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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RETIRED) JULIUS W. BECTON, JR.**

BY

**COLONEL BRAD M. BEASLEY
United States Army**

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Colonel Brad M. Beasley
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LTC (Ret) Thomas L. Hendrix
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Brad M. Beasley, Colonel, United States Army

TITLE: Executive Summary: Senior Officer Oral History
Program Interview of Lieutenant General (Retired) Julius
W. Becton, Jr.

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 25 May 1996 PAGES: 22 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

This executive summary of the Senior Officer Oral History Program interviews of Lieutenant General Julius Wesley Becton, Jr. (Retired) in December 1995 and January 1996 highlights his life and career. The summary provides an abbreviated version of the 440 page interview transcript. Additionally, interviewer commentaries and observations are provided in an effort to capture the human dimension of General Becton's legacy before, during, and after his 38 years of military service. Only the sixth black American to be promoted to the rank of brigadier general in the history of the U.S. Army, he was the first black Army officer to attain the rank of lieutenant general and to command a corps.

Executive Summary of
Lieutenant General Julius Wesley Becton, Jr. (Retired)
Senior Officer Oral History Program Interviews

The oral history of retired Lieutenant General Julius Wesley Becton, Jr. was recorded in four sessions commencing in December 1995 and ending in January 1996. Each interview took place at General Becton's home in Springfield, Virginia. The average length of each interview session was about four hours utilizing a total of fifteen sixty minute audio cassette tapes.

Lieutenant General Julius W. Becton, Jr. retired from the United States Army in August 1983 with over thirty-eight years of military service to our great nation. His last active duty assignment was as the Deputy Commanding General, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), Fort Monroe, Virginia. However, his most prestigious and in many respects his most controversial assignment was as Commander, VII Corps, Stuttgart, Germany. It was in the final days of this assignment that the Army Times published an article in which the comment, "abort or get out", was attributed to him. The U. S. Army's first black corps commander, made this comment regarding the disposition of female soldiers who get pregnant while on active duty and their impact on unit readiness. Many still believe today that it was this controversy that kept General Becton from achieving four-star rank.

This history portrays the fascinating life and military career of the Army's first black three-star general officer. He is one of the Army's great pioneer leaders who was able to endure and overcome tremendous obstacles while rising from the rank of private to lieutenant general. General Becton was a "soldiers general", whose legacy traverses through the segregated military of World War II, through the struggles of integration of the services during and after the Korean War, to the creation and successful implementation and operation of the all volunteer Army following the Vietnam War. The story of Julius W. Becton, Jr. will inspire and encourage many generations to come.

General Becton was born on 29 June 1926, in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. His father was a janitor in an apartment building where he worked as a laborer during its construction and stayed on as the building's maintenance man when it was finished. The Becton family lived in one of that building's basement apartments throughout General Becton's childhood. His father earned about \$75.00 every two weeks. General Becton had one younger brother Joe, who is now deceased. The two Becton sons shared a relationship filled with typical sibling rivalries and they were very close friends growing up. Both parents were from the south. His father was from Craven County, North Carolina, while his mother hailed from Caroline County, Virginia. His father went to the third grade. He then had to stop school to work to help support the family. His mother (Rose Inez Becton) completed the tenth grade. It is important to note, that in the county where

she grew up, blacks could only go to tenth grade. The writer clearly understood that while General Becton's parents had very little formal education themselves, they knew the value of education. They had "big dreams" and expectations for their two youngsters. Becton, Sr. had the idea that both boys would go to college and become medical doctors. This was his highest ideal for his two sons.

Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania was a small town of about eight to ten thousand people. The Becton's were the only black family in their neighborhood. Of course they were only there because they lived in the apartment where Becton Sr. worked as a janitor. As a result, most of General Becton's friends while growing up were white. He has early memories of the separation of races. He recalls walking to school with his white friends, spending all day in school with them, walking back home together, but never was he allowed to go into their houses or apartments. This was just one of those unwritten rules. He also recalls that integration was not a problem where he grew up but segregation was. He remembers that although the town had one movie house, the blacks were required to sit in the lower left front of the theater. There were certain stores that blacks could go into, but could not try on clothes. Blacks could buy desired items, but could never try them on like white patrons could. In school, there were no black teachers. He recalls that he saw his first black teacher when he attended Prairie View A&M College in 1957.

In junior high and high school General Becton played football, soccer and ran track. Academically, as a B student, he performed at an above average level throughout his elementary and secondary school years. He played the clarinet, studied Latin and Spanish, and was a Boy Scout. He regrets that he did not stay with the Scouts as long as he should have due to his interest in other activities, but is happy that he did make it to first class.

Becton, Sr. instilled in both his sons the value of a strong work ethic and moral character. General Becton recalls having many chores. He ran lots of errands, cut grass, raked leaves, and shoveled snow. His father also taught him plumbing, carpentry, and how to paint. Both parents were very religious. On a typical Sunday the family would spend all day involved in various church activities. Punctuality and not being absent were also important with his parents. This practice was evidenced by his only missing one day (because of sickness) during his first seven years of school. His father was a Private First Class during World War I. Needless to say he was very happy and excited when General Becton was selected to attend Officer Candidate School (OCS) and later graduated to become an officer. Becton Sr. was a little disappointed when his son decided to stay in the Army and not become a medical doctor. Unfortunately, his father did not live long enough to see him promoted to lieutenant colonel. His mother, Mrs. Rose Inez Becton, was living when he retired from the Army.

During his sophomore year of high school the United States entered World War II. General Becton recalled that many of his friends enlisted to go fight in the war. Some lied about their age. Many made the ultimate sacrifice, their lives.

On 28 December 1943, during his senior year of high school, at age seventeen, seven months prior to graduation, General Becton joined the Army Air Corps enlisted reserves. He was inspired to become a pilot by a friend who graduated from high school one year before him and became a pilot. He was determined to follow in his friend's footsteps and do the same thing. Further inspiration came from General Hap Arnold, Chief of Staff, U. S. Army Air Corps. General Arnold graduated from General Becton's high school (Lower Merion High School) in the class of 1930. General Arnold visited the school and gave a pep talk to members of the student body. He espoused the benefits of joining the Army Air Corps, e.g. become a second lieutenant and pilot, help win the war, become part of the elite, etc. On that day, General Becton and half of the high school football team decided to sign up.

Another significant event that took place during his senior year was meeting his one and only wife of 48 years, Louise Thornton Becton. Mrs. Becton was also a high school senior when they met but she attended a rival school (Radner High School). They met on a double date and married three and a half years after high school on 29 January 1948.

Upon graduation from high school in June 1944, General

Becton left home and entered on active duty in July as a member of the Army Air Corps enlisted reserves. He reported to the reception station at New Cumberland Army Depot. His detailed medical examination discovered a sight deficiency which disqualified him for flight duty. As a result, he was transferred to the Engineering Aviation career field and sent to McDill Airfield. He served out his enlistment there outside of Tampa, Florida. Although his disqualification from flight school was a major disappointment, he was determined to fulfill his military obligation to his country.

At McDill Airfield, he was assigned to a company of all-black enlisted men, all-black noncommissioned officers, and all-white officers. The company commander was a First Lieutenant from Arkansas. There were three Second Lieutenants as platoon leaders. General Becton has vivid memories of how the white officers would routinely refer to the black enlisted men as "boys". General Becton points out, if on occasion one of the officers would slip and say "men", he would correct himself immediately and say, "I mean boys". That was the overall flavor of what was considered normal in the Army at that time (1944). Specifically, segregated units of all-black soldiers were led by white officers who would belittle their men with the use of demeaning language. Although there were many negative aspects regarding the treatment of blacks in those days there was a positive side for General Becton. The unit first sergeant saw the leadership potential that young Becton displayed and

encouraged him to apply for Officer's Candidate School. He applied, was selected to attend, and was reassigned to Ft Benning, Georgia for OCS training.

In December 1944, OCS was an integrated training program. There were about two hundred candidates in his class, 17 were black. Of the 17 blacks, 12 successfully completed the course and were commissioned as second lieutenants. Graduation was on 16 August 1945. This was shortly after the atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In September 1945, General Becton was assigned to the Pacific Theater where he joined the famed 369th Infantry Regiment, 93rd Infantry Division. This was an all-black unit except for the battalion commander, brigade commander and regimental commander. In other words, black enlisted, white senior officers, and black junior officers. General Becton started off in Headquarters Company, but ended up in C Company as a platoon leader. The war was over and the unit continued to run patrols in the foothills taking along Japanese translators and bullhorns to announce that the war was over.

In January 1946, the 93rd Division was deactivated. General Becton was reassigned to Manila, Philippines where he joined the 542nd Heavy Construction Engineer Company. While the company's name implies an engineer unit, it was not. It was a signal unit. It was a separate company. Its mission was to put telephone poles into the ground, hang wire or cable, and establish and maintain communications. As a result of his assignment with the

542nd, General Becton was detailed to this unit as a signal officer. In November 1946, he decided to pursue a college degree at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He separated from active duty and was assigned as a signal officer in the Army reserves.

When asked to reflect upon his early military career, initially as an enlisted man, and subsequently as a young officer, he stated that his early military years were very developmental. First, having a variety of different assignments forced him to become a quick learner. He matured rapidly and developed a lot of intestinal fortitude. He also stated that he developed a high degree of respect for the black noncommissioned officer. They were very talented and were basically left alone by their white officers to run the day to day operations of the unit. In terms of integration of the military, General Becton stated that on paper integration took place soon after WWII (1948). However, when you get right down it, the stroke of the pen did not make it happen. Integration did not become a reality until post-Korean war.

At Muhlenberg College, General Becton was a true pioneer, breaking the race barrier as the first black ever to attend the college. He had a room to himself because no one wanted to room with him. He endured many hardships and acts of racial prejudice but persevered for the year and a half he attended the college. On 29 January 1948, he married Louise Adelaide Thornton and was recalled to active duty as a signal corps officer in November of

that same year. At the time of his recall the Becton newlyweds were expecting the first of their five children. His initial recall assignment was as a platoon leader in the 229th Signal Operations Company, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. After the baby was born in December, he was reassigned in January to Fort Bliss, Texas. He served as a platoon leader in the 29th Signal Battalion. In the spring of 1949, General Becton was selected to serve on a competitive tour for a Regular Army appointment. As a result of this selection he was transferred to the Infantry Branch and sent to Fort Benning, Georgia to attend the Associate Basic Course.

Upon completion of the Basic Course, General Becton was assigned to the 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington. This is where he started his competitive tour in pursuit of a Regular Army appointment. When the Korean war started he deployed with the 2nd Infantry Division to Korea where he served as a platoon leader, executive officer, and company commander in Companies K, I, and L respectively. An interesting thing happened during this assignment. The 3rd Battalion, 9th Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division was an all-black Battalion except for the battalion commander. There was a period of time when the regiment received an influx of badly needed replacement personnel. However, they did not get what they needed in terms of race. The regimental adjutant went to see the regimental commander, because he did not know what to do. The regimental commander, Colonel C. C. Slocum

said "Put them where they are needed regardless of race." By making this statement he gave the adjutant the go ahead to integrate the regiment--to assign white soldiers to the third battalion, and to assign black soldiers to first and second battalion. And that's exactly what happened. The 9th Regiment became integrated as a result of Colonel C. C. Slocum. General Becton expressed great respect for Colonel Slocum and his fairness towards all people.

Overall, the 9th Infantry Regiment and specifically the third battalion's performance was good in Korea. The regiment and battalion were mentioned in the books The River and the Gauntlet by S.L.A. Marshall and The Forgotten War, by T.R. Fehrenbach.

In May 1951, General Becton was reassigned to Fort Dix, New Jersey where he served as a platoon leader in the 60th Infantry Regiment. This is where he was integrated into the Regular Army. Over the next twenty-seven months he was assigned as a platoon leader with the 1117th Army Service Unit, Camp Edwards, Massachusetts; and as an Instructor, company commander, and operations officer (S3), with the 5th Infantry Division, Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. It was during the Indiantown Gap assignment that General Becton was promoted to captain.

In September 1953, he attended the Infantry Officers Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Georgia. Following the advanced course in April 1954, General Becton was reassigned to Combat Command "B" (CCB), 2nd Armored Division, Mainz, Germany. During

his three year tour in Germany he served as the CCB Communications Officer; Company Commander, Company D, 42nd Armored Infantry Battalion; and CCB Assistant Operations Officer (S3). In February 1957, he transferred from infantry to armor branch.

In June 1957, the Becton family accepted an assignment to the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Instructor Group at Prairie View A&M College, Prairie View, Texas. He served as an Assistant Professor of Military Science and Tactics. Two of General Becton's ROTC students included Cal Waller of Desert Storm fame, and Marvin Brailsford. Both were very successful Army leaders rising to the rank of lieutenant general while on active duty. While assigned to ROTC duty he also completed a course of study to earn his Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics. The Becton's second and third daughters were born during their ROTC assignment at Prairie View A&M College. Additionally, he was selected for promotion to major which led to his selection to attend the resident phase of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In July 1960, the Becton family headed to Leavenworth to attend the resident course of CGSC. While attending CGSC he was formally promoted to major. General Harold K. Johnson was the Commandant of CGSC, and served as a strong role model for General Becton. He later became the Chief of Staff of the Army. There were 670 American officers in his class. Eight were black. This was the largest number of black officers ever to attend CGSC in

the same year up to that point. Again, this illustrates another example of General Becton breaking new ground and paving the way for future generations. General John Wickham, a future Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, was in General Becton's Leavenworth class.

After completing CGSC, General Becton was reassigned to Verdun, France, where he served as the Plans and Operations Officer, 4th Logistics Command. In February 1964, he returned to the United States to attend the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia. After the staff college he headed to Washington, DC for an assignment at the Pentagon. He worked as a staff officer in the Promotions and Retention Division of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER). While assigned to the DCSPER staff he was promoted to lieutenant colonel.

In August 1965, General Becton broke new ground once again. He became a student in the first group of officers to be trained by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, as systems analysts, at the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) in Arlington, Virginia. Upon completion of the course in September 1966 he was assigned as a manpower analyst in the Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army. In May 1967, as an added benefit of this special program, General Becton earned a Master of Arts degree in economics from the University of Maryland, one of IDA's sponsoring universities.

In September 1967, General Becton assumed command of the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell,

Kentucky. In December 1967, he deployed his battalion to Vietnam. A few months after their arrival in country, General Becton recalls, his unit was assigned a relief mission, to relieve in place a battalion from the 82nd Airborne Division. The commander of the battalion he was going to relieve was a personal friend. His name was Roscoe Robinson. General Robinson was a West Pointer, who later became the Army's first Black general officer to rise to the four star level. When General Becton's battalion arrived to relieve General Robinson's battalion, General Robinson told him that "everything is just fine." He told General Becton that there was "no activity up here, everything is just pacified, and peaceful. We have everything under control". General Becton replied, "Great Roscoe, this is going to be a joy, because we have been having a hell of a fight down south. We're looking forward to taking a break."

Upon receiving that good news General Becton went back and told his soldiers the good news. However, within twenty-four hours after they were in position, they had a battle, and had continuous battles until General Robinson's battalion returned to reoccupy their position some 60 days later. General Becton said that he and General Robinson have talked and laughed about that many times. General Becton's recollections of the 101st Division was that they were very successful in Vietnam. They had, in his judgement, outstanding leaders. They had an all-volunteer force, even though the draft was in place. Consequently, the morale and

discipline problems the rest of the Army was having in those days were not experienced in the 101st. The quality of our soldiers was good, morale was high, and we were well trained and good at what we did. General Becton said that the most important lesson he learned as a squadron commander was the importance of people. He said that we talk today about empowering people. That term was not in vogue in the 1960s, but it was important to be able to give your subordinates the authority to do things and get the job done. Call it what you want but it's about training and developing your people and then trusting them to accomplish the mission. He said that another important lesson learned from Vietnam was the importance of the importance of integrity, because in Vietnam we got hung up on body counts. There is nothing more insidious than that, because it means nothing. You force people into taking positions that are wrong, dead wrong. They will lie. And that's not good for any organization.

At the end of June 1968, General Becton relinquished command and was reassigned as the Deputy Commander of the 101st Division's 3rd Brigade. This was an unusual position, because normally brigades do not have deputies. But within the 101st, because they operated out of a firebase and were so spread out, they had a commander, deputy commander and executive officer. In December 1968, General Becton returned to Washington, DC, where he was assigned to the Special Review Board in DCSPER. On 31 July 1969, he was promoted to colonel.

In August 1969, he attended the National War College at Fort

McNair in Washington, DC. Upon graduation he assumed command of the 2nd (St Lo) Brigade, 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas. On 10 January 1972, he relinquished command and was reassigned to Washington, DC, as the Chief of Armor Branch of the Officer Personnel Directorate in the Office of Personnel Operations, DCSPER. One of the company grade assignment officers who worked for General Becton was Gordon Sullivan. He described General Sullivan as a "solid citizen". A smart, hard working officer with lots of energy and good ideas. On 19 July 1972, General Becton became the sixth black American to be promoted to brigadier general in the U.S. Army. General Bruce Palmer, Acting Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, officiated the Pentagon ceremony. On the same promotion list he was on, there were four other black officers identified for promotion to brigadier general. This was an historic and memorable event for General Becton and the U.S. Army. Up until that time there were only five black Americans who had ever made general officer in the history of the U.S. Army. To have five appear on the same list was history in the making. General Becton remembers General Gene Forrester telling him that "no matter what assignment you get, it's the best assignment you could ever get as a brigadier general."

On 11 September 1972, General Becton became the Deputy Commander, U.S. Army Training Center, Infantry, and Fort Dix, New Jersey. General Becton commented in regard to this assignment that he does not recall a single day when he was not faced with a challenge. Initially he was not excited about the assignment.

He was hoping to be assigned as an assistant division commander. However, his first general officer assignment turned out to be a very exciting and rewarding job.

General Becton served under two different commanders while assigned to the U.S. Army Training Center, Fort Dix. The relationship he enjoyed with his first boss, Major General Burt David, was very good. However, his relationship with Major General Thomas "Tug" Grier was somewhat strained. The problem that existed is not unique in the Army. When the new commander came in, many of the old soldiers who were used to reporting to General Becton continued to report to him. The new boss, General Grier, wanted to run the training center, however people would not go to him. When it came time for General Becton to receive his first Officer Efficiency Report (OER), General Grier stated in his evaluation that General Becton was not a trainer and that he could not conceptualize, develop, and follow through on a training mission. Although General Becton approached him about his written comments, General Grier would not change them. This evaluation did not end his career. In early 1974, General Becton received a personal phone call from General Creighton Abrams, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, who said to him, "Julius, I just wanted to tell you, you are going to be a two-star general." And on 1 August 1974, the same month and year that General Abrams died, General Becton was promoted to major general.

In February 1975, General Becton was reassigned to Fort Hood, Texas to assume command of the 1st Cavalry Division. The

Corps Commander was Bob Shoemaker, who retired as a four star. His Chief of Staff was Jack Merritt who also retired as a four star. One of his brigade commanders was John Woodmansee who retired as a three star. Walt Kruger was his Command Sergeant Major. This was a very successful command tour for the Becton family and a memorable one too. One event which took place in September 1976, received Army-wide attention. It will go down in the history books as one of the most bizzare incidents ever to befall a division commander. I share this story because I believe it gets to the heart of describing the "true grit" character of this man we know as General Becton. It was a beautiful day in Cav country. Fluffy clouds overhead, stiff breeze. Eight thousand soldiers standing online on the parade field waiting for the start of the review ceremony with another two thousand spectators sitting in the stands. The band has just completed trooping the line, and now it's time for the division commander to mount his horse and review the troops. The handlers bring up Old Bill (General Becton's horse), and just as he was getting his right leg over the back of Old Bill, the unexpected happened. A jet aircraft screams over the parade field and spooks the horse. The horse rears up, General Becton pulls back and to the right on the reins, inadvertently pulling the horse to the ground while he is still mounted on its back. They go down hard together on the horse's right side. General Becton's leg is under the horse. The handlers run over to get the horse off General Becton. The horse gets up, General Becton gets up,

and they both appear to be okay. General Becton remounts Old Bill and the parade commences. General Becton is often asked the question: Why did you get back on that horse? He says the answer is very simple. He had 8,000 soldiers out there on the parade field, and 2,000 spectators in the stands. His leg hurt too much to walk. He had too much pride to get in the mule-drawn wagon which was the only other way to get around the field. So he got back on the horse. Of course, when he remounted Old Bill he got a standing ovation. His mother-in-law who had never attended a ceremony before was sitting on the front row as a distinguished guest. When the horse fell, she reportedly said, "He's not going to get back on that crazy horse, is he?"

After relinquishing command of the division on 16 November 1976, he headed to Washington, DC, to assume command of the U.S. Army Operational Test and Evaluation Agency (OTEA) in Falls Church, Virginia. During his command tour the organization was responsible for the operational testing of the Abrams tank, Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the Patriot missile defense system, Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), and the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS). In hindsight, when you think about what happened in during Desert Storm and our overwhelming success, almost every major piece of combat equipment used in the Gulf was tested by OTEA during General Becton's tenure as commander. In short, his strategic vision as a senior leader in the mid-1970s played a significant role in the Army's warfighting success almost 20 years later.

In October 1978, General Becton was promoted to lieutenant general and returned to Germany for his third European tour. He assumed command as the thirtieth commander of VII Corps in Stuttgart, West Germany on the twenty-seventh of the month. He commanded VII Corps longer than any previous commander, save one, and was the first black American ever to command a U.S. Army corps. His Deputy Commander was MG George Patron. The Corps Command Sergeant Major was Ray Williams, later replaced by Ted Williams. The corps had two divisions. 3rd Infantry Division was commanded by Major General Dean Tice, who was later replaced by Major General Sam Whitzel. The 1st Armored Division was commanded by Major General Glenn Otis, who later became Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Europe. Another prominent figure served as General Becton's G-3. His name is Gordon Sullivan, who later rose to the four-star level and retired as Chief of Staff, U.S. Army. Working in the Corps Chaplain's office was Major Matt Zimmerman, who ultimately became the first black two-star Chief of Chaplains for the U.S. Army. During his tenure as VII Corps Commander, General Becton perfected his twelve point command philosophy. He first developed and formalized this philosophy during his division command tour. The twelve points of General Becton's philosophy of command are as follows:

1. Be Professional
2. Integrity is Non-Negotiable
3. Loyalty is a Two-Way Street
4. Chain of Command Works - If we Use it

5. Innovate - Seek a Better Way
6. Admit Mistakes
7. Disagreement is Not Disrespect
8. Challenge Assertions
9. Be Sensitive to (and Intolerant of) Abuse and Misuse of our Troopers
10. Conservation is Everybody's Business
11. Maintain Your Sense of Humor
12. Keep Things in Perspective

Although General Becton's command tour was very successful overall, there was a very disappointing event that took place on 29 June 1981, the day of his change of command and his birthday. Army Times published an article in which he was quoted as saying that female soldiers who get pregnant should "abort or get out". General Becton said that the statement came about due to his and his subordinate commander's concern about soldiers being fit to fight. He felt that if his units had soldiers incapable of fighting for whatever reason, including pregnancy, then he had a problem. How large was his problem? About ten percent of his soldiers were women (8,800), located primarily in the support command elements. However, he also had women in his covering force as mechanics, signallers, and military police, and nothing restricted them. On any given day, about ten percent of his female soldiers were pregnant (880). He felt that was a significant portion of his total soldier population (88,000). At the interview with Army Times, General Becton recalls spending

about two hours with the reporter discussing operational readiness, and people readiness. During the entire interview the pregnancy issue was discussed for less than five minutes. Did he say "abort or get out"? General Becton said yes he did, but in the context that abortion was legal. He also admits that he was naive, and did not appreciate the full political ramifications of what he was saying. In retrospect, I believe he regrets having made the statement as bluntly as he did. But he continues to believe that the Army still has a problem in this area today. The issue remains unresolved. General Becton would not speculate whether the Army Times quote kept him from getting his fourth star, but he does believe that it did not help his Army career.

In July 1981 he was reassigned as the Deputy Commander for Training, U.S. Army, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), Fort Monroe, Virginia. He also wore a second hat as the Army's first Inspector General of Training since von Steuben. In this job he reported directly to the Chief of Staff, Army.

General Becton retired from active duty on 31 August 1983. On 9 January 1984 he returned to work with the federal government, as the Director of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the Agency for International Development. On 28 October 1985, he was confirmed by the Senate as the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He remained with FEMA until 1989, when he accepted the position of President, Prairie View A&M College. He held the Presidency until his retirement in October 1994.

General Becton's greatest legacies are his development of leaders and his untiring service to his nation, his soldiers and the community. He is deeply rooted in his family. Throughout his forty-eight year marriage to Louise Thornton Becton, they successfully reared five children (four daughters and one son), all of whom are college graduates.

As a senior strategic leader, General Becton has served his country honorably and with great pride, both in and out of government. He currently serves on several boards of directors in the private sector. He was also selected by Ebony Magazine as one of the 100 most influential blacks in America. He is a member of Who's Who in America; Who's Who Among Black Americans; Member, Board of Governors, American Red Cross; and many, many more.

Lieutenant General Julius W. Becton, Jr. in the opinion of this writer is one of the greatest military leaders of the twentieth Century. His direct, no-nonsense, tough-minded but compassionate approach to leadership has served him well throughout his life. These qualities have enabled him to overcome great challenges, rising to the highest levels of power, while keeping his feet firmly planted on the ground.