

## APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW WITH LIEUTENANT GENERAL WALTER K. WILSON, JR.  
PROFESSOR RICHARD T. FARRELL, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
MOBILE, ALABAMA, JULY 21, 1975

Q: I am interested in what you remember about your service in the Mediterranean Division. It was established in 1952, and you came in as Division Engineer in 1953.

A: Well, let me see. For a little background, East Atlantic District in Morocco got going about the same time as Greenland. The North Atlantic Division was responsible for both these Districts. And, incidentally, it was supervising me and Mobile to a degree since we were building a classified facility up in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, that was coordinated with one that General Sturgis was building out in the Denver area. Greenland was closer, and also Greenland had the problem of seasonal construction. So it got one heck of a lot of attention from the Division and the Chief's office. I don't think Morocco did.

North Atlantic Division was gradually relieved of some of its excess assignments. The East Ocean Division was formed in Richmond to take over the northern work, and Mediterranean Division was established to take over the Middle East and East Atlantic Districts and the Turkish-U.S. Engineer Group (TUSEG).

The first District Engineer in Morocco was George Derby. I know him very well. He was a cadet when I was. He was two years ahead of me, and there's no finer gentleman in the world. The construction in Morocco was started before it was ready. It was kind of like landing on a hostile shore. What I learned out there did me a lot of good when we were doing things in Vietnam because I could see what was coming but nobody paid much attention then either, so it didn't help. But, through no one person's fault, but just the fact that the management really thought they had to complete certain physical work by that summer in order to prevent some kind of a world problem with Russia and others, they poured it in. They shipped stuff,

took it ashore, without adequate organization yet to receive it. They didn't have any place to put it. They didn't have any warehouses. They didn't have these kinds of things. They could have waited a couple of months and gotten their organization built up and a little storage area. It was very much like, as I say, landing on a hostile shore. Materials were landed and got put out some place, and that's the last anybody saw them for a while. Some of them were probably never seen again. Furthermore, the emphasis in dealing with the contractor was to get the job done. The key thing was there must be planes landing on the 14th of July 1951.

There were several airfields capable of taking some planes by that deadline, but they weren't as well built as normal. There were some little pebbles--several feet in diameter--within inches or feet of the surface of the runway. They had placed fill and rock, day and night. There had been the usual inspection and so on, but there had also been this terrific urge. The fate of the free world depended on getting this ready, and probably that was the true cause.

At any rate, they did land planes there on schedule, and we didn't have any expansion of the Korean War into a world deal, and so maybe that was it, I don't know. But it meant that the contractors' efforts were less than perfect in that they didn't have an opportunity to get staffed and organized and so on. The A-E's [architect-engineer's] work was similar, and people were thrown in helter-skelter and tried to get going and organized. Frankly, that's why they started the Mediterranean Division.

[Orville E.] Walsh went over as Division Engineer to establish the Division, and [Gunnard] "Swede" Carlson and others [went over]. But by the time they got there, the job organization was a group of armed camps. Everybody was keeping his little black book to protect himself. I'm talking now about everybody in the District itself and their key people, the architect-engineer and their key people, the construction contractor combine and their key people, the Air Force command over there, and the French liaison mission. Now you throw

another headquarters on top of it. The District didn't like it worth a damn. They figured they had now gone through the worst. They had gotten over the worst, and now suddenly here's this helpful crowd showing up only 20 miles away to look over their shoulders and step on them. So let's put it that it was not a mutual, pleasant, or happy situation on the U.S. side. I don't blame any particular individual. It's just, you know, when something starts bad, it scares everybody.

In the meantime the Air Force, at this stage in life, was quite interested in doing their own construction and not having the Corps of Engineers do it. This looked to them like a golden opportunity. There were congressional investigations of all kinds. Now this was all going on about the time that the Division was organized, and I think it was part of the cause of organizing the Division. But let's put it that the Chief of Engineers didn't wake up to the fact that the job was in trouble till it was already in much trouble. At that stage, it was not easy to correct.

We had an outstanding group of contractors, and they had some really fine people. We had a real outstanding group of architect-engineers. Unfortunately, they didn't necessarily send as high caliber over there after the initial start as I would have liked to have seen them send, but they still were well qualified. There was an outstanding group of consultants. But this same atmosphere of fear existed throughout. I just know about it from reading into the situation when I got there and from working and talking with many of those who had been involved as I earned their acceptance.

When I was appointed South Atlantic Division Engineer in October 1952, I didn't move my family right away because I didn't believe that after having two Districts in a row and now a Division that I would be left alone very long. But by Christmastime, when they hadn't moved me, I saw Chief Sam Sturgis in Washington and told him I was going to move my family up to Atlanta. And he said, "Sure, you should have already."

I moved them up there about the first of the year (1953), and we rented a house. I went to the Chief's office for a meeting between mid- and late-January and found out Sam Sturgis wanted to see me. I went in to see him, and he says, "You're going to Morocco!" So I left my family in Atlanta and got to Morocco in March or April.

Walsh had been in Morocco I guess about a year when the Joint Construction Agency (JCA) in Europe was getting into some kind of problems. So they transferred him from the Mediterranean Division up to JCA. There was no full-time Division Engineer in the Mediterranean Division for a minimum of six months, maybe longer, but Colonel Carlson was there and so was [Curtis W.] Curt Chapman. Jack Campbell, as senior officer in the whole Division, was acting Division Engineer in addition to his full-time District Engineer job. Then I arrived.

I got quite a bit of briefing and so on, of course, before I went. By that stage in life the top management of the Chief of Engineers' office was convinced that they weren't going to get control of the situation until they got away from a cost-plus-fixed-fee contract on the construction site. Then they gave me very strong indications that I should look very hard and see if there wasn't some way to make such a conversion as promptly as possible. Basically, they gave me a feeling that look, do it unless it's absolutely, positively, definitely not the right thing to do.

I landed there about a week after a team from OCE. It quickly became clear that the staff in the Division, all of whom felt they had been sent over here on a white charger to straighten everything out, had very little respect for the District staff. They didn't trust the contractor, they didn't like the architect-engineer, they didn't like the Air Force, and they wouldn't trust the French Liaison Mission. They knew that they had a terrible bear by the tail because the cost was going up. They couldn't get a handle on it, and they couldn't find out how you control this. On the other hand, the District felt they had been handpicked when they came over, and they had come with George Derby, who was an experienced District Engineer who had recently been replaced by Jack

Campbell, also handpicked. But they knew they had gotten the short end of the stick through some of the early days, 'and they were gun shy.

Instead of being a help, at the moment it really was a hindrance to have these two headquarters there. Remember, on a cost-plus-fixed-fee job, the contracting officer was the District Engineer, and the contractor couldn't do lots of things that he would like to do without getting specific authority. For instance, they had to have a terrific supply setup because the contractor could not say fly me over a bulldozer blade or something if he ran out of it. He had to get the permission of the District Engineer, who would have to justify the cost of flying it versus having thought about it earlier and shipping it. There were just all kinds of personnel problems. The contractor couldn't necessarily fire somebody because under the CPFF thing, the government had an overseeing responsibility on top of it. So the many, many normal quick routes to straighten out something like this weren't easily available. The District Engineer had to think in these terms: "Now, we are accused of all this business and mismanagement. If I make the wrong decision here, who's going to get hung?" The Division staff in turn were there, and as long as they're there they had a responsibility, too. So, it wasn't too good.

I immediately started my staff in making an analysis as to whether we should convert this from a cost-plus to a lump-sum-type arrangement, and they worked on it pretty hard. Colonel Chapman was spearheading it, and of course we had some well-qualified civilians there too, and they worked on it. But along about the first of May they reported to me. We had about a whole-day session while they reported, and they conclusively demonstrated the impracticability of converting. It would have to stay CPFF. It was not realistically practical to convert in a situation of this magnitude. This was a sincere report, so I turned it around and said, "I surely appreciate it. This was the finest analysis I have ever heard of this nature? I said that I was going to leave for a three weeks' trip to inspect the other areas in the Mediterranean Division: Tripoli, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, and TUSEG. I said, "I'll be gone about

three weeks. When I get back I want to see just exactly as thorough and outstanding-an analysis as you just presented to me, but I'd like to have it pointed out that it could conceivably be a good idea to go in and try this conversion. This might be a way of getting out of our problems.'

This was somewhat of a blow and a shock to the assembled staff, but by golly I came back and they had it. Now, I'm sure they weren't convinced yet, but it did put a different slant on things. After we talked about it and reviewed it for about two weeks, I had at least gotten the top element of the Division to agree with me that there could be advantages to conversion. So Colonel Chapman and I went back to Washington about early June. We in the meantime had tried to figure out how much money we needed. We spent about three weeks in the Chief's office and in the Pentagon. We got with the Chief's office, and they concurred finally that we should try and convert. Then we had to get permission from the Secretary of the Army, and all this took a lot of doing. We had to get a certain amount of money. I don't remember the exact amount, but it was up in the millions; and we needed it right now, you know, to cover our deficit on the work already under contract. Near the end of June I picked up my family and took them to New York, and we rode the transport over to Casablanca.

I got a few days of rest. I came with an authority to convert if I could convince the contractor that it was in his best interest as well as ours. And I had--I've forgotten exactly how much--about 5 to 15 million bucks we had gotten in order to be solvent. Well, they met me at the gangplank; Colonel Carlson, Chapman, and others. They took me aside and said, "We're sorry to tell you, but you need 10 million more than you brought." "Well," I said, "who have you told?" And he said, 'Nobody,' and I said, "Don't. The only one that's going to know it is you and me and let's try and sort it out first, before we say anything. I'm not going to even think about going back, saying we were wrong by 5 million bucks. At this stage, we may have to, but we'll never do it now."

So then we went and got into high gear, and we met with the contractors. I became completely

convinced that the contractors' management wanted to have a clean job that they could be proud of. They also felt that their chance--and our best chance of getting near true management capabilities--was to convert it, to get off this cost-plus instead of having a committee rule. We thought, "Let's give them the responsibility and let them do it." But then our big problem was how do you convert a going contract with major work at five major airfields, plus numerous lesser facilities scattered around in radar stations and things like that, all of them under construction, all of them constructed under costplus a fixed fee? We were working around the clock, overtime, everything you can imagine. Materials were arriving daily, lots of materials. How do you estimate what to set as a figure on a particular moment at midnight on the last day of July? Well, as you can readily see, this is some problem. But again, I was convinced that the contractor forces wanted to do it in order to improve the efficiency and costs of the job.

Q: Were most of these contractors American firms, or were they European?

A: Well, the Atlas combine was an American firm. There were five major contractors from the U.S. that had combined to form Atlas constructors.... Their management committee was the head man from each of these five firms, and they were over there for this purpose. The sponsor was Morrison-Knudsen. On all these things they always have a sponsor.

They were scared. They were concerned. They didn't like what had been going on. They wanted to try and get it straightened out so it could be a better job. One that they could get some good reputation out of instead of a lousy reputation. But they felt, as did I, that if we could convert, it might give a handle we could get hold of. I was convinced personally that the only way to make it a success was to be darned sure that I succeeded in allowing enough money in the contract so **the** contractor was not going to have initial fiscal problems. But I felt that I could convince them that they couldn't keep excess profits because it was under the wartime renegotiation regulations required with any cost-plus contract.

I promoted this idea privately with the head man of the combine. I said, "I want to try and see to it that we come up with a price which you can live with, but I'm going to expect you to come back and hand me money anytime you can because then I can crank that into additional authorized construction and that will be a legitimate base on which you can draw legitimate profit. So I'm going to try and get you down to a price that I think is realistic, but I'm sure going to try and see to it that we don't start off with you in financial trouble." So these were our two attitudes.

But there were thousands of people working on this thing and you can't go around telling them all this. I'm convinced most of the government employees over there thought I was on somebody's payroll. They thought I was giving away our shirt. When we started our negotiations in the latter part of July, Jack Campbell was the District Engineer, so he was the contracting officer and had to run it. We did them day and night, and I mean day and night. We got very little sleep. All of a sudden, it dawned on me that Jack was about cracked physically, and I got concerned about it.

Incidentally, the Chief's office had sent over a team with Dave Tulley, the new assistant chief of engineers for military construction, and he was there with a special representative of the Secretary of the Army with authority to approve or disapprove. We had to have this authority on site, we couldn't fiddle around and go back and forth. So I talked with them, and they had noticed the same thing. They were just sitting in listening all this time. They agreed Jack just couldn't make it physically so we put him to bed and I took over, which was not the nicest or easiest thing to try and do either. But, in order to make a long story short, the contractor was talking in terms of \$45 million before he even wanted to talk to us about work--the current contract--and the nearest figure that I could get out of anybody on our side was about \$21 million.

I had worked hard with Swede [Carlson] and Curt Chapman and our civilian staff in the Division and got them up to a figure that was over \$20 million. They didn't like it. They thought it was too high,

but they accepted the fact that it was a negotiating figure. To make a long story short, we finally settled on \$32 million, and I told the contractors that I wanted them to know that I realized this was too high, but I was going to accept it. I said, "I'm going to recommend that we get approval of the Secretary of the Army because I think it's the only way we can get going. I'm convinced you can do the job more efficiently if we quit having this committee system, and I'm expecting you to come back in the middle of October and offer us back some money which can then be cranked back in because I can assure you, if you make any excess profits, I'm going to lead the team that analyzes you and see that we take them away?"

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As a result of our conversion to a CPFF posture, something on the order of 4,000 Americans left fairly promptly. I can't be sure of these figures, but there was a tremendous exodus within the first 30 days of conversion. One thousand or more of them left right away. How could they do it? Well, real easy. They no longer maintained this supply record, as such. They went on a basis of when they got supplies, here they are, if they're needed on a job and a guy shows up with proper authority, he can have it. We won't need anywhere the size staff we've got here. Furthermore, we'll order in advance on major things that we know are needed. On a lot of little odds and ends, we'll wait until we see if we use up all the stock we have. If we run out, we'll fly something over. So on that basis, and that was an honest basis, there was a terrific exodus of fairly high-priced U.S. help.

Now the same thing applied to some extent to the technical side because when you're on a CPFF thing, you've got yourself, the contractor has himself, and he's got somebody looking down his throat every minute so he has to have a good qualified technical man there watching a good qualified technical man do the work. And then the architect-engineer is going to have somebody sit in there too because he wants to be sure it's done right. Then the government is going to have somebody sitting there too. But without these requirements any longer in effect, the contractor's work force was pared

materially. Under the cost-plus basis, we had to approve the local hires. We had to approve the subcontractors he got. When he became his own prime contractor, he could do a lot of this. He could put native drivers on equipment at his own risk without us having to be utterly and completely convinced that they were duly, fully qualified and all this kind of thing. So there was a major change.

To everyone's amazement--including Dan Teters, the contractor's top man who had been captured on Wake Island and [who was] a prisoner all through World War II, a heck of a fine guy--progress picked up using fewer people and produced greater profit. By the middle of September, Jack Bonny and his group came back for another visit. He came in to see me and said, "I've got \$5 million I want to return to you right now." This was after 45 days, and I said, "Jack, I appreciate that because I think it ought to be about 15. I've been watching, but I'll take the 5, and I'll say no more because I'll expect to see you again in the middle of October." And that's the way it worked. We renegotiated those lump-sum figures we had originally established about three times over the next three or four months. Authorized additional work was added on a much more realistic cost basis to the contract. We had a big renegotiation along about the middle of November.. We nearly had a parting of the ways.

The contractor had established Lyman Wilbur over there in addition to Dan Teters. Dan Teters was resident manager, but Lyman Wilbur was the resident partner. Lyman's job at this stage really was to keep track of this business and get ready for negotiations. About the middle of November they came back with their management committee--Mills and Teters, someone from J.A. Jones, I believe, all of them. We had a long negotiation. It was supposed to last about a day. It started about Sunday. Lyman Wilbur had analyzed every single operation. It was a pile of material about a foot thick in about two or three volumes. I had gone over it myself personally, and I couldn't find a single place that I could quarrel with. It was a beautiful job. He's an outstanding estimator, but he also is a complete perfectionist. He estimated

every element so there was no chance of their being wrong in any little steps. When you added them up all together, I knew it was too high.

Now the best way we could figure these estimates was to figure how many people would be required for each feature and that was the real key to figuring what the cost would be. So they put these books of the estimate there, and we discussed it. There were 15 to 20 people sitting around the table, and I kept trying to find fault with little items here and little items there and my people did and studied it pretty thoroughly. We weren't getting anywhere, and I finally said to Jack Bonny, "I would appreciate very much if you would go back to your office now and read this thing." Well, he said he would. This went on twice, through Monday and Tuesday. Finally Wednesday morning he came in and sat down at the table and he said, "Well now, we decided to let Lyman be our spokesman this morning, so what he says goes." I said, "Fine." And Lyman put his hand on these big books and says, "This is it. Take it or leave it." And I said, "Well, Lyman, since I have been told that you are the spokesman, I appreciate what you're saying. It's been nice working with you and your people. I have a lot of respect for you, but that concludes the negotiations. We'll hire a new contractor."

This caused a certain amount of excitement, and Jack Bonny spoke up promptly and said, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, let's don't be hasty now. We'd like to have a little chance to get together a little more yet before you take a step like that." And I said, "Jack, you can have as long as you want, but you told me he was the spokesman, and he just told me that.s it-take it or leave it, and I leave it. We don't want to change contractors in midstream but we sure will." And he said, "Well, let's have a little break." So right after lunch he came back, and he said: "I'm sorry. I've now spent three hours going through that book in detail; and I haven't finished it, but I now see what you were trying to tell me all the time. I talked with Lyman, and I know what you were talking about. If you'll give us till tomorrow morning, I'll come back. Why don't you and I sit down and estimate this thing?" I said, "all right, we can do it as well as anybody else can. it's just a

matter of judgment." So he came back Thursday morning and sat down with that book, and we went through page after page. I'd say, "Well, I think that's too many people in this job and that job and this thing." He'd say, "All right, I accept that." So we just arbitrarily cut them, and we got clear through. We had made a heck of a cut. I said, "Jack, I'm sorry. I'm not satisfied." He said, "You mean you still want to take more cuts?" I said, "No. I'm scared we've cut too much. I want to go back and put a little bit back in 'cause I don't want you to be hurt right at the start and get a discouraged job. I want a good job."

So we went back and added a little bit back in and agreed on a total which was a tremendous change from what had been presented. Then we got the group back together and met, and they accepted this. And I said, 'Now, just for the record, this is a pretty good price. I'm proud of it, but there's still more in it than is necessary, so there's going to be an opportunity for the contractor to bring some more back.' If I remember correctly, they did.

But that's the system. That's the way it worked. It worked primarily 'cause of the basic difference between the two systems--under cost plus a fixed fee, the government agent is a partner. He has to approve every decision. For various good reasons, good reasons for controlling materials and not letting them get lost and so on, and then protecting the government's interests and so on. There's a very extensive logistical system which takes a lot of people to make it work. When you get a lot of people to make it work, particularly in a foreign area, you then have more workers and that means you got to have more camp support. You may ask why do you ever go to a cost plus? You go to a cost plus because you don't have your plans ready, you don't have your materials available. You want to keep working while you're developing these plans and getting the materials and so you can't do anything else. So you're forced into it. But once it's stable, once you know what you really want, once you've got your plans in pretty good shape, it's sure cheaper, in my private opinion, with a good honest contractor, to give him the responsibility with the government inspecting and

making sure that he does the job properly. The contractor can cut out all this extra staff that CPFF requires, and you can reduce the staff of the government side materially also. Again, that's what happened with us.

In November 1954, East Atlantic District was consolidated with the Mediterranean Division, and we moved out to Nouasseur. That's just about the time I'm talking about that latter negotiation. The first thing we did, we phased out the architect-engineer contract to a major extent and hired some of his people on the government staff. We kept only one engineering organization. It belonged to the District, which reduced duplication. By then, we gradually melded the Division and the District into one, and we had a very small element of the Division that concerned itself with the Middle East District. At that stage it was still--well, I guess by that time, TUSEG had been taken away from us, that's right, it had. So basically, everybody in the Division office was also in essence doing the extra job that the District had had, but there was a small group of programmers, engineering review, construction supervision that tried to stand a little bit above the Moroccan scene and do normal Division functions in the Middle East District as well as kind of an overall overview of what was going on in Morocco. But that in itself resulted in a tremendous saving of bodies. I think it was well worth it.

Now again, I'm utterly convinced we couldn't have changed the government's side materially until we got the contractor's side reduced in size. We couldn't have done that unless we had converted the contract to a lump sum and fixed price. We couldn't have done that without a cooperative, honest contractor that wanted to make the job work out well. He was more concerned with that than getting an extra nickel. He wanted to get his profit, don't get me wrong. He was entitled to his profit. But he was also concerned if there was a question of doubt as to whether something was legitimate or not. I don't mean legitimate but whether it should be charged off against their-profit or whether it was a real cost. He would accept my judgment right off the bat. He'd say, 'OK, if you don't think that belongs in our cost,

why we'll take it out of our profit." And that was the only way we could possibly have brought it under control.

Now, as I told you a while ago, I'm convinced that most government employees and many of the military personnel felt I was on somebody's payroll or getting a payoff or something to begin with. I mean even the way they looked at me, I could see it. But within six months, we had a happy situation. Our effort could be devoted to doing the job technically well rather than to going around putting out fires and trying to stop them.

We still had problems. The Air Force was still gunning for us. I kept talking to the Air Force command in Morocco. I had to report to him. He was the senior military person over there. He'd pick up a rumor from some place and immediately go to the Pentagon with it, to the Air Force. And the Air Force would blow it up there and go to the Chief's office, and the next thing you know here we have a full-blown conflict. They were not the smartest people in the world though, because, as I kept telling the man, I said, "If you think you've got something that we're not doing right and you want to ask about it, call me. Or, I'll come up and see you and tell you because everything you've picked on so far, you're absolutely wrong, and I've been able to convince people that your rumors were incorrect and so it's just taking time and effort on our part." Just between you and me and the gatepost, there were things that they could have caught us on with no question. We were slow working out of all this, but at the end of six months, I wasn't concerned with anything. I told the Chief's office, "You can send any investigators you want now because we're ready. We're in solid shape."

As a matter of fact, one of the reasons that we were able to get by without that extra money that I mentioned way back was that by thorough analyses, we found over \$5 million worth of equipment--materials that had been put into camp facilities and other things which were supportive--and we went around and earmarked things that were in the camp facilities that would ultimately no longer be required in those places

and could then be reinserted into the permanent facilities and thereby reduce this cost. Basically we recovered the \$5 million worth of materials that they had told me that we were short when I returned. I wouldn't say no one was stealing in a foreign country with light-fingered people. Sure there were things that disappeared, but the bulk of this was strictly a case of getting the job done and somebody in the system missed a point.

There were things like generators, kitchen equipment, major things, that we had used in some of the facilities built to house contractor personnel that were ultimately converted for use by the Air Force personnel, which was their real purpose. I do know that they did the same thing up in Greenland at a later date, a whole year or so later. They came over and got with us to find out how we handled it, and I think it paid off up in Greenland too. But I'm completely convinced we did the right thing.

I'm not trying to say that we were any smarter or any **more** astute **or** any better technically **or** anything **else** than the people that were there before us because we had been forced to get going before we were ready. We'd have had the same problems. You can't help but use a cost-plus kind of contract in the early days of some activity when there isn't sufficient time and means to get the thing done in the normal manner. I've found this **out** on quite a few cost-plus jobs in my life, and yet I can't fault the fact that under the political and international circumstances that have existed **in** each case, a cost-plus job was essential in the early stages in order to get going.

Q: Did you have any direct relationship with foreign governments? Did you **have to** worry about that side of it as well?

A: Yes, to a degree. We worked it through the consuls primarily. But like in Morocco there was an organization called the French Liaison Mission that represented the French and, yes, they were very positively a part of this. All of our real estate dealings had to be through them. We had radar stations and communication systems that were scattered around. All that stuff had to be done

with their approval. Any contracts or subcontracts we made with French or Moroccan or foreign firms had to be worked through them, getting their complete approval. We hired foreign nationals to some extent going down the line. And those all had to be approved by the French Liaison Mission. We were involved with the French resident general, who was really governing Morocco, and there was a sultan. But the Frenchman was above the sultan. The French Liaison Mission reported to the resident general and the French government in Paris. The French Liaison Mission was headed by a colonel-type from the French Engineers, and they had a staff and they reviewed all these things.

Now the same thing was true in Tripoli. The Middle East District primarily did the work there because our Division personnel weren't there very often. The same thing was true in Eritrea where I had to go down and call on the emperor of Ethiopia on a visit to Eritrea because it was a province of Ethiopia. I've called on Saudi Arabian rulers at management level to some extent. I didn't do any more than I had to. In Turkey the same thing. I paid courtesy calls on the Turkish government whenever I'd go over there, and our TUSEG group had to work very closely with them because what you could do and what they wanted done and where you could do it and how you could do it and how you could get people out of jail--all those kinds of things were very definitely worked out with the Turkish government with occasional assistance from our U.S. embassy staff.

Now we had a problem with money. We had what we called "funny money" or scrip. There was no U.S. money in Morocco itself. The Air Force had it too. This was a logical thing. Gradually over a period of time the scrip began to take on real value, and then gamblers got on to it and so on and so forth. So every so often they just closed down and collected all the scrip and replaced it with a new issue. That gets you into contact with the foreign government and the Air Force and the customs people and every other thing you can imagine.

I had a very interesting situation. I had a provost marshal working with the Air Force, and he

had raided a pretty-good-sized gambling operation that was taking place on one of these sites and had seized somewhere between \$8,000 and \$15,000 worth of scrip that was being used in the, card game. Now the contractor types were not permitted to use scrip and hence deal with the military types. It was an interesting situation but this was very much verboten, and we tried to break them up as much as we could and here we picked up this guy. Here was his money that was seized for evidence. All at once, one day, we get word. The gates are closed. Turn in your funny money. Now that meant my family, who were still living in Casablanca. I was at Nouasseur. They had some scrip, not much, but they had French money too to spend in the local community, but I had to estimate how much money they had at home and put it down and get it as quickly as I could and trade it.

Out at the airbase where the construction was going on, the contractor personnel were paid in Moroccan francs, but it suddenly dawned on me that we had this man's money in the safe. He was in jail some place. It dawned on me that come tomorrow that money will be good evidence, but it wouldn't be worth a nickel. So I got in touch with the provost marshal, and he was very happy. He said, "Well, we won't even have to find him guilty. We'll just forget it." I said, "No, you're not. We've got to do something about it." So, much to his disgust, he had to arrange to get all that money marked and take it to the finance people and get us, in essence, a check from them for that amount of money, and all the certifications you had to put on so that you could hold the check good at a later date once the case was taken care of. But this again would involve the French. In other countries they had some of the same problems, although it wasn't as much in some of the other places. There just wasn't that much use of scrip. We had the U.S. consul in Morocco, and socially we had to maintain good relations. I told you earlier about these people that had problems from an accident that fortunately wasn't their fault. But that kind of problem could arise all the time. When you had all those things to worry about and you had to deal with them and you picked up any native people with any suspicion of anything, you had to turn them over to the local authorities for trials.

Incidentally, it took a lot of awful hard work to complete the construction program. But the final result was outstanding. We beat ourselves over the head with a hammer in order to make it feel so good when we stopped. But we had a program of testing all the pavements--airfield pavements--with heavy rollers. The heaviest I'd ever seen at that time. In all truth we rolled them so long that we should have taken useful life away from the pavement. But if there was any giving in that pavement, we tore it out and did it over again. We did it far beyond my personal feeling of how far we should go, but the experts all said this is what you've got to do, and so it was done. People would stay out there in that hot damn sun and sit and look. I've sat and done it for hours, and it got to where I could see the pavement moving up and down whether it moved or not. But anyhow, this was done. The work was all corrected. It cost something, but ultimately we've turned it back to the Moroccans. The quality of the work, well it improved. Rapidity of work improved. The cost of the work dropped. The materials could be a problem. There had been a change in what was going to be built. To start with, everything was going to be lumber, the barracks and everything. So all this terrific load of lumber--my God, we had a lumber pile that was out of this world!

Q: Were decisions like that made in the Office of the Chief of Engineers or were they made by the contractors?

A: Those made basically as a program thing would come out of the Air Force headquarters and the Chief's office. The initial decision to make lumber frame barracks and so on was accepted by the Air Force, but then they decided that it wasn't the best thing later on. But all this lumber had been ordered. Here we were. We had one hell of a lot of lumber. And we got some prefabricated huts that we were worried about, and we tried worldwide. We shipped some of that stuff all over. Then we had a lot of our own equipment that gradually was working itself out of a job. The amount of heavy equipment could not be planned and executed truly economically because all five airfields were required at the same moment. So you had to buy equipment to build five airfields.

Now, as you go along and the work begins to peter out, you begin storing this stuff. OK, well you store it. And it costs money to store it. And if you don't store it properly, it goes bad. There was a pretty good little expense involved in that. Now, as far away as we were from the U.S., in Atlas we had a very fine rebuild capability and fortunately for us, the Air Force decided on this big program in Spain. They weren't about to try and get us off the hook down in Morocco. But they couldn't get equipment. They couldn't get supplies as quickly as we could furnish them, so we turned into quite a wholesaler. They had a mission to come down and pick the equipment they wanted. And we put it through the rebuild shops and sent them outstanding rebuilt equipment. Of course, it was all Air Force money, so this was a help to the Air Force. It was a help to U.S. funds.

I got nothing but compliments out of the people in the Navy that were doing the construction in Spain, and they were kind of afraid we'd slip them all the dogs. But it was done, and we insisted that they have inspectors right in the Atlas plant so they could make up their mind on each piece. Whether you replaced or repaired it or rebuilt parts, that was a decision of the future owner standing right there. And it was going to cost him one way or another. They also took most of the lumber off our hands. They could use it, and it was the quickest place they could get it.

So this all went into this recovery of the five million bucks I talked about. This all was a saving to construction funds in Morocco. It could go into more work because there were lots of things, as these years went by, the Air Force wanted added to expand their program. And this is one of the ways of getting the money to do it. But there were all kinds of things that moved up there. Also there were military activities in Europe, came down with shopping lists and got equipment and supplies at somewhat of a reduced rate and of course it was a saving to our funds not letting them sit out there.

Q: How were decisions made between whether or not it would be the Corps that actually did the construction?

A: Well, that would be down at the Department of Defense (DOD) level. That's my opinion. And we had a lot of dealings with the Department of Defense. When I went back to get this extra money and so on, and when I went back to get authority to go to this conversion, I had to sell it not only to the Secretary of the Army but up at the defense level also. The Chief's office would want the job, and the Navy would want the job. So DOD made the decision.

Q: When was the complete headquarters moved to Livorno?

A: I was deputy chief of engineers at the time MED Division moved to Livorno and had helped get approval for them to do this. I lived the first six months in Casablanca. Then to save money and reduce the size of everything and to get it to where I could get people together after this conversion sometime that fall of 1953, I moved our Division office into the District's office building in Nouasseur when so many people had been sent home that there was office space available. Then my family moved out and lived in one of the construction quarters there and got out of town. And then of course by 1957 they reestablished the District in Morocco in order to leave the Division free to move to Italy.

Q: Do you have any concluding remarks?

A: I can't overimpress you with the fact that it was an extremely unhappy job when I got there. Not due to me, but just the way the changes took place; after about six months or so, it was probably the most pleasant assignment I've ever had. It was far enough away from the throne not to be looked at every minute. People were cooperative, friendly, and everybody worked together to get the job done. There was very little, after the six months or a year, there was very little real nasty bickering as between the government's side and the contractor's side or between one office and another or between the Army and the Air Force. It was a happy, pleasant feeling, and frankly that's the way to get things done.