don't tell them that, those divisions have to be maintained up there. And I am feeling mad, and I know that, and I don't like it. I am mad about that, my little twin said to me when he was just learning how to speak, what is the matter, I said I am mad to you. What is mad to them for doing that to us? Also the lies that were going on and the people were accepting. That, it is a civil war, that the North Vietnamese were not there, denied the North Vietnamese being there for a long time. They, the media, and the radicals, and the opposition but they were there and as far as it being a nationalistic war. Nationalism was an element that they used as a strategic center of gravity. Because it was an issue, and they just took it. It was a communist dominated war. Ho Chi Minh, so people even denied that he was a communist. Not very many of them now, believe he was. The struggle of the free world versus the communist world was real and Vietnam was a little part of it. And it was ongoing, and by its nature, it was to consume the capitalist world. So the doctrine of . . . what am I trying to stay. The Truman doctrine of



containment. At that time, I thought that was proper and we should have been there. And also the meanest and the brutality of the communists system itself, reinforced me to deal with any objection that any one had for us being there, and I still had it to this day. And someday I may wake up and say you are all wrong about the whole thing. I will tell you this and I have studied it, and studied it since and I have studied the demise of communism and there is nothing like it in history. And the best, dealing with it better than anyone, especially early on was **Discheles**, the Yugoslavian, who wrote the book *the new class* that came out in 1957. And he condemned communism and he condemned it using his own language. And he really got to the point, and the essence of it is the power of consolidation. To where you have one guy like **Stallion** who could kill millions. And I won't really get into that.

**Dr. Baldwin:**

You were going to deal with those kinds of things when you came into a ROTC assignment?

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

26.) Absolutely, yea, yea, what am I trying to say here on that point. On the brutality, they say the public is not getting this and we are losing the public. This is a mistake we are making on that strategic center. But one of the centers is the political thing. There is about 5 or 6 of them. The Army was one of them. And if you concentrate on that you can have results. And they did it. They wiped us out, matter of fact, Nixon said, that the war was won at this time. And I have a lot of respect for him and his foreign policy. Him and Dean Rusk. But the brutality of this thing, see, which our people don't know back here in the states, and so some of them is even swallowing the communist thing, that it is inevitable so we might well do it. It is better to get dead than red. I want to say something about the brutality, because I knew of it then, many were not aware of it. Media never talks about these things, when they talk about that international struggle, that totalitarian situation. A lot of the acquisitions were denied, that there was totalitarianism in the system. But in 1957 **Decheles** called it that you see and told them why. But anyway the brutality of the thing. There is a big debate on how

many millions of people died of communism. When Vietnam went and it was one of the saddest days of my life. I was sad anyway because I had just lost my wife, suddenly. The undersecretary of defense was at Fort Knox and I said to him, "is there any way to explain how this occurred, I am really feeling bad about this." He said, "I know you are, a lot of us are." Anyway, get off of me and back to the issue. On the brutality not getting to the people and not having the people so that they are positioned and determined to do the protracted thing was a big failure. And not getting the message out, should we be there first of all, the question is, is that system, that system bad. Is it a blessing or a curse? And the answer is that it is a terrible curse, and many people didn't know that and a few still don't know it. And some of them say that it was **stallid**, but if you look at the records it is not all **stallid**. You did have it under **stallid**, in the Ukraine, I didn't know about this until after the Vietnam war. Where about 250,000 people were shot, you know what they call it, where they place it . .

**Dr. Baldwin: Catten**

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

27.) No, not **Catten, Catten** was a different thing. This was in Ukraine. This was civilians and women and kids. 250,000 that is just an estimate. Sometimes 16 truckloads a day would come in there, and this happened everyday for four years. And some of the people are still living. And they got an interview not too long ago. **Catten** about 10,000 **Polish-Russian** officers, and they were blaming it on someone else. And that was just murder. **Degellion** said that history could forgive the communists for their brutality. Part of it was staying alive. If you didn't, people were not going to tolerate it, and they were going to destroy the Marxist government. And there is the civil war and all that stuff after they took over. But anyway that brutality the killing of those guys, the starving to death of millions, and I believe that was in the Ukraine. Shipping wheat out and sending money to other parts of the world to support communist insurrections. And in that process, according to conquest, 1/4 of the population starved to death. Are you aware of this?

**Dr. Baldwin:** No

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

There is a book out, *Called the Harvest of sorrow*.

**Dr. Ernest:**

They industrialize very quickly that way.

**Dr. Arthur Kelley:**

28.) But it was, I think the starvation came partly in the industrialization, but this particular thing came from the collectivization. So to me it is evil, it one of the worst evils, it ranks right up there with Hilter and his gang. And therefore containment is necessary. And it is imperialistic and it would move and it may not be, you know there is some vagueness about what is there in that Vietnam situation in particular and it is very complex and complicated. And I need to take a break.

**Arthur Kelly**  
**8-4-97**  
**Tape 2**

Dr. Baldwin: John wanted to ask a couple of questions before we got to that

Dr. Ernst: I'm just curious if you had any interaction with the ROKs and what your impressions were of the South Koreans?

Arthur: I did and they were very professional and exceptionally good soldiers. In the Korean War early on they weren't, some were as time went on. The ??? is such a big factor in their equipment of course. When they were in Vietnam they were well respected by the military community.

Ernst: They're often criticized as being very brutal. Do you know of any...

Arthur: I didn't know of any. I do not know of any cases of that in particular.

Ernst: No one has been able to validate that for me. They always say they were ??? troops.

Arthur: I served in the vicinity of them and saw one or two occasionally but generally we were kind of in a world of our own.

Ernst: You mentioned the book Street Without Joy. Bernard Ball wrote that. Did you have much interaction with him? And what was his...?

Arthur: Well, you know, he was a pacifist early on. And he made a case that's a hard thing to deal with. The question comes back, is it too difficult to deal with to be worth the price in blood and treasury, money? He was very pessimistic himself. So after we talked to him you didn't feel too good.

Baldwin: Did the army or the marines instructors did they counter his argument at all? Or did they kind of just throw all of those things out and let you deal with them?

Arthur: Oh yeah. Our class would ask questions. Those classes are real educated and well read and they could stand toe to toe with any of them. .

Ernst: If he was so pessimistic than what was his purpose, why did the army expose you to him?

Arthur: **Oh, you don't understand at all.** They weren't sheltering us. I mean you needed that.

Baldwin: That's interesting what you brought up about that part of it, because no one else that we talked to has indicated that breadth and that depth of knowledge. And in fact a lot of the things that have been written indicate that the officer corps was very shallow intellectually. They made decisions based on career motives. They uh, you know, and John and I have talked about this because my husband is a career army officer, and I'm saying you know, this is not what I saw.

Arthur: Well, it's easy to say that. Once you just check their background. I mean they aren't that many geniuses, I mean you don't find very many Einsteins, geniuses in those fields. But there are some brilliant men and well educated and knowledgeable.

Baldwin: And the generals all seem to be like that. At least the ones I've read about.

Arthur: It's very rare that you run into one that's...it's hard to find a dumb general. But I mean they are out there.

Baldwin: On that issue of commanders...

Arthur: Dumb is relative.

Baldwin: On that issue of commanders, sort of making the next promotion on the backs of their units, was that ever something you observed?

Arthur: I don't see that. You know, we had a colonel. We called him Colonel B, and he was like an old maid. He would drive you crazy. He liked me, most of the time ??? didn't like me. Truth matter is he slapped them around. I had, early on I had an incident with him. He came to see me, he sat down on the thing and told me he said, "Welcome to the division", just got there. And he said "The artillery don't know what they're doing." He said, "They're not aggressive enough." And I said "Colonel, you don't know what you are talking about." And told him what we taught in school. I said I just came from school, I can tell you what they taught them. He was saying they don't teach them this that or the other tactics. Well they wanted you to fart around in their pocket. And we did practically. But anyway that's off the subject. What was it you were saying?

Baldwin: When we were talking about some of the interviews we've made and some of the books that we have read have been very negative about the officer corps.

Arthur: Well anyway, what I was fixing to say about him. Man, I mean, he took care of those men. Boy, he was killing us, but you had better take care of those men. I mean, he tried to save their lives. And some of them were more aggressive than others, and sometimes that aggressiveness is better, not worse as far as the outcome. But you know, you are a combatant, and you have to have the mentality to do battle. But I didn't see it as, and I knew the battalion manuals very well. We were all concerned about the troops, morale and their well being. I mean, if there was one, I didn't see it, and there might have been.

Ernst: What did your battalion look like racially? Can you roughly break up the percentage and did you have any racial problems at all?

Arthur: Didn't have any at the time I was there. They had some racial incidents later on in Vietnam. But, no morale was high. My Sergeant Major was a black Sergeant Major, and a good one.

Baldwin: Yeah, a lot of the racial incidents were probably later. '68 and '69 I think they started really bad.

Well, tell us about the ROTC assignment, and how you came to take an ROTC assignment, and tell us about Morehead.

Arthur: I went through Morehead St. University going to Germany when it was a little college. It was kind of a dusty hot day, the streets narrow, traffic heavy. I looked over there and saw that campus sign that said Morehead St. College. And I looked over at my wife and said remind me not to get an assignment here, an ROTC assignment. And you know, you have to wind through those hills and you get behind a lumber truck and you would be driving forever, and I go let me go laboratory. Ollie's father is having serious health problems and we decided we wanted to get her closer to her dad. So I called to see if I could get an assignment in ROTC in Kentucky and they said yes, and they said Morehead St. University is available. And I said, Morehead St. University, why would I want to go there? , to myself. I said, well, tell me about Morehead St. University. They said, it's one of the best ROTC assignments in the nation. They got a brand new building, Dr. Doran supports it, and on and on and on. I said I'll take it. SO, that's how I ended up there. Got there shortly after I took as professor of military science we had student organization committee putting up crosses out in front of the ROTC building.

Baldwin: What year was that?

Arthur: That was 1969. There was some emotional confrontations between a little body of students, I was looking out the window. One guy looked like he was stressed, might have been a veteran, came along and started kicking those things out of the ground. And mad to those crosses. The other people could see that he was really upset, and kind of backed off a little bit. So that's how it started. I was told don't be, don't expose yourself to those guys, cause they'll throw tomatoes at you, and they've had an instance where they've done that. Or worse rotten eggs. We were getting ready to have, for our graduation, an awards ceremony, and they were going to try to stop it, which they had done on other campuses. And had little groups, little things to do to do it, to interrupt it, see, throw tomatoes, throw rotten eggs. Lay down in front of the formation as it's marching, and that sort of thing. I might interject here that General Westmoreland was supposed to come and be the speaker at graduation. There had been an instance where some general, officer, had paint thrown on him. Dr. Doran thought it would be wise not to do it, so I had the job of calling General Westmoreland and saying can we get out of this, and it was interesting. We finally got it worked out so he wouldn't come, without losing face. It was a mistake. I'll tell you later if we have time, but anyway, not a big mistake, it worked out alright, but the generals should have been on the campuses, in that

respect. Then the student organization committee was active at Morehead, the SDS a more radical group was not. They bombed the building, one of the campus buildings on the University of Wisconsin and killed a person. We didn't have SDS, there was some SDS people at UK. The student organization committee wasn't a Marxist outfit; the SDS was more of a Marxist. They had some Marxists, they wouldn't mind if you was Marxist joining, but they had some others. As things heated up a little bit, I decided I needed to know them personally. I talked to Dr. Doran about it and he said, well I don't know whether you want to do that or not. But anyway, I did make an effort to see their leaders. They wanted to be kind of anarchist and not have any leaders, but I knew who they were, and Mike Green was one of them. And I can't think of his name, Edsel, Ensle, but anyway. Before Kent, just a little bit before Kent, I decided to bring them in and talk to them. And I brought the number two guy in, and I'll think of his name maybe in a minute, and I asked him, I want to find out whether you can burn a building down. They had burned some buildings at that time. And I asked him point blank, would you building down in good conscience? And he said yes. And I said, when? And he said, when it becomes a problem. He says like cancer, he said if you had a cancer on your liver, what would you do with it? And I said I would remove it. And he said that's it. And I can see him now sitting over there, looking like an SDS member. Had another one with him that was one of my cadets that was required to take it at the time, and wasn't as radical as the others, and I looked up at him and I said do you mean that. He said yes sir. And then I said, suppose some other element on campus decides that all people on campus who wear sandals, who wear dirty T-shirts, who wear whatever he was wearing and had long hair are cancers. And this other guy looked over at him and he said Explain that. Answer that, Ansel, Ansel was his name. So, we got to talking after that, you know, and I said to him, if you could take all the military weapons and equipment, if I had it all in one pile and all you had to do was strike a match and it would ignite it and destroy it, would you do it. And he said no. And I said why, so I said the difference between you and is that you are saying we need military, you won't put that match to it. The difference between us is probably is how much we ought to have. Anyway, he finally said well he said, they're gathering outside, would you come and talk. Kent had occurred now. I am remembering what they said. Also, the military was very sensitive about what we said, because it could get into the headlines and sweep the world, if you made some dumb statement like that Lieutenant Colonel who said that we have to burn the buildings to save the people or something. Well, anyway, will you come out and talk to them, and I said if you'll go and talk to them, and if they'll invite me as a group, I'll come and talk to them. He went out and came back and said they are inviting you as a group to come and speak to them. So, I decided to go, and I was aware that I had to be very careful about what I said, that I could say the wrong thing and embarrass the president, you know just like that guy in Vietnam. Because of that you had very severe requirement getting your presentations made speaking to groups, and I didn't have time to get that done so what I decided to do, I will speak from inside my head from my experiences and from what I know and only what I know. I won't speak for anything else or anybody else, the state department or defense department or anybody. So I went out there and they had a microphone set up, and there was a pretty good size crowd out there, maybe 150, 200. And off to the left was the student organization committee members, I probably ought to back up. Let's see Ill tell this and then I'll go back.

Baldwin: Was this in front of Button?

Arthur: Yes, on the steps there. There's a picture of it someplace. Well, I'll finish this story, and then I'll tell you about the other. I had already come to know them, because of my experience. I decided to try, I wanted him to know me as Colonel Kelly, and not as PMS, and I had done that, I had achieved that. So they knew me as Colonel Kelly. When I went down to speak to them I wanted all the students to know that I was just an ordinary guy, that I was a Kentuckian just like they were, that I have kids, and a wife and have all the problems that you have with a family, educating them and all those sorts of things. So I told them I'm so and so, I'm from Springfield, Kentucky, I'm married to so and so, and I have five children, two of them are in Breck, two of them are in college, and just to say I'm a human being. I had decided I was not going to speak, I was going to answer their questions. So I told them, I'm not an expert on Vietnam, I said, but I have been there, and I have studied insurgency, I have gone to schools and had classes on it. I have had educated people, I have had generals all kinds of speakers to talk to me from both sides of the issue. So I can bring that to this thing, this activity. I said, what I'll do I'll answer your questions, I'll answer what I know, not what somebody told me. So, I said, with that I'll take your questions. And they were throwing their hands up see, and I went right to Mike, cause I figured they'd insult me and I didn't mind. Matter of fact, I thought an insult would help me. So up they come, and he says to me, are you a Christian? And I said I hope I am. I want to be. I profess to be. And he said, well how can you be a Christian and be a soldier? And I said, well I've been in three wars, and I've never lost a minutes sleep over whether or not I can fight a war. And I said to my knowledge that question has been answered, and the great minds have addressed it, and there are a few isolate pacifist religious groups, but most of them agree you can fight a just war. Then he starts talking about what we're doing that's mean and nasty and dirty. How about the time they captured this little guy, this little fellow, and hooked him up to a telephone and had a crank and an alternator that would shock him if you turn the handle and shocked him and he wouldn't talk, and they hung him on a well by his hands and he wouldn't talk and they started pounding his fingers with a rifle, until he fell in the well? I said, well it might have happened, but I said I'll tell you what I saw. I said, one time we had a guy that game in and gave up and he told us where his unit was and he got up in an airplane and showed us where he was, and watched us conduct an air mobile assault onto his unit. And I said, I went up and asked G-2 who deals with intelligence, knowing who they are and what they are, why these guys did that? And he told me that they do it first of all they are told if they surrender that they would be mistreated, and secondly that he's scared to death. So I said, I had, I was the???, I was battalion commander, I was the ??? Coordinator and I was at brigade headquarters most of the time, and that was where we brought the prisoners in. We wanted, we tried to get prisoners, and even offered R and R into Hawaii to get one. I only know one incident where something occurred between an American and a prisoner, and I said I saw maybe a hundred or so in little groups at different times. One time a Sergeant Major was trying to offer a guy a drink of water out of his canteen, he knocked the canteen out of his hand and called him a capitalist pig or something, or some kind of an insult. That's the only incident that I know of. I said who are these guys, they're guys from Morehead, most of them are just like you. They



wouldn't kill a fly if it wasn't bothering them. I said, of course there is an exception to that, you have the criminal elements, and we have a few of those. But they're screened out pretty well, but still we have some. And we have those problems, but anyway, went on and on like that for about an hour. And it kind of moved pretty much to my side and little bit of hostility towards the student organization committee, and I kind of had to settle that down. Before this occurred, I had talked to Dr. Doran and decided to go to one of the meetings, meetings were open, at the education building, first floor there, there's a room there that will hold maybe a hundred. I went in there, and it had been raining, and I walked in there, and boy it was full. And we were going to have our awards ceremony and they were talking about what they were going to do to disrupt it. When I opened the door, most of them didn't see me, at first, there was no seat in the rear. I started walking up, I walked all the way up and there was a seat in front. The only seat. I walked up there and sat down. I was facing them. A dog walked up behind me that was wet, he came in with me, and he shook water all over me. I said, I bet that dog is a member of the student organization committee. That broke the tension, and they laughed, and then they went on about their business. And they, somebody would jump up to make a motion to throw tomatoes, somebody would do this that and the other. Then they were going to do a survey, to ascertain whether or not the content of the academic programs were valid doing worthwhile, and whether the instructors were good, bad, indifferent. I welcomed that because I had already done one, and ROTC military science came out real well, we were, I mean it was shining glowing results. They were going to take their instruments and spread them around campus, and I told them, if you do that you are going to invalidate your survey and it won't be worth anything. I said I'll let you come in the classrooms, if they'll require that and do your survey. And Mike Green in particular started throwing a little fit, raising Cain, and someone said, well now wait a minute, and pretty soon they got to talking about it and I said if you're concerned about how we'll influence it, we'll leave the room. You take them, and you have them yourself. You can take the results and you can tell us about it if you want to. Or you don't have to. He said, ok we'll do that, and they did. And it came out not like ours did, not real well. I knew that some of them before we got in there

Baldwin: Your tactic, you're very, accommodating I think would be the word. It seems that you're trying to understand their point of view. But taking that a step further, you're trying to get them to reexamine their point of view from a more rational standpoint.

Arthur: My strategy, or tactics, was at the time, it was you're not going to move them out of that position, but you could confuse them. You can say, well maybe I'm not ???, but if you confuse them, they're not going to burn a building down. They have to know that they are right and that they're doing what they ought to do to burn a building down.

Baldwin: Did you ever think that they would burn the building?

Arthur: Well, after he told me they would. Well, yes I did. I was frightened. I was concerned because we were getting all these reports, and these reports were serious. I mean, they were doing serious things. A lot of the leadership on campuses lost control. TO their detriment and a bad reflection on their leadership. Dr. Doran didn't. He was a

great leader, and he handled that thing very well. Without him I'd would have been in trouble. He's come to summer camps and other PMSs knew about these things that were going on. We did a lot of things; he supported a lot of things to strengthen our program. They wanted to meet him, because he was kind of a hero in our eyes, because he supported us. The evil guys. Closwith(????) talks about that trinity of army, government, and what was the other one, people. See, people and the army just (sucking noise), and that was the hardest on the cadets.

Baldwin: How big was your program at that time?

Arthur: We were king bee in our program. We were number one in first army, which had MS-3s, which had about 70 institutions of higher education. We were about fifth in the nation in MS-3s, and also very high quality and a lot of that was because of the programs. The national security one hundred, I think we might have had that while you were there, that was a great idea.

Baldwin: How many were you commissioning at that time?

Arthur: Well, I think 30 something at that time. And we had 60 in MS-3. So, some of those dropped out after I left. 40 something, is what they had commissioned out of that class.

Ernst; The cadets seemed to handle themselves very well, at least what I've read. They were spit upon on occasions, but they always seemed to conduct themselves like gentlemen.

Arthur: We talked to them. We told them, we gave them, Dr. Doran said, you people can say whatever you want to say, but you can't interfere with somebody else's civil liberties. That's all we needed. And then we said to them, ok you've got that, they're going to insult you, might even spit on you, but don't create an incident. Don't respond to it. And the cadet, who had gotten spit on at that time, I talked to him after it was over and I said what did you say to them. He said, I told, he said you sonofabitch, if I wasn't in uniform I'd whip your you know what. So I said, that's good, you had to say something, and so we talked about that with them. We talked to the cadets often about not creating a crisis. Even when they had been abused. They understood that. They also understood the necessity of having ROTC on campus. The importance of it.

Baldwin: You've indicated that the upper administration, Dr. Doran, was supportive, what about the other faculty, general faculty? What was their reaction?

Arthur: Most of them were supportive. There were some that were with the student organization committee, not many. But I knew them I knew them well. Some of them were my best friends, and generally the sociologists had the biggest problems with Vietnam and the military. But, some of the historians, but not all, John Henryhan, he

wouldn't be what you would call a hawk by any stretch of the imagination. But he was a very close friend of mine, I liked John. I liked all those people.

Baldwin: Yeah, John always spoke very highly of you.

Arthur: Well, I thought a lot of John. It was, there was a lot of information on campus. I made it a point being with those guys as often as I could, and I was usually getting information, doing as little talking as I could, I was listening to what they would say. Cause there would be things that would be valuable.

Ernst: At one point you served on a committee of nine people, including John Clever and history, to discuss whether ROTC would remain required or become voluntary. Can you comment on that at all, remember anything about that?

Arthur: Well, to get ROTC off campus was the goals of the radicals. SDS in particular, SMC and some of them that weren't as radical as those two groups. They had all kind of tactics to do it, and part of it was to show that the content was ??? as they called it in the subjects. It wasn't worthy of academic credit, and to kill to credit would make it more difficult for somebody to take the course. Also to take away the professorship of the PMS, professor of military, and they did that at the University of Michigan successfully. And the guy had a Phd that was there. That cripples the program and makes it more difficult to attract cadets. Of course with the anti-military it's hard to attract cadets, so there were some but not many and not real radical. There were a whole lot of very positive support and a lot of old WWII guys and some of them are really impatient, like the guy at UK, one of the guys that's in my book, his story, he's one chapter of my book. They're taking, carrying the flag down, pulling the flag down at UK, he went there and let them know he was going to whip all three of them if they didn't put the flag back up there, and they believed him. So there were a lot of that.

Baldwin: Were you in contact with other PMSs in the region?

Arthur: Yes, we decided to meet and we, I suggested that we get together and exchange ideas on how to survive how to live through this turmoil. So what we would do is meet at the officers club at Lexington Bluegrass Depot and bring the wives, and we'd get together and bring all the officers from Eastern, University of Kentucky, Morehead, and later on some of the others wanted to come. We'd meet, I think, once a month. We would outline what we knew, what the threats were, what information's we had, what the risks were, and how to counter these various things and learned a lot about what was going on at the other campuses. Then we'd close shop and go out and have a good time. . It was a nice little military community. **Back in Fort Segal**

Baldwin: And you felt that you probably had the best support of that group from the upper administration?

Arthur: Well, no. UK did not. UK wasn't hurting, and PMS suffered, he suffered. You could tell that, he was stressed. Eastern had good support. Morehead had good support.

Western had pretty good support. Murray had good support. I'd say Morehad was better, Morehead and Eastern were probably two of the best in the nation, for support.

Ernst: Do you remember the incident at the military ball?

Arthur: Yes. I was right there looking at it.

Ernst: Can you tell us a little bit about it?

Arthur: Well, we're all dressed up in our blues and the women looked beautiful wearing long formals and we're all excited. Just coming in, and some of them were gathered on top of the steps on the second floor and here comes the guys and they're all dressed like students they were in uniform. They were in the sandals, and the dirty T-shirts, and the long beard and hair, and little coffin, to emphasize the guys were all getting killed over there and it was a waste of time. We just kind of sat there and observed, and they were doing a little theatric, and I forget what that was, they had some little lions and I wasn't proactive in this one, I was just kind of watching, looking at it. I thought that would be the best way to deal with it, to just let them run their course. Wasn't hurting anything. I wasn't mad at them. The guy that was running ADUC, what was his name, can't think of his name, blocked them at the top step and said you're not coming up here. He was kind of mad. And they relented and disappeared. And as they were leaving everybody applauded them. It was kind of funny.

Baldwin: Was that Clyde James, or was that before his time?

Arthur: That was before Clyde.

Ernst: His name is in there, I can't think off the top of my head.

Arthur and Baldwin: Yeah, yeah.

Arthur: I ought to be able to remember his name.

Baldwin: do you have anymore questions about that?

Ernst: No.

Baldwin: Well, in your ROTC assignment and throughout most of your career, obviously, you felt that the army was doing what it needed to be doing, fighting communism and all of those kinds of things. In retrospect, looking back on the Vietnam War, does that remain your opinion?

Arthur: Yes. You can't go around broadcasting that, cause people think you're crazy. It's strange, when people speak about the Vietnam war, it comes out in little bite, wrong war, bad war, and that's about it. It was a badly fought war. The cause was noble, and containment was proper. If you think and feel that Communism was a terrible evil, I

mean, it had noble ideas but that collection of that power that enabled Pol Pot to go in and evacuate a whole city bigger than Louisville, and most of them, many of them, a fourth of them, fifth maybe, how many, a million and a half, two million people died as a result of what he did. About a fourth to a fifth to a fourth of the population. So, if you bring those things into it, as a part of it, then as ???? said, then you ought to be out there raising Cain and stopping it. And you know, at that time, early on in Vietnam, a fourth of the world was communist, a fifth of the population, or it might have been the other way around, and they were spreading. So, I still feel very strongly that it was proper and proud I was there. I would go back today given the same set of circumstances. And risk my life, and a lot of other people would. I'm not the only one who feels that way, especially in the military. People that have looked at it hard especially.

Baldwin: Is there anything that we didn't ask you that you could add to our study?

Arthur: That's a good question. No, not really. It's an interesting topic, and it's something that you can't do in three hours, or six hours. In my book, dealing on combat, I wanted to get the story of the timed death march, and the camp life, so I chose one guy that was on the death march that was a good witness. Some of them were not good witnesses, some of them were delirious from malaria. I did get one. He also was a guy that was on the line when the rescue, and that's a good story, I wanted to get that in there too. What was I talking about?

Baldwin: If I hadn't asked you something that you would tell us.

Arthur: Oh.

Baldwin: so you were relating to your interviews.

Arthur: Sometimes you would ask a guy a story and you would get a great nugget. And I did that with most guys.

Baldwin: Well, we really appreciate you talking with us.