

## **FRANK ALLEN RAMSEY<sup>1</sup>**

### **Early Years**

Q: General Ramsey, would you tell me a little bit about your early years; who your parents were, what their names were, what they did, where you were born, and where you went to school?

A: I was born in Texas. My father was a rancher all of his life. I grew up on a ranch which he had. I had four sisters and a brother, and my brother served for about three years during World War II.

All four of my sister's husbands served in the military service. One sister lost her husband in Italy during, or shortly after, World War II. He was in the Air Force. Her second husband had also been in the Army Signal Corps during World War II.

Until I started preparing for this interview, I had never considered my family to be a military family, but looking back on it, I guess quite a few have been in the service. Both my grandfathers were in the army. My paternal grandfather was an infantryman. My maternal grandfather was a surgeon.

One of my brothers-in-law was a veterinarian, and before and during high school I worked with him. I guess he triggered my interest in veterinary medicine. Before I go any further, both of my grandfathers were in the Confederate Army.

<sup>1</sup>This is a career oral history with former Chief, Veterinary Corps, Office of the Surgeon General, Brig. Gen. Frank Allen Ramsey, Retired, U. S. Army Veterinary Corps, conducted at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, on 15 April 1999, by Dr. Barry W. Fowle, Office of Medical History, Office of the Surgeon General of the United States Army. This document has been edited by Dr. Barry W. Fowle and by Brig. Gen. Frank Allen Ramsey. The original manuscript and tapes are located in the Office of Medical History Archives, Falls Church, Virginia.

### **Texas Agricultural and Mechanical [TA&M], 1947 to 1954**

I went to high school in Uvalde, Texas. In fact, I went through high school in Uvalde, Texas, and I left there and went to Texas A&M where I got my degree in veterinary medicine, graduating in 1954. I started there in 1947 and crowded a six-year course into seven years, and was fortunate to receive my degree in veterinary medicine.

### **The Army Veterinary Corps**

Q: Were you commissioned directly on graduation?

A: When I got out of college, I went to Fort Worth and worked for the United States Department of Agriculture in their Meat Inspection Division. I worked for them between my junior and senior years in veterinary school for three months, and then after college I went back to work for them.

At that time we had a choice of being drafted for three years or joining, volunteering in the Army for two years. So I volunteered to serve in the Army Veterinary Corps, and I believe I was called to duty in January or February 1955.

Q: Had you been in the Reserves?

A: No, I had not been in the Reserves. I had been in the Texas National Guard during the war. We had a small Texas National Guard unit in Uvalde, and while I was in high school, we met periodically.

I volunteered, and my intent was to serve my two years and then get out of the Army and go back and go into practice with my brother-in-law, who at that time was in El Paso, Texas. But from 1947 until 1954 we had a seven year drought in Texas. The normal rainfall is 21 inches where I lived, and during those seven years we had an average of four inches of rain per year, and for four of the seven years we had zero measured precipitation.

So when I got out of college, the country was in a devastated condition as far

as agriculture is concerned, and as far as ranching and veterinary practice. Animals were worth nothing, and veterinarians were having a hard time, so that influenced me to enter the Army because my brother-in-law said there was no way we could both make a living in his practice.

### **The Army Medical Department Officer Basic Course**

Q: So then you joined the Army and you were assigned to Fort Sam Houston, Texas?

A: Yes, I reported to the Medical Field Service School at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where I attended the Basic Army Medical Department Officers Course. I don't remember the exact length, but I believe it was somewhere around three months.

### **United States Army Medical Department Veterinary School, Chicago, Illinois, 1955**

Thereafter, I went to Chicago to attend the U.S. Army Medical Department Veterinary School, which was located there because of the proximity to all the packing houses which were essential training aides for the school.

At that time, the Veterinary Corps was deeply engaged in the procurement inspection of meat for the armed forces, and that at that time included grading. We not only inspected the meat for sanitation, but we graded it as to grade.

### **Commander, 73d Medical Detachment Veterinary Service, La Rochelle, France, 1955 to 1957**

The veterinary school lasted two or three months, and when I completed that school, I was ordered to report to France, where I was the commander of the 73d Medical Detachment Veterinary Service, which was a 12-man TO&E unit, located at Jumeau Caserne outside La Rochelle, France. France at that time was organized into an Advanced Section up near the German border and

a Base Section headquartered in Orleans, which controlled the Western, Northern, and Southern Districts of France. France constituted the Communications Zone for the army in Europe, and the army would be forward positioned north of France, it was anticipated, in the combat zone.

During my time in France, I served as the Western District Veterinarian, and during periods of temporary absence of the Northern District Veterinarian (he was sent on TDY to Yugoslavia for four months), I also served as Northern District Veterinarian.

I covered the Northern District as well as the Western District, and similarly for the Southern District. When the Southern District Veterinarian went TDY to Yugoslavia, I covered his district. So I got to see a great deal of France.

There were 35 military installations of the United States Army in the Western District alone of France, and each of the other two districts had somewhat fewer numbers of military bases, but quite a few.

Q: What specifically was your job there in France?

A: To provide complete veterinary services within the Western District, and other duties as directed by the COMZ or the Base Section veterinarians. Specific duties included food inspection. All of the food shipped over to Europe for U.S. forces from the United States was unloaded at the Port of La Rochelle, a great deal of it, and then either warehoused there or trucked to other warehouses in Europe. We met each incoming ship containing food, and went into the hold of the ship and inspected the hold to make sure that it had not flooded during the overseas voyage, and we did find several that were full of water, with the cargo of food ruined.

Then we inspected the food during off-loading, made sure that the food was still suitable for use by the Army. Then when the food was put in storage, the veterinary service has a schedule of inspections. Perishable foods are inspected monthly, nonperishable foods in storage are inspected on about a three month

basis. As soon as any indications of deteriorations are detected, the food is immediately issued so that it can be consumed before it is lost. Refrigerated foods are inspected more frequently.

Most of the food shipped from the United States to Europe was of the nonperishable variety. We did a great deal of off-shore procurement of perishable foods, and since there is no United States Public Health Service or U.S. Department of Agriculture operating in overseas areas, the Army Veterinary Service fulfills all of the functions of those health agencies here in the United States in overseas areas. So we looked after the—our basic mission was to protect the health of the Army and to conserve the fighting strength, and a secondary, equally important mission was to protect the financial interest of the United States government, and to make sure that we received good, sound food in the proper quantity and quality for the money we spent.

We procured fresh meats overseas. We went in the packing houses and inspected the animals before slaughter. We inspected the viscera and the carcasses after slaughter, and we inspected the meat as it was being cut up for shipment out to destinations.

During college I had heard the term Pearly Disease, which was a lay term for Tuberculosis. The first time I walked into a slaughter house in France, about 50 feet away across the room there was a row of iron hooks on the wall, and they had what we called the pluck: the heart, liver, and lungs of the animals hanging on these hooks. One of those sets of lungs was completely covered with white pearls, some of which were a quarter to a third of an inch in diameter, but they were glistening white from a distance. In all my seven years in veterinary college I had seen two cases of Tuberculosis, and they had granules of tubercles in the lungs that were the size of a grain of sand, and there I was seeing pearls a third of an inch in diameter.

I got a quart jar full of those, a section of that lung, and packed it in formaldehyde, put it in a box, packed it with packing material, and mailed it

back to our pathology teacher at Texas A&M. I never did hear whether that arrived or not, but that would have been a wonderful specimen.

We purchased eggs, and this involved going out and candling the eggs prior to purchasing to make sure they were good and fresh. We purchased fresh fruits and vegetables. We purchased dairy products, milk, anything that we needed. We purchased bakery products from local bakeries.

Overseas, in all overseas areas worldwide, the Army Veterinary Service publishes, as a tool to be used by the Quartermaster procurement officers, a directory of sanitarily approved sources for armed forces procurement. In overseas areas, the Quartermaster procurement officers are only allowed to procure foods from food establishments that appear on that directory. So one of our functions there was to perform initial sanitary inspections on food establishments that wished to do business with the armed forces, and if they passed, we added them to the directory.

Q: Do you inspect those periodically after they're ...

A: We do an initial sanitary inspection, and then we do routine follow-up inspections. The frequency of the follow-up inspections depends upon the product being procured. Dairies or meat packing plants would be inspected more frequently than a bottled water plant, for example. And we did inspect bottled water plants. We inspected breweries and wineries, a great number of procurement plants of that type.

Q: Did you find many people that were not passing your inspections?

A: Yes. We found at that time in Europe it would be the exception if a plant did pass an inspection because this was in 1957, a short decade after the end of World War II, and Europe had not fully recovered. There in Europe a great many of the businesses are what we would call mom and pop businesses here in the United States. Our requirements for directory listing are not considered exceptional here in the United States in the food industry. But when we went into France and required, for example, that all windows be screened, that all doors be screened and have self-closing devices, that the latrines be equipped with a lavatory for hand-washing and have soap, that the people wear hairnets, and that the people could not wear an excessive amount of jewelry while they were working with meat, these were astonishing requirements to them at that time.

Our prerequisites for approval in subsequent directory listings were pretty extensive and extremely costly for a small mother and dad operation. They often had a 50 x 50 foot building, and they just could not afford to paint that building, and to have hot water. Very few of them had hot water heaters, and they could not afford to do all the screening that we required. They could not afford to have boiling water to sterilize their meat-cutting knives between cutting a carcass which may have had Tuberculosis and the next carcass which was sound.

Subsequently in Europe, during a later tour, we had a significant problem with the procurement people. They had the idea that their accomplishments would be measured in part by how many plants were listed on the directory of sanitarily approved sources. So we had, I do not remember the exact number, but let's say 500 plants listed.

Well, they wanted to have two or three thousand plants listed. So all over Europe they put notices in trade journals, trade magazines, and in newspapers inviting people to request inspection leading to being listed on the directory so that they could sell their food product to the armed forces. This resulted in our office being flooded with hundreds of requests to do sanitary inspections all over Europe— Spain, Italy, Portugal—every country in Europe. We were

receiving these requests to come and inspect their bakery, or their egg poultry producing facility, or their dairy.

When we would make these trips, we would find that their egg plant consisted of 200 hens, and a mother and dad and three children, and there was no way in the world that they could produce eggs, package them, and sell them to the United States government profitably for themselves or conveniently for the government. We had quite a problem in getting the Quartermaster people to quit this advertising, and getting them to realize that only certain sized plants had the financial resources to equip their plant to sell to the U.S. government, and that they were creating a lot of ill will toward the United States by their advertisements, which led to our going out and disapproving these plants.

We had to write a letter to the plant owners and tell them that they were disapproved, and gave them the reasons why they were disapproved, and told them that if they corrected these discrepancies within a 30, 45, or 60 day period they could request reinspection. Well, it was a slap in the face to a Spaniard to tell him that his bakery did not meet the U.S. Army sanitary requirements.

### **Encounters with the Military Police**

Although food inspection and food establishment sanitary inspection was our major duty, we had several hundred military working dogs in our western District and also provided limited care to pets of U. S. personnel including an immunization clinic.

Military quarters were unavailable so I rented a modest chateau in a village five miles from my office. I sub-rented to Lts. Gene Williams and Gaston de la Bretonne, both Finance Corps officers. Melle Yvonne de Montzaigle was my landlady. Her newly-wed husband went off for duty in the French Army in World War I and returned four years later to die soon afterward from the effects of German gas. He had no leaves during those four years; now that was hard duty!



Later one night, two Military Policemen knocked on my front door. There was an emergency with a guard dog at the Chize Air Base fifty miles away. The Air Force Base Veterinarian was on leave, so I had been sent for. I found the dog rolled in a blanket and tightly taped. The handler explained it had been eviscerated in a dog fight. We washed the dirt and leaves off the viscera in a pan of Phisohex, replaced them in the abdominal cavity, liberally sprinkled Sulfanilamide and sutured up the 9-inch cut. It healed well and as a reward, I was later invited to a wild boar hunt in Chize forest, the hunting preserve of the Kings of France. I was never able to accept the invitation.

Late another night some months later, two more M.P.'s knocked on my door. I had been called to an Air Base near Bordeaux, seventy miles away, to attend another guard dog which had "attacked a deuce and a half" and was in a coma. The front of its skull was caved in in an oval shape two inches by three inches, and I could feel the bones were badly crushed. We obtained a large oval stainless steel soup spoon at the base mess hall and ground off the handle and shaped it in the base machine shop. I removed the pieces of crushed bone, trimmed the edges of the skull to an oval shape and fitted the spoon bowl to size and sutured it in place. A year later, when I was transferred to Berlin, the dog was still on duty.

On another midnight, the two M.P.'s wanted me to go to a bar in La Pallice. An American Merchant Marine sailor had brought his pet raccoon ashore to party with him. It had bitten an American sailor and his French girlfriend. At that time we quarantined rabies suspect animals for 14 days. The sailor's ship sailed the next day so I inherited a raccoon. At the end of the 14 days I wanted to be rid of it so with much fanfare was finally able to present it to the city of La Rochelle Zoo.

Several months later, the deputy of the mayor of La Rochelle came to see me and asked if I could get for them a male raccoon since it had become obvious their female wished to mate. I was aware that raccoons, abandoned by U.S. personnel, had multiplied and were causing garbage can problems in Frankfurt

and other German cities. I told him I would contact one of my Veterinary Corps friends in Frankfurt and have a male sent down. He recoiled as if I had slapped him and said, “No, Monsieur, we will never accept a German Raton Qui Laver (rat which washes), but only an American one!”

I got him an “American one” and several years later was pleased to see a brass plaque on the cage in the La Rochelle Zoo crediting the U.S. Army. The cage contained twelve raccoons.

The next time the two M. P.s came for me, we again went to a bar in La Pallice. An American soldier had been badly bitten by a monkey belonging to the chief of a touring Gypsy circus tribe. The French Gendarmes were there and there was much excitement. I did not want to quarantine the monkey, and after much discussion we all agreed the chief would advise the local Gendarmerie whenever the monkey moved during the 14-day quarantine, and I would check with them to learn where his circus was and go there every other day to check the monkey. The monkey was always in the top of a high tree, so the chief would clap his hands and call “Singe” and it would come down, jump on his shoulder, and eat my peanuts.

The chief was one of the circuses aerialists and one day I found him in a leotard with shoulder straps practicing on their high bar. He noticed me staring at the two large, open, healed scarred holes under his collar bones. He grinned, touched them and said, “Le Boche, Dachau, meat hooks, two days hanging.”

### **New Offshore Discharge Exercises (NODEX)**

In 1955, ‘56 and ‘57, the United States Army conducted a number of NODEX exercises along the French Atlantic coast, usually one in the summer and one in the winter. Because the Southern and Northern District Veterinarians were on TDY to Spain or Yugoslavia, I was fortunate enough to be designated as the NODEX Veterinarian for four consecutive exercises. Four to six cargo freighters would come from CONUS and their cargoes would be unloaded

over-the-beach, simulating wartime conditions when all ports would have been destroyed.

During these exercises, for the first time, a number of newly developed techniques and items of equipment were field tested. Among them were the De Long Floating Pier, the Rough Terrain Forklift (capable of unloading barges in six to eight feet of water and carrying the pallets ashore), the Overhead Aerial Tramway (which carried pallet loads of supplies from a ship suspended from overhead cables to a De Long Pier, the way buckets of concrete were transported during the construction of Boulder Dam in Nevada), Perforated-Steel-Platform panels to firm up sandy beaches and Deep Sea Landing Barges to transport supplies from ships to shore or the De Long Pier.

At least one of the four to six freighters would contain subsistence, sometimes more than one. Our job was to board the ships on arrival and inspect the hold for water leakage and/or damage, to supervise the unloading, to conduct a statistical sample inspection of the subsistence, and supervise the loading into transport trucks, and then a final receipt inspection when off-loaded into depots or warehouses.

On two exercises, I accompanied an Engineer officer, while he performed pre-exercise road route-reconnaissance, to document the condition of all roads and beaches to determine their pre- and post-exercise condition to be used in settling post-exercise lawsuits with the French.

The total exercise usually lasted three weeks for me and the Veterinary Service enlisted men and NCO's who participated. We lived in tents and had one hot meal per day in field kitchens. Going aboard the ships was always a pleasure as they always invited us to eat in the ship's officer's mess. Based on the exercise reports, these items tested were modified as required and all of them soon were used in Vietnam very successfully. These were multinational, NATO type exercises and there would be American, French, German, and English military units and personnel participating, and invariably

competing with each other to see who could get their assigned cargo ship off-loaded first.

Duty at these exercises was in addition to our normal duties, so when we returned after a three week absence, our routing work had piled up and we would have a busy time catching up. Usually three EM would be assigned to the NODEX from each of the three Veterinary Districts, one NCO and one officer. These exercises and lessons learned proved invaluable to me in years to come, as well as to the Veterinary Service.

### **Submarine Pens at La Pallice**

The 73d Medical Detachment (Vet. Svc.) was housed in a 20' by 40' cinder block building on the edge of Jeumont Caserne at the port of La Pallice near La Rochelle, France. One of Nazi Germany's largest submarine pens loomed over Jeumont Caserne. It was approximately 150 yards on each side, some 50 feet high, with a 20-foot reinforced concrete roof and walls. Huge steel doors closed the entrance to the individual sub "pens." A woven chain curtain with anchor chain-sized links hung outside each door to protect from "skip" bombs and the roof jutted out over each door to further protect them. These pens were never seriously damaged during the war. The final scenes of the German post-war movie epic "Das Boot," about their submarine service, ended at La Pallice.

Everyone had difficulty in finding our Veterinary office, so I had a nice, big, clear sign with an arrow painted on it and gave it to Sgt. Truman Harris. I asked him to drill a couple of holes, put in some wooden dowels, and screw it to the side of the submarine pen. When I returned, I was surprised to not see our sign. Sgt. Harris said, "Lieutenant, you won't believe this, but I couldn't drill the holes." Red-faced and tired after swinging the sledge on the Star drill for twenty minutes, I had to admit he was right. A thin, flat dime would have more than filled the hole both of us had tried to drill.

The Germans surely knew how to mix concrete!

### **Procurement of Seafood, Cadiz, Spain**

Q: You have Spain down as a TDY [Temporary Duty] station when you were in France.

A: Yes.

Q: What were you doing?

A: I was one of a series of veterinary officers sent to Cadiz, Spain, down near Gibraltar, to procure seafood for sale through the European exchange system. The seafood was shipped to commissaries and to NCO and officers clubs across Europe, and most of it consisted of North African rock lobster tails.

Officers were sent down to do this procurement, and we worked in a refrigerated cold storage plant which had a seafood processing operation in it. The fishing vessels would leave Cadiz and head for North Africa, and then when they came back, if they had been lucky enough to catch a cargo of rock lobsters, then we would inspect them and package them for shipment across Europe. That was a very interesting assignment.

### **Berlin Command, 1957 to 1958**

Q: When you finished with that assignment, you went to the Berlin Command for two years?

A: Yes. I came back from Spain and served in France for some time after that. Then one Friday I received orders to report to Berlin, Germany the following Monday morning because the veterinary officer there had passed away unexpectedly. So I got orders from my local headquarters sending me to Berlin, Germany, and got in my automobile and loaded all my belongings and drove to Germany.

I got as far as the Helmstedt Check Point and was turned back by the Russians because I did not have all of the proper required documentation. So I stayed in Helmstedt for a number of days until I got all the proper documentation, and then went on into Berlin, where I was the Berlin Command Veterinarian. I again had a TO&E [Table of Organization and Equipment] unit there. It was probably the plushiest assignment of my Army career. I had a wonderful apartment, fully furnished and equipped. Being a unit commander, I had my own automobile and a German driver who was at my door every morning and drove me wherever I needed to go on business all during the day.

There in Berlin, we purchased meat locally and did the inspection of it. We purchased eggs locally, we purchased vegetables locally. A six-month supply of food was maintained in storage at all times in the event of a blockade. While I was there it was ordered that this would also include a six-month supply of frozen fresh milk, so we had to freeze half-gallon cartons of milk. That was a nightmare operation because frozen milk, unless it's flash-frozen, the solids in the milk settle out and then when you thaw it you have two inches of solids in the bottom of a half-gallon carton, and it's hard to get people to shake it up before they drink it. They drink it and have a little sediment in the bottom of their glass, and the children don't like that.

We found some ways of freezing it a little bit faster, and we rotated it each month so that it did not stay in the freezer more than a month, and that helped the situation.

We had a lot of interrelationship there with the British, the French, and the East Germans.

Q: Did you support the British and French in Berlin?

A: Somewhat with food, but not directly. But we worked with them considerably, worked with the French surgeon quite a bit. Neither he nor his wife spoke English, so as a lieutenant there in Berlin, I was fortunate enough to be invited to most of the social affairs that our army surgeon was invited to because he

spoke no French; and having been stationed in France, I had a rudimentary capability in French. So I would go with the surgeon and his wife, and the French surgeon and his wife, to many of the affairs that otherwise as a lieutenant I would never have been able to attend.

### **Donuts in Berlin**

We inspected all sorts of food establishments in Berlin. We bought a lot of food there on the local economy because it was so difficult to ship it from the United States to Berlin. I got in a habit of stopping by the officers club early in the morning to have coffee and doughnuts before I would go to work. One morning my friends and I were enjoying these beautiful large glazed doughnuts, and one of them said, "These are the best doughnuts I've ever eaten. Where did they come from?" I did not know, so I asked my NCOIC when I got to the office, and he did not know. So we asked the procurement officer at the officers club at the Harnach House where he was getting his doughnuts, and he was very reluctant to tell us.

Finally he gave us the name of the company, and sometime later my sergeant was by there and saw a truck pull out with a name on the side of it. So he followed the truck and that afternoon he got me in the office and said, "You better come with me. We'll go look at something." So we rode out down on the Unter den Linden, which was the main embassy row in pre-World War II Berlin which led to the Brandenburg Gate, and at that time when I was there, both sides of the street were rubble still from the Russian artillery bombardment and the bombing.

We drove up Unter den Linden, and he turned off on one of the side streets. About half a city block off the main Unter den Linden there was a road going back in the rubble, and he drove back there. We stopped and got out, and there was a tripod with a metal ring on top of it, and sitting on the ring there was a huge iron kettle. It had a door on top of it, and there was a bottle of butane gas off to one side with a hose leading to a burner under this kettle. Then on two sawhorses beside the kettle there was another door, and there was also a long

broom handle with a round wire hoop on the end of it with a screen on it. When he lifted the door off of the kettle, it was full of grease. The hoop was used to sift flies off the top of the grease each day before they cooked the doughnuts, and when they cooked the doughnuts, they put them on this door on the sawhorses and either dipped them in the glaze or sprinkled powdered sugar on them, and those were the best doughnuts I've ever eaten.

Q: Fresh air doughnuts.

A: Fresh air doughnuts. This is probably not what you are interested in.

Q: Were you able to procure outside of the Berlin zone area?

A: I did not, but other veterinarians in France and Germany did procure and send in to us. But my activities were confined within the Berlin perimeter. The only time I went outside was whenever U.S. servicemen would be bitten by dogs fairly close to the Helmstedt Check Point. They would send me from Berlin out to check the dogs for rabies.

### **Disbanding the Horses, the United States Constabulary, Berlin Command**

We did provide a somewhat unique service there in that the last horse-mounted unit in the United States Army was stationed there in Berlin. It was the United States Army Constabulary Unit, and they had approximately 50 horses and a number of men who ran that unit, and they rode the horses to patrol parts of the Allied sector of Berlin, which joined the Russian or the German section surrounding us.

There were parts of that border that were inaccessible by road or by Jeep, so they rode these horses to patrol the perimeter, and we provided veterinary support to that unit. That was an interesting experience. They had a lot of fine men in the unit, and fine horses. The Berlin Free University—whose dean was a wonderful German by the name of Dr. Becker—the Berlin Free University



Veterinary College let us use their facilities whenever we needed them to treat our animals.

Q: Did you have any trouble with land mines with those horses when you went into these inaccessible areas?

A: No, we had no trouble with land mines, strangely enough. A couple of incidents with that Constabulary unit—while I was there it was disbanded. The troopers rode their horses from their stable to the Berlin Command headquarters building and went into formation in front of the building one evening at retreat, and they had a disbanding ceremony there for that unit. When the troopers left, they all led their horses back to the barracks through the streets of Berlin. It was a very poignant ceremony.

Some of these horses were quite old. I was told by Dr. Becker that one particular horse had come over from the United States for the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, and I took an interest in him because the name of the horse was Texas. He was over 20 years old, and we had him in the stable, and the men would ride him on patrol periodically. But he was lame in all four legs, and he would limp, especially if they rode him hard one day.

Every three months we had an equestrian show there, and the French, the British, the Americans, and the Germans all competed in a horse show, and they had the jumping events. The week before the horse show they would begin to put up the bunting and the flags, and decorate the riding hall, getting ready for the show. Texas would see this, and he would perk up and start being very, very active, and prancing back and forth in the paddock. He always entered in these jumping events. He was so old that he could not tuck up his hooves to clear all the jumps, but time-wise he almost invariably won the jumping event. But also invariably, by having a dangling hoof, he would knock a brick off the brick hurdle and they would penalize him, so he would come in sometimes third or fourth in the contest. All the horses after the contest would be in one end of the arena, and when the judges announced the winner, the horse would trot to the other end to have the wreath put around his neck.

Well, I don't know whether they deliberately let him go, but no one was ever able to hold Texas back. He knew he had won, so at each event he would run to the other end of the arena and stand there by the winner of the jumping event to receive his wreath. He was great.

Some of the horses were old, as Texas was, and a cartoonist here in America named Herblock, when he heard that this constabulary unit had been disbanded, published a cartoon which showed a long line of cavalrymen leading their horses over a hill, and in the distance was a bunch of smokestacks belching smoke, and a sign said Glue Factory. When that came out in the *New York Times*, our commanding general, Maj. Gen. Barksdale Hamlett, was awakened about 3 o'clock in the morning with a phone call from Washington telling him that in no instance was he to let any of those U.S. Army Cavalry retired horses go to a glue factory, or be fed to animals, or used in any way that was degrading. That was emphasized very strongly to him because it was such a politically hot issue.

Sometime later it filtered down through channels, and I was tasked to write a staff study on what we would do with the carcass if one of these horses should die. They had told us we could not feed them to animals in the Berlin Zoo and we could not let them be used for human consumption.

The city of Berlin had an ordinance that prohibited the burning of animals. There was no incinerator in the city large enough to dissect the animals and burn them piecemeal. The city of Berlin had an ordinance against burying animals due to the water table, so it was an interesting staff study. So we ended up listing all of these options and saying which ones were prohibited, and tongue-in-cheek recommended, among other things, that if one of them died, one option was to load them into an airplane and pack them with time delay explosives and drop them over the North Sea.

Another tongue-in-cheek recommendation was to load them on an airplane and fly them back to the United States and let the people in the United States dispose of them. Another option was to try to sell them to anyone we could sell them to. So I was told that the option adopted, although I never saw it in

writing, was to load them on an airplane and fly them back to the United States and let the military here dispose of them. But we transferred a number of the marginal horses to the U.S. Army down in France, and they went down there and later on were disposed of there.

The procurement in Berlin was interesting. Most of the facilities were still World War II or pre-World War II vintage. The bullet holes were still obvious in all the walls, the artillery shell holes and the machine gun holes. The Veterinary TO&E Unit there was a good unit. We were stationed in a military kaserne which had been the headquarters of the SS [*Schutzstaffel*] Medical Support Unit; red sandstone buildings, Gothic construction, beautiful facilities.

Q: So when you were finished with that tour, you went back to Fort Leonard Wood?

A: I went back to Fort Leonard Wood.

### **The Decision to Stay in the Army**

Q: General Ramsey, before we leave Europe and go back to Fort Leonard Wood is there anything else you want to mention?

A: Yes, there is. Going back to about 1958—at that time the Veterinary Corps was under study with the objective being to abolish the Veterinary Corps because the last unit in the U.S. Army that had horses had been disestablished, so why do we need a Veterinary Corps when there are no longer any horses and mules in the U.S. Army—a study was ongoing, and as a result commissions in the Veterinary Corps were being held in abeyance.

I was a lieutenant at that time, a promotion to captain was being held. Regular Army commissions were being held in abeyance. I came back to the United States from Berlin to report to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. I had leave before reporting, and I visited college classmates who were practicing in San Antonio and Dallas. I was offered full partnerships in two veterinary practices. I talked with these men long and seriously about going into partnership with

them, and told them both that I'd think about it a while, and I went on to Fort Leonard Wood.

While there and while thinking about it, I came to realize that during the last three years I had been associating with a different group of people than I had grown up with. I was tremendously impressed by my fellow officers and by my superior officers in the Veterinary Corps. I was tremendously impressed by all of the career noncommissioned officers in the veterinary service.

When I went to France as a new lieutenant fresh out of veterinary school, I knew nothing about the military. I had been to Fort Sam Houston and to Chicago, but those experiences were fleeting and hazy, and the mass of material thrown at us surpassed anything I had ever had during veterinary school, and I had not absorbed very much of it, I'm sure. But I was fortunate to have a 1st Sergeant Andrew Gibson in my unit who was outstanding, a career Veterinary Service individual, and he taught me a tremendous amount about the Veterinary Service and about the Army during those years in France.

When I got back to Fort Leonard Wood and started thinking about whether to get out of the Army or to stay in the Army, I went through about a year of mental anguish, and finally decided to temporize and say that well, I'm going to stay in the Army 10 years, and then see what the situation looks like. Perhaps it will have started raining in Texas by then, conditions will be better. I had left southwest Texas, and thanks to the Army I had seen a good part of Europe, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Portugal, things I had only dreamed about before that; and the quality—I keep coming back to that—the quality of people I had been surrounded with was so outstanding.

I went back to Texas on leave, and I visited my friends, and I found that I did not have a great deal in common with them anymore. After the first 15 minutes of conversation, it became difficult. So I made a decision, as I said, to stay in the Army 10 years, and that eventually led to almost 31 years, and a continuing association with the members of the veterinary service who I considered to be

among the outstanding people in the United States Army. I am sure individuals who served in any other branches of the Army feel the same way.

The veterinary service provides a considerable number of very essential functions in an efficient and a highly cost effective manner. Napoleon was right, the army moves on its stomach. Food is absolutely essential to an Army. The Veterinary Service, 100 percent overseas and to a large extent in the United States, protects the health and the financial interest of the United States Armed Forces. I became extremely proud of that group of people. So I wanted to digress and clarify that. That was the reason I ended up staying in the Army.

### **Marriage to Lucette Claudine Reboul**

Q: When you were in Berlin, you got married, did you not?

A: I did. While I was in France I met a great many people, and I met a number of outstanding young ladies, and after I was assigned to Berlin, I went back to France and got one of those young ladies that I had known in La Rochelle, France, and we were married there in France, and I took her back to Berlin with me. Her name was Lucette Claudine Reboul.

Q: And then you returned back to the states, and as you said, you were touring Texas, speaking to all your old friends. You were also bringing your new wife back to see a new country. Was she impressed with Texas?

A: Absolutely. Yes. We drove from Bayonne, New Jersey, to Texas, and then from Uvalde, Texas, where I lived at that time, we drove out to El Paso to meet my sister and brother-in-law, who was a veterinarian. And when we came to the Pecos High Bridge over the Pecos River, we pulled off at a roadside park at daylight. The sun was coming up, and on the rim of the canyon above us there was a row of Spanish dagger plants, which is a cactus with long, sharp points, and we got out of the car and we were walking around a little bit, and I stepped up beside her and I said “now don’t look up, and don’t get excited, but there’s a whole row of Indians wearing full war bonnets up on that bluff

behind us, so get back in the car.” And she immediately turned and looked up and screamed, and dove in the car. So Texas was quite a surprise.

While stationed at Fort Leonard Wood, on 4 July 1959, we had twin sons, Randal Reynolds Ramsey and Ramsay Allen Ramsey. Both sons are 40 years old this year, and they both attended Texas A&M. One of them graduated, and one of them came near to graduating, and they’re both in business in Bryan and College Station, Texas; still live there and are doing well. One of them is married and has two children, a son who is about one year old and a daughter who is about four years old now. So I have two grandchildren there.

#### **Post Veterinary Officer, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, 1958 to 1961**

Q: When you went to Fort Leonard Wood, what was your job there?

A: I went there as the Fort Leonard Wood Veterinarian, and my job there was similar to what it had been in Europe. Food inspection was the primary function. We did a lot of procurement food inspection from various food establishments in the area: dairy products, meat, vegetables, eggs, poultry. We did receipt inspection on all incoming shipments of subsistence which had already been procured for the Army: nonperishable subsistence, canned goods and dry goods; perishable subsistence, anything that would deteriorate rapidly; and frozen, and chilled foods.

We performed establishment sanitary inspections on all of the food handling establishments on the base, as we had done overseas. We inspected the dining facilities, the mess halls, the post bakery, the post meat cutting plant, the commissary, all of the post exchange activities, the officer’s club, the NCO club, the enlisted club, the nurseries, the school dining facilities. Anything that handled food, we inspected it.

There was a riding stable there of privately owned horses with about 50 horses in it, so I provided veterinary support to that, and supervised and directed the sanitation of that operation. We had military working dogs there, and I did not

mention that in both France and Berlin we had large numbers of military working dogs there, mostly guard dogs at that time, and we had the Polish Labor Service workers after the war who usually took care of the dog kennels and handled the dogs, and they guarded POL [petroleum, oil, and lubricants] depots at night. They guarded our subsistence warehouses at night, and they guarded the military installations at night, and we took care of all those dogs, and maintained their immunizations, and treated any injuries they had, operated on them whenever necessary, and that was a major function that I did not mention in Europe, but we do that all over the world. We did that at Fort Leonard Wood.

### **Post Preventive Medicine Officer**

After I had been at Fort Leonard Wood some months, the surgeon there, who was my direct boss, called me in one day and told me that he had had a number of Medical Corps officers serving as post Preventive Medicine Officers in the recent years, and that he was short of Medical Corps officers at that time and he wanted me to assume that as an additional duty.

So he sent me to Fort Sam to the Preventive Medicine Officers Orientation Course, which lasted some months—I believe it was around four months—and when I returned, he made me the Acting Preventive Medicine Officer for Fort Leonard Wood. He retained, as army regulations required, the title as the PMO, and basically I was the operator, and he signed any papers that needed to be signed. His name was Colonel John T.B. Strode, and he was a tremendous individual.

I enjoyed functioning as the, in fact, preventive medicine officer there. I had several preventive medicine technicians working for me, and they were extremely capable and taught me a lot about the preventive medicine field.

When I entered the Army at Fort Sam Houston, the Medical Corps officers who taught preventive medicine were the most respected members of the

Army Medical Department at that time. Preventive medicine was in the forefront of the medical profession.

As a result of the diseases of World War I, and the Spanish-American War, and World War II, preventive medicine was extremely important. In the decades that followed, preventive medicine declined in attractiveness for Medical Corps officers, whereas today very few of them are interested in entering that field. They all want to be surgeons or some other specialty field. A man can only operate on so many people per day, but by preventive medicine, he can prevent thousands and thousands of casualties.

Q: What did that job actually consist of in terms of preventive medicine?

A: The preventive medicine function involved the immunization program at the school. It involved the immunization program for all of Fort Leonard Wood as an engineering training center, and all new recruits come in there and have their basic and advance training. So all the recruits have extensive preventive medicine requirements, immunizations. It involved the insect and rodent control program on the installation. It involved the water testing program, water wells; it involved the chlorination and fluoridation, the proper operation of the chlorination and fluoridation plants. It involved the operation of the sewage disposal plant, the water purification plant.

It involved sewage disposal; it involved the disposition of the mess hall food. At that time when the soldiers finished eating, they walked through a line and they dumped their food into garbage cans for edible garbage, and they put the paper in the other containers. This edible garbage was then sold to pig farmers in the area. We went out and inspected the pig farms to make sure that they complied with federal and state laws, and found that no one had ever inspected them before, and they were not cooking the garbage to prevent trichinosis, which is a larval worm pigs have, and if you eat uncooked pork, it can be transmitted to a human being. Pork scraps from the mess hall, if not cooked thoroughly, can give the pigs trichina, and then it will develop in their body, and then if they're slaughtered and eaten and not cooked properly, human



beings can get it, as Yul Brynner found out. The Hollywood actor got trichinosis.

The rabies control program was a cooperative program between preventive medicine and the veterinary service. We immunized all animals, and kept records of them, and licensed them.

The preventive medicine officer would assist us whenever we had a dog bite case. One case there, a sergeant and his wife had some dairy cows. They belonged to a church group, and they saved cream from their cows for about a week, and had strawberries and whipped cream at the church social, and the next day one of their dairy cows died. They went out there and found out that this cow had died of rabies, her milk and the cream contained the rabies virus. It was not pasturized. It was whipped and all these people ate it. As a PMO officer, I had to investigate each of the people who consumed it to determine whether there was any likelihood that they might have gotten rabies.

Well, we found that one elderly man had false teeth, and his teeth caused ulcers in his gums, and it was quite possible that the virus could have been introduced as he ate the whipped cream. So he had to take the rabies treatment.

A woman was suckling a child, and she had fed the child some of this whipped cream, and the child was cutting teeth. It had raw lesions on its lips, and it could possibly have contacted the virus. So out of about 70 people we interviewed there at that church gathering, I think there were five or six we had to give the rabies treatment to as an example of preventive medicine activities.

We had a school public health nurse who worked under us, and she taught various prenatal classes to expectant mothers. As preventive medicine officer, we got into emission of noxious fumes from the weapons reconditioning laboratories there on post, where the ordnance people used various acids to clean weapons and repaint automobiles, and trucks, and things.

Preventive medicine is just a tremendous field that involves many, many areas. We had problems with the trainees there suffering from heat exhaustion, so that was a problem that some years later, at the military academy in West Point, I got into even more deeply, but it was a problem there.

### **Colonel John T. B. Strode**

Colonel Strode was a very busy man, and he worked long hours, and I would go down and try to see him and I'd sit an hour or two waiting to see him. So finally he said "well, where do you go for lunch," and I told him I did not usually eat lunch. And he said "well, come by and see me during the lunch hour." He brown-bagged with a sandwich and a cold drink, and whenever I needed to see him about something, I would go in while he was eating his lunch and we'd discuss our business, and I'd go on my way.

We had a horticulturist from Hawaii, who had his master's degree in horticulture, and he was drafted in the Army, and they made him a 91 Tango, an animal specialist in the Veterinary Service. He was a tremendous help in our small animal clinic there.

He came to me one day and he said, "Sir, may I work on beautifying the area around our building?" I said, "Have at it." All of the women who owned animals thought he was the greatest thing in the world because he took such good care of the animals, and he obtained all sorts of support from the Post Engineer, through the Post Engineer's wife, for us.

One day he decided he would really fix up our area. We had a lot of Arizona ash trees around. I was gone for the day, and when I returned he had painted all these ash trees up five feet with whitewash. Well, they looked beautiful. It really made the area look pretty. We were sort of off on the edge of the post.

I got back late that afternoon. When I went in my office there was a note, report immediately to Colonel Strode. I went down to his office and walked in, and I could tell at a glance he was very upset. So I hit a brace in front of his

desk, saluted, and told him I was reporting as ordered. He reached up and got hold of his glasses and pulled them off of his head, and drew back and threw them at me. They whizzed by my ear and hit the door behind me and hit the floor. I knew I was in deep trouble, but I did not know what it was.

He said, "How in the world do you dare to paint your ash trees when you know there's a post regulation against that?" "Sir, I didn't know it." Someone had called him from post headquarters and jumped on him, so he was passing it on to me.

I learned afterwards that anytime he really wanted to make an impression on one of his recalcitrant doctors he'd pull off his glasses and then throw them. Well, they were shatterproof, but I didn't know that. He'd throw his glasses at whoever he was mad at. But that made quite an impression on me.

Q: Why didn't they want them painted?

A: Once you paint them, they look great for a month or so, and then the rain starts running down the trunk, and the sap flows down, the insects flow down and it starts looking black-streaked, and then you have to paint them again. It starts a never-ending cycle of having to paint them.

I didn't know that was what he was mad about, but while I was in my office, I was talking to this animal specialist who was a horticulturist, and he told me that he had painted them with whitewash, but he had put some insecticide in it to keep the Arizona Ash beetles from killing the trees. A lot of trees on post were dying from these borers. When I told Colonel Strode that I didn't know they were going to be painted, but that he had painted them to prevent the trees from dying of this borer, that mollified him a little bit, but not very much.

I think I've adequately described what preventive medicine officers do. They do many more things than that. While I was there, I was the veterinarian, and I had about 12 to 15 men under me in the veterinary service doing food inspection. We have enlisted men stationed in the commissary, for example, and in the food subsistence warehouse, and we have enlisted men who do food

inspection on receipt at the commissary whenever fresh fruit and vegetables are delivered or anything like that.

We are looking to make sure that the foods are good, and that they are of a dollar value and quality that we're paying for them. In our commissary we always had black bananas, and we went to the A&P stores in the little town off post, and they had beautiful yellow bananas, and it turned out that the produce supplier would go to the A&P store and pick up their black bananas and bring them to the military, and leave the fresh bananas there. So that's just an example of the type of things that you're looking for.

Q: You were at Fort Leonard Wood for three years?

A: Yes, approximately three years as well as I can remember, and it was an excellent tour. It was interesting because my next superior in the veterinary chain of command was in Chicago, Illinois, and I saw him once during the three years. He came down as the veterinary member of an IG inspection team and visited me, and that was the only time I saw him. And I only heard from him on matters of official business, and I guess that made an imprint on me.

I felt sort of like I was on Devil's Island as far as the rest of the veterinary service was concerned. I remember I went to one meeting of the American Veterinary Medical Association which was held in St. Louis, Missouri, and that was about the only time I was around other veterinarians. Once in a while one of my friends would stop by and visit on his change of station trips, but I was basically by myself, and that had mixed benefits. In some ways it was good, and in other ways I missed being able to talk over problems with other veterinarians.

But I had two good surgeons while I was there, and I had outstanding enlisted men working with me, and I had an outstanding civilian secretary who was invaluable to me, as were the secretaries in every office I had. Everywhere I served in the Army, the secretaries always were the backbone of the unit, and

without someone to do the reports, and write the letters, and take care of the correspondence, you'd be totally lost.

While I was in France I had an enlisted clerk typist with my unit, and after about a year he rotated, and the personnel people in France at that time were somewhat lax, and no replacement came. So we had a unit which was the same, as far as the army is concerned, as a company, and we had all the reports that a company has to submit, daily reports and monthly reports, and I had no one to do it. So at the end of every day I'd have to type up the reports, and then when I went on trips and came back, all the reports had backlogged.

So I did this for about four months, and finally I kept screaming through channels that I needed my clerk. And so on one of the daily reports, the final notice I put on it, I said "I'm a lieutenant, and for the last four months I had been performing my duties as well as the duties of a clerk typist, and this was the last morning report that I'm going to submit because I was unable to perform my assigned duties as the commander of this unit and also function as a clerk typist." So I didn't send any more reports.

After some weeks, I got a phone call from Orleans wanting to know what in the world was going on. So I explained it to him, and a few days later a clerk typist arrived. That's totally irrelevant, but one of the things that happened.

Q: Did you have any other problems with suppliers at Fort Leonard Wood other than the one you mentioned on bananas, which is a rather interesting one?

A: Continuing problems. That's what we were there for. We had continuing problems with meat deliveries, with milk deliveries, continuing problems with temperature. Perishable foods are supposed to arrive at not more than 40 degrees because harmful organisms reproduce above 40 degrees and do not below 40 degrees, so you keep meats, dairy products, eggs, and other perishables below 40 degrees and they stay healthy. We had constant temperature problems. I can't remember specific problems that we had now, but I do know that we had them because everywhere we are we have

continuing problems with the food; more so overseas than here in the United States, but they exist everywhere.

Sanitation of plants—we would go out and find plants in the area, dairies or meat plants, that were totally unsanitary, and many of them were under the state inspection program. We would coordinate with the state inspectors, and frequently there at Fort Leonard Wood and elsewhere you find that the state inspectors are hamstrung by politics. That plant is owned by a son-in-law of a state senator, and you don't disapprove that plant because that state senator controls the salary of various people.

We had those type problems, and we had political problems. Quite often we would disapprove a plant that was approved by the state, and then we had to explain why, and it explodes. I've dealt with many senators on those very issues because the senator would pick up the phone and call and want to know why are you disapproving my plant. Well, isn't there something we can do to resolve this problem? And it's a never-ending problem. It will always exist, and it's just another reason for having a veterinary service.

**Veterinary Officer, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, 1962 to 1964**

Q: Then you left Fort Leonard Wood and went to West Point?

A: Yes. I arrived there and the veterinary service there was not providing any animal service to the privately owned animals on the base. The veterinary service had no equipment to provide such service. I was told on arrival that one thing that was expected of me was that I would provide the service.

My household goods arrived some time later, and a few days after I arrived, while my household goods were being unloaded, a car pulled up in front of my house and a nice lady got out and asked me if I was the new veterinarian. I told her I was and she said, "Well, I have a problem." They had a beautiful cat that they loved very much and it had gone to sleep on top of the block of the motor of their car, and when her husband started the car, the fan had cut the cat's

lower mandible in half, and the two halves of the mandible were out at 90 degree angles from the head, and the mouth was gaping open and bloody. She had the cat in a box in a blanket, and she handed me the cat and said, “I want you to take care of my cat,” and she got in her car and drove off.

I went down to my office, and we had nothing. I went up to the hospital pharmacy and talked to the pharmacist. He was next door to medical supply, and I tried to find what I needed. I wanted some fine wire suture material, and they had nothing—no wire.

Well, I finally found a curved needle and a needle holder, and I finally found some material that I could use for suturing, and went back and wired the lower mandibles together and sutured the skin and treated the cat. Cats are lovely animals. They respond very quickly, and they will either die or get well in a hurry. A dog will linger on and give you trouble for months, but cats heal quickly.

About a week later she brought the cat back and I removed the stitches, and you couldn’t even tell it had ever had an injury. It happened that she was the president of the Officer’s Wives Club.

When I started trying to obtain equipment for the veterinary clinic, all the doors were open, thanks to the Officer’s Wives Club. And we equipped a clinic and started providing regular veterinary small animal clinic services on a limited scale, but still much better than they had before. So everyone was happy with that.

#### **Four United States Army Mules**

Our office and clinic was in what had been a cavalry stable building there at West Point. It had a full basement and a first floor full of stalls, and a full second floor that was the hayloft upstairs, and some supply rooms. And we had four U.S. Army official U.S. government property mascot mules in those stalls. In the wintertime they stayed in the stalls because the exercise corral

outside was full of snow and mud. They had a miserable existence. Part of our job was to care for the animals, and clean out their stalls every day, and take care of the health of the animals, and exercise them and feed them, and maintain their health. But they were just vegetating there.

We contacted a number of horse tack companies on the East Coast, in Kentucky, and Iowa, and Ohio, and a number of other places, and finally one of them agreed that they would make for us a complete set of tack if we would give them recognition that they have donated to the academy. We ended up with a magnificent set—four sets of tack. We measured these animals and sent them the measurements, and they came back with bridles, and with fetlock straps, all brass studded, tooled, black leather. They made surcingle straps to go around the horses with grips on each side so that the cadet mule riders could ride these mules and hold onto them and perform stunts.

My 1st sergeant talked the cadet uniform shop into making us some ornate satin blankets to cover these mules. They were about three feet by four feet, and they fit over these straps, and these iron handles came through slots in the blanket, and they had West Point colors—black, gold, and gray—and they were beautiful.

At one of the football games we had these mules make their debut wearing this beautiful new equipment and it was so pretty that the superintendent, who at that time was General William C. Westmoreland, really liked that, and he directed that these mules would attend every football game after that.

Then we had to get trailers to haul them in, and a railroad car that was specially fitted with removable stalls, and what had started out with the intention of just having them perform at the Army-Navy game on the academy field ended up they performed at every football game West Point played, and you'll see them on television today.

The cadets then implemented what they call the mule riders, which are an offshoot of a yell leader, and this is an elected position in the Corps of Cadets,



and four to eight of the cadets are elected to be mule riders. They perform equestrian acrobatics on the mules at the football games and other sporting events and ceremonies.

The mule riders would come down to our stable as frequently as they could get away from their barracks duties, and ride the mules, and practice their acrobatics. The academy started having them attend not only football games, but other athletic events, and they started going to all the football games away from the academy. The veterinarian would often be designated as the convoy commander.

For example, we went to the University of Pennsylvania, and we left West Point with a convoy. This convoy had trucks carrying the band equipment, carrying all the guidons for the Corps cadets, carrying the cannon, carrying a Model T touring car that they use, carrying a replica of the Liberty Bell, and carrying our mules. We got a separate foot locker for each mule with his personal tack in it, and we had all that. We had their feed buckets, the ropes, everything we needed to take care of these mules away from home, and we set out in convoy.

We got down in Pennsylvania near a town called Schartlesville, which has a Pennsylvania Amish Dutch restaurant that has 50 different kinds of food on the buffet. We had been traveling all day and it was getting dark, and we were all about at the end of our rope. We enjoyed a dinner and had a good laugh when the owner thanked us for our business, but said if we were regular customers we would eat him into bankruptcy! We decided we would spend the night, so we stopped and asked which farmer around there had some corrals and barns where we could put our mules overnight, and they told us. We went out in the country and knocked on this farmer's door. We told him what we wanted, and he opened his arms to us. We put our mules in the barn in stalls that night. He took us up to his house, and his wife cooked breakfast for all of us.

The next morning, way before daylight, we all got up and started to load the mules. We had a man leading each mule, and we started out of the barn to load

them into the truck. One of the mules wiped his handler off on the barn door, and took off running. Well, this farmer had an open field between his home and the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and there were 18-wheelers going up and down that turnpike in both directions almost bumper to bumper. They traveled during the night. There was a tremendous number of them, and this mule headed right for the turnpike.

Sergeant Everett Horne and I took off on foot after the mule. He went one way and I went around the other, and we tried to get ahead of it. He had the foresight to pick up a big flashlight, and when we got near the mule he put the flashlight in its eyes, and it stopped dead because it couldn't see where it was going. We ran up and got the halter. We could both see the headlines—U.S. Army mule involved in five 18-wheeler crash on Pennsylvania Turnpike.

We got back and got on our way. We took them to Chicago, they performed in Soldier's Field. We took them to Philadelphia, they performed at the Army-Navy games. We took them to JFK Stadium in Washington, D.C. It had just opened, and was just months old, and we took them there by train. Then we unloaded them into some trucks and trucked them over near the stadium. We finally found a warehouse building that had a loading dock with an incline ramp on one end.

We off-loaded them onto the ramp, led them onto the loading dock, and then led them down and off the ramp. We led them about three blocks to the stadium, and they performed. During the last quarter, we decided that to beat the rush of traffic, we had better leave. At the start of the last quarter, we started to leave, and Sergeant Everett Horne said—he had told me this earlier during the game—"Instead of leading them all the way back and taking all that time, I'll have the trucks come over here." There was a very steep incline at the back of the stadium, and he said, "We can just lower the tailgate and it will make a level ramp and we can lead them down that hill right into the trucks, and we'll save a lot of time." It sounded great, so I said, "Let's do it."

He had the trucks come over, and they backed up to this hill, beautiful green grass hill. We led the mules around to the top of it and back and forth a few times. We started down the hill and everything went fine until they got about a fourth of the way down the hill. The mules set their feet, and the whole hillside came down. It had about 4 x 6-foot pieces of sod pegged down with little wooden pegs, and they had wet the whole hillside and then put down all this grass. They pegged it down and then wet it again. So these squares of sod were setting on top of a muddy hillside, and when the mules set their feet, all these squares of sod stacked up like a deck of cards and went right into the back of our truck. And there were these mules, and there we were. I said, "Sergeant Horne, take care of this," and I left.

About that time, a unit of the cadets came by. Sergeant Horne went up to the commander and took over the unit, and had these cadets go over there. About four or five of them would grab one of these pieces of sod, and they would slide it back up the hill. We told the truck driver to go on back to the warehouse, and the mule handlers led the mules back to the warehouse, and these cadets re-sodded the hillside, and we left there.

The Military Academy was an interesting assignment. Taking care of the mules in itself was an interesting assignment, and getting into not only taking care of them, but having to escort them to all events. The superintendent required that the veterinarian go on all these field trips with them, so there we were. It was interesting.

We refurbished our barn, and built a beautiful tack room up in one of the supply rooms upstairs. It had separate racks for each mule's tack, and it was really an ornate area. When we finished all this, one of the colonels had toured it, and evidently passed on the word to General Westmoreland, because one day the General's aide called and said they would be there in 10 minutes. He and the General came down and they went over our whole building. They liked what they saw. It was kind of impressive, because the changes that we made were pretty good.

West Point was a wonderful assignment for me. I enjoyed every day of it. I had really some fine people there. I was lucky enough to escape the major disasters that happened while I was there. One of the army mules died, and that could have been a career-ending incident, but it turned out all right.

### **Preventive Medicine Officer, West Point, New York**

The surgeon there at West Point, after I had been there not too long, called me in and told me that he had reviewed my record. I had been the acting PMO at Fort Leonard Wood, and he wanted me to take over the same function there at the academy. From that day forward I did, and had civilian preventive medicine technicians working for me, and the public health nurse worked for me. The public health program, the preventive medicine program there, was an extremely interesting one. We initiated a fluoridation program for the water there. They didn't have it, and in discussing it with the surgeon, he decided he wanted to go along with initiating one, so we did.

### **Heat Injuries**

The PM program there had all the functions that we had at Fort Leonard Wood, plus a few more. I had mentioned that at Fort Leonard Wood we had heat problems in the summer, and that continued to be a problem at West Point.

The cadets reported the summer before their plebe year for summer training, and of course, it's hot and humid, and they were in poor physical condition. The trainers at West Point had what I call the Foreign Legion mentality. They believed in working them hard and not letting them have any water, that that would toughen them up and make men out of them. Each summer they had a great many physical problems due to heat injuries—heat strokes, heat exposure, heat exhaustion—and every time that happened to a cadet, he was in the hospital and lost training. Through our preventive medicine channels, we learned that the Army had been experimenting with what was called the wet bulb globe temperature device, which correlated the temperature with the

relative humidity. You had two temperature readings; one was taken from a bare thermometer, and the other was taken from a thermometer inside a black globe, which was a copper toilet tank ball painted flat black. You put it out in the sun and you had a thermometer in it, and you got a temperature from the inside of that black copper ball.

Then you had another thermometer that was wrapped in a wick, and the end of the wick was in water, so the water came up and surrounded the thermometer, and you got a wet bulb temperature reading off of that. And you correlated the two temperatures, and they had devised a chart, and it said that when the wet bulb globe temperature index reading was at a certain point, you should restrict military training. When it reached another temperature, you restricted training, and you moved under shade trees, and you opened your shirt. And when it reached another temperature, you ceased training altogether.

So we presented this proposal to the surgeon, who presented it to the commandant, who didn't want anything to do with it because it would restrict his training. But they did implement it on a trial basis that summer. The previous summer they had dozens of heat injuries. That summer we had zero. The surgeon was number one with the superintendent after that, so that worked out well.

### **The Hotel Thayer**

We had a tremendous number of food establishments on the academy and off the academy that we procured from. The Hotel Thayer is located just off the academy. Many important visitors to the academy stay there. The superintendent has a superintendent's fund that is his personal slush fund that he can spend in any way that he sees fit to benefit the academy or any of the cadets. People donate to this fund, and it's a considerable amount of money. Each year he has a superintendent's fund banquet and invites all the donors, and they come from all over the United States to this banquet. He has a briefing, and tells them the status of the academy, and it's a very nice social affair.

Well, they had it at the Hotel Thayer that year, and I had gone back to France on leave, and took my wife and two sons with me to see her parents. While I was gone, they had this banquet at the Hotel Thayer, and after the banquet, 10 or 11 o'clock, everybody dispersed. Some stayed at the Thayer, some went to New York City, some went to New York and got on trains, some got on airplanes, some drove away in automobiles, and within a few hours people were falling ill all over the United States—in the air, on trains, in vehicles, in hotels. They had acute food poisoning from eating this meal at the Hotel Thayer. I was the preventive medicine officer, but fortunately, I was in Europe at the time. One of the cooks was found to have had some cuts on his fingers, and he had wrapped a gauze bandage around it, and processed the turkey, and processed the turkey dressing, and from the cut on his finger he had inoculated all this meat and dressing, and all these people ate it and it just made them all ill. Fortunately, no one died, but some of the elderly people came very near it. I was able to come back and shake my head and say well, if I had only been here, something like this would have never happened, jokingly, of course.

### **The Cadet Mess**

You were interested in food inspection problems. One of the activities that we inspected there was at the cadet mess. It prepares three meals a day for the 4,000 cadets and some of the other people there at the academy who eat there. We ran into some interesting things there.

They are allowed so much money per day per cadet for the ration, and the cadet mess officer, if he is astute, can save a little bit of that money every day. About once a month he has saved enough to where he gives the cadets a banquet meal, and one of their favorites was sole, the fish. Sole was about \$10.00 a pound, and flounder was \$1.50 a pound. Well, once a month all 4,000 cadets would eat probably a pound of sole each at the banquet. One of my good inspectors had previously been assigned up in the fish markets in the

Boston area and he knew a lot about fish. He came to me one day and he said, "Sir, basically I have my suspicions."

We got samples of the sole and sent it off for laboratory testing and determined that it was flounder. They had been paying \$10.00 a pound for sole, and getting \$1.50 a pound flounder, and there was quite a financial disparity between those two figures, so we brought this to the attention of the powers-that-be and this practice was stopped immediately.

Later on we found out that all the cadets were drinking Golden Guernsey milk from a certain dairy, because everyone knows Golden Guernsey milk is rich milk, and it's healthy for these cadets. Well, by law all whole milk is stabilized at 3.25 percent butterfat. It doesn't matter whether it comes from a Jersey, or a Golden Guernsey, or what it is, the butterfat level is stabilized. So to pay a premium price for Golden Guernsey milk as compared to Holstein milk, when they're both the same, doesn't make economic sense. So we called that to the powers-that-be, and that practice was stopped.

Q: Do you delete these people from your list of qualified sources, or do you just rap their knuckles and keep going?

A: You keep going. We open the bid. Instead of the bid being restricted to the one location, instead of the academy buying all of its milk from one dairy, they then put the invitations to bid out on a competitive bid basis, and all the dairies in the area got to bid on the contract, and they immediately realized a tremendous savings in the money they were paying out for milk, just as with the sole.

We found out that the cadet mess was paying a pig farmer so much per pound—I think it was five cents a pound—to come and pick up the edible garbage from the cadet mess. They were paying him. Why is this going on? Well, the reason given was that he was the only one who would do it, and they had to pay him to do it. He was taking the edible garbage out, and had a tremendous pig-feeding operation. And again, when we went out and inspected

it, it was not being operated properly. He wasn't cooking the garbage properly, and had no sanitation for these pigs. So we found the names of a number of pig farmers in the area who would bid on that contract, and were eager to bid on it, but had been restricted from bidding on it. They all started bidding, and where they were paying five cents a pound to get it hauled away, suddenly the hauling away was free, and they were being paid something like 10 or 15 cents a pound to obtain it, and then they would haul it away. Well, that immediately resulted in a tremendous influx of money.

These are just a few little incidents that I remember involving food inspection from the academy. But we inspected in a large area surrounding the academy. We inspected poultry plants, dairies, meat slaughtering plants, bakeries, and many others.

They had a little bakery in downtown Highland Falls right outside the academy. They got the cadet list from the academy, and they sent letters to every mother of every cadet. They said next Tuesday is your son's birthday, here is our brochure of the cakes that we will bake and deliver to your son's room at 10:00 P.M. on the night of his birthday. He can have all of his company mates in for a piece of birthday cake. They had a tremendous business, and they were delivering cakes to the academy, and we went down to this bakery and it was pathetic. We could not get them to do everything that needed to be done immediately. It was too expensive, and they were in too closely with the high officials on the academy, so we could not close them. So over a period of months, incrementally we finally got them into a proper sanitary condition where they could make these cakes without running any risk of making cadets sick. It was an interesting experience. This bakery had been doing this for years uninspected.

Part of the preventive medicine work involves swimming pool sanitation; the sanitation of the wrestling equipment, the wrestling mats. Some of the cadets were getting boils from infections that were on the wrestling mat. Just the tremendous number of activities that you get into, you have no idea how complex it is until you start doing it, and every day a new problem would arise.



When they had an event—a football game or an athletic event—there were vendors who would come on base and want to sell hot dogs from their little vending cart. Well, we had to inspect all of those and make sure that the hot dogs came from an approved establishment, and that they were handling them properly before they sold them. You don't want a crowd of people to eat hot dogs at an academy sporting event, and then all get sick.

### **Sheila McDonough in the Rooms at West Point**

Q: When you finished the two-year tour at the Military Academy, I see you went to Command & General Staff College. Had you asked for that, or did you think you were going to go?

A: No, I had not asked for it, and I was dumbfounded when I got orders. Before I leave the academy, a couple of other extraneous amusing incidents. In the cadet barracks, they have Army tactical officers in charge of each barracks, and they inspect the barracks. Along with a cadet officer, the tactical officer would conduct inspections. They began to get reports that some of the cadets in a certain building had a female in their building and they were passing this female around, so they started inspecting the rooms. This went on, and the whole cadet corps was laughing about this, and they couldn't find this female.

One day I was in my office and one of the mule riders came in. He said, "Sir, representing the mule riders, we would like to ask a favor." I said, "Sure, what is it?" He said, "Could we leave a pet with you for a while?" I said, "I guess so. What is it?" He said, "Well, it's an iguana," and I said "yes."

They came down with this iguana that was six feet long, a green iguana. Her name was Sheila McDonough, and the tactical officers had gone so far as to identify this female that was in the building, and they knew her name, and they knew that she was the girlfriend of one of the cadets. What they didn't know was that the cadet had named his iguana after his girlfriend, and this female had been in that building for many, many weeks. They had green curtains on their windows, and every day they would hang Sheila in a fold behind the

curtain, and she hung vertically, and she'd stay there all day. When they'd come and have inspections, they'd open the curtains and look. They never found her, and so the cadets got a tremendous kick out of that. We kept Sheila in a big cage there in our office for the rest of the year. Then when the year was over, the cadet took her home with him. That was humorous.

### **Tulip Beds**

At the same time, we had a surgeon who had been the SHAPE surgeon in Belgium, and his wife and he lived there on the academy. While in Belgium, they had become avid collectors of tulips, and when they left to come back to the states, they brought with them hundreds of tulip bulbs. The horticulturists had drawn blueprints of how to set out the beds, and each bulb was numbered, and you followed the blueprint in setting it out. Then when they bloomed, you had these colors that would make up crests and different things, beautiful integrated colors, heights and colors, and some had smooth blossoms and others had frizzled blossoms, and they were just beautiful.

At their quarters they set out all these tulip beds. Their tulips started growing, and he called me one day and he said, "This is a little outside of our area, I know, but I've got a problem. My tulips are dying." Well, I had a civilian friend with the Post Engineer who handled horticulture matters on the post, and he and I went over there to look at the tulips. Before we got out of the car, he said, "There's the problem." There was a great big boxer dog walking by the tulip bed, and as he walked by, he lifted his leg, and several dead tulips resulted from that.

Well, the boxer belonged to the chief of staff, and they had a rule that no dogs would be permitted at large there on the academy. But several times, when the cadets were having a review there on the plain, this boxer would get out. He'd run up and down in front of the companies, and the chief of staff thought this was the greatest thing that ever happened. Well, there was his boxer. So I caught the dog and went to see the chief of staff. I said, "Sir, my career is in

jeopardy. You've got to keep this dog tied up or in your yard at home. If any more of those tulips die, I'm out of here."

So sure enough a couple of days later the dog got out again; the surgeon called me—his wife would call him and he would call me. That was the great tulip fiasco. But we tried all sorts of scents. We tried screening them. He just jumped over, you know, building a little screen. Well, that obscured the view of the tulip bed, so that didn't work. We tried copper screen wire and hooking an electric cord to it and plugging it into the house. Nothing worked. We wracked our brains, but we never did come up with a good way to control the problem. So we started going by every day to check and make sure the dog was fastened in properly. That's enough of that. Go ahead.

#### **Command & General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1964 to 1965**

Q: Okay, Command and General Staff College.

A: Command and General Staff College. I went there. I attended Command and General Staff College, met a tremendous number of good fellow officers, enjoyed it very much, spent 10 months there in the school. I was "lucky" in that that was the first 10 month course. It had been shorter before that, and they lengthened it. I met a lot of officers that I continued to meet thereafter throughout my career, and I guess to me as a veterinarian that was probably the greatest benefit from it. We studied infantry tactics, and armor tactics, and everything else. Two of my classmates had been instructors at the Armor School for four years, and we had one of our tests on "The Armored Division in the Attack in China." They both flunked the test, and I did extremely well on it, and I had a lot of fun teasing them about it after that. All I knew was by rote what they taught us there, and these men were encumbered by their knowledge and experience. So they tried to interpret more into it than the school intended. But I had a lot of fun out of it. That stands out in my mind.

Q: Were you the only Medical Corps officer there?

A: No, I was the only veterinarian there. There were some Medical Service Corps officers there, and there was a Dental Corps officer there, a few of us. I think the total number of AMEDD people, there may have been about five of us. I think there were two or three MSC officers there, and we sort of followed each other after that in our career with assignments. Some of us ended up in the Surgeon General's office later on.

I can't tell you a whole lot about the Command and General Staff College. So much of it was material that really was not relevant to a Veterinary Corps officer, except in the larger meaning of military service it helps you to know what other people are doing. You can do your job better and support them better if you know what they're doing, and from that viewpoint it was very beneficial.

I'm a firm believer in continuing this cross-training experience and we have continued sending Veterinary Corps officers there until this day. It's a great thing.

Q: But you get a chance to let them know what you do, too.

A: Exactly. And that's important; and there is a payoff there because during the time there, you pretty well know a lot about what everyone else does, and they know what you do in the Army.

Q: Do they ever come up to you and say gee, I never knew you did so much?

A: Yes. They did that, and initially some of them came up and said well, what in the world is a vet doing here? We don't have any more horses or mules, which is our perennial question that we're always asked. And by the way, that's a problem to this day in Washington with the Congress. You get a new representative every two years, a new senator every six years, and when they arrive there, immediately they get on a committee concerning the military and they say, well, we're trying to save money. Why do we have a Veterinary Corps? There's no more horses or mules, and they think they've just

discovered the electric light. Then they initiate a study on veterinary service. And this went on ad nauseam for years until about 1967 when we finally began to put a stop to it. You mentioned that to me earlier, and we'll get into that deeper later on.

### **Combat Development Command, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, 1965 to 1967**

Q: From the Command & General Staff College you went to Fort Sam Houston?

A: Yes, to the Combat Development Command, the Medical Service Agency of the Combat Developments Command. The officer I followed there had been in the assignment for five years. When I got there, I looked forward to a long, interesting assignment. I got on the housing list there at Fort Sam, and they told me that it would be up to a year before I could get quarters on post. I was living in an apartment, and I began to look for a house to buy. After I had been here five or six months, I guess, the engineers gave me a very dark prediction as to when I would get housing. I ended up buying a house here in San Antonio and closed on it on a Friday, and the next Monday the engineers called me and told me I could have my pick of three houses that had been on engineer hold for complete renovation, maintenance, and painting, and I could have my pick of the three. I had just closed on a house, so I had to decline, otherwise I would have had the opportunity to live in one of these nice houses along the row here at Fort Sam Houston.

I was assigned to the Combat Development Command Medical Service Agency, the second veterinarian who had been assigned there.

Q: What did that involve?

A: That involved the development of TO&Es (Tables of Organization and Equipment), which are documentation of the Army Medical Department and the Veterinary Corps. So we completely reorganized the TO&E of the army veterinary service units. We had a veterinary command and control unit, a team AF. We had a veterinary small animal hospital. We had a veterinary large

animal hospital, and we had a veterinary food inspection detachment small, and a veterinary food inspection detachment large, and each of these units had their sets and kits that went along with the personnel organization tables. So we redid all of the organization tables which authorizes the manpower in these units. We did away with some units, we developed some new units, we changed the unit personnel organization structure, and then we addressed each set and kit of equipment and obtained the sets and kits, laid them out item by item, evaluated each piece in each set and kit, and determined which were obsolete, which needed to be replaced, and came up with new listings. All these things led to new sets and kits, and new TO&Es which were finally approved.

Q: Were you able to benefit from the Vietnam experience at this point? It's early in the war at this time.

A: Yes, we were getting reports back from units staging to deploy to Vietnam and other units already in Vietnam.

Q: You were getting reports back, then?

A: Yes, we were getting reports back that we need such and such and we don't have it. And so we began to identify what we needed, and in revising the TO&Es, we also addressed other medical TO&Es such as the MEDCOM TO&E, and went into the organization and the staffing, the veterinary service manpower staffing of the MEDCOM itself.

It was interesting there that at the MEDCOM we had very minimal veterinary staffing at that time. So when we ended up with our revision, we ended up with a full time colonel as the peacetime MEDCOM veterinarian. Then in the event of an all out mobilization, we would have a brigadier general as a MEDCOM veterinarian, for example, MEDCOM Europe, in the event of a war in an expansion of the armed forces.

We fought particularly hard to get an E-9 senior veterinary enlisted man on the staff of that MEDCOM. The dentist wanted one and I wanted one for the veterinary unit. We were ultimately successful in that, and many years later when I was in Germany, they didn't have a MEDCOM in Europe, but they said they would reorganize and have a MEDCOM. They set it up, and lo and behold, we had that E-9, and everyone was amazed that we got an E-9 on our staff there. But that was a result of that medical service agency action that we had taken many years before. Sometimes you get to reap the benefits of your labor.

We identified a number of items of equipment that we needed. So I worked on those veterinary problems, and then all of us who were there—medical, dental, MSC, nurses— in this medical service agency—our commander would also give us other functions to do, other tasks in addition to our own. So we stayed very busy. I was really digging in and beginning to feel like I knew a little bit about the job, and I thought I'd be here four or five years like my predecessor. Of course, my home is in Uvalde, 80 miles west of here, so I was kind of enjoying being home where I had a chance to see my parents once in a while. And lo and behold, one day I got orders to move, much to my surprise, after I had been there less than two years.

### **Office of the Surgeon General, Washington, DC, 1967 to 1971**

Q: Where were you assigned then?

A: Well, I was assigned to the Office of the Surgeon General. We loaded up everything we had and went to Washington.

Q: Did you sell your house or did you rent it?

A: I rented it and kept it many years, and had many friends who had rental property and had beautiful experiences, and I had nightmares. But eventually in the long run, I was able to sell the house and make a little bit of money on it, but I sure had a lot of problems with it.

Q: So you went to D.C. then, packed it in, put it in a trailer?

A: Went to D.C. Arrived there, a country boy in the big city, and that was quite an awakening. Our general then was General George Kuhn, and he was a wonderful general. He was a dead ringer for George Patton. In fact, they had been at Fort Knox together in the horse cavalry, and he was the Fort Knox base veterinarian when George Patton was there, and George Patton invented his famous saber there at Fort Knox. They were very close friends.

Soon after I received my orders to report to OTSG, I received a phone call from Col. Martin Oster, the man I was to replace. He spent a lot of time briefing me on the job, the office, and on Washington. He gave me a seemingly endless list of people and activities I would be in contact with. I was greatly impressed by his knowledge and his call made me very apprehensive. I did not think I could ever have his phenomenal memory. It was months later I realized he had been reading names off his Rolodex and his phone roster, then I felt a little better. I overlapped with Colonel Oster for about a week and he was a great help and went out of his way to orient me.

Colonels Lorenz L. Beuschel, Hayward G. Brown, John Powell, and Tom McChesney were in the Office of the Chief of the Veterinary Corps in OTSG. All of them were extremely capable and experienced. Colonel Beuschel was particularly kind and helpful to me and perhaps more than the others, served as my mentor. I could discuss assigned actions with him and he would review my draft papers and always had constructive comments. After some months, Col. (later BG) Wilson M. Osteen replaced Colonel Powell as Deputy Corps Chief, and Col. Wallace L. Anthony replaced Col. Tom McChesney. Col. Mylo Hagberg came in later during that tour and became a lifelong friend and advisor.

General Kuhn was on terminal retirement leave, and I don't know how long that was—30, 60, 90 days. At the end of that leave, he was going to retire when General Russell McNellis, who was then the Chief of the Veterinary



Corps, retired. So when General McNellis retired, General George A. Kuhn—his name, his file—was submitted to a general officer selection board to select a new chief since technically he had not retired yet. He was selected to be the next chief, and came to Washington and took over. This was while I was here in San Antonio at the Medical Service Agency.

### **Reorganizing the TO&Es**

Later on we had a meeting somewhere, and I was told to give a briefing on the veterinary activities at the Medical Service Agency, which I did, and you asked if we had any indication of the need for new items of equipment which had developed out of Vietnam. We did, and when I presented this briefing, I talked about redoing the TO&Es, and the sets and kits, and the other things—the functions of the medical service agency, overall functions and all that—gave the agency briefing, and then talked about the veterinary portion of the agency's activities, and in that mentioned that there was a need for some new items that we didn't have.

When I arrived in Washington, I hadn't been there very long and General Kuhn called me in and told me that he wanted to have a veterinary R&D effort to develop these new items that we needed, and to determine whether there were any other items that we needed that we didn't have. So at the next meeting of Veterinary Corps officers here in the United States, which occurred soon thereafter, this was brought up and discussed at length, and working committees came up with a tentative list of things that the veterinary service needed in order to do its job better. Some of these were regulation changes, some of them were TO&E changes that they were discussing. Some of them were new items of equipment that were needed in these TO&E sets and kits. Some of them were things that were needed by CONUS veterinary units in doing their functions.

We initially identified about 100 items—I don't remember the exact number, but approximately 100 items that it was believed by individuals were needed. Then we started working to refine that list. We finally reduced it to 25 items

that we felt we really wanted to spend time and effort on, and we started out to get civilian industries interested in developing these items for us. We had the military medical R&D working on developing them also.

### **Portable Jet Injector**

At that time the nuclear-chemical-biological threat from Russia was uppermost in our minds. In addition to the threat against human beings, we were gravely concerned about the biological disease threat against all of the livestock in the United States and our allies. Anthrax, brucellosis, and other zoonotic disease could be used by the Russians to attack and decimate our livestock and thereby reduce our food supply.

We identified the requirement for a portable, self-powered, rapid jet injector (using a high pressure jet in place of a needle) for the rapid, mass immunization of cattle, swine, sheep, goats, and horses. Army R&D had developed an electric powered jet injector for use on troops and in the Preventive Medicine Officer role we had field tested it at Fort Leonard Wood in 1959 or 1960.

Over a period of several years we did successfully develop a light-weight, portable backpack, jet injector. It had a lever projecting forward under ones left arm that was pumped normally (or by foot power in a fixed location) to reach the required pressure. It was successfully field-tested in Mexico by Col. Stuart J. McConnell during an outbreak of Venezuelan Equine Encephalomyelitis and was later used on a similar outbreak in the United States. At the same time, an electrically driven jet injector was developed for mass immunization of livestock. The major difficulty with the development of both injectors was the variation in thickness of the skins of domestic animals. This required different sizes (diameter) of the jet orifice which was drilled through sapphire jewels to prevent erosion and a resulting change in the dose administered.

### **Program to Obtain an Improved Military Working Dog**

As the Vietnam War progressed, it became evident that no mechanical device or electronic gadget could meet the enemy troops, or to trail and locate enemy troops or locate mines or tunnels or hidden bunkers as well or as consistently as a dog. They also served as guard dogs, sentry dogs, and as scout dogs leading infantry units into combat.

We initiated a program—the Veterinary Corps—with Col. Bud Castleberry, VC, as the project officer. The program was located at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Bud first evaluated all breeds of dogs to select one or more breeds which met a maximum number of our criteria. He then selected a number of male and female dogs and began breeding and developing the necessary training techniques. He selected the German Shepherd breed. In a few years he had developed the training method and was producing trained dogs that were sent to Vietnam and were very successfully field tested. In a few more years this program would have provided a source for a stronger, more intelligent, more trainable military working dog for the Army to meet its requirements. The end of the war in Vietnam was the end of this program. Brig. Gen. Wilson M. Osteen was Chief of the Veterinary Corps at that time, following Brig. Gen. George Kuhn. I served under both of them as the project officer for these various research and development items.

### **Retrievable Dog Shipping Containers**

We have a medical equipment agency at Fort Detrick that develops the equipment for the military. We put the requirement on them. During my first tour there, one of the things I worked on quite a bit was this R&D of new equipment. I can't remember what all those items were, but you asked about Vietnam. One of the things that we identified that we needed when they shipped military working dogs to Vietnam—and many hundreds were shipped over there—were better dog shipping containers. Well, all we had was a commercial dog shipping container, and they were expensive; they didn't

meet the requirement, and when they got over there they were thrown away. We never got them back, so it was lost money.

Why worry about a dog cage when you're dropping million dollar bombs. But anyhow, it was our concern. So we started out to develop a collapsible, nesting, lightweight, military dog-shipping container that could be used on arrival as a doghouse. One of the objectives was that five of them would collapse, nest, stack, and lock in place, and occupy the same space as one container fully expanded. We developed that successfully, and in the latter years of Vietnam it was used.

They had shipped over hundreds of these dog containers, and they were just abandoned at the air bases over there. Then we started getting them to collapse them, and return them to CONUS and use them again. They had water pans in them, they had feed trays, barred windows, ventilation holes, and the whole thing collapsed. They were made out of aluminum. I was the R&D project officer for the development of these veterinary service items and it was a good experience.

### **Recording Thermometers**

We needed a recording thermometer because they were shipping perishable foods from California to Vietnam on ships, and they were on board the ship for 20 days or more. We had no way of knowing what the temperature fluctuation en route was, and that is essential information. So we developed a recording dial thermometer that we could put in the shipping containers, and then at the other end, we retrieved the container and it had a round chart on it that had the temperature—the hourly temperature recorded on it for the whole trip.

We needed an instant reading thermometer. None existed. We didn't want to have to stick a thermometer into a piece of meat and have to stand there for a minute or more and wait for it. So we wrote up the requirement, and then farmed it out into industry in America. Today your child will have a little

thermometer, and they'll stick it in their ear and it reads instantly. I may be kidding myself, but I think that our initiative at that time started a lot of these development actions. The civilian industry had not had the requirement laid on them before, and they didn't know that there was a need, or that they could profitably manufacture them. So we now have an instant recording thermometer which is very good.

There were a great many other things. Offhand I can't remember them—one was a folding device—when you get in a frozen boxful of chickens, for example, to inspect, you take the lid off the box and there's a layer of chickens there. Well, what you can see looks all right, but you need to see the bottom chicken. And if you take them out of that box, you can never get the same number of chickens back in the box, so it's a problem.

We developed a rack that had flat metal fingers, and you open the box, and these fingers went down on each side and in the end, and it had a slatted top on it. Then you turn the box upside down and you remove the cardboard bottom box, and there you had the bottom chickens exposed, and you could look through the slots all the way around it and see all the side chickens. That way you could inspect the whole box, and then when you're through, you slipped the box back over it and turned it over and put the lid back on it. It worked well.

A lot of these were just tools that a veterinary food inspector needed in a packing plant, for example. You mentioned that some of the NCOs indicated that they were often assigned isolated duty in high expense areas, and I hope I remember to touch on that later on when we get into studies.

Whenever we would see General Kuhn, he would walk up and say, for example, "I was just out to veterinary school in Chicago and they are not teaching anything about poisonous snakes. Have them put in 30 minutes or an hour on poisonous snakes of the world."

## **Reorganization of the Veterinary School**

I became his liaison between his office and the veterinary school, and I would fly out there sometimes several times a month and talk with the commandant of the school and his staff about training. The school was undergoing a reorganization at that time. This reorganization, eventually several years later, led to the relocation of the veterinary school to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where it is today. It has now been integrated into the Academy of Health Sciences.

Q: Where was it in the Chicago area?

A: It was on Pershing Road out in the stockyard area in South Chicago in a huge warehouse building. It occupied a floor of that warehouse building.

Another activity, while I was in this professional programming and planning branch, became very significant in later years. Up until that time, the Veterinary Corps had been able to send very few officers for graduate training. One or two had gone for training in food hygiene, and a few had gone for training in radiology. But we had very few Veterinary Corps officers who had been able to obtain graduate training. It became evident that this graduate training was based upon the number of validated positions which your branch of the army had; in other words, the number of positions you had which required graduate training for the officer to function in that position. And there was a very detailed and lengthy annual validation process. For each position that you identified as requiring graduate training in a specialty field, you had to document why the army had to send a Veterinary Corps officer to graduate school to obtain a master's or a Ph.D. in that specialty field.

## **Validating Positions for Graduate Training of Veterinary Officers**

During those four years, we undertook to validate more positions for graduate training and were successful in doing this, so that we went from having at any one time one or two officers in graduate school to where we would have

perhaps 50 or 75 veterinary officers attending graduate school in various specialties. These graduate schools might be one year in length, two years in length, or three years, and in a very few instances, longer than three years for a Ph.D. By this validation process, we then obtained the positions for graduate training in competition with all other branches of the Army Medical Department—the physicians, doctors, nurses, dentists, and MSC officers.

We obtained each year an increased number of validated positions so that we could send these officers off to obtain the graduate training. Congress passed a law which stated that any research project utilizing animal models must have a veterinarian in attendance, and this helped our graduate training program because many of these requirements were for veterinary surgeons, or veterinary toxicologists, or veterinary pathologists, or veterinary radiologists, or veterinary laboratory animal specialists, or many other specialty fields. So whereas before our training had been in only one or two fields, now it expanded to many different fields of graduate training.

It was very, very gratifying to see the end result of this action because in a decade or two, the Veterinary Corps became one of, if not the single corps within the United States Army with the highest level of education, because all of our officers had their DVM to begin with, and a greatly increased number then had master's or Ph.D.'s.

Following graduate training, many officers became board certified in a specialty field. The issue of pay has always been a point of contention among certain Veterinary Corps officers who felt that today, and for probably the past 10 years or more, a veterinary officer usually goes to college just as long to obtain his DVM degree as a physician. Each has been in college for seven or eight years to obtain a DVM or an M.D. degree. And then they go ahead and obtain graduate training, and then they obtain board certification, but they do not receive the same specialty pay that the physicians do, or the dentists.

So that's been a sore point, and at one time during the Vietnam War we had a tremendous amount of problems with one or two classes of young veterinary

officers here at Fort Sam. When they got in the Army and the light dawned that they were not being treated as were the physicians, they became very belligerent. There's no easy way of handling this. My solution was to meet with them and tell them look, life is full of decisions and decision points. At some time in your life, you reached a decision point and you had to decide well, now, when I get out of high school, what am I going to be—a physician, a lawyer, a dentist, a veterinarian, a plumber, or a carpenter. And you make a decision, and you all chose to become veterinarians. And when you made that decision, thereafter you were bound to live with that profession.

Had you chosen to become a physician, you would be entitled to all the pay that a physician receives. Had you decided to become an architect or an engineer, you would be entitled to all the pay and benefits that they receive. But since you made a decision to be a veterinarian, then you're entitled to receive what a veterinarian receives.

This was not to say that the leadership of the Veterinary Corps should not do everything in their power to try to obtain additional benefits. It was just to say that that was the general philosophy of life to me, and I didn't have much patience with young officers who became very belligerent because they didn't receive the same pay that a physician did. I felt that if we did our job, and did it the way it should be done, over time these other benefits would accrue to the veterinary service, but they'd be because they were earned.

As a result of the graduate training that our officers received, and the current level of education of the Corps, many veterinary officers are commanding medical units, medical R&D units, and have served as, for example, the deputy commander at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. At one time he was a veterinary officer.

At this time the only corps in the AMEDD that is not receiving extra pay for specialty board certification is the Veterinary Corps. This is a gross inequity, and I believe that in the near future this will be corrected.



Q: The Nurse Corps collects extra money?

A: The Nurse Corps collects extra money for specialty trained nurses. We are the only ones that do not collect it.

Q: While you were there as the assistant chief, you soon became Chief of the Professional Programming and Planning Branch.

A: Yes, that's true. Colonel Greg Brown was the chief of the branch, and he was reassigned, and upon his reassignment, I had been in office about two years, and I was then made chief of the branch.

Q: And you also were chief of the Veterinary Corps, Personnel Assignment Branch?

A: That was a temporary function because there was an interval between branch chiefs, and so for some months I served as the Veterinary Corps officer assignment officer, and that happened twice. At that time when I went to Washington, there was General Kuhn, and he had his personal secretary, and then there were five other officers in the office with four secretaries. And as the scope of activities of the veterinary service has increased over the years, the numbers of people on the staff there have steadily decreased. Whereas at the time I went there, there were five officers plus a general, now there's a general and three officers, and where we had five secretaries, now I believe there are two secretaries in the entire office. And we now are serving not only as the Army Veterinary Service, but as the Department of Defense Executive Agent for Veterinary Services.

We are providing veterinary service support now to the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, the Navy, and in many instances to the Coast Guard, and also to many Department of Defense agencies or activities such as the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. We have veterinary officers assigned there. So our work has greatly increased, and the number of people performing it has greatly decreased.

Q: Were you a full colonel by then, or a lieutenant colonel?

A: I was still a lieutenant colonel.

Q: And you arrived there during the last years of General Heaton's tour?

A: Yes. General Heaton was there, and General Kuhn was there, and I remember General Kuhn telling me that when he was appointed as chief of the Veterinary Corps, he came to Washington, and our office then was in the Main Navy Building, not over 100 yards from where the present Vietnam War memorial is located. They had a series of World War I wooden buildings there two stories tall, and we had two rooms in that building. The general's office was on one side of a central corridor, and our other pool office was on the other side of that corridor.

General Kuhn told me that he had arrived there and was sworn in, and went into his office and he said at the end of about two weeks he learned that every Friday General Heaton had a complete office staff meeting, and that every morning at 7:30 he had a meeting of his immediate staff, himself and the chief of the MSC Corps, and the Dental Corps, and the Nurse Corps, and his deputy surgeon general.

So General Kuhn became aware of these meetings, and he went in to General Heaton's office and General Heaton said, "George, what do you want?" And he said, "Well, I'm in here to turn in my hat." He said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you don't need me around here." And he said, "What do you mean, I don't need you?" And he said, "Well, you have a staff meeting every morning, and you have a weekly staff meeting every week, and I haven't been invited to any of them, and I understand no Veterinary Corps Chief has ever been invited. And General Heaton laughed and said, "Well, consider yourself invited."

So from then on, the Chief of the Veterinary Corps sat in on the Surgeon General's staff meeting every morning and every week. But it's interesting that from the time the Corps was established in 1916–3 June 1916, I believe—my memory may fail me on that—up until that date, 1968, no Chief of the Veterinary Corps had ever sat in on the Surgeon General's morning staff conference. So that was a small step forward.

Q: A big one actually. You can get your foot in the door. So then you were there for four years?

A: Yes, on that tour, I was there four years.

Q: Is there anything more that we need to talk about in that tour, before we go on to the War College?

A: Well, that tour—offhand all I can remember is the validation of graduate training requirements for Veterinary Corps officers, and the R&D action, and then continuing the action which we had already initiated to revise our TO&Es, and we had a great family of Army Regulations. We revised all of those Army Regulations during that time, and I served as action officer on the revision of those regulations, which probably every chief that's ever served has done that. But we did revise them all, and at the end of that time, we were quite pleased to have completed it.

### ***Veterinary Corps Officers Guide***

I remember one other action. General Kuhn wanted to have a *Veterinary Corps Officer Guide*, and we developed that guide, modeled somewhat on the *Army Officers Guide*, of course, and published it, and I enjoyed working on that because when, I may have mentioned earlier, when I reported to France, I reported to the headquarters and turned in my orders, and the adjutant told me where my unit was located, and that was it. There was no other veterinarian there to guide and direct me, and I was at a loss as to what to do. And had I not had outstanding NCOs to lead me by the hand, I don't know what would have happened.

But we did write an officer's guide, and we carried a new Veterinary Corps officer through from the time he received his orders to report for duty. We told him what to do when he reported to his first duty station, down to how many paces in front of the desk he should stand when he comes to attention and salutes, and says Lieutenant So-and-So reporting for duty as ordered, Sir, and handed out a copy of his orders with his left hand.

We went into that much detail, and we told this officer what he should do the first day he was on his first army post assignment, what he should have accomplished during the first week he's there, and we had a chart with check places on it, and what he should have done during his first month of duty, and what he should have done by the end of the first year. This covered not only his military activities, but his social activities also, and it went into great detail.

At that time when an officer graduated from our veterinary school in Chicago, upon graduation he received his certificate of graduation, and a copy of that *Veterinary Corps Officers Guide*. But they had already spent an hour during the course going over the guide and telling them what was in it. And then when they left there to go to their first duty station, whether it's somewhere in the United States or somewhere overseas, they had that guide. And if they remembered to refer to the guide, they could hardly go wrong during their first month on their new duty station.

We developed it and started handing it out, and then we questioned our officers subsequently as to whether or not they had received it, and whether or not they had used it, and whether or not it had helped them, and what changes they wanted to have made to it, and we kept revising it periodically. I found, and many officers told me, that that was invaluable to them, and it's one of the items that I still believe was very, very important, and that should have an historical impact and historical continuity. I hope that it is still being provided to each incoming officer. I do not know whether it is or not, but I hope it is. If it is not, I feel strongly that it should be.

## **Development of Army Standard Plans for Construction of Veterinary Facilities at Posts, Camps, and Stations**

At that time, i.e., 1972, veterinary facilities were located in facilities that dated back to the Indian Wars, World War I, or World War II. These were totally inadequate as to size and functionality as the functions of the Veterinary Service had changed from the care of cavalry and quartermaster equines and meat inspections to a number of new functions, just as the Army itself had evolved.

Obtaining funding for new construction, or renovation of existing facilities, was hampered because each post had to develop its own plans for construction. Once this problem was recognized, we proceeded to develop and standardize three sets of detailed construction plans for veterinary facilities, small, medium, and large, based on the size of the installation, areas of responsibility, and number of persons assigned. The plans also provided for construction modifications according to the location and climate conditions.

There was an architect working in the office of the Chief of Engineers, and he and I spent over a year developing and staffing these plans and finally getting them adopted as Army Standards.

Thereafter, when a Veterinarian wanted to build a new facility or modify an existing one, these Army standard plans gave them an approved starting point. These plans led to a steady improvement in our facilities to the present time and on into the future.

## **The Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 1971 to 1972**

Q: The War College, '71-72. Did that surprise you?

A: Yes, that surprised me greatly. Col. Bud Castleberry had completed the Army War College correspondence course. I believe in about 1968 or thereabouts, in several years, two or three or four years, he had completed the correspondence

course, and at that time if you wanted to take it, you wrote in and presented your credentials, and they considered your application and accepted you or not. And he was accepted, and did it, and graduated, and he led the way. But no veterinary officer had ever attended the resident course before, and so I had a monkey on my back since I was the first one. It was a very challenging course for me, it was a difficult course for everyone there. We worked hard, but there were quite a few Army Medical Department [AMEDD] officers in that course, and we got together and worked together, and helped each other, and did pretty good, I think.

I met a lot of officers there, as I had in the Command and General Staff College, and I continued to run across them throughout the rest of my career. Usually when I would visit an army base, quite often on the staff of the installation I would find someone that I knew when I ran down the list of names. So it opened a lot of doors for me and helped a lot. And I'm sure it was very instrumental in my being selected to be a general officer because I had that on my record, and I think that was of immense help.

It was a good experience. It was 10 months long. I was a winner three times; the AMEDD Officer Advanced Course, Command and General Staff College, and now the United States Army War College, had all been made 10 months long just before I attended them. I got a long course each time instead of an abbreviated one. That was good.

The pace there was rigorous and continuous, and every week or two you entered into a new phase. You're in committees, and each committee has a leader, and when you start a new facet of the training, they shuffle you again and select a new leader. Well, I think they didn't know what to do with me as a Veterinary Corps officer, so by the end of the year I had far more than my fair share of pink slips, which meant that I was going to be a committee leader. I started out feeling like a duck out of water because there I was with Infantry, and Armor officers, and Signal Corps, and Quartermaster, and other officers, and they would have a Veterinary Corps officer as their committee leader.

Well, they did that, I learned, to a number of the medical personnel. I think the faculty of the War College was a little uneasy as to what to do with us, so they would put us in these positions, and it made it more interesting for us.

I don't have much to say about that year except it went by very fast, and was very interesting, and I enjoyed it. It benefited me greatly.

Q: And then you went back to the Surgeon General's office?

A: When I finished there, I went back to the Surgeon General's office, yes.

**Chief of the Food Inspection Policy Office and Chief, Veterinary Corps, Office of the Surgeon General, 1972 to 1977**

Q: Doing what?

A: As well as I can remember, I think I started out as Chief of the Food Inspection Policy Office. Then after doing that for a while, I was designated as the Deputy Corps Chief, or I think they called it a Senior Veterinary Staff Officer on the staff of the Corps' Chief. I think there was a thing then against having deputies, you know, the title. It indicated redundant personnel. So I think in the Surgeon General's office, and elsewhere in the Army, they did away with all deputies and started calling them Senior Veterinary Staff Officers, or Senior Staff Officer or whatever it was. But in essence, I functioned as a Deputy Corps Chief.

Q: So you were there for three years?

A: Three or four. I think it was probably closer to four.

Q: What did you do there? Just staff officer?

A: Coordinated everything that came in with the other two staff officers who were in office, and as work came in, passed it out, delegated the work to them,

whatever was to be done, and did myself whatever I couldn't delegate out to them.

### **Abolishing the Army Veterinary Corps**

Q: Any significant projects or problems come up at this time?

A: 1972-75; yes, that was a black period because during those four years, there were 25 separate, documented, in-depth studies of the Army Veterinary Service, all with the sole objective of abolishing the service. And I functioned as the staff officer for each of those studies. We were studied by the Army IG, by the Surgeon General's office, by the General Accounting Office, by the Judge Advocate General's office, and I don't remember all the others. At one time we had five studies ongoing at once. They all started out with the—and they would tell us at our first meeting, the members of the study team would say “well, tell us something that we've been talking about; why do we have a Veterinary Corps when we have no horses or mules in the Army?” Those were usually the opening remarks. So they knew nothing about us.

We had to start from scratch and thoroughly educate and indoctrinate each of these study teams on all of the missions, and functions, and activities, and organization of the military veterinary service, and why we existed. And then the teams would go out in the field; for example, the Army IG team spent 18 months. They went to Europe, they went all over the United States to every Army area, they went to Hawaii, they went to Alaska, and when they finished their study at the end of all that, they presented a briefing to the Chief of Staff, United States Army.

I attended the briefing, but I was sitting on a chair back against the wall. They had a big table with all the Army staff around the table, and the Army IG, a major general, presented the briefing himself. He used projectuals, and diagonally across the corner of each projectual was written finding, finding, finding, finding.



Well, in the Army when they do a study, a finding is a proven, documented, significant fact, whereas an observation is merely that. It may be hearsay, it's usually not documented, it is somewhat irrelevant frequently. It's just that, it's a casual observation I would say. But a finding is something that you must take decisive action on. So this briefing was presented, the Chief of Staff of the Army was sitting there, and all of these projectuals were shown as findings. The briefing continued all the way through, and I had coordinated very closely with the study team during the whole of their study, and periodically they could come back and sit down and tell me something. We helped them with contact points. When they were going to different army areas, we would give them the list of veterinary personnel in that area and what their functions were, and where they were located.

So these veterinary people would then call me after the IG team had visited them, and tell me what had happened. So I knew a great deal about what should have been in their report.

During this briefing, as the IG showed successive projectuals, each marked diagonally in all four corners with the word finding, I had passed to the Chief of the Veterinary Corps, seated beside the Surgeon General, several notes calling to his attention that these projectuals were marked as findings, when in fact in the IG report itself they were all listed as observations, and there were no concrete findings.

When the briefing was concluded, the Army Chief of Staff turned to the general officer staff seated around this table, and asked them if anyone had any comments to make. There was a prolonged silence, then the Chief of Staff turned to all the junior officers seated around the wall and said, "Do any of you gentlemen have any comments to make," and I raised my hand and was recognized, and I stood up and said, "Sir, I have served as the Vet Corps action officer on this study, and I've worked closely with the individuals conducting it, and I've read the final report, and there were no findings in the report. There were only observations, and I'm puzzled by the presentation.

The Chief of Staff turned to the Army IG and said, "General, how about that?" And he replied, "Well, Sir, when we prepared this briefing, the only projectuals we had on hand were those that show finding in all four corners. We didn't have any that showed observations." The Chief of Staff looked at him a minute, and closed his book and stood up and said, "That's all, gentlemen," and left the room. So that study was dead in the water.

Q: I'm glad I wasn't the IG

A: I was not glad that I was who I was because I thought that was the end for me, because I had to walk around the Pentagon for about a mile to get back to our office, right behind the Army Surgeon General, and he never even looked in my direction. I thought well, that's the end of the course for me.

Q: Who was that at that time?

A: Lieut. Gen. Richard R. Taylor, MC.

Q: Any other projects, programs, or problems that you had during this time?

A: That tour, as I said, was a dark tour in my mind because we just had one study after another, and each could have been fatal to the Veterinary Corps. And so we were fighting for our Corps survival. However, as we had each study, the first one or two studies, in fact, found a few fairly insignificant discrepancies. We corrected them immediately. So as we did each study, they became easier, so that the last two or three we almost did it in a semi-happy manner because we felt that we were on top of our act, and we felt that these people could not find anything to criticize us about because not only did we correct anything that they did find, but anything else that we became aware of ourselves, we corrected. So by the time we had completed these 25 studies, our Corps had been studied at every level in great depth, and had been pared down to essential functions only and essential people only. So we ended up as a good, solid organization that had been studied almost to death.

Toward the end of our studies, the General Accounting Office did a very long study of the Veterinary Corps that cost about \$1.5 million. The GAO is the study body for the Congress of the United States. They may do two types of studies. One, a study in response to a request or a directive from a member of The Congress, Senator or Representative, and the other type study they may do is one that is self-initiated by the GAO. When they find an area in government that they feel is grossly mal-operated, they may initiate a study of that activity themselves.

One day we received a notice that the GAO was going to study the Army Veterinary Service. When they came for their first meeting, the GAO had discovered that there was a Veterinary Service in the United States Army, and they knew full well that we had no horses and mules, so why were we there. We gave them a very extensive detailed briefing, backed up with documentation, and hoped that they would go away and we would hear no more about them, but they did not believe a word we said.

They went out and conducted this study. They went all over the United States. They went to Panama, to Hawaii, to Europe, and the GAO has regional offices around the United States and around the world, in Europe, for example. They would delegate the study to their European branch, or to the Hawaii branch, the Pacific branch, and they themselves out of the Washington office studied everything along the East Coast and many other places, but then they went abroad with their regional offices.

Well, this went on, and the study date was concluded, and we got no report. We called them and asked for a report, and they told us it was still being acted upon. We kept calling them—no answer. Finally, in response to one of our calls, they said well, we will schedule a briefing for the Surgeon General on such and such a date. So that day came and they brought over their study team, and they gave their presentation.

When we all entered the room, they ascertained that there were no tape recorders there, and that there was no one taking shorthand notes, there were no tablets or writing material in evidence. They started their briefing, and they

said that in essence they had studied the veterinary services in great depth, and that there would be no report forthcoming because the General Accounting Office does not issue white hat reports. In other words, if they study something and find that nothing is wrong, they don't issue a report saying that they studied this and there was nothing wrong, especially if it's a GAO self-initiated study. And if they admitted that they did the study at tremendous expense—to them maybe it was peanuts, but anything over a million dollars is a lot of money to me—if they admit that they did this, and that they initiated the action themselves, then it makes them look bad. So they told us they would not be issuing a report.

That was one of the 25 studies that was done for which there is no report other than our own notes of what they did, and where they went, and what they asked. This lasted almost the full four year tour that I was there. We just had one study after another, and I was the action officer on each study, and by that I mean that I handled the day to day communications between the study team and our office, and coordinated their visits wherever they were going, and did everything that was necessary on our end.

Q: As action officer, did you keep the Chief advised?

A: Every step of the way.

Q: How good or bad was your support from the Chief?

A: My support was good as far as physical support or anything like that. At the IG briefing I told you about, our Chief was there at the head table, and the Surgeon General was beside him, and I was handing notes to our Chief. Whether or not our Chief handed them on to the Surgeon General I could not see from where I was, The Surgeon General chose to say nothing, and I believe to this day that had I not stood up and spoken, we would all have walked out of that room, and everyone would have believed everything the IG said, and the result would have hurt the Veterinary Corps, perhaps fatally.

Q: Who instigated some of the other studies?

A: The Surgeon General himself instigated at least one study that I'm positive of, and may have instigated some others. At that time, the Veterinary Corps Chief was a brigadier general, and had been since World War II. We were given our star in 1941 or 1942, during World War II.

### **Coincidence?**

Late one evening in the fall of 1973, while on leave in Europe, my wife, her brother and I were having some dinner in one of the ancient restaurants in Strasbourg, France. We were the only diners. The owners, waitresses, and cooks were having their dinner at a large table across the room.

The door opened and a small, old Frenchman came in from the rain. We spoke to him as he passed on his way to the owners' table. After a brief conversation there, he returned to us, very excited. "You are Americans?" he asked. We replied yes, and asked him to sit down and have a glass of wine with us.

He then told us he loved America and Americans, and was a close friend of Charles de Gaulle and Eddie Rickenbacker. He took from his jacket an invitation from President de Gaulle to a social affair for war veterans to be held at the presidential palace. He opened his billfold to show several photos of himself standing beside Eddie Rickenbacker, who had his arm around his shoulder. They were standing in front of Rickenbacker's World War I airplane. The Frenchman had served as the adjutant of the Lafayette Escadrille to which Rickenbacker had belonged before the United States entered World War I. Then both had transferred to the U. S. Army Air Corps, this Frenchman to act as French Liaison Officer. After the war ended, he then acted as interpreter for Marshal Foch on his grand tour of the United States.

After awhile, he was called to have dinner at the owners table. Soon the door opened and two couples entered and sat at a nearby table. The waitress brought menus (in French) and I overheard one man say to the other, "Now for the moment of truth. You have been telling us how fluent you became while you were in the Lafayette Escadrille, now prove it."

From their later conversation, I learned they were both retired Merchant Marine captains, they lived near each other on the Hudson River above New York, and were crossing Europe by barge from Holland to the Rhine River and had made an unexpected and unplanned stop at Strasbourg due to the rain and fog, and had decided to come ashore for dinner.

Without speaking to them, I went to the owner's table and asked the old Frenchman if he would please come with me for a moment, which he did. En route, I could see the two couples were watching us, and the old Frenchman was watching them. When we neared their table, one of the captains, and then the Frenchman, exclaimed and they then rushed into a long embrace—they had served together in the war and had recognized each other after all those years!

A little later, we were all moved to the owner's table; more food and drinks were brought out and we all listened to these two old friends reminisce for hours. What a memorable evening it was.

We had almost gone to another more famous restaurant for dinner, but had found it crowded. The old Frenchman said he had almost stayed home because of the rain. The two couples said they were supposed to spend the evening at another town along the canal. What brought us all together on that night -- coincidence?

**Assistant Chief of Staff for Veterinary Services, 7th Medical Command, United States Army, Europe, 1977 to 1980**

Q: After five years in the Chief's office, you left in July 1977 to go to the 7th

Medical Command, and became Assistant Chief of Staff for Veterinary Services.

A: I did leave the Surgeon General's office and went to Europe, and was assigned there as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Veterinary Services, 7th Medical Command. Our headquarters was in Heidelberg, Germany. I had a senior NCO in my office, a secretary, and two officers. Later on I had two NCOs, two officers, and one secretary.

We were in charge of and responsible for veterinary TO&E units all over Europe, in almost every country of Europe. Our functions were, as we have discussed before, all the many facets of food inspection; some limited facets of preventive medicine at different locations, depending on the personnel there; animal care for the military working dogs; the procurement inspection of food coming from food establishments all over Europe, which we did sanitary inspections on, and listed in the directory; in-storage inspection of government owned food shipped over from the United States; constant participation in different types of field training exercises all over Europe; inspecting the ration breakdown points in the mess facilities; and continuing ongoing unit training.

### **Communicating with the Command**

When I got to Europe, one of the first things I remembered was how I felt when I was stationed at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and communications became a primary purpose in life for me there. I was especially aggravated because we were so spread out over Europe, and usually we would only be one officer deep at a location with a varying number of enlisted men, both food inspection specialists, and animal techs under that one officer. There were people all by themselves all over Europe, in every country, and the cobweb center was there in Heidelberg in our office. Together with the people working in my office with me, our entire staff worked together on communications constantly. We did this by setting up a phone roster, and every veterinary officer in Europe was called by either myself or one of my

staff every month, and we talked to them as long as they wanted to talk, and we listened to their problems.

We set up a monthly newsletter that went out to every veterinary officer in Europe, and at that time we also got one from Washington, a Veterinary Corps Information Memorandum. It has since been discontinued, I believe, although parts of it may be being sent out on the Internet to people who are connected by computers. But we sent out the monthly memo from Washington, and then we sent out our own 7th MEDCOM memorandum to each officer.

We had monthly meetings in the conference room in my office there, and every veterinary officer and many of their senior NCOs within driving distance would come to these monthly meetings. We encouraged each commanding officer of veterinary officers at some distance—in Denmark, for example, or in Italy, Egypt, Spain—we encouraged those commanding officers to program funds so that their veterinarian could come to at least a minimum of one of these meetings per year. After the first year, the results of that began to show.

### **Ticker-Tape Communications**

The international telephone service in Europe from 1975 to 1980, and perhaps still today, was not very reliable. Often it was impossible to call Iran, Greece, Spain, Egypt, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Denmark, France, Belgium, Austria, Holland, or other countries where we had Veterinary Service personnel stationed. The food industry deals with highly perishable, time sensitive products which demand instant communication. For this reason, every major food producer in Europe has a ticker-tape machine in its office and through it they can contact each other and conduct business as fast as a secretary can type. I obtained one in my office in Heidelberg and could contact any of my Veterinary Service people in Europe in minutes. It proved invaluable on many occasions. We had one installed in our office in Tehran, Iran. We remained in contact with our office there until five days after the Revolution had overthrown the Shah. At that time a member of the Revolutionary Guard



answered and after we exchanged a few messages, informed us that that line was dead.

### **Annual Military Veterinary Medical Training Conference**

We programmed and planned for an annual international military veterinary medical training conference. We usually held these in Garmisch or in Berchtesgaden. Because veterinary officers overseas are unable to avail themselves of the continuing education opportunities which exist here in the United States, we made these annual international veterinary medical training conferences just that, a training conference, and we started presenting American Veterinary Medical Association approved veterinary continuing education during this conference, so that the attendees had 15 hours of graduate continuing education training when they left. We gave them a certificate which they could send back to their state or to the AVMA.

This was a tremendous boost to the morale of people, because if you get sent to Europe for four years and you don't have any training opportunities while you're there, in the field of veterinary medicine, you get out of touch. So that paid off.

I did not initiate this training conference. It had been ongoing since back in the 1950s, but the scale of it is what increased, and I feel the quality of it increased. We began to have this training with it, which was an increase that hadn't taken place before, and we began to invite more military veterinarians from our allied nations. For at least two of the years I was there during that tour, we had 18 countries represented with military veterinarians at this conference.

Q: And did they participate?

A: And they participated. For example, we wrote to and invited the Chief of the French Army Veterinary Corps to attend, and we asked him to bring his deputy if he wished, and we offered him the opportunity to present a paper at

this conference if he so wished. We sent him copies of previous papers that had been presented on different subjects for his information and guidance. A great many of them did participate. If nothing else, they would present a briefing on the military veterinary services of Italy, or of Spain, or of Iran, or of Turkey, or of Greece, or of Italy, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Germany, France, Switzerland. All of these countries attended.

People arrived on a Sunday, and Monday through Friday we had continuing education every day. Every night the people got together and talked, went out to dinner, and then on Thursday night we had a banquet and everyone from all these countries wore their dress uniform. Most of the non-U.S. officers who attended brought their wives with them, and the U.S. officers in Europe who were married, of course, brought their wives. These were highlight events for everyone there. Everyone benefited.

As a result of that, we began a veterinary officer exchange program with the British. They assigned an officer to the United States Army, here in the United States, located here at Fort Sam Houston, that officer was. We assigned an officer to the British Army of the Rhine stationed in Germany. The next officer we assigned at the British Army veterinary headquarters in England. This lasted several years. It has decreased due to the withdrawal, the downsizing of U.S. forces in Europe. All of the Iranian veterinarians who attended our conference were killed during the revolution, as were most Iranians who had traveled out of the country and been educated out of the country.

The conference was an outstanding way of communicating, and it served its purpose because when we had a food importation problem, or a food trans-shipment problem, food going from Germany to Denmark, the border guard would stop the truck and say "you can't bring this German food into Denmark." Well, word would filter in a while, and then we would talk to the chief of the Danish Army Veterinary Service, and he would talk to the chief of their customs service, and the problem would go away. So it worked beautifully.

Here I might add that in Europe, in almost every country of Europe, the veterinary services occupy a much more significant role in the total food safety program than they do here in the United States. At one time in the United States, the Army Veterinary Service was not only in charge of inspecting meat for wholesomeness and quality, but also for grading that meat. The USDA was not grading meat at that time, so we did it for the Armed forces.

In the overseas countries, for example in Denmark, they have a Royal Danish Veterinary College that graduates a class every year. Those veterinarians work in positions in packing plants and in the food industry that here in the United States, our USDA has replaced the veterinarians with lay inspectors, and many of these lay inspectors do not have a high school education. Nothing against them, but they don't have the level of training to qualify them to do the job they're doing.

In Denmark they pay their veterinarians a salary which will attract them to that work, and they don't have food problems. Their entire food program is closely monitored by veterinarians. Here, our USDA, because The Congress does not appropriate the money to hire these veterinarians, they look for a cheaper way of doing the job, and they hire lay inspectors where they previously used veterinarians. And there may be one veterinarian in a large city, and he is supervising many dozens of lay inspectors who are doing the actual hands-on inspection of the meat being purchased.

In Europe, this is not the case in most countries. They almost all have veterinary colleges, they have graduates, they need jobs, and they use them where they are most effective.

### **International Near-Catastrophe**

One year, 1978 I believe, we had invited the Chief of the Veterinary Corps of the French Army, a major general, and his wife to our International Military

Veterinary Conference at Berchtesgaden. We had received no answer and after an unanswered follow-up, assumed he and his wife would not be attending.

On the Sunday before the conference began on Monday, Colonel Scotty Reynolds, who was assigned as the Army and Air Force Exchange Service Veterinarian in Munich, Germany, went out to the Munich Airport to meet a friend coming to the conference.

In the terminal, he saw a French major general pacing the floor by his wife and luggage, obviously very upset. Knowing nothing of the circumstances, Colonel Reynolds saw that something was wrong and asked if he could be of assistance.

The general was very upset that no one had met them. Colonel Reynolds took them to his home in Munich. While his wife fixed them a snack, he brought them each a triple scotch. To their amazement, he then came in with a large deep dish pan full of hot, soapy water, took off her shoes, and put her feet to soak in the pan.

Throughout the conference, the General could talk about little else except the hospitality of Colonel Reynolds!

### **Procurement of Food in Europe**

Our procurement people, during this tour when I was in Europe, I touched earlier on the problem we had with the directory where they wanted to have a big thick telephone book directory, and we wanted a small directory of outstanding establishments to produce food, establishments that had the sanitation, and that had the capital, and that had the volume output to justify our purchasing from them. We had ongoing problems with these procurement people in Europe, and I think they perhaps culminated when they independently made a trip to Italy on a procurement problem.

This Quartermaster colonel got to Italy to address this meeting, to solve this

problem, and when he went into the meeting, he sat at the table, and the whole table was full of Italian military veterinary officers. They started the meeting, and the Italian colonel chairing the meeting turned to this Quartermaster colonel and said, "Colonel, what veterinary college did you graduate from in the United States?" He said, "I'm not a veterinarian. I'm a Quartermaster officer." And the Italians closed their books, and they all stood up, and the meeting was over. So to accomplish what he wanted to accomplish there, he had to wire back to Heidelberg and we provided him with a veterinary officer to go to the meeting with him, and that was the only way they would deal. They don't deal otherwise.

That's an example of how the veterinary services in Europe differ from the way they operate here. They have a lot more power. We learned a lot from them, they learned a lot from us. The Turkish, the Iranian veterinary services wanted complete copies of all of our regulations, our operating manuals, equipment sets; they wanted everything we had, and we provided them footlockers full of material, and they went on to develop a good veterinary service which probably has gone totally down the tube now, at least in Iran.

### **Commanding the Various Teams**

This veterinary conference operated for about 10 years over there annually in the manner I've described, and it operated very well. I talked about communications, and I can't overstress how important I think it is. When I went to France on my first tour as a lieutenant, I had personnel stationed at 35 different installations around France, and most of them were absolutely outstanding soldiers. I had a few problem soldiers.

I had one that just ran my 1st Sergeant and me both crazy. We were talking about it one night and scratching our heads trying to figure out well, what in the world can we do. I said, "I wish I could write a letter to his mother." And I said well, why not. I got his home address and wrote a letter to his mother and father and told them what a potentially outstanding soldier their son was. I

went on in that vein for a while, and then I told them what a problem I was having with him.

I went back down in that area not too long after that and visited another installation, and while I was there one of the enlisted men asked me, he said, "Sir, did you really write a letter to Corporal so-and-so's mother?" And I said, "Yes, I did," and he just shook his head. But the corporal straightened up. That worked, and I did that on many occasions after that, and there in Europe established a policy of sending a birthday greeting to every veterinary officer in the command. I couldn't do it to all the enlisted men. I did it to a few of the senior ones, but I sent them birthday greetings, and if they got married, or if they had a baby, or if one of their parents died, I wrote them a letter. The payback was unbelievable.

I continued this practice when I became Chief, and from 1980 to 1985, I sent a birthday letter to each officer in the Corps each year. I wrote three different letters each year, one for colonels, one for field grade, and one for company grade officers. This was a small thing, but the officers in Alaska, Korea, Guam, Japan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Hawaii, Panama, Kenya, Egypt, and many, many other isolated locations around the world seemed to appreciate the letters, and I sincerely appreciated the work they were doing.

When I left Europe, and as with the War College, I received notice one day to come up to the MEDCOM Surgeon's office, and when I got there he told me I had been selected to be the next Chief. I was totally astonished. But when I became Chief and came back to Washington, I tried to continue these various communication techniques that I've discussed with you. And I continued writing letters, and I continued the newsletter, and I continued having conferences and meetings, and I set up the phone roster and I or someone in my office called every senior veterinary officer in the United States or overseas once a month. I made at least one trip per year to Europe while I was Chief and visited the international conference, and then after that I spent a week visiting units all over Europe, as many as time permitted.

I went to the Pacific once a year and visited Alaska, Hawaii, Korea, Japan, Guam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and any other place that we might have people over there at that time. I held meetings there, and I tried my best the whole time during those four years to start an international military veterinary conference out in the Pacific because I believed it would have had just as beneficial effect as the one in Europe did. But I never was able to crack that nut. I tried to do that.

### **The Combat Casualty Care Course**

While I was in Europe, from 1975 to 1980, we started something else over there. The Medical Department has what they call the Combat Casualty Care Course. It was here at San Antonio, and the purpose of the Combat Casualty Care Course was to train as many medical service personnel—medical officers, dental officers, nurses, MSCs, senior enlisted people, physical therapists, veterinarians—to train as many of them as they could on immediate care of mass casualties. At that time, we were under the nuclear threat, and it was envisioned that we were going to have hundreds and thousands of mass casualties.

You're probably familiar with the triage principle. When you have hundreds of casualties come in, your most experienced physician has to step out and examine them, and quickly classify them into categories. Then you allocate your treatment resources, which are limited, to care for those casualties for the greatest possible return. You may have a man there who has all four limbs broken, and a concussion of the brain, and a gaping wound to the chest, but he's still very strong and alive. And if that were a peacetime accident here in the United States, you'd bring in a massive team and you'd work 15 hours straight, and you'd save a man's life.

But under a mass casualty condition you can't do that. So you set that man aside in what's called the expectant category. He is expected to die. You can't devote all your efforts to that one man when there are 200 out here who have spurting arteries, that if they're tied off, you'll save his life. That's all you have

to do is tie off that one artery. So you put your resources where they can do the most good.

Well, another important thing, and I felt very strongly toward it, while I was there in Europe, we were close to the combat situation. We had various ammunition storage facilities in Europe where they stored all classes of weapons. You can't get in there with a gasoline powered lawn mower that emits sparks to mow the grass. So we started putting herds of goats in there, and they do an excellent job. They keep it clean, and then you've got goats. They reproduce so you've got more goats.

To conduct a Combat Casualty Care Surgical Training course, you have to have an animal, so they used goats. They anesthetize the animal, and they shoot them and break the femur and cause various injuries, and then you teach these medical people to care for them, to stabilize them and save their lives. And it's a very important course, and tens of thousands of medical people here in the United States went through this Combat Casualty Care Course.

We did it in Europe. The veterinary service supervised the raising of the goats. We brought the goats in, prepared them for surgery, shot them, trimmed them, clipped them, draped them, had all the equipment ready for the students. There are all kinds of physicians. Only a small number of them are surgeons. If you take a physician who is a psychiatrist, he has had medical training, but he is a psychiatrist and really is not very competent in surgery. They need refresher training periodically on how to do these simple, life-saving things. You bring this class in, and the veterinarian would conduct the class, and show them what was to be done, and supervise them while they did it. We did it in Europe, and it worked beautifully. We trained a high percentage of our medical people in Europe. Of course, it's a continuing, ongoing thing. People rotate and new ones come in, and you continue training.

We did it, and when I came back from Europe and was then Corps Chief, we had the CCCC program ongoing here at San Antonio, and it was started at many other installations all over the United States. Every one of those



installations had areas that were very, very ideal for the raising of goats. All you had to do was start with a billy and 10 nannies, and you can raise all the goats you want. We wanted to do that, and we wanted to help with this program. I say we—the Veterinary Service wanted to help with it. We wanted to do it; we wanted to participate in it to whatever degree the Surgeon General wanted us to participate. But we wanted to be there. Congress required that a veterinarian be there, so if we're going to be there, we want to go ahead and give the introductory lecture and show them what was to be done. We could do it as well as anyone.

I spent four years trying to sell this idea, and I never did sell it. So I left the office feeling I had failed on that. It was something I felt was good, and essential, and cost effective, and it was not approved because the American College of Surgeons feared that the veterinary profession was trying to encroach on the medical profession. It was a political thing. It took me a long time to recognize that, but I finally recognized it and quit. I tried to sell it to at least two, maybe three surgeon generals. They would seem very interested, and then later on they would talk to their friends and find the political ramifications of it and they would back off.

The program went on and we still participated, but not as much as I wanted. I don't know whether that program is still ongoing today or not. It may be one of the things that was dropped, since the threat of mass casualties had lessened.

### **Advertising the Veterinary Program**

Q: Are we through with Europe? You took that program right from Europe, right through the United States, and ran it around the world and back again. You were talking about communicating, and the communicating job that you did in Europe when you came back there because you recognized your problems you had with the lack of communicating with higher headquarters.

A: Yes. Another facet of that that we touched on—communicating. When I got to Europe and began, during my first few months there, to visit, for example, the

naval base at Rota, Spain, where we had a veterinary officer assigned, Italy, many of the major army installations in Europe. I was a colonel then, but when I'd go to one of these bases, the first thing I always had to do was call on the commanding officer, the base commander, and tell him who I was and why I was there.

A number of them, when I would arrange an appointment, I would go and see them and they would say, "Well, I was surprised when you called for an appointment because I didn't know I had a veterinarian here," and that opened my eyes. At one of our first monthly meetings, please let me digress here, before we held these monthly meetings, all the veterinary officers and NCOs all over Europe would send in their suggestions of items to be discussed at this monthly meeting. We would list them all on a piece of paper with a space between each one, and then at the meeting we would discuss each one around the table. If we reached a decision right then, we wrote it down. And then when the meeting was over, the minutes were typed up and sent out to everyone, so they knew what had happened and they had it in writing.

At one of our first monthly meetings, I told each officer that they had so many weeks to go back to their base and prepare a 30 to 45 minute briefing for their commanding officer or commanding general, the installation commander under whom they served. We told them to use no more than 10 projectuals, try to make it 30 minutes, never have it more than 45 minutes, and when they got their draft finished, to send a copy of the draft to our office. That way we made sure everyone prepared it.

We got in this whole file of drafts for each area, and each veterinarian then would call up the general, the admiral, the colonel, whoever was the base commander, and talk to their aide and request 45 minutes to brief the general. What do you want to brief him on? I want to brief him on the veterinary service. And they were dumbfounded.

The veterinary officer would go in and would brief the general, and would tell him, "General, this is what we are doing for you in your area. These are the

functions we perform,” and they would give him a very brief organizational briefing on how many men they had, how many vehicles they had, what area they covered, what activities were in that area, what food inspection they did, what sanitary inspection of establishments, what refrigerated warehouses were there, what dry storage we had, what military working dogs. They told him everything they did for him. And then they told him what he did for them. They said you’re providing us with our building, with our telephone, with our vehicle, with our POL, with our barracks, with our mess facilities, and we want to thank you for that. We’re not directly under you, but we certainly appreciate your support. And about then the general’s mouth would drop open.

Then when I started going around following that and visiting these same people, I walked in the general’s door and he would say, “Colonel, your captain was in here two months ago and already briefed me on the veterinary service. He gave me an excellent briefing, and I know what you do. But I didn’t even know I had a veterinarian on my base.”

### **Consolidating the Army and the Air Force Veterinary Services**

We started that, and it became policy. Everywhere I went in Europe, every base I would go to, when I went in to see the base commander, he had been briefed, and briefed very well. Along about then, beginning in 1979 and 1980, we started planning for the amalgamation of the Air Force Veterinary Service into the Army Veterinary Service. We had had all of these studies. The studies would address both the Air Force Veterinary Service and the Army Veterinary Service, but they concentrated on the Army. The Army had come through all these studies with flying colors.

Then The Congress, in their frustration, said well, we have two veterinary services. Why do we need two? If we eliminated one of them, we could save X number of manpower spaces. The Army Veterinary Service was established in 1916, the Air Force in 1947. The Congress eventually decided to abolish the Air Force Veterinary Service and consolidate the two, which was done.

There were many air bases in Europe at that time that had Base Veterinarians. We met with them. There was a senior Air Force officer in Europe, Colonel Joe West, who is now at Texas A&M at the Texas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. Joe and I would meet frequently. The Air Force veterinarians attended our meetings. He and I met and developed a phased plan to allow the Army to assume veterinary services to these various bases. As their people finished their tours, we would bring an Army officer in to take their place. We had Army officers on air bases all over Europe, and on some navy bases. As soon as they arrived, they had to brief their commanding general. And we learned that sometimes the Air Force base commander didn't know that he had a veterinarian on base, so it paid off.

Q: Especially an Army one.

A: Right. We had a veterinary unit at Subic Bay in the Philippines. My appointment with the admiral wasn't until the next day, so the veterinarian took me all around and showed me everything he had, and showed me that down on the dock they had to work standing out on the dock in the rain, and inspect food, and they had no facility and no place to wash their hands.

The next day I went in to see the admiral, and he told me that my man had briefed him, and he was impressed with the briefing. We had set up a recouperage operation there for the navy vessels that were on patrol in the Indian Ocean. The ships go out and they stay so long, and then they come back, and they are resupplied. Previously, when they came back they got offshore so many hundreds of miles, and any food they had left, they dumped overseas, and it was a total loss, but a lot of it was still good.

So our people talked the admiral into setting up a recouperage operation using Philippine labor, and they brought all this food in and unloaded it, and then steam-cleaned the storage areas on the ship. Our people would recoup the subsistence, put it in new boxes and re-strap it, and they would load it back on the ship. All of a sudden, his expense records began to show a tremendous

savings in rations expense. That was a big feather in his hat, and he got a lot of brownie points for it, and it worked out very well.

When I went in to see the admiral he said, "What do your people need?" I said, "Well, it looks like you've taken very good care of them, and I thank you. They've got good quarters, and good message facilities, and you've given them good vehicle support. By the way, the chief veterinarian did mention to me that they're having to inspect their food down on the dock out in the rain sometimes." It rains 15 inches overnight there at Subic Bay sometimes. He said, "Well, we'll just build them a facility." Within days, a unit of Seabees came in and they built them a facility and put in latrines, and inspection tables, and everything they wanted. So they appreciated our support.

### **Promotion to Brigadier General**

Q: Did you get your star in Europe, or did you get it on your way back? Were you able to show that star off to all those people over there?

A. Yes. I got a call and they told me I had been selected, and then it surprised me how difficult it is to buy general officers uniforms and accouterments in Europe. I had some friends, and one man gave me a pair of trousers, another man gave me a blouse, and someone found me some stars up at some other installation, and I gradually assembled a uniform. The blouse and trousers didn't match very well, but they did the job, and I was sworn in and commissioned as a general there in Europe. Then when I got back to the Surgeon General's office, I was sworn in as Chief of the Corps there.

**Chief, Veterinary Corps, Office, Surgeon General, United States Army, Washington, DC, 1980 to 1985; Assistant Surgeon General for Veterinary Services, Office, Surgeon General, United States Army, Washington, DC; Acting Department of Defense, Executive Agent for Veterinary Services, and Deputy Commander, United States Army Medical Research & Development Command, Fort Detrick, Maryland, 1984 to 1985**

Q: So then you went back to become Chief in Washington in November of 1980?

A: Yes, and I stayed there until February of 1985, I believe it was, when I retired.

### **Integration of the Army and Air Force Veterinarian Services**

And that was a tremendously interesting period in the history of the Veterinary Corps because the integration of the Army and Air Force Veterinary Service had begun, but I would say it was less than 5 percent complete when I got back. So we still had a long way to go. There was a considerable amount of resistance on the part of the Air Force. Not too long after I came back to Washington, the Air Force Surgeon General invited me to a medical commanders conference at the Air Force Academy, and every senior Air Force medical officer in the Air Force from all over the world was there. There were probably 150 officers, and they were from the Philippines, Korea, and all over the world, wherever there was an air base.

I gave a briefing on the Army Veterinary Service, what we do, how we do it, how we're equipped to do it, how we're manned to do it, and then I discussed the consolidation plan. We had planned how to assume command of the veterinary services on the various air bases all over the world: the staged plan, as their people reached the end of their tour, they would come back to the United States and then we would send an Army man in to replace them.

When I got to the meeting, the atmosphere was awkward, and when I went into this big meeting room, they had me seated in the witness chair over at one side of the room, and I felt very ill at ease. The introduction I received was supposed to be funny, but it really had an underlying note to it. Anyhow, I gave them my briefing. It was supposed to last about 40 minutes, and I finished it in about 35 minutes, and they then told me I had 45 minutes. Well, arms started going up and the questions started coming in, and my part of the meeting took about 2.5 hours. It was supposed to take 45 minutes on their program, and one flurry of questions would die down and the Surgeon General

would try to terminate it, and around the audience some very senior officers would hold up their hands, and they'd ask some other questions.

I had a good feeling when I walked out of there, and that night we had a dinner, and a cocktail hour, and many, many of these men came up to me and talked in a very friendly manner. In the next four years, as I visited air bases all over the world, I kept running into these same men. "Oh, yeah, I remember you. You were at Colorado Springs. You spoke to us there. They were trying to do a hatchet job on you, weren't they?" It was interesting.

Q: You were able to demonstrate a successful program in Europe because you had already done that.

A: Yes. And so it worked out.

Q: Was that your major problem you had when you were ...

A: That was the major problem. It was ongoing. It really wasn't a problem because it turned out very smooth and everything went well. Before I left Europe, all these veterinary officers there, we had this annual military veterinary conference and we invited all of the Air Force veterinary officers to attend, and a great many of them did attend. During that conference that year, and that was probably 1979, they had a couple of officers there who were sort of spokesmen for the group. So I told these spokesmen that I would like to have lunch with all the Air Force officers. Do you think you could arrange to get them to agree to sit down with me?

He said he could, so we got a separate room, and had a big, long table, and we all sat around the table. I sat in the middle of one side of the table, and I said "now, what do you gentlemen want to know?" And so they started tossing all kinds of rumors, and questions, and things they had heard, and things they had been told, and we sat there and talked for an hour and a half or two hours. They were offered the option of transferring to the Army if they wanted to, or they could get out of the Air Force altogether. Or they could remain in the Air

Force as a Medical Service Corps officer. I think they call them biomedical officers. But they do still have a few veterinarians in the Air Force serving as biomedical officers.

They were concerned that if they transferred to the Army, the Army promotion selection board would not be familiar with Air Force officer record briefs, and they wouldn't be able to interpret their training as compared to a comparable Army officer's training, and decide who to promote. They were concerned about their promotion status. They were concerned about their pay status, the future. They were concerned about having to work on Army bases instead of Air Bases. They had been brainwashed that the Air Force is so much superior to the Army, that they didn't want to work on an Army base.

We had a good discussion that day, and eventually the majority of those officers sitting at the table transferred to the Army, and I don't think any of them ever regretted it.

When I got back to Washington as Chief, I brought one of the Air Force officers that had transferred to the Army into my office there, in the Surgeon General's office as a staff officer. That made them all feel better because they could pick up the phone and call someone in the Chief's office, and they felt like they could get straight answers. That worked out well.

One of the Air Force officers who had transferred, Lieutenant Colonel Gary Stamp, now Colonel Gary Stamp, is the commander of the Veterinary Command in San Antonio now, and he was Air Force. The things that we were able to do in Europe, most of them followed on here in the United States, and really the phase of takeovers was comparatively smooth.

Q: How long did that takeover take?

A: We were completed by the end of 1985. In fact, I think for all purposes we completed it a little bit before that. But it started in 1980 and it was all over by 1985, as well as I remember.



Q: By the time you left, it was done?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have any other projects you were working on during that time frame?

### ***The Veterinary Officers Guide***

A: Yes, a great many, but for one thing I reviewed the *Veterinary Officers Guide* and had it updated and republished. I don't know where it is now. There was never an end to the project. One thing we touched on before, things were changing, things were a great deal different than they had been when I entered the Army. We, there in Washington, convened a meeting of all the senior veterinary officers and some NCOs including some of the overseas ones. We brought them all back, and we got out at a countryside conference center there in Virginia and had a veterinary service strategic planning conference that lasted several days.

We started out the first day and presented the problem and it's sort of a discussion, and we broke up in the working groups and addressed different problems, and we ended up with a published three ring notebook that everyone got a copy of eventually, redefining the mission of the Veterinary Corps, setting forth immediate, short range, mid-range, and long-range goals, and addressed ways and means of accomplishing these goals, and as Colonel [Paul L.] Barrows indicated to us, that is still ongoing. And not too many months after that, other branches of the Surgeon General's office began to do the same thing, and it spread throughout the Army. So far as I know, we were the first AMEDD branch to do it.

The idea was not mine entirely. I had a brother-in-law who worked for Hewlett-Packard, and he was the Hewlett-Packard manager east of the Mississippi River. I would get with him periodically, every year or so when I passed through Atlanta or Dallas, I would stop and visit my sister and

brother-in-law, and we would talk about things that Hewlett-Packard was doing , and I would tell him about things that we had done, and we bounced ideas back and forth, and that was one I got from him.

Packard had come up with this idea for Hewlett-Packard, and they had done it and he was all enthusiastic about it. So we did it, and we became enthusiastic about it. I've used "I" too much in this brief encounter. When I say I, I'm talking about a great many of the senior officers in the Veterinary Corps. We all got together. We communicated frequently. They had wonderful ideas. I was the Chief of the Corps, and I was the triggering mechanism for a lot of these things that we did. So I say "I", but really it wasn't Frank Ramsey, it was the Veterinary Corps.

By virtue of the training programs we had, I know I wanted to touch on something else—R&D versus food inspection. I want to touch on that in a minute. By virtue of these graduate training programs that we had and other training programs, when I retired in 1985, I walked out of my office and shut the door behind me, and severed connections with the Veterinary Corps and felt perfectly at ease because I knew that there were dozens of officers that we had prepared and trained, and that had come up, and any one of them could do the job that I had been doing better than I had been doing it, because they were better trained.

Some people, when they leave an office, try to hang onto it and go back and check on it every month to see if it's operating right, and so on, and I never once had that feeling. I think that now that the veterinary service is the DOD Executive Agency for Veterinary Service, this matter of being studied to death is a thing of the past. If you're Army, they can cut you, but if you're a DOD Agency, you are almost bomb-proof. So I think the Corps is on a good foundation. It's still performing the same essential functions. Someone has to do them. We have proven that we can do this plethora of different functions in an effective and cost efficient manner.

## **Assignment of R&D Officers**

Backing up though, when I came back from Europe in 1980 and was the Corps' Chief, immediately the assignment of officers arose. A big change usually occurs once a year, but all during the year there are people being changed. We had a senior veterinary officer in Korea at that time, and he was a colonel.

Well, we needed a colonel to go over there and replace that man. In looking at all of the available colonels, we had a considerable number of full colonels in R&D assignments who had more than 20 years service, and had never been overseas. We had a lot of colonels who had been in the food inspection area of the Veterinary Corps, and some of them had one, two, or three overseas assignments.

I soon faced the problem of having to send colonels overseas, and who am I going to send. Well, I felt badly about sending an officer back to Korea who may have already had two or three overseas tours, when out at one of the R&D facilities there was a full colonel who had never been overseas. So I put some of these colonels on alert that they were soon to be tabbed for an overseas assignment. And when I did that, the ceiling fell in on me. The commanding general of the Medical R&D Command came to see the Surgeon General and got him all wired up as to how essential this colonel was to the R&D effort, and then I was called over and the three of us sat in the office, and the Surgeon General asked me why I would do such a dastardly deed. So I told him my philosophy.

I said all these Veterinary Corps officers are citizens of the United States of America. They are under oath, officers of the United States Army. They owe a lot of loyalty to the Army Medical Department. They are members of the Veterinary Corps. Many of them then have specialty training that they have received while they've been members of the Veterinary Corps, most of them, and last, they are individuals. And when we make an assignment, we consider all these factors. And I could not, in good conscience, assign a man to a

repetitive overseas tour when there was another man wearing the same green uniform, drawing the same pay, who has never been overseas a day in his life. And that man is fully trained to do the job, and he will have people to help him do the job, and he can do the job, but it calls for a full colonel.

And so the Surgeon General told me in this particular case you will go ahead and not assign this colonel overseas as a favor to me, please. And then he turned to the major general commanding Medical R&D Command and he said, in so many words, there will be no more such discussions.

A few months after that, the Surgeon General assigned me an additional duty to be the Deputy Commanding General of the Medical Research and Development Command at Fort Detrick, Maryland. For the last two years of work on active duty, I was Chief of the Veterinary Corps, Assistant Surgeon General for Veterinary Services, Deputy Commanding General of Medical Research and Development Command [MR&DC], and acting Department of Defense Executive Agent for Veterinary Services. A lot of different hats but it all worked out. I worked at Fort Detrick three or four days each week and would be in my office in the Pentagon every Friday and many Thursdays. We had a great many Veterinary Corps officers in the MR&DC.

The only way I was able to function in these positions was that I had an outstanding group of officers on my staff at all times. They included Col. Richard G. Oakes, Col. Peter S. Loizeaux, Col. William K. Kerr, Col. John Barck, Col. William H. H. Clark, Col. William B. Smith, Col. Wayne Derstine, and Col. William P. Yonoshonus, during the period 1980 to 1985. They came and they went, four were there at all times. No Corps Chief ever worked with more outstanding men.

Most of the R&D activities to which veterinary officers are assigned are at Aberdeen Proving Ground, or in Washington, or at Fort Detrick, in that general area. So I called the senior veterinarian at each location and told them that I wanted to meet with all of the R&D veterinary personnel, and I went out to Fort Detrick, and we had a meeting, and I told them that I understood there

was a lot of discussion buzzing around among that group when I had attempted to assign this colonel overseas, and so I told them that I was new in the job but that I wanted to share with them my personal philosophy and let them know how things were going to be. And so I proceeded to tell them what I told you a while ago, that they're first of all citizens and so on, and I said, "Now, we will be assigning officers who are, or who have been, or who are going to be in R&D Command to overseas assignments."

"We will make every effort to make it a cooperative, open-ended, convenient assignment. If you are on an R&D assignment and you've been there two years and you have two more years to go, we're willing to wait until you finish those two years, and then assign you overseas. If you have a research project ongoing and it's essential that you remain with it for six months, we'll wait six months."

"You are free to tell us when it's convenient for you to go overseas. You tell us. But you'll all be going sooner or later." In the group there were a number of senior colonels, a number of whom had served in World War II in the Navy, in the Army, and then they had come back and gotten their DVMs and advanced training, and they were now occupying positions such as the head of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. Colonel Dick Garner would have been one such officer.

He and several others stood up and told this group an overseas tour won't kill you. We all had overseas tours, and it didn't hurt our career at all. It will open your eyes and broaden your perspective, and let you see a little bit more of the world, and you'll be able to come back and do your job better. And if you can't stand a one year, or a two or three year absence from your R&D assignment, why, you're not very good at it to begin with. So it won't hurt you. Bedlam broke loose, and I just sat back in the corner and listened to them, and boy, there were arguments all over the place, almost fist-fights.

As a result of that meeting, we had a very limited number of resignations, a few of them. And I brought in a Colonel Pete Loizeaux who had been in

R&D, and I brought him into my office as my deputy. So I had an Air Force man in there, and then I had an R&D man in there. And the R&D people then felt like they had a voice in my office.

We started assigning these R&D people overseas. A lot of them got out of veterinary school, and thought, oh boy, the glamour of R&D. So they wanted to get R&D and they did it for two or three years. Well, then we sent them overseas maybe to Germany and they commanded a veterinary food inspection unit, and they did all the things I'm telling you about, and they got to see all of the country, and they got to go to the conference.

And quite a few of them decided they didn't want R&D. They wanted to go into food inspection. That's where the fun was. And so over the period of the five years, that storm abated. It came to a roaring furnace fire back in late 1980, and then it burned down, and that became my accepted policy. I believe that at least one Chief who followed me continued that same policy, and I hope it's still continuing to this day, but I don't know. I haven't asked, and I really don't know. But a dichotomy within our Corps had been created, and an elite group of R&D veterinarians had established itself who looked down on everyone else, and they felt that the food inspection specialists were inferior, and that they were not pathologists, or microbiologists, or physiologists, or what-have-you, and it just tore the Corps apart there for a while, or it was about to tear the Corps apart.

### **Quarters at Fort Myer, Virginia**

In 1981, a year after becoming Chief of the Veterinary Corps, I was offered quarters at Fort Myer. It cut my daily commuting time from Vienna, Virginia, to the Pentagon and later to Fort Detrick, Maryland. I greatly appreciated this opportunity and was told this was the first time quarters at Fort Myer were provided to a Veterinary Corps Officer.

After moving in I learned the previous occupant had died in the quarters which were then placed on Engineer hold for over a year for rehabilitation.

At that time, I was traveling much of the time around the United States of America and the world visiting military installations. Each time I returned to Fort Myer, I heard from my wife another account of the weird happenings in these quarters.

Doors were being opened—or closed—during the night. Lights were being turned on or off. Bugle-like sounds were faintly heard at night. The commode in the bathroom of the master bedroom upstairs would flush during the night. Footsteps and a creaking wooden floor could be heard from the large attic storeroom. One night a German sled about five feet long, which was firmly in place on the flat top of some china barrels in the attic storeroom, “fell” off and slid some 25 feet across the room. I personally heard the sled thump and slide, the commode flush, the bugle-like sounds, the footsteps and the floor creaking and found doors that had opened or closed.

We were never able to account for any of these happenings, but it made life there interesting. We never felt uneasy or threatened, but that flushing noise would surely wake me from a sound sleep.

### **American Veterinary Medical Association**

You asked me what else happened during that period while I was Chief. Well, there was a major thing that happened, and it lasted a while, but in time it ended, and many of the most vociferous objectors later on told me that they agreed in the long run that they thought it was the right thing. The Veterinary Corps is interesting because if you are a civilian veterinarian, you are a small animal practitioner, or you are a large animal practitioner, now many of them specialize. Some are bird specialists. Some are reptile specialists. Some of them are pig or poultry specialists.

Some veterinary animal practitioners, and some of those in R&D looked down on veterinarians in other facets of the profession. There are many veterinarians in the field of education teaching at the veterinary colleges and the medical

colleges. There are veterinarians in federal programs. The Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service has just selected a veterinarian as his deputy.

Veterinarians manage most state meat and poultry and egg inspection programs. Most states have a state veterinarian in control of animal diseases, zoonotic diseases that are transmissible to man.

A civilian veterinarian may function in these facets of the profession, but they're functioning in one facet, and they do that all their life. If you are in USDA meat inspection, you're doing that one thing all your life. If you are a small animal practitioner, that's what you do. But when you come in the Army in a 30 year career, you will find yourself doing small animal medicine for X number of years, you'll find yourself still caring for horses and large animals on military bases. You will find yourself doing food inspections, all the different facets of food inspection.

You may find yourself functioning in the preventive medicine field. You may find yourself teaching in one of the army schools that required a veterinary staff officer. You may find yourself doing R&D for X number of years. You may get in it and stay, or you may get in it and be there five or ten years. You will find yourself, whatever you are doing, doing administration, which many civilian veterinarians do full time.

If you have a career in the military veterinary service, you are going to perform in a great number of the different facets of the profession, whereas if you have a career in civilian veterinary medicine, you're going to perform normally in one facet. The Army is a great career choice.

During this last five year period, we had another problem area that arose with the AVMA. Prior to the 1960s, there were few, only 26, veterinary colleges in the United States. There were not a great many veterinarians, and in many areas of the United States, there were no veterinarians, or maybe one veterinarian.



Let's take Fort Hood, Texas. A large military camp, a lot of military people there, many of them had horses, many of them had pets. There was one civilian veterinarian and he was a large animal practitioner. He didn't care what the military veterinarian did.

The military veterinarian always, wherever we are, we have a small animal clinic where we register all the local animals and immunize them against rabies. We provide minimal care to those animals. We can't be in there operating all day long because we've got too many other functions we have to do. But we do those minimum things essential to a good preventive medicine program on that base.

Today around Fort Hood there are approximately 20 veterinarians. They have packed in there. Most of them are making their livelihood off of these military families. They started objecting to the fact that the base veterinarian was immunizing and registering all the animals for rabies, and providing some other veterinary emergency type care. They wanted to close that clinic. Well, you know, they should have realized that if they closed the clinic and divided what he did up among 20 of them, it was not going to make them rich. It would increase each one of their pocketbooks just marginally, one-twentieth. But our installation commander did not like that. He wanted the military veterinarian in control of their animal population.

This became a very sensitive area between the military veterinary service and the American Veterinary Medical Association. There were a couple of years of letter writing; civilian veterinarians writing in and publishing letters in the AVMA Journal, letters to the effect that my salary, my tax dollars, are being used to pay the salary of this military veterinarian who is competing against me and taking bread out of my mouth, that type of rationale.

The Chief of the Veterinary Corps is a delegate to the AVMA House of Delegates, by the way. Finally we got with AVMA and they appointed a committee, but really the committee ended up being one individual, and that

individual and I exchanged drafts for months, and we finally reached a mutually agreeable draft of a military veterinary clinic policy. The AVMA presented it to the House of Delegates and they voted to approve it. And so far as I know that policy that we established still exists today, 17 or 18 years later.

I don't think a word in it has changed. We word-smithed every word in it, and we fought to keep as much as we could so that our veterinarians could have the potential of some hands-on veterinary practice on animals while they were in the army. And they fought as hard as they could to keep us from doing anything. So the policy was developed finally.

Many other activities took place during those five years and I will briefly discuss some of them.

### **Memorabilia and Souvenirs**

When I first reported to the Office of the Surgeon General in Washington, it was located in the old Main Navy Building, which was a series of two-story buildings on the Mall near where the Vietnam Memorial now is located. On my second tour there we were in the James Forrestal Building across from the Smithsonian Museum. At both locations our office joined those of the Chief of Chaplains, whose office was filled with souvenirs and military memorabilia of all kinds from around the world dating back to 1776. In comparison, our Chiefs' office was cold and uninteresting and presented a poor welcome to visiting officers and others. With great difficulty, I wrote a letter to senior veterinary corps officers all over the world encouraging them to submit items, with donors given recognition with brass plaque, to decorate the Chiefs office on a permanent basis. When I departed in 1985, we had received a number of interesting items which greatly enhanced the appearance of the office and gave a sense of permanence and pride to all.

### **The Total Army Concept**

There were a number of veterinarians and veterinary service enlisted

personnel in United States Army Reserve and United States Army National Guard units across America. In the first months after I became Chief, I met and talked with a number of them. They all felt neglected, ill-informed, and that they were not considered equal in any way to the active duty personnel. I had a Reserve colonel (veterinarian) appointed as the USAR/ANG Consultant to the Office of the Surgeon General. He served his annual two weeks of active duty in my office. His job was to serve as a conduit between the USAR/ANG veterinarian personnel and my office. Col. Richard Keagy did a superb job. We helped them obtain equipment, publications, and in any other way we could. For the first time, whenever the active units held a training conference or meeting of any kind, the USAR/ANG units were invited. We were successful in having veterinary USAR/ANG units included in overseas two week training exercises in Honduras and other overseas locations. We were practicing the Total Army concept before it became a central theme of the Army. This action proved to be a morale booster for both the active and reserve units.

### **Warrant Officer Food Inspector Career Field**

At the conclusion of twenty-five studies of the Veterinary Service, the Congress decided to abolish the Air Force Veterinary Service and transfer their mission and functions to the U.S. Army Veterinary Service. Some members of Congress were never able to understand why Doctors of Veterinary Medicine (animals!) were involved in food inspection activities worldwide. It was directed that we give up 50 Veterinary Corps officer spaces and replace them with warrant officer food inspectors under the control of the Veterinary Corps. This directive was pending when I became Chief. Within one year we initiated the Warrant Officer Food Inspector career field, developed a training course for it, held a selection process and selected fifty candidates, sent them through Fort Sam Houston Academy of Health Sciences, commissioned them, and had them on active duty. Most of them were former senior NCOs in the Veterinary Service.

### **Distinctive Insignia**

Many branches of the Army had their distinctive insignia which fostered recognition and esprit-de-corps. We in the Veterinary Service had nothing. We began to discuss this and in time prepared a request to the Army Institute of Heraldry for a distinctive shoulder crest to be worn on the shirt or coat epaulets. We provided a draft drawing of some of the items identified with the Veterinary Service, and in time the Institute returned a drawing which we approved. Since that time, officers, warrant officers, and enlisted personnel of the Veterinary Service are authorized to wear this distinctive crest. It was a small thing, but another morale booster.

### **Meals Ready to Eat**

Another item I forgot to mention was that the U.S. Army Natick Research and Development Command, Natick, Massachusetts, is responsible for developing clothing, doing the R&D to develop items of clothing including new boots, uniforms for soldiers, and they also are responsible for developing food, the rations. They develop the rations for the astronauts. They've developed rations that are put on life boats, on every ship at sea. They develop rations that are put in aircraft in the event of a crash. When the plane crashes, they've got some rations.

Another thing we do is inspect all of these rations I just mentioned on a routine basis, make sure they are still good, and if not, that they are rotated. Natick develops these rations and we have veterinarians working on the staff there at Natick who have graduate degrees in food technology, to help them develop rations. So they developed what is called the Meal Ready to Eat [ MREs]. This meal was developed and the components are produced in different factories all over the United States, and then those separate components are shipped to ration assembly plants. We have veterinary service personnel stationed in those ration assembly plants to inspect them and make sure that they contain what they're supposed to, and that they're properly packed, and packaged to endure the required years of storage. In our inspections around the world, we began to

find problems with these MREs. We were finding the OD colored plastic bag over each of the 12 separate meals swollen. No one could determine what the problem was.

I retired in February of 1985, and in the summer of 1986 I was called back to active duty to head a study group which went all over the United States to inspect these MRE's, both at the component producing plants and at the ration assembly plants, to determine what was causing this problem because we felt like we had a basically good ration. But all of a sudden it was beginning to swell.

This MRE, Meals Ready to Eat, study team consisted of approximately 20 individuals representing every possible facet of the food industry—food packaging, food technology, food micro-biology, etc. We had them all, and it was an outstanding group of individuals. Most of them were civilians. Colonel Jack Barck, Veterinary Corps, participated in this study as the invaluable operations officer who coordinated our travels, and arranged airplane tickets, rental cars, hotels, typing of reports, mailings, and communications. The study would have been impossible without him.

This study lasted over six weeks. We covered most of the United States, and finally did identify the problems with the Meals Ready to Eat, and prepared and issued a written report which outlined in great detail the causes of the problem and what corrective measures were needed.

Initially there was some concern about the MRE's plastic pouches, packing, and packaging materials. The study concluded there were no problems in these areas.

The MRE's were developed by the U.S. Army Laboratories, Natick, Massachusetts, under more-or-less laboratory conditions and careful, step-by-step inspections.

The MRE's purchased by the DPSC for long term storage were produced by a

number of low-bidder companies with varying experience. Some minority contracts were awarded companies with no experience in food production, handling, or sanitation and were indirect causes of the problem.

Direct causes of the problem were:

1. Inadequate management, supervisory, and quality assurance personnel in some plants producing the twelve main-entree meal pouches.
2. Failure to properly seal the twelve main entree pouches due to overfilling, food being caught in the seal, improperly adjusted sealing machine, lack of or inadequate inspection of the seals.
3. Once sealed in the pouches, the entree items are then cooked in pressure-sealed retorts. Some of the "swellers" had not been cooked at the proper time or temperature.
4. Some of the main entree pouches were scratched, cut, or perforated by other pouches, conveyor belts, or by rough handling.
5. Some of the manufacturers of the main entree items did not have properly trained, experienced, equipped, or empowered in-plant quality assurance inspectors. It is noted that the Jolly Green Giant plant in Minnesota had the best QA inspection program. Each pouch inspector had a 12 inch magnifying glass enclosed in a neon tube ring on a flexible arm to inspect every single pouch for improper seals, cuts, scratches, abrasions, or perforations. It is further noted that the pouch seal corners and edge were extremely sharp and could make "paper cuts" if handled roughly or allowed to drop off a conveyor onto other pouches.
6. Some management personnel appeared to be in the business only for profit and did not seem to care about delivering a quality product; they were in the minority.

These were the main causes of the “sweller” problem which I remember. There may have been some others.

Once the causes were identified, the necessary corrective actions became self-evident.

The final report produced by the study team is on file in the offices of the Quartermaster General and the Chief of the Army Veterinary Corps and elsewhere.

The findings of the study were provided to Veterinary Service food inspection personnel and are used in performing inspections of these MRE's during production, at assembly plants, while in storage, and at time of issue.

The MRE “sweller” problem was solved in less than eight weeks, start to finish. Since that time, the MRE have performed outstandingly in Desert Storm, Somalia, Haiti, Grenada, Panama, Kosovo-Herzegovinia, and Afghanistan, and anywhere else U.S. forces are deployed.

The U.S. Army has obtained, compared, tested, evaluated, and tasted the field rations of every other modern army in the world and concluded the MRE is the best by far. I concur.

These corrective measures were implemented fully by the Army and by the various contractors, and when we had *Operation Desert Storm*, all of the participants in that operation subsisted on the Meals Ready to Eat, and for the first time in recorded military history, a prolonged military operation took place without a single known case of disease due to food-related causes.

There was one air base in Saudi Arabia at which the base commander was so pleased with the performance of his people that he told them that on a certain day they were going to have a unit party, and he ordered his procurement officer to go out on the local economy and procure various food items for this party. They had a party, and they all partook of the food provided, and a high

percentage of the unit was unable to function because of intestinal disorders for quite a time, and this individual was in a hard position to explain what had happened to his men. But it was really a pleasure to read about the results of that war insofar as the nonexistent casualties due to food poisoning.

We in the Veterinary Corps felt that we had all played a very major role in this by ensuring through our inspection throughout the procurement, transportation, storage, and the issuing of these rations that they were safe for consumption, and I think the fact that we had no food-borne disease casualties, it's hard to put a dollar value on that figure. But when you think of the hundreds or thousands of people who normally are made ill in military operations, and this was prevented; there is a tremendous savings there of manpower and dollars.

Q: I think it's an amazing story, just the idea of having a war and never having any food problems.

A: Yes.

Q: You ducked out of the office and got to be a civilian, and then came back on active duty. How long did you stay on active duty?

A: Something over six weeks. We were traveling for about six weeks, and then we spent some time writing our reports, and then we went into Washington and presented the report to the Quartermaster Corps general officer, Maj. Gen. Ed Honor, who had initiated the study. By the way, he and I had gone to the Army War College together, so when he ran into this problem, my name came to his mind. Some of the benefits of the War College and Command and General Staff College are the friends one makes while there.

Q: Did you have any other problems while you were Chief of the Veterinary Corps? I know you probably had lots of them, but any outstanding that you would like to mention? When you left as Chief, who took your place? Were you able to brief him, in other words? Did he get in so you could brief him?



A: Yes. Brig. Gen. (Ret) Robert R. Jorgensen (Chief Veterinary Corps, 1985-1988) followed me. We had worked together for years. When I left Europe to come back to become Chief, he replaced me most ably in the position I had been occupying in Europe. So we thought alike, and that's one thing I touched on early on. When I left office, I closed the door behind me and forgot about it because I knew that the Corps, to which I had devoted 31 years, was well able to continue, and it did, and it has, and it is still functioning superbly today.

Jorgensen was followed by Brigadier General Robert E. Via, Jr. (Chief Veterinary Corps, 1988-1990).

Q: So then if you look back over that 31 years, is there anything that you might have done differently as you think about it?

A: I'm sure there's a great many things I could have and should have done differently, but there were a few things, such as the Combat Casualty Care Course, that I wished to initiate and was unable to do so.

When I came into the office of the Chief, I had a list of things I wanted to accomplish while I was there, and I ran through that list and that took about four years, and then when I finished that, that's when I had the strategic planning conference. I had run out of ideas, so I wanted to get ideas from other veterinary officers, and we did get a lot of ideas, and started on a new list of things, a to-do list. I'm sure that each successive chief did the same thing.

Many of these things that I've touched on were problems in 1916, and some of them are still problems today. Many of the Chiefs faced the same problems that I faced. We each had about a four or five year period to serve as the engineer of the train and keep it on the tracks, and I'm sure we all did our best to do that, and do anything we could to improve the train as it ran along.

The veterinary service performs a great many essential functions in the armed forces today in a highly effective and cost efficient way. This is becoming

more and more recognized. We must continue, forever, to explain these functions to both the military and civilian communities.

As we discussed earlier, there is still a black hole of a lack of knowledge about this, and that's why I started the program of having each veterinarian brief each installation commander periodically, or whenever the installation commander changed, brief them on what we are doing for them, and this has tremendous results within the military. We need to do the same thing in the civilian community, but every little fringe, every little facet of activity in the United States has their own parochial interests, and everyone wants to feel more important, and more recognized, and all you can do is just keep plugging away and do the best you can at the time.

### **Retirement, 1985**

I retired in 1985, and came back to San Antonio, Texas, where I stayed for a couple of years. I then moved to my home-town where I graduated from high school, Uvalde, Texas, and since then I've been ranching and farming continuously. I had an Exxon filling station and a convenience store for two years. I bought it as a non-brand name station, and then got Exxon to take it under their wing as an Exxon station and improved the business considerably, and I ended up selling it to my son-in-law, so he's now running it very successfully.

I have two sons who now live in College Station, Texas, and they're 40 years old. One of them graduated from A & M and another one came very close to graduating, but they both enjoyed about all the education they could endure, I guess, and went in business in College Station and are both doing very well. One of them is married and has two grandchildren. The three of us, my two sons and I, have gone into the real estate business there in College Station. We have rental apartments. One of my sons, Ramsay A. Ramsey, works full time at managing these apartments, maintaining them, renting them, and doing whatever needs to be done, and that has kept him busy. I went up there about every three months for two or three years and I would stay a week and work



Brig. Gen. Frank Allen Ramsey: In retirement at Uvalde, Texas

with him, and then I began to feel like I really wasn't needed, so I've quit going so frequently. I go about once or twice a year now, mainly just to visit.

My other son, Randal R. Ramsey, has a fence building company and is doing very well with a 20-year reputation for fine work. He builds cedar fences, decks, bridges, and gazebos.

I'm still farming and I'm still ranching. I have a brother who lives 65 miles north of me, and ranches. I had four sisters. Two of them have passed away, and two of them are still living in Uvalde. One is married and one lives by

herself on our family home place. I check on both of them every day and help them whenever they need it.

When I retired from the Army in 1985, I came back to San Antonio, Texas with my wife, and we lived there for about 2.5 years. In the Veterinary Corps, especially during my last 15 years, I did a lot of traveling. I think when I retired and was home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it became an untenable situation for both of us. So I was divorced in 1988. Several years later I remarried, and the lady I remarried, Mary Lou Cain, has a son and daughter, both approximately 40 years old, and they each have two children. The daughter-in-law lives here in Uvalde and we have her two grandchildren here with us, an 18 year old girl and an 11 year old boy, and we see a lot of them. My stepson lives in Seguin, Texas, and he has a boy and a girl, and we see them often.

So life goes on, and enjoyment of retirement is just not appreciated by anyone until they do it. But when you've been getting up at 5:00 in the morning for 30 years and then all of a sudden you can sleep as late as you want, it's a pretty good feeling. I still get up fairly early every morning, and still am able to put in a good day's work. I'm still in reasonably good health, so I think I'll continue to enjoy life for a few more years.

I'm sure there are many areas that after being retired 15 years I can't think of. I don't know whether any of them are of historical significance or not, but if I think of any, I'll try to write myself a memory jogger and perhaps we'll have another opportunity later on.

Q: Thank you very much, General Ramsey. I appreciate it.

A: Thank you. This is a wonderful project you are engaged in. I wish that when I became Chief I could have had access to accounts like this from each of my predecessors. I believe they would have been of great benefit. I certainly do appreciate your hard work on this project.



## Glossary

AMEDD	Army Medical Department
A&M	(Texas) Agricultural and Mechanical
A&P	Atlantic & Pacific
AVMA	American Veterinarian Medical Association
BASEC	Base Section
CCCC	Combat Casualty Care Course
CDC	Combat Development Command
COMZ	Communications Zone
CONUS	Continental United States
DOD	Department of Defense
DVM	Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
EM	Enlisted Men
GAO	Government Accounting Office
IG	Inspector General
JFK	John F. Kennedy
MC	Medical Corps
MD	Medical Doctor
MEDCAP	Medical Civic Action Program
MEDCOM	Medical Command
MFSS	Military Field Service School
MR&DC	Medical Research and Development Command
MRE	Meals Ready to Eat
MSC	Medical Service Corps
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
NCOIC	Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge
NODEX	New Offshore Discharge Exercises
OD	Olive Drab
OTSG	Office of The Surgeon General
Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy
PM	Preventive Medicine
PMO	Preventive Medicine Officer

POL	Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants
QA	Quality Assurance
R&D	Research and Development
SS	<i>Schutzstaffel</i>
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe
TA&M	Texas Agricultural and Mechanical
TDY	Temporary Duty
TO&E	Table of Organization and Equipment
USAR/ANG	United States Army Reserve/Army National Guard
USMA	United States Military Academy
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USAREUR	United States Army, Europe
VC	Veterinary Corps
ZI	Zone of Interior