

A: Well, like hot cakes.

Q: Yes. Well, that's interesting. That pretty much goes through my questions.

A: Yes. I've checked off every one on my list.

Q: Well, were you ready to go, ready to come back to the States in the summer of '89? Two pretty intense years in Germany. Did you feel that it was time to come back?

A: Yes and no. I really liked USAREUR. I spent three tours over there, and I enjoyed all of it. I enjoyed the activities there and would have been happy to stay over there.

At the same time, it was obvious that I was not going to be selected to be the next Deputy Commander in Chief of Europe, the job that I would be most happy to stay in, so it seemed like time to look for something else.

I knew the Deputy Chief of Engineers position would be open, and I was in the twilight of my career—two possible years left on active duty. So, I thought that it was time, even though I'd really enjoyed my job as Chief of Staff, USAREUR, and I enjoyed working for General Saint, it was time to begin the transition back. To go back and work at another place I liked to work, that is, USACE, as the deputy supporting Hank Hatch, and that would put me in place for the final transition: that is, back to retirement in civilian life.

### **Deputy Chief of Engineers<sup>3</sup>**

Q: In August of 1989 you became Deputy Chief of Engineers. I wonder if you could say something about your feelings at the time of the selection, and how that came about.

A: To be selected as the deputy?

Q: Yes.

A: I was serving as Chief of Staff in USAREUR, and was asked by the Commander in Chief, Butch Saint, whether I would like to stay on as Chief of Staff another year. I said, "No, I think I ought to return to the United States." He said, "What would you like to do?" I said, "I would like to be the Deputy Chief of Engineers."

So, he says, "Okay. I'll be going back in a few weeks. I'll probably see Hank Hatch back there." I said, "Well, I'm going to call him and tell him the same thing."

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<sup>3</sup>Interview conducted by Dr. Paul K. Walker on 19 October 1990 at Washington, D.C.

So, I called Hank Hatch, told him I'd like to do that, and I called Colonel Steve Smith in the General Officer Management Office and told him the same thing. Another couple of months later they confirmed it and that was it.

Q: Now, would you say that is the usual way that would happen, or maybe there isn't a usual way?

A: For general officer assignments, that has been my experience. There's been a dialogue with the Chief of Engineers and your desires made known, and all those things go together. So, I think every assignment I have discussed with the Chief of Engineers has happened with my cognizance, except when I went to the Ohio River Division the first time. It was kind of a surprise because Harry Griffith had been pulled out very quickly, and the Chief, General Morris, had made up his mind before he talked with me.

Basically, there's been dialogue for most general officer positions. So, I'd say, yes, I thought that was rather normal.

Q: What you're saying then is that when General Saint brought the question up with you, you had already discussed this with General Hatch, at that point?

A: No. I think I called him right after that.

Q: Okay.

A: So, before General Saint went back, I had discussed it with General Hatch. My job in Europe was a great job, being in Europe, being Chief of Staff of USAREUR, and with all of the things going on. I would only have two years left before mandatory retirement, and normally, having been in the personnel assignment business, people aren't looking for a one-year person. They're looking for doing something when you have two years left. So, I felt if I stayed there another year, I would be putting someone in a box as for what I would do in my final year. I knew I wanted to return to the United States before I retired.

Of course, the deputy job is a super job, and you're right at the top of a great organization, so I really wanted to do that. That was certainly my prime choice. I would be hard-pressed to think of another choice.

Q: At that point.

A: At that point, right.

Q: In 1988, little more than a year earlier, you were mentioned as one of the top candidates for the Chief of Engineers at that time. Did you want to be Chief at that time?

A: Of course. I thought I was qualified and a good candidate, and my background actually was much like Hank Hatch's. We'd been a lot of the same places, in the ACE's shop, in Europe, at Belvoir, around the USACE divisions. So, I thought I was qualified and probably a pretty good competitor of his.

Q: Does that have any effect, maybe more from a personal point of view, then to later come in as deputy or not? Well, actually, you said you wanted the position.

A: No, I don't think so because, you know, when people grow up as peers, go through the ranks, you participate together, you contribute together, you serve together, and you also compete as the pyramid narrows to the top. So, we've always—we also went to Leavenworth together—we've always had a good professional relationship.

I always had thought that it would probably be between Hank Hatch and me, and he was the one guy that I would understand that, if he got it, the Army made a good choice. So, it wasn't difficult at all to come back and ask him to be his deputy. I think we've had a great year working together because we've brought our particular fortes to the table, and we've been able to operate with fairly good strength in the headquarters.

Q: I had a question to ask you about your past relationship with General Hatch. You were a year ahead of him in class at West Point, so that your careers fairly well paralleled in terms of—

A: Yes. We never were assigned closely together, but he was one of those folks I knew was out there, and around, and coming up, and getting assignments. We were doing different things about the same time, commanded battalions in Vietnam about the same time. We didn't run across each other over there but, I mean, when you're of the same peer group you're going through the various gates and organizations at about the same organizational level, so you know who they are and what they're doing.

Q: So, in talking to you, then, it seems—it's a lot different to want to be Deputy Chief of Engineers than the jokes that people make about being Vice President of the United States? I mean, it sounds like you felt that that was a genuine place where you could make a contribution at this point in your career?

A: Sure. I thought it was a very good, substantive job, and certainly not a figurehead. Now, one of my predecessors, Norm Delbridge, keeps wondering why I'm so busy—as if he wasn't. I keep asking him, "My goodness, Norm"—I mean, I leave the office at 6:00 every night and stay fully occupied every day chasing issues and working problems and things like that.

So, I don't know what was driving his thoughts, but to me, it's a very substantive, needed position that gets very involved when you have an organization as big as USACE—40,000 people worldwide, 13 divisions, 39 districts, the labs, and all of those kinds of things. There's plenty out there to keep a whole bunch of people occupied if we're going to really move ahead, move forward.

Q: Now, did you come into the position with any particular things, goals of your own that you wanted to see happen, implemented, at the beginning?

A: No, I had no particular agenda. As I mentioned, I had just left being Chief of Staff of USAREUR, a big headquarters doing all kinds of things, and I figured I'd be joining the USACE headquarters doing all kinds of things, albeit different.

I liked the Corps of Engineers so much. I've served at division level; I've served on the USACE staff as Deputy Director of Civil Works, Deputy ACE, and the Chief of Public Affairs. I may be getting into a little bit more of the career stuff here but, I mean, they're pertinent to the deputy job.

Q: Sure.



*General Kem (second from left) toured the Pineville, Kentucky, project as the Nashville District prepared to drill tunnels.*

A: So, I've had an awful lot of interaction time in the headquarters working with people. When I was at Belvoir, that's so close, so much interaction—I didn't need an agenda. I just knew a bunch of people that were very enjoyable to work with, and I knew so many people in USACE headquarters too—most of the SESs, plus the general officers and quite a number of the office chiefs—that it was almost like rejoining the family.

I was coming back to a place where I knew I'd be professionally challenged, rewarded, and satisfied and working with good people and doing the very interesting and very important work of the Corps.

Q: One of the end-of-tour standard questions has to do with preparation, and I think that's a little hard in terms of the deputy position to ask, but maybe there's some particular assignments—you've sort of been indicating that—that maybe now, looking back over the past year, would have helped with the perspective that you have to have.

A: No, I have some things to say about that.

Q: Okay.

A: Beyond the particular positions that I had that allowed me to interact, working in our headquarters, recognizing that the Chief of Engineers has two jobs: Chief of Engineers and Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He's always moving between one and the other, and I, as deputy, move between one and the other—that is, the Deputy Chief in an Army Staff role, or the Deputy Commander, doing the major Army command kind of issues.

I think there are some things that are essential in that preparation, and I think any success I might have had comes from that, the experiences I have had. I think if anybody else comes without some of those experiences, they might be less effective or might have difficulty picking them up. Of course, that's also dependent on a person's nature, and not everybody has the same experiences.

One of those is on the other side of the house. On the Chief of Engineers' side of the house, the Army Staff side, I think a person really needs to have experience in the Pentagon, in fighting the battles of how the Army does business, and I'm talking about POMs and budgets, and dealing with the Director of Program Analysis and Evaluation, and getting down into the real, tough, infighting on issues. So, you know how to play to win; know you have to get deep down, do your homework, and be tough in the trenches if you're going to win those battles. At the same time, you also have to know how to deal and build credibility.

A person who plays in the Army Staff arena has to be credible, has to be smart, has to do things very timely, and has to have a sense for how to balance all those things so that you're there at the moment before the decision is going to be made, anticipate what's going to happen, figure out who the influencers are, and network those influencers before an action. Also you can even be tough and go for the jugular when necessary and somebody's picking on your people, to make sure your people aren't picked on, and you don't lose because of that.

So, a person needs to understand the Department of the Army's staff arena, and it's a tough arena. You can get overwhelmed and overrun if you're not playing it tough. I think my background, having come up from a major Army command—that is, Headquarters, USAREUR, in 1978-'79 where I was involved in working with the Army Staff—and then coming to the ACE's shop where I sat on the Program Budget Committee as the Deputy ACE and experienced all the infighting around those programs, gave me that preparation.

Then, subsequently, as commandant of the Engineer School at Fort Belvoir, where I fought Army force structures and systems battles—I mean a never-ending fight to sustain structure,

spaces, systems, and dollars—prepared me to have a sense so I could work with Hank Hatch. He'd also had those same kinds of experiences, having been at Belvoir in Combat Developments—not as commander, as I was, but certainly in that most intense combat developments part of it—and having served as the ACE and as DCSENGR in Europe, he also had those same kind of experiences.

So, we can almost talk to each other in shorthand, understanding what needs to be done almost immediately, based on the parameters that we see out there. I think that's been helpful, having the two of us. As he goes around a bunch of other places, the other one left here—that's me—or if I'm out places, he's here, somebody's always around that has a sense for that, to help provide perspective and guidance to the people in our Resource Management shop or the ACE's shop where we're fighting all those battles, or preparing for those battles.

So, I think that upbringing—a sense for how to play and win in the Washington and Pentagon arena—is an important ingredient to my job as deputy.

I would say, on the command side, I brought a sense to the job as Deputy Commander of USACE that came from those same jobs, understanding the Washington level—Deputy Director of Civil Works; Chief of Public Affairs—but also commander of the Ohio River Division, where I was there for three and a half years and had a feeling that we needed a higher headquarters that acted like a higher headquarters.

Some of my time in the Ohio River Division back then, I never felt that way. As I would grapple and seek to obtain guidance or decisions, a lot of them having to do with resources, and then having to dialogue with so many over time, it seemed never ending. It just took too long to make things happen. So, I brought that sensitivity in.

Now, I already told you, I didn't come with agendas. I didn't come with an agenda to change the headquarters. Having been here, I think I have a sensitivity for the next layer down, the division, that we in USACE communicate to, that was helpful.

Q: Okay. Did General Hatch, early on, seek a kind of definition of what your role would be?

A: We had a very early-on discussion, and it was specific in what the role would not be. It was not specific in what it would be. It was specific in what it would not be, from the standpoint that he said, "I do not want it to be I'm a Mr. Outside, you're a Mr. Inside—that is, I would go out and travel around and you stay here to do everything. I want yours to be a substantive role and across the board."

I think he probably asked me what I thought before he gave his views. I told him that I felt I could probably best help by using my background, which had been across the board. I didn't want to be a designated hitter, role player, take a part of the action and he'd take another part. I saw myself dealing with substance, not process. I'd served in the Chief of Staff of the Army's office before as Assistant Director of the Army Staff, and I saw how the Chief of Staff did some things, and the Vice Chief of Staff did other things, and they didn't try to

duplicate themselves, but they both dealt with substance, and the Director of the Army Staff took care of process.

I thought that was a pretty good arrangement and that they were maximizing both number one and number two to deal with substance. The whole rest of the Army Staff worked the process under the Director of the Army Staff. That's where the process works, but when you want to go to win, then you send somebody who'll fight the battle.

It shouldn't be Hatch and me together. He goes and fights some battles; I go fight some other battles. Or maybe, if he's off somewhere, I go fight that one, or if something I've been handling and I'm going to be gone, he comes in and he covers that one.

We often strategized together. I'm a contributor to his commander's guidance and how he formulated an approach to something, but we're both players of substance. We had that conversation, and he agreed that he wanted me to be in that substantive role.

I had been interested, when I looked at Ken Withers' 67-1A, that he had done an awful lot of work on automation and an awful lot of work on research and development. Specifically, I left those off my 67-1A when I submitted it because we'd had this conversation—that is, Hank Hatch and I—about staying broad across the board.

He asked me, when I sent it in to him, "What about automation and research and development," and I told him why I'd left them off. He said, "Well, I agree. However, those are places where we have an SES in Research and Development, surely, but we don't have one in the automation arena. So, I'd like you just to provide a little two-star oversight in both these arenas, especially since Bob Oswald [Director of Research and Development] has been off convalescing for a period of time."

So, I put them back in. So, I did carry those roles and, in fact, I was very busy in both roles this year, for reasons that developed over and above the fact that I was just going to be the oversight. It turned out that, in both arenas, there was a year of intense activity, and whether I had written that on my 67-1A or whether Hank Hatch had told me pay attention to those two arenas or not, I would have been fully engaged in them.

I was also fully engaged in military programs, and involved in Bill Robertson's strategic planning, got involved in civil works and some in real estate. So, I really was across the board in the various arenas. I've left out resource management. I did a lot in that arena too.

Q: Well, General Hatch spoke of his deputy as an alter ego that he saw there, your spheres intersecting, and that he was looking for a credible spokesman for him when he was not there. These are all the things that you've mentioned.

I asked him specifically about the inside and outside because I recalled that, at—I think it was at General Withers' retirement—there was reference made to that distinction by a previous Chief of Engineers. General Hatch got up and made a reference to the fact that that's not the way it was going to be under him.

So, you know, I was following up on that. He came in from the Director of Civil Works position, of course, under the previous Chief. So, I think he saw that aspect, and that was something that didn't suit how he wanted to operate.

A: Well, he's very comprehensive, and so he can handle a whole lot of things all at once. The Chief of Engineers, like a lot of people—like when I was at Fort Belvoir; like when I commanded in Germany—as the boss has demands on time from well-meaning people who like to have him come out and visit their organizations and show the flag because it makes them all feel good, and it's kind of important.

Sometimes the Chief, or his player, needs to be at the battle—moving toward the sound of guns. Sometimes it's more important, and you do more for the organization being at an Army Select Committee meeting than out visiting “Project X” or “District Y” and feeling good that we have the very best people in the federal government working on these jobs.

Q: It would seem, from what you said earlier, that you both have a sense of when you need to be at those kinds of things, and, you know, that that's the priority. It may not be the sexy things in terms of the people out there that want the flag shown and all that.

A: Right.

Q: In terms of attending Select Committee meetings and other meetings in the Pentagon, then, have you found yourself just doing that frequently? It seems that General Hatch does it a lot himself.

A: I've attended Select Committee meetings and I have attended general staff council meetings—all those meetings for him. Pete Offringa, the ACE, does also, as the guy over there in the Pentagon. General Hatch, if he's here, will go to them. So, whatever works best, that's what we try to do. Sometimes when he's here, but he has to go somewhere, I'll do it. Often we'll size up the subject matter and see who the players have been, and that will make our determination, as well.

Way back, when I wrote him a letter congratulating him on being chosen Chief, I gave him a couple of pages of friendly guidance and counsel that suggested that he needed to pay attention to the Army's POM schedule, the Select Committee schedule, and that he needed to play and win in Washington. Sometimes he ought to look at his schedule so that he doesn't get trapped away when he needs to be there, and be ready to break things.

I remember General Noah telling me once how he was supposed to fly out to somewhere, while he was Comptroller of the Army, and more than once called and canceled a half an hour before the flight was supposed to leave because of something critical that was happening.

I think Hank Hatch has done that. In fact, after he came in, he said, “Well, I got your letter out the other day, just before you came in, and I think you should be happy that most of the things you mentioned I've accommodated.” I said, “Yes, that's been obvious to me.”

Q: What about the whole scheduling process in the executive office. How is that handled? By the Chief of Staff, pretty much?

A: He runs the process of the staff. Scheduling, of course, is done with our respective secretaries, or the Chief's exec. Different people need us for different things, and they call the secretaries up directly. We interact with our secretaries to decide the priorities of who needs to be where and what might need to get slipped because something else has occurred that requires attention.

Travel is a place where each time you commit yourself to travel, then you're vulnerable to whatever happens during that period. So, we weren't Mr. Inside/Mr. Outside. I've traveled extensively—I haven't been to every division, but I've traveled to quite a number of them. One of them, a far-reaching trip out through Pacific Ocean Division, took over 10 to 12 days.

When you schedule a trip like that, you're blocking out time, you pretty well have to look within. At those points in time, the Chief of Staff, Al Genetti, who maintains a schedule of general officer travel, tries to assure that we're all covered. When Bob Page was our secretary, he wanted the Chief or me here, one or the other, and the Director of Civil Works or the Chief here, one or the other.

So, we were always looking to see where there are conflicts before we accept things, or before we lock the schedules. There is a lot of interactivity between the secretaries, the Chief's exec, and Al Genetti and his Secretary of the General Staff people.

Q: That sounds like you play a pretty active role in determining the schedule as well.

A: For a long time I've always looked at a six-month block calendar for programming and major things like leave and like trips. Then a two-week closer in focus, and then, of course, the day by day.

In my six-month block, I don't know what the day by days are going to fill up with, but Delores Green, my excellent secretary, takes care of filling those. If I'm in town, then she works who gets there and who doesn't.

We have master calendars of what events are coming, and so the Secretary of the General Staff folks tell her when the Monday staff meeting is going to be on Wednesday of this week, can we schedule it; or my Friday automation executive committee meeting that often meets on Monday or Tuesday. When we make all those changes, we call it around.

I found a long time ago that if you're in an executive position, you can't abrogate your own schedule to somebody else or you lose control of yourself and the ability to put your time where it needs to be put. So, every now and then I'm a little frustrated, and most of the time I remember that I have not paid attention for two or three days and let it get away from me.

But, you know, you don't get down to the details. I just sort of keep tracking and watching and knowing, and then trying to set aside days sufficiently in advance if I want to go and do something. For instance, if somebody would like me to come and talk, then I look around,

what else I would like to do to make it a two-day affair, and then I'll start the negotiation maybe three months in advance.

I'll participate in that process, so that when we lock it, it's of value. That participation may be one phone call, two phone calls, put it down and the details will come in later. I know generally what's there and what's going on, and to put it in the parlance we taught at Fort Belvoir, the commander's guidance has been given; now frame it, and flesh it out, and make it work.

I guess I learned that lesson—that's probably another contributor of the past—when I was commander of the 7th Engineer Brigade in Germany because I really had three hats. I have two hats here in this job; I had three hats there. I was a brigade commander, commanding the largest engineer brigade in the Army, six battalions and an atomic demolition munitions company. I was also the Corps engineer, responsible for all engineering activities in the VII Corps, to the Corps commander. I was community commander of the Ludwigsburg–Kornwestheim community during this time, subcommunity of the greater Stuttgart military community.

What I found out was that the community staff because I interacted with at least three mayors and county commissioners, the *Landrat* would ask for my attendance at things far in advance of either the Corps staff or the brigade. So, my first few months there I was always boxed because my calendar was filled.

My learning experience was that I had to take charge of my own calendar or I would lose my ability to influence things. So, I did it then, and that experience has been valuable ever since.

Q: Do you and General Hatch have regularly scheduled one-on-one time, or has it just happened irregularly, or how do you arrange for those kinds of meetings?

A: No. We have a door between our two offices, and we walk back and forth as needed but don't have a scheduled one-on-one. I go see him when I think something's burning, and he's the person who finally provides the direction, and that sort of thing.

So, if I've been handling something and I want to make sure he's aware of it and the direction I'm going, he's got a chance to tell me that. Or if I find out something he ought to know because he's working something and I want to make sure he has that influence and my input into what he's doing, I just walk next door and we chat.

So, it's been rather ad hoc, discussing things.

Q: Have you found yourself ever put in the position as the deliverer of bad news, as, you know, something has teed off the Chief, kind of thing?

A: Oh, you mean to deliver bad news from him to somebody else? Or are you talking about taking bad news to him?

Q: Well, I guess both. I was thinking of it as sort of a protective role to the Chief, he didn't have to do it, or for whatever reason. It doesn't sound like it was frequent.

A: I don't recall any of that. I do recall at Fort Belvoir it was nice to have a tough deputy so that I could be the nice guy.

Q: Yes, I think that's what I was getting at. Yes.

A: No, I don't think so. I've delivered some folks some bad news, but not because of protecting the Chief. I mean, I just felt that was my role to do it. I don't think, in particular, I was a deliverer because I can't recall any instance, as a matter of fact.

Q: Okay.

A: Usually when something like that happens, it is that somebody wants to save themselves for yet another communication. So, if you pull back once, then you can still play. If you're the deliverer, then there is no opportunity to perhaps work things out, other than be at this final resting place.

Q: Right.

A: So, sometimes you'd want to try to keep it down at a working deliberative level, rather than at any culminating point. I can't recall any occasions frankly.

Q: What kind of a feeling, if any, is there in the executive office of a sense of what's going on at the lower levels, in the directorates? I think General Edgar was saying something the other day about, you know, a lot is missed, and I think that's probably maybe just what happens because of the nature of the beast. Do you make a conscious effort to be regularly involved with the directorate heads and the issues they're working?

A: Yes, with the directorate heads, but I don't make a conscious effort to get down below them or talk with their people doing the job. I have to qualify that by saying it's different if it's something where I require the directorate head to come up. I would probably call the directorate head or his deputy or maybe his executive director on an issue. If they choose to solve it by sending up somebody, that's fine. I mean, I'm receptive to whomever they send, the expert. For example, in the recreation study I had a lot of interaction with Dave Wahus, even though Dan Mauldin, the Deputy Director of Civil Works, was the principal contact. So, I'd probably call Dan Mauldin; Dave Wahus would probably come up and tell me where we are, and that was certainly a good way to work.

In the automation line, I worked with the entire staff on that program that we had going this year, and so I really got down and got a feeling for that.

By understanding—if the comment by Edgar was we don't really understand what's going on down there in—

Q: No, I think what he meant was there's an awful lot happening, and you're going to miss it if you don't deal with it. Yes.

A: Well, there is a lot happening but, I guess, we're all put here and have a particular position to handle only what we can handle. So, I'm very happy with Pat Kelly handling his directorate, with my knowing enough to engage and that things are going in the direction that USACE wants it to go. When we need to know, we know how to get involved, and we can do it and work it. I don't have to walk around Civil Works office to office and find out how folks are doing. That's his job.

Q: Shortly after you came, you had a transition workshop over at Fort Belvoir. Was that your idea?

A: No, I was told by the staff I should have it.

Q: Okay. Did you find it helpful?

A: Yes, and I was surprised. I didn't think I would. I really kind of fought it for the first two or three times. I said, "Why do I need a transition? I know most of these folks; most of them know me. I mean, I'm not an unknown quantity, so why do I need to do it?"

Everybody said, "Yes, but there are a lot of questions out there. They want to know how you want to operate."

So, I more or less went along. Just to go on to your next question, I really found it valuable, and maybe not for what it started out to be, but for that too.

Anyway, it was prescribed that I ought to get to know the folks better, and that was true, and I did. Second, they ought to get to know me because now I'm in a different role, and they need to look at me in that role and hear me talk about that role.

So, with the questionnaire that was put out, I was trying to figure out from them what they sought—and you were one of them—

Q: Yes.

A: —sought from me, the deputy, a role definition kind of thing.

Now, I sensed there must be somehow growth from my predecessor and where he fit in with the Chief. Or maybe it wasn't. I don't know. But, for some reason, to me, there should be no question about role. I mean, you already heard what I said about Hank Hatch in my discussion, which seemed to be sort of typical of how I expect all Army activities to operate and how deputies and chiefs of staff and commanders operate. So, although it seemed plain to me because it was suggested, I went through it.



*General Kem (second from left) with leaders from the Nashville District at the Divide Cut of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in 1990.*

Now, with the questionnaire coming back, I was really kind of surprised because many of the answers suggested that everybody wanted me to be a “Super Chief of Staff.” I’ve always told you that I wanted to deal in substance and thought I should deal in substance, and we had a Chief of Staff who could handle the process. Well, he’s not a general officer, that’s true, but he’s pretty effective. At least I thought so. Having just been a Chief of Staff, I knew how one could operate a staff and deliver what the CINCUSAREUR needed, and how demanding he was in that instance, and how you have to keep a lot of activities going. I mean, there’s a lot involved in being Chief of Staff.

We had a deputy commander in Europe, so we had that same separation role over there—the two got together, but they also did their different things. So, there were two substantive persons, not one a mirror of the other.

So, when I read the results of the questionnaire I thought, “No, I can’t be a ‘Super Chief of Staff.’ We don’t need two of us; there really is enough work around here to be dealt with substantively for the Deputy.”

So, I used the session initially to sort out the issue: Isn’t there enough work at the Corps headquarters? What really is the problem?

I sort of came to understand that what people were saying was that our staff process didn't work fast enough, and I also sensed that it didn't work fast enough. I can talk about that some more, if you like.

The way I decided I could help the most is not messing with the process, but be this substantive person that can make decisions. The problem was, we never got around to making decisions. So, if Al Genetti, the Chief of Staff, could work the process and I could deliver somebody a more rapid decision, that's probably helping the organization better than my trying to also work the process.

So, I came to a different conclusion as to what the real problem was, and I was willing to let Al Genetti keep working the process.

When we got out of the workshop, with people talking all that morning, all of a sudden I was supposed to give feedback in the afternoon. I was ready to give feedback by eleven o'clock in the morning.

So, I sort of summed everything there and told everybody where I was coming out. It occurred to me, also, that perhaps we had an identity problem within our headquarters unto ourselves, and that identity problem—having worn two hats before and having sensed this before in our headquarters—is that we sometimes confuse whether we're doing things as staff for the Chief of Engineers or the staff for the Commander of USACE. Only one place does that occur in the Army, and that's with the Chief of Engineers and Commander of USACE.

By the way, the Army is about to put the Surgeon General back in that forum, where Health Services Command will go away and the Surgeon General will be the commander of whatever this new organization is called. So, he'll be two-hatted again.

Because of this, there was confusion in the headquarters—and certainly we had two letterheads. You can sign things “Chief of Engineers” or you can sign things “Commander, USACE.” A person might be working in the morning on one action, and in the afternoon on another action for the other side.

I thought, then, for the balance of that day we'd just have an exercise to figure out if people really knew where they were because I didn't know. You know, you ought to be able to construct a wiring diagram representing your organization. It always seems like you might be a little bit better if you knew who you are when you're doing what you are doing.

So, I asked folks to address that issue, and two different work groups came up with a scheme by which they would lay their functions down and then address whether they were Army Staff or USACE headquarters staff—that is, policy, programming, or operational in those aspects of the USACE headquarters. Then the work groups really got into it.

I mean, I watched it, and there was a lot of energy and enthusiasm, and it seemed like a pretty good exercise, to me. I had some disagreement with one, but I mean, that was part of the interaction of understanding.

For example, the disagreement was that the Inspector General said, “Well, of course, he’s about 50–50. He’s 50 percent Chief of Engineers staff things and 50 percent Commander, USACE, things.” Well, I took issue with Denny Bulger at the time and said, “No, I don’t think so because the only reason for the Inspector General is to be the Inspector General for a commander.”

That’s how it all started, way back with Von Steuben, and that’s a very good Inspector General’s role, to be there for the command and the commander, sensing the ability of the command.

Why would an Army Staffer need that? He said, “No, obviously I do.” I’d say, “Well, we’ve got a Department of the Army Inspector General. You might be called on to provide him some help, but he also gets command assistance from the FORSCOM Inspector General and the USAREUR Inspector General.”

Of course, I had just come from USAREUR where I was Chief of Staff. The Inspector General reported through me to the Commander in Chief.

Anyway, it was through that kind of a dialogue that I tried to heighten people’s sensibilities to roles, really come to grips with self. Are you really doing that because you are the expert MACOM guy, or is that really a staff function?

Of course, we had the deal with Civil Works, which is a staff function when they’re dealing through the Army Staff secretariat, so you’d count that the same as Army Staff.

So, they put out a tasker to everybody to go back and look at their organizations and come to grips with themselves and put down the number of people they have working both functions to just see where we come out.

We came back together 30 days later and had a report out. We had worked the various sheets in the meantime, and our discussion was, I think, illuminating in a couple of rather key instances. I think everybody understood themselves a little bit better, and I hope that process allowed them to influence some of their subordinate people into understanding the two very important roles.

The answer came out that, basically, about 17 percent of our activities here in Washington had to do with the Chief of Engineers’ role—that is, dealing with policy, programming, and things in both civil works, military construction, real estate, research and development from an Army Staff role. For the Chief of Engineers reporting to the Army Staff, the Assistant Secretary for Installation and Logistics, or the Chief of Engineers reporting to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, that is doing a staff role. About 83 percent of our activities were as the MACOM headquarters staff, dealing with how we work our divisions and districts—dealing downwards, in other words.

Now, the second thing—and this came from participants—was a statement that I thought was really interesting and most illuminating. Somebody said, “So, 83 percent of our time was

spent at Headquarters, USACE, but I would bet that's the part of the job we do less well than the other part of the job."

My reaction back was, "Now that you mention it, as I think back to my time as commander of the Ohio River Division, I would sense that's right. I felt then that your attention was on Washington level things, and I had difficulty attracting your attention to deal with me on things. You surely sent out a message saying, 'You only get this number of spaces; you will do this.' Trying to get a meaningful dialogue and influence was difficult."

So, it really is important to understand, you are the Headquarters, USACE. That's 83 percent of our role, that work. You need to work in putting out the right policy, doing the right programming, the right kind of resource allocation, the right kind of anticipation to direct, lead, manage this worldwide organization called USACE.

So, from all that, I thought the workshop accomplished what it was intended—that is, the interaction so that I get to know the chiefs better. I thought I got a big value out of that. Second, I thought we probably did some illuminating work that was of benefit to all of us.

Q: It was an approach that hadn't been taken before, in terms of sitting down and trying to look at that, and I think the comment that you made was that, you know, from below, we don't look like a corporate headquarters, or are we acting like a MACOM, and what does it mean, to act like a MACOM?

There's probably more to be done on that as an outgrowth of that session, I think. More sensitizing. Has there been an effort to carry on that kind of thinking in terms of attention to the MACOM headquarters' role in the months and the years ahead?

A: No, I don't think so. I have used the occasion to articulate that in the senior leaders conference and at other kinds of affairs. When I got into the automation business that I was involved with during the year, I figured that in that case we were definitely acting in the MACOM headquarters' role, and therefore we needed to do headquarters kinds of things for the command. Others may have not known or understood that aspect of it, but to me, having gone through the transition thing, my recognition was that this action would involve that part of the USACE world, and we've got to do those necessary actions, even though we were responding to Bob Page, of course, who was a staffer.

I was really doing Headquarters, USACE, things, but that would cross over the line to the Deputy Chief's role when I'd go see Bob Page to present.

Q: Did you share the results of that session with General Hatch?

A: Yes, much like I described to you before. I walked in and chatted with him and told him what we'd done.

Q: Maybe it helped. I think, from the questionnaire, the interviews that happened beforehand, and you were talking—there was a situation between the deputy and the Chief of Staff. That's one of the real things that came out, and perhaps that was a frustration over the feeling

that the process wasn't being managed as well as it should be, or could be. It may not have been a question of individuals in charge of that as much as how big the process is. I don't know.

A: Yes. Might be.

Q: I know there was some reference made to the time in the few years before you came in, in the mid-80s, when we had, like, four Chiefs of Staff in two years.

A: Yes.

Q: That was a problem. There was a sense from the staff that we needed some continuity. Of course, with Colonel Genetti we've had, certainly, a greater measure of continuity—

A: Sure.

Q: —because it's been almost two years; next month it will be two years. Compared to what we'd had, you know, we've had three in that same period before.

A: Well, that's a very key job, and the person has to be the right kind of person. He also needs a kind of anticipation and know-how to play and win in the Washington area for that position. Al Genetti had that because he'd been with the State and Regional Defense Airlift and been in and around a bunch of different places.

Q: He'd been in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

A: Yes. So, he had a feeling for how people can get down on you when they don't understand, and how you may not even know that you're in trouble because the dialogue is going on, and you figured everything is wonderful, and over there, they're ready to carve you up because there's misinformation. How you have to stay tuned and be in constant contact and then mount a counteroffensive and do your homework and go do these things.

He also had a sense of organization. An organization's got to run. I've really been impressed with the way he's done things this year because I've seen how he gets the staff together. And, having gone through that transition thing, where I wasn't going to get involved in his business, he has done absolutely what I thought he would do. That is, he has run the staff.

In our USACE organization we have such powerhouse directors in our big, functional stovepipes, and they are the Directors of Civil Works, Military Programs, Real Estate, Research and Development. That's how they operate, as program directors. They run their programs.

You find at the AMCs, the Forces Commands and the USAREURs, the Chief of Staff is a two star, and he's maybe the senior guy. Then the directors of the staffs may not really be program directors and not as powerful. Staff activities are two and one stars, or SESs.

I was the USAREUR Chief of Staff and was the senior two star on that staff. The Commander in Chief says, "I don't want to talk to the DCSOPS every morning; I talk to the Chief of Staff every morning. The DCSOPS can talk to the Chief of Staff. I let the Chief of Staff run the staff. I don't interact, direct, one or the other, unless the Chief of Staff sends him in to see me." Here in USACE we have a colonel level Chief of Staff/executive director because he, too, is Chief of Staff of the headquarters element and also executive director for the Chief of Engineers in his staff role. He would funnel a lot of things through the ACE when they'd come through the Army Staff.

Then we have this direct relationship of the Director of Civil Works with the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works because of the way that works, it's so close to Congress. With these powerful, functional components and program directors, our colonel Chief of Staff starts from a position of weakness unless he's got guts and fortitude and a lot of ability.

Al Genetti really has operated as a Chief of Staff, and I think earned everybody's plaudits for that this year.

Q: The new Chief of Staff comes out of the Pentagon arena?

A: Yes, comes out of that arena. When I was in the ACE's shop, Bob Herndon was a lieutenant colonel action officer in DCSOPS trying to get the NTC under way. Thankless job. He did a great job. He won the Pace award as the outstanding action officer on the Army Staff there.

Now we have him. He knows our organization. He's been the Jacksonville District Engineer, so he knows what happens in the field. He knows how to make things happen on the Army Staff. He's been a very effective executive director to the ACE, so he knows the Program Budget Committee and Select Committee and what's important.

Now he's going to be here as Chief of Staff. I think he'll come in and there will be some differences. There always are, but he'll really know how things work. He'll be a good one.

Q: Is there anything more you'd like to say about the ACE's office and how that fits into the scheme of things? I know you mentioned the Director of Civil Works and the Assistant Secretary, but sometimes there seems to be tensions, or whatever, between Military Programs and the ACE's office, perhaps, or the headquarters elements and the ACE's office.

A: You say sometimes there seem to be tensions; there probably are. In a lot of things where good folks are operating, tensions occur at the staff level. They're trying to protect their boss, or isolate their boss, or do something.

Usually when you get boss to boss, reason and logic prevail. Sometimes below those levels, somebody's trying to make sure they keep it in a particular arena, as they see the world, but they're not the people with real perspective of how things are. The boss got to where he is because he'd been through all those major, lieutenant colonel gates, and now he's a major general, like Pete Offringa, the ACE, because he's done a lot of that stuff. He has a perspective. Some of his subordinates may not. So, I think most of it's that.

I served in the Office of the ACE from '79 to '80, as the Deputy ACE. I was the first of the brigadier Deputy ACEs before the job went away. I just happened to go there as the colonel deputy and was selected for brigadier general, and General Morris left me there for the year, so we had two flag officers playing in the arena.

Because that's really a tough job over there when you have to go up here before four committees, as the ACE does, and you have to attend all the Select Committee and Program Budget Committee meetings, the poor ACE finds himself coming and going.

So, it was awfully nice for General Bill Read at the time to go work the committees, and I would work the Program Budget Committee. Thus, he didn't have to be coming back from testimony to be handed a bunch of documents to go sit in the Program Budget Committee meeting until eight o'clock at night, whereby they'd hand him his testimony for the next morning for the next appearance before Congress.

There's plenty of work in the Office of the Assistant Chief of Engineers for two folks.

At that time, there was some tension between Military Programs and the ACE's office because, in fact, we in the ACE were carrying the programming ball for housing and for facility engineering. Those aspects both came under the then-Military Programs, who had their own brigadier general, and the people over in the Pulaski Building. The ACE was all over at the Pentagon.

So, there were tensions because we always had our own MCA programmers who had all the answers. Then we'd have this big, apparent void, you know, in housing. So, we weren't developing a full plate of answers or positions.

That was structurally fixed later when they moved programmers from those other offices over into the ACE programs. Certainly, our facilities funding understanding and ability to articulate issues is much better because of that.

There's a very separate difference between the ACE and his role as the Army's programmer and his installations staff role, and the Director of Military Programs, who is the Corps' executor of those missions the Army gives USACE for construction.

Now, over the last couple of years that has been broadened, of course, with the growth of our environmental programs and our defense effort to solve environmental problems. Maybe there's been a little tension grown there because we have the environmental office, which works for the ACE, as he did way back when. With Military Programs that environmental part has now grown.

So, there might be some tension there, as we work that out. We've been trying for some time now to make some organizational changes with regard to the environment, and that hasn't yet come out of the secretariat because some of the folks over there are working their own agendas. There are still some battles ahead to sort all that out.

Basically, the ACE, as I see it today, is much stronger than it was in my day in the ACE. They're a much more credible player on the Army Staff, I believe, respected by the operations community, and the Chief of Staff, and the Director of the Army Staff in ways they weren't back in my day. We seem to always be trying to clamor for recognition and credibility. I think, over the years, because of the things like I mentioned, of moving housing and the O&M programmers there, so the ACE had a more complete package. Those structural things were fixed. So, therefore, they're better.

Q: Yes.

A: Second, now, when I was there, it was the last of the Carter years and we were on low budgets. So, the second factor was that we went through the Reagan years' budgets and all of a sudden the ACE comes out as a bigger player on a bunch of things because of that.

Now, with the growth in the environment and the Chief of Engineers being given the role as the Army's chief environmentalist, the guy responsible for the Army's environmental programs, the ACE's role has grown. Finally, with all the base closures and the realignments and all those exercises that have to do with installation planning, the Installations Planning Office, which had all the books back when I was there and did some pretty good stuff, now is really involved in anything the Army tries to do in figuring out changes in installations.

So, I think the ACE is much stronger than it used to be and a very credible player. I don't see any problems or tensions in what's happening with respect to them. If there are, it's because somebody doesn't understand the respective roles.

I think, without doubt, with regard to Military Programs, we've got communications there better than ever before. I'm sure Bill Ray, having arrived and having come out of Europe as the DCSENGR and now having been previously in the ACE's shop in programming, that also will improve—just understanding of the leaders and how things are.

Now, as new people come in as action-oriented folks, they've got to provide their perspective to their organization, so that they respond and respond that way.

Q: I would like to ask you about—you said you might want to return to the issue of the process not working fast enough, since we were just talking about process a few minutes ago. Do you have more comments on that?

A: Yes. As a headquarters, we really don't do staff actions in a timely manner. Now, you know, I just got through saying Al Genetti really cranks these and does them right. What I'm really coming down to is I think we're so big that we don't have that Pentagon, Department of the Army sense of timeliness on doing things.

We almost have a MACOM of stovepipes. We're a very professional bunch, so we'll go at it very deliberately, and sometimes we're not ready with a decision when it needs to be made.

Now, you can say, you know, that maybe they want decisions too early. Well, in this environment, in this town, to win you have to have anticipated, done your homework, and be

ready to deliver because a quality product is only quality when it's delivered at a point in time that it influences the action. If it's delivered two weeks late, it's then overcome by events and doesn't mean anything.

So, just time and time again I find the action officer has come in on something, and I ask where are we, and he responds, "Well, we're still waiting for coordination chops out of this directorate or that directorate."

"Well, okay," I ask, "how long has it been?" "Well, it's been three weeks." "Three weeks?" You should never have to wait three weeks. You don't get it in three days, then they probably didn't want to comment, or you probably shouldn't have asked them, or something. I mean, there's some phenomenon that's apropos here.

So, two problems. One is we've gotten into this environment where it's all right to never give a person's paper back. Second, our action folks don't know how to get attention to get something back on a timely schedule.

We've sort of grown to that. That's become our thing now, I think, and we really need to get away from that, so when we have a paper, the action officer has talked it around enough to know that they're about to have a consensus or not. You get it there so you can get a concurrence or nonconcurrence quickly, walk it around or whatever. If we get the nonconcurrence, we write the statement of consideration rather quickly and get it up to a decision maker so that the problem hasn't festered and become worse, so the problem isn't overcome by events, so that it's more meaningful. So, that's what I mean.

Q: How do we get out of this problem?

A: We really need to work those faster. Today we assign ourselves deadlines that are too long.

Q: Yes?

A: I mean, the Secretary of the General Staff will assign a three-week deadline, which, in my view, usually means two weeks on the back burner, and then they pull it forward and work it.

So, if you really need something, then you ought to assign a week deadline so they work it right away instead of putting it on the back burner. Now, you can't do everything that way, you have to measure importance and figure out how you cut the amount of work. I think what we're doing is, our staff folks are putting a lot more work in some things than is really needed, so we're spinning wheels; that's really needed for the decision maker. As a measure of productivity, that's pretty bad because we're not getting any productivity.

So, we need to find the way by pushing the system so that we get the right, smart person to do the right thinking, to come up with the right conclusion, and we don't spend process time trying to get that right conclusion to whomever is going to make the decision.

If we study an issue and then restudy it and overstudy it, then that's not going to help. So, I think we've got a way to go to get that one squared away.



*General Kem (second from right), Deputy Chief of Engineers, inspected the chemical demilitarization facility on Johnston Island during a visit to the Pacific in 1990.*

Q: How would you do it? If you were going to be around for another year, whatever, would you devote more time to trying to clean that situation up? Can the Chief of Staff do that on his own, or is he going to need a higher emphasis on the whole?

A: Well, no. There are only two people higher than the Chief of Staff.

Q: Yes.

A: So, I have tried to work it out this year in the things I've done. I'm just trying to make those examples of something by saying, "If you want to get it coordinated in three days, give them three days. If they haven't answered by then, you just send it up to me and say they didn't answer, and we'll make the judgment." Or, "Why did you send it to all 20 people for coordination because you know that for 15 of them it doesn't apply and you don't need their comments? It's not going to be meaningful to you; it will not improve your paper. If you spend two days on each one of them coordinating it sequentially, you'll never get to the ones you really want. So, why don't you just take it to the five people that you need input from, get their input, incorporate it, and then go talk them into signing concurrence."

It becomes a training issue for every action officer. To do that requires mentoring and coaching and perspective from the executive directors and the bosses down the way. You're

not going to run a school and run everybody through it for 14 days at a time because those things don't come out.

Q: Of course, our staff action handbook, which was a product of the last couple of years, is trying to address some of these very issues.

A: Yes, that's helped.

Q: I'm sure it's helped, and I think there's been a great improvement.

A: Yes.

Q: You're saying we have a ways to go yet.

A: Yes, I think there has been improvement, even this year, but we still have a ways to go.

Q: Now, a frequent complaint we might hear is that everything has to go to counsel, and that this becomes a real bottleneck. Do you have any comment on that?

A: Well, in today's world—

Q: Today's world?

A: At the high level we deal with in civil works, in military programs, in real estate, in resource management, I mean, counsel's pretty important. And, in fact, our counsel is more than just a lawyers' shop. They provide counsel too.

You get a guy like Les Edelman, who's served on the committees of Congress, and with his great sense of Washington you get more than your money's worth. You're not just getting a legal check for dotting i's and crossing t's.

Q: Yes.

A: You're getting counsel. So, it's pretty hard to argue. Every individual item can be looked at on its own merit. Does this one need to go to counsel or not? It's pretty hard to argue that the sense of important kinds of things, that our counsel shouldn't have access—be able to be monitoring and have an opportunity to view an issue and say, "Chief, that's no problem with us," or "This seems to be not thought out," or "Somebody forgot that in 1884 somebody did this to that," and that sort of thing.

Q: There were three specific areas that I wanted to look at a little more closely, and one of those is the information management area. The CEAP [Corps of Engineers Automation Plan] seems to me to be one of the major areas that's occupied you in the last year. That was something that had started before, I believe before you came into the position. You were referring to the fact that General Withers had worked in the information management area a lot. You've already alluded to it in terms of dealing with it as a headquarters thing, but it

came out of congressional directive, and it came out of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works. Correct?

A: Well, I will elaborate on that.

Q: I was wondering if you could explain a little bit about what it is and why, and the problems and considerations that have been involved for the last year.

A: Sure. The Corps of Engineers has been embarked for a number of years, like all corporations in America and all other government entities, in trying to figure out who handles all the information requirements they have, and how to automate it, and do all of those things at reasonable cost. Because there are big bucks involved and because the state of the art changes all the time, it's a very difficult arena.

It's hard to find anybody that's done it right, you know, in government. Certainly our airlines must have done theirs right because they can get all these tickets and do all that stuff so much better than they could fifteen, twenty years ago.

Way back, when I was here in the Public Affairs Office, '75 to '76, we were talking about CE80 [Corps of Engineers in 1980]. We were going to have this kind of architecture for automation, and we had people working on it back then.

Then when I got to the Ohio River Division, '81 to '84, we would get briefs at all the annual conferences about what the Corps' approach would be to do this and do that in automation.

Then, I arrived back last year as Ken Withers' replacement. He told me one of the things I would have to do right off was to consider whether I wanted to be the source selection authority for our CEAP contract. It had to do with a contract solicitation for firms to provide the hardware, software, and communications to provide for our Corps of Engineers' automation requirements in our MACOM role—that is, the headquarters, divisions, districts, labs, and other field activities.

When he talked about that, the first question was whether Bob Page should be the source selection authority, but he decided he did not want to be it. So, I inherited being the source selection authority. Now, that came up very early in my tenure, I would guess probably September of '89, which was my first or second month.

Q: The contract was awarded on the 6th of October.

A: Okay. It was immediately prior to that. The source selection really follows a process. Since you asked me to bring you up to date on this, the Corps had gone out a year and a half or so before that to ask for proposals to provide for Corps needs over eleven years in hardware, software, and communications. Several firms responded, and I guess this was winnowed down to a smaller number of three by the time I got into it.

Those three had gotten into doing certain show and tells, benchmarks, and other activities with our staff. We had an evaluation committee, which had met and gone through a rather

standard federal procurement approach of technical evaluation, where they would judge the three vendors and what they were going to do against the requirements. It involved both headquarters and field people, a rather rigorous system where they would be graded out on whether they fully met, partially met, or what in each of the categories of what we wanted.

The evaluation committee did the job on a raw score basis. There was no weighting to that, although we had previously weighted various arenas as being more important. Over a rather long period, the committee came up with a rather large volume of material, and it was pretty impressive. You take a lot of experts, put them down to evaluate others, and they really come to grips with things.

Then the advisory committee met. The advisory committee applies the weights and now brings in the cost bids for the first time. You see, the evaluation folks never saw costs. Then the advisory committee goes through a rather set routine also and comes up with a recommendation to the source selection authority—which was me.

We went through that process, and I had the advisory committee report. I went through the volumes of the evaluation board and the advisory committee and looked at all the factors. As the name implies, I was the final authority for the selection of Control Data Corporation as the winning vendor for that CEAP contract.

I thought that we had a good contract: eleven years of options, a minimum money guarantee. That is, we only had to spend some \$5.6 million or so to meet minimum requirements. I had all the evaluation criteria, and they scored out very well compared to the others, in some factors more than twice the others.

We had a good vendor and a good product in all three areas of hardware, communications, and software, also good training, good administrative capability, and the flexibility of eleven years of options, with the prices stated to buy certain things if we needed them.

Then there was to be a pilot test. Now, I sort of thought that was going to be the extent of my major responsibilities—selecting this vendor and that was that, and we'd go about going through pilot tests and then go about fielding it.

Congress and Bob Page, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, both had misgivings on the size of the contract. There was congressional language that pretty well said, "Okay, Corps, you can have your pilot tests and do it, but you don't need to spend more than the pilot test until you come back and tell us what went on."

Then I was asked to go brief Bob Page on where we were out of the source selection, so I did. I never had been made to understand how much he was against the CEAP program or his strong personal feelings that we were embarked on the wrong path—too much big computers, we didn't know what we were doing, we hadn't based the program on requirements, and so forth. He felt the technical people were driving the train; that our approach was to buy a computer, then figure out what to do with it. It costs way too much money, and we were never going to be able to afford it. We didn't need it, and we were really

on a binge. I mean, he was really strong about it. He had had his own experiences in the private sector, which put him in opposition to this direction.

We had a lot of others who influenced him on just the costs. He explained that every time we came over to brief him on CEAP, we sent somebody different over. So, he always saw a different bunch of people, and they were always the technical folks, and that didn't have much credibility with him. He felt the cost was just out of sight because he had seen an initial estimate that was up in the \$1 billion range, to do all of those things.

Now, the \$1 billion estimate was not \$1 billion. That was some early thing that had no credibility with us either. When you boiled it down to the kind of things being considered, we were talking \$120 million. I'm not saying that's not large; what I'm saying is the \$1 billion was grossly incorrect.

So, anyway, we had a rather testy meeting in which he was adamant that, when the pilot test was over, we'd better decide that was it. We weren't going to buy any more. I'm sitting there at the meeting saying to myself, "Wait a minute. What's all this? We're embarked on the thing."

I had thought it was all locked before I arrived. I thought we all had gone through it, processed it, and come to grips with what we wanted to do before we went out to the vendors. In fact, we had; but now we had different players. I responded to him that we did base CEAP on requirements. We were not going to buy hardware first and figure out what to do with it. We did know a lot of what we had to do. We did a lot of things in automation, and our other machines were wearing out. We absolutely had to buy something soon to replace our Harris-Honeywells because they were ancient, exhausted, and wearing out.

So, I promised him at that meeting that I would come back after the pilot test and lay out for him the direction the Corps wanted to go and answer all of his questions. I said, "We're going to show you how we based it on requirements. We'll show you how we fund it." He was also interested in charge-backs to the districts because he felt they couldn't afford it and we shouldn't put a system on them they couldn't afford.

So, I said, "We'll lay out the affordability situation in the districts. We'll make an economic analysis that shows you what we're going to get. We'll answer every one of your questions, and I'll bring it back to you."

He said, "Okay, well, you're going to have to do that before I approve it."

That took it from what I thought was going to be a nice source selection process and I would be done with this issue, to one where I took the lead because somebody had to, to sort it out over time. In fact, we did sort it out through a rather rigorous process that we set up.

There was nothing magic about it. It's, I guess, the way I've tried to approach things throughout my whole career. That is, when you have an elephant that's too hard to swallow in one gulp, you'd better break it down into bite-sized increments, attack each bite one at a time, and make it happen.

The problem was we had to do it all in a year.

Q: Which is the length of the test contract, the pilot?

A: The Harris–Honeywells had already worn out, and we needed to get out of them to start really saving money. We were spending big bucks each year on Harris–Honeywells, \$754,000 annually.

Q: \$754,000 a year?

A: \$754,000 a year per district Corpswide.

Q: That *is* big bucks. So, you had that very important time deadline for acting.

A: Right. So, what I was saying was the way I've always approached these kinds of things is to break it down in parts and then work each part. Because of the tight deadline, it could not be a sequential thing. We had to work them all concurrently.

What I'd promised him really was not that much different from my own viewpoint. I'd come out of Europe where we had just developed two or three different automation initiatives, starting down at the very bottom, at the work center, and doing something that made sense to the worker, and then amalgamating upwards.

For example, Butch Saint had always wanted a company-level computer. He thought that would save the time of the company commander and the first sergeant. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Wickham, had said, "We will never have a company-level computer." His thought was you don't need the first sergeant tied to a desk in the orderly room. Two different views of the world.

Our approach in the Army—this is where our problems came from—had been to figure out what we needed at the top and then go down to the next level and the next level to the bottom level, so they had to provide all that information up.

Our approach in Europe then, as Butch Saint did it, was bring in a smart captain as commander of the company, have him design and build a laptop computer with the programs he needs to run his company. Then we would buy the laptop, give it to every company, and make each company commander able to pick up from our computer store the software packages to do that. It would be his. Nobody could meddle with him and change it.

Now, if something the company commander has on there is useful higher up, then they can pull it up and use it. It's his system. It was a pretty nice approach. Credit Butch Saint.

So, I brought those same biases into USACE. My bias was that CEAP ought to be requirements driven. There's probably too much information that we produce that doesn't really get used that ought to be scrubbed down. The biggest bias—because of the company automation experience where we put the company commander who knew what he needed in charge—was that we really needed a functional guy in charge, not the technical guy. So, you

see, I had an affinity for what Bob Page was saying because my own predilections were that you should do those things.

Then I remembered back, and all my years in USACE, in 1975, '76, I heard about CE80, my time in the Ohio River Division when I got briefed, who were the guys always talking about the automation? It was Information Management. Now, we've taken some people, given them the mission, come up with this Corps automation program, left them alone, really. In our own Army, Corps way, the staff and the agency in charge have got to run with the ball. That's true. In USACE it was really an Information Management-developed product, not a functional component-developed product.

So, he, the Chief of Information Management, goes in to the Director of Civil Works and says, "Let me have some time. What do you need?" The Civil Works guy says, "I'm too busy, you know. Go develop it; go talk to my underlings." So, we had an information management system that was developed, but it never had a buy-in by functional chiefs. So, we had to be able to tell Bob Page that, yes, we had based it on requirements, and we had to be able to solve his problem of our always sending somebody different over, and always a technical guy, rather than one of Bob Page's fellow engineers. I established a very quick principle. I put it under the "Let's make sure we win" principle, that we wouldn't send anybody over to Page's office anymore from our Information Management shop. I would go over. I would lead the team. I might take technical guys with me, but we were not going to send technicians over as messengers just to get shot because he would see who they were and shoot them just on sight.

I was doing a little damage control as I tried to grab hold of it to begin with so we could get organized and I could do my own thinking of how we could progress. Basically, the way we did it was, as I told Bob Page, I will accept the rose. I'll pin the rose to my chest to deliver to him all the things he asked for.

Having gotten the rose pinned on my chest, I went out to find some other rosette getters. That was to be the functional chief of each of the fifteen functional arenas in the headquarters.

The Director of Civil Works was really not the expert. He's got so many different parts, like project management, like engineering. I mean, those are the people in Civil Works who ran a stovepipe of activity who really were the Corps' experts on how you do that functional arena. Those were the people that I wanted in charge of that functional arena.

We set up a process. It started with them. The first thing was to put together the inventory, a list of the whole world of USACE automation, every program that we use, and match them against each of the functional arenas.

Having done that, then each of those functional leaders was charged with figuring out how people in that function do their work now and, second, how automation helps them do their work. Notice I was talking requirements. I didn't start with the automation; I started with work. That's requirements. So, the requirements are driving their automation needs rather than automation driving their requirements, from the Page comments.

I asked them to present that for now, the present, and then how they would like it to be in the future because every one of them would want to do their functional area better—how they'd like it to be in 1995. "Come back and tell me how you'd really like to do work in 1995 with automation helping you." They did that. Each one of them came back, and I had them brief our executive committee.

I need to stop, pause for a moment, and talk about our framework for dealing with our automation. It had to do with an Information Resource Management Steering Committee, high level, both headquarters and the field represented, and a senior level committee with a lot of SESs and general officers.

Underneath that we had some other committees because we had started data scrubs and we started considering configuration. We were going to have to get into configuration management once the pilot test was done.

Page wanted to influence the action down there, so he wanted his office represented on a users committee to represent the user. Now, I really took umbrage to that. I mean, we're going to put people from his office to represent the user? I mean, after all, we had users—the district level folks—who knew a lot more than his people about users. Why should somebody be telling us what users want? Why don't we find out ourselves?

The idea of the committee wasn't bad, but I thought the idea of his putting people on it was bad because—as they quickly turned out—they'd just be a quick channel to him and then the next thing you know I would be getting memos telling me how to proceed.

That certainly happened. After the first meeting of the users committee, I had a memo signed by him from Bob Sterns—he was Page's representative on the users committee—before I even had communication from the committee chairman, Art Denys, Southwestern Division.

So, I went to see Mr. Page and said, "Look, that's no way to operate. I mean, your guy's on there to contribute, to help find the right solutions, not to come back with his own agenda and, because he failed to get it in the committee, come back up here, get you all to sign a memo telling me I have to do that and tell the committee to do certain things. I mean, that's just not the right way to work."

Page understood and he agreed. He said, "Well, didn't he come through the chairman?" I said, "No. The chairman offered him the opportunity to write a minority opinion, but he didn't even do that."

He says, "You're right. They'll come through the chairman henceforth." So, we got that back in place.

I guess I started talking about our process structure. We used that structure, then, with the Information Resource Management Steering Committee as the overseer of the whole thing, and each of the subordinates had a role to play as we went through the yearlong process.

The steering committee had an executive committee. I met every Friday with that executive committee that consisted of John Wallace, our Resource Manager; Pat Kenney, our Information Manager; and the two project managers—that is, Ken Calabrese with CEAP and Dave Spivey with the software development effort. We also had Terry Wilmer, who was Deputy Director of Real Estate, and Don Cluff, out of Civil Works. We later added John Sheehey from Military Construction.

We would meet Fridays and just try to track the process and where we were going. That was my major sounding board. They really were helpful to me in developing my thoughts and helping drive the whole process.

Now that I've explained the organization, what we did was have each of these fifteen functional proponents brief on how they wanted to do business with automation now and in 1995—brief the executive committee.

Meanwhile, now, Information Management had gone to Joan Stolley and, using her as the point of contact, contracted out to a local firm for information technical expertise. They came in and listened to all the briefings. Each proponent briefed how he would like to be in 1995, and we had certain measurements of how many kinds of machines, what size memory, how many activities, how many connections they would need, so we got a real sensing of size.

I thought that was a good process. A lot of people learned a lot about their own functional arena. It was good for us because we had the boss involved. A lot of them learned how automation could support them, and it was a supportive thing in that our technical folks were available to them to help them understand what could be available.

Each one of the functional proponents developed its own way of doing business. Whether it was microprocessors or mainframe kinds of things, that kind of advice was there. Each one built the model of how he thought it would be in 1995.

Then the contractor and Joan put it together, integrated all of that. First of all, they converted all of the briefs to a common set approach. Then they integrated it all, thought it out, and came back and recommended to the executive committee an approach to set up an architecture to solve our problem.

We gave that a lot of deliberation. I don't want you to think it was an easy process. The executive committee went out to the Fusion Center and spent two days in a workshop. Now, you know, that was with shirt sleeves rolled up, really dialoguing and trying to figure out what's what and how we do things—and should do things.

We then fine-tuned a little bit, but essentially put together and brought the recommendation that we establish a core architecture, which was to have regional centers that everybody, meaning the headquarters activities or divisions or districts or labs, would connect to for communications. We at USACE would drive the system, the architecture, and we would provide the mainframe computers, serve the system, plus do central processing. We'd leave district organizations to themselves. However, we would buy their communications link.

We hammered all that out in, I think, a rather creative effort. So, you see now, what we had done is respond to Page's requirements. We let requirements drive. We built a requirement in each of the fifteen functional areas. We then integrated them, came up with a solution of how we would do that, specified the parts, left some things to the districts, which provided for that sense of decentralization we wanted. At the same time, we recognized that, out of that process—I'm a little ahead of the game—in the economic analysis, that they would really be spending a lot more money down in the districts to develop their individual things than we would if we did it centrally.

We knew we had to have discipline in our future approaches, and we just couldn't let everybody have free reign to drive on and develop on their own. That's the bad side of decentralization.

So, having done that, we took it up. I promised the division engineers we'd interact with them during the year. We had a briefing for them, and in the summer time frame we had all these things culminating together. The pilot test had been ongoing, and it was producing good results. We'd had to convert an awful lot of our programs and legacy systems into the database requirements and into the CEAP environment, and that had taken a lot of work.

The executive committee met on Fridays and monitored the entire process and tried to break down obstacles to make sure it all happened on time.

All of these events were coming to culmination about the 31st of July, and we programmed that we were going to come to grips with it on the 9th of August at our Information Resource Management Steering Committee meeting. I should say that all the other committees were doing their work too. The users committee was reviewing these things all along. We'd developed an economic analysis model with Doug Wiley's help, who was from the secretary's office, and he was very helpful in showing us how we could approach that.

Now, I was going off on leave for eighteen days to Europe in August, and then we were to brief the Chief of Engineers on the 5th of September and then Bob Page by the end of the month. We'd finish out the fiscal year with it all approved. Then Bob Page announced he was leaving and would be gone by the time I got back from vacation. So, we had to advance and culminate our process much earlier. We really couldn't extend the pilot tests. We really couldn't accelerate configuration management and all those things that were really coming to a head on 31 July. So, we really had no way of accelerating a decision before 31 July.

So, the period from 31 July to 9 August was very intense, as simultaneously the configuration management board met and determined the configuration. They chose to have two regional centers and not deploy hardware to each division location as we had originally envisioned. The users committee met, under Art Denys, and pored over all the issues.

We tried to pull together all the economic analysis and the numbers to fit the model. Mike Yeomans, out of Information Management, worked very diligently with his folks on that.

We went to the Information Management Resource Steering Committee, briefed the division engineers, and finally I went with General Hatch in the middle of the steering committee wrap-up to see Mr. Page and laid it out for him and received his approval. [See Appendix D.]

We had met his requirements. We had shown him, by this process, that requirements had driven our recommended system. We had taken those requirements and built the automation program for the Corps for 1995 that was needed, and we were going to accommodate project management—something new. We were going to do the work of the Corps in all the other areas. Also, the essential initial programs had to be, as a minimum, provided by '92; others could be judged on their own economic feasibility.

We showed him that the economic analysis showed we would save money in automation alone and we would increase productivity. That is, we could combine finance and accounting centers and do away with some positions. We would eliminate people doing stubby pencil jobs today and save other money in the future.

We talked affordability. We showed him, if I remember the number, \$164,000 a year per district would be saved in automation billbacks.

I told him that we needed to provide discipline in the system. We had to right some of that. We convinced him that—when I talk about the Information Management technocrat, I'm not really disparaging him, but he wasn't in charge—the leaders were in charge. I mean, the corporate management was now telling Page we wanted to do this because we had addressed our requirements in each of the functional areas. We'd integrated them and had them in a logical solution.

So, it was not the technicians bringing that solution to Page. It was Corps leaders, who now understood the corporation and how automation could help them, who had come to that decision. That was our recommendation.

He then approved it and wrote letters to the Office of Management and Budget, the congressional committees, and back to the Chief and said he was removing his office as the obstacle that he'd put himself in and now wanted the normal routine approval, budgeting, programming process to work.

So, with that, we have now given the second option year to Control Data, and we're figuring out what we want to buy with that. We will buy the communications equipment to provide every one of our field offices. We're paying for the redeployment of the hardware that was at our pilot site locations to our regional centers. We have to buy very little additional mainframe hardware—some—and we spend our effort really developing the software things that make it work.

So, that was the year of automation.

Q: It started out as what you thought was going to be a one-vendor selection. About how much of your total time do you think you might have given to that, if that's possible to estimate?

A: Oh, probably 8, 9 percent.

Q: Eight or nine?

A: Everybody thinks it was a lot smaller, but everybody in the time frame of 31 July to 9 August, I mean, it was probably nine straight days.

Q: At the end, yes.

A: We had an awful lot of good staff. I leaned very heavily on Pat Kenney and his staff, the project manager, Ken Calabrese, Dave Spivey, Mike Yeomans, Joan Stolley, Brenda Evans, Ed Huempfer, Pat Cobb. They're very good people.

The technicians really were great folks. Page's problem with them was, you know, that they came over and they really didn't understand his corporate level questions. We sent them out as messengers instead of taking them with us to provide technical advice as leaders carried the mail. We asked them to reflect management's view instead of the manager going over and saying, "I want this because I want it." So, I mean, that one little change of technique helped right there. We had great folks, and they were very helpful.

So, I presided, I facilitated, I showed up for all the meetings with the functional persons, and I required the function chiefs to brief personally because I wanted the bosses signed up. You see, the other thing we achieved during that process was a consensus because they were all involved.

By this process, one couldn't sit back and say, "Ah, the CEAP. I've heard it's going to do this, it's going to do that." Each was involved, so he had to buy in early. We got the division engineers early. We didn't have 100 percent coalescing of opinion on it, but we're a heck of a lot higher than we ever were before, and I think we have a good product, and we saved an awful lot of money.

We're only buying probably 50 percent as much as was estimated at one time—remembering that they were all option years. We never had to buy it all. If you projected that we would buy it all and put it all out in 13 places, it was to be about \$95 million. We're now going to invest about \$24 million and put it in two places.

Q: This is really the product of the last year?

A: That's right. In the last year we developed an architecture for doing the Corps' work. We really have an understanding of what all the boxes in these fifteen functional areas are. We really have an understanding of what ought to go in there. We really know what the key ones are that must interconnect—that's project management, financial management, program management, real estate—and we built a way to isolate an executive database to pull stuff up, just data we need at Headquarters, USACE.

We've figured out a way that we don't need a separate database for divisions and the headquarters. It will all be one database. From the division commander's staff viewpoint, it's his. From our headquarters viewpoint, it's ours.

We're getting to the point where we should be able to get where a person in the district can manage all of this data, for whatever his purposes are, and it's up to us to specify the details that we want. Then, when he plugs in the completion date of a particular project and the project name for his management purposes, or changes and updates, by his putting it in the system should update the corporate database used by the divisions and the headquarters with just those two entries at that one point.

Information is now available for the project manager of the Savannah District and to the project management division at Headquarters, USACE, and other people who want to see that same piece of data. He's only inputted it once, but it's available to all three.

The decision has been made. Now we've got to go execute all that, and most of the work's in the software. What we've done is we've boiled down the hardware requirements into something that is more palatable and makes more sense. Also, you can say, if you're the district guy and not wanting to pay for all of this, that now you're saving \$164,000 a year. If you're a Page, who said, "It costs way too much," we brought those numbers way down. It provides for what's needed now and it has growth potential.

If we find out we need more, we've set up the system that provides for an economic analysis to show and tell why it makes sense to do more. If we can show and tell and we save money, then we ought to be able to get the right decision to proceed. If it doesn't make money, we're not going to proceed. We're rewriting the discipline things for the whole Corps to say, "If you've got a bright idea, before you go around and spend money on your bright idea, you're going to have to check it off against our system. Does the solution already exist? If so, use it; don't develop a new one."

If you've got such a great new idea that the current system doesn't do it for you, then you do your economic analysis and show how what you want to do will be compatible, that it's exportable to the rest of the Corps, and that it's going to make money going off in your direction.

So, we've really put in a system of not only feasibility, but also economic feasibility. All in a year.

Q: A real accomplishment.

A: Well, we had a bunch of good people. I was the driver, and so you take it back to what we talked about earlier about the substantive role: How can I help the headquarters? Well, I drove the process to meet the requirements put on us by Bob Page.

Q: Okay.

A: I'm not an automator. I was a manager. You see, the managers had to be in charge. The managers had to listen and have their ears open to the technicians, but the manager had to make the decision. You see, I helped open the ears and the minds of the managers to receptivity to what the technicians were trying to tell them all along. Now he had to understand because he was going to have to come up and show and tell to the executive committee how he was to do his business.

So, he listened, and we got a lot of benefit out of the technician helping improve that data level that we never saw until it was presented. So, we had a lot smarter people and a lot smarter corporate body.

Q: So, the decision that General Hatch was to have made, he made that, obviously?

A: He just did.

Q: Oh, he did. Okay.

A: We sent in a regular decision paper a couple of weeks ago. It had a whole list of decisions on it. He approved them all, one of them with comment because just how these two regional centers will operate between centralized management, which you must have for that kind of operation, versus the day-by-day control of centers at the Waterways Experiment Station and NPD [North Pacific Division] has to be worked out in detail.

So, I suggested he might just want to leave that—because it's contentious between a couple of the field commanders—and just might want to have the details brought back to him for his final approval. So, he approved the concept, awaiting the details.

Q: Here's another area that I was going to ask you about. When I was talking to General Hatch last, he mentioned the CEAP area, of course, and another area he mentioned was that he had utilized you as his principal in working with the Army Staff on the E-Force structure. That, of course, is not something new to you, by any means, coming in as the deputy, having worked that issue at Fort Belvoir, and perhaps earlier and since as well.

At the time that you became the deputy last August, a year ago, where was E-Force; what was the status of that? Obviously some decisions had been made, but there were more yet to be made. Then we might look a little bit at how it's evolved over the last year.

A: Well, let me back off and just give a perspective right here and a little bit of the historical development in executive fashion.

E-Force was developed while I was at the Engineer School at Belvoir in 1984-'85, responding to my early education into TRADOC and how it works and the force structure fights of that fall.

My guidance from then-CAC commander General Vuono and TRADOC commander General Richardson was that they wanted the proponent, TRADOC's commandant—me in

the case of the engineers—to find new, creative ways to fix things, get it right for warfighting. My responsibility was to ensure the engineer system on the battlefield was right.

Well, from my long background in divisions, I knew that it wasn't right in Europe and knew what the answer was. We'd almost surfaced it in our REFORGER '77 FTX when I was VII Corps engineer and 7th Engineer Brigade commander in Germany. It was premature at the time, and so we worked then on mechanizing Corps engineers, getting APCs [Armored Personnel Carriers] for them, and doing other system things.

In my first year at Fort Belvoir, one of the things I put down was to fix all the engineer force structure while I was there. We were already under way in fixing and changing the combat heavy battalion. By the way, Bob Herndon, who had just finished commanding a combat heavy engineer battalion in Korea, was back, and for three or four months we used him to head the team to redesign the combat heavy battalion.



*General Kem (second from right) with members of the Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff, including Charles Schroer (third from left), Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Wynn, Commander of the Honolulu District (fourth from left), and Brigadier General Clair F. Gill, Commander of the Pacific Ocean Division (right).*

We'd just redone the light division engineers as part of the new light division. The airborne engineer battalion and air assault engineer battalion had just been redone. We were in the midst of doing the topo battalion over with an all-new topo concept. So, the only one we hadn't touched was the heavy division engineer battalion.

So, I put a team together and started working with Colonel Ted Vander Els, the Combat Developments Chief, and Majors Rick Capka and Houg Soo. I was intimately down with them working the details, trying to design how it really should be. So, we developed a new organizational model for engineers in the heavy division. What we were trying to do was provide the right kind of command and control and the right kind of force where the work gets done at the brigade level.

The other thing that had happened at that time was that NTC was showing that the engineers were not doing the job during exercises at the NTC. They had to be augmented. They were failing. They even had armor command sergeant majors, quote, "in charge of" fleets of bulldozers to get the work done, rather than the engineer company and the engineer platoon.

What was identified, in spades, was that the engineer platoon was insufficient to support the maneuver task force, and the engineer company was insufficient to support the maneuver brigade.

Now, I'd known that all along because I'd been out there in the field as a platoon leader in the 23d Engineers, 3d Armored Division, years ago and then as commander of the 7th Engineer Brigade and Corps engineer in VII Corps, Germany.

We put all that together, and then, like everything, we had to sell the product. So, we started developing the briefing that would articulate the need and market it. Then we had to call the new structure something.

So, that's when I came up with E-Force, engineer force because we were doing the whole force. E-Force really wasn't just the heavy division. It's come to be thought of as just that one increment remaining. In fact, my responsibility to Vuono and Richardson was to do the whole engineer force to fight the whole engineer battle. So, we had done all of it.

Now, only this piece hadn't been wrapped up, the heavy division. Over time, that got to be known as E-Force, and you'll see that again and again.

Q: You were referring to the whole thing?

A: Well, initially, I was referring to the whole thing.

Q: Yes.

A: My briefing usually says, "Here's where we are. Now, let me return to what's left—the heavy division." You take the briefing, which is, you know, an hour long. Well, there's 10 minutes on the problem and the whole, and then the next 50 minutes deal with just the heavy division

part. So, the emphasis of the briefing makes you think that's all that we're talking about in E-Force.

That was the genesis of E-Force. It started at that point in time but, unfortunately, I briefed General Vuono in his last month in command, and he was not receptive to new ideas in his last month. Later he was to tell me it's like telling a brigade commander how to run training in his last month in command.

I mean, he was receptive to the need, but it was one more thing that he wasn't going to be able to follow through before he left. His plate was full in wrapping up what he was doing, and so I sort of got the cold shoulder on it at the time.

Over the next year we worked some more on it and brought it back up to his successor, Lieutenant General Bob RisCassi, and General Richardson. It had not been to Richardson earlier. RisCassi sent it on to the TRADOC commander, who liked it. He wanted to send it on up to the Army Staff.

At this point, it was toward the end of Richardson's last year. The DCSOPS of the Army now was General Vuono. General Wickham was shortly about to leave as Chief of Staff. Once again, it was not deemed opportune by General Vuono to send it up because General Wickham had just slam-dunked a cavalry reorganization in his and General Richardson's last days.

You know, one of the aspects of E-Force all along was that it was never just an engineer thing. We brought infantry in and armor in. A lot of folks with experience at the NTC, maneuver commanders, said, "We got to have something like this." All that combined arms input contributed to E-Force from the beginning.

Now, maneuver commanders, as they went to the NTC, began ad-hocking E-Force so they could use the concept. Now we were hearing maneuver people really saying, "Hey, this thing's really paying off." I mean, this from tankers and infantrymen. Pretty soon, as people were hearing about it around the Army and trying it out, those people had done it as battalion commanders and brigade commanders and then they were assistant deputy chiefs.

So, we had a whole wealth of maneuver people who said, "This E-Force is better. It works better. For the first time, I have the right level of engineer—a captain, not a second lieutenant, at task force level, or a lieutenant colonel, not a captain, at brigade level—doing engineer command and control. I have got enough engineer assets, and it's really tailored to what I need."

This was coming out of the NTC in published lessons learned. People were getting it all over the Army.

So, as General Vuono returned as the TRADOC commander, we continued working the details and worked it throughout that year. When I left the Engineer School, Major General Reno took it on the following year. When General Thurman came in as TRADOC

commander, he sort of backed it up, and Bill Reno developed the study that really fleshed out the writing to support the concept.

Major General Dan Schroeder replaced him—we had a quick turnover of commandants. Schroeder came in and General Thurman challenged him to put analytics with the concept. Meanwhile, the commanders who liked it moved up, like Lieutenant General Saint at III Corps, who'd seen it at NTC, all of a sudden became Commander in Chief, USAREUR.

Now he wanted to implement E-Force, and he started communicating back between the Army Staff and TRADOC, wanting to get on with it, wanting to test it. General Thurman had said we should test it at a REFORGER exercise.

Later, General Thurman reneged from that position after a Schroeder brief. Thurman had stated he wanted a test in the same manner that the Army had done the 7th Infantry Division at the NTC—put it together, take it to a major exercise, and test.

The only place you can do that is at a REFORGER where you've got the Corps level FTX. We already knew about the NTC—that the engineer company was better than a platoon at the maneuver task force level. What we wanted to do was put the rest of it out there.

So, Thurman had pushed for it to go on REFORGER, and then he backed off. General Saint came up on the net and said, "Chief, I want to test it myself. TRADOC withdrew Army sponsorship, and I want to test it." The Chief of Staff said, "Go ahead. You test it. I'll send some TRADOC people over to watch it."

Meanwhile, Schroeder did his analytics and got the TRADOC analysis center involved. Then USAREUR had a very good test a year ago [January-February 1990] during REFORGER. They actually put the E-Force organization together on the battlefield, set up an ad hoc division engineer, brought in Colonel John Morris, who was deputy commander of the 7th Engineer Brigade, to be that colonel, division engineer commander. Gave him a staff, an S-3 and a deputy. Then they brought three battalions in to work with each of the three maneuver brigades, and they worked it during the REFORGER FTX.

It really proved itself. I mean, the lessons learned that came out of that FTX were that E-Force was really the answer on the heavy battlefield.

So, that sort of brings you to where it was when I came in last year as deputy. As I left USAREUR, we were just getting ready for this REFORGER test. We had wanted to document the organization so they could organize. We were not permitted to do that, so they had to ad hoc the organization, as I've just mentioned, for the test.

My activity as Deputy Chief regarding E-Force has not been direct. It's been indirect, and I've gotten a lot of men working over the last year—involved with USAREUR, Forces Command, the Army Staff, TRADOC, and Major General Schroeder at the Engineer School—trying to move the decision along. That is, too often things sit and aren't brought to a head, so I networked and pushed to make things happen.

Meanwhile, General Schroeder really has the ball. He's the proponent now. He did the heavy work of discussing it within the TRADOC community. His analysis in TRADOC—the Engineer Restructure Study—showed that a battalion was right for the maneuver brigade and that we needed all the things called for in the new organization. Under the AirLand Battle future program the Army was downsizing the heavy division. That's a future model. So, Dan Schroeder built a future engineer component.

E-Force, as a name, really isn't the name of this new organization. I mean, I already told you how E-Force manifests itself to the heavy division. The new concept looks an awful lot like E-Force, but it has things that have changed to match the AirLand Battle future concept. The program name was changed to the Engineer Restructure Initiative, and that's what Dan Schroeder's pushing now.

The Army, the field knows it was E-Force because it looks like E-Force and has the major things that the E-Force design had when we first came out with it. So, that's still, I guess, the name that one attributes to what we're talking about.

Q: So, we're still awaiting another decision?

A: Well, where it is right now is that General Schroeder was successful in going to General Foss, commanding general at TRADOC. General Saint, from USAREUR, came up on the net along with General Burba, commanding general of Forces Command, who was a big supporter when he was commandant at the Infantry School. He was a fellow commandant with me. Both came up on the net and supported it strongly.

General RisCassi left being the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army where he was facilitating those things on the Army Staff and went to Korea. He was a buyer and reorganized his engineers in Korea to the E-Force concept.

So, where we stand right now is that it has been approved by General Vuono for implementation in Europe as the force draws down. That's what General Saint wanted.

After Conventional Forces, Europe, when General Saint reduces the size of his European force, he designed what he wanted that force to look like. He wanted that force to have all of its divisions with an E-Force kind of regimental organization, and the Chief of Staff approved that. With TRADOC now having to approve the TO&E documentation, the letter was provided. Europe now has the modified organizations and, with the drawdown, will organize the two E-Force brigades. They planned to do that in two divisions in '91.

Korea also wants to do E-Force, and they've already come in so that this year's command selection boards will select their centralized troop commanders. Europe is in the process of doing the same thing for their troop commanders.

What happens in Forces Command is unknown at the present time. General Schroeder's documentation provides for everybody. I think that DESERT SHIELD, now ongoing, and with Forces Command in the midst of a build-down—that is, the 2d Armored is going out—and

with our deployments, our minds are turned to other things at the moment. So, that's where it is.<sup>4</sup>

Q: Okay.

A: So, my role this year has been as an active networker, but not the proponent's role.

Q: Working with a lot of players that you've dealt with all along.

A: About 50 or 60 or so.

Q: Yes.

A: I haven't had the direct role recently that Schroeder's had. There are just a lot of people who understand it now and want it. General Vuono asked me when I was still in Europe where we were with E-Force over there, and I told him, you know, in some jest, but not all jest, that the division and Corps commanders had finally convinced me that E-Force was the right way to go.

In fact, they were E-Force's greatest proponents. They were the ones that knew the engineers weren't right on today's battlefield. With this design because they had practiced it and seen their engineers and maneuver brigades and maneuver task forces go to field with it, had seen it work better, they were all sold on it. So, the clamor for E-Force is basically coming from all over. It's not just coming from engineers.

So, for the last three years I've not had to be the marketing spokesman for this concept. I gave my briefing to thousands of folks back when I was at Belvoir and created a TV tape of the briefing and passed that tape to a lot of division commanders and a lot of people to explain the why. I haven't had the tape out for the last two years.

What I've been trying to do with the networking is to make sure, if there's a decision point coming, if we have an obstacle, then we get rid of the obstacle so that everybody's in agreement, so we can try to keep moving. That's what I've tried to do this year.

Q: I think, as far as the engineer commander goes, General Hatch has observed when we were talking about the relationship of the Chief with the Engineer School, and his not being in command—

A: He was not the proponent.

Q: Right.

A: General Schroeder is the proponent.

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<sup>4</sup>*Editor's note:* Lieutenant General Franks, commander, VII Corps, deployed to Saudi Arabia with engineers organized as E-Force and fought in Iraq with the concept. Subsequently General Vuono approved the change so that armored and mechanized divisions would have an engineer brigade of three engineer battalions.

Q: Yes. General Hatch was talking about the importance of speaking the same language.

A: Yes.

Q: He said, “When we get E–Force, it will be because we all spoke the same language.”

A: Right. Exactly.

Q: I think that’s an important point.

A: It is, and my having been his deputy this year has allowed me to be a networker and help the whole process. Certainly, Colonel Tom Sheehy, over in the ACE’s office, has been very effective in working with DCSOPS in all the details of what’s going on.

Q: Is he in the Military Engineering and Topography Division?

A: Right. That division has had a bigger and more influential role this year than I’ve ever known in the past. I think, with his aggressive, can-do nature, he’s really taken on the correct context. That’s why I’ve stayed back and strategized and networked.

Q: Now, I want to turn to strategic initiatives a little bit. Of course, now General Hatch has just named an Associate Chief for Strategic Initiatives. What has been your role, then, in that area in the last year?

A: Well, I’ve been a very active player. Bill Robertson and I have talked lots of times. I’ve been involved with them. He carries the work basket of pushing things, and he’s networking and doing all of those very valuable things for USACE.

I think it was a very good stroke by the Chief in setting up that office and getting somebody who’s not burdened with an in-box of daily operational problems to be able to look ahead and try to articulate and network important things.

A long time ago, when I first became knowledgeable of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, he had, I’m not sure what it was called, a planning cell or strategic planning cell. I know Ernie Peixotto was in there at one time. During one of the position cutting drills, they did away with that office. It had just been a small office; I don’t know its size. It certainly wasn’t in the very aggressive, direct role that Bill Robertson plays today, but, I mean, it was the Chief’s ability to go out and do thinking and planning things.

I’d been in a similar kind of organization when I was in the Office of the Army Chief of Staff on what was called the Special Actions Team. We would do whatever the Chief of Staff or Vice Chief of Staff or Director of the Army Staff wanted. It was not specified. We could go out and chase various initiatives and try to help congeal staff thinking because they had to do all kinds of things every day and couldn’t spend time looking at a particular area. If the Chief or Vice Chief of Staff had something, we could go out and develop that issue for them and bring it back in.

Now, I always thought that if I was ever in such a position, I would want my own special actions team. I see Hank Hatch with the Office for Strategic Initiatives having been smart enough to establish his special actions team. He gave it the particular direction of strategic initiatives, but he has unencumbered it, just like we were unencumbered in the special actions team—from having a routine in-box. I mean, you do what seems to me to be done for the good of the corporation. When I first came in as deputy, I saw the Office for Strategic Initiatives and I thought, “Boy, that’s really a great stroke.” I’ve been very impressed with their work this year.

So, your question was, “What have I been doing with the Office for Strategic Initiatives?” Of course, Bill has direct access to the Chief and gets his guidance, and they interact together. I think I’ve been a sounding board for both. I think Bill’s come to see me to try things out beforehand. I’ve had the Chief ask me about various things.

So, I have played in a lot of these issues and initiatives enough to be counsel and sounding board. I’ve been involved very directly in putting together some of the things as we looked at things. Either we were going to go out and get together in the Senior Staff Group and dialogue on something, or, more specifically, on the space initiative, where I was the front person of the effort—going down to give the speech in Albuquerque during Space ’90 in February and meet with Dr. Aaron Cohen of the Johnson Space Center to start an interaction with NASA. I was making networking phone calls to the Space Systems Division and the Air Force staff to open the communications door there.

Q: Is that a new area for you?

A: Networking was not.

Q: No, no. The space initiative area.

A: Yes. I had not been involved in space before.

Q: Yes.

A: Then I know when they recently had a briefing of the General Staff Integrating Group, where the Chief is the member, I represented him because he was out at the senior leaders conference.

So, I’ve been involved most directly in that arena. I’ve been involved in the nation building mission push. As Bill and his folks put together the nation building piece, I was involved in suggesting folks to come in and be in the skunk works, involved out at the Fusion Center in some of the briefings and in the development of that initiative.

Later, as Colonel “Rock” [Terence C.] Salt became involved with taking on nation building, I went over to help brief Bob Page and the ambassador designee to Poland on how we could help in that arena. So, I’ve been a player both as part of the thinking and part of the doing.

Q: The decision on forming this office did have its people who had questions about it, were skeptical about it. One of the concerns that was raised at the time that this separate Office for Strategic Initiatives was established had to do with the very fact that you've looked on as a strength: the isolating of a strategic planning team. Originally some of this was handled out of the Resource Management office. Also, there was the involvement of, perhaps, a broader spectrum, or a deeper spectrum, of the staff, which maybe is not so much the case under the way things function now. Would you have a comment on that?

A: What you're suggesting is that when Resource Management had it, there was involvement of a broader, deeper spectrum of staff?

Q: I wouldn't necessarily tie it together to that. It's just the arrangement that existed before, another group that existed, was called the Strategic Planning Initiatives Group. That group involved a lot of less senior people, as well as senior people.

That is not so much the case now. It was said at the time that this strategic initiatives proposal—because that was worked through the staff and everything—it was said that doing this would, in effect, really destroy that old arrangement, and therefore strategic planning. All managers needed to think strategically, and there would be nothing left in place to get them to do that, in a sense, nor to take advantage, perhaps, of some of their contributions to the whole process.

A: Well, the latter one is the most important point. Back when there was Resource Management, and Kathy Thompson was involved with it—a very capable person—I was involved, I guess, when I was in the ACE.

Q: It's called Future Directions Branch, Resource Management, I think.

A: I don't know whether I was involved with the Strategic Planning Initiatives Group, or what it was called. I remember meeting, when I was Deputy ACE and Deputy Director of Civil Works, in future planning sessions that Kathy Thompson was getting off the ground. Maybe it developed deeper later.

Q: It was in Civil Works then, later.

A: Well, what I was going to say was I never had a feeling it really worked. I think the problem with it was—and I'm not really being fair, and I'm not castigating her under any circumstances because she is very capable—that it was all too structured. It was almost like the information management experience I have just talked about. The senior managers had only tuned in to the technical guys when they said, "Here's what we got." They never put their minds and thoughts really into CEAP to make it something, so that management never bought in. Senior managers participated every now and then, but they didn't buy into strategic planning. I'm talking about senior managers, director level. Although you might have had a lot of players, it might have been like some of those other staff activities I mentioned. We play in a lot of arenas in the Corps; we're a bunch of professionals and we talk and plan, but getting down to doing it, that's another question.

So, I think the value of what we have now in the Office for Strategic Initiatives is that you have an absolute buy-in of the Chief of Engineers. I mean, this is his thing. It's not Bill Robertson's thing. It's Hank Hatch's thing.

He's just not coming to a meeting and then pulling away. We now have a person in Bill Robertson who's higher up the pecking order and has an access to the Chief that Kathy Thompson never had. So, instead of working a process of strategic planning, talking about this and that as possibilities, and developing certain products, we now are developing the process and the vision and the products—developing the articulation for the Chief to use so the words are out on the table, then networking behind the scenes to open contacts, to make things happen, to hit points of influence.

It's much different now and much more active. Planning is not a very active thing. Planners just keep planning. I mean, it's sort of a truism. Army planners keep planning and planning and their product is a plan. Operators operate and accomplish the mission.

You get out into our divisions and districts, and our planners for years have turned out planning product after planning product. When I was in the Ohio River Division there was at least one district planning chief that every year budgeted the same studies. Just throw another little bit of money at it, hire a couple of people, and he would keep working, irrespective of whether the district ever came up with a product.

What a corporation needs in strategic planning is to find and establish a sense of direction and to follow that direction. Corporate America does that for several reasons: because a functional mission area goes away and they need a new one, or they've maximized their talents and they want to move into another area, or they see an opportunity, or they want to coalesce and find other opportunities because they've outgrown their wealth and are big enough to expand. Then they move, make decisions, and crank up.

What we in USACE were always doing was talking, but we were never doing in the process that I described of 10 years ago, in my view. What we have now with the Office for Strategic Initiatives is an ability to at least work in certain directions.

When I was in the Ohio River Division, the word was, "Yeah, we ought to be the federal engineer. You guys at the bottom go out and carve out your way of doing it." Well, some things you can do at the bottom, but to carve out a new mission area really is top team, top leadership stuff.

So, you don't approach NASA from the bottom, or even the Department of Energy—although we have, working the Hanfords and the Savannahs and all those other places. If you really want to carve out a mission area, that is doing the necessary things at the Washington level, and that means you have to get to influencers and decision makers and essentially get to the person who's got his hands on the resources.



*Groundbreaking Ceremony at the new Winfield Lock. Left to right, Major General Kem, Deputy Chief of Engineers, Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, Neil Diehl, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Ingram Barge Company, Congressman Robert Wise of West Virginia, and West Virginia Governor Gaston Caperton.*

To do that, the Chief's got to be in the lead. He has to have somebody who's paving the way, developing the contacts, setting it up, writing the articulations, and doing the networking. That's what we've got now with Bill Robertson and the Office for Strategic Initiatives.

With the Office for Strategic Initiatives, we have a very proactive element. They are not just strategic planners. I mean, the word is not strategic planning now, you see—it's strategic initiatives.

Q: Initiative. Which is the emphasis more on the action.

A: That's right. It's action.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I arrived after the fact; it was all set up. When I walked in as the deputy and found out what it was, I just nodded to myself and said, "What a smart guy Hank Hatch is to do that."

Q: Now, you are on the Senior Staff Group that meets—I don't know if it's a regular schedule.

A: Periodically.

Q: Periodically. That is all the senior level people and general officers, basically?

A: Basically, yes, the SESs and general officers at the headquarters.

Q: Maybe you can say a little bit about how it works.

A: It's a forum that allows the Chief to dialogue firsthand with his senior staff, a so-called board of directors. Most of the time, the board of directors meet here. I think we're more effective if we always involve the great, strong leaders, our SESs and our general officers, at this level. There are so many of them in the headquarters, in our offices and Directorates of Military Programs and Civil Works. I don't even want to use their names because then I would leave somebody out.

Just run down the names, the division chiefs of those two directorates, and you've got a wealth of experience, hands-on in the field and at the headquarters. They have done all kinds of things. That is a tremendous assimilation of talent.

So, the Senior Staff Group is the Chief's way of interacting with them all—to dialogue with them. So, I say that's our board of directors. I mean, not a board in the sense of validating what the chief executive wants, but a board in the sense of contributing fully to the charting of direction.

The Senior Staff Group provides a great dialogue for the Chief of Engineers to work on anything important. Some of our sessions have been contentious. I mean, people let their hair down and say what they believe. That's really superb, that you've got a forum of such people, and an environment where people feel free to really say what they believe. It's got to be a positive thing when the Chief of Engineers can hear two of his top folks take different sides of an issue. Of course, the other thing goes with it too—when something is out on the table, you can't keep quiet if you have a thought and it affects you. I mean, you'd better stand and be counted because you were there. Silence means you buy in, so it causes people to have to talk.

A couple of those meetings of the Senior Staff Group that I've been at this year have had to do with program and project management, as we've sorted out what different interpretations of what those things mean. Our divisions have tried to reorganize project management to meet what they saw as the Chief's guidance, and their interpretations have been different.

So, it's been a way of coalescing a corporate position and a way for the Chief to hear straight up what his top people think and a way for the Chief to dialogue back. I mean, it's not a one-way, Chief telling them this. It's really a dialogue, and I've really been impressed with that. I've rather enjoyed the Senior Staff Group.

Q: I think having that type of forum was part of the original plan when the office was set up. That went along with it. General Hatch and I haven't gotten to this area yet in our interview, but—

A: Well, I don't know that specifically, but the two go hand in hand because if you've got an initiatives group charged—remember, they developed the vision first—and all of that to sort of set a course and how you work through things, then it is essential for the Chief to have a

way to bang things around among the senior folks for two purposes: To get it right, first of all, and, second so they have a buy in, so there's a consensus that this is the right way to go.

I guess also so the Chief hears different views, and when he makes up his mind, it's not just been Bill Robertson talking. Bill may have been the architect in putting all of this together, but it's been banged around by all the other good thinkers. He gets all the inputs, and we can better a good product, with a consensus buy in, and everybody feeling good because they participated.

Q: I don't know if you can answer this. As an institution, the Office for Strategic Initiatives—it's very clearly General Hatch's "thing." When a new Chief comes in, do you think it's likely to have proven itself and be the means that will continue, or is it really—

A: One can never predict those things.

Q: Yes.

A: I created my "thing" when I was at Fort Belvoir as commandant. It was a technique to create a matrix thinking, developing synergy. I called it my "mafia." I brought Tom Farewell in to head what I called the Engineer Force Modernization Office, my special actions team. I gave him two people, ensured they were not encumbered by an in-box, and used them as the focus of activities of the mafia and others to make things happen for the engineer force modernization efforts I was pushing.

They were big drivers in helping me work to establish E-Force. They did a lot of integrating work and networking, and I thought they were super and did significant work. Yet, my successor killed it in three months after he arrived because all the other folks, the colonels in the command, turned against it.

You see, the mafia folks were lieutenant colonels, and I thought I was taking care of the insecurities of the colonels by making them the oversight. They, the colonels, met with me and the mafia, and we always did things together. When I left, the colonels turned upon it, and Bill Reno did away with it.

So, I would say you can't be assured that the Office for Strategic Initiatives and Bill Robertson will continue like that, and if you get somebody other than Bill in there driving the Office for Strategic Initiatives, it may not be as effective and, you know, his interests may not stay there forever. If you get a guy of that ilk, his satisfactions come from creating and doing things. If he feels that it's no longer an opportunity for creativity, then he may well decide there are other places that he can get such satisfaction. Without him, there goes the chemistry because he and Hank Hatch right now have great chemistry.

Q: That's an important part of it.

A: It is.

Q: Like your group, you had the chemistry, I'm sure.

A: That's right. So, if either one of the next two don't have that chemistry, then it won't quite work. So, it could go away.

Q: Have you given your successor some advice from your last year as to his first months, or whatever?

A: I think so, but if you're going to ask me to say what they were now, I'm having difficulty in recounting it.

I've walked through a bunch of things. I've talked to him about many of the things I've talked about today, that is, process versus substance, inside–outside, how you have to play across the board, how you have to anticipate, how you have to try to influence the action, and the need for better timeliness on the part of our headquarters in coming to grips with issues. What I really mean in timing is coming to grips with what we need to do, whether it's a little thing or a big thing, also, the fact that the budgets of the coming years mean we have to find a way to do less with less.

Q: Not everyone states it that way, do they? Doing less with less?

A: No. A lot of people say more with less.

Q: More with less. Right.

A: I say that because we're going to have a 580,000-person Army. We cannot expect to continue USACE at this size for a 580,000-person Army. It has just come back to me in the last couple of weeks since Ernie Edgar's arrived, and I've had the opportunity to communicate that to him.

Way back when we were doing the command operating budget, it was obvious our funds were being cut. I laid down several markers, and we tried to not salami slice. I tried to put it out to people that we must look at a different way of doing business. We can no longer afford everything in the same manner.

So, for purposes of looking ahead to '91, we've got a 40 percent cut. You'd better find out how you're going to live within that. You hit a 30 percent cut, you'd better find out a way how to do it.

For example, the Engineering and Housing Support Center. We're going to have a 580,000-person Army and fewer installations. Since the center's job is engineering and housing support to the field, they had better find out how they can be smaller and do it. So, what's essential? To all—don't just salami slice. Figure out if there is something we're doing that we should not be doing, so you can cut it away.

Q: You know, you asked the same question at the transitions workshop a year ago too.

A: Did I, really?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, it will all come back to haunt me. [Laughter]

What has happened this month since I've returned from leave and while Ernie Edgar's been here, we crossed into the new fiscal year. All of a sudden we're in the year that the command operating budget is effective.

Each one of our offices has come back to Ernie and said, "He cut my budget. I can't live this year." So, I told Ernie, "You know, we're going to have to find a way." I mean, once you get your budget cut, there are two ways to work it.

One is, you find out what's really essential, and you reorganize and downsize to do the essential. Second, if your essential is more than that, then you find the way to better your articulation to go fight the battle back uphill, to show the Army why we need more money for that.

So, you ought to be able to win, one way or the other. You've gotten lean, and having gotten lean, if there's something still so essential that's important, you have a better argument to go back to the Department of the Army.

Now, six, seven months ago when they got their reduced markers, all these people didn't do that. They waited until now, and then they've thrown the marker back and said, "I can't get by this year because I don't have enough money." So, having not articulated a need for more, they are left to downsize.

In fact, at the Engineering and Housing Support Center now—they have a new commander—Ed Watling came in and said, "I need more people." I said, "Ed, the Army is not going to give you more people" because, as General Sullivan said the other day, if we don't cut some places in the Army, we're all going to be standing around watching our one division of people—because that's all we got out there doing the job.

So, one of the things I've told Ernie Edgar is that one of his big challenges this year—if we can get by this surge of Vanguards, Lab 21s, and all the rest of the studies—is to really bring our own selves to bear on our organization so that we find the way to change and get our people really to come to grips with trying to get leaner. Corporate America has gotten leaner. When I was in Europe, I arrived as DCSENGR, and the Commander in Chief, General Otis, had just eliminated ISAE from my organization.

Now, the Engineering and Housing Support Center is patterned after ISAE. It does for the Army what ISAE did for the U.S. Army in Europe. I was there when ISAE was started years ago, in '78, '79 in Europe, and it was a nice organization, provided support to the directors of engineering and housing in the field. Over time it got bigger and bigger, and more of its people supported each other in the field.

So, General Otis said, “We’re going to cut the headquarters. We’re going to do away with functions we don’t need. I’ll make the tough choices between what we have to do and what we’d like to do.”

Everybody said, “You can’t do away with ISAE. We have to do this. We have to provide staff assistance to our installations.” He said, “No, you don’t. You only get around to an installation about once every two years. What kind of assistance is that? You know, when installations call, they have to get in a queue, and you’ve got somebody required for the scheduling.” So, he did away with the whole outfit. Some of the things were moved to the DCSSENGR’s staff. I mean, different things moved different places, but ISAE as an entity went away.

When General Saint came in, we had to take the Vander Shaaf cuts. As Chief of Staff, as I mentioned earlier, I led the staff effort over there where we had to cut 450 spaces out of USAREUR and the Corps headquarters. We found a way to do it.

We cut a lot of sacred cows on the way, like 20 auditors. “You can’t cut auditors,” we were told, but we did. We did away with our MS-3 staffing study shop. “You’ve got to have an MS-3 shop,” they said. “No, we don’t,” and we really didn’t. We also eliminated 30 lie detector operators.

Now we’ve got to meet this new requirement in USACE, you know? We have to make tough choices. We all say you shouldn’t salami slice, but if you don’t make a choice between A and B, then you have to take the same percent off both of them.

We haven’t come to grips with that in USACE. So, I’ve told Ernie Edgar that I did not succeed this year. I tried to cut excess. I sent a marker to the Engineering and Housing Support Center, told them that they were going to have to figure it out. I sent a marker to the Engineer Automation Support Activity, told them they were going to have to figure it out. Sent one to the Engineer Studies Center, told them they would have to figure it out, and all of them stonewalled change.

Really, we are going to have to figure out how to cut somebody because you can’t continue doing everything at the same level when what you’re supporting is smaller.

Q: Is a lot of that going to come in the very next year, do you think, or spread out maybe over a few? I mean, is the next year going to be really the toughest, or might it be ’92 that’s even worse?

A: I think the work activity for addressing it is next year. See, the advantage of doing it on your own initiative is that you might well be able to program the ramp. If somebody else does it to you, you probably can’t program the ramp. There are a lot of reasons why you want to program the ramp.

You might be able to say, “I want an Engineering and Housing Support Center of this size. However, during the pullout from Europe and the base realignment and closure process for two years, I ought to take a little and take a little and then take some more in the fourth or

fifth year.” As opposed to saying, “We don’t need this. Cut them all now,” like General Otis did in Europe.

So, we really must come to grips with realities. That’s one item I’ve told Ernie that he’s going to have to focus on.

Q: There’s a lot of pain associated with that, of course.

A: Sure there is. I mean, it’s tough.

Q: This has been a not very usual situation in which there have been two deputies on duty concurrently for a period, even though short. It’s given you an opportunity for some overlap and some of this interaction that normally doesn’t occur.

We were joking about that the other day, but it’s only been maybe—what? It will end up being about six weeks of time.

A: Well, it’s really been fortuitous for a couple of reasons. He came in, I guess, around the latter part of July, and I was gone for eighteen, nineteen days in August. So, we had a couple of weeks of overlap, and then I turned it over to him, so he was able to operate and had to come to grips with things.

Part of the problem of any transition is that the issues don’t surface while you’re there overlapping so that you’ll have an opportunity to dialogue it while it is hot. So, by his early assignment, he was in the saddle and having to operate. Then when things came to his attention, he could ask about that. I may have not thought to tell him about it to begin with. So, we’re able to dialogue better from that standpoint.

Second, he then was able to get around and get acquainted while I was operating the store. When I was on leave, he was operating the store. I could finish up the automation, which is one of the big things to be completed, while he was there to mind the store. Plus, then the senior leaders conference came during the period. We always have to leave somebody in Washington, and I could stay back while he could go out and interact with all the leaders that he was going to associate with in the future. So, that worked nicely too.

It’s worked throughout. Like, even next week, I turn out to be the designated guy to stay home because both the Chief and he will be out of town. With our requirements to have generals in town, and before Bill Ray came back to be Director of Military Programs, we were one shy. I’m still behind in my officer efficiency reports, even after all that. I mean, that’s how fully employed I’ve been—all the Vanguards and all those other actions.

Q: When you commented earlier about the need to know the Army system and how the Washington scene works and everything and since you just mentioned the Vanguard study and all of the other things, there are some things that have been coming out recently from Vanguard and defense management reviews, I believe it is. Has the Corps been caught off balance by any of those, or were these all mostly things we anticipated coming along?

A: Yes, I think we've played in all of those activities. The problem is, in all those studies, you get people who really don't understand. They go crashing on in some great crusade to do something. They don't understand, and once they put a marker down that certain cuts seem appropriate, then they're unwilling to back off from their position. Remember the Vander Shaaf action I discussed in USAREUR?

So, the good guys—us—are always on the defensive to folks who really have some imbecilic ideas, and to deter them just takes an exorbitant amount of executive and staff time. It's really a lot of work, and some of the ideas are atrocious and unrealistic.

Q: Yes. Maybe what I was getting at was, wasn't there a way earlier to anticipate and do something so that they didn't get to this situation? I guess that is what I was looking for. Were there some missed opportunities, perhaps, or some things you could have paid more attention to?

A: Well, Vanguard, I mean, that's been an ongoing process. I'm really disappointed with their hardheadedness and misunderstanding of USACE and our labs and their apparent unwillingness to find out the facts.

Now, we know the process is growing. We've had them over. We've talked to them. So, I think we've participated. For some reasons, they don't understand facts, logic, and truth. So, it's just very difficult. I mean, we say certain things that meet their requirements and the principles they espouse, and then they produce a new paper that comes back with the very same original position, as if you'd never talked. So, how do you deal with that?

Certainly, we've been playing with them for weeks. I met just this afternoon on where we stand.

On the defense management reviews, those come down sometimes with a bit of surprise, sometimes not. Certainly, the big one going on now is who's the construction agent. We were participating with them. I think we were a little surprised by what they originally came out with.

Their numbers are also very wrong. So, how do you ever anticipate that somebody's going to use screwed-up numbers, then think it's the gospel and come up with a conclusion without even the other option that you had been led to believe was going to be in there to begin with.

Now, I don't know if that meant that we dropped our guard at an inopportune time. We were certainly surprised when they only came out with two options.

Q: I don't know if you've had any predictions on what might happen. For example, for the big one you were just talking about, do you know what the outcome of that defense management review might be?

A: No. Now they're talking about yet another study, going to April. Blows my mind. Everybody's got a better idea of how to do things.

Q: Yes.

A: We spent an exorbitant amount of time addressing all those ideas, and there's an awful lot of wheel spinning. For some reason, Defense puts people in positions of responsibility with a bean-counter mentality whose sole justification seems to be to achieve some level of cut.

"Goodness" is then defined, you know, as to whether you achieve the cut, rather than whether you've done the job that needs to be done for the Army.

Why people that have that outlook get picked to go into those jobs, I don't know. Certainly we teach in all of our schools that mission accomplishment is paramount, doing the Army's job. That really gets lost when people keep quoting, "We're doing this to meet the principles of Vanguard."

The principles of Vanguard are fewer field operating agencies. Yet, you could have something like a subordinate operational activity; that's all right. Doesn't that sound like a field operating agency?

Q: Yes.

A: Only by another name?

Q: Yes.

A: Sure it does. So, I don't know. The original mark on the wall becomes the driver, and we have folks who see their measure of success as to whether they can achieve that number, irrespective of mission accomplishment or effectiveness, and that's absolutely wrong.

We ought to find out how to effectively accomplish the mission with fewer resources, or with the right number of resources, or articulate the cause if it's a threshold on a certain kind of resource, like AMHA [Army Management Headquarters Account] spaces, to get it right.

Part of the Vanguard problem is that it was good, in years past, to have subordinate activities do these kinds of jobs rather than headquarters. Now, "good" has been redefined. It's no longer good to have a field operating agency. It's better to have the function at the headquarters, but you can't have more spaces at headquarters—that is against another principle, which was the original problem that caused the field operating agencies to be established to meet the original "goodness." So—it's bonkers.

Q: How do you feel at this point, now that you're about two weeks away from retirement?

A: Oh, I feel that I'd rather go back, start my career all over again, and do it all over.

Q: Sure.

A: I mean, if you asked me again, I might tell you the same thing. I feel pretty good. I've had 34 years, 5 months of great service, and I've enjoyed all of it—some days more than others.

We've just got great people and a great mission and a great opportunity to serve, and I feel that I have contributed more than my fair share and have some significant achievements that I'm proud of. So, it's been a wonderful time.

At the same time, they don't let you stay forever. I've always known that at least by June of next year I would be retired mandatorily. So, I started on a path to ensure that I was looking at opportunities should they come up in the final year and not stay until the very last day before I started looking.

Mentally, I'm prepared for that transition as well. So, I feel pretty good.

Q: Well, it's certainly been a pleasure talking about the last year.

A: Sure. Well, I've enjoyed this. It's been fun.



*In a ceremony at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, on 3 May 2002, Major General Richard S. Kem, USA (Ret.) (center, right), received the Gold Order of the deFleury Medal from Lieutenant General Robert B. Flowers, Chief of Engineers and Colonel of the Army Engineer Regiment (center, left). The Gold Order of the deFleury Medal is the most prestigious individual recognition award presented by the Army Engineer Regiment. Only one such medal is presented each year. General Kem also is wearing the Silver Order of the deFleury Medal, which he received in May 1989. (Photos by F. T. Eyre, HQUSACE, and Michael Curtis, DPTM TSC, Fort Leonard Wood.)*

