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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY  
PROGRAM INTERVIEW OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RETIRED)  
EMMETT PAIGE, JR.**

**BY**

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SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW  
OF  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RETIRED) EMMETT PAIGE, JR.

by

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: Executive Summary: Senior Officer Oral History Program Interview Of Lieutenant General (Retired) Emmett Paige, Jr.

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This paper summarizes information provided by Lieutenant General (Retired) Emmett Paige, Jr. during interviews conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Craig B. Hanford from October 1996 to April 1997 as part of the U.S. Army War College/U.S. Army Military History Institute Senior Officer Oral History Program. This summary highlights the life, experiences, and insights of four decades of Army service. Only the thirteenth black American to be promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in the history of the U.S. Army, he was the first black Army Signal Corps officer to rise to the rank of Lieutenant General and the first black General Officer to become an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

The story begins in a different time. A time when America was high with the euphoria of having won a world war. A time when the light of freedom had not been easily extinguished by the darkness of fascism. A time when millions of people in Europe regained their freedom in a long hard fought war, yet millions in America were still seeking the freedom promised them by a president more than eighty years ago. A time when a young black kid dropped out of high school to join the US Army and become one of its greatest visionaries. It begins in 1947.

The story is the oral history of retired Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. as it was recorded in seven interview sessions commencing in October 1996 and ending in February 1997. Each interview session took place at General Paige's office in the Pentagon during the final months of his tenure as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (ASD(C3I)). The average length of each interview session was about two hours utilizing a total of thirteen 60 minute audio cassette tapes. A copy of the interview questionnaire is attached as Appendix A. The audio tapes and associated transcripts are on file with the Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. retired from the United States Army in June 1988, with over 41 years of military service to our great nation. The author was fortunate to have met General Paige in 1985 when he was commanding the Information

Systems Command (ISC) as a captain assigned to one of ISC's major subordinate commands, the Information Systems Engineering Command (ISEC). Having known General Paige all of these years since then, it was clear there was an important story that needed to be told about a unique and audacious visionary whose contributions to the development and modernization of Army communications and information systems is universally heralded and unparalleled. He is a "soldier's soldier" whose commitment to excellence forms the foundation of his philosophy even today. This oral history is a testament to his service and commitment.

The story begins in Jacksonville, Florida, a small town back in the 1930's that exemplified the pre-war south; the segregated south. General Paige was born on 20 February 1931<sup>1</sup> to Emmett Sr. and Elizabeth Paige. He started school early at the age of four having studied with his sister under his mother's tutelage.

*"My mother worked with my sister teaching her the times tables, which meant we couldn't be outside playing, so I figured I might as well learn them too. So my mother decided she would put me in school."<sup>2</sup>*

He first attended Franklin Street School, later named Matthew W. Gilbert, through junior high before going on to the only black high school in Jacksonville, Stanton High. There he received a good industrial arts education learning everything from printing to automotive mechanics. Boxing became his best sport. So much so that General Paige aspired to become the world heavyweight champion. Unfortunately he was too small so he fought welter

weight and light heavyweight all the way up until his first assignment as a lieutenant. It was his wife who eventually put a stop to his career.

It was not long before "I had enough and decided I would go off to bigger and better things and that was it."<sup>3</sup> So he dropped out of high school and joined the merchant marines as a mess man in the mess hall and a "wiper" in the engine room. The lure of good pay and travel caused him to decide to become a merchant marine, but it did not last too long. While in port at Jacksonville, a fire on board ship changed General Paige's mind about life on the sea, so he went home and ran into a visiting Army recruiter.

It was the drafting of his first cousin from Cuba and his idol General Patton that directed General Paige towards the Army. He and his cousin were close, but Paige was too young to join the Army at the same time as his cousin, so he followed the war closely in the papers. This led him to idolize General Patton as a hero; even to shed a tear when Patton was relieved for slapping a soldier.

Again, his intelligence caused him to stand out. Having taken the entrance exam in high school and missing only one out of the 50 questions, the recruiter was anxious to get him to fill an open slot in the Army. During the years after World War II, the Army was invoking Sections 368 and 369 of the regulations to discharge blacks for disciplinary and/or aptitude reasons. The

emphasis, at that time, was not on high school education or completion but on entrance exam scores and General Paige was highly recruited for his high test score. He enlisted at the young age of 16 and completed his GED after basic training.

How did General Paige begin an Army life in communications? It was a simple decision based on temperature - training at Fort Dix, NJ was not as hot as elsewhere.

*"The recruiter said, 'You have qualified for the ground forces or the Air Corps.' I said, 'OK, where does the Air Corps get basic training?' They said, 'Shepherd Field in Texas.' I said, 'OK, what is the temperature out there?' He said, 'a hundred and five, a hundred and ten.' I said, 'What about the ground forces?' 'Fort Dix, New Jersey.' 'What is the temperature there?' He said, 'In the nineties.' I said, 'I'll take it.' So that is how I ended up in the Army rather than in the Air Corps."*<sup>4</sup>

That decision resulted in his beginning basic training in the only black training regiment at Fort Dix, the 365<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The Army trained blacks at only two installations during those years; Fort Knox and Fort Dix. So General Paige joined Major General (Retired) Harry Brooks at Fort Dix, and due to his high test scores, was trained in communications as a radio operator.

Basic training was supervised by technically competent and knowledgeable black signal officers who had been recalled to duty and had been former enlisted men before attending Officer Candidate School (OCS). The Army was so segregated that only

black officers trained the black soldiers in basic training at Fort Dix. Very few black officers could be found in any units other than basic training units and this accounted for General Paige finding himself alone in future officer assignments.

General Paige's first assignment after basic training was with the 159<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery (FA) Battalion, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Nara, Japan. Again his high test scores worked for him. Those with the highest scores went to artillery and technical service units as opposed to infantry units. The 159<sup>th</sup> FA was the only black FA battalion in the division and was consistently at double strength before the Korean War. Consequently, half the unit trained with the artillery pieces in the morning and half in the after noon. As was the rule in the segregated Army, the 159<sup>th</sup> FA supported the black 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. Although President Truman had signed the executive order to integrate the Army, implementation had not really begun.

For a very short period of time as a child, General Paige was a Boy Scout. A short time because his parents couldn't afford to buy him a uniform. But long enough for him to learn Morse Code, radio procedures and how to build crystal radios. This early experience eventually served him well in the Army. He was able to build his speed up to 21 words per minute by practicing constantly with other black soldiers in the radio section and throughout the division.

*"My black mates and me would lay in bed at night and send codes to each other. We would*

curse each other out; we would do all sorts of things sending code to each other. We wouldn't talk in English, we would talk in Morse code. That is how we learned and built our speed up. We practiced during the day just sending and receiving code. Then we would listen to the international news service. Then we would get on the nets and send code in the division radio net and we tried to hold our own with those white boys. Everybody had their own best. We all knew one another from all over Japan. Anytime we would get near another organization we would always go visit those people who we had met on the air to put a face with a key. Everybody had their own touch, their own rhythm and there was no doubt, if you were on duty, that we would know you were on duty. Although you might be 500 or 600 miles, we knew who was on duty on that shift just by their key."<sup>5</sup>

In January of 1949, General Paige reported to Fort Hood to be assigned to the Bridge Company, 17<sup>th</sup> Armored Engineers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division, as a radio operator and later the Communications Chief. After the outbreak of the Korean War, he was transferred to the all black 29<sup>th</sup> Heavy Tank Battalion. In this unit, he became close to his battalion commander and saw something that would spur him to seek a commission. During numerous training exercises, General Paige, as a sergeant, would watch lieutenants who were graduates of Texas A&M and West Point continually fail to operate their radios properly and raise the ire of the battalion commander. "I quickly concluded that if these guys could be lieutenants, I damn sure could be one. They didn't impress me as being very smart or very sharp...."<sup>6</sup> So, in

1951, he was off to Leadership School at Fort Gordon in preparation for Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Fort Monmouth.

Past experiences as a child would, yet again, come into play to help General Paige succeed. As a child, he had worked for an old Greek gentleman named Tony Picras in a "Head to Toe" shop. There he learned how to shine shoes, press clothes, and block hats. While at the Leadership School, then Candidate Paige was the epitome of precision. Yet, no matter how perfect his uniforms and bedding were for inspection, as the only black student he would get demerits and end up on Kitchen Patrol (KP). Eventually, the Commandant would explain to him that there was a reason why he was receiving such harassment. General Paige never forgot the Commandant's words:

*"You are the first Negro to go through here. You have set the standard for those that follow ... Unfortunately, you have to be not just as good as your white contemporaries; you have to be twice as good. I am not telling you that it is fair. It is not fair. I am not telling you that it is right; it is not right. But it is a fact of life. It is a reality. I want to be sure that you are prepared for it."*<sup>7</sup>

In the end, General Paige completed the school and went on to OCS at Fort Monmouth.

OCS was a pivotal experience in General Paige's career; one that almost derailed him. "I made the mistake of challenging an infantry instructor assigned to the course at the school there."<sup>8</sup> Candidate Paige went to extraordinary lengths to prove a teaching

point that he believed he answered correctly. In the course of doing so, the instructor, Captain Boyle, considered him "too smart" and submitted Candidate Paige for an Elimination Board. The Board decided to recycle Candidate Paige and have him redo Captain Boyle's phase of instruction. In the end, Candidate Paige graduated in July of 1952.

General Paige's first assignment following OCS was to an all black signal battalion, the 41<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion, Fort Bliss, Texas. There he was one of two black officers assigned; the other being Lieutenant Benjamin Alexander. The Army was still an Army with separate and segregated officer's clubs. The main club at Fort Bliss was for white officers only, while the club on south post was primarily for black officers. The only exception was if there was a command performance at the main club.

It was during this assignment that General Paige met his wife. Gloria McClary was an enlisted woman who worked in the detachment at William Beaumont Army Medical Center (WBMAC) and had joined the Army to be enlisted the same time as her brother. "I remember asking my wife's sergeant who's the best looking WAC [Women's Army Corps] over there. She gave a little thought and told me, Gloria McClary..."<sup>9</sup> They got married 1 March 1953 at Fort Bliss and his wife left the service. General Paige came back to Fort Bliss to marry her before going to his next assignment overseas. This was the beginning of a marriage that would endure for 43 years. Their love for each other and her

support for his Army career helped tremendously to overcome the bad times. "She knew what the Army was, she accepted that. She knew what the requirements were for me to be successful."<sup>10</sup>

Still a second lieutenant, Paige was assigned to the 315<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion as a platoon leader and the only black officer in a former all white unit from the Georgia/Alabama area. Shortly thereafter, the 315<sup>th</sup> was deactivated and consolidated with the 40<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion, which was formerly all black. General Paige then went to B Company, 40<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion and had a subsequent problem with his company commander, Captain Ken Styles. Captain Styles asked battalion headquarters to trade Paige for another Lieutenant by the name of Alvin Davis, who was a white OCS graduate. This request resulted from Captain Styles' perception that General Paige was trying to "take his company". Within a couple of months, General Paige was transferred to C company which was commanded by his former B Company Commander, Captain Ed Flemming and all were happy. Shortly thereafter, Captain Styles called Paige to apologize because he did not fully understand how much a backbone Paige was to the company and therefore felt threatened by Paige's attitude that he would get the work done and that company commander's needn't do anything but be there when needed. Consequently, a good officer efficiency report (OER) followed since Captain Styles still hadn't submitted one for General Paige.

This was an important OER for General Paige. Black officers did not get good OERs during that time in the Army. In addition, Paige had convinced himself that Fort Monmouth was right concerning the dangers of getting rated too high on OERs. So, before this OER, General Paige had refused to accept higher ratings and rewrote others to "tone them down." This resulted in his overall performance standing being below the Signal Corps median. He had hurt himself and had to work extremely hard to build his standing back up and become competitive. The OER from Captain Styles was an important one.

The incident with Captain Styles was not the only one that General Paige had to suffer. Lieutenant Colonel Harold Warren took command of the 40<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion and he called Paige to his office. Lieutenant Colonel Warren proceeded to tell him that integration was wrong, it wouldn't work, and that the quality of black soldiers work was inferior. Fortunately, General Paige followed his Captain Flemming's advice to keep his cool. Yet, Paige did make it clear to him that if Negro soldiers were poorly trained, then it was because of the poor training provided by their white leaders. Also, that by treating his soldiers with respect, Lieutenant Colonel Warren would easily gain their support. Such forthrightness changed Lieutenant Colonel Warren's opinion of General Paige and made him one of Paige's strongest supporters.

*"I invited him up when I was selected for  
Brigade and turned command over to my*

replacement -- he was there. When I came back as a three star to take over ISC, he was there. I made sure he was invited to all those things. When I retired from the Army, he was there. He was proud. Nobody could have been prouder than Harold Warren."<sup>11</sup>

This philosophy of respect was, in General Paige's eyes, key to ensuring positive black/white relations during those troubled times. Had white officers afforded such respect to black troops under their command, then that would have prevented many of the misperceptions regarding the battle worthiness of black soldiers during the Korean War.

With the 40<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion, General Paige "gyroscoped" (rotated) back to the Continental US (CONUS). The 40<sup>th</sup> switched with the 25<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion out of Fort Devens, MA. In this unit rotation cycle, General Paige demonstrated some of the "soldier's soldier" qualities for which he is known and exemplified some of his fundamental philosophy.

*"Old Emmett Paige, ex-sergeant, I wanted to be sure we had enough for our troops so I drew some from Karlsruhe where we had our supplies. Drew my quota from them and then went to Western Command down at Clayburn and drew my allocation from them. Everybody had enough of everything, batteries, sheets, whatever it took to be sure that we could do the job. I made damn sure we had that and the young lieutenants that came in they got a lesson from the old timer that said these are the things that you got to do so on and so forth and you got to listen to those platoon sergeants. If you're going to be great those platoon sergeants are going to make you great. That is just the way it is. Lieutenants are nobodies until those*

*sergeants and those troops -- they'll make you somebody -- they'll make you a hero."*<sup>12</sup>

These principles are key insights into the makeup of General Paige and set the stage for the direction of his career.

Prior to the 40<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion "gyroscoping" to Fort Devens, General Paige was promoted to First Lieutenant. While at Fort Devens, Paige participated in the implementation of a new division organizational concept where regiments were being replaced by battle groups. This resulted in those signal officers going to infantry divisions going to the Communication Officers Course at Fort Benning and those going to armored divisions going to the same course at Fort Knox. General Paige was with the second group of signal officers that went to Fort Benning and completed the course with ease. Unlike previous courses, he had none of the same racially motivated problems since the Army had been well along with integration; there were no all black units anymore. Upon completion, he was assigned to the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colorado.

Shortly after his arrival, the 9<sup>th</sup> Signal Company was reorganized into the 9<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion. General Paige was assigned to B Company and became the Executive Officer (XO). In addition, he was acting company commander for the majority of the time because his company commander was a distinguished marksman. This required him to spend a significant percentage of his time

with the Army Marksmanship Team, thus affording Paige considerable command experience as a First Lieutenant.

General Paige is eventually promoted to Captain, but not before being boarded for cause. During a background investigation for a security clearance, he was mistakenly listed as Absent Without Official Leave (AWOL) while assigned to the 29<sup>th</sup> Heavy Tank Battalion. Fortunately, his former commander, Lieutenant Colonel Cecil Shoddy, vouched for him but the allegation surfaced while the Captain Promotion Board was in session. This resulted in Paige being notified prior to the list being released that he was to appear before a Show Cause Board. The board process was extremely stressful for General Paige because of the potential that his Army service could have been terminated. That was not to be the case as he was cleared of the allegations and promoted to Captain in November of 1958. After which, he became both the battalion S3 (Operations and Training Officer) and assistant division signal officer as a new captain.

It is interesting to note that during those years shortly before and after 1957, there were few black senior officers in the Army. The senior black officers in the Army for many years were Colonels Deveaux, Robinson, and Taylor. Colonel Deveaux was a chaplain who aspired to become Chief of Army Chaplains but never made it. His son later served as a chaplain under General Paige. Colonel Robinson was viewed as general officer material until his picture appeared in Ebony Magazine with a white

secretary. It wouldn't be until the latter half of the Vietnam War before another black officer would follow Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis to flag rank.

General Paige felt strongly that the performance of black officers in the Vietnam War and the attitudes of successive Chiefs of Staff of the Army (CSA) paved the way for black officers to reach flag rank. Paige views the CSA as key to setting the tone for the officer corps regarding the advancement of black officers. This was particularly important when one notes the number of division commanders that have been black during the tenure of a given CSA.

A call from Washington resulted in a reassignment to Provisional Military Assistance Group-Korea (PROVMAG-K) for a 13 month overseas tour. In reality, he was assigned to the 57<sup>th</sup> Signal Company, 304<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion. General Paige was given responsibility for all of the military telephone systems serving Seoul and the Army Command and Administrative Network (ACAN) facilities, i.e. technical control and receiver/transmitter sites. This was a time before satellites and undersea cable; the Army depended heavily on HF (high frequency) radio. Transistorized systems have replaced vacuum tubes. This position made General Paige responsible for all the communications equipment that connected Eighth US Army with the outside world. He wasn't an engineer nor had a college degree, yet he installed new systems and decided what systems were to be used and how. It

was his intelligence, technical competence, and determination to get the job done that got him to that point with so much responsibility.

Officer Advanced Course (AOC) at Fort Gordon was next on General Paige's plate. But before he would attend, he was assigned to Fort Monmouth again to be the Chief, Combat Developments Branch, Signal Training Command. Here he controlled the requirements of projects like Tactical Operations System (TOS) and the first Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), the ANUSD 1, 2 and 3 drones. Unfortunately, the Maneuver Control System (MCS) would become a derivative of the TOS resulting in a program that survives until killed by the future Brigadier General Paige.

Finally, General Paige attended the Signal Officers Advanced Course. Given all of his experience and knowledge, the course was a snap for him. In fact, he considered it too easy and thought that they didn't fail enough people. "They didn't force people to really learn the fundamentals. What they were taught and tested on was the equipment capabilities."<sup>13</sup> General Paige saw this as the major failing of the Signal Corps school system, the lack of sufficient training in electrical engineering (EE) theory and fundamentals - the why and how systems worked. This was manifested in the low technical competence of the noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) and officers out in the field; most who were former cooks and motor sergeants from overage military occupational specialties (MOSs). He felt the problem

began with the Army utilizing the Human Resources Research Organization (HUMRO) to survey military schools resulting in a recommendation to make a major change in instructional emphasis; the Army was over training people.

*"My contention is if you teach them theory then as the new technology comes in the fundamentals will not change. I don't believe you have to spend as much time teaching them specific hardware as we do today."<sup>14</sup>*

General Paige fought hard to get the Army to recognize the problem and at least require signal officers to have a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. Unfortunately for the Army, he lost that battle.

General Paige still sees the Army as having not learned their lesson even today. Yet, now he sees the situation as having changed due to rapid technological advances and fiscal constraints. He felt that the Army needs to change its support philosophies and out source as much maintenance as possible. Unfortunately, General Paige is still finding a lot of resistance to this concept; the Army culture is too hard to change.

After the completion of AOC, General Paige returned to Fort Monmouth for a short assignment as the Acting Secretary of the General Staff (SGS), US Army Electronics Command (ECOM). He held this job as a captain when the position required a full colonel. For him it was an exciting job. Signal Corps stopped being a tech service and a new command was standing up. He was a captain

doing a colonel's job based solely on his experience and knowledge. Having no degree at all, he was still able to gain the respect of senior officers in ECOM, to include those with a Ph.D. It would be after an assignment to Vietnam that General Paige would obtain his bachelor's degree.

The Army decided to ship him to the Pacific for his next assignment. General Paige became the Systems Status Officer, Defense Communications Agency (DCA) - Southeast Asia. It was a job similar to that of a watch officer where Paige tracked the operational status of all Pacific communications facilities and networks, particularly those in SOUTHEAST Asia. He work in a Network Operations Center (NOC) that put AT&T's to shame. Due to the increase in intensity of the Vietnam War, he spent a considerable amount of time in Vietnam and Thailand planning and engineering communications systems prior to the major war buildup. His efforts resulted in the development and construction of what was to become the integrated wide band communication system that supported the command and control (C2) function for the war. General Paige's determination to ensure and maintain technical excellence was clearly evident during this assignment. Not only did he build a reliable system, but he did so to commercial CCITT standards, which were more stringent than DCA's. He achieved this with a hand picked staff of personnel that would follow him throughout the rest of his career.

Although the Army was integrated during the Vietnam War, it was not without its racial problems. Much has been written about the racial climate of the Army during the war and a lot centers on the performance and attitudes of the black soldiers. What is not known is the effect poor leadership had on the racial climate at that time. General Paige clearly identified that leadership played a significant part creating the problems and impressed his superiors with his ability to get them to refocus on that aspect when dealing with a racial situation. An example of his success was when confronted with the prevailing attitude that black soldiers should not be allowed to congregate while attending a senior staff meeting. Paige immediately spoke out against such policies and convinced his leadership that the best approach was for the leaders to talk to their black soldiers and learn about the real problems.

*"Anyway it was bad news over there. I believe that a lot of the senior leadership were running in fear. In fear of blacks. God forbid that we ever let the Army get to the point again where things are so bad people don't understand leadership, don't understand how to deal with people of different races, different colors, what not."<sup>15</sup>*

General Paige feels that the this philosophy is key to race relations in today's Army. It has been more than 20 years since the Vietnam War ended, yet he thinks that things have not gotten better; that today's leadership is blind to the problems that exist in the Army.

It was during this tour in the Philippines that he was promoted to Major. General Paige was relieved to have been promoted since there were few black field grade officers in the vicinity. It would be at this point in time that a major would expect to attend the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, KS, but that was not to be for General Paige. The first time he was ever to set foot on Fort Leavenworth was as a Major General. Neither did he complete the course by correspondence. During that period of the Army's history, one could receive constructive credit for CGSC and that is what occurred for General Paige.

The technical competence and intelligence that had served him so well had now brought him to the attention of senior Army leadership. The commanding generals of both Army Materiel Command and Communications/Electronics Command thought enough of Paige's abilities that they developed a plan for his future. The work he was doing was too important to the war effort, so they agreed to have him finish his project in Vietnam, give him a combat battalion command, and then give him constructive credit for CGSC as opposed to sending him to attend CGSC now. After all of these assignments were completed, then he was to go get a college degree to ensure that nothing stood in the way of his making general officer. BG Thomas Rienzi's comments summed it up:

*"... the only thing that can stop you from becoming a general officer is the fact that*

*you don't have a degree. We are going to give you a command so you'll be given constructive credit for C&GSC when you finish that. Then there is nothing else in the way. Your top priority when you leave here is to get a degree even if it is in basket weaving."*<sup>16</sup>

Thus, General Paige moved to Vietnam as the Project Officer, and later Deputy Project Manager for the Integrated Wide Band Communications System (IWCS).

In this assignment, General Paige continued to improve upon the system that he had begun building while assigned to the Philippines. His innovative and unique system designs resulted in communication capabilities that allowed the tactical unit to provide transmission/reception links from the fox hole to the White House. President Lyndon Johnson made frequent use of this capability throughout the war. It was all high frequency (HF) based because satellite communications were in its infancy. Paige installed sophisticated telephone switches thereby providing the capability of establishing telephone links across the Pacific without human intervention. He had the unique ability of looking at the problem with a systemic perspective. Even in that earlier time, General Paige was thinking about the efficiencies to be gained from implementing the concept of interoperability.

The promotion to Lieutenant Colonel was still a surprise to General Paige. He had fully expected to retire as a major with 20 years of service. But rank was never a priority with him; he

felt that all he needed to do was to concentrate on doing a good job and promotions would follow. With the promotion comes a new assignment, so off to Vietnam he goes as the Chief, Special Projects Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Signal Brigade.

It was General Paige's responsibility to finish the work he began with IWCS. With the scope of the war increasing, IWCS had to be reengineered. To do this, Paige collected a select group of officers and enlisted, all of whom had degrees, and redid the system to provide better capability. It was a monumental undertaking that was accomplished with efficiency under wartime conditions. In spite of the TET offensives and periodic artillery shelling, General Paige continued to install the hilltop receiver/transmitter sites and never lost one to enemy attack.

After 12 months in this assignment, he was extended for six more months in Vietnam to take command of the 361<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Signal Brigade. Selection Boards did not select battalion commanders during that time, generals did, and as was promised, he was given command of a battalion. This unit had communication responsibility for the northern half of South Vietnam, to include links to Thailand and the Philippines. General Paige's philosophy of command was simple: first, mission accomplishment; second, everyone goes home safely; third, respect each other; fourth, know your job; and lastly, use common sense. It was a fun time for him if only for six months. One noteworthy

aspect of this assignment was that he had a female warrant officer under his command; a unique situation given how few women were in the war.

With battalion command completed, General Paige was assigned to DCA as a Communications Staff Officer in the Voice Network Global Management Branch. His responsibilities included management of the Automatic Secure Voice Communications system (AUTIS/VOCOM). This provided him the opportunity to work with the services to continue to ensure technical communications excellence, particularly during the delicate peace negotiations. The need for secure and reliable communications was critical as the war wound down. In addition, this assignment allowed him to broaden his joint perspective.

It was during this assignment that General Paige worked on his degree. BG Shulke personally directed Paige to take whatever classes necessary, day or night, to complete his degree. His sense of duty wouldn't allow him to take duty time for class, so he went to school five nights a week in a University of Maryland program taught at the Pentagon. It was difficult at first, but he soon learned how to prioritize his time in order to successfully work all day and then go to class at night. The experience not only paid off with obtaining a bachelor's degree, but he developed study habits that paid off in his next assignment.

Good fortune was with General Paige at this juncture in his life; he was selected for promotion to Colonel and selected to attend the US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA. The confidence that the senior leadership had in his abilities was evident in these significant selections. As significant as they were, he felt compelled to continue to pursue an advanced degree from Penn State while attending the War College. All in all, he considered his time at Carlisle as one of the best years of his life. It was a time for him to reflect, study and meet new people; people who were to become future generals. Surprisingly enough, he became the second person in his class to later make BG and he sat on the promotion boards for many of his classmates. Out of the ten black officers who were in his class, approximately half made flag rank.

From the War College, General Paige went to the US Army Communications Command (ACC) as the Deputy Chief of Staff (DCoS). This was instead of going to Alaska as the assignments branch wanted. Again, the senior leadership decided what was best for Paige's career and according to them, what was best was for him to command a signal group. Consequently, he was the DCoS for six months in preparation for taking command of the 11<sup>th</sup> Signal Group. Yet, while DCoS, he did participate in the discussions regarding the consolidation of the Computer Systems Command (CSC) with ACC. General Paige did not support consolidation, but years

later he was to witness just such a consolidation under his command.

Command of 11<sup>th</sup> Signal Group took him to Fort Huachuca, AZ. The desert post was too far out in the middle of nowhere for General Paige's taste, yet he considered the job, work, and weather great. He received excellent support from the ACC staff, but the quality of the soldiers under his command left a lot to be desired. He concentrated on taking the best and brightest NCOs and officers and putting them into the right positions to maximize unit efficiency. In addition, Paige challenged the system by having all of his personnel positions coded both male and female so that women could be utilized more effectively and advanced. He attacked long held notions about what females could or could not do and what positions they could or could not hold. "So from my experience there I figured the integration of the Army with additional females wasn't going to be a big deal."<sup>17</sup>

Command of the group was about to end because while sitting on the lieutenant colonel promotion board, General Paige was notified that he had been selected for promotion to Brigadier General. This was the culmination of all the hard work he had done and the fulfillment of the promises made by the leadership. Notably, the one person that stood out as Paige's preeminent mentor over the years and forecasted this event was the one who called him first with the good news, General Thomas Matthew Michael Rienzi.

This promotion made General Paige the 13<sup>th</sup> black officer to ever attain flag rank in the Army and the first black officer to reach flag rank in the 116 year history of the Signal Corps.<sup>18</sup> Although one not to ego trip, it did cause him to be more aware of his image and his position as a role model. Also, he felt it that much more important that he continue to serve on selection and promotion boards as the required minority representative. Whereas, General Paige had been called to serve frequently before, he volunteered more often to ensure that he served on whatever board was be convened. Thus, he served on more boards than any other officer in the Army during those years until retirement.

*"I knew why I was being assigned there and I knew what was expected of me by the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Secretary of the Army and had no reservations about speaking up on behalf of minorities to include women. I insisted that everybody get a fair shot but would stand up there and speak up on behalf of the minority officers as their records came across."<sup>19</sup>*

General Paige was frocked to BG in April of 1976 prior to taking command of both the Communications Electronics Engineering Installation Agency (CEEIA) and the Communications Systems Agency (CSA) at Fort Monmouth and Fort Huachuca respectively. Both of these organizations supported each other in that the CSA was responsible for communications projects and CEEIA was responsible for engineering the projects. The CSA also doubled as the

Project Manager (PM), Defense Communications Systems-Army (PM DCS-A). This forced him to divide his time between both installations, so he spent one week out of each month at Fort Huachuca and three weeks at Fort Monmouth. With the help of Colonel deputies and Technical Directors, his job was much easier than expected.

General Paige's promotion to Major General in July 1979 coincided with his assuming command of the US Army Communications, Research and Development Command (CORADCOM). He truly felt up to the task of being more senior in rank and taking command of a larger organization. Now he was responsible for all of the research and development (R&D) and acquisition of all the tactical communications for the entire Army, to include computers. He found it to be a significant task to change the command's mind set regarding transitioning to commercial support and purchasing commercial of the shelf (COTS) equipment. The stage was being set for the future in Paige's struggle to change the command's culture. He was certain in his belief that the right way to go for the Army was to move towards commercial standards, away from MILSPECS, and take advantage of COTS purchases. Although unsuccessful in changing the culture during this command, he never gave up on his beliefs.

It was during this command that General Paige saw the disconnect between the combat developers and the material developers. He discovered that they were both out of synch which

resulted in less than optimal systems being fielded to the force. Although there is some improvement today with the advent of Battle Labs, General Paige feels that the key to significant improvement rests with educating the officer corps to be more technically competent.

Next, then Major General Paige assumed command of the US Army Electronics Research and Development Command (ERADCOM). The Army was undergoing considerable changes as it sought to structure itself in order to be more efficient. R&D and material development commands were undergoing several merges and splits. Now as the commander of ERADCOM, General Paige commanded ten world class technical laboratories, such as night vision electro-optics and Harry Diamond. This was one of his more enjoyable jobs because he was working with a lot of extremely well qualified people who were doing real R&D. It was also a job that two successive commanding generals of the Army Materiel Command (AMC) felt that he should have until the right 3-star billet became available.

General Paige took the opportunity during this command and the previous one to push his philosophy of advancing the education level of the officer corps.

*"In all the functional areas we need to push them out to get their advance degrees in information technology, computer science, and double E if we're going to exploit the technology that is available to us. I often tell people that I don't believe we've scratched the surface yet in terms of exploiting the technology that the computer*

*brings to us. We don't have a cadre of people out there that understand what its all about and that understand their functional area and how to translate this technology and use it in their functional area. I think we will continue to fail to exploit it fully."*<sup>20</sup>

He clearly saw the need to increase the level of technical competency throughout the Army if technology was to be really leveraged.

Finally, an opportunity for a 3-star billet presented itself. GEN Wickham, then the CSA, decided to merge some of the communications and computer related commands into the US Army Information Systems Command (ISC). General Paige was promoted to Lieutenant General and given command of ISC. Again, he was thankful that he had made it this far, especially since there were so few black officers who had made it to this level. Still, for a period of time, he was the senior black officer in the Army.

Up till now, General Paige had been a part of or influenced the transformation of the communications and computer organizations in the Army as the Army grew and embraced the new technologies. He had laid the foundation for military communications throughout most of the world and during the Vietnam War. He had managed and directed the development of communications and information systems that changed the way we did business in the Army. Now, with the command of ISC, General Paige will realize the culmination of a concept that he has long

held fast to, the systemic application of communications and computers as information systems.

Out of this merger evolved the Information Mission Area (IMA) which General Paige was responsible for managing. It was a difficult task to consolidate five disparate disciplines into one cohesive organizational function. General Paige thought that it was too much too soon and that the library, records administration, printing and publications disciplines should remain with the Adjutant Generals Corps. This belief he still holds to this day.

General Paige felt strongly that for the Army to benefit from implementing the IMA, the DISC4, ISC, and AMC must work together as a team to provide the field what it needed. He considered it important to centralize under one command efforts to provide comprehensive information systems infrastructure installation, systems development, acquisition, and engineering. The Army would be better served when resources were needed to surge as in the case in Desert Shield/Storm. He considered it important to have one command that could ensure horizontal integration of information systems and interoperability as opposed to maintaining the traditional functional stovepipes. He was successful in achieving some of these objectives, but not all.

When the time came, General Paige was ready to retire. Then Secretary of the Army Stone and the CSA suggested that he extend

for one more year to be the Special Assistant for Information Management to the Secretary, but he declined. "If I would have stayed then I would have denied someone younger an opportunity to be promoted to three star and to two star, one star. It all cascaded down. I was ready and don't regret it a damn bit."<sup>21</sup> His prospects for attaining the rank of 4-star General were extremely small. He was a signal officer and the Army culture reserves those exalted positions primarily for the combat arms officers. He had served his country for 41 long years and it was time. So the story ends with the retirement of Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. from the US Army on 30 June 1988.

# APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES FOR  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL EMMETT PAIGE, JR. (RETIRED)  
SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

US Army War College, Senior Officer Oral History Program (SOOHP)  
Interview Questionnaire (18 October 1996)

**SUBJECT:** Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. (Retired)  
**Interviewer:** LTC Craig B. Hanford

**Session Number:** 1  
**Date:** 18 October 1996

**1. Background Development - Basic Biography.**

a. In order to develop an understanding of who you are, where you came from, and the general course of your life would you discuss:

(1) When and where were you born?

(2) Is this your hometown or did you grow up predominantly in another town?

(3) What primary and secondary schools did you attend?

(4) What were your parents names and where did your parents grow up?.

(5) Did you attend college? Which one, when, and the degree obtained?

(6) Did you hold any jobs before entering the Army? When?

**2. Military Career Assignment History.**

a. Enlisted Service:

(1) When did you join the Army and where?

(2) Where did you receive basic training? In what MOS?

(3) What was your first assignment after Basic Training?  
Duration?

(4) What other Enlisted assignments did you have? When,  
where, doing what, and how long?

(5) Did you attend any other Enlisted schools? When and  
where?

b. Officer's Candidate School (OCS):

(1) When did you attend OCS and where?

(2) What was your first assignment after OCS? Duration?

c. Company Grade Officer:

(1) What 2nd and 1st Lieutenant assignments did you have?  
When, where, doing what, and how long?

(2) What Captain assignments did you have? When, where,  
doing what, and how long?

(3) When were you promoted to each of the company grades?  
Due course?

(4) When and where did you attend OBC and OAC?

US Army War College, Senior Officer Oral History Program (SOOHP)  
Interview Questionnaire (18 October 1996)

**SUBJECT:** Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. (Retired)  
Interviewer: LTC Craig B. Hanford

**Session Number:** 1  
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**1. Background Development - Basic Biography.**

a. In order to develop an understanding of who you are, where you came from, and the general course of your life would you discuss:

(1) When and where were you born?

(2) Is this your hometown or did you grow up predominantly in another town?

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(4) What were your parents names and where did your parents grow up?.

(5) Did you attend college? Which one, when, and the degree obtained?

(6) Did you hold any jobs before entering the Army? When?

**2. Military Career Assignment History.**

a. Enlisted Service:

(1) When did you join the Army and where?

(2) Where did you receive basic training? In what MOS?

(3) What was your first assignment after Basic Training?  
Duration?

(4) What other Enlisted assignments did you have? When,  
where, doing what, and how long?

(5) Did you attend any other Enlisted schools? When and  
where?

b. Officer's Candidate School (OCS):

(1) When did you attend OCS and where?

(2) What was your first assignment after OCS? Duration?

c. Company Grade Officer:

(1) What 2nd and 1st Lieutenant assignments did you have?  
When, where, doing what, and how long?

(2) What Captain assignments did you have? When, where,  
doing what, and how long?

(3) When were you promoted to each of the company grades?  
Due course?

(4) When and where did you attend OBC and OAC?

d. Field Grade Officer:

(1) What Major assignments did you have? When, where, doing what, and how long?

(2) What Lieutenant Colonel assignments did you have? When, where, doing what, and how long?

(3) What Colonel assignments did you have? When, where, doing what, and how long?

(4) When were you promoted to each of the field grades? Due course?

(5) When and where did you attend CGSC and SSC?

(6) Were there any other military schools that you attended? When and where?

(7) Were there any civilian schools that you attended as a field grade? When and where?

e. Flag Officer:

(1) When were you promoted to Brigadier General? Where?

(2) What BG assignments did you have? When, where, doing what, and how long?

(3) When were you promoted to Major General? Where?

(4) What MG assignments did you have? When, where, doing what, and how long?

(5) When were you promoted to Lieutenant General? Where?

(6) What LTG assignments did you have? When, where, doing what, and how long?

**END OF SESSION ONE**

Note: Session one may be broken into multiple sessions depending on where we are at the end of our first scheduled two hour period.

**Army War College, Senior Officer Oral History Program (SOOHP)  
Interview Questionnaire (5 November 1996)**

**SUBJECT: Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. (Retired)**  
Interviewer: LTC Craig B. Hanford

**Session Number: 2**  
Date: 5 November 1996

**1. Childhood (from age 10) and Early Education (1941-1947).**

a. In order to develop an understanding of those things that shaped your personality, moral outlook, judgment and values, would you discuss your:

(1) Childhood, including family and friends.

(2) Growing up in your hometown?

(3) Primary and secondary education to include any sports or other activities in which you excelled.

(4) Other interests and hobbies.

b. Early influences:

(1) Discuss who or what in your home life significantly influenced you.

(2) Discuss the role your parents/siblings played during your early development years.

\* (3) Did any of your childhood teachers (through high school), coaches, ministers or others influence you in any way?

c. What other issues or areas of your formative years would you like to discuss?

**2. Early Career Development - Enlisted Service, OCS and Company Grade Years pre-Officer Advanced Course (1947-1961).**

a. Enlisted Service (Aug 47 - Jun 51):

(1) According to your assignment history your enlisted service began in 1947, after dropping out of High School. IN the last interview, you gave your reasons as to why you joined the Army and your recollections of your service. Would you talk about the racial climate in the Army at the time you entered active duty?

(2) Would you talk about other areas related to your enlisted service that you would like to discuss.

b. Officer's Candidate School (OCS) (Sep 51 - Jul 52):

(1) Who/what inspired you to apply for and attend the Signal Corps Officer's Candidate School (OCS) in 1951, five years after entering on active duty?

(2) What impact did growing up during WW II play in your decision to join the Army?

(3) Would you talk about the racial climate in the Army at the time you entered OCS?

(4) Were there any other Black or minority candidates in your OCS class? How were you and other blacks/minorities treated

while attending OCS? Did all minority candidates successfully complete the course?

(5) Were there any OCS classmates that you later served with? Did any of them surprise you as officers, as opposed to when you knew them as OCS candidates?

(6) Please talk about any other issues or areas related to your experience in OCS would you like to discuss?

c. First Assignment as an Officer (Aug 52 - Jan 53):

(1) Upon graduating from OCS your first duty assignment was the Outside Plant Construction Officer and later Platoon Leader, C Co., 41st Signal Bn, Ft Hood, TX. Would you talk about your service in the 41st Signal Bn?

(2) You were one of 2 Black Officers in the Battalion. Would you talk about your overall impressions of the Army in those early years, specifically as an officer serving in a segregated Army?

(3) You stated in the last interview that you met your wife, Ms. Gloria McClary, during this period and that she was an Enlisted Woman in the WACs. Did you encounter any problems because of this relationship?

(4) When did you and Ms. Gloria McClary get married? What has been the secret of your long lasting marriage?

(5) Your first assignment as an officer was 7 months long before you were reassigned to USAREUR. Why was that?

(6) Please talk about any other issues or areas you want to discuss regarding your first assignment as an Army Officer?

(7) What were your impressions of the overall performance of Black units in general during post WW II?

d. Platoon Leader (Apr 53-Jul 56) assignments, USAREUR, and Executive Officer assignments, Camp Drum and Ft Devens respectively (Jul 56-May 57):

(1) Following your first assignment you had two Platoon Leader and two Telephone and Teletype (T&T) Outside Plant Officer assignments while in the 40th Signal Battalion, Germany. Part of the reason for so many assignments was due to the Company Commanders you served under, correct? Did these reassignments have any impact on your performance or standing within Battalion?

(2) What other memories of those early Lieutenant assignments do you have that were not discussed in the last interview?

(3) How did those initial Lieutenant assignments prepare you for future assignments?

(4) In reviewing your service resume it appears that you had a 3 month stint as an Executive Officer (XO) for a Detachment at Camp Drum, NY. Why were you assigned there? What type of detachment was it?

(5) Then for 8 months you were again the T&T Outside Plant Officer and later XO of A Co., 40th Signal Battalion, Ft Devens, MA. How did this come about? Is this a result of the unit "gyroscoping" from USAREUR?

e. Infantry Communication Officer Course, Ft Benning, GA  
(Jul 57-Oct 57):

(1) Why were you sent to this course as opposed to the  
Signal School?

(2) How was the course of instruction? Did you have any  
problems like you did at OCS?

(3) What was your impression of the quality of Army  
training during those days?

f. 9th Signal Bn, Co. Commander and S-3 (Oct 57-Apr 59):

(1) Would you discuss your experiences in the 9th Infantry  
Division? Please include:

o Challenges of first Company Command (as a 1st Lieutenant)

o Quality of soldiers and units

o Morale

o Leadership structure

o Competence of leaders

o Segregation and discrimination

o Deployment to Korea

o Performance of Black units during this period

o Recollections of senior Army leaders and their reluctance to move swiftly with the desegregation of the Army.

o Who were the senior leaders that supported the desegregation of Black fighting units and what was the impact of their support on their careers?

o Who were the senior black officers serving in the Army at that time?

(2) Please discuss any other issues or areas regarding your assignment with the 9th Infantry Division that you would like to talk about?

g. Officer in Charge (OIC), 57th Signal CO., EUSA and Branch Chief, US Signal Training Command, Ft Monmouth (Jun 59-May 61):

(1) Following your 20 months with the 9th Infantry Division you had two short assignments. One was as the OIC, EUSA Telephone Exchange, 57th Signal Co. (Spt), Korea. What are your recollections regarding your assignment with this unit?

(2) Were you accompanied by your wife? How did she like the tour in Korea?

(3) Another short assignment was as the Military Branch Chief and later Combat Developments Branch Chief, Plans and Training Division, ACS G-3 (Operations), US Signal Training Command, Ft Monmouth, NJ. What are your recollections regarding your assignment with this unit?

h. Signal Officer Advanced Course (OAC), Ft Monmouth, NJ (Jun 61-Sep 61):

(1) What was life like as a student at that time?

(2) How challenging was the curriculum and how did it compare to the curriculum of the early 1980s just prior to your retirement?

(3) Was this the first integrated major Army school that you attended?

(4) What was it like and how were you treated by White officers?

(5) How many other Black officers were in your class and how did they do?

(6) Are there any other recollections regarding your advance course experience that you want to share?

**END OF SESSION TWO**

Note: Session two may be broken into multiple sessions depending on where we are at the end of our scheduled two hour period.

**Army War College, Senior Officer Oral History Program (SOOHP)  
Interview Questionnaire (22 November 1996)**

**SUBJECT: Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. (Retired)**  
Interviewer: LTC Craig B. Hanford

**Session Number: 3**  
Date: 22 November 1996

**1. Early Career Development (cont.) - Enlisted Service, OCS and  
Company Grade Years pre-Officer Advanced Course (1947-1961).**

g. Officer in Charge (OIC), 57th Signal CO., EUSA and Branch  
Chief, US Signal Training Command, Ft Monmouth (Jun 59-May 61):

(1) Following your 20 months with the 9th Infantry Division  
you had two short assignments. One was as the OIC, EUSA  
Telephone Exchange, 57th Signal Co. (Spt), Korea. What are your  
recollections regarding your assignment with this unit?

(2) Were you accompanied by your wife? How did she like the  
tour in Korea?

(3) Another short assignment was as the Military Branch  
Chief and later Combat Developments Branch Chief, Plans and  
Training Division, ACS G-3 (Operations), US Signal Training  
Command, Ft Monmouth, NJ. What are your recollections regarding  
your assignment with this unit?

h. Signal Officer Advanced Course (OAC), Ft Monmouth, NJ  
(Jun -Sep 61):

(1) What was life like as a student at that time?

(2) How challenging was the curriculum and how did it compare to the curriculum of the early 1980s just prior to your retirement?

(3) Was this the first integrated major Army school that you attended?

(4) What was it like and how were you treated by White officers?

(5) How many other Black officers were in your class and how did they do?

(6) Are there any other recollections regarding your advance course experience that you want to share?

**2. Middle Career Development - Company Grade Years post-Officer Advanced Course and Field Grade Years (1961-1969).**

a. Another short assignment was as the Branch Chief, Course Developments Branch, Schools Division, ACS G-3 (Operations), US Signal Training Command, Ft Monmouth, NJ. What are your recollections regarding your assignment with this unit?

b. Subsequently, you had another short assignment as the Acting Secretary of the Staff, US Army Electronics Command, Ft Monmouth, NJ. What are your recollections regarding this assignment with this command?

c. Systems Status Officer, Operations Branch, Defense Communications System, South East Asia Region, Defense Communication Agency (DCA), US Army Pacific Command, Clark AFB, Philippines (Nov 62-May 65):

(1) Again you are assigned to the Far East on an overseas tour. This time to the Philippines as a Systems Status Officer. Can you explain exactly what that title means? What are your recollections regarding your assignment with this unit?

(2) Were you accompanied by your wife? How did she like the tour in the Philippines?

(3) How any Black officers were assigned with you?

(4) How were you treated by the white officers in the command?

(5) This time frame was pre-Vietnam. Did it appear that the US was going to enter the war? How did it affect operations there?

(6) What was the racial climate among US soldiers stationed in the Philippines at that time?

(7) How were US Black soldiers treated by the local Philippine Nationals?

(8) You were promoted to Major during this assignment. Who promoted you? What were your thoughts at the time regarding achieving the rank of Major?

(9) Were there any other significant events that took place within the country, the Army, or your life during this period?

(10) When did you attend CGSC?

(11) Was CGSC truly "the best year of your life"?

(12) What were the overall strengths and weaknesses of the Army's Officer Training program at that time?

(13) What was the racial climate like at CGSC? Were there other Black officers in your class?

(14) Are there any other recollections about your staff college experience that you want to discuss?

d. Project Officer and later Deputy Project Manager, Integrated Wide Band Communications Systems, Procurement and Production Division, Office of the Project Manager, US Army Communications Systems Agency, Ft Monmouth, NJ (May 65-Aug 68).

(1) This assignment took you out of the tactical signal environment and placed you in a totally new realm, acquisition/procurement. Why this assignment as opposed to another tactical signal unit?

(2) Did you receive any specific training for acquisition? Did you feel prepared?

(3) Did you feel that this assignment would have made you less competitive relative to your peers who were still in tactical units?

(4) What were your duties and responsibilities as:

(a) Project Officer?

(b) Deputy Project Manager?

(5) What was the racial climate like for you in this "white collar" acquisition environment?

(6) Did you feel that your next assignment after this would be to Vietnam?

(7) You were promoted to Lieutenant Colonel during this assignment. Who promoted you? What were your thoughts at the time regarding achieving the rank of LTC?

e. Chief, Special Projects Division, Communications Systems Engineering Management Agency, 1st Signal Brigade, US Army Strategic Command, US Army, Vietnam (Aug 68-Jul 69).

(1) Your assignment history indicates that you served in Vietnam initially as a Division Chief in the 1st Signal Brigade. What were your duties and responsibilities?

(2) What do you recall about the TET Offensive of 1968 and what role did you and your unit play in that operation?

(3) What did your wife think of your being in Vietnam?

**3. Battalion Commander, 361st Signal Battalion, 1st Signal Brigade, US Army Strategic Command, US Army, Republic of Vietnam (Jul 69-Jan 70)**

a. Following your 12 month assignment in the Special Projects Division you assumed command of the 361st Signal Battalion in the same brigade. After your initial tour in Vietnam, when and how were you notified that you would command that particular unit?

b. What was your initial reaction when you learned of this news?

c. What was the date of the change of command, who did you succeed in command, was there a ceremony, and who officiated the ceremony?

d. Who was your Brigade Commander while you were in command and how long had he been in command when you arrived?

e. What was your Brigade Commander's leadership style like and how was your relationship with him?

f. Did you have any major disagreements with him regarding the deployment of your unit while in command? Please discuss.

g. How was your unit organized, what was its missions and where did it serve?

h. Would you discuss other major combat operations in which your Squadron was involved during your tour of duty?

i. Did any of your Company Commanders stand out as being particularly outstanding in combat? Please discuss.

j. Would you please discuss the quality of soldiers and junior leaders (platoon and below) assigned to your battalion at that time?

k. What was your Philosophy of Command?

l. How was the command and racial climate in your unit, and throughout the theater?

m. Discuss the adequacy of the Army's training system at the time in preparing you and your peers for combat duty in Vietnam? What were some of the shortcomings and how would you have fixed them?

n. What was the most important lesson you learned during your Command tour?

o. Discuss your relationship with leaders (peers or superiors) who stand out in your mind as having a major impact on your development as a combat leader?

p. Discuss any other important issues or relationships with individuals or organizations from your experience in Vietnam that need to be addressed.

q. Why were you in command for only 6 months?

**4. Post Vietnam assignments (Jan 70-Jan 75)**

a. Communications Staff Officer, Voice Network Global Management Branch, Voice Networks Management Division, Defense Communication Agency, Washington, DC (Jan 70-May 73)

(1) What were your duties and responsibilities in this assignment?

(2) How did you feel getting this assignment after having been in a combat command?

**END OF SESSION THREE**

Note: Session three may be broken into multiple sessions depending on where we are at the end of our first scheduled four hour period.

**Army War College, Senior Officer Oral History Program (SOOHP)  
Interview Questionnaire (30 December 1996)**

**SUBJECT: Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. (Retired)**  
Interviewer: LTC Craig B. Hanford

**Session Number: 4**  
Date: 30 December 1996

**1. Battalion Commander, 361st Signal Battalion, 1st Signal  
Brigade, US Army Strategic Command, US Army, Republic of Vietnam  
(Jul 69-Jan 70)**

a. Following your 12 month assignment in the Special Projects Division you assumed command of the 361st Signal Battalion in the same brigade. After your initial tour in Vietnam when and how were you notified that you would command that particular unit?

b. What was your initial reaction when you learned of this news?

c. What was the date of the change of command, who did you succeed in command, was there a ceremony, and who officiated the ceremony?

d. Who was your Brigade Commander while you were in command and how long had he been in command when you arrived?

e. What was your Brigade Commander's leadership style like and how was your relationship with him?

f. Did you have any major disagreements with him regarding the deployment of your unit while in command? Please discuss.

g. How was your unit organized, what was its missions and where did it serve?

h. Would you discuss other major combat operations in which your Squadron was involved during your tour of duty?

i. Did any of your Company Commanders stand out as being particularly outstanding in combat? Please discuss.

j. Would you please discuss the quality of soldiers and junior leaders (platoon and below) assigned to your battalion at that time?

k. What was your Philosophy of Command?

l. How was the command and racial climate in your unit, and throughout the theater?

m. Discuss the adequacy of the Army's training system at the time in preparing you and your peers for combat duty in Vietnam? What were some of the shortcomings and how would you have fixed them?

n. What was the most important lesson you learned during your Command tour?

o. Discuss your relationship with leaders (peers or superiors) who stand out in your mind as having a major impact on your development as a combat leader?

p. Discuss any other important issues or relationships with individuals or organizations from your experience in Vietnam that need to be addressed.

q. Why were you in command for only 6 months?

## **2. Post Vietnam assignments (Jan 70-Jan 75)**

a. Communications Staff Officer, Voice Network Global Management Branch, Voice Networks Management Division, Defense Communication Agency, Washington, DC (Jan 70-May 73)

(1) What were your duties and responsibilities in this assignment?

(2) How did you feel getting this assignment after having been in a combat command?

(3) What are your recollections regarding your assignment with this organization?

(4) In this assignment, you received significant joint experience. What was the joint environment like compared to similar staff assignments in the Army?

(5) During this time frame, you obtained your BA degree in General Studies from the University of Maryland. What made you decide to get your undergraduate degree at this time?

(6) Why the Univ. of MD? Why did you not get a degree in a science or technical field?

(7) How difficult was it for you while in your current assignment?

b. Student, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA (Jul 73-Jun 74)

(1) How did you feel when you heard you were selected for the War College? What were your thoughts?

(2) You were promoted to O-6 during this time frame. Was it before or after arriving at Carlisle?

(3) Who promoted you? What were your thoughts at the time regarding achieving the rank of COL?

(4) Was the War College "the best year of your life"? What did your wife think of the experience?

(5) What were the overall strengths and weaknesses of the War College program at that time?

(6) What was the racial climate like at the War College? Were there other Black officers in your class?

(7) Are there any other recollections about your War College experience that you want to discuss?

c. Deputy Chief of Staff, US Army Communications Command, Fort Huachuca, AZ (Jun 74-Jan 75)

(1) What are your recollections regarding your assignment with this unit?

(2) Why was it only for six months?

(3) What preparations were you able to make for your follow-on Group Commander assignment at the US Army Communications Command?

(4) Are there any other recollections regarding this assignment that you would like to discuss?

#### **END OF SESSION FOUR**

Note: Session four may be broken into multiple sessions depending on where we are at the end of our scheduled period.

\* = revised questions

\*\* = new questions

**Army War College, Senior Officer Oral History Program (SOOHP)  
Interview Questionnaire (27 January 1997)**

**SUBJECT: Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. (Retired)**  
Interviewer: LTC Craig B. Hanford

**Session Number: 5**  
Date: 27 January 1997

**1. Post Vietnam assignments (Jan 70-Mar 76) (cont.)**

a. Deputy Chief of Staff, US Army Communications Command,  
Fort Huachuca, AZ (Jun 74-Jan 75)

(1) What are your recollections regarding your assignment?

(2) Why was it only for six months?

(3) What preparations were you able to make for your  
follow-on Group Commander assignment at the US Army  
Communications Command?

(4) Are there any other recollections regarding this  
assignment that you would like to discuss?

b. Commander, 11th Signal Group, US Army Communications  
Command, Ft Huachuca, AZ (Jan 75-Mar 76)

(1) What were your thoughts when you first learned that you  
would be commanding the 11th Signal Group?

(2) What did you know about the history of the unit and its  
past accomplishments?

(3) Please talk about your tenure as Group Commander. Include in your discussion the following:

(a) Arrival at Ft Huachuca. First impressions of the post and how you were greeted and treated.

(b) Change of Command Ceremony and associated events. Who attended, who officiated the ceremony, who did you assume command from, etc. ...)

(c) How many Senior Commanders did you work for during your command tour? Talk about your relationship with each of them.

(d) Describe your leadership style and how it complemented or contrasted with that of your Senior Commanders. Do you recall any major differences or disagreements you had with your boss? How did you handle them?

(e) What was your Philosophy of Command and how did it differ or change from your Battalion Commander days?

(f) How was the Group organized and what were its missions?

(g) What were your specific objectives for the Group during your command tour? What significant challenges did you have to overcome to achieve your objectives?

(h) What were your significant accomplishments as Group Commander?

(i) There has been much talk and discussion about the poor quality of soldiers in the Army during the early 1970s near the

end of the Viet Nam War. Many have said that it was the worst Army of our nation's history, infested with drug abusers, alcoholics, racial conflict/tension, poor discipline and low morale. Would you talk about the quality of your soldiers and soldiers in the Army in general during that time?

(j) What were your impressions of the climate in the nation during those years regarding the United States' involvement in Vietnam? How and why did the national attitude change regarding Vietnam from the time you were a Battalion Commander to your Group Command years.

(k) Discuss the adequacy of the Army's training system at that time to include shortcomings and what you did in an effort to improve it.

(l) What were the most valuable lessons learned during your Group Command tour and how did the experience shape and prepare you for future senior leadership positions?

(m) How many Black General Officers were there during that time? With which ones did you have a personal or professional association?

(n) Who were your mentors during those days and how did they impact on your personal and professional development as a man and future senior leader?

(o) Who did you relinquish command to in Mar 76?

(p) Please discuss any other issues or areas related to your Group Command tenure that you feel are important.

## 2. General Officer assignments (Apr 76-Jun 88)

a. Commanding General, US Army Communications Systems Agency (USACSA), Ft Monmouth, NJ and US Army Communications-Electronics Engineering and Installation Agency (USACEEIA), Ft Huachuca, AZ, (Apr 76-Jun 79).

(1) You were promoted to Brigadier General on 1 Jun 76 after taking command in April. Were you "frocked"? Discuss the importance of that promotion to you and how you felt when the "star" was pinned on your lapel.

(2) Who promoted you to General Officer and who were the special guests in attendance?

(3) It was noted that you were the first black officer to reach flag rank in the 116-year history of the Signal Corps. How did that make you feel?

(4) Who was your boss, and what was your relationship with him like?

(5) What was the mission of the US Army Communications Systems Agency?

(6) What was the mission of the US Army Communications-Electronics Engineering and Installation Agency?

(7) Why were you commanding both USACSA and USACEEIA?

(8) How did you divide or share the responsibilities of commanding both organizations?

(9) What projects and Project Managers (PMs) did you have responsibility for and/or in your commands?

(10) What was STRATCOM and its relationship to your commands? To USACC?

(11) During that time frame, there appeared to be a "turf war" between AMC, USACC, and STRATCOM. What were the contentious issues?

(12) Neither USACSA or USACEEIA exist. What happened to them?

(13) Did the Army have a communications strategy at that time? What was it and how well did they implement the strategy?

**END OF SESSION FIVE**

Note: Session five may be broken into multiple sessions depending on where we are at the end of our scheduled period.

Army War College, Senior Officer Oral History Program (SOOHP)  
Interview Questionnaire (29 January 1997)

**SUBJECT:** Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. (Retired)  
Interviewer: LTC Craig B. Hanford

**Session Number:** 6  
**Date:** 29 January 1997

**1. General Officer assignments (Apr 76-Jun 88)**

a. Commanding General, US Army Communications Systems Agency (USACSA), Ft Monmouth, NJ and US Army Communications-Electronics Engineering and Installation Agency (USACEEIA), Ft Huachuca, AZ, (Apr 76-Jun 79).

(1) You were promoted to Brigadier General on 1 Jun 76 after taking command in April. Were you "frocked"? Discuss the importance of that promotion to you and how you felt when the "star" was pinned on your shoulder.

(2) Who promoted you to General Officer and who were the special guests in attendance?

(3) It was noted that you were the first black officer to reach flag rank in the 116-year history of the Signal Corps. How did that make you feel?

(4) Who was your boss, and what was your relationship with him like?

(5) What was the mission of the US Army Communications Systems Agency?

(6) What was the mission of the US Army Communications-Electronics Engineering and Installation Agency?

(7) Why were you commanding both USACSA and USACEEIA?

(8) How did you divide or share the responsibilities of commanding both organizations?

(9) What projects and Project Managers (PMs) did you have responsibility for and/or in your commands?

(10) What was STRATCOM and its relationship to your commands? To USACC?

(11) During that time frame, there appeared to be a "turf war" between AMC, USACC, and STRATCOM. What were the contentious issues?

(12) Neither USACSA or USACEEIA exist. What happened to them?

(13) Did the Army have a communications strategy at that time? What was it and how well did they implement the strategy?

b. Commanding General, U.S. Army Communications Research and Development Command (CORADCOM) (Jun 79-May 81)

(1) When were you promoted to Major General?

(2) Who officiated at your promotion ceremony?

(3) Who did you assume command from and who officiated the ceremony?

(4) What were your thoughts now that you had made Major General?

(5) Did you know that you were going to be selected to command CORADCOM and was it a surprise to you?

(6) How was the command organized and what were it's missions?

(7) Did your leadership style and philosophy of command change any?

(8) What were your significant accomplishments as Commander?

(9) Were there any significant challenges you had to overcome in order to achieve your goals?

**END OF SESSION SIX**

Note: Session six may be broken into multiple sessions depending on where we are at the end of our scheduled period.

Army War College, Senior Officer Oral History Program (SOOHP)  
Interview Questionnaire (21 February 1997)

**SUBJECT:** Lieutenant General Emmett Paige, Jr. (Retired)  
Interviewer: LTC Craig B. Hanford

**Session Number:** 7  
**Date:** 21 February 1997

**1. General Officer assignments (Apr 76-Jun 88) (cont.)**

a. Commanding General, U.S. Army Electronics Research and Development Command (ERADCOM) (May 81-Jun 84)

(1) Sir, you took command of ERADCOM in May 81. Who officiated at your change of command ceremonies for relinquishing CORADCOM and assuming ERADCOM?

(2) Although you have spoken some about this command earlier, what were your thoughts about taking command of ERADCOM?

(3) Who were your superiors at that time and how did you relate with them?

(4) Can we review what ERADCOM's mission was relative to CORADCOM's?

(5) You stated previously that they needed to be combined, did you have any success in achieving that during your command?

(6) Were you any more successful commanding ERADCOM in getting more Signal officers to obtain advanced degrees?

(7) Now that you had been a general officer since 1976, how many other Black General Officers were there serving in the active Army in 1981/82?

(5) You had mentioned before that you had considerable experience sitting on numerous promotion and selection boards. What were your impressions about those board experiences, particularly with respect to the development and advancement of Black officers?

(6) Who did you relinquish command of ERADCOM to?

(7) Are there any other issues or areas regarding your Division Command tenure that you want to discuss?

b. Commanding General, U.S. Army Information Systems Command, Fort Huachuca, AZ (Jun 84-Jun 88)

(1) After your tours on the east coast, you and the family headed back west where you were assigned to command the USAISC. Were you "frocked" to Lieutenant General? When were you officially promoted?

(2) Discuss the importance of that promotion to you and how you felt when that third "star" was pinned on your shoulder.

(2) Who promoted you to General Officer and who were the special guests in attendance?

(3) You were the first black officer to reach 3-star rank in the 116-year history of the Signal Corps. How did that make you feel?

(4) Who was your boss, and what was your relationship with him like?

(5) What was the mission and organization of the US Army Information Systems Command? And why was it created?

(6) Was it difficult starting up this new command? Did it result in a "turf war" with AMC?

(7) What was the Information Mission Area (IMA) and why was it added to the Army's mission area concept?

(8) There were five disciplines to the IMA. Was that the right way to go or was there a better way?

(9) What was the relationship of DISC4 to ISC?

(10) What were some of your challenges in implementing the IMA?

(11) How did the idea for Standard Army Management Information Systems (STAMIS) modernization come about?

(12) Was it supported by the Army and was it successful?

(13) There developed an apparent rift between the "communicators" and "automators", is that correct? Why?

(14) Did the Army officer Corps have enough officers with advanced degrees to fully exploit the technology and implement the IMA goals?

(15) During this time frame, Ada came into its own as the DoD programming language standard. What were your thoughts about creating such a standard and its implications?

(16) Did the Army and DOD go about it the best way?

(17) Should DOD retain Ada as a standard?

(18) What was the most interesting project you remember dealing with during your ISC watch?

(19) I can remember that the concept of "systems integration" has always been big with you, did it ever catch on in the Army?

(20) Are there any other issues or areas related to this assignment that you want to discuss?

(21) How did you feel about retiring?

(22) Did you think that you could have become AMC Commander? Do you think a Signal officer can ever become AMC Commander?

**END OF SESSION SEVEN**

Note: Session seven may be broken into multiple sessions depending on where we are at the end of our scheduled period.

## NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> General Officer Management Office (GOMO), Pentagon, "Resume of Service Career of Emmett Paige, Jr., Lieutenant General," 30 June, 1988.
  - <sup>2</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 5.
  - <sup>3</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 3.
  - <sup>4</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 8.
  - <sup>5</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 16.
  - <sup>6</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 22.
  - <sup>7</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 27.
  - <sup>8</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 30.
  - <sup>9</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 33.
  - <sup>10</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 88.
  - <sup>11</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 73.
  - <sup>12</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 41.
  - <sup>13</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 127.
  - <sup>14</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 131.
  - <sup>15</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 159.
  - <sup>16</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 167.
  - <sup>17</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 257.
  - <sup>18</sup> Joe Whetstone, "First Black Sig Corps General," News Release, PAO, Ft. Huachuca, 3 March, 1997.
  - <sup>19</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 283.
  - <sup>20</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 331.
  - <sup>21</sup> Oral History Interview pg. 375.

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General Officer Management Office (GOMO), Pentagon. "Resume of Service Career of Emmett Paige, Jr., Lieutenant General." 30 June, 1988.

Whetstone, Joe. "First Black Sig Corps General." News Release, PAO, Ft. Huachuca, 3 March, 1997.