END-OF-TOUR ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

BRIGADIER GENERAL

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FORWARD

Brigadier General Earl M. Simms is the thirteenth officer to serve as commander of the U.S Army Soldier Support Center/ Institute since it was first formed in 1973. During the course of his career, BG Simms served also on two different occasions as Commandant, U.S. Army Adjutant General School, one of five schools forming the Soldier Support Institute. Brigadier General Simms is indebted to Sergeant Denise Blackwell for transcribing the original interview. Dr. Stephen E. Bower, Command Historian, U.S. Army Soldier Support Institute, conducted the interview and edited the final transcript.

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DR. BOWER: The Army "personnel" mission extends well beyond the limited proponent responsibilities of the AG Corps. Is the AG Corps a branch for personnel specialists or the branch designation for certain personnel functions?

BG SIMMS: The personnel community has been subdivided over time into relatively small compartments. Certainly, the primary focus of the Adjutant General Corps is the management of people -- strength and personnel accountability. Most senior and junior leaders recognize those missions, among others, as most visible to commanders and critical to our organizations. How do you maintain your strength? Do you have the proper array of MOS's, skills, grades and so forth?

The lifecycle of a soldier in the United States Army, however, truly reflects the totality of the personnel system -- from cradle to grave, from recruitment to burial. Everything that happens to a soldier during his or her time in service is a part of the personnel business. Some of that mission has really gone unnoticed because of our focus on other things. When I say "we," I'm talking about the leadership of the Army. We focus on causalities in a hostile environment, but beyond that we give lip service to it in peacetime. The mission is a local, face-to-face responsibility that rarely gets anyone's attention beyond the installation level. Who, for instance, is responsible for the recovery of remains from past wars? Logisticians make up most of that mission, but its part of the casualty system. I've partnered with the logistics community in performing the mission, but, by and large, we overlook it in the personnel community. It's part of the lifecycle of soldier who comes into the service. The personnel community has much of the responsibility for this mission.

The concept of "human resources" addresses the totality of the personnel mission, and people tend to confuse it with the Adjutant General (AG) mission. People think human resources and the AG mission are one and the same, but they aren't. There are differences between the two, and together comprise the total scope of the personnel business. I've been involved with the different sides of the personnel mission – from personnel accounting and personnel management to the everyday caring for soldiers. Some of these things typically don't get a great deal of visibility. I don't know if that makes me an expert, but certainly my view of the business is different from someone who has spent all his time managing faces. That seems to be the Achilles heel of the AG community. I used to say we were the world's best personnel managers, but the world's worst manpower managers. We truly do not understand how organizations are built and designed. For instance, we've not done very well building our own personnel organizations. Certainly, we've not done this as well as our Finance Corps brethren.

DR. BOWER: Should leadership, then, expect SSI or the AG Branch to be able to perform a human resources mission? Certainly, it's a personnel mission, but is it an AG mission? I realize senior leaders often don't make these fine distinctions. That seems to be true in TRADOC where anything designated "personnel" comes to SSI and the AG Corps despite the fact that some of these things lay outside the historical role and functions of the AG Branch. TRADOC, and perhaps the Army as a whole, does not possess a coherent structure or organization from which to view the personnel mission in its larger dimension, much of which has always existed outside the narrower branch concerns of SSI.

BG SIMMS: Some of that is an inability to articulate what the personnel community consists of. There certainly is an "umbrella" that covers all personnel aspects of the soldier lifecycle, but the umbrella is not the AG Branch. Perhaps we need to redefine the branch to include such things as equal opportunity and the human resources mission. Thus far, we've failed to articulate the resources necessary to execute the larger personnel mission. That failing relates to what I referred earlier, not understanding how organizations are designed and built. That requires a deep understanding of the functions your are being asked to perform, meaning, of course, all tasks relative to the performance of those functions. That often requires going beyond the popular beliefs about what your organizations are truly about. If the AG Branch, for instance, is to embrace human resources, it needs to quit defining itself narrowly in terms of those "go to war" functions with which we have so long been associated.

A good historical example of the failure to fully appreciate or to articulate the full extent of the personnel mission was the recent transfer of the record management function back to the personnel community. That happened when I was Adjutant General of the Army. If you recall, record management was taken away from us because some believed it more akin to information rather then personnel management. I'm not sure it came back to us for the right reason, but we've got it again. It was simply convenient for the Army to manage the issue that way. Record management is truly a personnel mission. We're talking about information that deals with people and the management of information that deals with people. In fact, I've come to believe that the "center of gravity" of the personnel mission is managing information that deals with people. When you look at the personnel mission in those terms, it takes in a lot of territory. We certainly have failed to articulate the full scope of the "personnel" mission and what that might mean in terms of organization and the way the Army does business. Perhaps someone needs to take a good look at all the pieces of the Army's personnel mission and figure out how they relate to one another.

DR. BOWER: From the perspective of Army historians, information managers really don't manage information at all; they manage information systems, and don't care much about the information that passes through them. Their answer to record management has been to hit the delete button. As you have recognized, there is a moral dimension to all that – taking care of commanders and the people who work for them. Even in the digital universe, there is a responsibility to maintain a record of activity.

BG SIMMS: The incredible thing we discovered after Desert Shield and Storm was that we knew more about the experience of soldiers in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam than we did about those we deployed to Southwest Asia in 1990. When we looked at things like sickness and the location of deployed soldiers, we were better able to do that in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. It was a complete breakdown of the record management function. Computers were not as prevalent during the Gulf War as they are today, but there is no question the Army was coming to believe record management was more the domain of information managers than personnel managers. Because of the absence of a record management program in the Gulf, we were unable to draw a historical perspective on individual soldiers or their units. Is it a responsibility of the personnel community? You better believe it is. It's all part of the responsibility to account for individuals.

Of course, record management became an issue when the Army had to uncover certain information related to the mysterious "Gulf War Syndrome," the mystery disease afflicting several Gulf War veterans. They couldn't give the mission to the personnel community because the personnel community did not have the responsibility for the function anymore. They solved that problem by giving it back to us. Consequently, record management came back to the AG Corps because they needed someone to dig up pertinent personnel information from the Gulf War. Unfortunately, there were huge holes in the data and we were unable to retrieve very little pertinent information.

Interestingly, immediately following that tasking we also were given the job of declassifying 250 million pages of documents dating all the way back to World War I and through World War II. That's when we discovered how well soldiers and units were documented compared to those who participated in Desert Shield/Storm. The whole thing was amazing. We quickly began talking about the irony of being able to document the "Agent Orange" issue during the Vietnam era better than the "Gulf Syndrome" during Operations Desert Shield and Storm. Of course, given advances in information technology, the reverse should be true.

DR. BOWER: Perhaps by design, the AG Corps seems not to have done a very good job of articulating the differences between its functions and those historically belonging to the division, corps, and theater army G-1, or the Army DCSPER. The tendency in recent years has been to conflate AG business with G-1 business when in fact the G-1 has always been responsible to the Army staff for the personnel mission in its fuller dimension. Until the Army of Excellence in the early 1980's, the AG Branch represented only a piece of this. Is this a significant issue and should we be talking about it as TRADOC and the Army transforms itself in the months and years ahead?

BG SIMMS: Absolutely, we should be talking about those things. We haven't done as good a job of laying these things out we should have. Using the Army division as an example, the Adjutant General of the division used to be the "action agent," implementing certain personnel policy and programs prescribed by the Division G-1. The Division G-1, on the other hand,

executed certain "personnel" policy and programs that were much broader in scope, programs and policies with which the division AG had little if anything to do. We're talking about such things as equal opportunity, safety, and suicide prevention, things rightfully belonging to what we call the human resources area. We're also talking about staff responsibility for such things as JAG, Finance, and public affairs. I see this as a positive development, but our tendency at SSI and the AG Branch, predictably, has been to focus more on the action piece for which the Adjutant General traditionally has been responsible.

DR. BOWER: I see this as having not only resource implications, but certainly implications for how the Army and TRADOC is organized and structured to prepare the personnel community for war. I also see personnel doctrinal implications, and for how folks in the AG Branch view the battlefield.

BG SIMMS: Adjutants historically have worked for the G1 and have been unconcerned about the larger personnel mission for which G1s were responsible. I became the G1/AG when the positions were consolidated in the 3rd Infantry Division. My day-to-day focus was typically AG, concerned with three major functions – personnel actions, administrative services, and strength management. However, we became responsible for the policy side of such things as equal opportunity, safety, and other things dealing with the health and welfare of soldiers others outside the Adjutant General community were responsible for executing. Certainly, the mission of the Adjutant became broader than the one to which I had been accustomed. Adjutants became responsible for what became known as Personnel Service Support.

Whether we call it Personnel Service Support or human resources, it refers to something broader than what the Adjutant General Corps has been about. It refers to the total program of caring for people. PSS becomes similar to logistics in that logistics is more than the Quartermaster Corps, but embraces transportation and ordnance also. Today, we talk about Human Resources instead of PSS, but we mean the same thing.

DR. BOWER: Is it still useful to talk about a PSS proponent in TRADOC?

BG SIMMS: I think SSI has to take on that role. In recent years, we've compartmentalized the AG, Chaplain, JAG, and Finance. All of those things overlap into a common concern for taking care of soldiers. We should be cognizant of that as we transform ourselves and build new organizations for the future. These functions and organizations must be blended together to provide efficient and effective personnel support. At some point, we've got to recognize Personnel Service Support or Human Resources as a composite of several branch and functional proponents that provide essential support to soldiers and commanders.

The Soldier Support Center (SSC) used to be the PSS integrator for TRADOC. Everyone knows PSS integration disappeared when SSC was absorbed into the Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM). The resources for PSS integration became CASCOM bill payers.

Therefore, PSS integration faded quickly from CASCOM purview. We don't do it anymore. Despite that, the Army and TRADOC continues to look at SSI and the AG Corps instead of CASCOM as the responsible agent for anything "personnel" in nature. SSI leadership has to assume some of the responsibility for this development also. Although the mission changed when the command moved to Fort Jackson, many in SSI continued to believe they had the responsibility for PSS integration. It depends on whom you talk to, but I believe it has become a part of the SSI culture. However, we've had difficulty articulating what that integration responsibility ought to be. Certainly, that has been my experience since coming back to SSI. Having served previously as commandant of the AG School, I know we assumed some things outside the AG Branch proponent area simply because we knew they needed to be done. As the TRADOC PSS integrator, CASCOM should probably have been given the missions, but we picked them up anyway because they were fundamentally "personnel" in nature.

CASCOM recently encouraged a couple of conferences that brought together all of the PSS proponents. These sessions were very successful. We shared information and everybody seemed pleased with the outcome. However, the other PSS proponents were typically concerned about being taken over by SSI and the personnel community. That would never be my intent, but it seems you need an overseer of those things if PSS is to mean anything at all. The G-1 of a division or corps has responsibility for these things, so logically that role probably ought to go to SSI. That's only one way of looking at it. I know there are a number of "rice bowls" out there, but at some point we'll need to look at PSS if we're to affect an efficient transformation of the Army.

Clearly, PSS is as large a responsibility as logistics, but, unfortunately, few ever realize that until we put people in harms way. Mail, for instance, is not an issue until we deploy and become concerned about morale and the soldier's ability to communicate with loved ones. Typically, it becomes one of the first concerns of the commander, but in a peacetime garrison environment, it's hardly ever mentioned. Today, we have a number of soldiers deployed so it has remained visible to commanders since Desert Shield and Storm. Unfortunately, PSS functions tend to be neglected in peacetime because they're typically not problems for the commander. That's a cyclic problem that seems to come around time and again. It's our responsibility in the personnel community to better articulate PSS issues in a peacetime environment and convince our combat arms brethren they need to be addressed. The AG community has performed its core mission of managing people so well with so few resources that our business appears easy to those looking on from the outside. Things like record management, however, continue to fall off the plate because they are not taken seriously in peacetime. We've got to have some kind of organization that keeps the broader definition of personnel in front of commanders who will expect us to do all those things when the U.S. Army deploys.

We'll have problems in the next major deployment because many of our things aren't being addressed in peacetime. Since we don't have many issues, the perception is that we're doing our mission. However, we simply aren't resourced to do all those things that will be expected of us in a major deployment. There are a few leaders who realize we'll be challenged,

but they don't understand the full breadth and depth of the challenge. Today, battalion commanders, for example, will refer you to their S-1s to solve a personnel problem. I can remember a time when battalion commanders could identify the source of a personnel problem and often be able to provide a solution. Most of the time they were on the mark, because they were required to know the basis of our business. They understood that certain aspects of our business were their responsibility. Back then the personnel community taught commanders about their responsibility to the personnel mission. Just like certain pieces of logistics, intelligence, and operations were their responsibility, certain pieces of the personnel mission were their responsibility.

As we began drawing the force down, we began taking a certain degree of risk in the personnel business. We began eliminating certain components of the personnel business that evaluated how well the mission was being performed. For instance, we used to have inspection teams, PERMAS teams, which evaluated how well we performed the personnel mission. PERMAS reports used to provide a good barometer of how well we were doing personnel business. As PERMAS teams went by the way, so did the means to measure mission effectiveness and teach commanders about our business. Battalion commanders were concerned about the timeliness and accuracy of OER's, because we had reports that required them to take an interest in those things. Today, they may not be any more knowledgeable about those things than the soldiers who work for them. We used to have a process that forced leaders to become knowledgeable about personnel business.

I remember when we were briefing the DCSPER, GEN Ohle, about SIDPERS 3 and data accuracy. In the course of our briefing, he recalled that he used to get "beat up" all the time if SIDPERS data was not timely, updated weekly. The system worked to enforce the timeliness of SIDPERS updates. Our briefing showed him that it was now taking 27-30 days to get data from the units to the top of the system. So, the lights went on. What happened here and who's watching this now? The answer, of course, was that no one was watching because we've taken certain risks in the way we do business. We saw a couple of things here. First, when you draw down an organization you need to make sure everyone understands the impact of certain risk-taking decisions on the organization. Second, people won't understand the true extent of the risk until a later time when the organization starts to crack from the stress of increased operational tempo. Then, of course, we end up reinventing one of the wheels upon which the organization used to ride. It's the whole thing about repeating history if you don't know it. That's where we are today in the personnel community, faced with the reinvention of things we've allowed to pass away. These problems aren't anything magical. We've had them before and addressed them before. We've simply taken risks in the way we do personnel. We've probably not done a very good job of tracking of those things.

As we transform the Army, one of the things we have to do in the personnel community is to dissect our functions and figure out the resources necessary to perform each of them. Simplifying and streamlining personnel functions is good and proper, but at some point we have to insist on some mechanism to monitor performance of the personnel system. That will force personnel specialists to become more familiar with the mission, but it will also necessarily

involve the commander in the whole process. As leaders of soldiers, commanders will become more familiar with the personnel system and what it does for them and their soldiers. If that happens, we shouldn't have great difficulty articulating our needs as they relate to the mission. In the end, we may not agree with the amount of resources given us, but commanders should be able to understand the risk associated with certain levels of resourcing. That's going to happen at some point, because we're essentially broken.

DR. BOWER: Correct me if I'm wrong, but the SSI relationship with the DCSPER of the Army seems to have grown closer since the command moved from Fort Harrison to Fort Jackson. I remember one DCSPER visit to Fort Harrison during the 1980s and early 1990s, and that was to attend an extensive Systems Program Review with the Vice Chief, TRADOC commander and others who came to review the PSS community's transformation under Army of Excellence initiatives. That always seemed strange to me, given that SSC was the Army's proponent for PSS, a true extension of the DCSPER and the broader definition of personnel that we have been discussing.

BG SIMMS: I can give you my view on these things. You have to understand that the DCSPER is focused principally on the present, namely the "strategic" present. He's usually up to his neck in alligators; one has him by the leg, another by the arm, and he's using the other arm to turn the valve that drains water from the swamp. So, he's very, very, focused. Does he have a responsibility for the future of personnel operations and tactics? Surely he does, because he's controls a lot of the money for future development. However, he's primarily concerned with the strategic level of the personnel mission. That often doesn't connect with what we do here at SSI. Recently, he's been focused on strength management issues that affect the entire Army. That's the focus of Army leadership these days, and that's his focus as well. Despite that, we still could form a greater connection with the DCSPER.

When I left the AG School to become Adjutant General of the Army (TAG), it became immediately clear that my TAG job was focused on the present and maybe 12 months out. As commandant, I spent most of my time thinking from 2-10 years out. We're still talking personnel, but our focuses were different, and by virtue of the job, we were totally overcome by them. Therefore, we often experienced problems with language and communication even though we were talking about the same functions. If my mission as TAG is to declassify 250 million pages of official records by the year 2000, and I'm only at 98 million in 1999, boy, that's a real chunk on my plate. As commandant, my focus is not on the process of declassification, but on the future and providing the structures and organization in which record management might be performed. So, we often have problems seeing things in common. With record management, for instance, both parties have to understand the other's focus before they can talk and walk together.

It was my desire to bring certain programs together, here or at Department of the Army, which would develop the future, based on how certain functions were currently being performed. I don't know that we've devoted much energy to that, however. BG Neil Snyder was actually

the first to facilitate routine meetings between at least the TAG and SSI. As DCSPER, LTG Fred Vollrath also bought into some of that as he saw his office moving towards a "human resources" organization. That vision brought him closer to TAG and SSI. As TAG, I lobbied for SSI involvement in his strategic human resources vision. It was not a natural connection, but it's getting easier because of all the talk about transformation. The picture is still complicated by the fact that we aren't sure how responsibility should be divided among SSI, the AG School, and the DCSPER. However, we're all communicating and talking on a regular basis. That's a far cry from where we used to be. When SSI was SSC and the PSS integrator for the Army, they had all they could handle. There didn't seem to be as much of a need for that communication. As SSC commander, GEN Brooks was connected to TRADOC and only conversed with the DCSPER infrequently. That's my view, strictly my view.

DR. BOWER: Is the SSI configured to adequately support the Army of the future? How should SSI be structured to satisfy Army transformation and the future development of the personnel community?

BG SIMMS: I probably was able to do less in this arena than I wanted. SSI seems to be headed in the direction in which I think it can make a difference in the future. As a result of the draw down, it became very clear to me that the transition from SSC to SSI had left us with an inefficient organization. I'm not going to take the designers of the SSI organization to task, because their reasoning was probably appropriate for the time. Over time, however, as resources continued to dwindle, we didn't reorganize into what I believe to be a more efficient organization. We had a headquarters that was much larger then we could afford. All of our people are important, but as our schools were reduced the headquarters remained the same. I felt the headquarters had to go on a diet and that the schools ought to be fed a little more. The schools are the lifeblood of SSI. If they don't function, SSI dies.

My approach was to provide them as much cover in the way of resources as I possibly could. There were other ways of doing this, but I chose to eliminate certain headquarters elements, and take certain pieces of the Training Support Battalion (TSB) and consolidate them in the SSI headquarters. My intent was to install more of a traditional staff in the headquarters, and push the freed up resources down into the schools. People seem to miss the fact that SSI is composed of two branch schools and the Recruiting School. The two branch schools are central to our business in that they develop officers as well as enlisted personnel. The intent of my predecessors, as I see it, was to in effect a balance between the two branch schools so that one did not have more than then the other. I came to believe we could no longer afford that. We've grown even smaller since the move to Fort Jackson. I decided to bite the bullet and try to support our primary mission of training the load. However, we've still got an organization based largely on the parity principle rather than on efficiency.

DR. BOWER: Do we really mean it in TRADOC when we say that "training the load" is our priority?

BG SIMMS: I was with the TRADOC commander when he laid that out; yeah, he does mean it. So does the Chief of Staff of the Army. Of my three assignments to TRADOC and SSI, this is the first time they really mean it when they say it. GEN Abrams has made it clear he will resource training and assume risk in other areas. His ability to monitor training and hold the line on spending in other areas has been complicated by the Chief's transformation program for which TRADOC also has responsibility. The signals have become mixed in that training the load appears to have slipped down the priority list again.

From an Army perspective, training the load should be our priority. It's the right thing to do in the absence of resources for the other things which TRADOC also has responsibility. The Army staff has to recognize they can't have their cake and eat it too. If TRADOC is expected to train as well as design future organizations, they need to resource us to do both. However, the Department of the Army (DA) continues to melt down TRADOC while expecting it to churn out both products. I know the TRADOC commander, GEN Abrams, is frustrated by the situation. He tells DA they're breaking the Training and Doctrine Command, but as GEN Vollrath used to say, "Show me how I'm breaking you." If you can't translate your frustration into the language of manpower, money, or time that has been diverted to other things, then it's difficult for someone outside your business to understand the point at which your organization will break.

Training is our priority mission. On the other hand, we'll probably not get any more resources to support training until TRADOC substantiates the fact that transformation has diminished our ability to provide units with quality trained soldiers. If training suffers, we'll probably get additional resources. Because of the draw down, TRADOC has already assumed certain risks in its ability to train the load. There are certain programs that were eliminated that hinder our ability to effectively train. For example, we no longer have the capability to evaluate the quality of our training programs. We can't assess the quality of the training product because the program doesn't exist anymore. We decided to assume the risk a few years back as we drew down the force. We felt we could do without an assessment program; therefore, we eliminated it and then quickly forgot about it. Today, we're once again talking about the need to assess the quality of training and resurrecting programs for that purpose. No one is talking resources at this point, but we're suddenly remembering evaluation programs as integral to quality training. That's just a follow on to the question of do we really mean it when we say training is our priority?

I can understand why it's confusing to some, but we have to be able to say we're not going to do X because you've set Y as the priority. We have to draw a line -- everything above it is mission essential and everything below it won't be done well or not at all. Of course, we have to mean it when we say it, and stay the course until someone from higher headquarters tells us something different. TRADOC should also provide the standard against which the priority is measured. If we can't meet the standard within available resource constraints, then we need to be able to say so, and say what we need to get the job done. One thing that gets me up on a soapbox is the expectation to take on a mission without articulating the cost in personnel, time, and money. As an Army, we've got to get better at that. It's not "hooah", it's "dooah." What

does it take to do the additional mission that you assigned me? If you can do that, then you should be able to say how well you are going to be able to do the job. Therefore, there are no surprises for the person performing the task or for the person who has assigned it. There should be no confusion about priorities or an inability to perform lower priority missions to standard. I've only been marginally successful in teaching commanders how to do that. It's not easy, not easy, at all. You have to teach the process, and then people have to embrace it.

When I was Adjutant General of the 3d Infantry Division I learned a hard lesson about the process. We ran out of paper for a postal unit and I discovered that I had to pay for it. I said, "Wait a minute, why do I have to pay for something that the entire division is using"? However, I soon learned that in figuring my budget, I had failed to differentiate between the division account and the Adjutant General account. From that experience, I learned that the more attention I paid to how the process worked, the more resources I got. People don't understand why some people get all the fine office furniture, and others are still sitting on crates. Budget managers usually reward those who articulate their needs the best. I learned the lesson, and it has helped me successfully manage large, complex organizations. If it had been possible, I would like to have taught that lesson to every incoming lieutenant.

DR. BOWER: For over fifty years, senior leaders of the Army have assumed a close relationship between personnel and finance. Are the AG and Finance Branches getting closer or further apart as we move into the 21st Century?

BG SIMMS: The two branches are as close now as they will ever get. Both branches belong to the PSS community of functions, but have never been as functionally close to one another as senior leaders have believed. They persist in seeing the two as one for one reason and one reason only, and that's because since the beginning of time we've shared the military pay function – paying soldiers. That's primarily a disservice to the Finance Corps whose corps competencies and value to the commander stretch well beyond the pay function and couldn't be any more different from the AG Corps'. The core competencies of the two branches are separate and distinct, and always will be.

As it happens, the AG Corps is soon to inherit the pay function. We won't be sharing it with the Finance Corps any longer. The remaining core competencies of the Finance Corps move it much closer to the logistics community than the personnel community. If anything, it will force commanders to recognize the broader functions of the Finance Corps. The Finance School will remain apart of SSI, but it won't be as easy for senior leaders to put personnel and finance in the same box. The Finance Corps will become linked to missions and functions that have been given little recognition over the years. From here on out, when commanders think of the Finance Corps, they're going to have to see it for what it truly is -- a branch that enables them to have banking, foreign currency, and contracting support, and probably resource management support before all is said and done. As we speak, there is substantial agreement on the wisdom

to consolidate the finance with the resource management function. If that happens, finance will become even more distinct from the personnel community.

DR. BOWER: Command and control of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) recently passed from the Army DCSPER to the Commander, TRADOC. In terms of unity of command and functions, is this a good thing for the personnel community?

BG SIMMS: Originally, I was apprehensive because I felt that it was a distinctly personnel function that ought to be firmly within the personnel community. However, I viewed the issue from a strategic perspective, and perhaps failed to see it from an operational or even tactical point of view. USAREC is a command, and its commander ought to work for another commander. The responsibility for recruiting in terms of the Army staff remains with the DCSPER. However, the real issue is the command aspect of it; that is, how beneficial is it to have the USAREC commander reporting to another commander? How beneficial has that relationship been? Well, I believe the success USAREC enjoyed this past year is directly attributable to that.

Like the rest of the Army, USAREC had changed in recent years to address the specific challenges that stood between it and mission accomplishment. However, the changes or adjustments had not been in a systematic sort of way, namely the systematic sort of way required by TRADOC. I'm talking about all those things that TRADOC does -- training and doctrine development, proponent development and the like. What changes that did come to pass in USAREC were from an operational and tactical standpoint, not from a strategic point of view. For instance, who's the proponent for recruiter training and 79R? I asked the Commandant of the Recruiting and Retention School (RRS) whether he was the proponent for these things and he said no, USAREC was the proponent. I felt that was the wrong answer. As commandant of the school, a TRADOC school, he was responsible for those things like all the other TRADOC commandants. He was responsible for training development and design, the actual training of soldiers, and all the rest. With time, the DCSPER became comfortable operating differently. When you look at it from the standpoint of a TRADOC school and how it functions, it makes sense. Because of the TRADOC connection, we were able to program the resources the RRS needed to do its mission. Documenting class size and student numbers enabled us to get the RRS the resources necessary to meet its mission. In a word, the RRS began operating like all the other TRADOC schools.

I still believe TRADOC needs to have some mechanism that allows for some flexibility in providing resources for its schools. If the recruiting market requires more or fewer recruiters, then TRADOC ought to be able to respond to that situation. Recruiters require training. They're not like other soldiers who go through basic and initial entry training and suddenly appear for duty. Recruiters are men and women who are already in the Army, and have to be trained to perform the recruiting mission. They require a skill level and ability to respond to the ups and downs of the market. The TRADOC school system is the right model for that. We need to have the flexibility to adjust to the market. However, the great debate remains. Should USAREC fall

under the DCSPER or TRADOC? My opinion doesn't count for much, but I feel it should remain under TRADOC. Should the Chief of Staff be able to ask the DCSPER about the state of the recruiting mission? Probably, because when there's a problem, you want the person responsible close at hand. However, TRADOC provides the system by which you can manage fluctuations in the recruiting market.

DR. BOWER: From my perspective, Americans seem to have lost some sense of civic and personal responsibility for the future health and security of the nation. The idea of personal sacrifice and commitment to ideals that transcend self seems not to be a part of the public conversation any longer. What are your thoughts on Army values and the young people coming into today's Army?

BG SIMMS: The military services are a microcosm of the larger society, carrying around both the strengths and weaknesses of the larger American community. I grew up in an era where everybody served. My parents were products of a drafted Army, one where you served whether you wanted to or not. If you were healthy you served in the military. We still get young people who are apprehensive about adulthood, their future, and having to get out of bed at 0400 hours and deal with a drill sergeant. That's something even their fathers and grandfathers experienced. However, back then those fathers and grandfathers were able to impart experiences to the young that really had nothing to do with job satisfaction and career enhancement. Military service was not about self and securing your future, but about service to country in time of need. Parents told their sons and daughters about these things. We called it patriotism and when you served you came away feeling rewarded for having done your part in service to the nation. The difference between then and now is the diminishing numbers of soldiers who truly understand patriotism. The numbers of patriots, the numbers of soldiers who sign up to serve a larger cause are declining annually.

Serving in the military has come to be viewed as one occupation among many. In the past there was no option. When you left the service, you left believing you had done your duty, not that you had mastered certain skills making you more marketable for civilian life. There were those who made military service a career, but it was a career grounded in commitment and service. For me, it still is. I would like to think of my career as service to the country. I feel good about that, but now its time get on with the next stage of life. That's probably the piece that's missing. The implications for recruiting today's Army are immense. You have to make military service seem as attractive as other career options from which folks choose. The process itself brings us a different kind of soldier.

If you ask young kids coming into the Fort Jackson reception center why they joined, you'll get a variety of responses. If you ask them the same question six weeks later when they are about to graduate from Basic Training, they are able to talk about the values of service and commitment. I attribute that to our values training. All of them had sensed this about military service and life in general, but were unable to articulate it in the beginning. Our battalion commander recently visited one of our Army divisions to assess how well our AIT training had

prepared soldiers to do their jobs. As one might expect, our former AIT soldiers told him they had been well trained for their duties. Most profound, however, were unsolicited comments about values training in the battalion. These soldiers told him they missed the teamwork and the family environment of the AIT companies to which they belonged. It seemed not to be a part of the unit to which they had been assigned. These values, they said, weren't taught or reinforced in their new assignments. They believed in those values and what they had been taught. That's powerful testimony to my previous assertion that these kids know about these things, but have not been in an environment that actually applied them in the everyday setting.

We sell military service as an occupation. The selling is a form of competition that enables the Army to draw from a pool of people who have other attractive career options. Ours has become a profession that has to compete for the services of people. As such, individuals probably join the military for reasons of career and occupation, but learn quickly that military service is also about service and commitment to others and to our nation. We've also come to understand that marketing military service as an occupation has implications for the retention rate. People want to complete their terms of enlistment, go back home, and find good jobs utilizing the skills they have received while in the military. Reenlistment is rarely the first option. I don't believe this is a problem in the sense that something is broken. Taking good care of soldiers has always been a way of drawing folks into the Army or making it an attractive career alternative, but from the standpoint of values we probably need to start looking at the retention process differently. Leadership has to recognize the difference between joining and staying. It will become especially crucial in the years ahead when the well of draft-era soldiers finally dries up. When they go, so too goes the memory of such things as service and commitment as the first priority of the soldier.

DR. BOWER: We also seem to have lost interest in teaching the values of nationhood – how our nation compares to others, what it means to be an American, how our American values and system of government compares to others. Without these things, it seems impossible to impart patriotic values – the whole idea that there are some things larger than self and worthy objects of selfless service and sacrifice.

BG SIMMS: Our difficulty in recruiting is one thing, but what concerns me more is the will of our nation. When the going gets tough, we're only going to be as tough as the will is strong, and it doesn't seem to be very strong at this point. If commitment doesn't extend beyond my group, community, or family; if there isn't a feeling larger than self, we're going to have problems and lots of them. We're going to find ourselves in situations that will require the support of the American people. If we don't have it, it's doubtful we'll have the political and moral stamina to prevail. More than that, it becomes hypocritical to talk about the will of the people when there isn't any to back up the politicians and soldiers ready to invoke it.

My hope is that families, schools, and communities are able implant what you call the values of nationhood. There is indeed a difference between a volunteer and a non-volunteer force and much of the difference has to do with the values of the soldiers who serve in each. The

future will eventually challenge the "volunteer" force. It won't be peaches n' cream. We'll suffer casualties and we'll have to deal with the situation as a nation. How important will military commitment and the loss of life be to the American people? The loss of life always puts military commitment in perspective. Is the commitment worth the loss of life? Will the American people recognize that certain commitments are worth the loss of life? That's the issue to which everyone is sensitive. Should we be there, should we be walking away rather than into a situation? It certainly poses a challenge for those who have to connect the mission to things we value as a people. I'm speaking of things like freedom and democracy. That will prove to be very, very interesting and profound.

DR. BOWER: How do you want to conclude this interview?

BG SIMMS: Notwithstanding all we've talked about, there is no doubt that we are a strong nation and a strong Army. We are a people who are at liberty to freely express ourselves. We'll transcend those problems that confront us as an Army and as a people. Unless that changes, my faith in our ability to overcome our problems will remain unshaken. Certainly my 32 years of service was well worth it. I would do it again in a flash, knowing exactly what I know today. I could have gone elsewhere and done other things, but I valued my service to the nation 32 years ago and I value it today as I walk out the door.