

Summary of Interview with Retired Major General Herbert Lloyd Wilkerson
102 Shoreham Drive, Jacksonville, North Carolina
Interviewer: L.J. Kimball
20 September 1999
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I first came to Camp Lejeune as a recruit after about 4-5 weeks of boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina. About 200 of us came on the train which backed into Peter Field Point, now Camp Geiger and the Marine Corps Air Station. They unloaded us onto a grass parade deck surrounded by tents at the 7th Marines CP in an area where the entire 1st Marine Division was under canvass. That happened in the month of March 1942. We stayed there a couple of weeks, then went to Norfolk and loaded aboard ships. That was my first experience coming to Camp Lejeune.

No advanced infantry training was conducted for new enlistees before joining the FMF. I received no additional training at Camp Lejeune. I know that the infantry battalions were training in the field, but I was not with them. As a matter of fact, I wasn't trained when I went into the rifle company at Guadalcanal, and that was a shame. I could have performed so much better. The major emphasis at Parris Island was marksmanship training. That was the biggest block of training, and the other emphasis was on drill and orientation into the service. We came direct to the 1st Division without advanced training. Boot camp was so short and concentrated that we wore our newly issued green uniforms without having them pressed. We just pulled the stapled quartermaster tags off our uniforms and wore them for warmth. The deep square impression marks from the tags made it obvious that we were recruits. Most of the 200 joined the 7th Marines, the first regiment of the division to leave Camp Lejeune.

I was assigned to Headquarters Company, 7th Marines. Sergeant Major Shaw, the Regimental Sergeant Major, actually came on the field. He and another Marine did our assignments; I was the last man of the 200 left on the field. Sergeant Major Shaw apparently had looked over the service records and knew about me. He walked up to me and said you must be Wilkerson. I responded, "Yes, Sergeant Major." He shouted, "A college man and a god damn reserve! I guess you think you will be an officer in this outfit, but you'll be a private as long as you are in this regiment, you understand?" He took me directly to the regimental commander. The regimental commander was the same Colonel James W. Webb whose portrait now hangs in Building 1 at Camp Lejeune; he was one of the earliest Base commanders. I stood in front of Colonel Webb in great anxiety. He informed me that I was to become his orderly and driver and that we were restricted to camp because we were leaving in a couple of weeks. He further stated that I had the job because his driver had taken his vehicle the night before and made an unauthorized trip to Jacksonville. He had demolished the vehicle and killed himself. Colonel Webb said that when the regiment moved, my job was to get his personal equipment on the train to Norfolk, Virginia. There I would find a new vehicle for him, and I was to get it aboard the ship in which we would sail. I had never seen a Navy transport and had no idea how I would get that vehicle aboard a ship. It was sort of a carry-all type vehicle in which I stowed his gear and mine, and I successfully got it in the hold of the USS *Heywood*.

[MGEN Philip] Torrey had the division when I joined it at Camp Lejeune. Vandegrift had the division after Torrey I guess, but I never saw Vandegrift until I saw him at Guadalcanal. The

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division came from Puerto Rico to Parris Island and then up here, at least I think my regiment did, for I remember hearing the Marines talk about being down at Parris Island for a while after returning from the Caribbean islands.

I have no idea where the Division Command Post was located. I remember riding by a tank outfit that appeared to have some sort of temporary structures that looked like corrugated metal huts of some sort. Not a Quonset hut for I don't believe they had those at that time. I don't know whether they used the huts for storage or for some other purpose. I couldn't tell you where the tank outfit was located.

The Regimental Headquarters of the 7th Marines was in a little quadrangle-type tent layout in what is now known as Camp Geiger. At first, I performed very few duties for Colonel Webb because we had no vehicle. His tent was one tent back from a sort of square area where the regimental offices were laid out in tents. I would report to him at his tent each day, and he would tell me to go back to the company area. I would then be assigned on working parties with the Marines who were packing up the headquarters property to move. We were nailing lids on boxes of machine guns, tools, clothing, extra individual equipment, and all that sort of stuff.

During that period of a couple of weeks, I was only out of that Tent Camp one time. The Sergeant Major and the Personnel First Sergeant for the regiment lived with their wives at Midway Park. That was constructed to house the employees who were building Camp Lejeune, laborers [there was no rental property for them in the area]. But somehow, these two senior NCO's had gotten their wives into those quarters. I went in a working party with a truck to get the Personnel First Sergeant's footlocker from his quarters. This truck from regimental headquarters company went all the way down to Hadnot Point and back. So, I got a view of what I call the expeditionary building routine. All of those barracks from that circle on Holcomb Boulevard to the river were under construction. It was like a pioneer camp; I have never seen anything like it in my life. Carpenters were climbing all over the new construction, but there weren't any finished buildings, none.

Holcomb Boulevard at that time was just dirt. No pavement. As I recall, what is now Highway 24 was not paved. I believe that was gravel, too. We had to come across the old bridge and through Jacksonville to get to Midway Park and into Lejeune from down toward Wilmington. We crossed an old bridge right near the courthouse. Court Street was paved, but there wasn't much more pavement beyond the school.

It reminded me of my hometown where I was born and lived as a youngster. There was not much to it. I have researched the U.S. Census for the year before Camp Lejeune was bought. Jacksonville had about 840 people in it, and there weren't many more than that when I came in 1942. The officers and SNCO's who had wives here, by and large, had them located in Wilmington, Kinston, and Greenville. I heard the Colonel say that the officers could go away on

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one weekend to say goodbye to their wives. Not all of them had cars, or their wives had their only car, so they had to car pool. It was a time-consuming trip to Wilmington or Greenville at that time, so they could not go home at night. They only went home one time during that last two weeks, so far as I know.

I don't know the exact date the 7th Marines departed Lejeune for Norfolk, but it was sometime near the end of March because we embarked in ships, sailed about 30 days, and arrived in Apia, British Samoa, about the first of May. For me, an interesting memory about that trip was the fact that there was no bunk for me in the USS *Heywood* when I got aboard. Some of us were spill-overs—no troop spaces for us. I slept on deck with my bedding roll. I had never been in a ship before, and going through the storms around Cape Hatteras made me glad to be topside because the hold was unholy. I was required to go down into the hold to make muster everyday, and the smell of sick men was really unsavory.

The night before we left Hampton Roads, a German submarine sunk a ship right outside the exit. There were seven troop and cargo ships in our convoy, and when we came into open water, there were approximately 40 fighting ships waiting to escort us. They escorted us via the Windward Islands into the Gulf of Mexico to the Panama Canal. Until we entered the Gulf of Mexico, there weren't many hours of the day or night that there wasn't a depth charge thrown somewhere. There was severe stormy weather for the first several days. The water was so rough that the old four-stacker tin cans they had in those days sometimes disappeared in the troughs. As I stood on the weather deck of our ship, it was not unusual for the destroyers at a range of 1,500-2,000 yards to just disappear; they would be gone and then come back into sight. Cold rain squalls were persistent and made it miserable for those on deck, especially those sleeping up there!

[The interview continued along my career path to Guadalcanal, Australia, back to the USA, then to duty at Pocatello, Idaho, where I met my wife. I indicated that my last enlisted rank was that of Platoon Sergeant. They administratively promoted some of us NCO's to platoon sergeants just before we were commissioned.]

I returned to Lejeune in 1944 and spent the fall in officer training. The NCO screening course at Camp Lejeune was 4½ months in length. The candidates were billeted in newly built barracks just behind the bus station not far from the circle. On the first of January 1945, those who made it through screening were sent to Platoon Commanders School at Quantico for four more months of training. The officer procurement pipeline was obviously beginning to satisfy the anticipated needs of the Marine Corps for the screening of NCO candidates became ruthless at Camp Lejeune and at Quantico.

While under training at the NCO screening program at Lejeune, I did not have the opportunity to see Women Marines in training or discuss their training with them. Having women in the Marines did not bother me at the time. Marines had them in WWI we had been told, and I don't

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think many of us thought much about it. We were more interested in what we were going to do. The war was gaining momentum, and everything we thought about was completing the requirements for commissions and our next assignments overseas. That's what we were getting ready for because that was the sole mission of our training. Most of us were already combat veterans. We figured we would go into Japan, and we would have if the war hadn't stopped. We were all just ripe to arrive and be assigned as platoon leaders to make the two beachheads into mainland Japan.

I don't remember that we were restricted to base during weekends at Lejeune, but I didn't go off base. I don't know whether anybody else went, but I didn't go. I didn't go to Jacksonville at all, never saw it.

I cannot recall a training facility called Waller Gunnery Trainer. Our screening consisted of close order drill and school on weapons in the barracks complex. Most of our training was done in the squad bays, most of it intellectual, and the physical part on the drill field. We did not run obstacle courses or anything like that, as I remember, but we spent many hours taking machine guns and BARs apart and putting them back together while blindfolded. We concentrated on all the infantry weapons, becoming very proficient at nomenclature and methods of maintaining weapons and equipment under field conditions. We did conditioning hikes along the roads, often carrying field marching packs.

We were billeted in H-type barracks (new then), the second row of barracks back from the double-lane road leading from the circle to Building 2. The barracks in which we lived was right behind that first row of buildings and not very far from the bus station.

We went to the base theater for movies, and I believe we had movies and training in what is now the area recreation building in area 2.

We heard that black Marines were being trained at Montford Point at that time in 1944. The feeling in the Marine Corps at that time about bringing blacks in was generally negative. Even though I was a Southerner, I never believed in the prejudice that a lot of people had in the South. I later found out that it was in the North as well, but there was a feeling in the Corps among men that I talked to that black men would not fight. The opinion was that blacks ought to be stevedores and labor troops in supply organizations. That was the attitude expressed in the daily chatter among the troops; they didn't worry about talking about it because there was no penalty for open discussion, no politically correct monitoring. After Mr. Truman correctly issued the order for desegregation, it became hazardous to discuss opinions freely. You never knew with whom you could safely have a frank discussion in later years. But in those days [1944], men were straightforward about how they felt, and a lot of them felt that the blacks could not be made into competent infantrymen. That opinion was blatantly false, and it was proven to be false in

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the Korean War. In my experience, they are rather pugilistic and courageous as a race, and have a splendid fighting capability.

I do not know if black Marines were restricted to Montford Point during the war, or if they were given the privilege to go anywhere on base, but I would guess there were segregated areas in Jacksonville since there were such areas everywhere in the South.

A highlight of the tour at Camp Lejeune was the visit by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The officer-screening unit was designated as the honor guard for his visit, and we formed up on a grass parade deck on a cold November morning ready for his arrival. The black cabriolet, with its top down, pulled up close to our commanding officer, LTCOL Piper, who presented us to the Commander-In-Chief. I was in the front rank within 20 feet from the auto and could hear their voices. The auto was driven so close to the commanding officer that he hardly needed to move to reach the side of the vehicle. The President just sat there and talked to the colonel about our training. Of course we know now that he could not get out and review the troops. He was dressed in a black boat cloak and a wide brimmed felt hat. His face was pale, even approaching the color of yellow jaundice. The survivors of that training unit were in the Marine Corps detail from Quantico that became a part of the Armed Forces parade unit that escorted the remains of the President from the Railroad Station in Washington, down Pennsylvania Avenue, to the White House when it arrived from Warm Springs, Georgia, in April 1945. After the parade, we were taken to the Marine Barracks, Washington, given a meal, and placed on a train that preceded the funeral train to Hyde Park, New York. There, we stood guard at double interval inside the Rose Garden during the funeral.

[In the interview concerning other parts of my career, LCOL Kimball was interested that I had served with a Colonel McQueen whom I admired very much. Kimball provided the information that McQueen was one of the first two officers that Commandant, Gen. Thomas Holcomb called to do a reconnaissance of Camp Lejeune when it was being procured. The other officer was Gen. Verne J. McCaul].

[The interview continued to explore my personal career after China duty to San Francisco, Guam, back to Camp Pendleton, and duty in Korea in 1950-51. Then, it covered my return to the USA, assignments to AWS, HQMC, followed by another tour at Camp Lejeune.]

I came to Lejeune in 1955 and stayed two years.

I was Company Commander, Company A, First Battalion, 8th Marines, S-3 of 1/8, and CO of 2d Division NCO School. The Division NCO School consisted of a Staff NCO Class and an NCO Class during my tenure of approximately 6-8 months, maybe a year. As I remember, the courses lasted about three weeks each, and we humped them through the boondocks pretty often. The school was conducted in a tent camp at Triangle Outpost on Lyman Road near the Swansboro

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Gate. This was the only organization at that location, and I was designated the camp commander. We had a little tent city, and we used a separate set of training areas out there. We went to the field. We trained people out of Division and other east coast organizations by quotas. We taught Marines how to soldier. The objective of the school was to teach Marines to become small unit leaders. Often times the people who were sent to me were staff NCO's who were in need of additional instruction. They needed a lot of remedial training. The Marines didn't know it, but I knew it, and their commanding officers sent them out there for that reason. The idea was to see if we could help raise the standards of performance. It eventually turned out to be an elite school, but the earlier classes were remedial. I don't know how it was being conducted before I arrived. I had a very able staff of instructors. As a matter of fact, Carson [SgtMaj John, retired locally] was one of my instructors, and another was SgtMaj Sloan [retired locally]. Both Carson and Sloan were superior troop leaders.

That facility had been there a while before I took command; the school had been going a long time. I just took over from somebody else. I have no idea how long it remained at Triangle Outpost, but I think they moved it to Montford Point or some other place. They later put it into buildings instead of tents. We took a lot of pride in primitive living, and in demonstrating how to live in the boonies, too.

We had a Quonset hut mess hall. It seems like we had a storage building that was a Quonset, too, and a little wooden building that was our command post.

I was asked if there was an old school building out there. My answer in the interview was no; however, there was some sort of a wooden building in which classes were held in inclement weather. There was another structure out there in which I had my command post. There was an LZ, but not a designated LZ. There was a range that we used for anti-tank weapons, machine guns, and mortars. We had our own ranges out there. We didn't fire rifles, but we fired bazookas, 3.5" rockets, and machine guns.

The whole complex was at least 1,000 yards on the left side of Lyman Road going toward Mainside. There is still sort of a drive off there, and it goes up a sandy slope onto flat land. I have been by there in the last year or two and reminisced about its location. We should find firing lines and revetments to the right of that road as you enter the area. We wouldn't have to go more than 150 yards into the area to see them. The firing lines had ranges up to about 200 yards for bazookas with old vehicles for mechanized targets. There was a berme for machine gun controlled fire.

I suspect that I have color slides of that. I have an index on my computer and I'll check. I have color slides of a lot of my duties here from 1955 onward, including activities of BLT 1/8. I know that I have slides of that firing line with White Phosphorus projectiles hitting tanks and all that

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sort of stuff. We had tank mock-ups, old automobiles, and vehicle hulls out there for targets. I will donate the ones about Camp Lejeune to this history project.

I lived at Tarawa Terrace II on Orote Place. Junior officers were in TT II, the one closest to the main gate. I moved in there as a captain and made major while I was in 1/8. They let me continue to live there until I departed. I was on the base housing list, but at that time the waiting list was so long that one often got quarters and orders at the same time. During the time that I was in 1/8, I took a marching unit in blue uniforms to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. That was my first racial problem. I didn't organize that marching company; Marc Moore organized it. He had been Puller's aide-de-camp and remained here after Puller retired. He became Fox Company Commander about the time that I became Able Company Commander. Marc was a captain, junior to me, and he had organized this marching company for Mardi Gras at the direction of the Commanding General 2d Marine Division, Major General Ridgely, a VMI graduate.

Marc was in Fox Company, so General Ridgely picked him because he was a fine looking guy and was recommended by his regimental commander to take the marching company to Mardi Gras. All of the officers had been selected. One day I received a call from Colonel Riley, the Division Chief of Staff. He said that he wanted to see me right away. I went by to call on my regimental commander on the way to see Colonel Riley. The Commanding Officer, 8th Marines was Colonel Glenn Funk. Colonel Funk informed me that the division commander was going to assign me to replace Marc Moore, that he had recommended Marc for the job, and that he did not agree with the change. He stated further that the general was upset with Marc because he had not eliminated all the blacks [then referred to as colored Marines] from the unit. He said that General Ridgely was concerned that black Marines would be mistreated and endangered while on liberty in New Orleans, and he wanted them out of the unit.

At that time they probably would have been endangered. People would have been there in a partying atmosphere ready to harass the hell out of them, and if they went into bars, they would really have had a problem. Not right, but the circumstance that prevailed in 1956.

Colonel Funk warned that General Ridgely would direct me to take command of the marching company and get rid of the blacks. He did not agree with this action, but advised me to do whatever the general demanded. So I went to see the chief of staff who escorted me into the general's office. Sure enough, I received the same instruction that had been forecasted. He informed me that he preferred that I command the company, that there was only one black left and he wanted me to get rid of him. Ridgely had actually brought me down to Camp Lejeune with him. His wife thought that I was going to become his aide-de-camp, but he quickly let her know that I was coming to command a rifle company to enhance my career.

Ridgely's position was that racial integration was so new and controversial, it was unwise to take a black Marine down to New Orleans to march in parades in blue uniform. If people started to

pick at him, and fights broke out, the Marine Corps would get a bad name. And if he went into a bar, even if he were allowed to enter, and people picked at him, fights would break out and the Marine Corps would get the bad name. He thought we could avoid that by not taking the black Marine with us.

Well, I took command of the company, called the officers front and center, and replaced Marc Moore. He and I had been friends for a long time, and it left a bad taste in my mouth to do that. The first time I ever saw him in my life, he was a PFC on the Main Door at MARPAC headquarters in San Francisco in the 40's. Afterwards, he went to college in Texas and was commissioned in the regular Marine Corps. The entire company was in dress blues ready for inspection, but I began with the officers center. One of them had whiskey on his breath—smelled awful like a brewery. So I said, "Lieutenant, you may be excused. You are no longer in this command, return your sword and fall out." I then inspected the troops.

The Marine who was black had been nominated from my old company. I knew him well for he was a sergeant in one of my units, I think it was in the machine gun section—he was a first class Marine. I passed him by without comment and completed the inspection. Afterwards, I called him into the privacy of my office, discussed the general's concern, the political climate in New Orleans, and told him that he would be at risk to freely go to bars and do the things that all of the others would be doing in New Orleans. I told him that I would consider it a personal favor if he would just drop out of this thing. He agreed and turned in his special equipment.

I went back to the division commander and reported that I had fired an officer because he came to inspection half drunk to the extent that I could not pass near him without smelling a brewery. I indicated that this officer couldn't go with me and that I needed another officer replacement. In the meantime, I had moved the executive officer to the first platoon, so I needed an executive officer and recommended that they give me Marc Moore. Well, the steam started to come out of him at that point. He called the chief and they kibitzed about it. Finally they gave me Marc Moore as my executive officer.

Then, I brought up the subject of the black sergeant. I told the two of them that the sergeant was known to me and was gone from the company, but that he was whiter than some of the Marines who call themselves Caucasian. I told them that we would be better off if we took him along because he could pass for white. If anyone ever criticized us for doing what the general had me do, we would really have an ace in the hole. He said not on your life.

On being asked by LTCOL Kimball if I thought there was a sense that the personal endangerment to the sergeant just provided a convenient excuse not to have blacks, I responded that I absolutely believed it to be true. Both General Ridgely and Colonel Riley were VMI graduates. That was the culture of the day, and that is the underlying thing that people have to remember. They were doing what their culture dictated that they do. They were brought up to feel that way, and I was,

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too, but I never did the pranks in the streets that my contemporaries did in West Tennessee where I grew up. Like on Saturday, they would see an old black man or old lady, black people, walking down the sidewalk. Three or four teenagers would lock arms and make the blacks walk into the street. I wouldn't participate in that stuff, and I didn't think they were right in doing it either. It was a skylark among kids when I grew up, and the placid old black people wouldn't fight back, nor would the white parents discipline the boys for it. We have come a long way in this country, but we haven't come far enough.

This Mardi Gras incident was in February 1956. I have color pictures of that marching unit, and slides too.

The Med-Deployments had been stopped before I arrived at Camp Lejeune in 1955. The reestablishment of these deployments took place just before I was transferred from 1/8 to command the NCO Schools. The first unit to start up the Med-Cruise was 2/8, and as I remember, LTCOL Stallings was its commanding officer. I wanted to go very badly and went to him to volunteer to be his S-3, but he had a favorite who was much senior to me. I soon was assigned to the Schools billet.

The 8th Marines were then billeted in the area to the left of the double lane, Holcomb Boulevard, going toward Building 2. I never knew it to be occupied by anybody else until 1973. So far as I know, until the new barracks construction began in 1973, the 8th Marines were over there on the left of Holcomb Boulevard, the 6th Marines on the right, and the 2nd Marines were down toward the old Naval Hospital. The 10th Marines were beyond the 8th Marines, down toward the beach.

Force Troops Headquarters was at Mainside in 1973. They were around the theater, in that general area, and some of the barracks were assigned to them. Force Troops wasn't nearly as big as FSSG is now. The battalions were farmed out in other areas as well. I cannot remember if the tracked vehicles were located at Mainside or at Camp Geiger. I doubt if tracked vehicles were at Geiger, however, Force Troops at one time had a lot of people out at Geiger. When we started the preparation for new barracks construction, as Base Commander I made a plan for people to move around to free up barracks for demolition. That is when the migration began. I moved a regiment to Camp Geiger with permission of the Commanding General, 2nd Marine Division. He had to give way somewhere if he wanted new barracks. The 2nd Marine Division had first priority for new construction, and we moved the 8th Marines over there as the first increment.

I departed Lejeune in 1957 and returned in the summer of 1967. I returned to Lejeune as a lieutenant colonel, became the G-3, 2nd Marine Division, and was later promoted to colonel. I was G-3 for about a year when I was transferred to the Army War College. In 1968 at Camp Lejeune, the racial unrest was bad news. I think that serious disturbance at the theater occurred before I arrived. I never saw much of the action, but we were all very busy trying to keep the racial thing down to a low roar because throughout the Corps, particularly here, we were having

trouble. I departed Camp Lejeune in the summer of 1968 and have very little firsthand knowledge about incidents at Lejeune in 1967-68. During this period, my peers who commanded regiments were deeply involved. We often talked about it, and everybody was really concerned about how to handle the situation. We were committed to making integration work. It was not like it had been in the 1940s, we were committed to making this change in our culture and to finding ways to handle it. Some regimental commanders handled it better than others did. Some went down the tubes.

The racial tension was bad enough, but this was all exacerbated by the fact that the Secretary of Defense required us to take enlistees from Project One Hundred Thousand. As a lieutenant colonel representing Parris Island, I had gone to a conference at DOD at which that program was discussed. The Service representatives argued against establishing the program. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower from my home state of Tennessee was the sponsor; God I can't remember the guy's name. But I ended up saying to him, "Do you realize that when one of these fellows is finally put into the ranks, he goes in the foxhole next to my son and yours? Do you have a son?" He indicated that he had no son in the military. I retorted, "Well, I don't know how you would feel, but I am very uncomfortable with the decision of my government to put inept people in the foxhole beside my son. I have a son who might become involved. He will be required to make up for the deficiencies of this new man as well as perform his own duties, and I don't think this is fair play." He just cut that thing off, his mind was made up, and he wouldn't have any part of further discussion.

As G-3, I spent a lot of time on the road. I went to Vieques and Roosevelt Roads, Spain and the Mediterranean, and then we changed Division Commanders in the middle of my tour. [MGEN Ormond R.] Simpson was the Commanding General when I arrived, and [BGEN Edwin B.] Wheeler was the ADC [Assistant Division Commander]. Wheeler took over when Simpson had to go to Parris Island to relieve [MGEN Rathvon McC.] Tompkins. When the CG 3rd Marine Division was killed in Vietnam, Tompkins was the officer the Commandant selected to go immediately out there and take that billet. Simpson was moved to Parris Island at the same time, so that left Wheeler to command the 2nd Division. Simpson and I were traveling for the first six months, and then I didn't stay a full year, so I didn't get in on a lot of racial activity at Lejeune. Now the Marines training at Vieques were of concern to me as G-3. Both the ground element commander and the aviation element commander were dear friends of mine. They were having fights among the troops. [LCOL] John H. Miller, who became a 3-star in the Marine Corps, was commanding the BLT at that point down there, and he was wrestling with that problem on a daily basis. The Commanding General and I visited Vieques at the time.

I lived in quarters on St. Mary's Drive, Paradise Point, near the water tank and the golf course. We went to Saint Anne's Episcopal Church in Jacksonville. That was our home parish.

I returned to Camp Lejeune from Vietnam in 1970 and was assigned to duty at the Marine Corps Base. I knew that MGEN Tompkins had asked GEN Chapman [Leonard F., the Commandant] for me to be CO of ITR [Infantry Training Regiment]; that information had been bootlegged to me, so I knew I was coming back for a good assignment. I came in to Camp Lejeune and reported to the chief of staff of the Base, and he said, "General Tompkins wants to see you right away, by the way, let me tip you off. He is going to assign you as Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel Services." I responded to Jim [Colonel James Callender], "Jim, what the hell have I done to deserve that?" Jim indicated he had no idea in the world why this was my assignment, and sent me in to talk to the General as he was waiting for me. So I went to the door and was invited in. I hadn't talked to him since I was a battalion commander and a regimental XO for him at Parris Island. I had known him a long time and he had expressed great accolades about me in the past. Aside from warmly welcoming me home and commenting favorably about my service in Vietnam, he wasted no time in coming to the subject of my assignment. He said, "I reckon Jim has told you what you are going to do." I said, "Yes, sir, and I can do it." "I know you can, and there are some things that you need to find out, and I want you to take that job and come back with some recommendations about what ought to be done in that function." The meeting was pleasant, but short. He had other people waiting to see him, as I recall.

As a matter of fact, I was so discouraged about my future in the Corps that I wrote a résumé, took leave near Christmas time, and Jeanne and I peddled it to the University of the South. They had a place for me in retirement. I asked them one favor, and that was to not disclose that they had my résumé until summer. I was in the promotion zone for brigadier general, and the board met in July. I told them that I did not have much expectation based on what was going on with me right then, but I wanted to be balloted on one time. They agreed to do it with the understanding that I would be back in touch as soon as the board reported out.

We returned to Lejeune about Christmas time. When I arrived at my office, there was a note from the chief of staff telling me to see him right away. Jim informed me that General Tompkins wanted to see me and tipped me off that I was going to be chief of staff. "I don't understand, what are you going to do?" I inquired. He said, "I am going to be the deputy base commander and retire, and you are going to be the chief." There were 20 colonels on the Base, and I was in the middle of the list. I knocked on the door and reported to General Tompkins. He said, "I want you to be my chief of staff." "All right, sir, I can do it." His retort was, "I know you can; get out there and go to work!" And that is all that I got out of him. He retired in June, and I was selected for brigadier general by the board in July. Major General [Carl A.] Youngdale replaced Tompkins in June when he retired. The Marine Corps was so unprepared for my being selected that I think they didn't know what to do with me. So, they left me a whole year as chief of staff.

During that year, General Youngdale was the commander, and he retired the next June. It was obvious the Marine Corps anticipated that some other senior major general would replace Youngdale, as was the custom in those days, for four stewards were transferred to his quarters at

the very end of his tour. A staff officer from HQMC called me to say, "You're going to be the interim commander of the Base until after the General Officers Symposium, and there will be somebody to replace you as soon as we get everything shaken out." LGEN Foster LaHue was Chief of Staff of the Marine Corps at the time. Finally, in frustration, I called him to inquire about my future saying, "Hey, I have been CG here for 2-3 months now, the Commandant has been down here for a visit, is this a real tour or when do I get orders?" He said, "Oh, I was supposed to call and tell you that you should move up in the big house [GOQ 2000]. You're going to be staying there."

The major issues of that tour were the black/white problems and the poor quality of manpower in the Marine Corps at the time.

There was an unwritten policy that we would not discharge a Marine for a pre-service record in courts. The mission was to keep him and make a good Marine out of him. That was not on paper, but you were called on the carpet if you grossly put people out. At that time I had a new brig that was to replace the old one, but I couldn't close the old one. Too many prisoners. Both of them were over-crowded, and the Investigative Service kept bringing to me more records of Marines who had previous felony charges or imprisonment in civil life. In some instances judges would not prosecute if the defendant would join the Military Service and thus get out of town. At one time I had in my desk drawer over 400 reports of Marines with pre-service misconduct. The brigs were already full, and we came to the point that a commanding officer couldn't just sign a confinement order and expect the brig to take the Marine. Often, when we received a Marine to be confined, a call would be made to the Division or Force Troops saying, "We have a confinement requirement from one of your subordinate commanders, which one of your guys do you want to let out of prison to accommodate the new prisoner? There is no room in the inn."

I believe that the 2nd Marine Division had established a stockade-type facility where commanding officers were allowed to send minor offenders who received non-judicial punishment. There they received supervised training. It relieved some of the pressure on the brigs. I do not know where this Correctional Facility was located.

When one of those guys on my 400 list hit the jailhouse because of a new offense, I started action to separate him from the service. I encouraged the Division and Force Troops to do the same. We were separating a lot of folks, and finally it was called to the attention of General LaHue [LGEN Foster C., Chief of Staff at Headquarters Marine Corps]. He called me saying, "I don't know whether you know all that is going on or not, but here are some statistics about the numbers of people you are letting out of the service." I told him that I was not discharging anybody who was worthy to be a U.S. Marine. We discussed the problem back and forth, and he agreed with what I was doing and concluded that he was just giving me a heads up to watch out because people [staffers] were beginning to surface the results of what I was doing.

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I had known Foster LaHue since the time he was GEN Shepherd's aide-de-camp. We had kept in touch during all those years, and he was telling me not to get in trouble, but I have no idea how many people we discharged from the Marine Corps because they were sorry people.

This was at the tail end of the Vietnam War, and the Marine Corps had been procuring both volunteers and draftees during that war. It was interesting that in 1965-66, drill instructors in my recruit training battalion at Parris Island reported to me that they preferred training draftees to volunteers because draftees were older, more mature, and caused less trouble for them. We still had lots of lower group 4B personnel in the Marine Corps in 1968-73. We kept taking more and more of them as the war continued. These were the guys that were smoking pot and throwing grenades at their commanding officers in Vietnam. They came back to Lejeune to complete the remainder of their obligated service. They were just troublemakers.

There were some militant blacks, and there were a lot of terrible whites, too. The Project One Hundred Thousand people were predominantly white. The blacks, a lot of them, volunteered while we were accepting draftees. The draft law deserved to die in my opinion. It was so badly mismanaged in the Korean War and even more absurdly in the Vietnam War by the local draft boards, not necessarily the Federal Government. The latter acquiesced by silence, and the whole process deteriorated during the Vietnam War to the extent that the Armed Forces had to fight with a disproportionate number of blacks and poor whites in the front lines. The draft boards picked people off the streets, sent low quality individuals because it was politically acceptable to do that. They didn't send their better sons and daughters to fight that war, rather they gave us the unemployed and the destitute. DOD's [Department of Defense] position, which was iterated to me, was that the Armed Forces were better able to assist those people in becoming good citizens than any other institution in the United States. Therefore, it was our duty to help society in that way. Well, as a professional Marine, that was disturbing to me.

The underprivileged people in any culture are those who don't have the tools to succeed. Not necessarily lack of brainpower, but lack of resources. I don't mean financial resources; I mean knowledge resources. If one grows up in an underprivileged family where there is no learning, then all he gets is what he gains for himself at school. If he is not adaptable to the school environment, he becomes a 17-year-old lad without tools. Every society has it; I don't know how to correct it. I wish I knew for then I would be the brightest man on earth.

The small unit leadership in the Marine Corps found the Marines of this era very difficult to lead. The staff NCO's who would have been most able to deal with the problem were given commissions. That left the younger, less experienced sergeants to quickly become staff NCO's. They were not ready for so large a task, and it made it very difficult for the whole culture to be well led. It was a very troublesome time, and the staff NCO's who were commissioned didn't necessarily work near the troops where they could have influence. They were given other jobs,

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leaving new lieutenants just out of Quantico to face the problems with poorly prepared staff NCO's. They had a problem beyond their time.

In 1972-73, Jacksonville was segregated so badly that New River Housing had a section where they would let blacks rent, but basically they turned away blacks every time they had a chance. New River Housing Management controlled it, and management discriminated against blacks. The Beacham Apartments that were being built in 1972-73 over on the other side of the city near Camp Geiger and the Air Station were being rented as they were built. They were turning away blacks and letting whites come in. Beacham was building this huge apartment complex over there, but they weren't letting blacks move in. We got complaints about it and sent our people to investigate. A black Marine would go in and be refused because of "no vacancies." A white Marine would follow the black and ask for and be approved to rent the same accommodations the black had asked for five minutes earlier.

We had multiple records of these events taking place; the record collection was under the supervision of Colonel Motelewski, my Staff Judge Advocate. Finally, we decided to make a public issue of the problem. I reported the circumstances to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Department of Defense, and the Housing and Urban Development folks in the President's Cabinet. The latter sent an attorney, and others sent representatives. After a thorough investigation by the local Military-Civilian Council, and with the concurrence of representatives from higher authorities, I finally put Beacham out of bounds for military personnel. We did not require those already living there to move out, but no new personnel could become tenants there. All military personnel arriving at Lejeune were briefed that it was unlawful to seek housing at Beacham Apartments. The Defense Department and HUD took care of the legal issues, and I issued the order to place him out of bounds to all military personnel not already living there. Oh, the hue and crying that went up around here!

I did not put others like New River off limits. The reason that I did not was that they had learned that I was about to take action against Beacham, so they sought an audience with me. Not as a group, but one by one in the privacy of my office, they thanked me for taking action. They indicated that until I had broken the ice on this issue, none of them could successfully rent fairly; that unless all managers complied, it would be economic suicide for one to go it alone. They were all ready to comply. We established a set of monitoring conditions for Beacham to demonstrate good faith before the off limits could be lifted. The others offered to comply, too. Beacham was still off limits when I was detached. I don't know who put him back in business; I guess [MGEN Robert D.] Bob Bohn did. He succeeded me.

In connection with this action, we had frequent discussions with the mayor and the chairman of the county commissioners. They were not difficult when the facts were presented, and I told them that this was the way it had to be. The most interesting thing that happened to me at that time was the reaction of the Congressman from this area. He lived over here in Warsaw, as I

recall. He had frequently visited me down here, called me often, and caused his local contact to keep in touch with me. We seemed to have a favorable relationship. Just before I completed the final action to put Beacham off limits, he called me from Washington and said, "Lloyd, I know what you are going to do. I agree with you and you should do it, and I am leaving for Europe. I will not be answering the telephone calls of my constituents on this matter. Good luck." And away he went. He and I never discussed the subject again.

By that time, the Military-Civilian Council did the liaison between the military leaders, the city council, and the county commissioners. Through their actions, I think the eating places had come to grips with the problem of race. I do think that there were areas where blacks predominately patronized, and they didn't like whites to come in. There were places that whites went because they knew there would be no blacks there, or thought there would be none. I don't think the management in either case tried to run a segregated place. I don't think restaurants were having all that much problem in the 70's, but housing was a problem, for living next door to a black was still offensive, and vice versa. You may notice that in the New River Housing, even today, the blacks are huddled together in one area. I don't know how you do reverse segregation. I wish I knew how to do that, for the Hispanics as well as the blacks will drift together in desegregated housing because they have a common bond and comfort zone. They voluntarily segregate themselves instead of joining the masses when they socialize. So do whites and other ethnic groups. I don't know how to solve it. I wish I did.

As a final thought, I think that the overall quality of personnel in the Corps in 1970-73 was the lowest in my more than 36 years of service. It was a direct result of the manpower policies established by the Department of Defense, the Vietnam War with the restrictions placed on the Services in conducting the combat, and the moral bankruptcy of the Draft. The manpower czars in DOD had no feeling for life in the trenches, nor did they understand the necessity to maintain an esprit de corps within the forces as well as in the civilian sector. The aftermath was the creation of a so-called all-volunteer armed force, a professional military establishment not supported by a draft from the citizenry. In a Democracy it is difficult to get support for a war when the members of the armed forces are not closely identified as citizen soldiers from the population. This situation is new to the United States, and the people, even legislators, do not feel any requirement to support in the same way they did in WWII.

In WWII a person would get bashed if he said anything adverse about the Armed Services; the entire population went to work, women, old men, young folks. They built the war machinery for their men at war. They made personal sacrifices for years. But as long as we have the professional soldiery not closely associated with hometown, USA, they are considered gladiators and condottieri. Even though the current military members are the most highly trained, dedicated, and fiercely patriotic, I don't believe we can expect the kind of support for them that prevailed in WWII.

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The draft board system as we knew it has disappeared. It deserved to die because it was so unfairly administered at the local level. If the elite as well as the ordinary citizen is drafted by lottery in a national emergency, the people will support the effort. But, the elite must be made to serve, not just the ordinary folks. Drafting the banker's gardener and not his son will fail politically. I know that draft registration continues today, but I do not believe there is a draft board system in place. The local board system, when reestablished, must not defer the elite and draft the blacks and poor whites as they did in the Vietnam War era. That corrupt action in the Vietnam War caused the Armed Services to fight with a lower quality Soldier, Sailor, Marine, and Airman than in past wars in which I served. The Armed Services are not institutions to be used as instruments for correcting the failure of families to teach core moral values to their children, or to give a judge the opportunity to set aside criminal charges if the accused will join the Armed Forces. The latter happened too frequently.

During my tenure as chief of staff and commanding general, the State of North Carolina built a cloverleaf on [Highway] 24 in front of the main gate. Thirty-eight units of Midway Park housing were relocated by the State at no expense to the government in order to provide land for the overpass and the four lanes for Highway 24 as it now exists. The State authorities verbally agreed that they would eventually make a four-lane highway [Highway 24] all the way to the docks at Morehead City, but it stopped in Swansboro. We had an agreement in writing for the Swansboro segment, and they assured us that the Morehead segment was on the drawing board. Well, they changed governors and the priorities changed. Now, the Department of Transportation indicates that the Swansboro bridges to support the addition will be begun this year.

LCOL Kimball inquired about the origin of the 96-hour pass that appears to be peculiar to Camp Lejeune and not to Camp Pendleton, California. I do not know the origin, but it has been in place at Lejeune a long time. The 96-hour pass was always promoted as a means of getting Marines on long liberty periods (as opposed to leave) because of the isolated geographic location of Camp Lejeune and the poor public transportation servicing the area. When the 2d Division first came here after WWII, transportation out of here was primitive, and not many Marines owned a car in those days.