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STUDY PROJECT

EXPANDING THE LESSONS LEARNED PROGRAM TO
INCLUDE CORPS SUPPORT COMMAND COMMANDERS
AND THEATER ARMY AREA COMMAND COMMANDERS

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL KENNETH M. BEAN^m

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

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EXPANDING THE LESSONS LEARNED PROGRAM
TO INCLUDE CORPS SUPPORT COMMAND COMMANDERS
AND THEATER ARMY AREA COMMAND COMMANDERS

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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EXPANDING THE LESSONS LEARNED PROGRAM
TO INCLUDE CORPS SUPPORT COMMAND
COMMANDERS AND THEATER ARMY AREA
COMMAND COMMANDERS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

✓
The Oral History Program's purpose is to supplement official histories, to isolate successful command, leadership and managerial techniques, and to gain important perspectives on defense issues. The program currently gathers information from retired officers and other selected individuals and includes lessons learned from division, Corps, school and Major Army Command (MACOM) commanders.) The program is being expanded to include selected general officers serving in joint and combined billets. Sustainment is vital to success at both the operational and tactical level of war and a critical element of combat power. Therefore, it is essential that the Lessons Learned Program be further extended to include the commanders of Corps Support Commands and Theater Army Area Commands.

General William C. Westmoreland started the Senior Officer Oral History Program in 1970. The objective of the program is to capture the experience of senior leaders in the areas of command, leadership, and management. The individual is interviewed three to five years after his retirement in order for him to reflect on his career, to discount trends and activities that proved to be of only passing interest and to determine what was actually vital to

1

the Army. The Oral History Program also has topical projects such as Army Nurses in Vietnam, Special Operations, Low-intensity Conflict and Activation of a Division. These interviews concentrate on a particular function instead of an individual. As of 1 September 1988, the program has captured over 2000 hours of taped interviews and 100,000 transcribed pages.¹ These were intended to be used to gain insight into command and management techniques and to further research in military history.

In June of 1984, the Chief of Staff, General Wickham, expressed a desire to collect lessons learned from division commanders as they finished their tours of duty.² The intent was to capture lessons learned about training, doctrine, organization, equipment, leadership and ethics, and family action issues. The collection of command lessons learned was to be made available to battalion, brigade and division commanders as a preparation tool for command. Additionally, they could also be used for General Officer Professional Development. As of 1 September 1988, 30 division commanders have been interviewed, and the U.S. Army Military History Institute has produced a summary of selected extracts from 1985 through 1988.³ These documents are available to provide insight for incoming commanders as well as practitioners and students on the art of command.

While serving as the DCSOPS in 1986, General Vuono directed an expansion of the program (lessons learned) beyond division commanders at the direction of the Chief of Staff.⁴ Corps commanders, MACOM commanders and school commandants were now

included in the program. As of 1 September 1988, fourteen interviews have been done under this program.⁵ However, unlike the Division Command Program which documented the experiences of division commanders, the results of these interviews have not been consolidated into a single document for dissemination to the field.

Recently General Vuono directed the program to be expanded once again.⁶ This time his purpose was to codify lessons learned from the experience of selected general officers serving, or who have served, in key joint and combined positions. In June 1988, 24 general officers' positions were identified as candidates for interview. The War College has organized the faculty into regional teams to satisfy this requirement. The completed interviews should do much to enhance the understanding of the difficulties surrounding these positions. Appreciation should also be gained on how the Army supports the CINCs, on how the faculty draws expertise in regional issues, on how joint and combined procedures develop, and on how the Unified Command Plan really works.

END NOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Army, Military History Institute, Senior Officer Oral History Program Project Handlist, p. Forward (hereafter referred to as "Army Oral History").

2. U.S. Department of the Army, Division Command Lessons Learned, Message, 20 Aug 1984.

3. Army Oral History, pp. 33-34.

4. U.S. Department of the Army, Memorandum, Expansion of Oral History Program, 28 April 1986.

5. Army Oral History, pp. 32, 87-90.

6. U.S. Army, Memorandum for Record, U.S. Army War College Comprehensive Briefing for the CSA, 26 July 1988.

CHAPTER II

DISCUSSION

The lessons learned program covers the war fighter but not the logistician. Institutionalizing experience and precluding senior leadership from having to reinvent the wheel is just as big a problem for the logistician as it is for the war fighter. The rising phenomenon of specialization which causes U.S. Army general officers to be less capable of being an expert in all the activities they may be responsible for is far more likely to happen to the logistician than it is the Combat Arms officer. The division commander will command anywhere from 10,500 to 18,000 personnel depending on the type of division. His organization will not change in size or structure if deployed to a combat zone. Training programs are developed so that all his assigned units are capable of working together on a daily basis just as they would in war. Although he has his own logistics units, his survivability is dependent on corps support command (COSCOM) and theater army area command units. This is especially true for the light-infantry force.

The corps has anywhere from three to five divisions assigned to it as well as a signal brigade, artillery brigade, engineer brigade, aviation brigade, military intelligence units, MP units, a personnel service command and in addition the corps support command. The size of our peacetime corps changes drastically as

we mobilize to go to war. The COSCOM is one of the units which has the largest change in size and structure upon mobilization. Corps support commands have an assigned strength before mobilization of around 6000 depending on the unit. Upon mobilization, these units mushroom to a size of 23,000 to 30,000 personnel depending on the operations plan (OPLAN). COSCOMs provide support to all corps forces, and when directed they provide support to forces of other services or countries. COSCOM units operate as far forward as necessary to support the tactical plan. Two of our active force COSCOMs are commanded by colonels; the remainder are commanded by general officers.

Behind the corps lies the Theater Army Area Command (TAACOM). We have two in the active force structure, and 70% of their capability is in the reserve structure. The TAACOM is the key logistics operator in the communications zone (COMMZ). This command provides combat service support (CSS) to all units located in or passing through its assigned area. Additionally, it supports the corps with specified logistics support and the theater supply system with maintenance. Finally, the TAACOM coordinates host nation support, supervises real property maintenance activities, and ensures rear area protection (RAP) within its assigned area. TAACOMs are comprised of only those units required to provide support. The types and numbers of subordinate units depend on the number and composition of corps and units within the COMMZ. These units are commanded by senior general officers.

Nowhere in our Army today should a lessons learned program be more valuable than in the logistics community. We must remember that at the operational level of war logistics governs what can and what cannot be accomplished. If any commander has less start up time or a shorter learning curve, it is the senior logistics commander. Manning, arming, fueling, fixing, feeding and moving are basic tasks of the logistics commander.¹ Each in itself is difficult, and the ability to integrate them all into comprehensive integrated battle support while being responsible for the rear battle is a difficult challenge. Yet sustainment must be carried out so as to facilitate the ability of the maneuver commander to attain the tenets of Airland Battle doctrine-- initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization. Unfortunately, the logistics commanders cannot roll all his units to the field for a FTX to identify weak areas and to see how they line up once deployed since the majority of his forces are in the reserve structure. If he does it with the forces that he does have, he does not have the opportunity to exercise their mission capability unless at least one division with its corps slice is deployed so he has someone to support. The logistics commander must identify and document problems/shortfalls as he goes, and although he may pass them on to his successor, he will find that they are not preserved for commanders of like units, future commanders and students of the art of logistics. Additionally, the logistics commander must be knowledgeable of the missions, capabilities, strengths and weaknesses of his supported customers and other

combat service support elements to ensure he provides the right support, at the right time, to the right place. FM 100-10 summarizes this well:

Effective battlefield sustainment demands that the separate elements of the CSS system unite to perform required logistics and support functions at both the operational and tactical levels. Sound intelligence information is vital at both levels. Additionally, CSS forces must meet special support requirements to ensure that battle support is maintained. Weapon systems must be kept operational. Reconstitution actions must be supported, vital sustainment engineering tasks must be accomplished and reinforcing units must be deployed and employed. Noncombatants may have to be evacuated. CSS elements must be prepared to support all these activities.²

END NOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-10, pp. 1-9
(hereafter referred to as FM 100-10).

2. Ibid. pp. 2-21.

CHAPTER III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LESSONS LEARNED

I reviewed the current lessons learned questionnaires for outgoing division and corps commanders. The purpose of the questionnaires is to gain insight about command/leadership at the senior level from general officers. They concentrate on the following major subject areas: Readiness, Training, Doctrine, Field Operations, Organization, Installation Management, Leadership, Ethics, Family Actions and Reserve Components. The questionnaires, although general in nature, allowed for specific responses that could identify problems, trends and solutions. I felt the questionnaires could be applied to logistics commanders if two areas were expanded--readiness and reserve components. Readiness was expanded upon to cover the senior logistics commander's supported units as well as his own. Reserve component were expanded on because of the size of the logistics tail that is in the reserve structure. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was used to interview COL George B. Dibble, Commander, First Corps Support Command, XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, North Carolina (Appendix 2).

For the purpose of this interview, the questionnaire developed was satisfactory. However, it must be expanded to include questions on host nation support, labor relations and civil affairs before interviews are done in Europe and Korea.

International political agreements, stationing limitations, force ceiling restrictions and budgetary constraints place strength limits on forward deployed U.S. force structure. To improve readiness, host nation support has become the preferred method of meeting valid support requirements within acceptable risk. Host nation support is validated by signed national agreements and plans that specifically define tasks to be performed in priority sequence and include procedures for testing and revising the agreement. War plans are based on these agreements.¹ Questions on civil affairs units' capabilities and shortfalls must be addressed because they are responsible for liaison and coordination of host nation support agreements. Unfortunately, all civil affairs units are in the reserve structure. Additionally, questions must be generated for Europe and Korea on local national employment, both benefits and problems, since local nationals comprise a large portion of their work force and are part of their go-to-war capability.

END NOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-16, pp. 1-6 - 1-7 (hereafter referred to as FM 100-16).

CHAPTER IV

THE INTERVIEW

The interview with Colonel George B. Dibble (Appendix 2) conducted on 26 November 1988 was highly instructional. I had been professionally and personally associated with Colonel Dibble from May 1986 until July 1988 and perceived I knew how he would answer most of the questions. This was not the case. His candid responses allowed me to see him in a different perspective and gain insight into problems in command at the senior level. Preparing for and conducting the interview was a learning experience in itself, even after having taken the Oral History advanced course. Although I organized and labelled tapes, checked paperwork and tape recorders, and foresaw some obstacles as a result of the course, I still ran into surprises. I showed up at the interview site short an extra copy of the questionnaire and an extension cord. The interview site chosen was also a mistake--his home, instead of his office. The thought was to be comfortable; unfortunately, it also allowed for distractions--e.g., dog, son, and wife.

I also perceived that editing the transcript would be a fairly simple and quick process. Again, this was not the case. Transcribers did not understand all of the tapes because of acronyms, noise interference, etc. They could not put sentences in proper context because they did not know the subject matter.

It took 38 hours to edit the 60-page transcript.

Colonel Dibble's interview will be a good tool for the incoming commander and is going to be available to him at the right time--prior to his assumption of command. The interview is also a good document to begin a compilation of comments from logistics commanders to provide insights and to stimulate thinking about being a successful and effective commander. Just a few of these comments extracted from the interview follow:

Preparation for Command.

I probably could have learned a lot from some of my counterparts. Perhaps I should have gone to the Log Center to talk about doctrinal issues. ...I have found that there are significant differences in the divisional forces. That's my background, rather than support in non-divisional forces. I could have been better versed in OPLANS and corps operations.

Training.

COSCOM, obviously, is much different than a division. The individual organizations of the COSCOM all have varied and different missions, and in many instances are tied to different OPLANS. To some extent the training on which these organizations focus is suboptimized. What I mean is that in a division all the training focuses on one objective and that is the betterment of the division whether it be in closing with or destroying the enemy or providing combat service support. However, when you are dealing with a fragmented kind of organization, such as a COSCOM, you have to focus more on the company level. The business of training down to company level as opposed to training to battalion level from the divisional or COSCOM command level was entirely different.

Field Operations.

Don't let inhibitors of "We're too busy" get in the way of doing field operations. Look for opportunities. Communications is a limiting factor in the field. We had to lean on the signal brigade quite extensively for our communications. They have been good to us, but I think, that if we ever found ourselves on the battlefield with all the demands for communications, as well as the numerous units and the great distances in the corps rear, communications would be the biggest inhibitor to effective command in the field.

Organizational Structure.

The magnitude, the size and the span of control of some of these non-divisional organizations, in my view, often times inhibit the effective command and control and the effectiveness.

Leadership.

You can't command from behind the desk even at the COSCOM level. You have to get out and be visible. You have to know firsthand what is going on. I think personally that I have learned in the time that I have been in command how to be a better leader. I have learned through trial and error and through my own mistakes.

Reserve Components.

We can play on FTXs more with them. I think that may facilitate greater oversight. In other words, it is something that can be multi-echelon-trained, not only training and supporting from the active side, but bringing them in and letting them participate in all of that. We get a better feel for their capabilities and build a closer relationship.

As I look across my CAPSTONE organizations, they are spread across the entire continental United States. That is one of the impediments of a closer relationship with these kinds of organizations. We've talked an awfully lot,

and we are not the only ones speaking to this, toward the notion of having a closer relationship by aligning our CAPSTONE trace more along the lines of units on the eastern part of the United States. This facilitates opportunities to meet on a more frequent basis and to participate in FTXs, and it would be more cost effective.

When there are sufficient interviews completed, problems within the Army can be identified and forwarded to the proper agencies for resolutions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that logistics is vital to the success of the Army in both a war and peacetime environment. During war we must sustain. While at peace, we must ensure forces have sufficient assets to wage war and in the event of war have immediate access to material to replace battle losses. The Corps Support Command is vital to the Corps' capability to successfully employ its divisions, and the TAACOM is required to support the corps within the theater of operations. COSCOMs are larger than divisions; and TAACOMs are as large as, if not larger than, a corps. I believe this paper justifies the need to further expand the lessons learned program to include corps support command and theater army area command commanders. The questionnaire developed, with minor modifications as suggested in Chapter III, will work well in future interviews and will be a good tool for commanders to use while transitioning. The process of oral interviews by USAWC students ensures responsive answers from the commander and not prepared comments from his staff. The interview in itself is a valuable learning experience for the USAWC student. Following are recommendations:

Recommendation 1. That the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, further expand the lessons learned program to include corps support command and theater army area command commanders.

Recommendation 2. That extracts from the completed interviews be consolidated into a document like the Division Command Lessons Learned Program. This document should be distributed to corps commanders and reserve logistics commanders as well as the active logistics commanders. All lessons learned consolidated documents should be required reading for USAWC students and faculty.

Recommendation 3. That USAWC students continue to do interviews.

Recommendation 4. That the questionnaire developed be utilized with modifications as suggested in Chapter III.

Recommendation 5. That the Oral History elective be continued, and students doing Oral History as a MSP (Military Studies Program) be strongly encouraged to take it.

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5. U.S. Department of the Army. Memorandum for Record, Army War College Comprehensive Assessment Briefing for the CSA. AWCA: 26 July 1988.
6. U.S. Department of the Army. Memorandum No. 10-3, U.S. Army War College Regional Teams. U.S. Army War College: 30 June 1988.
7. U.S. Department of the Army. Military History Institute, Senior Officer Oral History Program. Carlisle Barracks: 1 September 1988.

INTERVIEW GUIDE AND QUESTIONNAIRE FOR
CORPS SUPPORT COMMAND LESSONS LEARNED PROJECT

Opening Comments

"In June, 1984, the Chief of Staff of the Army directed the DCSOPS to begin a project to capture lessons learned in division command. This is a proposed extension of this program. I will ask you questions about your experience in command. To make your remarks most useful to your successor and other prospective support commanders, please reflect on what you have learned in your time in command, rather than only on what you currently do. Information about an initial idea that you modified may be a useful lesson learned that can be passed on. I may ask some follow-up questions during the interview. Please keep your remarks in an unclassified form.

"At the end of the interview I will ask your opinion of the questions, how they could be improved, and any additions or deletions you may suggest. You will be able to revise the text of the transcript of this interview. The completed transcript will be treated as FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY and will be distributed as the DCSOPS directs.

"Sir, do you have any questions? I will now begin the tape.

"This is a COSCOM Command Lessons Learned Interview. I am _____,
Interviewing _____, Commander of the _____.
The date is _____. The interview is
being conducted at _____."

General

1. Reflecting on what you expected as opposed to what you found as you assumed command, what was the single most surprising fact about your command?
2. I would like to know what you have learned about preparation for command. What would you have done differently in preparing for this assignment? Were there any subjects or activities you could have been better versed in? Any courses you wish you could have taken? Books or manuals you should have read? People you should have talked to?

Readiness

3. Please focus on the readiness of your command. When you first assumed command, how was readiness, in terms of both actual readiness and reporting?
4. If there were things that needed improvement, how did you handle them?
5. If you were just coming into command and had some time to prepare yourself, what would you study about readiness, or who would you talk to about the subject?

Support Responsibilities

6. Please focus on the readiness of your supported units. When you first assumed command, how did you find the readiness situation of your supported units?
7. If there were problems, how did you remedy them?
8. If you were just coming into command and had time to prepare, what would you study about your supported units?

Training

9. I would now like to address the general subject of training. What techniques or methods have you personally found helpful in training your command?
10. What would you tell future COSCOM commanders about what you have learned in training your command?
11. If you were just now entering command and had a month or so to devote to preparation, who would you see, what would you read, or what would you do with that time?
12. What have you found to be the best guidance to your subordinates to enhance the level of training in the command?
13. What techniques did you use to reduce training detractors?
14. What techniques or programs did you find necessary to establish to reinforce professional development in your chain of command?

Doctrine

15. The next questions deal with doctrine. Were there any particular doctrinal areas that you found troublesome during your command?
16. What would you tell a prospective COSCOM commander about doctrine? What techniques or methods would you pass on to make his duties easier?
17. Have you found it necessary while in command to study doctrine?
18. Have you found it necessary while in command to teach doctrine?
19. If you were just about to enter command, is there any particular doctrinal area that you would devote time to?
20. Since you have been in command, have you tried to change doctrine? If so, what and how?

Field Operations

21. We are interested in your thoughts on field operations. What was the single most limiting factor in exercising effective command in the field?
22. How do you go about overcoming that?
23. If you were promoted tomorrow and your replacement came in here and asked your advice about COSCOM field operations, what would you tell him?

Organization

24. The next questions deal with organizational issues. Have you found it necessary to modify any of your organizations, either temporarily or permanently?
25. When you first assumed command, did you have any surprises about the TO&E of any of your units?
26. What would you advise an incoming commander to do about any of the COSCOM TO&E's?

Equipment

27. The next questions will deal with equipment. Thinking back to when you first assumed command, what was your biggest equipment concern?

28. How did you resolve that concern?
29. What techniques or methods have you found to be successful in introducing new equipment?
30. What was the most significant maintenance-related concern that you found when you assumed command?
31. How did you resolve this concern?
32. If you could provide guidance to prospective COSCOM commanders about equipment-related issues, what would you say?

Installation Management

[INTERVIEWER: These questions are optional for those commanders, or who have minimal installation management responsibilities such as the COSCOM commander whose installation is managed by the XVIII Airborne Corps commander. However, in any event provide the commander the opportunity to comment on the subject.]

33. The next questions deal with the subject of installation management. When you first assumed command, what did you see as the largest installation or facility concern that faced you.
34. What actions have you taken to resolve that concern, and why did you select those particular actions?
35. If you were to design a short course for future COSCOM commanders who will have installation management responsibilities, what would you have them read or study? Who would you have talk to them?

Leadership

36. The next questions will deal with leadership. What are the differences between leadership techniques and methods at COSCOM and those at DISCOM or support group level?
37. What was the most significant leadership concern you found in the COSCOM when you initially assumed command?
38. What did you do to resolve that?
39. Have you found it necessary to provide leadership instruction to your subordinates? If so, please describe the nature of the instruction.

40. Have you found any particular technique or method to determine in your own mind the probable combat success or failure of a subordinate's leadership?

41. What have you personally learned about leadership while in command?

42. If you could provide leadership guidance to a group of prospective COSCOM commanders, what would you tell them?

Ethics

43. The next questions deal with ethics. Reflecting on the period when you initially assumed command, what thoughts do you have about techniques or methods you employed to establish or maintain an ethical climate within your command?

44. Have you found it necessary to provide instruction in ethics? If so, please describe the nature of the instruction.

45. What obstacles or impediments to ethical behavior did you find in the COSCOM?

46. How do you overcome them?

47. If you could provide some tips to prospective commanders about ethics at the COSCOM level, what would you say?

Family Action Issues

48. What family issue or issues presented the greatest challenge or were a limiting obstacle to your command?

49. What methods or techniques have you found to be successful in overcoming that obstacle?

50. If you could speak to a group of prospective commanders based on what you have learned, what would you tell them about family action issues?

Reserves

51. Upon mobilization for deployment, is your command augmented by Reserve component units/personnel? If so, what percentage of your command comes from the Reserves?

52. Do you have RC representation on your staff, either from active or AGR? If yes, does that function fulfill your expectations vis-a-vis the Reserves? If not, do you perceive a need for RC representation on your staff?

53. What kind of oversight do you exercise over your CAPSTONE units, e.g. copies of readiness reports, staff visits, etc.?

54. Do you see a need for greater oversight of your CAPSTONE Units? More exercises with RC participation? What impediments do you see to RC readiness to assume unit mobilization duties?

55. Does your staff have direct coordination authority for planning with your CAPSTONE units? If not, should that be possible? How would it be funded?

56. Do you have any other thoughts on CAPSTONE, RC participation and RC readiness which would be useful to other COSCOM commanders or your successor?

57. Can DA help to improve Reserve component problems? If so, how?

Concluding Comments

58. This concludes the required categorical questions. Concerning this program, would you recommend either adding or deleting any categories of questions? What would you recommend as to how to improve this program?

59. Finally, is there anything else that you would like to say?

"Thank you. As soon as we transcribe your remarks, you will receive the transcription for correction or alteration, as you wish. Following your action, your remarks will be printed and used as the DCSOPS directs."

USAWC/USAMHI COSCOM Command Lessons Learned
PROJECT NO: Special Project - 1989
INTERVIEWER: Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth M. Beam, USA
INTERVIEWEE: Colonel George B. Dibble, USA

THIS INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED IN SUPPORT OF A MILITARY
STUDIES PROJECT FOR THE U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE. ACCESS
TO THIS TRANSCRIPT WILL BE RESTRICTED AS GOVERNED BY
THE INTERVIEWEE'S ACCESS AGREEMENT AND APPLICABLE
GUIDELINES FOR MILITARY STUDIES PAPERS.

[Begin Tape D-187, Side 1]

INTERVIEWER: This is a COSCOM Command Lessons Learned Interview. I am Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth M. Beam interviewing Colonel George Dibble, Commander of the First Corps Support Command. The date is 26 November 1988. The interview is being conducted at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Sir, reflecting on what you expected as opposed to what you found as you assumed command, what was the single most surprising fact about your command?

COL DIBBLE: Well, I think at the outset I have to say, for the record anyhow, that I was stationed here at Fort Bragg two years prior to assuming command of the COSCOM. I thought I knew a fair amount about COSCOM. However when I got over there, I found that there was more that I didn't know than what I did know about the organization. In fact, that which I did know was very, very superficial. I think probably the thing that struck me the most was the magnitude of the organization in comparison with the organization that I had just commanded, the 82nd Airborne Division Support Command. It was far, far more complex. It required a different type, I think, of management and leadership than you might find in a DISCOM [division support

command]. In addition I had this vast Reserve Component association that I had to deal with somewhere in the neighborhood of 23,000 on the TPFDL depending on which OPLAN [operation plan] you are talking about.

INTERVIEWER: I would like to know what you've learned about preparation for command. What would you have done differently in preparing for this assignment?

COL DIBBLE: I think probably I would have tried to learn more about command at the outset. Again, I thought I knew a lot about COSCOM, but I found there was much I didn't know. So, consequently, my start-up or my learning curve, even though many of the functions were similar to a DISCOM, took more time than I had anticipated.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any subjects or activities you could have been better versed in? Or any courses you wished you could have taken? Books or manuals you should have read? People you should have talked to?

COL DIBBLE: I think I probably could have learned a lot from some of my counterparts and could have designed for myself, if you will, a little bit of a

tailorized pre-command course. In other words, maybe I should have gone to the 13th COSCOM and met with the commander there. Perhaps I could have gone to Log Center to talk about doctrinal issues. I could have visited the Quartermaster School, the Transportation School, or the Ordnance School in terms of the issues of the day, so that I had a better understand of the non-divisional force versus the divisional force. I have found that there are significant differences in the divisional forces. That's my background, rather than the support in non-divisional forces. I think that I could have been better versed in OPLANS and corps operations. Of course, had I had the time and not gone directly from one command to the other, I might have been better off with about a month of so called pre-command. I'm not talking at this juncture about formalized pre-command, but something that could have been tailored to my specific needs.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, the next area we are going to talk about is readiness. Please focus on the readiness of your command. When you first assumed command, how was readiness in terms of both actual readiness and reporting?

COL DIBBLE: That was somewhat of a surprise to me. I had come from an organization where it was almost a foregone conclusion that readiness was a very high priority to an organization which did not seem to put quite the same emphasis on readiness. For example, when I went in there, there was about 60 to 62 separate reporting units in the organization. About 36 of them were reporting that they had met ALO [authorized level of organization]. Now, much of that was related, of course, to personnel shortages, to equipment shortages and to a lesser extent ER/ES problems. But there just simply did not seem to be an emphasis and a close focus on the business of readiness in USO reporting. Several described it to me that through this mechanism we make our needs known to the higher-ups -- that is to say, our personnel shortcomings, our equipment shortcomings and that kind of thing. Shortly after I had taken command, the Corps commander said to me that reporting lack of equipment on hand is not a requisition to anyone, and I agree with him it won't get you a piece of equipment and the same applies to the personnel ranks. Consequently, we started working on the concept of readiness management. That involved every level of command examining the readiness condition of the organization. We worked on

cross-leveling equipment and making sure that we had a proper balance of people to improve our readiness. It worked from company level up to battalion level, from battalion level to group or brigade level and then from that level up to the COSCOM level. Working the issue at each level we made some substantial gains. We went, in a very short period of time, from about 36 to 50 reporting that they had made their ALO. That got us down to some of the really hard core issues that were beyond our ability to control. You can see that through a little bit of emphasis and a little bit of management of the problems, we were able to make some substantial improvements. Now, we were very careful to emphasize to each commander that he was to report it as he saw it. He should be able to stand up under any spotlight, at any examination as to the accuracy of his reporting. Any time that we saw subjective upgrades, we took a very close look at those. There is certainly nothing wrong with subjective upgrading if, in the view of the commander, it is appropriate, and he is confident that he can accomplish his mission at the next higher level or next higher level.

INTERVIEWER: If you were just coming into command and had some time to prepare yourself, what would you study

about readiness, or who would you talk to about the subject?

COL DIBBLE: Obviously I would want to talk to my next higher headquarters. I sort of stumbled on the subject just by simply going to the corps commander's readiness briefs, which were conducted on a monthly basis and obtained his views and his guidance. I think that would be one of my early topics with the corps commander and the deputy corps commander upon assumption of command. I suppose I would also talk to the group and brigade commanders about the subject.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, next we are going to go a support responsibilities. Please focus on the readiness of your supported units. When you first assumed command, how did you find your readiness situation of your supported units?

COL DIBBLE: That probably was a strong point. I don't know if it has to do with the uniqueness of the XVIII Airborne Corps and the priority it enjoys, but generally I found equipment was in pretty good shape. We have always done a quarterly senior log form where all the senior logisticians on the installation, to

include the S4s and the XO's [executive officer], and hopefully the brigade commanders of the non-divisional brigades, look at the equipment readiness and problem areas -- particular to Fort Bragg. We don't get into the readiness of the divisions outside of Fort Bragg, but we do look at equipment readiness, uniqueness or systematic kinds of problems, as well as the human problems associated with equipment readiness. Generally, I found readiness to be in good shape in terms of equipment.

INTERVIEWER: If you were just coming into command and had time to prepare, what would you study about your supporting units?

COL DIBBLE: I think the first thing I would do is get a good appreciation for what their missions are and some idea about their equipment density. Now I'm not talking down to the last ERC [equipment readiness category] line, but some appreciation for how many spalls there are in a MLRS [Multiple launcher rocket system] battalion and how many M198 howitzers in the corps artillery. I would want to get an order of magnitude of the equipment to be supported.

INTERVIEWER: I would now like to address the general subject of training. What techniques or methods have you personally found helpful in training your command?

COL DIBBLE: First, let me say at the on set. I felt that during my time as a DISCOM commander, I had focused on the subject of training and believed that I had a pretty good appreciation of how to train a combat service support organization. Dealing with a non-divisional force, such as those that make up the COSCOM, I've found some real challenges. Now part of that, of course, relates to the level of command in which I found myself. COSCOM, obviously, is much different from a division. The individual organizations of the COSCOM all have varying and differing missions, and in many instances, are tied to different OPLANS. To some extent the training on which those organizations focus are, you might say, suboptimized. What I mean is that in a division all the training focuses on one objective, and that is the betterment of the division whether it be in closing with or destroying the enemy or providing combat service support to that division. However, when you are dealing with a fragmented kind of organization such as a COSCOM, you have to focus more on the company

level than you do in a divisional kind of an organization. The focus is from the COSCOM level in this sense, you might draw the analogy that the COSCOM is somewhat like a division headquarters or the division level of command. I walked into the organization thinking I knew a lot about the organization. However, I found that the business of training down to company level as opposed to training to battalion level from the divisional or COSCOM command level was entirely different. It required, you might say, a different way of looking at it. Just two weeks ago I went to Fort Leavenworth to a conference entitled "The Senior Leaders Training Conference." It was presented by the commander of Forces Command in conjunction with a Forces Commander's conference. The senior official there was the Chief of Staff of the Army. In addition to him, there were three other four-stars and 16 three-stars, the CONUS [continental United States] corps commanders, CONUSA [the numbered armies in the continental United States] commanders and the commanders of the functional commands of TRADOC [United States Army Training and Doctrine Command]. All the division commanders were there, both active and Reserve component, the school commandants, and a considerable number of others. As I said, 4

four-stars, 16 three-stars, in excess of 50 two-stars, and very few brigadiers and very few colonels -- less than 10 in each category. As the Forces Command Commander said, "Its purpose was to put substance in what has previously been a lot of rhetoric in the subject of training." I only wished that I had had the opportunity to participate in something like that upon or shortly after my arrival as the COSCOM commander. It put an entirely different focus on the subject of training. It pointed out the emphasis that the Chief of Staff of the Army is now putting on training as a function of readiness. I think the Army is going to see a lot more emphasis on the subject of training. That poses some rather unique challenges, you might say, for the COSCOM. I think you have to acknowledge up front in any support organization like a COSCOM or DISCOM or any other non-divisional force, that your mission, the things that you do to support others on a day-to-day basis is, can be and should be a form of training. Back in the old days we used to call this OJT [on-the-job training]. It is training, and it is good training only to the extent that it is properly supervised and done to standards. You have a soldier, for example, working on a helicopter. If he does it under very limited or no supervision, he may not be

doing it to standard. He may be doing it the way he thinks it ought to be done, but, in fact, that's not the way it was taught or the way it is expected to be done. Therefore, he is not performing that task to the standard and he creates some bad habits. You could make the same statement about driving a M915 vehicle. Let's say, that you have a requirement to take three or four 915s down to Camp McCall to accomplish a line haul mission. This becomes a great opportunity to do convoy operations between Fort Bragg and Camp McCall and do it the way you should conduct a convoy operation with a leader in charge and practicing all tenants of a convoy operation. Or you could just send them willy-nilly down to Camp McCall and miss a training opportunity. If my pre-command courses were three years ago had provided the information I received at this senior leaders' training conference, I would have been a far more effective trainer. But back to the notion of what did I find and how did I deal with it? I found an organization whose primary emphasis was on the business of support. Certainly there is nothing wrong with that; that's our mission in life. However, it was support to the exclusion of training this sometimes involved the exclusion of organizational maintenance for our own equipment and the exclusion of fostering

better leadership and fostering better care for our soldiers. In other words, support was everything! I tried to put a little different focus on that, by saying that support is training and maintenance. You can't have one without the other. Very early on I wrote a training guidance document which stated the focus and the azimuth for the next year. Basically it said that our orientation had to be a go-to-war one. Ours had to be a go-to-war mentality. Everything that we did had to be done with that in mind. While doing those things we do here in garrison are great, and need to be done, they have to be done with a larger focus. They are primarily training vehicles and those things that enhance our go-to-war capability. I was pleased to find that this was essentially the focus of the corps commander when I gave my first training briefing. He felt we had to be prepared to go to war and survive on the battlefield and our training orientation should be in that direction. With that said the business of supporting our customers in garrison is a mechanism to cause that to happen. It is a matter of doing the same thing and a matter of the focus. How do you go about doing that, and what is the bottom line? Is the bottom line really just to perform a support mission or is the bottom line to better prepare yourself to go to

war and support the corps. We have used all kinds of mechanisms. I present quarterly training briefs or I have quarterly training briefs given to me. I, along with a selective brigade or group commander, give a semi-annual training brief to the corps commander or the deputy corps commander. We have a strong emphasis now on going to the field at least on a quarterly basis. When we took COSCOM headquarters to the field for the first time in many years, it surprised a lot of people, but helped put us in this business of training for war. This is why we are here -- for preparedness to go to war.

INTERVIEWER: What would you tell future COSCOM commanders about what you have learned in training your command?

COL DIBBLE: I think I would tell them what I just described to you, the concerning importance of training. It is the Chief of Staff of the Army's number one priority. It is no different for us than it is for an infantry line unit. It is just a matter of how you go about doing it. At Leavenworth several tried to make the point that training a combat service support unit is different. The conclusion, reached by

all, is that training in combat service support units is not different and it is not unique. Sometimes some may appear to be more difficult to accomplish, but really it's basically a matter of the conditions of training maybe being a little different. You have to use a little bit of creativity and uniqueness sometimes. You have to set your goal and then back it up with plans as to how you are going to accomplish it. That's what I would tell the COSCOM commander. I think I would also tell him that the first opportunity he has to attend one of these training seminars -- he ought to go.

[End Tape D-187, Side 1]

[Begin Tape D-187, Side 2]

INTERVIEWER: If you were just now entering command and had a month or so to devote to preparation, who would you see, what would you read, or what would you do with that time?

COL DIBBLE: As I said before, I think the first thing that I would try to do, if I had the time, is try to devise for myself a sort of informal pre-command course. I would decide on those things that I needed

to orient on, and I would go to the service schools and the Log Center. In addition to that, I think I would try to take that time to focus outwardly by getting to see every one of those brigade commanders and spending some time with the corps G4, the G3, and G1. I did that as a DISCOM commander. Then the day that I took command I was able to focus internally on the command itself. This reduced that early in the command learning curve that we all go through in learning about our organization and those external to us. I had the opportunity to do that as a DISCOM commander, and it worked quite well for me. I did not have the opportunity to do that when going to the COSCOM command, but I would have liked to have had that opportunity. I think it would have better served me as well as the command.

INTERVIEWER: What have you found to be the best guidance to your subordinates to enhance the level of training in your command?

COL DIBBLE: I guess the use of the training guidance. Let it be the document that says, "This is my training philosophy. This is the direction which I intend to take the organization. This is the role that I see you

playing in all of that." Perhaps it was the best mechanism that I found. I insisted that it be published down to company level so that there was no question in anybody's mind. All too often in my experience, in combat service support units there is a lot of lip service paid to training. Training tends not to be the primary focuses I've discussed earlier. What you have to do is find ways to cause training to happen. For example, I block my calendar such that a half a day a week at least is spent going out and taking part in or viewing what's going on in the training arena. This, I would hope, transmits throughout the command the notion that I not only speak to training but also through my actions show them that training is an important ingredient of our weekly activities. I found that works fairly well. That's not to say that our training is today where I want it to be or where it should be. I do think though, that through the mechanisms of quarterly training briefs, visitations, putting a lot of emphasis on training, both individual and collective, it has gotten us a long way toward where we want to be.

INTERVIEWER: What techniques did you use to reduce training detractors?

COL DIBBLE: We all find that that's a difficult one to deal with, probably more so in the combat service support arena than in line infantry or artillery kind of units. The best mechanism that I found -- I used this as a battalion commander and saw it used in the division support command as well -- is the notion of block-time training. In other words, we just say that this is the time that we are going to do our training, Thursday morning or Wednesday afternoon or whatever. We shut down all the warehouses and we close the maintenance shops. We say that this is what we are going to do and we're not going to do anything else during that time except those things that are absolutely essential. This impacts significantly on others. I found that worked fairly well. But in so doing, you have got to have a commitment from the chain of command up and down. There are all kinds of things that will get in the way -- dental appointments, appointments at the hospital, appointments at the education center and on and on. So you just have to be rather hard-nosed about it and establish a policy. During those times of block-time for training other things just will simply not happen. You have to enforce it and cause those looking down the chain of command to understand that you are serious about that,

and that if they are serious, they get on the bandwagon with you. One other mechanism that we have used that has worked with some degree of success is block leave. In an infantry unit you can put the whole battalion on block leave. But we have found that to be very, very difficult to do in a support organization such as ours. On a maintenance unit for example, if we shut down the entire maintenance unit for two weeks, it's obviously going to have an impact on our customer's readiness of equipment. The equipment is sitting in our shops not being maintained and is chalking up time on his readiness reports impacting adversely. What we have tried to do in those instances is put a platoon or section on leave without adversely or significantly affecting the customer and his readiness. If it is a nonreadiness kind of thing that we are working toward or dealing with, then we can shut down for a week or two and there won't be that big of an impact. We don't have leave as a detractor for training.

INTERVIEWER: What techniques or programs did you find necessary to establish to reinforce professional development in your chain of command?

COL DIBBLE: When I got there, I found that at unit and battalion level there was a fairly strong officer and noncommissioned officer professional development program. What I didn't see was a program at COSCOM level. I felt that there needed to be a supplemental program. What we, in essence, did was we established a program that would put on a OPD [Officer Professional Development] or a NCOPD [Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development] about once a quarter. In addition to that, we supplemented with special needs kinds of OPDs. For example, I've talked about this training seminar that I just went to at Fort. Leavenworth. My plan, as a result of that, is to put on a training seminar which will at least include battalion and may get down to company level. I just haven't really sorted it out but will sometime within the next four to six weeks. It will be a professional development seminar that will be designed not only to focus on the subject of training as the Chief of Staff of the Army wants us to do, but to enhance the knowledge and expertise of those leaders who are concerned with training. We have done other things. For example, last week we did a professional development session for battalion commanders and higher on the fairly recently implementation of SIDPERS

[Standard Installation/Division Personnel System], SAMMS, SARRS and SPBS programs to give them an appreciation of what those programs can and will do for the commander. I think they gained a good bit from it. Hopefully, if they need additional or more indepth knowledge in their particular circumstance, they could pursue that a little further.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, the next questions deal with doctrine. Were there any particular doctrinal areas that you found troublesome during your command?

COL DIBBLE: I'm not sure whether this is called a doctrinal area or not, but I am not sure that it is covered anywhere else. Most of my time in the Army has been spent with divisional kinds of organization. My non-divisional time is fairly limited. One thing that astounded me when I came in, was the size of some of the battalions -- a thousand man, 1200, in one case 1500 man battalions. Now the size of the battalion itself is not such a significant issue, as I see it. Large battalions like that either have large companies -- 300 man companies and larger -- or they have large numbers of companies. In that view, that kind of organization is just too big. It seems to me it is a

doctrinal issue. I know, there are some efforts in the school house to try to reduce the size of some of these companies. It is one, I think, in many ways impedes the effect and efficient way of doing business that we are called upon to do. A 300 plus man company is just too big for the average captain, I think. That was probably the most troublesome doctrinal area. The other one, I suppose, and one that they were beginning to work on when I first got there, was the lay-down of the COSCOM, the doctrinal COSCOM, on the battlefield. The seeming ad hocness (?) of it. In the COSCOM as we know, the basic building block is the company. That is why we have numbered companies as opposed to letter companies. A company can be part of one battalion one day and part of another battalion the next day. As we look at the doctrinal COSCOM on the battlefield, we see an organization that's somewhat akin to a fast type of organization ad hocness in command, ad hocness in relationships between the company and the battalion and whoever is overall in charge. We have done a lot of work in this area and have worked with Log Center in the fleshing out of an initiative that the Log Center entitles, "Logistic Command and Control Initiative." We have titled it "The Course of Forward Concept" in the 1st COSCOM command and it is something that as we

have squirreled with it over the last almost two years, we have found it to have great merit for the Army. It is basically a multifunctional kind of command with some very strict and some very well defined command and control procedures.

INTERVIEWER: What would you tell a prospective COSCOM commander about doctrine? What techniques or methods would you pass on to make his duties easier?

COL DIBBLE: I think the first thing I would tell him about is that which I have just described to you -- logistics command and control. I think if he embraces and follows through on that -- incidently it appears that most of the Army is moving in that direction, some more rapidly than others -- it will make his command more effective. It will make his ability to command his COSCOM easier if you want to use that term. I think that he can get on about his mission on the battlefield with far greater effectiveness than the way it is today.

INTERVIEWER: Have you found it necessary while in command to study doctrine?

COL DIBBLE: Very much so. Much of that has been driven by this log C² initiative. In addition to having been involved in numerous CPXs [Command Post Exercise], GALLANT KNIGHT, CABER DRAGONS, I have also been a part of the exercises down in Honduras for a couple years. You have got to know your doctrine. You have to understand what doctrine says about the corps support command and where and how it fits. Only by understanding the doctrine can you, number one, apply the organization and its resources to the battle. If you are going to deviate from doctrine, you have to have a firm foundation of what doctrine is all about. One thing I didn't mention we have been involved in, which also is a doctrinal issue, is the business of restructuring the COSCOM staff. COSCOM staffs have for numerous years been organized, on functional lines. They see it as personnel, materiel, services, security plans and operations or security operations training, intelligence. Nobody understands, much less the customers or higher headquarters, we have an initiative going in terms of the organization to realign more on to a G-staff. We think that has provided us great benefits.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find it necessary while in command to teach doctrine?

COL DIBBLE: Yes, and pretty much as a derivative of what I just described to you. In order to change doctrine, in order to lay down a doctrinal battlefield or to lay down a battlefield for combat service support perspective, that is that varies from the doctrine than you have to start from a known point, that is to say doctrine and have everybody understand where it is you're going as you deviate from it.

INTERVIEWER: If you were about to enter command, is there any particular doctrinal area that you would devote time to?

COL DIBBLE: Well, it goes back to my comments that I made at the outset concerning getting familiar with your command. I think that's where I would focus. I would focus my interest with the Log Center of the schools on just what a doctrinal COSCOM looks like, smells like, feels like, and just what is it really all about. I think that would have to be my first focus. My second focus in doctrine would be the doctrinal deployment and employment of the corps and its

organizations. The better I understand this, the better understanding that I would have as to my responsibilities of supporting the corps, not just in garrison, but more importantly on the battlefield.

INTERVIEWER: I know you have already covered part of this but since you have been in command, have you tried to change doctrine? If so, what and how?

COL DIBBLE: We have pretty much covered that. The two major areas have been in the area of command and control of logistical units on the battlefield and the structure of our own organization. In the command and control area we have spent a lot of time on this. We have sought to teach others. We have sought to be a party to its briefing or the exposure of others to it at both the annual COSCOM commander's conference and also the most recently concluded DISCOM commander's conference at Fort Lee.

INTERVIEWER: We are interested in your thoughts on field operations. What was the single most limiting factor in exercising effective command in the field?

COL DIBBLE: Any commander who can't talk can not exercise adequately his function of command. That goes to the heart of the business of communications. If he doesn't have a good, communications map, he can not effectively command his subordinate organizations. Perhaps to a lesser extent, but even so in the DISCOM my ability to command was to a great extent dependent upon my ability to communicate. That is particularly true with the forward elements. I found this magnified ten times over in the COSCOM. In the DISCOM we had a DISCOM signal platoon from the signal battalion which provided us with all the necessary communications to effect command and control. In the COSCOM headquarters I had 04 VRC46s and almost nothing else. We have had to lean on the signal brigade quite extensively for our communications. They have been good to us, but I think, that if we ever found ourselves on the battlefield with all the demands for communications, as well as the numerous units and the great distances in the corps rear, communications would be the biggest inhibitor to effective command in the field.

INTERVIEWER: How do you go about overcoming that?

COL DIBBLE: Well, that's not easy. I think the thing that we have tried to do the most is something like I tried to do in DISCOM. That was to make sure that those assets I could put my hands on always played with us when we went to the field. We insisted upon their being there. We leaned on the signal organization to give us the best and the most effective communication capability that they could. What that hopefully did was to become so routine that they became a part of us, so to speak, and were always there.

[End Tape D-187, Side 2]

[Begin Tape D-188, Side 1]

INTERVIEWER: If you were promoted tomorrow and your replacement came in here and asked your advice about COSCOM field operations, what would you tell him?

COL DIBBLE: I would say do it as often as you possibly can. Don't let the inhibitors of, "We're too busy" get in the way of doing field operations. Secondly, look for opportunities. Look for those kind of training opportunities that will allow your units to get out and do field operations. We can't forget COSCOM is a field organization, a TO&E organization, designed hopefully

by T0&E to exist in the field and that's what we need to do. We can learn to repair equipment and learn warehouse operations and all of those kinds of things in the field just as easily as we can comfortably do them in garrison.

INTERVIEWER: The next questions deal with organizational issues. Have you found it necessary to modify any of your organizations either temporarily or permanently?

COL DIBBLE: The answer to that is, "Yes." I have already described the important part of it which is the business of the staff reorganization, so I won't discuss it too extensively. However, as a part of this initiative of logistic C² or corps support group initiative we've found that we have had to put "plugs" into the group and battalion headquarters. What that does is make those battalions and groups multifunctional. We have to give them a multifunctional kind of staff. If we had to, we could devise some provisional T0&E, if you want to call it that, that allows you, in an organized way, assign people to a position that is non-existent as far as the established T0&E is concerned. It is a necessity, and

we have to have some manning document, if you will, to put these people against. Additionally, my predecessor, as a part of this C² initiative, had done some re-organizing of companies within the battalions by moving companies from one battalion to the other. This is all a part of this same initiative that I'm talking about. In addition to that, I found it necessary to do some fine tuning through the mechanism, again, of moving companies from one battalion to the other to better balance the battalion. In some instances it enhanced the span of control, reduced the administrative and logistic burden on some organizations. For example, when I first got there I found that the Materiel Management Center and the Movement Control Center were under one of the supporting commands. I took them from that, with the exception of logistic support, to those organizations or took them back to being subordinate organizations directly under the COSCOM headquarters.

INTERVIEWER: When you first assumed command, did you have any surprises about the TO&E of any of your units?

COL DIBBLE: Yes. I have talked in part about that. The magnitude, the size and the span of control, some

of those non-divisional organizations, in my view, often times inhibit the effective command and control and the effectiveness by which we do a lot of those other things we are required to do. In a few instances, it involved the effectiveness of the support that we render to our support organizations.

INTERVIEWER: What would you advise an incoming commander to do about any of the COSCOM TO&Es [Tables of Organization and Equipment]?

COL DIBBLE: I think the first thing he ought to do is to look at the situation and see just exactly what he is dealing with. Then I would say the second thing is to get very proactive with the Log Center and the schools, because here is an opportunity for him to influence the action if he approaches it right. It may be a long term kind of prospect. My feeling is that through the TO&E writers tend to write based on either their personal experiences in the service or in other jobs or positions, and sometimes this experience is somewhat outdated. Often times they don't crank into that equation the real needs of the field as experienced by those in the field. It is an opportunity for him perhaps to influence that. I would

say that if he finds a TO&E that he doesn't feel comfortable with and he has some good solid rationale for a TO&E change, he ought to get very proactive and try to work at it.

INTERVIEWER: The next questions will deal with equipment. Thinking back to when you first assumed command, what was your biggest equipment concern?

COL DIBBLE: The biggest concern I had was initially getting a handle on the state of the equipment which belonged to the COSCOM organizations and some visibility of the equipment of our supporting organizations. I already talked about that a little bit. The way that I was initially able to get a handle on the state of the equipment per se was to continue doing materiel readiness conferences, both COSCOM wide as well as our participation in the materiel readiness conferences conducted by the non-divisional brigades. In addition to that and associated obviously with equipment is maintenance. I embarked on a program primarily to gain focus, but also to get a little better appreciation of a briefing by each battalion level commander on his maintenance program. I went around and we did them in the motor pools. The

battalion commander, his maintenance personnel and I spent about two hours per battalion. Again, the idea of it was twofold one being to better educate me on the status of maintenance and the status of the equipment in the battalions and secondly, to make sure that that battalion commander had the proper focus and the proper knowledge and expertise on the subject of organizational maintenance. I did that during my first four or five months in command. Then as new battalion commanders have come on board, I've done the same thing with the new battalion commander. Again the primary purpose there is to update me and again to gain the battalion commander's focus on the subject.

INTERVIEWER: What techniques or methods have you found to be successful in the introduction of new equipment?

COL DIBBLE: At my level we do periodic IPRs [in process review] and that keeps me abreast of the status of the unit and also hopefully causes everybody to focus on that subject and look at it in its totality. Let me give you an example of something that went extremely well, but it only went well, I think, because everybody felt this strongly on the situation. This was fielding of a MLRS battalion here at Fort Bragg,

which we went through this past year. We did a number of IPRs to find out how that was coming, and of course, the corps was not only fielding new equipment, it was also fielding a new organization. It had to be a totally integrated effort to bring it all together. The organization itself, the respective battalion commander and his staff, and the brigade staff focused over the entire spectrum of bringing on line a new organization. That includes billets, motor pools, and personnel. Ours was a piece of that and sort of a subset. We focused constantly -- me in particular through the IPR process -- on making sure that we had a fielding site, all the necessary tools, necessary people and that we were prepared to receive and process the equipment onward to its gaining organization. I found that you have to have a mechanism employed in place, on an organization. It could be only just a couple of people. It may be ad hoc. But you have got to have somebody that will keep their attention on the subject of new equipment. Otherwise you will find yourself suddenly waking up with a whole bunch of equipment on your doorstep with all the accessory tools and equipment, sets, kits and outfits and you don't know where you are going to put it. You have just not planned for its reception. I think that the only key

to success is putting your attention to the thing in an organized fashion.

INTERVIEWER: I'm going to skip the next two questions, sir, because I believe you have answered the maintenance related concern previously. If you could provide guidance to prospective COSCOM commanders about equipment-related issues, what would you say?

COL DIBBLE: Well, simplistically, I think, I would say that you have to pay attention to that subject. You have to pay attention if you are involved in fielding new equipment. You have to pay attention and not short change your own organizational maintenance programs. You have to have a mechanism that checks to see that others meet -- now I am talking subordinates -- their own responsibilities. I don't mean to imply that we have a bunch of subordinate commanders running around out there who are derelict in their duties because they pay no attention to maintenance. The life of the commander in his day-to-day activities is extremely busy. There are an awful lot of alligators out there. You have to establish with the commander early on and periodically, through mechanisms and marks or maintenance briefings or motor pool visitations or

whatever, to keep his focus on that subject. If you don't, maintenance will get away from you and you are going to get some big time problems. It can get away from you pretty quickly. I guess what I would say is keep that as one of your top glass bells.

INTERVIEWER: The next questions deal with the subject of installation management. When you first assumed command, what did you see as a large installation or facility concern that faced you?

COL DIBBLE: It was not long after I assumed command that I heard that one -- I don't want to identify who it is -- but one of the senior officials in the corps had called COSCOM area a desert. Truly the area did look bad. My predecessor had started a number of initiatives to try to improve the appearance of the area. It was for me a challenge to not only continue with that, but to try to enhance it. We got together a major effort of burning of buildings, planting trees, and just doing all we could toward improving the area. We got a painting program going and a lot of the buildings have been repainted. We were able to convince the post that we should be first in line for a new sign effort. They were putting new signs, brown

and white signs, over all the post. All of that has helped. I guess what I should have said at the outset was that you have to understand the lay out of the COSCOM area and the fact that so much of it is old World War II buildings. Many have been renovated and are in good shape. They have metal siding on them and have been renovated on the inside. A lot of them had not been though, and were buildings that were to be ultimately destroyed, torn down, burned and that kind of thing. It was a large challenge we have met. When I leave, my successor will have a few challenges left in that area. That was the biggest concern -- the physical plan of the COSCOM.

INTERVIEWER: You have already told me, sir, what actions you have taken to resolve that concern. Why did you select those particular actions?

COL DIBBLE: Well, again, it's an interesting dichotomy. I described all the old World War II buildings that we had, many of them falling down. But the dichotomy of it all is that we also have some of the newest billets and newest dining facility on Fort Bragg. I felt that our soldiers needed an environment to live and work in that was conducive to being good

soldiers. In other words, we had to create for them a positive environment. We had to show them that we were concerned about their environment. We had to do all we could to make that environment better. We demand lot from our soldiers. We ask a lot from them -- a lot of hard work. We needed to create the best possible physical environment for them to enhance those things we require them to do.

INTERVIEWER: The next questions deal with leadership. What are the differences between leadership techniques and methods at COSCOM and those at DISCOM or support group level?

COL DIBBLE: I think I have to go back and reiterate a comment -- COSCOM level is not the same as DISCOM level or group level. The COSCOM command falls somewhere in between a divisional level and a brigade level. You can't say it is a division because it's not, although it has many similarities to a division with the general officer position. It's got a G staff, or a functional staff, as they have been previously aligned. It functions in many ways like it -- you're by and large exercising leadership to group and battalion commanders as a COSCOM command. Hopefully you're mentoring

primarily the battalion commanders. The techniques that you are trying for are somewhat different from what you might be using in a group or DISCOM or brigade level. You find yourself having to be a little more grandiose in your thinking and a little less concerned with lesser things, such as, "Are the fire lights left on?" You are more concerned about the grand scheme of things. That is true in leadership, too. There are some basic tenants that remain the same. A former DISCOM commander and former commander of the Ordnance School at Aberdeen once told me, "If you don't do anything else as a commander, you have got to be visible. You have to get out of the office." I found that to have been pretty good guidance in my case. One, I've come to the realization that you can't command from behind the desk even at COSCOM level. If you spend all of your time behind the desk, all you're going to know is what others tell you. You're going to know what others say about the state of readiness, the state of training, whatever. You have to get out and be visible as he said. You have to know first hand what's going on. You have to get out and see what is happening in terms of the maintenance activity and the training arena. You have to get out in the maintenance shops and the warehouses and see how, first hand,

they're supporting the customers. I've found, as I've said earlier, that I spend a lot of my time talking to battalion commanders. I spend a lot of time trying to provide them a better guidance on various topics and issues. In a general sense, I hope this serves as mentor for them. I found that when I was DISCOM commander that I tried to do the same thing with company commanders. I used to have one-on-ones with company commanders in the DISCOM. Extensively, it was tallied as a re-enlistment conference. Really it was re-enlistment plus whatever else might be either on my mind or the company commander's mind. I have similarly done the same thing with battalion commanders since I have been over in COSCOM -- sometimes individually -- sometimes in groups. I've had breakfasts or lunches with the battalion commanders. We have had one-on-ones -- sort of senior waiter kind of stuff. I have my monthly command and staff meeting. I include battalion commanders in that so that it's not only the COSCOM staff, but it is also the group and brigade commanders as well as the battalion level commands. I've found that that works fairly well for them to get first hand some of my thinking and some of my gettings. That's not unique as you know. It's the same kind of thing we did over at division.

INTERVIEWER: What was the most significant leadership concern you found in the COSCOM when you initially assumed command?

COL DIBBLE: I felt that at COSCOM level and to some extent at group level, there was not lot of personal leadership being exercised. That is somewhat of an indictment, and it was not true across the board, but there were a number of instances where there just was not much leadership. I am a proponent of leadership by example and sort of the fallen knee kind of approach. I didn't see a whole lot of that. We set about to try to cause those kind of things to happen. It has been a long time coming but I think we have made a lot of progress in that area. We had group, COSCOM commanders, Chiefs of Staff and those types of personnel out as an example, doing 12 mile road marches. We are awfully old to be out there on 12 mile road marches, but it is hard to ask those below you to do it when you are not doing it yourself. I guess it is set the example concept.

INTERVIEWER: Have you found it necessary to provide leadership instruction to your subordinates. If so, please describe the nature of the instruction?

COL DIBBLE: Again I go back to the business of what I was talking about, about mentoring battalion commanders. I've tried from a personal standpoint to do that in an informal mode at my level by being with battalion commanders and company commanders in the field, by bringing the battalion commanders into the command staff meetings so they can hear my guidance and direction. Probably the place, though, where the biggest weakness is, as you would expect, is the lieutenant and junior sergeant level. Through our chaplains we have devised a leadership program that is about one day in duration. It starts at 0900 and is usually over by 1700. It is a series of discussions on values, on leadership techniques, on seminars, and those concerning the general subject of leadership. It works pretty well. Again it is kind of at the grass roots level, but in my view that's probably where you need it the most. Generally when a guy becomes a battalion commander, you know, number one, he is pretty sharp otherwise he would never have been selected to be a battalion commander. He has some ideas and knowledge about that, plus he has had the experience of being company commander and so forth. In addition to that there is a pre-command course starting at company level -- not in the COSCOM, but by the corps. Also there are

the post NCO [noncommissioner officer] academy courses. I guess what I am saying is that we do some ourselves, but we have a lot of help also.

[End Tape D-188, Side 1]

[Begin Tape D-188, Side 2]

INTERVIEWER: Have you found any particular technique or method to determine, in your own mind, the probable combat success or failure of a subordinate's leadership?

COL DIBBLE: That's somewhat difficult to lay out a set of guidelines or parameters or anything like that. I think that's something that comes from experience. It is the experience one has gained over a Army career, in seeing those that have been successful and those that have not been successful. This business includes the studying of command and commanders, and assessing or analyzing why commanders with whom you have been associated have been successful. Then you must apply what you have learned through your own experiences and observations of others to the leadership of subordinates. It is probably more than anything, something that is intuitive. I think after you have

been in the business as long as I have, it is not too difficult to generally spot a good commander not only by how he conducts himself but also by how that unit goes about its mission, -- how it goes about doing all the things that a unit does. That involves everything from something as simple as how do they conduct PT and the motivation and esprit of the unit to how they look in the field. There are just a lot of small things that go into the equation that I think your ability to spot those things comes from experience.

INTERVIEWER: What have you personally learned about leadership while in command?

COL DIBBLE: I think personally that I have learned in the time that I have been in command how to be a better leader. I have learned that through trial and error, through my own mistakes. I only wish that I knew then what I know now. When I say then, I'm talking about when I assumed, in particular, battalion command. If I had had the knowledge then that I have now, I think I would have been a far better battalion commander. You can make the same comment about DISCOM and even COSCOM command.

INTERVIEWER: If you could provide leadership guidance to a group of prospective COSCOM commanders, what would you tell them?

COL DIBBLE: Again, I would go back to some earlier comments and I would tell them to be visible, to get out of the office, don't command from behind the desk, know what's going on, find a way or ways to get a finger on the pulse of the organization and be very proactive in command. Mentor juniors and try to make the battalion commanders as successful as you can with the time you have. Do everything to enhance their opportunities for their success. I suppose the other thing I would say is to try to be open and honest with everybody. Sometimes upfrontness can hurt, but I think, that is the only way to do business.

INTERVIEWER: The next questions deal with ethics. Reflecting on the period when you initially assumed command, what thoughts do you have about techniques or methods you employed to establish or maintain an ethical climate within your command?

COL DIBBLE: Well, I think, that's fairly simple. Number one, one would hope that commanders at the

battalion level and higher are going to be ethical persons, otherwise they won't get selected for that kind of command. You have to demonstrate and not just give lip service to the business of ethics. Your subordinates have to understand from the get-go exactly what your views are on that that you have certain standards, that those are your personal standards, and that you will personally demonstrate nothing less than that. The second part is that you have to insist on their maintaining high standards of ethics themselves and to tolerate no slack in that area. If a person deliberately falls in that area, then you have to deal with it and deal with it, in my view, in a tough way.

INTERVIEWER: Have you found it necessary to provide instruction in ethics? If so, please describe the nature of the instruction?

COL DIBBLE: Not directly. Not formal instruction, per se. I would trust that is happening down at the lower levels. Again, when you are dealing at my level with battalion and group commanders, you would trust that they are ethical people and that they are not going to need a lot of ethics or instruction in it. With that said, I think there is a place for and training in

ethics which should occur more, for me personally and for the members of the staff as opposed to the subordinate commanders. I have not put on formal ethics instruction, but I have talked to the subject of ethics every so often. That's not to say, perhaps, it shouldn't occur, but it is somewhat dependent upon the type of organization and your sensing as to the ethical behavior of its members. If you have an organization that imbues the idea of ethics, then I think people will tend to fall into line. If there was ever any notion of unethical behavior, then hopefully the organization and its members would influence that.

INTERVIEWER: What obstacles or impediments to ethical behavior did you find in COSCOM, if any?

COL DIBBLE: I found some individual cases of unethical behavior. But as far as obstacles to ethical behavior of the members of the organization as a result of organizational behavior or organizational dynamics, I found none.

INTERVIEWER: If you could provide some tips to prospective commanders about ethics at the COSCOM level, what would you say?

COL DIBBLE: Again, I think if you have demonstrated a high degree of ethics, you have to insist on that on the part of all of your subordinates. There has to be no misunderstanding about where you stand on that subject. If a breach of ethics is significant enough, you have to deal with it and deal with it head-on. Within the last few weeks we relieved a company commander for some unethical behavior. It is regretful, but that's the kind of hard nose approach that I would bring to them.

INTERVIEWER: What family issue or issues presented the greatest challenge or limiting obstacle to your command?

COL DIBBLE: One of the larger issues, and I think this is probably an issue to some extent in most combat service support organization, is how to deal with and how to approach the business where you have female soldiers, who also have families. This is the business of family care plans and the expectations for those persons, as opposed to the rest of the soldiers in the organization. In my view it is very difficult for a soldier to be both a soldier full time and a mother full time. Each one, though, has to approach that and

resolve that question in her own mind. Many do it and do it very successfully, but there are some that do not. The bottom line though is, at least in my view, that if that person is going to be a soldier, that person has to sign up to be a full time soldier. We regretfully are not in a position to cut them some kind of special slot, because they are a mother.

INTERVIEWER: What methods or techniques have you found to be successful in overcoming that obstacle?

COL DIBBLE: I think what we did and what we had to do is we have had to insist on the fact that mothers, if they choose to be soldiers, have to participate in everything that goes on in the unit. They are expected to be there at 0630 every morning for PT. They are expected to go to the field. They are expected, if there is weekend work involved, to do that. They will carry their share of the burden. I think just taking that kind of an approach is nothing unique that I know of, but taking that kind of an approach and insisting on a workable family care plan is vital. Incidentally, going to the field and having work call at unusual hours and those kinds of things, facilitate having reasonably good family care plans. There is nothing

magic about it. It's just a matter of something that you can't turn a blind eye to and that you have to approach head-on with fairness, but with the notion that you have to accommodate the needs not only of the individual members but also the organization.

INTERVIEWER: If you could speak to a group of prospective commanders based on what you have learned, what would you tell them about family action issues?

COL DIBBLE: I think that the thing I would tell them is that the family is very important to our business, and that we should recognize, up front, that in better than 50 percent of most units the soldiers are married and that soldiers not only have a career, but soldiers also have families that are a big part of their lives. We have to do everything that we can to accommodate that. There is often times a tendency, particularly on the part of the junior commander, to think about the organization and the organization alone and the betterment of the unit. He often times finds himself going at it for some unusual hours every day, meaning long hours. What he has to recognize is that he will command for probably a year or 18 months, but that soldier, who has a family, is going to be in that

organization for an extended period of time. He has to consider that. He has to consider the fact that not only should we insist on full participation and unit time, but we can't take all of their time. We have to try to give them as much of an expectation that their lives will be orderly, and we are not going to jerk them at all hours of the day and night any more than we can help and that they can have an expectation of a family life. That's important for commanders in making some of the decisions that they make as to what is going to happen when and that sort of thing.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, the next series of questions deal with Reserve components. Upon mobilization for deployment does your command augment about an Reserve components unit or personnel? If so, what percentage of your command stem from the Reserve?

COL DIBBLE: The answer to that is, "Yes." The organization goes from roughly 6,000 as it is today, to, again depending on which OPLAN you are looking at, somewhere between 24 to 40 something thousand. So you can see, percentage wise on full deployment or full mobilization and deployment of the organization in one particular scenario, we are very heavily depended upon

Reserve. The majority of the organization comes under those circumstances from the Reserves. We gain something in the neighborhood of about 240 units in one particular scenario.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have RC [Reserve Components] representative on your staff either from the active or the AGR [Active Guard Reserve]?

COL DIBBLE: Yes. In my staff I have two people, a major and a senior sergeant, who are Reserve component personnel. They administer the routine matters dealing with their administrators of the program.

INTERVIEWER: Does that function now fulfill your expectation vis-a-vis the Reserves?

COL DIBBLE: That's one area that I have probably not put as much emphasis on and put as much time into as perhaps I should have. The organization spends a fair amount of its time going out and visiting its CAPSTONE or other affiliated units. Those units come to Fort Bragg, and we have the opportunity to train with them. I am not sure over the last year or so that from a headquarters standpoint, we put as much time and effort

into that as perhaps we should. Now I'm talking more in terms of the management of the Reserve component program as opposed to the actual execution, which occurs at a subordinate level primarily. Now, I am not sure in my own mind whether that shortcoming is a staff or organizational related problem or whether it is that our attention has been on other issues. I suspect that it is probably more because our attention is now on other issues.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of oversight do you exercise on your CAPSTONE units? Do you use copies of readiness reports, staff visits? You have mentioned already that your representatives do make a lot of trips to the field.

COL DIBBLE: Yes, we do get out and see them a lot. We do have access to the readiness reports. We are having a CAPSTONE conference the first weekend in December. We try to get them in one form, fashion or the other playing with us on CPXs in particular and also on FTXs [field training exercise]. That has been somewhat limited, but in many instances just to observe us. By doing those kinds of things we do have some degree of oversight over them.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see the need for greater oversight of your CAPSTONE units?

COL DIBBLE: Well, I think so. I go back to my earlier comments. However, that to a great extent is a function of time available. It is just a matter of having the time to get out and spending as much time as we would like to with it. Now I think this, to the extent that we can bring them into FTXs, to the extent that we can play on FTXs more with them, I think, that may facilitate greater oversight. In other words, it is something that can be multi-echelon trained, not only training and supporting from the active side, but bringing them in and letting them participate in all of that. We get a better feel for their capabilities and also we develop a closer relationship to them.

INTERVIEWER: What impediments do you see to RC readiness to assume unit mobilization duties?

COL DIBBLE: I think from what I have seen both as an evaluator of Reserve component units and in my current job, time is the biggest. You go and look at what your Reserve component unit does in its two weeks AT and its 38 or so, whatever the number is, weekend drills, and

you will find that they spend an awfully lot of time getting prepared for the next inspection, recovering from the last inspection, and perhaps time not as productively spent on those basic grass roots kinds of things they need to be concerned with such as maintenance, training, leadership, and management.

INTERVIEWER: Does your staff have direct coordination authority for planning with CAPSTONE units?

COL DIBBLE: The answer to that is yes.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any other thoughts on CAPSTONE, RC participation and RC readiness which would be useful to other COSCOM commanders or your successor?

COL DIBBLE: I am so glad you asked that question. In the last 15 or so months that I've been over there, we have really beat the drum toward something called regionality. As I look across my CAPSTONE organizations, they are spread across the entire continental United States. I have units in California, New Mexico and all over. That is one of the impediments of a closer relationship with these kinds of organizations. Just to get from here to California

or to New Mexico is a great time consumer. We've talked an awfully lot, and we are not the only ones speaking to this, toward the notion of having a closer relationship in aligning our CAPSTONE trace more along the lines of units on the eastern part of the United States. Let me just give an example of what I am referring to. If my CAPSTONE units were all east of the Mississippi, and the CAPSTONE units of the 13th COSCOM at Fort Hood were located all within the central part of the United States, and if the units that were CAPSTONE to I Corps, that is to say the 311 COSCOM in California, were located in that part of the United States, it would facilitate a closer relationship. It would facilitate opportunities for training. It would facilitate opportunities to meet together on a more frequent basis, to participate in FTXs, and just a greater opportunity to facilitate our relationship on the battlefield if we ever have to do it. In addition to that, it would most likely be more cost effective. The dollars spent to get from Point A to Point B would be much less. As we mobilize these units, we could structure the units such that their mobilization stations would be somewhere closer to their home station. We would be dealing with fewer dollars spent in transportation funds just to get them to their

mobilization station. For example, it would be far cheaper to the Army to bring these guys from home stations east of the Mississippi than it would be to bring to Fort Bragg from California. So I think the notion of regionality -- although it has some pitfalls and some political ramifications has great merit.

[End Tape D-188, Side 2]

[Begin Tape D-189, Side 1]

INTERVIEWER: Sir, can DA [Department of the Army] help to improve Reserve component problems? If so, how?

COL DIBBLE: Yes. I think helping us with this notion of regionality would be a major step forward. One area that has not been a major problem has been Reserve component funding. We've had greater dollars. The money has been there. We have had more money -- in other words, we've had to turn back money every year primarily because of this business of time available to do all the things we wanted to do. Money is not a problem. The business of finding ways to allow us, given the time we've got, to be more closer aligned with our Reserve component units can't help but pay

dividends, both for them in peacetime, but all of us in wartime.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, this concludes the required categorical questions. Concerning this program, would you recommend either adding or deleting any categories of questions?

COL DIBBLE: Well, no, I can't think of any right off the top of my head. As I get the transcript, I'll maybe think of something else. I guess the one major thing you didn't talk to that, I think, is pretty important is some recognition or some discussion of the quality of the force and some of the things that commanders at all levels need to concern themselves in in terms of maintaining and improving on the quality of force. I'm talking now everything from the quality of the working and living environment, to re-enlistment and all of those kinds of things. There could be something major in a subsequent session.

INTERVIEWER: What would you recommend or do you see a use for this program?

COL DIBBLE: Absolutely. I think that to have something like this that a guy, who is taking command of the COSCOM, could get his hands on early on would help him even though most COSCOM commanders have commanded at the 06 level before and pretty much know how to command and what is involved. Something like this would serve as some tips as to how others may have done it and how they have dealt with a particular problem. It might help the prospective COSCOM commander to focus on some things early on that he might not have otherwise have focused on until later on in his tour.

INTERVIEWER: Finally, is there anything else that you would like to say?

COL DIBBLE: No, other than to say that there is probably nothing more fine than command. Command at the DISCOM and COSCOM level is the epitome of what it's all about.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you, sir. As soon as we transcribe your remarks, you will receive the transcription for correction or alteration as you desire. Following your

action, your remarks will be printed and used as the
DCSOPS directs.

COL DIBBLE: Okay.

[End Tape D-189, Side 1]