The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

GENERAL CHARLES GRAHAM BOYD

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
Initial interview date: February 27, 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Spanish language skills

MA, Air Force Institute of Technology, University of Kansas 1975–1976

Attended Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama 1976–1977

Naples, Italy—Allied Forces Southern Europe, Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff 1977–1979
Managing staff input
Command briefing
Soviet threat

Naples, Italy—Allied Air Forces, Southern Europe, Executive Officer to the Chief of Staff 1979
Air Force relations in the Mediterranean

Washington, D.C.—Pentagon, Directorate of Plans, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division 1979–1980
Air Force relations with Latin America and the Soviet Union
Interactions with Canada

Washington, D.C.—Pentagon, Joint and National Security Council, Deputy Assistant Director 1980–1982
Process of resolutions within the council
Green Desk
Influential Coworkers at the Pentagon

Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany—U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base, Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs 1984–1986
Lance Lord and the GLCM Missile bed down
Air Force Budget
Perception of other European Air Forces and their roles in NATO
Soviet air threat in Europe
Chain of command in the Air Force

Bossier City, Louisiana—8th Air Force, Barksdale Air Force Base, Vice Commander 1986–1988
Goldwater-Nichols law and Congress-Military relationship
The story of Memphis Belle
Transition into Strategic Air Command [SAC]
Medical clearance to return to flying

Washington, D.C.—Pentagon, Office of Deputy Chief of Staff, Director of Plans 1988–1989
Duties as a planner

Account of William J. Crowe and Sergey Akhromeyev's meeting
Global issues in relation to planning

Washington, D.C.—U.S. Air Force, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations 1989–1990
Working with General Larry Welch

Maxwell, Alabama—Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Commander 1990–1992
Changes within the Air University
Changes within the Air Force Institute of Technology
Curriculum at Maxwell
Trip to Moscow and the break up of the Soviet Union
General LeMay stories
Leaving Maxwell and the undoing of reforms

Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany—U.S. European Command, Deputy Commander in Chief 1992–1995
Drawdown of forces at the end of the Cold War
War in Bosnia
Staff within EUCOM [U.S. European Command]
Wife's death and effect on the family
The Garmisch-Partenkirchen School
Evacuation duties in Africa
Rwandan Genocide aid
Spending more time with the family

Retired from the U.S. Air Force 1995

Washington, D.C.—House of Representatives, Strategy Consultant to Speaker Newt Gingrich 1995–1998

Washington, D.C.—U.S. Commission on National Security for the 21st Century, Executive Director 1998–2001
9/11 report

Washington, D.C.—Council on Foreign Relations, Senior Vice President 2001–2002

Washington, D.C.—Business Executives for National Security [BENS], President and CEO 2002–2009

Washington, D.C.—Business Executives for National Security [BENS], Member of Board of Directors 2009–present

INTERVIEW

Q: Today is an interview with General Charles G. Boyd …

BOYD: Charles Graham Boyd …

Q: … being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy.

ORIGINS AND CHILDHOOD

Q: To begin with, when and where were you born?

BOYD: I was born in Rockwell City, Iowa, on April 15, 1938.

Q: Tell me please what you know about the Boyd family?

BOYD: There are two sides of my family, of course: the Boyd family and the Staton family.

Q: Give us a sense of timing, too, as you go.

BOYD: Yes. My father Henry Graham Boyd was born in 1903 in Palmer, Illinois. He was the son of a storekeeper who moved to southwestern Missouri in 1908 to become a farmer. My father was the eldest of a family of eight children. His father, my paternal grandfather, the storekeeper, died when my father was 14. As the eldest, my father became the breadwinner for that family. He raised the family actually, all the way to putting the youngest one through high school. He then moved to Iowa, becoming an itinerant farm worker and, after a time, began a family of his own.

So, I'm the product of a union between that man, Henry Graham Boyd, and my mother, Vernal Staton, who was born in Auburn, Iowa, in 1908. She was also from a family of eight children. .That marriage produced one other child, my sister Shirlee Glee Boyd, now Shirlee Boyd Bouch, the better half of a wonderfully close lifetime friendship.

Q: What do you know about your mother's background?

BOYD: My mother's parents were of English heritage. We're not sure when her ancestors came to this country. I do know that my grandfather on my mother's side, Arthur Staton, was orphaned at age five and grew to the age of thirteen under difficult family circumstances. He then left home, became an itinerant on his own, wandering about the country, sort of a vagabond.

When the Spanish-American War began he joined the Army, was sent to the Philippines, saw combat, returned to the states as the conflict drew to a close, and was mustered out of the service. With no home to return to, he followed an Army colleague to the Midwest, met the chap's sister, married her, and became a farmer. So that's my parents' brief history and launches me into my own life story.

Q: A quick question first, please: What can you tell us about your parents' educations?

BOYD: My father completed eighth grade, whereupon he became a full-time provider for his family, as I just noted. My mother graduated from high school and, following high school, she became a country schoolteacher. In those days in that part of the world there were small one-room schoolhouses that taught children from kindergarten through the eighth grade. She did that until she and my father were married. Neither one of them had any education beyond that: my father eighth grade, my mother high school.

Q: Very typical for that ...

BOYD: … for that era, yes.

Q: So, let's get to you, then, as a child. Let's talk about where you grew up.

BOYD: I grew up on a farm near Rockwell City, Iowa. It was a small agricultural enterprise, but not exactly a typical family farm. It was actually a couple of different farms, dairy, and dirt farming. My father rented out 160-acres on a sharecrop basis.

My parents were frugal people. They saved their money, bought a small piece of land, of about 80 acres, while maintaining their home on, and working the rented farm, and simultaneously farming the 80 acres, Now, this was a time, just before World War II, when land prices were going up rapidly. They managed to take one good crop off of that 80-acre farm, and then used the profits to buy a 120-acre naked farm, without buildings. They took a couple of crops there, and eventually they had enough money to buy a 160-acre farm of their own. That's the farm I remember growing up on. By the time I was about 11 years old, in 1949, I was helping to run a dairy and multi-crop agricultural enterprise, with all kinds of livestock. I did that until I graduated from high school in 1956.

Q: Well, let's talk about early education. What sort of school did you go to first?

BOYD: A one-room kindergarten school. For first grade I moved into a public school, one building with all 12 grades. I think we had mostly just one class per grade, sometimes two. I spent a lot of time in that building, graduating high school, as I said, in June 1956.

Q: So, these were not large classes, right? How small were they?

BOYD: My high school graduating class was 56 students. Most of the kids were farm kids, though there were a few who lived in town. Their fathers were storekeepers or bankers or what have you, but the culture was that of an agricultural area. Farm values, hard work, worrying about the weather, predominated. I grew up working on that farm and then as I got a little older I worked as a laborer in the summertime, earning money baling hay, working with tractors and crops, whatever was available that I could do—and by then I could do pretty much anything on a farm.

Between my junior and senior years in high school I took a job with a highway construction company building highways. The following summer, after I graduated, I became a truck driver., driving a gravel truck on construction projects. My education, you might say, went beyond my schooling. There's lot of valuable learning you don't get in school.

Q: Did farm work appeal to you or not?

BOYD: No!

Q: A very emphatic no.

BOYD: I was a heavy reader as a child, and I still am. I learned a lot about the world, at least I thought I did, so I knew there was something more than being tied to milking cows seven days a week, working hard in the fields and worrying about the weather, whether you were going to have a crop or not. I thought there had to be more to life than that, and I got that sense from the books I read that described the world beyond my immediate environment.

Aside from books, an important thing happened to me as a youngster that provides a key entry point into what became my life as an adult. I became fascinated with airplanes. How or why that happened I don't know. But when I saw an airplane I would watch it for as long as I could see it. We would often travel on Sundays to visit my grandparents in a nearby town, and the road took us by a little airport. It was very small: one Quonset building and a couple of airplanes. There was a sign advertising rides on Saturdays and Sundays. I would point this sign out to my father pretty much every time we drove by. I'd say, "Dad, could we, someday, I want to take a ride." And he would answer, "No, we're in a hurry, maybe another time." But I nagged him and finally he said okay. I was seven years old.

We went in the hangar, and there was a man there who had a Piper Cub. During the week he had it rigged up as a crop duster, with a tank in the front seat for the chemicals. On the weekends he would take out the tank, put a seat in and then give rides to make a little extra money. He gave me a 15-minute ride; my father paid him $2 or whatever it was. From that moment on there was no turning back. My single, undeviating dream was to fly—airplanes of any kind, in the beginning; later, jet fighters for the U.S. Air Force. For

a pre-teen farm boy from Iowa in bib overalls, in a family of very modest means, that was a really big dream—rather like, say, going to the moon.

Still, I would not let go of the dream. I devoured everything I could find on military aviation, fighter planes and the men who flew them. By the time I turned sixteen, I was no doubt the only person in my little town to know that a new aircraft, the F100A, had broken the sound barrier in level flight, the first jet to do so. Six years later, as a newly minted second lieutenant with a set of pilot wings on my chest, I climbed an F100C to forty thousand feet northwest of Phoenix, AZ, rolled it gently on its back, pointed the nose down and broke my own sound barrier for the first time. Thirty-five years later, I retired as the longest serving pilot then on active duty, what's known as "The Gray Eagle" of the Air Force.

Between the age of five and eighteen, my mother must have told me a thousand times. "You can do anything you set your mind to—reach for the sky, son, and you might just get a piece." I did that, and, indeed, got a piece of it.

I think that's a point worth underscoring. The one characteristic of my mother that had the most influence on me was her steady encouragement. She believed, or led me to believe, that I could do anything I set my mind to. She instilled in me a self-confidence that may have exceeded my native ability, but that's beside the point. If you really believe you can do something, you probably can. Years later, I think she took pride in telling people that after age fifteen no one in the family ever made another decision for me.

My father had quite a different kind of influence---at least as important. One incident still talked about in our family took place in a cornfield. In those days seed corn companies paid certain farmers to plant two varieties of their corn together. The tassels from one variety had to be pulled by hand so that the other variety would pollinate the first, and thus produce a hybrid. The job was mostly done by teenagers 16 and older and it paid handsomely. At 15, I wanted to get a part of that largess. My father, I think, did not know of the age restriction, and allowed me to apply.

The first few days went fine, then one morning it began to rain. The older boys began to grouse, complaining that the straw boss wouldn't let us stop and take shelter in the truck. Then one said, "I think we should all quit," followed by a chorus of support from others, including me. After all, if the older boys wanted to do it, then I wanted to do it too. And we did, en masse (though none of the girls joined us). We hitchhiked back to town, and I caught a ride with someone heading out toward our farm. My father working near the barn spotted me, and said, "You're home early. What's up?" I said, "I quit." "What do you mean you quit,?" my father said, with a frown on his face. "All the guys did. It was raining, and the boss wouldn't let us stop, so we quit."

My father thought about that for a bit, then said, "I want you to go back and see if you can get your job back. I'll give you a ride. Stunned, I said, "I can't do that, Dad. What would everyone think? I just can't." After a pause he said, "Ok then, go in the house, get

your things and hit the road. You can't live here anymore. We don't have quitters in our family."

I'm sure I had tears in my eyes. I had lived with that man long enough to know that when he said something, he meant it. So, I got in the car and made that painful ride back to the cornfield. We stopped next to the field where we spotted the straw boss. I got out and walked slowly toward him trying to figure out what to say. When I got six or eight feet from him, I stopped and blurted out softly, "Can I have my job back?" He looked to the road, saw my father, looked back at me and knew exactly what was going on. He nodded and pointed to the row where I should start.

It's a long story but it tells a lot about how I came to be the man I am. Mother's specialty was in confidence building; my father's was in character development.

Q: Well, I'm glad you included this, I can understand its importance. But now, let's talk a bit more about your early days. You say you were a reader; what were you reading back then?

BOYD: Just about everything I could get my hands on. There was a Carnegie library in my little town, in Rockwell City. I got a library card, I think when I was seven. My parents also bought a set of the Book of Knowledge, so we had those volumes in the house.

Q: Oh, I know those.

BOYD: Do you know the Book of Knowledge?

Q: I read them all.

BOYD: Well, I maybe didn't read them all, but I read a lot of them. There were very few other books in our home, except for maybe a Bible, and I'm not sure of that. Neither of my parents read much. They took a newspaper, but they didn't read books. So, I had the Book of Knowledge and I had a library card. I read mostly fiction from the library, and then I read whatever struck my interest in the Book of Knowledge. But I devoured them all, whatever I read. This side of the dinner bell nothing could distract me when I was into a book.

I also had two English teachers who were influential in my life, one in junior high and one in high school.

Q: Give me their names if you can remember.

BOYD: Well, I can do that, but at my age it now takes me a little time. I'm glad you asked, however, because I am still grateful to them, as I am to Andrew Carnegie and whoever it was who started that library in Rockwell City. Kids take a lot for granted

because they don't yet see the web of relationships that make up a healthy community. We can only see it from a distance in time.

So, there was Everett Kraft, my teacher in junior high. He introduced me to an array of authors that I had never heard of before—Rudyard Kipling, Jack London, many others. And my high school English teacher, Eugene Whiteman, encouraged me and pushed me in writing and in reading. He had a significant influence in my life.

Q: Did you find yourself moving to travel books, biographies or …?

BOYD: Some biographies. A lot of fiction. I especially liked novels and I liked short stories. I did read some travel, and I also was interested in geography. We had a very good geography teacher in junior high; I really liked to look at maps to figure out where things were. That's maybe why in high school I discovered and became fascinated with Somerset Maugham. I just had to learn about all those places he wrote from and about, the Malay Peninsula and India and Vietnam—called Indochina in those days. That is what took me, metaphorically at least, into Southeast Asia and Indonesia, and of course India. You have to get a map to figure out where these places are, and that's what I did.

Q: Yes, I remember. I'm about 10 years older than you, and when I was a kid looking at a globe I wanted to get away from everybody and go somewhere far away and exotic. I remember going to a globe and I came up with Wake Island. That's where I wanted to go.

BOYD: Oh, yes?

Q: This was before it became notorious.

BOYD: Famous, yes.

Q: And you know, I thought this is a place I want to go to. Well, as it happened, during the Korean War my transport plane landed on Wake Island.

BOYD: I have overflown it several times. There's nothing there.

Q: No. Not much, that's for sure.

BOYD: I flew single-engine fighters across the Pacific four times, and each time, westbound, I would first stop at Hawaii. Between Hawaii and Guam I would overfly Wake because that was an alternate landing place if we had problems. But I never had to land there.

Q: You didn't miss a thing. So, let me ask: With your interest in flying did you build balsa wood models?

BOYD: Now, that's a good question. The answer is that I did not. I knew two kids who did; neither one of them ever had any interest in actually flying, but they had an interest in building planes. I had an interest in flying; but didn't have the slightest interest in building planes.

Q: Yes, that was quite the hobby at one point.

BOYD: Of yours?

Q: Yes.

BOYD: Well, one of my friends was really an artist with those models. He created probably 20 airplanes, and he had them hanging from his bedroom ceiling. He did fine work. Most of those planes he made from scratch, not from a kit. He became a finish carpenter later in life and did beautiful carpentry, building furniture, fine interior moldings etc. But he had no interest at all in flying.

Q: In your reading, did you find yourself reading military things?

BOYD: Yes, very much so. I suppose a factor which played a part in my development was that my grandfather, as I mentioned, was in the Philippines in the Spanish-American War, and told me many colorful stories about being in the Army. He had served as a private, maybe private first class, under Arthur MacArthur, a commander for whom he had great respect. Perhaps as a result of those stories I became interested in Arthur's son, Douglas, and read everything I could about him. That reading eventually evolved into an interest in military aviation, and at that point I was really hooked. I found *The Bridges at Toko Ri, Baa Baa Black Sheep*, *The Hunters*—anything and everything I could find that had to do with aviation.

So, when I look back, I can see that I'm building an interest in the world, in the military, and in military aviation all at the same time. All of that developed before I was 18 years old.

Q: As a boy, where did your family fall politically?

BOYD: My parents worshiped Franklin Roosevelt. They were Democrats, of course, but they were specifically Roosevelt Democrats.

Q: Same for me; to my mother God was Roosevelt and Roosevelt was God, or very nearly.

BOYD: Yes, that's my parents, too. But it didn't stop there because—and this I remember very keenly—in 1948 when Harry Truman ran for election against Thomas Dewey, Truman came to Iowa and spoke at the Iowa State plowing contest. My father went to

that contest not because Truman was going to be there, but I remember him coming home and saying I'm going to vote for that man. And he did.

I was 10 years old then, and by the time I was 14 I had gotten interested in the military man, Dwight Eisenhower, our great commander of World War II. Now it happened that I bought my first car when I had just turned 14. In those days one could get a learner's permit and be allowed to drive to and from school. So, I bought this Model A Ford and I painted above the running board "I Like Ike," which was the main slogan of Eisenhower's 1952 campaign. My parents were staunch Democrats but, at age 14, I had decided to be for Ike, not because he was a Republican, just because I really admired Dwight Eisenhower.

Q: How about in the evenings at home? Did your family, you and your sister and your parents, ever talk about events in the world?

BOYD: Yes, my father in particular. We had a radio, and he would always listen to the news. He thirsted to hear the news. I can remember, even before the war was over and I was maybe six, sitting with my parents listening to Roosevelt speak. I didn't know at the time that they were called fireside chats, but I remember listening to him. I also remember vividly that when Roosevelt died in April 1945 my mother wept. It was serious weeping. She felt a great loss. So, they were very staunch Democrats, and they stayed that way.

Q: It was a little hard in Iowa, wasn't it?

BOYD: Iowa? Well, Iowa was perhaps more of a Republican state. But if you look at the record of Iowa presidential election votes over the years, it bounces around quite a bit between the two major parties. For example, Iowa went for Willkie in 1940 and Dewey in 1944 after having gone for FDR in 1932 and 1936; but then Iowa went for Truman in 1948 against Dewey. Since then it went twice for Eisenhower, but it also went for Clinton twice and for Obama twice. So, Iowa is not a solid red state.

Q: OK, but I think of Landon and-

BOYD: Alf? No, he was from Kansas. But back to your original question, yes, my father and I would talk about politics at the table. My sister did not have much interest but, my father and I would talk about such things and sometimes my mother would join in as well.

Q: Where did you stand religiously?

BOYD: We were Presbyterians. My father was born into a Baptist family, but my mother was a Presbyterian and, when they married, he joined her church. They were God-fearing people, rarely missed a church service. My mother also worked in the church on all the activities the women would engage in—meals for the elderly and the ill, charity drives

and all those kinds of things. My father was a deacon in the church and later became an elder. He was, to his death, like my mother, a religious person. As my mother got older and had mobility problems (my father was dead by then), she had a little more trouble getting to church, but she would still try in a wheelchair. I went to Sunday School until I was 12, but lost interest in that and stopped going.

Q: How about Scouts?

BOYD: Yes, I was a Boy Scout until the troop disbanded. It was a very small town, and unable to maintain a reasonably sized troop, but for the brief time one existed I was a Scout, a Second Class Scout at that. I was interested in it while it lasted.

Q: In high school, what activities were you involved in?

BOYD: Sports, mainly. I was a mediocre athlete, but I was still interested and involved. I played basketball in junior high school, but I was not a very good player. I gravitated to track and played football through my senior year.

Aside from sports, I began working after school and on Saturdays and Sundays in a filling station. In the wintertime, during the period when there was no football or track going on, I would go after school to work.

Q: What were your favorite subjects and your least-favorite subjects in high school?

BOYD: Well, clearly English was my favorite. I liked history. We had only one course in government, but I was fascinated with it. I least liked biology, maybe because back then it was mostly memorization. I was a mediocre math student. I didn't dislike it but I didn't particularly care about it, maybe because it was taught in a dry way, with few real world examples of how to use math. Physics was OK; I did not take chemistry for some reason. My emphasis was clearly on English and history, and my one opportunity to study government, it caught my fancy.

Q: What were your options when you graduated high school in 1956? What did you want to do?

BOYD: Always in the back of my mind was aviation. I tried to get a political nomination to the Air Force Academy without success. Next, I went to a larger neighboring town where they had military recruiters, and first went to see the Air Force recruiter. He was not encouraging. He tried to interest me in choosing an enlisted technical school, suggesting that perhaps later I would have a chance to fly. Disappointed, and maybe a little confused, I next went to see the Marine recruiter. He talked to me a little while, then asked what I had in mind. I said, "I think I want to join the Marines." He said, "Let's talk some more." After a bit he said—I'll never forget this, this is important to understanding the vector my life took—he said, "I don't want you to come to the Marine Corps just now. I want you go to college first, and then come back and see us. I want you in the

Marine Corps, but I want you as an officer." So, that sort of steadied me, and pushed me in the direction of going to college.

My sister had gone to college three years earlier, but no one else in our family had ever attended, and thus there was no one to give me much guidance. I had no idea where I wanted to go, or what I wanted to study, only that now I was going to go to college—somewhere. As it turned out there was a chap in a neighboring town, a fine athlete I admired who had gone to Baylor University to play football. The name of that school stuck in my mind, a cool name I thought, plus it was in Texas, a long way from Iowa, a big virtue. I applied, was accepted, got in my '47 Ford and drove to Waco, Texas, for what was to be much more my first big adventure than a serious pursuit of education.

Q: So, you started at Baylor in September 1956?

BOYD: Yes. I was there for two years—1956 through 1958. That time was also interspersed with a couple of trips to California, where I worked at Disneyland for a while. I was an indifferent student, but, when I learned about the Air Force's Aviation Cadet Program, which had stopped for a time but then started again, I instantly became interested. If one could pass the tests, both physical and mental, one could get into pilot training, and officer training simultaneously, and if successful, become an officer and pilot. Most important, it did not require a college degree.

AVIATION CADET (1959)

Q: Was this attached to Baylor? Sort of like an ROTC program?

BOYD: No, no it was not. There was an Air Force base near Waco, James Connally Air Force Base, and there was a recruiting office there. I worked through the recruiting office to take the mental tests and took the physical at the base hospital. After I was accepted, I waited for a class assignment to begin, which turned out to be April of 1959. I had to join as an enlisted man, which I did, with the promise that when the pre-flight training class began I would transfer from enlisted status to that of a cadet. That's exactly what happened. Then for the next 15 months I was in Air Force pilot training, pre-flight training for three months, six months of primary pilot training, and finally six months of basic pilot training. I graduated as a second lieutenant with pilot wings.

Q: Let's talk about the training. What was it like, what kind of planes were there and how did it all strike you? Any buyer's remorse early on?

BOYD: Well, temporarily maybe. They stripped me of my civilian clothes, gave me a set of fatigues, referred to as "green tux," which I wore unwashed for the next week. From the moment I rolled out of bed at 5:00 in the morning, until I fell exhausted into it at 10:00 at night I was screamed at almost constantly while learning to march, doing PT,

scrubbing floors with a tooth brush, and a thousand other stupid things — all intended, I understood later, to determine if I were really interested in staying around to fly. My answer, under my breath, "There is no amount of shit you can throw at me that can make me quit." I knew I was doing what I wanted to do. I went from being an indifferent student in college to a highly focused Cadet.

After Pre-flight training in Texas, the next six months were at Bainbridge Air Base in Georgia. In those days civilian instructors did the primary pilot training. There was definitely a military atmosphere and the military ran the program, but the academic instruction, as well as flying, was all done by civilians. These old guys—and I say old guys because a lot of these instructors had been around a long time—were just amazing. They had taught kids to fly in World War II, they taught kids to fly in the Korean War, and they were still teaching kids to fly in 1959. They were highly competent.

The first airplane I flew was a T-34 Mentor, a single-engine propeller-driven airplane with tandem seating. The instructor was in the back, the student in the front. I flew that for 30 hours. Now, fast forward just for the moment: I own a T-34 today. And, I must say, mine is a lot nicer than the one I flew in 1959. In a way it bookends my flying career, the first aircraft I ever flew, and no doubt it will be the last. After 30 hours in that airplane we went into jets, a small jet called a T-37 made by Cessna. I flew that 100 hours, and that completed primary pilot training. At the end, my gnarly old instructor told me, the only reason God gave you a right hand was to hold a stick, and a left hand to hold a throttle. I was born to it.

They moved us then to various Air Force bases. I went to Greenville Air Force Base in Mississippi and there flew the T-33, a single-engine jet trainer—one of the very earliest jet trainers. I flew that airplane for 115 hours, whereupon I graduated, having accumulated 245 hours of flying time.

Q: While you're going through this, how did the military aspects of becoming an officer suit you?

BOYD: Interesting question. I liked the idea of the military more than I liked the military itself. I was not keen on taking orders, particularly orders that did not make much sense to me, and some of those certainly did not. A lot of the military training in those early days had to do with making the cadet understand that he was a part of an organization and his task was to do what he was told, whether it made sense or not. In other words, the slogan they used was "yours is not to reason why, yours is but to do or die." That went under the general rubric of discipline.

I later began to understand the need for that sort of thing, but that's not the question you asked me. At the time, it is fair to say, that in the beginning I was not keen on living the military life, but I still liked the idea of the military, of being a soldier, and of the pride one can take in serving a noble, patriotic purpose.

And so, I acculturated quickly—I did well. We were graded on three things: flying, of course; academics; and military conduct. Military conduct was principally how you fit in with your peer group and was measured by peer evaluations. Every cadet had to list who they thought was the best military example, and the worst. I actually came out on top – maybe that was a sign. The long and the short of it is that by the time I graduated I had acquired a firm understanding of what the military was about. I loved to fly, and I discovered I was quite good at it. I had absolute assurance that I had done the right thing leaving Baylor and joining the Air Force. I just somehow knew I was set on the right path for my life.

Q: As you were going through the training, were they dividing you up into multi-engine and single-engine aircraft?

BOYD: No. There have been times when the training program did that, but not during this period. The process was simple and effective, guys who ended up at the top of the class went to fighters, and the guys who were down a bit went to other aircraft. Bombers were not highly regarded; transports, especially tactical airlift, were fairly popular, flying C-130s for example. Some guys wanted to go into what they called basic instructor school, where they would learn how to be an instructor and come back and teach other people to fly. I had no interest in that. My interest was in flying tactical fighters, nothing else, and I was fortunate enough to graduate high enough in my class that I could do exactly that.

Q: What sort of the tactical fighter was the most desirable to fly at that time?

BOYD: The F-100, without doubt.

Q: Thunder?

BOYD: No, Super Sabre, F-100. There were also fighter interceptors, specifically the F-102, also desirable, but less so. I went to Luke Air Force Base for six months of fighter training and had the time of my life. I was in hog heaven there, near Phoenix, with its hot but generally wonderful weather. I loved learning how to shoot gunnery, how to bomb, how to fire rockets, how to fight in the air, air-to-air tactics it was called. We also had further instrument flight training for weather flying. I loved every minute of it.

Next, I went to Nellis Air Force base, in Nevada, to spend three months in what they called top-off training. That consisted of an introduction to aerial gunnery, aerial refueling, low-level navigation, and nuclear bomb delivery techniques. The Air Force was using tactical fighters for that purpose since both the European and the Pacific theaters had nuclear alert commitments, but with no bombers stationed there. So, after six months of basic gunnery, three months top-off, and a stint at survival school, I was off to my first operational assignment at Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

Q: Let's go back for a moment to gunnery training. What exactly does that mean?

BOYD: Gunnery, or shooting, means to strafe. That F-100 airplane had four 20-millimeter cannon in it, and one learns to shoot by going to a range that had canvas targets about 20 feet by 20 feet in size. In a shallow dive one approached those targets at a speed of 400 knots, aiming with an electronic gun sight that has been harmonized to the aircraft's guns. Once within range, say about 1800-2000 feet, the task was to maneuver the aircraft in such a way as to position that gun sight onto the target, fire a burst, then try to remember to avoid running into the ground while concentrating intently on that little piece of canvas. Not a trivial task, especially for a young pilot, simultaneously learning to handle a very powerful, new (to him), high performance aircraft.

The requirement in training, if one was to graduate, was to get 25 or more of each 100 rounds fired, into that 20' X 20' piece of canvas. If one was unable to do so, one was allowed to go fly bombers or transports. Keen incentive. Later, in my first operational tour, I was able to hit 100 out of 100 a couple of times– very rare.

As for bombing, we did skip bombing first. That refers to a level bombing procedure where one delivers a bomb in level flight aiming at a panel target. The objective was to approach the target at 100 feet at 400 knots and release a bomb in such a way as to hit that cloth target. Initially you're approaching the target at varying altitudes, or varying air speeds and incorrect release points. The task was to refine control of the aircraft until one learned to keep the aircraft very level, very correct on speed, and to pickle (hit the release button on the stick grip) one's bomb off at an exact distance from the target

Then we learned to dive bomb, which is another kettle of fish. We were taught in those days to do a 45-degree dive angle and release a bomb toward a circular target on the ground. We had to place the bombs in a certain size circle to get qualified. I don't remember the circle size, but it was fairly small, or so it seemed to us at the time.

Then we learned one other thing: an introduction to the nuclear mission that fighter airplanes were involved in in those days. This training involved what was called an over the shoulder maneuver, one in which the pilot does essentially a half loop, or Immelmann, during which the bomb releases automatically at a preset point just past the top of the aircraft's arc of flight. The bomb is flung high up in the air then comes back down, while the pilot is distancing himself from the simulated nuclear explosion. This is a very tricky maneuver, first in calculating the precise point at which the bomb is to be released given the forecast winds through a range of altitudes in which the bomb will travel, first connected to the aircraft, then on its own. Maybe even more important is the precision with which the aircraft must be flown prior to bomb release if the bomb is to hit the target. By the time the student pilot reaches this point of his training he is no longer an amateur, but an entry level professional.

Q: Were you assigned in those days to fighter squadrons and bomber squadrons, or was it a mixed thing?

BOYD: No, they were separate. The fighter squadrons belonged to their own regional Commands, Europe and the Pacific. The U.S. Bombers all belonged to the Strategic Air Command. Most of the big bombers were in the United States, although we did have some medium bombers stationed abroad at times, in places like Spain and Morocco.

Q: These are B-47s?

BOYD: Yes. All the B-52s were in the United States. But that was a different world, and fighter pilots in those days were contemptuous of bombers and thought that only they were the elites. That probably has not changed.

FIRST ASSIGNMENT (1961)

Q: So, your first assignment abroad was at Clark, in the Philippines. During that period was there a significant other, and did being posted abroad bring hardship?

BOYD: Yes, there was a significant other. In Phoenix I met a schoolteacher named Millicent Sample. She was from Fort Scott, Kansas, recently graduated from the University of Kansas and, along with three other girls, had gone to Phoenix to become a grade school teacher. I met her, courted her, and by the time I left for the Philippines had married her. She was the first great love of my life.

Hardship? There's really no such thing when you're young, healthy, and in love. We lived off base in the beginning, a small house on the local economy, with no glass windows, only wooden louvers, no heat, no hot water, multitudes of cockroaches and mosquitos, and an uncovered sewage ditch at the edge of the dirt street in front of our house. We sweated under mosquito nets on muggy summer evenings and cuddled under blankets on chilly winter evenings—while having the time of our life.

Q; So how long were you in the Philippines?

BOYD: I got there in August of 1961 and left in October of 1963 - 2 years and 3 months.

Q: What were you doing mainly?

BOYD: I was in a fighter squadron, and as in all tactical fighter squadrons overseas at the time I was involved in two things: continuation training and sitting on nuclear alert. As to the training, we flew to hone our skills in bombing, shooting, and navigation. The alert commitment involved keeping four airplanes on nuclear alert at an air base in Taiwan as part of the nation's larger nuclear operation plan, the SIOP— Single Integrated Operational Plan. We had targets inside China and would sit alert with nuclear weapons mounted on our aircraft with specific target assignments. If the nation were to go to full scale war, the pilots knew exactly where they were going to deliver their weapon. We had

aircraft sitting alert during that time not only in Taiwan, but also in Okinawa and Korea. There were fighter squadrons stationed in Japan, (Okinawa was not part of Japan at the time) but since we did not store nuclear weapons in Japan, those squadrons pulled their nuclear alert time in Korea. All that was a part of the SIOP as it existed at the time.

Q: How did you feel from your viewpoint about the Philippine government, and being stationed there?

BOYD: Well, first of all, it was obvious even to youngsters who had other things on their minds that the Philippines was a Third World nation. The government was infamously corrupt, but the society itself seemed corrupt too, at least to us. We did not realize that corruption is a culture-specific thing. All we knew is that theft was a huge factor in the Philippines and so everybody who owned anything worthwhile had to try to protect it in some way.

One of the very first things that happened to me was that I bought a new car and had it shipped over there. Our little house off-base had a carport, and the first week that I was not there—my wife was there alone--somebody stole it. This was the sort of common thing that made most of the people in my profession contemptuous of both the culture there and the way the country was being governed. But we had our own community. Clark Air Base was the biggest U.S. air base in the world. We did things off-base, of course. I had a motorcycle and I rode all over Luzon island. But community life happened on base with other Americans, mostly military people and their families.

Q: Was there any concern about volcanic activity when you were there?

BOYD: No, although we obviously knew about the large inactive volcano, Mt. Pinatubo, near our base. We had no concern about it erupting, our only concern was we had to be careful in our bad-weather approaches lest we run into it. Later on, of course, Pinatubo did erupt and buried Clark Air Base under volcanic ash. At that time, in June 1991, the U.S. Government was negotiating its exit from Clark and Subic Bay Naval Station, and the eruption actually made it easier and less expensive to leave. Some used to joke with Rich Armitage, the chief negotiator, about how impressed they were that he managed somehow to make the volcano erupt just in time.

But when I was stationed there nobody concerned themselves with volcanic eruptions. I think most of us had few worries, even fighting a nuclear war. I loved being there, flying in largely unrestricted airspace, honing my skills, maturing as a fighter pilot. I would not have traded jobs with anyone in the world.

Q: You were assigned a mission into China; so, tell me what was the feeling about the Chinese air force at that time?

BOYD: China's Air Force was very inept at that time. In contrast, we respected the Taiwanese air force. Those guys flew American equipment, F-86s, and they flew a lot.

They were very competent. The Communist Chinese had no skill level remotely comparable to that of the Taiwanese, who would easily have won any battle over or near the Taiwan Straits. That changed later, but in the early 1960s that's how it was.

I'll tell you a story that brings home the point. It does not have to do with the fighters, but the point comes through clearly anyway. I, along with one of my buddies, got on a Taiwanese transport aircraft in Tainan on a routine flight to Taipei. It was a C-46 with Nationalist Chinese markings. There was weather that day, low ceilings throughout the area. Sitting in the back of the aircraft on canvas seating near a small window we watched with high interest how the pilot was going to make his approach. After some time in gentle descent the aircraft emerged below the ceiling, but as far as we could tell nowhere near an airport. At an altitude no higher than 150-200 feet we watched as he flew a short distance, turned, flew another short distance, then turned again. Just as we were beginning to think he was lost, a runway suddenly appeared beneath us followed by a beautiful landing. With raised eyebrows and approving smiles, we acknowledged to each other that he knew what he was doing.

After other passengers with their chickens and pigs departed the aircraft we went forward to the cockpit to see if we could talk to the pilot who was still seated in the left seat. We asked if he spoke English. He nodded yes with a look of curiosity on his face. We both complimented him on his approach and landing, then my buddy asked how much time he had in the C-46. "Ten thousand hours" he replied, stating the word "thousand" in typical Asian fashion as "sowzend." Astonished, my buddy asked, "You have 10,000 hours in C-46s? "No," the pilot replied, with a slight tone of indignation, "ten sowzand hour in *ziss* C-46." He had been flying the Hump through the war and, I mean, he'd been flying that plane nearly as long as I'd been alive.

Q: Well, I know the C-47, the Douglas standard. But what is a C-46?

BOYD: The C-46 was a little bit larger, but still a twin-engine transport. It had a sloped nose, so you could tell very quickly the difference between it and the C-47. The C-47 had vertically installed windshields tapering off into the contours of the nose. On the C-46 the nose sloped down from the top of the fuselage with the windscreens imbedded into that slope. It was an airplane that was not held in as high regard as the C-47, but was used by countries that received them from the U.S. and could not afford others.

Q: Oh, my, what a story ...

BOYD: Yes, this guy was very competent, and within limits the pilot is generally more important than the airplane.

So, you see we had high regard for the Taiwanese pilots. But we did not interact very often with them, other than sometimes in the air. As we ferried airplanes to Taiwan from the Philippines to replace those on nuclear alert, we knew we were going to get jumped before we ever reached the shoreline of Taiwan. There would be an F-86 or two

intercepting us, and had they not been friendly we would have had a fight on your hands. We could not get there without being jumped by these guys. They were very, very good.

Maybe while we're talking about Taiwan I should mention what it was like to "sit alert." Each pilot would spend 1 week per month on the alert pad, as we called it. That consisted of being quartered in a building that consisted of: a group bedroom; an open bay room where we ate, played cards, shot pool, etc.; and a secure room where the target folders and code envelopes were kept that we would use in case of an actual launch.

Each morning after breakfast we would go to the airplanes which were kept in open-ended concrete shelters located about forty yards from the main building. We would get into our assigned airplane, start the engine and run through all the normal pre-takeoff checks, hydraulics, avionics, radio, etc. While in the aircraft, with engine running, the aircraft was secured to the ground with chains, in the event the pilot went nuts, and decided to launch on his own authority.

Two or three times each week, anytime day or night, the klaxon horn would go off on a practice launch, and every pilot headed to his aircraft as fast as he could run, climbed the ladder to his plane, jumped in, hit the start button, while the crew chief, standing on the ladder, helped the pilot buckle in as the engine was winding up to taxi power. When ready to taxi the pilot would give a thumbs up to the ground officer in charge of the practice scramble who recorded everyone's time. The requirement was to be at the end of the runway in 5 minutes, but since we did not taxi in practice, it was 4.5min from sleeping or whatever until ready to go. When we all had shut down we went back to bed, or whatever we were doing when the horn sounded. After the first few times it became annoying, but necessary to remain sharp so that if we ever had to do it for real it would be absolutely second nature.

Q: Well then, after Clark Air Force Base in 1963, what next?

BOYD: I left there in October of 1963 to go back to the States. It was a 2-year tour and I extended by 3 months because I wanted to go back in the fall, during hunting season. I was a hunter.

Q: What was happening up to 1963 in Vietnam?

BOYD: Ah, good question. When I arrived in the Philippines in August of 1961 I learned that my squadron had an air defense alert commitment at Don Muang Airport in Bangkok. We kept four airplanes there, ostensibly for air defense against China. It made little sense on the face of it since China had neither capability nor reason to attack Thailand. The unstated, but increasingly obvious reason for our presence in Thailand was for training purposes in an area from which we one day might have to fight.

So, we were permitted to be there by a friendly government, to fly in and out of Bangkok at will and over the rest of the country to train as we wished. By 1962 we had stopped the

air defense mission at Don Muang and begun holding periodic exercises at a base called Takhli Royal Thai Air Base, located in central Thailand, about 150 miles from Bangkok. This gave us further opportunity to become familiar with all parts of the country, at least from an airman's perspective. Other airfields were also constructed during this period in places called Khorat, Ubon, and Udorn—all of them fine airstrips each with 9,000-foot runways, large parking ramps, underground fuel cells, weapons storage areas, but with no buildings, except a firehouse with a couple of firetrucks, that was it—sparse but capable of immediate air operations.

By 1963 Takhli had become, with the addition of some support buildings, a full-time deployment base. Our squadron from the Philippines was replaced by a squadron from Cannon Air Force Base in the United States. Clearly, what was going on was that we were preparing for something, and the something smelled an awful lot like Vietnam.

We did not know that for sure, of course, and I don't actually remember talking about war very much. We were living in the moment; great flying, like-minded companions, doing exactly what we loved to do. But, clearly, senior people in the military were establishing an operational presence. We were practicing flying and refueling to make sure that these bases were all working properly, and that the pilots were as proficient as possible. This was war preparation, we were not ignoring the nearby reality. By 1963 a small-scale war was going on in Vietnam, and there were a few Americans involved there as advisers. Some of them were flying with and training South Vietnamese pilots, as well as other support personnel. What we were doing in Thailand was part of a buildup and training ground in the event of a major engagement involving the United States. The archives, of course, tell us that in 1963 no decision had yet been made to increase American military commitment to South Vietnam. Still, by the time I left in October 1963 it was obvious to me that war in South Vietnam was a significant possibility.

VIETNAM 1965

Q: Yes, well it sure did.

BOYD: At the time, however, I had other things to do. I was headed back to the States to check out in a new airplane, an F-105. I did that, and then until April of 1965 I was either in the States or deployed to Turkey for nuclear alert.

In my absence from SEA things in Vietnam had progressed, with increased U.S. presence, and activity, both on shore and off. By April of '65 I was back at McConnell AFB in Kansas, flying the F-105 on routine training missions while keeping an eye on Vietnam. By that time the trigger for the Americanization of the Vietnam War had been pulled in August of '64 with the fateful incident in the Gulf of Tonkin. By February jets began striking frequently in North Vietnam, and on April 6, 1965 a large raid into the North against a variety of targets produced few results, and attention-getting losses.

The following day my squadron in Kansas was placed on alert for immediate deployment to Thailand, not to familiar Takhli, but to Khorat Air Base, 150 miles northeast of Bangkok. We launched our entire squadron of 24 airplanes within 48 hours, and headed out across the Pacific, with all the excitement and anticipation young men headed for combat have, at least those who have never been shot at before.

We got as far as Okinawa but no farther, to our chagrin. We believed we were headed for combat, but between our launch from Kansas and arrival in Okinawa, a change had been made. A local Okinawa squadron went to Khorat in our stead, while we remained behind to fulfill their boring task of standing nuclear alert. We were angry because we wanted to be in Thailand, where the action was. If you're a fighter pilot and you don't want to be where the action is, then you should not be a fighter pilot.

Q: So, when you were in Okinawa what were you doing besides sitting nuclear alert?

BOYD: Beyond nuclear alert, six nuclear armed aircraft and their pilots, those not on alert continued normal peacetime training, gunnery and bombing practice on the local range, over water navigation training, etc. So, we just operated.

Q: Was there any interaction in the air with the Chinese?

BOYD: At Okinawa? No, none. Nor at Khorat either. I and one other fellow volunteered to go down and fly combat missions out of Khorat, which we did. Those were my first combat missions. Then we rotated, because others wanted to come down and get a taste of combat. So, we kept two planes and pilots down there, and we rotated back and forth. That's how we spent that April through September at Okinawa.

After 6 months and a bit we returned to the States in September. We knew we were going to be coming back shortly, and indeed, in November 1965, we flew our airplanes from McConnell to Khorat to begin what became a permanent change of station for the purpose of flying missions over North Vietnam, and occasionally Laos, and nothing else. Milc waved goodbye to me standing on the ramp at McConnell AFB, the last she would see me until February 1973. We were at war in what was called Operation Rolling Thunder. I'm sure you remember that name.

Q: Indeed, I do. But let me go back and ask this: How dangerous was it to be in a small, single-engine plane with a nuclear bomb attached to it? I mean, if you ever had to actually drop the thing?

BOYD: Well, that was what these maneuvers that we practiced were about—to be able to deliver the weapon and escape the blast.

Q: Get the hell out.

BOYD: Yes, get the hell out of there. Newer bombs had evolved by then, bombs with parachutes that would slow the thing down while you were exiting the scene at 600 knots. But, you know, part of the madness of all of this is that in an actual nuclear exchange there were going to be bombs going off everywhere. So, there might well be nowhere to escape to, no undamaged airport to fly back to.

Let me tell you about one silly thing, a surreal thing really, they put in the little survival kit we carried. It was an eyepatch. What was it for? Well, we were supposed to put it on as we were flying into China, or out of Incirlik, Turkey into the Soviet Union, so that if somebody else's nuclear explosion went off close by and blinded one eye, you could take the patch off and see with that eye. It was sheer madness, and we knew it. What good would a good eye be when everything around you was melting? But we were professionals, and this was our job. Even though we knew it was crazy we were going to do it as well as we possibly could.

Q: OK, so let's get back down on the ground in the fall of 1965.

BOYD: OK, so we're at Khorat Air Base in Thailand and flying virtually daily missions into North Vietnam. That was a madness of its own caliber. There was no recognizable strategy. We were being sent against targets that were very heavily defended in many cases, but that seemed of relatively small value. Our targets were not chosen by a commander of an air campaign that made sense according to any known military logic. Our targets were being selected by people in the White House. Militarily, what we were being asked to do was simply incoherent.

We were operating in six different route packs, as they were called, defined geographic sections of North Vietnam starting from the south, at the Ben Hai River, to the northernmost which included Hanoi and Haiphong. The one farthest north, bordering on China, was called Route Pack 6, and that was divided into two parts, A and B. B was the one closest to the South China Sea, including the port of Haiphong. The Navy had responsibility for that one while the Air Force assumed responsibility for 6-A, including the city of Hanoi. Those were the most dangerous parts of North Vietnam, the most heavily defended. The least dangerous were the southern part of North Vietnam just north of the Ben Hai River.

In the early part of my tour most of our missions were in the middle sections, Route Packs 3-5. As the war intensified in the early months of 1966, however, we increasingly were sent further north, presumably to increase pressure on the Ho Chi Minh government. I actually preferred going to 6-A, for that's where the most significant targets were. In my naivete I assumed if we destroyed enough of the truly important targets that would accelerate an end to the war. I had not yet discovered that while we were fighting with the intent to win this war, we were doing so for a government that was not.

Q: You were all asking each other what the hell are we doing?

BOYD: Yes, we were shaking our heads. To give you an example, our intelligence watched as surface-to-air missile systems were being built in the summer of 1965. We knew exactly what they were and where they were, but we were not allowed to strike them until they were fully operational. Only then, after the damned things were capable of shooting us down, were we finally authorized to strike them. On the first day – the very first mission – three pilots were lost as a result. It made no sense whatsoever.

Q: Do you have any idea what was behind this? Did you ever …?

BOYD: We had a President who either could not comprehend, or was indifferent to, anything of an operational nature. He apparently was thinking only in terms of situational politics. Moreover, he had people working for him who apparently were equally indifferent, making operational choices in the absence of a rational campaign strategy. They determined where we would go, when we would go, what kind of targets we would strike, what kind of ordinance we would use. We were executing something that had no military coherence that we could understand.

It turned out, as we learned much later, the President's people were playing some form of game theory, using military instruments and their applications for what they believed were signaling purposes. They called this graduated response. I must add, we believed, and I still believe, in civilian control of the U.S. armed forces. But civilian control of the armed forces should not involve tactical micromanagement of the battle space. It likely produces unwanted outcomes, better known as losses.

Q: This is a real problem in Washington in many areas, that really the more important something is, the more it gets centered up into who's controlling it, and it gets out of the hands of
the professionals and into the people who have the biggest egos.

BOYD: Yes, it's true. Different presidents function in different ways.

Q: The President you're talking about now is …

BOYD: Johnson was the President, and Johnson wanted absolute control. In a broad assessment of the man's presidency he deserves credit for what he achieved legislatively. He did several very important things on civil rights, voters rights, and so forth. It's useful however to remember the context in which he achieved those legislative achievements. He managed to do it in part because he was a commander in chief in time of war. And in large part because of JFK's legacy, and because of his own legislative knowledge and experience. Military emergencies add trust and prerogative onto political leadership in our democracy, and Johnson made the most of it. But in measuring Johnson's performance strictly as commander in chief in time of war it's hard to imagine anyone doing a worse job. He is the enduring reminder for how not to be a commander in chief in time of war.

Q: Well, you look at Roosevelt, who really kept his hands off.

BOYD: That's right. Except on very important strategic considerations, and then he sometimes overruled his military, appropriately, I think. But you're right; he let his military commanders figure out the how questions while he pondered the what and wherefore questions.

Q: In contrast to Churchill, who also got his hands …

BOYD: He got way too involved, that's right. Now, I'm a great fan of Churchill in many ways, but he did mismanage too many military operations. And he did not learn from his mistakes as he might have. His first big screw up was, after all, at Gallipoli in 1915 when Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty.

Q: It's odd. It's true that Churchill was flawed as a military man, but no one can deny his political genius or his courage or his talent for leadership. From a distance we can see such figures as whole persons.

BOYD: That's exactly right, Presidents and Prime Ministers, and very senior generals I might add, need to remember their job descriptions, and stay at the level where they belong, where they have been assigned, either by elections, or an institutional promotion process. I remember as a young lieutenant hearing a very senior communication official proudly announce we had now developed capability so sophisticated that the President could contact a platoon commander in the field, half way around the world. Now I was very young, and not very experienced, but I had a feeling that was not a very good idea. If a President could, then he just might, and God knows what he might tell that platoon leader to do. I knew I did not want any President calling me in my airplane, telling me which way to turn.

In my very fortunate life I have had the opportunity to function at all levels of the military hierarchy, from a lieutenant flying fighters, to a four-star general at the European Command level. At the beginning flying was the only thing important to me, but later my life changed in a radical way. Flying opened doors and opportunities I never anticipated in my wildest dreams, leading ultimately to work in various foreign and security policy roles far beyond the imagination of a young Aviation Cadet learning to fly. Perhaps one reason for that advance was that at every level I tried to focus on my job, and no one else's. Would that our Presidents try to do the same.

Q: An honorable and, I think you'll agree, a fortunate life in the sense that you survived an ordeal many did not. And that leads us back to pick up the thread of the story, back to 1965, early '66.

BOYD: In mid-February, while returning from an easy mission in NVN, crossing the panhandle of Laos on the way home, a radio call came in from a forward air controller

asking if anyone in the area he identified had any ordinance. Our flight leader responded, yes, but only 20 mike-mike, meaning only bullets, 20 millimeter, in our Gatling Guns, which fired at a rate of 6,000 rounds a minute, in case you're interested. The controller said, "Perfect." We located him shortly then watched as he fired a marker rocket to mark the target, a small building he said contained numerous guerrilla forces.

The flight leader rolled in on the smoke marker but failed to see the building heavily covered with tree branches and camouflage. Number two did not see it either, though I, flying number three, spotted it, rolled in and began firing. I next heard the controller say, excitedly, "That's it. You got it!" while I was observing fire warning lights illuminate in my cockpit along with loud noises as my engine was coming apart. The gun, located forward of the left air intake for the engine, had exploded distributing its metal debris through the intake and into the engine. I hit my mic button and said, "I've lost my engine and am on fire. I'm getting out if this thing." The controller saw my burning aircraft and said, "Bend it around to the west if you can. The bad guys are all on the east side of that little river."

I had over 400 knots of air speed and traded it for altitude, while gently turning to the west. As I reached the apogee at just below 100 knots, I pulled the ejection seat handles, and made a clean departure from my mortally wounded aircraft. The chute opened with a soft jerk since I was going so slow, and I descended into thick jungle canopy with my hands over my crotch for important protection. Just as my feet almost reached the ground my chute snagged on some tree branches and stopped my descent. I unbuckled the harness and stepped out of it completely unscathed.

Thirty-five minutes later a Jolly Green Giant helicopter was overhead, dropped a line to me, snatched me out of the jungle, and after a short flight deposited me at a base just inside the Thai border. If one had to jump over enemy territory, this was about as perfect a rescue as one could possibly have. I was flown back to Khorat, walked into the Officers Club to hoots, cheers and back slapping, spotted my squadron commander and said, "Put me on the flying schedule for tomorrow afternoon." With raised eyebrows he said, "Don't you want to take a few days off?" "Nope," I said, "I'm ready to go." And indeed, I flew another mission the following day. I should add, over a two or three day period a couple more guns blew up before the armament people figured out we had received a batch of bad ammo, and stopped loading it.

I flew 88 missions over North Vietnam (plus another 18 in Laos). At the time, if you flew 100 missions over North Vietnam, that constituted a completed tour and you went back home, at least for a while. Though I had contemplated extending my tour, I got to 88 and that's all, because on my 88th mission I was shot down, and this time no Jolly Green came after me, I was in the outskirts of Hanoi.

Much later in life I returned to Bangkok, retracing steps back to where I fought my war, now in surroundings so layered with change I recognized absolutely nothing. I might as well have been in the middle of Timbuktu. What had not dimmed were my memories,

which surged so intensely as I get near Khorat AB that I could think of almost nothing else. I have long since come to grips with fighting an ill-conceived and ill-conducted war, but my memories tell me I was never more alive, more filled with feelings than in those 5 months. Nothing I have done since can match it.

It all came back: Being in the squadron at 3:00 in the morning, with ops giving us the target, and weapons load, intel giving us the lethal shit we'd be facing, flight planning, suiting up, the walk to the aircraft, start engine, taxi, take off precisely at 5:00, join up, find the tanker, top off with fuel, cruise to the let-down point. On the deck at the Red River, adrenaline racing, concentration more intense than it will ever be again after the war, find the target, pop to position to roll in with every fucker in North Vietnam shooting at you, saying to yourself, "Fuck you, I'm coming in." Do a thousand little flight adjustments to get the airspeed, dive angle, release altitude, and bomb sight precisely on target, release, pull to 6 Gs to keep from hitting the ground, start a little turn to look back over your shoulder to see where your bombs hit. Back down to the deck, run like Foyt on the straight at Indy, danger past, rejoin flight, start climb, mask off, light a Marlboro, feeling good, really good. Land, debrief, back to hooch, sleep, read, shower, go to club, eat, drink, go visit special Thai girl, no thoughts of tomorrow. Wouldn't trade my job with anyone. Going "downtown Hanoi," as we called it, with hundreds shooting big guns and missiles at you, to deliver the mail on time and with precision, then escaping unscathed—*that*, is living.

MISSION 88 (1966)

Q: While you were over in North Vietnam the first 87 times, what opposition did you experience? Was it strictly ground-launched missiles or was it airplanes, too?

BOYD: Up to that point it was almost exclusively ground-based anti-aircraft: AAA, anti-aircraft artillery, and SAM (surface-to-air) missiles. Really close to the ground there was also small arms fire, but the most dangerous stuff was the AAA and the SAMs. The SAMs would drive us down into an area that was defended by AAA—that was their strategy. Our strategy was to make our way as best we could through the AAA and get to, and kill, those missile sites. As a matter of fact, the mission that I was on the day I was shot down was an "iron hand" mission. It was, in other words, a mission designed to track down the surface-to-air missile systems that were defending the western part of Hanoi while a strike flight came in from the west. We were trying to suppress the SAMs so the strike flights could get in without that form of opposition.

At that time our capability to search and destroy the SAMs was in its early stage of development. The F-105 aircraft were equipped with rather primitive missile detection gear. But we also had a few F-100 Wild Weasel aircraft equipped with somewhat more

sophisticated sensor gear that could detect the acquisition radar of the SAM site, and also determine the point at which that acquisition input turned over to a firing impulse from the missile battery. That was identifiable on the sensor detection gear in the airplane, so he could call out, for example, "030 at 12 miles," so the other three aircraft in the flight could know where to look.

On that particular occasion they fired two missiles at me, in short sequence. I saw them come off the ground. They were easy to duck, I just turned and dove into them producing a closure rate that sort of SAM, the SA-2 missile, was not quick enough to detonate as we closed then passed one another. Then I pulled back up to get high enough to roll in and dive bomb the SAM site. And it was on the top of that pull up, what we call the pop, where I got hit by the AAA, anti-aircraft artillery.

Q: Could you tell where the hit was, or guess whether you could stay airborne for long?

BOYD: Well, those were big guns operating in the area that day, 37 and 57 millimeter. When you're hit with one of those it's not a small surgical incision, it's more like a body blow, you know you've been hit. I don't know whether I got hit with a 37 or a 57, nor exactly where. It didn't matter. just that I was hit and hit hard. The aircraft engine kept running but the plane was immediately on fire. I could look in my little mirrors up on the canopy rail and see that the whole rear end of the airplane was on fire—just a big blowtorch—mortally wounded. I wasn't going to be in that airplane much longer.

So, I looked to the right to see if I could maybe make it to the Gulf, and I saw that it was too far. I looked to the left to see if I could make it into the mountains, the ridge, what we called Thud Ridge, that ridge of mountains that came down along the Red River Valley. That was also too far. Immediately ahead of me, maybe 10 miles or so, was an area of jungle forest, and I thought if I could get there before I bailed out, then there was at least a chance somebody could come in at night and get me with a helicopter.

But that was a futile wish. Before I could get there the fire in the aircraft burned through my flight controls and I lost control of the airplane, even though the engine was still running. The aircraft just slowly rolled over and headed down, at which point I was going very, very fast. It was indicating a speed at which ejection is very dangerous. But I thought, well, if I don't eject I'm going to die anyway, so I'll pull the handles and see what happens.

What happened next was strangely interesting. I had my helmet on, of course, and my oxygen mask, and a visor down and chin-strap fastened. Still, the speed at which I went out of the plane created a force that tore my helmet off my head. I have no idea how that happened. All I know is that when I was on the ground the helmet was gone and I had big scrape marks on the sides of my cheeks. As far as I could tell, no bones were broken, and that is often not the case when one bails out at that speed. I figured all the gallons of fresh whole milk I drank on the farm growing up had made my bones so dense as to be all but indestructible. I like to think all that milk may have saved my life.

At any rate, I got a swing or two out of the parachute and landed in a rice paddy just right outside of Hanoi. There were lots and lots of people there. They were all running toward me, and a lot of them had AK-47s, so I was not going anywhere, that was for sure. They captured me and that was the end of that.

The air war in North Vietnam was over for me on April 22, 1966. The next period of my life extends from that date until February 12, 1973. That's the POW chapter.

Q: Well, however painful to relive, we have to go into that. But first just one last question on your air war experience. Were you ever briefed on either North Vietnamese pilots or North Korean pilots or Chinese pilots or Russians pilots?

BOYD: I don't actually recall being officially briefed on the nationality of the MIG pilots, but the air-to-air threats were not significant during my time in combat. In 88 missions over the North I never saw a MIG airborne. Never. Later, they became quite active, but during my 88 missions none. As a matter of fact, at one point I went down the runway of an airfield up there, probably 100 feet going very, very fast, and the whole ramp was full of MIGs. But they would not come off the ground. We wondered why?

How much of this was official and how much of it was bar talk, I don't know, but we had information that the Russians were there, and that they were certainly training people on the surface-to-air missile systems. They were also there training North Vietnamese in flying and air combat tactics. A little later there were indications, and I think official intelligence too, which indicated that North Korean pilots were there, and they were flying with the Vietnamese. If Russian pilots were flying, I don't know that for a fact. People who were there and were receiving intelligence in late 1966 and 1967 would have a much better understanding, I'm sure, than I do.

Q: The reason I ask is that as an airman second class in Korea, I was listening to Soviet fighters directed by Soviet ground controllers …

BOYD: In North Korea?

Q: No, in Vietnam, attacking Americans; and they weren't telling you?

BOYD: They were not telling us that officially, certainly not that I recall. We knew the Russians were there training them; we did not know for a fact that they were flying. In any event, I never once saw a MIG airborne in 88 missions flying over North Vietnam.

PRISONER OF WAR (1966)

Q: Okay, so back to the rice paddies. You're on the ground near Hanoi, and what happened?

BOYD: Well, I put up a little tussle but there were just dozens of people in my face and many more behind them. So, they had me down, practiced their soccer kicks on me for a while. Tiring of that I suppose, they then pulled my flight suit and boots off, left me in my underwear and loaded me on a small truck, more like a large jeep really, with a canvas top. They paraded me a while for the people to see, to scream and curse at me and try to rush in and hit me.

Then they took me to a holding place, a small building. I was bound, blindfolded, and left there until dark whereupon they put me in a truck for a drive that took an hour or so. The destination was, I later learned, the Hỏa Lò Prison, the old French dungeon that the American POWs who preceded me had decided to call the Hanoi Hilton.

Once there I was turned over to a very unfriendly welcoming party which introduced me to a new reality beyond anything I had ever imagined. Their first objective was to get me to talk, to identify myself, which they seemed to know was authorized under the terms of the Geneva Convention, an international agreement I soon learned they had no intention of complying with themselves. Thinking of myself as a tough guy, my initial intent was to refuse to give them anything, even my identity. They seemed to have little patience with that and straightaway trussed me up in what I later learned was called the "rope trick." In those days everybody who resisted seriously, and I think many did, went through this. They put my arms behind my back and applied what were essentially tourniquets tightened on each elbow, then pulled the elbows behind me together with all the force they could apply. The guards then lifted me up with the weight of my body supported by my bound elbows. This produced an exquisite form of pain I could not have earlier imagined.

Thus positioned, the guards took turns beating me, though I think the effect was largely overshadowed by the pain of the "rope trick." Then at intervals, the beating would cease to give the interrogator an opportunity to demand answers to his questions. This interrogator, I later learned, had been dubbed "The Rabbit" by earlier arrivals for the distinctive feature of his frontal buck teeth. He was an arrogant fellow, seemed to enjoy his work, mindful of his immense power over the hapless chap now in his charge. After I declined to answer his questions for a while the guards would again apply their persuasive efforts. Eventually losing his patience the Rabbit informed me that I would talk sooner or later, or words to that effect. I remember squeezing out a reply, "I would rather die than give you the sweat off my …" The Rabbit's memorable response was, "To die is easy, to live you will find is not so easy." Truthful response.

The Rabbit knew that time was on his side and left periodically to let time work, then return to see if I was ready to buy relief from the pain. I can't tell you how long it took, time became a complete blur with only a vague awareness of daylight passing to darkness, then daylight again, as I passed in and out of consciousness, and at times when

conscious I tried to slam my head against the concrete floor to knock myself out, unsuccessfully.

Pain is an interesting thing. Short term applications, even quite severe, can be tolerated without too much difficulty. It's protracted pain that wears you down, when you can see no end in sight. Eventually I was ready for the sadist to turn the relief key for my pain.

Name, rank, and serial number—my first attempt—was not enough. Rabbit wanted more, type of aircraft, unit designation and location, numbers of aircraft and pilots at that location, next-day targets, etc. I answered those questions the way I've learned most men do when pushed to their limits of endurance, I lied: fictional units, different type aircraft, large numbers of aircraft and pilots, target areas I doubted would be assigned any time soon. Some answers Rabbit knew to be false and would nod to the guards to encourage me to do more, as I lay on the dirty concrete floor in a fetal position, trying to protect important parts of my anatomy.

Finally, the nightmare ended, at least until the next time, and I was shoved into a cell in a place I later learned was called, aptly, Heartbreak Hotel. It was a small section of the larger prison in which were located seven cells and what could have been an eighth cell that was used as a place to dump slop buckets of human waste into a drain. There was also a water spigot there, and later on they let me go there to clean myself up a bit. By that point the effect of the ropes had destroyed enough nerves in my arms and hands to make them completely numb, almost useless. But what was more unsettling was my own sudden, psychological transformation from a cocky, highly confident fighter pilot living a life he loved, into a confused, frightened, totally powerless man with a new, not yet, recognizable human identity. That was the introduction to the new reality that, in the weeks to come, I would have to learn how to endure.

Q: So, it was operational information they were trying to extract from you?

BOYD: Yes, as I said they wanted to know upcoming targets, types of ordinance, where I was based and how many aircraft and how many pilots and how often I flew and what routes I flew. It was all tactical information. I knew very little of real use to them, although they didn't realize that, and often seemed to accept the misinformation I gave them. Plus, I really didn't know where the missions were going to be the following day.

Q: I was just going to say, you know, a fighter pilot really doesn't get much of a bird's eye information.

BOYD: No, you don't. We rarely got our targets for the next day's mission until late in the evening of the day before, and sometimes not until the day of the raid. We'd get up at 2:00 in the morning, start briefings at 3:00, flight plan, eat breakfast, get suited up and get out in the airplane for a 5:00 takeoff. We certainly did not know what the hell was going to happen the next day or the next after that. So, we were pretty valueless.

Q: Did you have the feeling that they had an ulterior motive? Or was this just nastiness for its own sake?

BOYD: There was certainly some nastiness. You can tell when someone is enjoying cruelty. But I think what they really wanted to do was to break our spirit to the point where we would become compliant prisoners, and no trouble to maintain. They wanted to persuade us that we had lost all power, that we had nothing left. They wanted us to realize that our captors controlled everything in our lives. They could kill us. They could starve us. They could beat us, torture us. We had no tools other than our own human spirit to resist. The objective was to break us to the point where we would then comply with whatever they wanted us to do.

Now, I didn't think this through philosophically at the time, but what I was doing and what I believed on reflection, was that to maintain some kind of human dignity after being in this totally powerless condition I had to focus on the enemy's long-term objective. And here's the answer to that, in my view: You can be broken, if being broken means that you can be made to say or write something that your captor wants you to say or write. There was not one prisoner in the 1965-69 period, when torture was most heavily used, who resisted to the point where he never said or did anything his captor wanted. None.

So, they could break you. The real issue is could they keep you broken? If you were willing to come back the next day and take it all over again, or next week, and show you are not going to stay broken, if you could display the willingness to do that, and the human energy to do that again and again, eventually your captor was going to give up on you to look for more compliant subjects. To repeat, for emphasis, the way one restores a sense of self-worth after having lost it all is by being willing to take the torture again, and again and again.

Q: What were your captors, your interrogators, like? Did you get any feel for them?

BOYD: Oh, yes, sure. Some were, you know, pure sadists. This is going to sound like a racist remark, but it happens to be true: I saw over the years Vietnamese do things to animals, for example, that I would never ever have seen or even thought that any American I knew was capable of doing. For example, they would kill dogs and eat them; that's part of their diet and there is nothing special about that in and of itself. But they would not just kill a dog, cut its throat or whatever; they'd torture him. They'd put eyes out with burning coals that they used to light their cigarettes and then let the dog wander around blind. They'd kick him and hit him and poke at him and laugh and carry on. They would eventually torture the dog to death and then skin it and put it in the pot.

They would also find rats and other animals, and they just had to torture the animals. They found joy in that, and it is a characteristic I have never experienced in Western culture anywhere. Maybe it was a self-selected group of sadistic people who inclined to be prison guards, I don't know. But, in as many places as I have been in my life, I have

never witnessed anything like it elsewhere. So, there was, in some of these guys dealing with us clear sadism. They enjoyed beating us, causing pain, with no fear of retaliation since their colleague was standing by with a rifle and bayonet. There were others who I think did not feel that way, who were just simply doing their job.

Now, the interrogators varied some in their personalities and approaches. We had names for them, the guys who were the worst and the ones who were not all that bad. But was there any friendliness, or ever any human relationships established? Not that I'm aware of. We continued to resist, they continued to try to get propaganda out of us for years. They long since had given up on getting any useful information because we just didn't know any. But what they wanted out of us was something useful for propaganda purposes.

Q: Did they ever give you or suggest a line, something to say?

BOYD: They wanted us to admit to crimes. We were all criminals in their eyes, or at least in their government's propaganda strategy. We were Yankee air pirates. They wanted us to admit we had committed crimes against North Vietnam. They wanted that to use in tandem with the antiwar movement in the United States. You remember that Jane Fonda came over to pay us a visit, and several others less famous. They all went back to the United States with stories that were not true. Whether Fonda and the others really believed them I don't know. But the stories were effective, I guess, for stoking the antiwar movement's morale.

A friend of mine named Fred Cherry, a black guy I had known before the war, who had been one of my instructors in fighter gunnery school, was a special target of the interrogators. He was a little older than I and shot down earlier. He had been shot in the shoulder, had an open weeping wound, with deteriorating health. They wanted to use him as a propaganda tool, specifically to get him to say that the war was a racist war, that white American leaders were using and exploiting black people to fight their war. To his everlasting credit, Fred never allowed them to use him in that way. He preferred to die, and nearly did so from their torture.

Then, since they were not able to get anything useful out of him, they decided that if they put him in a cell with a white Southern guy, the hatred between them would perhaps make Fred come around. The white Southern boy was a guy named Porter Halyburton, who immediately began nursing Fred's wounds, feeding him, and helping him with his daily functions. He nursed him back to health and the two became friends, lifelong friends, soulmates really. Those two—Fred died in 2016 at the age of 87—were as close friends as you're ever going to find in this world. They wrote a book together called *Two Souls Indivisible*, published in 2005.

Q: I seem to recall that there was a prisoner march through Hanoi that drew international attention, were you involved in that?

BOYD: Yes. An event that was not much fun at the time, but on reflection, if one had to be a prisoner this was an event one would not want to miss. It had some memorable highlights.

The march took place on 6 July, 1966, not long after I was shot down. Fifty of us were involved, as I recall, 25 pairs hand-cuffed together with a pair of Vietnamese soldiers with rifles and bayonets flanking each pair of Yanks, and those foursomes positioned line astern. As we emerged onto a major street our blindfolds were pulled off, and we saw, and heard, literally thousands of Vietnamese screaming, all agitated by men in civilian clothes with bullhorns, no doubt describing us in unfavorable terms, and encouraging the angry crowd to show us how unwelcome we were in their country.

At that moment of blindfold removal, I saw a guy I knew who had been declared KIA a year earlier, and heard him say, "Oh boy, a parade, I love a parade." With that wonderful little slice of fighter-pilot panache, the parade began.

In the beginning the guards on either side began hitting us on the top of our heads with the flat side of their bayonets, shouting, "bow, bow," probably the only word in English they had been taught. That meant to me that my primary mission now was to refuse to bow. As the angry crowd started to surge toward us and reach in to try to hit us, I was using my free arm to ward off blows, yet I could see out of my peripheral vision that the head of my cuffed partner was lower than mine. Without looking at him I shouted, "hold your head up"! Moments later with my primary attention devoted to blocking fists, I could still see my partner's head was too low, and partially turned and shouted, "hold your goddamned head up!" A few more degrees of head turn, and I could see a little short guy practically walking on his tip toes holding his head as high as he could possibly get it. I didn't have time at that moment to apologize but did so later.

Very shortly the parade got ugly. The organizers had obviously wanted to get the crowd riled up, angry and even more committed to the war effort, but had no intention of turning the locals loose to maul, and ultimately kill the prisoners. They probably thought one guard per prisoner was enough to hold the crowd at bay. As the evening wore on it was not clear that the prisoner/guard ratio was enough.

The surging crowd seemed to want to get us down, individuals would grapple with a guard from behind then try to kick a prisoner behind the knees, to break his leg support. I knew if we went down as a pair we would not get back up. My smaller partner lost his balance twice, but I was able to jerk him back upright. The guards were definitely on our side now, just trying to protect us meant they were taking some abuse as well.

To this day I have no idea how long this fight lasted, only that eventually we got to a stadium which apparently was our intended destination. More troops were there holding back the crowds, squeezing us through the gates, and helping to get them closed with us inside, and the mob outside. I had read about lynch mobs, and the psychology that

maddens them, turns them into crazed animals. I now know what that looks like, up close and personal.

Once inside that stadium and safe, the officer in charge told us to sit down on the ground which we were glad to do. My partner, with blood covering his face, and eyes wide open said, “Do they do this very often?” He was a Navy pilot, an F-8 driver off a carrier, and had been shot down the day before. My reply, long forgotten by me, reemerged in an interview with him years later, was, "Only on Saturdays." His name was Cole Black—a great guy—tragically killed in a light plane crash long after he retired.

One good outcome was that a Japanese photographer was present. Through his pictures of the parade the US was able to identify prisoners who had not been known to be alive and others who had been thought to be KIA. The fact of the parade caused an uproar in the US including, reportedly, in the White House.

Q: What sort of contact did you have with fellow prisoners?

BOYD: Our captors wanted to keep us as isolated as they could, so we could not communicate and boost each other’s spirits, or develop any organizational structure for the binding power that would create. They kept us in solitary confinement and then when space became limited they would put two guys to a cell, or three, but then they tried to prevent us from communicating with prisoners in other cells. If they could keep us isolated, they figured they could control us better. There’s strength in numbers, so if we were communicating with one another and had some kind of a prison organization, that would give strength and support, and that’s what they were trying to avoid. They were partially successful in doing that, but certainly not completely successful.

That is because one of the early prisoners, Smitty Harris, who was prisoner number six, had learned in survival school, and remarkably remembered, a simple communication system, a code, which could be used by tapping on a wall separating one prisoner from another. The code was simple, but ingenious. It placed the alphabet into a five by five matrix, eliminating the letter K, which could be substituted with the letter C. One could then isolate a letter by finding it on a horizontal line, and its intersection with a vertical line, then tapping the number of times to reach the horizontal, pause, then tap to reach the vertical. For example, to transmit the letter N which is in the center of the matrix, one would tap three times to identify the horizontal line, pause, then tap three more to identify the intersection with the vertical.

It was an easy thing to use, although time consuming, but we had plenty of time, after all. Most people with a little practice could become quite adept, and fast. I thought I could tap at machine gun speed, slow machine gun, mind you. So, Smitty introduced his idea, and over time managed to pass it along to the five prisoners who had preceded him. It became a standard communication method for all who followed. It was the means of locating the senior ranking officer, who could then build an organizational structure, with guidelines for conduct, giving people a sense of again being in a military unit. Moreover, it was a

mental activity, getting to know other people without ever seeing them, learning all manner of things from others, and spreading knowledge you possessed. I learned Spanish by tapping on a wall, accumulating a 2700 word vocabulary, 700 verbs, three levels of conjugation, grammar, pronunciation and syntax. All correct, I later learned when I went back to university. I believe I can say without hesitation, it was the primary means of keeping us sane. I used it so much that it was a great many years before the calluses on my knuckles finally disappeared.

It was particularly rough going for the first few years. Torture aside, I was colder, hotter and hungrier in North Vietnam than I have ever been in my life. I remember huddling in thin, cotton, pajama-like clothing, and only slightly thicker cotton blankets, with my cellmate trying to share body heat. It's one thing to get cold then go inside to warm up, and something completely different to stay cold for months on end. I remember lying naked except for shorts on my wooden plank bed, inside a steel roofed cell block, with no windows, covered with heat rash, sweating continuously. When flies would land on me, I would hesitate to brush them off, thus exerting energy which I thought would make me hotter. Hunger was a constant. What food there was ranged from disgusting to barely edible. At times, we received so little that prisoners began to contract acute malnutrition diseases. A period of my life best forgotten.

When Ho Chi Minh died in September, 1969 we noticed a change in policy. Torture was essentially over after that, and we had better food. It was still minimal, mind you, but better and slightly more than it had been before. And they started letting us outside occasionally, cell by cell, still trying to keep us from communicating with others, but giving us a little outside time to bathe using our tin cups and breathe outside air a bit.

Then, in the fall of 1970, came the famous Son Tay raid—a commando raid that entered the prison at Son Tay, where I had been. Sadly, all prisoners had been moved in July to another camp, so when the Son Tay raiders arrived there were no American prisoners to rescue. It was a beautifully executed raid, probably as well executed as any in our history, but unfortunately the objective of getting the prisoners out of that camp failed.

But what resulted from it was North Vietnamese recognition that outlying prisons were vulnerable to attack. So, they started moving people back into the larger Hanoi Hilton. That in turn gave us an opportunity to join with many new people in large cells. They put me, for example, in a cell that initially held 70 guys, so many we could not all lie down at the same time. After several days they removed 15 giving the remaining 55 a little breathing space.

We were thus in much improved conditions until the summer of 1972 when the bombing campaign resumed in North Vietnam. A group of 205, of which I was one, was moved north to the China border to a prison we called Dog Patch, consisting of 25 or so rough-hewn cell blocks, with no electricity, and of course no heat. We stayed there until returning to Hanoi just a couple of weeks before the first release in early 1973.

Q: Did they bring you news from the States, from family perhaps, to loosen you up or one thing or another?

BOYD: They did. They allowed some communication, some letters with our family. This was only later on, however, and the letters were limited to little six-line pieces of paper. We could write on those six lines, so long as it said nothing of our treatment, and then that was posted. They would usually give those letters to a visiting antiwar group, and they would take them back and turn them over to our authorities, who would then distribute them to the families. And the same thing in reverse: Our families were allowed to write to us occasionally. In my case, which was probably typical, I received over the years maybe four or five letters. I wrote more than that, but certainly not all of them made it out. Some guys never got to write; it was never entirely clear why.

Q: Any propaganda directed at you?

BOYD: Oh, yes. We were constantly bombarded with propaganda. There was a speaker in every cell, and we would get Hanoi Hannah, a voice that would read us news about what was going on in the United States. Most of the news had to do with the antiwar movement, embellished in such a way that it was portrayed as prevailing. The movement, she asserted, would cause these criminals, our President, Johnson, and later Nixon, to end the war. And then they would play music for us and it would be antiwar songs from some of the singers of the day who were popular in that antiwar movement. To this day, I cannot listen to Joan Baez or Pete Seeger.

The propaganda was crude enough that listening carefully could help us determine what was actually going on, to a point. We knew that we had an election in 1972, for example, and we knew that George McGovern was the antiwar candidate who had promised that, if elected, he would pull out of the war with no strings attached. Had the propaganda been accurate, McGovern would have become President. After release we learned McGovern had carried one state, and the District of Columbia. There was smug satisfaction in that.

Q: Yes, I remember. I've always been a strong Democrat, like your parents; but I voted for Nixon in that election.

BOYD: We held our own election in my cell. We all voted for Nixon, of course.

Toward the end, for those of us in the place on the China border, we suddenly started getting a lot more food. They'd bring in big buckets full of rice, so we knew something was up. And they were not harassing us in any way. We started putting on some weight and they were cutting our hair and kind of making us look a little better.

So, one night I'm lying in my wooden bunk with about seven or eight of us in a small cell, and the next thing we know a truck comes into the compound, which is unusual. A few minutes later another truck came in, then a third truck and a fourth truck and a fifth

truck—about 19 trucks came into the compound during the night. We could hear them come one by one. So, we concluded that this must mean we're going home. With dizzy optimism, we put two and two together: They have been feeding us all this damned rice, and now the trucks, this has to be the best sign ever. And sure enough, the next day they took us out, and started loading us on trucks.

Now, whenever they had moved us before, no matter how long or how short the distance, they would handcuff us, blindfold us, and shove us in the back of a truck maybe handcuffed to another guy. This time we were without blindfolds, as they loaded us onto the trucks. No handcuffs either. We were in a kind of controlled ecstasy as we drove for most of the day and into the night back to Hanoi. We were moving over very rough roads, sitting in the back of the trucks bouncing around, but without complaint. We could see out, and that alone made us deliriously happy. We thought, this is surely the end of a very bad dream.

Sure enough, when we got to Hanoi they returned us to Hỏa Lò Prison. The next day came the announcement of the Paris Peace Accords, and we were going to go home. We were scheduled to go home in segments. The guys who had been there the longest would go home on February 12, and then there were two more dates dragging on into March. But everybody was going home, and indeed, everybody did. I was in that first group because I'd been there a long time.

Q: How long had you been there?

BOYD: Well, it turned out to be 2,488 days, if you want to know exactly - 2 months short of 7 years.

Q: During this time, had there been any attempts to co-opt you through kindness or to, you know, humanize the thing?

BOYD: Oh yes, but for those who remained firm resisters, and that was almost all of us, there were no takers. There were, however, 14 guys, out of more than 600, who were more compliant, of weaker character. Twelve were offered early release, and against the orders of our senior ranking officer, accepted. Two were more than just compliant, actual traitors, actively aiding and abetting the enemy. They were too valuable to our captors to be released early, so were held to the end.

One more was released early, yet he was certainly an exception to the category of "compliant." A young seaman named Doug Hegdahl, while serving on a destroyer in the Tonkin Gulf, fell overboard during a work detail on deck at night. He had a life vest on and somehow no one recognized that he had gone missing. He floated around in the gulf for many hours until some fishermen picked him up. Thus, he became a prisoner, but one our captors never quite understood. Clearly not a "Yankee Air Pirate" so apparently in their confusion, they decided to grant him early release. By that time, he was well inside our communication system and a good prisoner. The senior ranking officer said, "If they

let you go home, take it. But first you must learn the names of all the prisoners"—hundreds at that point— and he did. That information was of great value to the authorities back home.

I have the names of 2 of the 14 "compliants" mentioned above burned into my memory. They were actual traitors, so valuable to our captors. One was named Ed Miller and one named Gene Wilbur — one Marine, the other Navy. These guys were really total turncoats, and they got lots and lots of special treatment; better food and so on. When they came home, the rest of the prisoners knew of their behavior and tried very hard to get them court martialed. It became a political issue with our government because some elements within the antiwar movement came out in support of them. One of the legal groups that had been a powerful force in the antiwar movement swore if these guys were court martialed the organization would take up their defense in court, and they would turn it into a show trial against the war. The Nixon Administration buckled. Even though I had great fondness for Richard Nixon in the way he handled the overall POW issue, I never quite forgave him for that.

Because these guys were wards of the Department of the Navy it was John Warner, the Secretary of the Navy at the time, whose job it became to tell us that the government was not going to court martial them. He did so when we were gathered in Washington for a grand dinner at the White House that President Nixon hosted for us. I respected Warner for having the courage to do that, and he did it face to face, not through some aide. Still, and I think I speak for just about all the POWs, I was disappointed that they caved in. I would have gone ahead with the show. We had almost 600 witnesses who could have come forth and told everyone what scumbags these guys were. They should have ended up in Leavenworth. But that never happened.

Q: So, what were your reactions in the process of coming back home?

BOYD: Well, we were ecstatic the thing was over. But the mind can play tricks. I remember worrying that it all might just be a dream, and that I'm going to wake up to find that it isn't true. But it was, when they put weight on us and did a nice job on cutting our hair and all, we knew it was not a dream. We got a razor so we could shave, and we looked pretty good after a month or so of fattening us up with loads of rice. Before the big diet increase, my weight must have been around 115-120, from 170 pounds when I was shot down.

Then the big day came, and we were separated into groups. I was in the third group of the first wave. The night before they gave us some clothes—nice looking pants and shirts and little jackets, all alike. We had been wearing these raggedy old pajamas for years. And they provided shoes. I had not had shoes on for 7 years and now I had a pair of shoes that sort of fit, and socks too. Then they loaded us on buses and took us out, again with no blindfolds or handcuffs, to Gia Lam Airport. They put us in buildings with no windows, but we could peek through the cracks and kind of see what was going on out on the flight

line. Sure enough, a U.S. C-130 came in, and believe me that was very exciting to see. We were on an emotional high.

That C-130 carried a maintenance unit, we presumed to be available if any maintenance was required on the aircraft sent to retrieve us. About 30 minutes later in came a C-141. I'd never seen a 141 because they'd come online after I was shot down, but some of the guys had seen them. We watched the guy land and saw the huge mess that landing made, through no fault of the pilot. The landing strip was filthy, so when the plane came in a lot of dust and debris was kicked up, especially when the reversers engaged to slow the plane down. I learned later that it was a 5,000-foot runway, and that's not a long runway for so large a plane. We were very attentive to these kind of details, always worried that something might happen that would prevent us from leaving.

Okay, so first a bunch of guys, not our group, went out, climbed aboard and away they went. Then we watched as another C-141 approached, maybe 20 or 30 minutes later, but this one overshot the runway, perhaps misjudging a crosswind. That made us a little nervous, but when he overshot the second time, we became concerned. On the third pass he landed, but when he engaged thrust reverse, the plane was engulfed in debris, followed by a very loud noise sounding like a compression stall. He taxied in after a bit, and shut the engines down, which the first aircraft had not done. At this point our concern turned to worry. Our thought immediately presumed he had broken the damned thing, and we were somehow going to get stuck there. Not very rational perhaps, but we were hanging on every detail, as you can imagine. To our great relief the second group walked out, boarded, and presently the pilot started up his engines and took off.

Then the third and last airplane came in to collect the third group, my group. The North Vietnamese took us out and turned us over to a U.S. military representative, an AF colonel in uniform. One by one they called out our names, we stepped forward, saluted, some with tears running down their faces, and we stepped across the line representing U.S. control. That was the formality of the exchange.

A few steps across that line a crew member from the C-141, or one of the several nurses with the crew, would step forward take each of us by the arm and lead us to the aircraft. As the last man stepped aboard, that aircraft was taxiing, the pilot knowing we didn't want to spend one minute longer in that hated country than necessary. The most memorable moment was when we looked out the windows and saw that we were crossing the shoreline onto the South China Sea. A loud whoop went up from all the POWs, that being the instant when we really knew we were free, finally free, in my case after nearly 7 years of captivity.

HOMECOMING (1973)

Q: So how was the reception when you got back?

BOYD: Unbelievable. It was like a dream, but this time a wonderful dream. We landed at Clark with 500 members of the press pushing forward to get their first look at us. CINCPAC (Commander in Chief of all Pacific Forces), a four-star Navy admiral, was there to greet us. Tens of thousands of people lined the streets, U.S. and Filipino, and God knows what else. We loaded onto buses and passed through these flag-draped and cheering crowds, 50,000 strong we were told. Some of our guys leaned out the windows reaching to touch these enthusiastic, wonderful people. You could say, we were greeted warmly.

We were then taken to the base hospital. I had been stationed at Clark earlier in my career, as you know, so I knew the base. But we were taken to a hospital that had not existed at the time I was there, a big, modern, wonderful hospital. Several floors of the place were reserved just for us, we each picked out a room. The next thing I wanted to do, and this was true for most of us, was to get in a shower and have a really good scrub. There were several showers there and we had to get in line. When it was my turn, I went in there and I ran that hot water on me with soap and shampoo and scrubbed and scrubbed. The dirt was so embedded after years of living in filth that I'd never been able to get it out while in prison. I was working away at the dirt when some guys waiting said, "Alright, your time's up, get the hell out of there." So, I got out, grabbed a beautiful, thick Turkish towel, scrubbed myself dry with it, then promptly marched to the rear of the line to start the process all over again. That was the biggest deal of all; a chance to wash away not only the dirt, but psychologically, I guess, as much of the experience as possible that had come with all that dirt.

There was a chow hall in the hospital. It was nice, a cafeteria with very nice tables. As we sat and ate, all kinds of people, flight surgeons and medical people, were watching us like hawks to make sure we didn't harm ourselves from overeating, like some World War II concentration camp survivors did. They gave us Vietnamese food—rice and chicken and fish of the kind they thought we were used to, so the change in diet would not be too abrupt. The truth was that this food was one hell of a lot better than what we'd been eating, even toward the end when the rations got larger.

But what I wanted was eggs and steak. I remember one of the flight surgeons watching me as I asked the short-order cook behind the partition for five eggs. And they had these steaks that were already prepared, and I asked for one of those, too. And this flight surgeon said to me, "You'd better be careful." And I said, "What are you talking about? I've been eating fish heads. My stomach can handle anything." And it did. I ate, and I ate, and then I ate some more. Coffee, ice cream, everything. I mean, this was a glorious thing.

Above all, of course, most of us wanted to communicate with our families as soon as possible. They had that all set up. We had access to dozens of phones and little booths for privacy, but first we had to be evaluated by a psychiatrist to see just how crazy we might have become. If you were not fairly rational they did not want you getting on the phone

to talk with your family and making *them* crazy worrying about your state of mind. When we found out that we could not get in touch right away it was disappointing, of course, but after a short time most of us were cleared to call home. I was cleared fairly early, the next day. I stayed up all night in anticipation. There was no way I could sleep.

The next day, all I had to do was pick up the phone and say I want to call my wife. I just told the operator my wife's name, and that person knew where she was, and her phone number. They made an immediate connection to an operator in Wichita, who made a connection to my wife's house. It took less time than it's just taken me to tell you about it, that's how efficient this thing was. And that was true for everyone, even guys who after so many years were not sure where their wives or parents were. If someone did not know, he'd just give the name and that's all it took. So, I got to talk to my wife for the first time in 7 years.

We also had tailors there who'd measure you and build a uniform for you that same day. They knew what decorations you had received, what rank you now were. I was now a major; I'd been a captain when I was shot down. And, they debriefed us; first in a very basic sense and later in greater detail.

Once they figured we weren't nuts and didn't have any big health issue, we were cleared to go home. We went straight to the flight line, boarded C-141s, flew to Hawaii, refueled, then on to San Francisco, Travis Air Force Base. From Travis we flew on regional airplanes, C-9s usually, to take us to the regional hospital nearest to the place where our families were located. In my case, they dropped me off at Wichita Falls, Texas, which was a fairly short distance from Wichita, Kansas, where my wife had remained in my long absence. To my complete surprise, my wife was actually there to meet me at Wichita Falls, at something like 2 o'clock in the morning.

Once on the ground, with press and hundreds of well-wishers there to greet us, we were taken to the hospital and into the presence of a large staff of doctors and nurses, greeting me warmly, but also with a look of grave medical concern. After a few initial questions, one of the doctors gave me a choice: I could stay in the hospital in a private ward, or I could go to the BOQ with my wife. He asked which I preferred. I said, "Are you shitting me? I'm going to the BOQ with my wife." At that point they all smiled, with sort of a look of relief, as if to say, "There's nothing wrong with this dude." And that was that. We remained there on an out-patient basis for a couple days while they ran some more medical tests on me. This was not just *pro forma* stuff. I was full of parasites, for example. But basically, I was okay. Once released I got on another airplane with my wife and flew to McConnell AFB, Wichita, KS. As we deplaned there was a band playing, hundreds of people on the airfield clapping and waving flags, flash bulbs popping, with the local press recording my arrival. Someone shoved a bank of microphones in front of us with klieg lights glaring and a question. What I remember was a choked-up answer, maybe with a few tears, mumbling something like, "It's good to be home." After well over 7 years, I'd have to say that was an understatement.

Q: How did the country strike you once you were back a while? A lot had happened in those 7 years.

BOYD: It was an overwhelming experience, like coming back to a totally different country. Not only had there been a huge antiwar movement, there was new civil rights legislation and implementation. There had been racial disturbances within our culture and burned cities and universities on strike either protesting things having to do with race relations or having to do with the war. I missed the assassinations of 1968 and all the fallout from that. It was a time, in the middle 1970s, that was incomprehensible to people like me. Many people were wearing goofy clothes, long hair on their heads and faces, and the language had changed as well in some ways. But, of course, there were also people, lots of people, who were dismayed by some of these cultural trends. We heard about a so-called Silent Majority, and it seemed that those were the people who were receptive to our return.

Q: During the time you were in prison and coming back did you ever run into John McCain, and was he a name at that time?

BOYD: I did not know McCain before the war, but learned his name following his shoot-down. After the Son Tay raid, when all prisoners were relocated into the Hoa Lo prison, I was put into a cell adjacent to his and remained there for 18 months or so. For many hours each day various people in each cell tapped with each other on the wall separating the two cells, and in that way those in our cell got to know those in the adjoining cell, including McCain.

John was a very good POW. Later, in his political career, some hate groups on the far right, thinking John insufficiently conservative, fabricated unflattering stories about his performance as a POW. The stories were simply false, outrageously so, and should reflect on the perpetrators, not John. It should be noted that our captors offered John early release probably because he was the son of the four-star admiral who commanded our forces in the Pacific, in order to embarrass him. John refused. He said, I think rather elegantly, "I'll go home when everybody goes, or I won't go home at all." And he'd been wounded, you know, he was broken up badly and he was hurting constantly.

John and I did not always see eye to eye as I got to know him later on. He went into politics and I got to be a very senior guy in the military, and maybe that didn't mix well, but my view of him as a prisoner was one of complete respect. He was a damn good prisoner.

Q: How were relations with your wife?

BOYD: Interesting question. At the time I was shot down we'd been married almost 5 years but did not yet have children. She was teaching elementary school, and I was still in my twenties, running around the world flying airplanes with my hair on fire and trying to put it out with a hammer. Let me explain what I mean by that in normal English.

These were exciting times for young flying warriors. Like a lot of fighter pilots then, and I suppose still, at least to some extent, I was a hard-drinking guy. It was part of the ethos of the group to be inclined to wild behavior and to not pay all that much attention to home. It constituted a kind of throwaway behavior, cavalier behavior, that worked in a way to cultivate bravery in the sense of a general willingness to toughen the mind by engaging in risky behavior. It's not easy to explain, but I think you can get a sense of how it works.

Beyond that, you have to realize that before the U.S. role in the Vietnam War got very active, the year before I went to Thailand for the first time, I had spent 270 days TDY (on temporary duty) away from home. I was in Turkey, I was in Europe, I was all over the place. So, my marriage was not on the most solid of footing at the time I was shot down.

Now, realize too that I had had nearly 7 years to reflect on that, and I certainly did a lot of reflection. I worried about it, and I came to understand better over time, a little bit more maturely, what cost might result from those years of my bad behavior. But, notwithstanding my worry, the character of the woman I married was better than mine, she redeemed my anxiety. She knew that the marriage was not on solid ground, but she made a commitment to herself—and to my parents—that she would wait for me to come home. "You don't have to worry about that," she told them, "I will wait for him. What happens after he comes home will depend on where we are at that time, but I'm not going to leave him."

And she did not leave me as long as she lived. She stayed with me, but I also think I had become a different and better man; the one that I had determined to be while in prison. That very first night that we were back together, in that BOQ room, she said, "I'm here for you, but I'm not going back into the conditions that we had before." And I told her without a second's hesitation that I didn't want to go back into those conditions either. And that's how our marriage was immediately recommitted, and I said to her that I wanted to have another wedding ceremony and recommit to her with new wedding vows. The very next day we did that. It was a formal thing, a ceremony with a minister and some other people who were there. After that our marriage was solid, and remained so until 1994 when she died of cancer.

Q: In a way you were very fortunate. So many of the men who were imprisoned ended up separated from their wives, often divorced for one reason or another. All of it really goes back to this trial of forced separation, doesn't it?

BOYD: Yes. Many couples had grown apart over time. The psychological pressures were enormous. Guys in prison can't grow at all in their relationships, and the wives' uncertainty about whether their husbands were ever going to come home weighed very heavily on them emotionally. Young married women thought about what they were missing in life, and indeed what kind of a life they might have were their husbands to

actually return, or how the prison experience may have damaged the man irreparably. As you can see, the separation had significant, but unknown consequences.

Q: You and your wife soon thought about children after you were reunited, I suppose.

BOYD: Yes, very much so. Initially we were having trouble getting pregnant and that made us nervous given our age, mid- approaching late-thirties.

Q: Yes, time was ticking on.

BOYD: Right, that watch was ticking. So, we adopted a child, a one-day-old girl, Jessica Marie, who instantly became the most important thing in our lives. Though content for the moment, sure enough, 16 months later, Milc delivered an eight-pound baby boy, Dallas. I learned afterwards that this sequence of events is not uncommon, though I'm not sure anyone really knows why. So, that was our family, the two of us, a daughter and a son. We were deliriously happy, irrationally optimistic, without a clue what the future might hold, but ready for anything.

REINTEGRATION: U KANSAS AND THE AIR WAR COLLEGE (1973)

Q: Let's talk some about your reintroduction to your Air Force career and how later you became involved in all manner of military-political affairs.

BOYD: Sure.

Q: Okay, so what happened in terms of your career after you returned from North Vietnam?

BOYD: Renaissance Day for me was Lincoln's Birthday 1973, February 12th of 1973, a rebirth for sure, but also a career crossroads. I had been a boy fighter pilot. That is to say, I had entered the AF at an early age, but without a college degree, as we discussed before.

Q: So, what did that mean?

BOYD: It meant that, notwithstanding all that I had parlayed my fighter pilot skills into: well respected operational tours all over Asia, the States, and the Near East; acclaimed performance in a tough and highly demanding air war; solid absorption of all the North Vietnamese could throw at me for 7 years as a POW; what else did I have to offer? What does the U.S. Air Force want me to do? Well, maybe some complications here.

Now I told you a little while ago that following release, and going through all the medical and psychological exams, I was deemed to be neither crazy nor physically disabled. But what I did not mention is that I did have some obscure medical issues that prevented me,

immediately at least, from getting back into flying. I had contracted beriberi from protracted malnourishment, which, among other effects, left damage to my optic nerves and blind spots in my vision.

So, what does the AF do with a has-been, hot fighter pilot, without a college degree, and uncertain visual problems? That took some thoughtful personnel consideration, and I must say the personal attention those folks gave me was truly memorable. It went like this, "You have had a remarkable run so far in peace and war, and the AF wants to keep you. While we're waiting to see how your vision issue develops with time and a good diet, we suggest you go back to school for a college degree. We'll still want to keep you even without a degree, but frankly, you'll likely have a range of mediocre jobs that you may not find challenging."

I must say, the Air Force personnel people were wonderful. They had a heart as well as a brain. The advice they gave me, and the gentle shove, led to a career which would simply not have been possible otherwise. So, okay. I'm going to school. Where and when? At that point personnel handed me off to the Air Force Institute of Technology, a highly regarded in-house school for graduate studies in engineering, math and the hard sciences. Within that school, there is also a department devoted to managing AF officers studying at civilian colleges and universities around the country. As an aside, as fate would have it, years later as a lieutenant general, I commanded Air University, the organization responsible for all professional and occupational education in the AF, to include AFIT.

But for now, I was a young major venturing into whatever the AF wanted me to do in the world of higher education. As it turned out the AF wanted me to choose what I would like to study, and where I would like to do it. I could pick my school, so long as it would let me in. Two factors came into play, the first having to do with the Spanish language.

Q: That sounds interesting, tell me about it, please, by all means.

BOYD: During my time at Son Tay, I lived in a cell block we called the Cat House. Two cells removed from mine lived a chap named Ken Fisher. In the course of our tap code communication I learned that among Fisher's various talents was knowledge of Spanish. So, by relaying through the chap that lived in the cell between us, I asked if he would teach me the language. He said, sure. Now, the guy in the cell between Fisher and me was not particularly interested in learning Spanish, but he was a good guy, and said he would take the communications from Fisher's wall, bring them to my wall for delivery. Thus, we began my education, which really came down to his teaching me vocabulary.

He taught me around 2700 words. It took a lot of time, mind you, but of course we had a lot of time. I had memorized and alphabetized 2700 words of which 700 were verbs, since I had no paper and pencil. He taught me three verb conjugation forms, basic syntax, all the irregular verbs and their conjugations, and general pronunciation. I would get new words every day, some days maybe 10 to 12 new words, other days 15 to 20, and I'd

rearrange my alphabet listing and keep it all in my head. A couple of other guys got interested, too, and I'd give it to them as well, and that helped me learn.

Q: Excuse me, how could you get any help on pronunciation?

BOYD: Well, it was just approximate, but it was easy. Fisher would tap an A, for example, then tap that it was pronounced as an AH, an E as an A, and an I as an E. The consonants are more or less the same as in English, except for a few like rr, ll, and ñ. So, you could figure that out at least to some extent. That explains my interest in Spanish.

Q: Okay, Tell me please the second factor.

BOYD: My wife had waited for me in Wichita, Kansas, during my war years, in a home she bought after I was shot down. Her parental home was nearby, in Ft. Scott, KS, and my parents lived in Iowa, a reasonable distance from KS. After all those years of absence I thought being fairly close to family was an attractive thing for all of us. Given that, my next thought was to look for a good university geographically close to where we wanted to be. The University of Kansas in Lawrence was an easy choice. If they would accept me, that's where I wanted to be.

Q: So, go on; what happened next?

BOYD: Well, first of all I got my old transcript from Baylor, a depressing document to be sure, not one I guessed that would cause KU to welcome me with open arms. So, rather than send that shoddy document to the school, I looked up the name of the guy who ran the place, Calgard was his name, the Executive Vice President of the University, and asked to meet with him. The gentleman was kind enough, or maybe curious enough, to agree and put me on his calendar. I knew the meeting would be critical, so I dressed for the occasion, suit and tie, rehearsed what I would say, and entered the office as if on a mission. As it turned out Calgard was warm and receptive, made me comfortable right from the start. My argument was short, but clear: I said, "I know my education background as an 18/19 year old, was unimpressive, but I'm 35 now, I have done some things well in life so far, and I intend to do well here if you'll let me in." Calgard was equally short and to the point, he said, "I'll give you a semester to prove yourself, then we'll take it from there."

That done, I'm now a new student at the University of Kansas. I quickly learn there is a Latin American Affairs program that seems interesting, with a requirement for lots of Spanish. Since I did mot have a lot of other special academic credentials I figured I had a head start with Spanish. I could work toward fluency. I thought that might prepare me for being a military attaché sometime later on. So, I enrolled in the Latin American affairs program, which was very strong at KU.

The Air Force was generous; they gave me 3 years to get the baccalaureate degree. I got the baccalaureate degree and a Master's degree too, in that period of time. Of course, I

took a lot of Spanish along the way, and it turned out that everything Ken Fisher taught me was correct. My memory helped, but more important was the fact that not one single thing that he taught me was even slightly incorrect. Under the circumstances, I thought that was pretty amazing.

Q: Had Ken Fisher been a teacher or … ?

BOYD: No. As a matter of fact, he was a tough kid who grew up in the Bronx. He became a boxing and wrestling champion in high school and went to the University of Pennsylvania on a full scholarship where he enrolled in ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps). He was designated pilot-qualified, and after graduation as a second lieutenant went on to pilot training.
At some point he was assigned to Del Rio Air Force Base, on the Mexican border. There he met a girl who became his girlfriend, and she taught him Spanish, and possibly a lot more than that. Later on, Ken got into fighters, went to war, then ended up in prison with the rest of us. He retired as a colonel and I still maintain contact with him. He was an influence in my life.

Q: So, how was your experience in academia?

That was a wonderful 3 years. I loved the academic work. After 7 years of very little new information my mind was a sponge, thirsting for knowledge with an absolute smorgasbord of interesting subjects to choose from. I loved it, and of course did well. As with all aspects of life, if you can find something really interesting to do, chances are you're going to do it well.

Calgard's gamble paid off. And, as a bit of future irony, years later when I was Commander of Air University, I asked him to serve on my Board of Trustees. He did so, as proud of me, I think, as I was grateful to him.

Two more points before moving on: As I was finishing my master's program I got a call from the officer at AFIT who was charged with monitoring my academic performance. He congratulated me for concluding my degree, then made a proposal which gave me pause. He said, "You have done extremely well, how would you like to stay on and get a PhD?" I hesitated, then asked, "For what purpose?" He said, "Get the degree in History, we'll then send you to teach at the Air Force Academy."

Wow, that offer came straight out of the blue, not only surprising me, but sort of pleasing me as well. I said, "Give me a few days to think it over." Our time at KU had not only been a wonderful experience intellectually, but special in other ways as well. We had a nice home with 17 acres of space, very important to me after being confined for so long. The academics had been easy for me, thus giving me much free time to spend outdoors with horses and dogs, and most important, with my wife, strengthening that once fragile relationship. The prospect of continuing this dream world was extremely attractive, but still left me a little uneasy.

The officer I most admired in the AF was named Dan Druen, the operations officer in my first fighter squadron, an extremely sharp officer who apparently saw something in me and took time to mentor me in different ways. Now, years later, he was a major general in charge of all personnel matters in the AF. I called Druen, told him of the situation and the offer. Without hesitation, he said, "Get your ass back to work," meaning, in the AF. "If you go to the Academy," he said, "You will get bored, and probably retire as a lieutenant colonel. You have more potential than that. Come back to the AF, establish your presence, let people get to know you, and you'll be on your way." I said, "Yes sir."

While at KU, the AF promoted me to lieutenant colonel, two years below the zone. All officers promoted below the zone are required to go to senior professional military education school, in my case, the Air War College or the National War College. Druen offered me a place at either one. Even though in general the National War College was preferable, because I'd been away from my service for so long I thought it would be better for me to go to Air War College, and so I did. Next stop, Maxwell AFB, Air War College, Montgomery, AL.

Q: Excuse me; I don't want to skip over this. What was your experience at the Air War College?

BOYD: It's a really good question because it leads to something later.

It was a very relaxed, laidback operation, not particularly demanding. Maxwell Air Force Base had two golf courses on it, and many of the students, both at the Air War College and the Command and General Staff College, devoted a good bit of attention to improving their golf handicap. Now, I'm not saying it was a waste of time. The place did give us a perspective on the broader relationship of the military to the entire national security establishment in this country and to the intersections between the political and the military spheres. That said, it was a less rigorous program than I had expected. This matters obliquely, at least, since in a later chapter in my life I was put in charge of all professional military education in the United States Air Force—including the Air War College. My Air War College observations would be relevant in that later assignment.

But, back to the timeline. I completed that course, such as it was, and now what was I to do? As we discussed before, "back to the cockpit" was not an option. Moreover, I was now a lieutenant colonel, at a rank level beyond my professional development for that grade. Something of an odd duck, one might say.

Though I may have been an odd duck, I was an AF odd duck, and that fine personnel system was not about to abandon me. Some action officer had me in his file with every intent to get me placed. The chap told me, "Look, you don't ever have to go overseas again; that's one of the rules about having been a POW. But we have a job that might interest you in Europe." It was a job in the Southern Flank of NATO, known as

AFSOUTH (Allied Forces Southern Europe) in Naples. I'm sure you're familiar with that organization.

Q: I was Consul General in Naples.

BOYD: Oh, you were? At the embassy?

Q: Well, I was in charge of the Consul General in Naples in 1979-80.

BOYD: I was there in 1977 to 1979.

Q: We may have touched ...

BOYD: We may have; that's very interesting.

Q: Anyway.

TO NAPLES (1977)

BOYD: Anyway, I said, "I have no problem going overseas again, as long as it's not to a prison camp in North Vietnam. What's the job?""It's a position in the Staff Secretariat.""What's that?"
"Three 0-5s, (lieutenant colonel equivalents) Army, Navy, and Air Force, working for an Army colonel, managing the staff paper flow en route to the chief of staff, an Army three-star." After a couple more questions, and confusing answers I said, "What the hell, I'll take the job. When do I leave?"

Nothing could have been less promising than this hard-to-describe, obscure job on the southern flank of Europe. And, as it turned out, nothing that I can imagine could have been more career-enhancing at this stage of my life than the one I took because nothing else was available.

I walked into that HQ the first day with a good deal of uncertainty, but determined to keep quiet, and learn as fast as I could. The first thing I learned was what "managing staff input" meant. It was reading staff papers being sent to the command section of the HQ, from the various staff agencies—Operations, Plans, Logistics, etc.—and making them comprehensible to the chief of staff. These staffs were populated with officers from five different countries, three of which spoke, and wrote, in English as a second language. And, as I was to learn, many of the staff papers were challenged in terms of clarity, or

sometimes even comprehensibility. The sky brightened with that realization. I knew how to write, and how to edit, even if I did not know all the intricacies of the subject matter.

The second thing I learned was a little more daunting. It was the matter of a command briefing. Shortly after I arrived in AFSOUTH, the Commander in Chief, Admiral Stansfield Turner, was tapped by President Jimmy Carter to be the next Director of the CIA. When important people visited AFSOUTH—Congressional delegations, Parliamentarians from NATO countries, generals and admirals from around Europe—Turner gave them the command briefing unscripted. Turner's replacement, Admiral Hal Shearer, was an officer cut from a different bolt of cloth. A tough, gruff, sea-going officer, he was respected for getting hard jobs done—if not for being an eloquent speaker of our native tongue. So now, among many other changes about to take place in the HQ, there was the question of who was going to give the command briefing.

For reasons that remain a mystery to me to this day, the Chief of Staff, Lt. General McAllister, who had only met me briefly, told my boss, the colonel, "Tell Boyd to build it, and do it quickly. We have a CODEL coming in a couple of weeks." Now, I didn't know a damn thing about any of this. But I had a new job and I went to work on learning, very rapidly, the structure and the missions and all the interactions and so forth, necessary for building a briefing. I had built some briefings as a student at the Air War College, but they were pretend—just class exercises. Now I had a real briefing to prepare, and I'll tell you, I really worked hard on it.

When I got it done I presented it to my colonel and he said, "Okay. Good. Next step is the chief of staff." So, I did that. He made a few changes and told me to present it to Admiral Shearer. I did that too, and the Admiral made no changes to it whatsoever. Moreover, he said to me, "This is fine. This is really fine." And, as he got up to leave, he told the Army three-star that he wanted me to be *the* briefer. That is how I again became a prisoner; he would not let anybody else give the briefing.

For the next year every visitor that came through there of any significance got a command briefing from me—every CODEL that came through; Al Haig, the SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe); senior military officers and politicians from all five nations of the Southern Flank—all came through at one time or another, and dutifully I gave the brief. Soon, everybody knew my briefing, and everybody knew me. Dan Druen's recommendation, "establish your presence" came to pass without even trying.

Q: Briefing is an art form, and I guess you had the artistic talent.

BOYD: I suppose so, it did come naturally for me. But I don't want to leave you with the idea that all I did was brief dignitaries. When not briefing, which was most of the time, I learned how to be a staff officer. Moreover, I learned how the staff entities worked and the differences in each. Logisticians think differently than operators, operators think differently than planners, and so on. I learned their preferences, and I learned how to help

them express themselves in the staff papers they sent to the command section for approval, the best way to argue their preferences. I was no longer an active fighter pilot, but I had learned a new trade.

Q: Before we move to the next thing, I'd like to tap into your experience as a briefer: What was the Soviet threat at that time, and how did you feel we could handle your area?

BOYD: AFSOUTH believed that it could manage the Soviet threat in the Mediterranean Sea. They could bottle up the Soviet Black Sea Feet by shutting down the Bosporus Strait and the Sea of Marmara with their available submarine force. With two carrier battle groups in place at all times, they felt they could maintain control of all other seaborne activity. What was never mentioned, a completely ignored fact, was that the commander of the Atlantic Fleet, to whom the two Mediterranean carrier battle groups belonged, intended to pull them at the first sign of serious war with the Soviets, and move them to the GIUK Gap (the maritime space between Greenland, Iceland and the UK).

The problem on land was different. The bulk of U.S. ground forces was in Germany, where the primary threat was. Italy was a secondary front with Italian ground forces having the primary responsibility for defense. Our stated confidence in their success was high, our private thoughts less sure. We were highly confident that our air component could manage any kind of threat that the Soviets might mount in the air. Overall, however, private confidence in Southern Flank security was less certain.

The Southern Flank headquarters, by the way, was in some ways not dissimilar from Air War College. It was a fairly relaxed headquarters. The Italians all went home at 4:00, if not before, and the Greeks and the Turks spent most of their time spying on each other and didn't do much else. The Brits were down there, and the Brits work hard and are compatible with us. The French had a liaison officer there, but they would not participate in anything in an active way back in those days. They were just observers. Their forces, as you remember, were not integrated into the NATO command structure at that time.

Q: You've used the term CINC. In reference to Adm. Shearer, I presume that means commander in chief?

BOYD: Yes, commander in chief.

Q: Of NATO forces?

BOYD: Well, he had two hats: he was the commander of AFSOUTH and he was also commander of U.S. naval forces in Europe, referred to as CincUsNavEur.

Q: Let's continue the story of your time at AFSOUTH.

BOYD: Part two of the Naples chapter, and a critical one, involves a new character in the story: an AF three-star named Rocky Brett, commander of the NATO Air Forces on the

Southern Flank. Gen Brett had attended many of the briefings I gave at AFSOUTH HQ and had gotten to know me a bit. Following one of those briefings, he asked that I come see him. I did so promptly, of course, and he told me that I needed to get back in the Air Force, among air force people, and issues, and activity. And I said, “Well, I’d love to do that, but I work for this admiral, and he keeps me on a very short leash. I don’t have free choice to go anywhere without his permission." He said, “Let me worry about that, you just prepare to move fast when I tell you to."

It turns out Brett was in the Class of ’45 from West Point, and a classmate of the three-star army chief of staff, my boss once removed, Robert M. McAllister. Brett goes to McAllister and says we need to get Boyd out of here and back with his AF family. I know the CINC has a grip on him, but he needs to get back into air work. McAllister, to his great credit, said, “Okay, I’ll move him out of here the next time the Admiral’s on travel,” and he did. How he handled that I don’t know, but he broke me loose.

Q: What was your impression of, particularly, the Italian air force?

BOYD: They lacked the professionalism of a first-rate air force like the U.S. Air Force. I considered the Brits as having a first-rate air force also, though small and poorly provisioned. The Italians were a second-rate air force.

Q: At one point I asked Admiral Crowe how he found the Greeks and the Turks; he sort of threw his hands up. I mean, maybe you’ll get two allies who are doing nothing but spying or opposing each other.

BOYD: Oh yes, that was exactly right.

Q: You have islands out there they get all excited about. Damnedest place.

BOYD: In the Aegean, yes. Many years later I ended up in a position where I was sent out there by the White House to get those two allies to back off from some very aggressive behavior relating to the Law of the Sea. When the Treaty was finally ratified it put a 12-mile circle around all of those Greek islands, overlapping in such a way that the previous international airspace corridors were now sovereign Greek air space. The Greeks triumphantly announced that air travel through those islands would be by their permission only. The Turks said, "If you do that it means war."

The next thing you know Turks are flying F-16s just outside the airspace, armed with sidewinder missiles and hot guns, threatening to enter, while Greek F-16s similarly armed, are flying just inside their now sovereign territory, both hurling insults at one another on guard channel, 243.0. That was a tinder box waiting to be ignited. The first time one of them squeezed off a sidewinder, and shot down an opponent we were certainly going to have a war between two NATO allies. Not a good thing. So, they sent me down there to try to get these two antagonists to agree to some principles about very stupid things they would promise not to do. More on that later.

Anyway, I learned at Air South headquarters very quickly and was having a great time. Six months or so into that, Gen Brett came into my office on a Saturday morning when I was all alone at work, and he said to me that he was going to send me back to the States. This came as a huge surprise, so I said, “Are you firing me?" He said, “No, but you have learned everything you’re going to learn here." I was not opposed to doing something else, so I said, "Well, where are you going to send me?" And he said, “I’m going to send you to the Pentagon." “Why would I want to go there?" I asked. And he said, “I didn’t ask you if you *want* to go; that’s the place you *need* to go." And so, I went to the Pentagon.

TO THE PENTAGON (1979)

Q: Tell me about the Pentagon.

BOYD: So, after bouncing around Italy for a shortened 2-year tour, I was off to this huge and intimidating place called the Pentagon. While I had figured out how to play ball in Italy—sort of like playing ball at the small college level, now I’m heading for the majors without ever stopping off in the minors. The minors in Europe, in my analogy, would have been the NATO HQ in Mons, Belgium.

Suddenly, it seemed, I found myself at the Pentagon physically before I was comfortable being there mentally. The reason was simple, I suppose: I was still insecure about missing all those years of normal AF development—not sure I belonged where I was being placed. But, as I had reasoned upon arrival in Naples, if you’re thrown off the dock before you know how to swim, it’s probably best not to spend too much time worrying about it; better to just start paddling.

In a way, just getting to the building was a kind of metaphor for my state of mind at the time. I had a report date and a place to report. I got itchy feet well before my report date, got in my car, and headed for the Pentagon without knowing how to get there. I drove up the Shirley Highway toward the Pentagon, and upon actually seeing it, could not figure out what exit to use to get there. So, I ended up doing laps around the Lincoln Memorial and that nice little circle on the Virginia side of Memorial Bridge. Eventually I did find my way into the Pentagon parking lot but could not find a legal place to park, so I said to hell with it, parked illegally, and headed for the nearest entrance. I did notice that the parking lot there had a larger footprint than the entire base I had been on in Italy.

Q: So, then what did you do?

BOYD: Once inside, and after asking several people how to navigate that weird system of rings and corridors, I found my way to the Directorate of Plans, where I had been assigned, and learned I would be Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division which dealt with all the countries of Latin America, and Canada as well. At that point it dawned on me that this assignment might have had something to do with the fact that I had picked up Spanish from Ken Fisher in prison, and then pursued Latin American studies at the University of Kansas. Or maybe it was a coincidence.

Didn't matter, I was chief of something, something that had to do with planning, and I knew something about planning. My time at Naples had not been wasted. Before I left the Pentagon that day I had met with and picked the brains of the guy I was to replace, eight or ten action officers who would be working for me, and the two secretaries. Moreover, I had located the brigadier general who was to be my new boss, a guy named Bat Masterson, a cool name I thought, an impression that turned out to be correct. I got on his busy schedule and waited until his long day was finished. He came out of his office with a quizzical look on his face and said, "I was not expecting you for another week or so." I said, "Sir, I wanted to get a head start." Even though it was late, and his day was done, he smiled and said, "Come on in, let's chat." I liked him instantly, and as it turned out later, it was apparent he liked me too.

Q: So, what was the job like? What did you actually do?

BOYD: Well, the job turned out to be more of a political-military posting than a hardcore military planning one. We were dealing with Latin American countries and alliances, and their maintenance. Planning for significant military contingencies in Latin America was not in the cards. It was one of the smaller divisions in the Directorate with less relevance than those regional divisions where the U.S. might have to go to war, such as the European, or Mideast Division. Initially, that was fine with me. I figured I knew more about Latin America than most people up my food chain, since most had served in either Europe or Asia, or both. And the pace or intensity of interest might be slower in this division than the other regions while I learned how this big Puzzle Palace worked.

Q: Did interdicting airborne drug trafficking come into your area of responsibility …?

BOYD: No, not at that time. Later it did, but we did not have anything to do with drugs then. While I knew a good bit about the geography, history, politics and cultures of the various countries, I knew almost nothing about Air Force or DOD plans relative to Latin America, so that was my initial focus. As it turned out those were not very numerous or very sophisticated, and so that part was pretty easy. Mostly, as I said, it was political-military stuff.

Q: Well, for years Air Force planning was designed mainly to keep high-performance aircraft out of the hands of the Latin Americans because you could build up an arms race there, an arms race, and …

BOYD: … and to keep the Soviets from aiding any of those countries in order to develop friendly relations.

Q: Right. Please explain further what our interests were as the Air Force saw them.

BOYD: Basically, it was denying the Soviets any significant involvement in the area, beyond Cuba of course. We wanted to keep the Latin countries in our orbit. We occasionally conducted airlift exercises with Latin American countries, air support for humanitarian assistance, to practice operational coordination procedures and things like that. I went twice to Argentina to participate in these exercises as the senior USAF representative. My observation was that while there is little operational meaning in these kinds of exercises, there is significant political value. It's part of alliance tending, and during the Cold War that was part of the retail political-military business we needed to do. The Soviet Union tried to make some inroads and did, obviously, in Cuba and later some temporary inroads with Peru. So, when I would go into the area we would have a C-130 airlift in support of various operations just so that everyone could see that we were still there and paying attention. That's all part of keeping an alliance together.

Q: As you have said, it's also a continuing education, learning as you're doing. The Foreign Service is like that to some extent, as well.

BOYD: I did that for a year and you are right, it was an education not only in alliance maintenance but also in understanding the political-military intersection. That's a very important construct, and I think an underrated, poorly understood, aspect of military professionalism.

Q: Was the Mexican air force in your portfolio when you did Western Hemisphere plans?

BOYD: Well, yes. They had one, but it did not amount to much. The significant thing about Mexico, it seemed to me, was that their major war plan had to do with defense against an invasion by the United States, and their exercise components presumed there had been a U.S. invasion. I guess they had not gotten over 1846. It was interesting since they had very little capability.

Q: How about Canada?

BOYD: Canada, of course, was a part of the "Western Hemisphere," and our interactions with the Canadians took place on the Permanent Joint Board on Defense, an alliance structure that had existed between Canada and the United States since World War II. I was one of the U.S. representatives on that Permanent Joint Board on Defense. We got together with the Canadians once a quarter or so. We conducted a set piece series of meetings designed to update each other on our respective thoughts or grievances on the health and operation of the alliance. The Canadians were easy and pleasant to work with, though they always seemed to have their hand out for something. We called them the

blue-eyed Arabs of the north. They wanted technologies from us, or they wanted this and that without, of course, having to pay for it, or paying very little. But we understood how to deal with such things without being rude or difficult. We would smile, and say, we will take that as a proposal back to the Air Staff, where it will be staffed in the approval process (where it could quietly be killed.) It was all very congenial.

The Canadians had a useful air force, too, small but thoroughly professional. I held a little bit of a grudge against Canada for its behavior during the Vietnam War. I did not like how the Canadian government took in U.S. war protestors and draft evaders, and I still haven't completely forgiven them for that.

Q: And after the Western Hemisphere?

BOYD: About the time I really got the hang of my job, the Air Force decided they wanted me to do something else. That's the way it went. I was at the Pentagon for 5 years and had five different jobs. From being Chief of the Western Hemisphere Plans division I became one of three colonels under the Assistant Director for Joint and National Security Council Matters, also a colonel, but a senior one. That senior colonel had responsibility for managing all staff work within the Air Force relating to issues to be addressed in the Joint Chiefs of Staff decision process, issues affecting all of the Services, as well as interagency issues managed by the NSC, which required JCS consideration.

We three more junior colonels had the responsibility of managing all Air Staff participation in the JCS decision process on issues that could be resolved below or at the colonel level. The issues not resolved at that level required general officer attention, whereupon the senior colonel assumed specific responsibility for preparing the two-, three-, or four-star level attempts at resolution.

Q: So, describe in more detail your new role.

BOYD: As issues arose, from whatever source, the office of the Director of the Joint Staff determined if service involvement was appropriate, and, if so, to which staff entity the issue would be assigned. Next, a Joint Staff action officer would prepare a paper describing the issue and proposing a solution. The Joint Staff paper would be assigned to an appropriate action officer on the Air Staff who would meet with other Service and Joint Staff counterparts—to either accept the JS proposal, or to alter the proposal in such a way as to find unanimous agreement. If action officers could not solve the matter it next went to the colonel level to be addressed.

Each of the four Services maintained a small number of colonels with broad understanding of their service's particular interests and perspectives in dealing with the broad issues of the Department of Defense. So, with an issue framed but found too difficult for the action officers to resolve, these colonels with broader knowledge would tackle it. I was one of those colonels.

Q: So, then what would happen if the colonels failed to find agreement?

BOYD: If the colonels could not find common ground, the issue became one to be addressed at the general/flag level—first by two-stars, failing there, on to the three-stars, and finally, if those very senior officers remained in disagreement, the issue travelled to the Service Chiefs, and the Chairman. Once a problem reached that level, the senior colonel in our office assumed responsibility for preparing the general to meet with his counterparts on what obviously had become a difficult, and often contentious, problem.

As a humorous aside, that senior colonel with broad responsibility was known colloquially as the "Green Desk Planner" and the junior colonels as "Buff Planners." Those terms were derived from a much earlier period in which different colors of paper were used to determine the level at which an issue was being addressed: i.e. issues being addressed at the action office level were printed on white paper; when the issue moved to the colonel level it was on buff colored paper; and, when the generals got them they read green papers. When the practice was abandoned, I have no idea, but it must have been done by a humorless twit.

Q: Tell me a little more about your duties as a Buff Planner.

BOYD: There were three of us as I said, and broadly, we managed the staff process for all Joint issues. We managed joint issues within the regional divisions, addressing Pacific, European, Middle East, Latin America issues and those divisions for types of warfare, strategic, tactical, land, sea and air, and so forth, arms control, alliance issues, technical transfer issues with other countries, doctrinal disputes within the Services, disputes between Departments, such as the State Dept. or CIA. There were multitudes of issues and they were generally in flux simultaneously. Before anyone had invented the term multitasking, that's what we were doing.

There was a division of labor of course—no one could handle all of these responsibilities at once. Each Buff Planner had his own portfolio. Over nearly 2 years, though, I sat in each of those three desks, handling all three portfolios. Now, to be fair, while that was a lot of work, our boss, the Green Desk guy, managed us and that meant help and guidance which saved time and effort in many ways. When we were girded for battle on some knotty issue with the other Services, he would take time to listen to the arguments we planned to use, maybe help refine them, or offer other suggestions we had not thought of before. Moreover, when the lifting got heavy—when the issues made their way to the generals—he took that on alone; all the rocks were in his knapsack. Finally, he was the one who, for the AF, managed that process at the JCS level— he also insured all we did remained connected to the larger NSC process.

Every week there was a Joint Chiefs meeting, and usually there were two—one every Tuesday and maybe another later in the week. And the first priority of a Service Chief under Title X, as I'm sure you're aware, was his responsibility as part of the JCS. His second responsibility had to do with his service's organizing, training, and equipage. So,

if it was a Tuesday and the chief was in town, he was in that meeting at 2:00 and, in those days, the Secretary of Defense would let them meet alone initially, and then he would come and join that meeting for the last half of it. That was the way things having to do with policy got done in the Pentagon in those days.

It was, as I suggested, formative for me. I learned where the intersection was between the political and the military, and the appropriate way to deal with that kind of issue. At that time, 27,000 people worked in the Pentagon and probably 500 of them were truly meaningful in terms of policy development, or execution. Of that 500 probably only about 50 stood at the intersection point between the political and the military. Not everybody got an opportunity to learn how that works and how best to work in that environment. For that reason, I was very fortunate.

Q: I would imagine that an inordinate amount of your time would have been concerned with, compared to other air forces, with the Israeli Air Force. I'm sure it was always making demands that moved quickly to the political side.

BOYD: That's right. Dealing with the Israelis was always difficult, and we generally did that outside of the JCS arena. When the Israelis came after something, they came to us as a rich sister service. We admired their pilots and their professionalism in operating airplanes, but they too always had their hand out for something. And if the Department of Defense said no, say concerning some technology transfer, the Israelis would go to Congress, often getting the Congress to overrule the Department of Defense. That sort of thing stuck in the craw of a lot of people in the Department of Defense, not just in the Air Force.

I remember a big arms sale to the Saudis that had to do with AWACs and F-15s.

Q: Oh, yes, I well remember that.

BOYD: The Israelis were lobbying against that, in what became a very tense environment. The assistant vice chief of staff in the Air Force had as one of his peripheral responsibilities to deal with foreign military attachés. This guy, a very serious fellow, called in the Israeli defense attaché and asked him to think long-term about the relationship. He explained that the Israeli tendency to seek workarounds through Congress was creating a generation of action officers who deeply resented Israelis. And the majors of today who really don't like you, he said, some are some day going to be generals, and they're going to carry their resentment into positions where they can really mess with you, all the way up until when they're four-stars. He read the riot act to him.

I don't think it changed Israeli behavior for the long run, but what I'm telling you is there were two levels of thinking about this, military and political. The situation with Israel was hardly unique, by the way. We thought similarly about the French. We liked the French Air Force, their pilots and the way they flew, but we often did not like the politics of their French masters. They tended to oppose virtually everything we thought we

needed or wanted to do—as if being an obstacle had acquired the status of principle. So, it's possible to hold two different views of an ally simultaneously depending on who you're talking to, or what topic you're dealing with.

Q: So, how long did this assignment last?

BOYD: I spent a bit less than 2 years as a Buff Planner in, essentially, three different jobs. This was a fabulous learning experience for me, beyond anything I could have imagined the day I arrived at the Pentagon. Then, on a Christmas Eve, I was working late on some urgent thing with Lt. Gen. Jerry O'Malley, my boss two levels above. When we were finished, he cleared the room, but asked me to stay. Without any lead-in, he simply said, "I'm offering you two jobs, take your pick: you can have the Green Desk, or be head of General Officer Matters in Personnel—both highly-prized and promotable colonel positions." I was stunned, knocked completely off balance. I said nothing for a moment or two, then said, "Sir, you choose, I'll do anything you want. All I want to do now is run to the Springfield Mall before it closes and get a Christmas present for my wife, I haven't done any shopping." O'Malley laughed and said, "Ok, you have the Green Desk, but others wanted you as well." At the time I think it was probably the best AF colonel's job in the Pentagon.

Q: Is there more to this Pentagon story?

BOYD: Yes, a lot more, but I'll try to keep it brief. Just a few words about that Green Desk job, one of the most interesting, and satisfying jobs I ever held. No issue, great or small, that arose in the Pentagon that required Joint consideration at the general/flag-officer level escaped my involvement in some way. If the chief, his deputy, the OpDep, or the DepOpDep went to the Tank to solve a problem, the information they used to prepare was information I gave them: description of the problem; its history; AF interests at stake; other Services' positions; and, finally, suggested arguments. I would then brief them personally and send them on their way. The rest was up to them.

In that job I put in practice what I had come to believe as a Buff Planner, that my success would depend in large part on the quality of the people who worked for me. With that in mind, I selected seven colonels during my time to fill those three Buff Planner slots. All seven later became generals: three full generals, one three-star, two major generals, and one brigadier. That had never happened before in the history of the office. And when you consider the very small odds of a colonel becoming a brigadier—much less a three- or four-star—this is pretty remarkable. Much of my success I owed to them, and I suppose they left feeling a certain loyalty to me.

Others were critical to my success and development. Gen. Charlie Gabriel for starters. He gave me my first job, but I never saw him again until he returned to the Pentagon as the AF chief, shortly after I became the Green Desk guy. I spent many hours preparing him for JCS meetings in the Tank, and debriefing sessions after. I learned a lot from him in the process.

The most important person in this period was Jerry O'Malley, whom I mentioned before. Though I was several levels below in the chain, he picked me out for some reason, and started calling me to his office to talk about issues, or giving me special tasks, often sensitive ones. He worked late, as did I, and often called me to his office just to talk. Those sessions, casual conversations, in retrospect were some of the most valuable learning periods of my military life. I believed then, and am more certain now, having dealt with countless senior officers in our country and many others around the world, that Gen. O'Malley was the finest officer, in any service, or country, I ever met.

While still a three-star, he was included in a Washington Post article on the 80 most influential people in America. No other military person, four-star or below, was selected. He was promoted to four as the youngest four-star in the US and Europe—some say in the Western Hemisphere—became the vice chief briefly, then Commander of Air Forces in the Pacific, moved quickly from there to the Tactical Air Command in the states—a brief stepping stone en route to becoming AF chief of staff.

On a Saturday afternoon on a short trip to Wilkes Barre, PA to give a speech that evening, O'Malley, flying a small passenger jet, landed on a short runway with construction at the far end, lost his hydraulic system causing brake failure, could not stop the aircraft before dropping off the embankment at the end. He died, along with three others, including his wife. A tragedy beyond calculation.

Others helped me develop as well. Jack Chain, a lanky fighter pilot, wickedly smart, with a flair for the dramatic, followed O'Malley and was the three-star in the JCS line-up while I was on the Green Desk. You'll hear more about him later.

Major Gen. John Shaud, Director of Plans, during my Green Desk days, a West Pointer too smart to go Army afterward, with a later-acquired PhD, had an office with a connecting door to mine. A gentleman if ever there was one, with a soothing manner, operating in a high-tension environment. He recognized I was wound pretty tight most of the time, and would come through that door late in the day, sit down beside my desk, calming me, while teaching me a number of
things I probably would not have learned otherwise.

This was the key period for me, without which the rest of my career would not have unfolded as it did. I came to the Pentagon as a lieutenant colonel, though a colonel select, and left a brigadier. I had gained confidence and perspective in Naples, but still had a huge deficit in my overall professional development from the 10-year absence (as a POW and then a student). When I walked out of the Pentagon on my way to a new and promising job in Europe, my insecurities were gone. I had no doubt I could handle whatever lay in store.

BACK TO EUROPE: RAMSTEIN (1984)

Q: Wow, what a run. This next job was when, what period?

BOYD: It started in July 1984 and continued through November, 1986.

I had become identified with the world of plans thanks to my Pentagon experience. The world of the Air Force in staffing features a major division between programming and planning. Programming concerns the preparation of budget requests, for example. It has to do with money, with the distribution of resources, with interactions with other Services as well. Planning has to do with how we're going to actually execute in time of conflict. It also has to do with deploying resources used for training and equipping our warfighters, because without that no combat arms organization can perform well. When I went to Europe from the Pentagon I was positioned where those two functions—programming and planning—came together in one shop. And I was placed as the head of that shop.

Q: Is this within NATO, or ...?

BOYD: No. This was in the US Air Force primarily. I had a NATO hat, as a secondary responsibility, but it was almost irrelevant. My principal task was within the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE), for both programming and planning.

Q: Where were you stationed?

BOYD: Ramstein Air Base—in Germany. This was a wonderful assignment. I just loved it. I was, among many other things, given responsibility for assisting the bed down of the ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) that was part of our response to the Soviet deployment of the SS-20s in eastern Europe, outside Soviet territory. This was my introduction to "big time" international politics because the bed down was less an operational issue than a political one.

Before I arrived, since this was to be a new responsibility for the office, a section was created and staffed with about a dozen staff officers. But the GLCM was a new type of weapon unlike anything in the AF, so those assigned to the HQ came to the job knowing nothing about the weapon system, nor with an established method of learning. Those folks already assigned, fine people though they were, would not likely be of much value even for routine HQ work. It took me about a day to figure out I had a problem, and one, I soon learned, the personnel system seemed disinterested in solving.

It occurred to me that the Strategic Air Command had missiles, strategic, not tactical, but scads of experienced missileers, quality people with staff experience who could no doubt adapt quickly to this new world. How to identify, and get my hands on a few? Top people are certainly not going to volunteer without some incentive. I called my old boss, Gen. Shaud, a longtime SAC guy, and asked, "Who is the best young missile colonel in SAC?"

“Lance Lord,” he said. I called another trusted senior SAC missile guy, and asked the same question and got the same reply.

With that in hand I went to my three-star vice commander, and asked, “Please call the SAC Vice and ask if we can have Lance Lord." “No way,” was the answer he got back. I then went to my four-star commander with the same request, but to instead call CinCSAC. I explained my strategy to the boss and left him with a point paper with the best arguments I could muster. He made the call, and the answer came back, “Yes!”

My next call was to Lance Lord, who was a bit confused, I must say. I told him what I had in mind. I told him about the magnitude of the program, the political sensitivity, and—if it could be done right and quickly—the strategic value. I told him I had the leadership role in the bed down, and would stay in front, but I needed quality support behind me, and didn’t have that now. I asked him to come as quickly as possible, but before coming to identify about 10 high-quality captains, majors, maybe a lieutenant colonel, with field and staff missile experience. “All I need is their names,” I told him. “If you’re as good as everyone says you are these guys will come happily just to work for you. I’ll handle the personnel action to get them."

That’s exactly what happened. Within a couple of months we had a terrific team backing me up as I moved through the five capitals—finding the bureaucratic lethargy points in their military staffs—then bugging our ambassadors in the countries to push on political leaders to kick tails where needed. I moved about the field locations regularly as well—identifying lethargic contractors to report back to HQ, encouraging our guys in the field pessimistic over the slow progress. In general, I was having a great time working on a great project that really mattered.

Two staffers from the House Armed Services Committee paid a visit to our base in Comiso, Italy, skeptical of the whole project, in particular the amount of money in the AF request contained in the President’s Budget. I accompanied them the entire day, then took them to dinner at a local restaurant along with several officers from the base who had whispered to me that besides the whole AF request they would love to have a swimming pool. The attitude of the staffers improved after several glasses of wine, and so I gently brought up how good it would for morale at this isolated location if the troops had a swimming pool. It must have been a surprise to the programmers on the Air Staff when they read the next Appropriation Bill and found buried in it a swimming pool for the base at Comiso, Italy. It all worked out in the end, and it turned out that I seemed to have a knack for the world of political-military affairs. In retrospect, I can’t imagine another job at that level that could have taught me as much as that one did.

Q: Did you have any responsibilities regarding the Air Force budget?

BOYD: Yes, indeed. When you reach a certain rank money almost always becomes at least a part of the job. To that point, I was in Europe having a great time, but I was also running back and forth across the Atlantic to participate in the programmatic process in

the Pentagon; that is to say, to get involved in building the Air Force's part of what is called the POM—the Program Objective Memorandum—which is the Defense portion of the President's Budget. As the Air Force POM is being built from the ground up, many key resource allocation decisions between the major commands are being made at the colonel level. Each command sends their programmatic team, led by a colonel, to present their needs or desires for the coming fiscal year and then competes with all the other commands for a money pot—which never comes close to satisfying every one's desires, or even needs, as presented.

I decided to represent USAFE in those meetings in a little different way. Our team would go as usual, but I would fly back for many of those meetings, then drop in as critical elements of our program were being presented. I would sit in the back of the room to be unobtrusive, though a general sitting in the back of a room filled with colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors tends to make them curious, if not uneasy. Then, at a certain point I would stand up, ask if I might say a few words, confirm everything our guy had just said, but ask if I might add a little more texture. At that point the skills I had developed as a Buff Planner kicked in. It's impossible to know the effect those dramatics had, but I can say this with absolute certainty: USAFE during that period got a bigger fraction of the DOD budget pie than it ever had in its history. We did really well.

The long and short of that is making so many trips back and forth across the Atlantic plus frequent visits to five countries in Europe was hard on the body and on family time, but we got an awful lot done in USAFE during my two and a half years there.

Q: What was happening in the Air Force between those connected to the bombers and those connected to the missiles for delivering nuclear ordnance?

BOYD: There was always competition. We had a triad, of course. We in the Air Force had two legs of that triad: the missiles and the bombers. The Navy had the boomer subs. Yes, the competition for resources never ended. I saw that vividly in my planner job in the Pentagon. Competition has a bad name politically among many in the Congress, but it is actually a very healthy thing most of the time. In our society we believe that competition is a fine thing in general. It overcomes unearned privilege, it stimulates innovation and best practices, and more. But when it gets to congressional oversight of the military, they think mainly of it as being the Services fighting each other. The context is different.

Q: Yes.

BOYD: But I think any rational person would conclude that our inter-service competition is healthy. If the Navy makes a better argument for more resources in some operational arena than the Air Force, it probably means they are more logical, sharper, more persuasive, and that translates into more efficient use of resources.

You can say at this point, as many do, that we don't need a strategic triad anymore—two legs would do. The third leg, the ICBMs, are at a fixed location, easy to target. Therefore, at the beginning of a nuclear exchange, you have to "use them or lose them." We need not get into that argument here, but I think the triad at that time was both unassailable and a major stimulant to innovation that protected our qualitative advantages.

Of course, we always argued how to split the pot between the three legs, and sometimes that discussion became too enmeshed in partisan politics. You remember that President Jimmy Carter had canceled the B-1 bomber. Now at the time we were building a stealth bomber, a very highly classified program. As a matter of fact, it was one of the best kept secrets we had in the nation. When Jimmy Carter was trying to get re-elected in 1980 and was perceived to be weak on defense, he had his Secretary of Defense reveal that we were building a stealth bomber—exposing that precious secret. We in the Air Force thought it was shameful to spill this secret for political purposes.

Ronald Reagan, when he became President, decided to build both the B-1 and the stealth bomber. Both are still today very much a part of our hardware and our capability. We've watched the B-1 in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it brings a huge capability. It carries something like sixty 500-pound bombs, which is the equivalent of thirty F/A-18s carrying two apiece off their carriers.

Q: And the bombs are much more accurate because they're directed.

BOYD: Well, most bombs today have a guidance system—accuracies are amazing.

Q: So back to Europe. How did you evaluate some of the other major powers—the Germans, the British, the French—in your fields?

BOYD: We always considered the Brits as the most competent of the NATO allies. They had a rich history, a separate air force long before we did, but with shrinking resources. They were not at the cutting edge or even really close to the cutting edge of technology. Highly professional, but on a very tight diet for capability. They had better support from their public than the other European allies did, however, and that owed something to the intersection of history and reputation. The RAF performed magnificently during the May 1940 Battle of Britain. The RAF really stopped the possibility of a German invasion. It was true, as Churchill said, that never in the course of human conflict have so many owed so much to so few. And the average age of the RAF pilots was 19. Think about that.

Q: Good God.

BOYD: The British people to this day—even if they don't remember their history very well or never knew it in the first place—know that the RAF is very special. That reservoir of cultural support is greater than anywhere else in Europe.

The Germans bear the opposite cultural legacy. The German air force conducted itself extremely well in World War II. The pilots were trying to defend their country and really did a magnificent job that ultimately failed because of US production superiority. They simply could not replace their losses at the rate the US could. But the German people, I think, never quite forgave the Luftwaffe for failing to protect them—ignoring the reason. That explains the lower German regard for the Luftwaffe than the Brits have for the RAF.

The Norwegians—small but very professional. We held them in very high regard—higher than any other nation other than Britain. But the Danes, the Dutch, Italians—with generally lower budgets and a more lackadaisical work ethic—would not inspire much confidence in time of war. The Turks and the Greeks for the most part spend more time worrying about each other and less on implementing the overall concept of NATO.

Now, the French were not then integrated into the military structure of NATO, so we didn't have the means of really measuring their capabilities. They didn't undergo operational inspections the way all the other NATO member states did, including the United States, of course. But from a distance it struck me that they had a professional, competent air force. Later on, I had more dealings with them. I actually got to fly one of their airplanes, a Mirage 5. We did some simulated aerial combat. They defeated me, but these were young captains in their own planes and I'm already an old guy by then in a plane I'd never seen before. Anyway, I thought then—and I think now—that they have a competent air force, a professional air force. So, beyond the constant annoyance of French politics, they were enjoyable to work with and they were capable. It could even be that the spirit of Franco-American camaraderie goes back to 1917 when the Americans came in to support the French air force flying …

Q: Well, we were flying French planes …

BOYD: Yes, we were flying French planes …

Q: … during the entire war.

BOYD: That's right. We were flying French planes and operating with the French. That reminds me of an anecdote during the time when I was a one-star. There is a memorial to this unit, which was known as the Lafayette Escadrille, outside of Paris. It is a fine domed structure and in a circular underground area are crypts where some Americans are buried. I didn't know much about that, and one Memorial Day weekend my commander at Ramstein told me he wanted me to go there to be the US speaker at a service at the memorial. I was disappointed because it was a holiday weekend and I had been away from my family so much running back and forth across the Atlantic. I had a big weekend planned with Milc, and the kids, but my boss wanted me to go. So, of course, I went.

I got there the night before—in time to write a speech for myself. The next day the Embassy had a car ready for me with an American flag on it and the driver took me

directly to the monument. As we arrived I didn't know what to expect. There was a *huge* crowd gathered, hundreds of people—far too many to count or even for me to estimate. So, I got out of the car and was quickly escorted to the dais where three people are waiting: a French general, the local provincial governor, and an elderly man in a wheelchair with a nurse. That elderly man, it turned out, was the very first squadron commander of the Lafayette Escadrille. He was 96 years old, I was told.

So, here we are up on the dais just moments before the program is to begin. After the speakers finished, a flight of four French Alpha jets came by performing a missing-man salute. After a respectful pause a French boy up on the high ground above the memorial started to play Taps with an American lad down below playing a beautiful echo. As I was standing at attention rendering a salute, I saw out of my peripheral vision the 96-year old guy in the wheelchair struggling to stand up. The nurse tried to help him but he pushed her away, got to his feet and saluted. At that moment I felt suddenly ashamed of myself for not wanting to come and be there, because it became one of the most moving and memorable moments of my life. I remember it still—vividly, as though it happened yesterday.

Now, after this, as I went down off the dais to go to my car, it seemed that just about every French man and woman there wanted to come by and shake hands with me—to thank me personally for coming ashore at Normandy. Since I was only 6 years old at the time, I kept insisting that I was not actually there. I was missing the symbolic point: I was a representative of a country that had come to help them. They kept me there for a very long time.

It was amazing, and I saw really for the first time that the bedrock of American and French affection for each other goes very deep and I think will always be stronger than the political squabbles of the moment. The people remembered, and they believed in this relationship with the United States. That was a revelation to me. Until I experienced it personally, I had not understood the power of that feeling.

Q: Well, there has always been an ambivalence between us. You know, when Black Jack Pershing arrived in France as head of the American Expeditionary Force in World War I, he said "Lafayette, nous somes ice," Lafayette, we are here.

BOYD: Yes, we were there, and I suspect should similar circumstances occur again, though unlikely, we would be there again. We are soulmates and competitors at the same time, and have been since 1789. I think that's what makes the relationship both meaningful and sometimes difficult.

Q: What did you think about the Soviet air threat at the time, the capabilities of the Soviet air force?

BOYD: The Soviet air force was huge, mainly because they seemed never to retire anything. They kept everything, even when it was so obsolete that it really was not

providing much value. If you looked just at the numbers and put numbers against numbers, they held an overwhelming advantage. But if you were a little more discerning about what all those numbers really meant, their capability was generally less than that of the United States—which of course is not just the Air Force but also includes, in a major way, the Navy. We had mastered elements of technology the Soviet air forces lacked. They built good airplanes, but they were not as capable nor as durable as ours. They had serious maintenance issues. We generally had a solid edge over the Soviet Union in areas that counted most: technology, training, logistics, intelligence, and doctrine.

In that context, as we noted a moment ago, we were in the process of responding to the Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles in East Germany with a new technology: ground-launched cruise missiles.

Q: Oh, yes, the SS-20 crisis.

BOYD: We got sidetracked a bit, but my thrashing about with the GLCM bed down was where the rubber meets the road of a very large strategic arm-wrestling contest. At a low level I was engaged in the US response to the two-track decision in NATO. Track one was to produce and bed down ground-launch cruise missiles in five countries and on six bases—two in the UK and one each in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy. Track two was to deploy Pershing-2 missiles in Germany.

It was an interesting experience, too, because having made the decision as a country on the highest political level, each of the five were actually resisting the implementation in various ways for domestic political reasons. So, my work, in conjunction with our embassies in each of those countries, was to get these reluctant folks to let the bed down process advance in this place or that place and in this operation or another. In the overall context of political-military relations it was a highly frustrating but marvelously informative experience in a senior officer's development. There are some things, many things, that can only be learned by doing. This was one of them.

Q: The crisis of that time really was the epitome of a politico-military engagement, wasn't it?

BOYD: The Soviet deployment was meant to roil German politics and drive a wedge between Germany and the United States. German politics at the time leaned toward neutralization in the hopeful expectation of reunification, and major politicians, like Egon Bahr, were advocating that line. We put the Pershings and the cruise missiles in to counter the political purpose of the SS-20s more than because of their narrow military significance. The Soviet leadership didn't think we could do this, and they blew their stack when they were proven wrong. It was a highly successful countermove, and politically a very brave one.

You're absolutely right, it was the epitome of pol-mil engagement, and it was extremely successful. We got them all bedded down and got those missiles operational, and that

provided the means by which we could do some serious arms control negotiation from a position of strength—and I mean both political and military strength. The INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) negotiations followed and succeeded, and we got the zero-zero option that some critics claimed was designed by U.S. hawks to foil arms control altogether, not to advance it. The results proved them completely wrong. We got the zero-zero; we got arms control that for a change actually reduced nuclear weapons and delivery systems—indeed, in this case that eliminated a whole class of them.

Of course, as you're aware, that turned out to be a key episode in the successful and peaceful end of the Cold War. I did not have much to do with that directly, but I had to do with all those bed down issues that enabled the strategy ultimately to succeed. It was a very interesting period in my life.

Q: When you're doing all this, was there a band of brothers in the Air Force of those who'd been prisoners of the North Vietnamese around, or were most of them retired and gone from the military?

BOYD: No, there was no such thing. Many of those who stayed in the Air Force chose a location and a job that was not involved in the mainstream of AF activity. And, of course some retired, and others left the AF shortly after release. Those who rose in prominence did so on their own merit. I happen to be the only Vietnam-era POW to have risen to four-star rank.

Q: How did your wife respond to all the moving around your career entailed?

BOYD: My wife was always ready to go, no matter where I was headed—Italy, Louisiana, Germany, Alabama, Washington—it didn't matter. I think, had I been sent to Timbuktu, she would have come along with a smile on her face. There was never an Air Force wife more supportive than Milc. She loved to travel, she loved to go to new places and, I think, she loved to support me, too. We were a really good team that way.

Q: Did you ever have the feeling that people were sort of looking cross-eyed at you? Your background experience at rank was very unusual, and I wonder if there were ever issues of trust or discomfort, even if they were never voiced.

BOYD: Yes, probably so.

Q: It would be a normal reaction.

BOYD: I was moving pretty fast, but it seemed as if once people worked with me, they became my allies. I never had a serious problem in that way. But I think some people did look askance at me because well, "Where the hell did *he* come from?" After all, for essentially 10 years of my life—7 years a prisoner and nearly 3 more in a civilian university—I was out of the normal Air Force experience and routine. When I was at the

Air War College nobody knew me. A few guys from the old Thud community, the F-105 community, remembered me, but we were all long since removed from that.

Q: What you're saying here reminds me that many people don't understand what a closed society, like the Air Force, is like. You might be moving around, but you're keeping an eye on others and others are keeping an eye on you. Everybody is somebody. But if you disappear, basically, for a decade you sort of become, if not a nobody, then a kind of mystery.

BOYD: Yes, that's true; to a certain degree it's a tribal system. Senior guys have younger people they have worked with and determined to have the right stuff. They may hand the individual off to another senior guy for an attractive job, then later pull him back to work with them again. There are two important points to be made in this regard, however: First, if the guy being sent to another tribal leader fails, he can't go home again. He has embarrassed his earlier boss and that's the end of the relationship. Second, once handed off, the guy may never return, becoming a part of another leader's tribe.

Q: And there is still more, yes?

BOYD: Well, a little more clarity: As you know Brett sent me to Gabriel, who gave me a job. I did well, at which point O'Malley, a bit younger member of Gabriel's tribe—but in the process of forming his own—notices me and puts me in a job he controls. I do well. O'Malley then gives me a new and better job and hands me off to General Jack Chain—a Gabriel/O'Malley tribal member. I do well. Chain backs me for promotion to brigadier, then hands me off to a guy named Minter (commander of USAFE) because Chain thinks the job in Europe is perfect for me, even though Minter is about to retire and about to dismiss his tribe. At this point I'm tribe-free, which is fine since I don't understand the tribal system anyway; I just do my job as well as I can. The new commander, Gen. Chuck Donnally, does not know me, but warms to me—after watching for a while—and 2 years into the tour supports me for promotion to major general. Shortly after the two-star promotion list comes out, I get a call from Chain who says, "You're coming to SAC," where he is now the Commander in Chief. I'm beginning to understand the tribal system.

SAC (1986)

Q: OK, so back to the timeline. What's an old fighter pilot going to do in SAC?

BOYD: Well, the pattern I had begun to figure out repeated itself again. Every time I got to the point where I felt like I was getting comfortable with my job, someone gave me another one about which I knew little. In retrospect, all of these experiences look like growth periods—wonderful opportunities to learn and mature, but sometimes they didn't quite feel that way.

When Chain called to say I was coming to SAC, I asked, “To do what?" “Vice commander, 8th Air Force,” he said. That struck me in two ways: First, I’d been working in staff jobs forever, it seemed, it will be great to get out into the operations world. Second, I thought, I don’t know the first thing about bombers. I did not say that of course, I said, “Yes sir, when do you want me there?" This thing seemed odd to me at first. I had a pretty good understanding of most of the AF—the regional commands, especially Europe, Tactical Air Command from long ago, but also from working in the programmatic world competing for resources with TAC and the Pacific Command. I knew a lot about SAC’s mission at the strategic level having worked on the Single Integrated Operation Plan, the SIOP, but SAC was kind of, in the AF but not of it, culturally—different, isolated. So, what does Chain have in mind? He’s a strategic thinker, what’s his strategy? Broadening my gauge, I suppose; another test to see if I’m of senior officer timber.

Back at quarters I told Milc, "We’re going home, back to the States."“Where, she said?” “Barksdale." “Where’s that?" “Louisiana.”“Great, I’ve never been there. When do we leave?”

Now, just as I arrived at SAC, a new course was being established called the Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course. That course was established at Maxwell Air Force Base for all four Services; the concept being to bring promising young generals and flag officers together to think about and to study joint warfighting capabilities at the theater operational level. So right off the bat Jack Chain sends me there.

That assignment had some ramifications that emerged later. I was in the second class of that new program, the origin of which was the Goldwater-Nichols Act—a piece of legislation intended to nurture a better concept of jointness among the Services. One ramification of Goldwater-Nichols was that you could not be promoted to general- or flag-rank if you had not served in some kind of a joint assignment before. The idea was that officers from all the Services would develop an awareness of what the others knew and could do, so that we could fight together more effectively. It was not about harmonizing technology but harmonizing people.

So here we are, mainly two-stars, from the four Services. One of the elements in the 3-week curriculum was a 4-hour morning class devoted to understanding the military relationship with the Congress. The speaker for this class was a fairly young congressman from Georgia named Newt Gingrich. He had a 4-hour block of instruction, 3 hours of lecture and 1 hour of Q&A. I was stunned at the way this guy lectured for 3 hours, with no notes, on a very wide variety of historical issues, all leading up to the contemporary intersection of the military and the Congress.

Following that lecture extravaganza, we got into Q&A, and Gingrich is fielding questions left and right. He came across as a very knowledgeable guy, with glib and quick responses that seemed always on point. He was also singing the praises of this Goldwater-Nichols law that would supposedly bring about very positive change—not just

in the relationship between the military and the political realm—but in a power shift from the Services to the Joint Chiefs. Goldwater-Nichols divested the collective power of the JCS and gave that power singularly to the Chairman as the principal military advisor to the National Command Authority, the Secretary of Defense and the President. And Gingrich enthusiastically endorsed all this.

After sitting quietly for most of the hour, I raised my hand and said, "I don't believe, if you had really understood the nature of the military structure, that you in Congress ever would have done what you just did." The room went silent. Gingrich looked at me and said, "Ok, go on." I then said, "Look, the military is something like a tripartite form of government that mirrors the larger tripartite structure of the nation. We have an Executive Branch, Legislative Branch and a Judicial Branch, and we all understand and endorse the separation of powers in our system, and we understand that authority which is too centralized is not a good thing." So now I have his attention, and he said, "Ok, continue."

"In the military," I said, "the Executive Branch is the JCS (the unified and specified commands), which makes and executes policy. The Services constitute the Legislative Branch, providing resources to the Executive, and communication with the grassroots, keeping tabs on the welfare of the people, the troops. The Judiciary is the civilian Office of the Secretary of Defense, which balances the power of the other two branches and makes sure they obey the law. What you did was take power from the legislature and gave it to the executive. You would never do that in political life. You would not relinquish the power of the Congress and give it to the President. The Constitution would not let you do that, at least not without a fight."

"So, what has happened," I continued, "is that is you have put more power in the Executive Branch than it can handle and it is spilling over into the Judicial Branch—to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. That will mean two things: a larger civilian staff, and a new problem because civilians will now have more structural legitimacy to get involved in military affairs, something few if any ever understand in terms of how the application of power should best be used. The civilians may be professionals, but they are not the right sort of professionals. You have just screwed this whole thing up."

Gingrich was quiet for a long moment, then said he'd never heard anything like that before. I said, "Well, that's because I just made it up, but I think it's exactly what's happening as we speak—the major fault of the Goldwater-Nichols law. Keep an eye on the manpower growth over the next couple of years." Well, before he left that day, he came around and asked me my name. And he said, "Executive, legislative, judicial? I'll remember that." That is how I first met Newt.

Q: So, back to Louisiana. Was Memphis Belle located there?

BOYD: No, it was in Little Rock, but it was being restored during that time and was actually finished while I was at 8th AF.

Q: Well, I knew it had been restored. For those who may not know, the Memphis Belle was a B-17 bomber based in the 8th Air Force in England, and after it finished its 25 missions it was used to make a fictionalized movie showing the bomber conflict as it really was. And so, as symbols go, it's the pre-eminent airplane of World War II in our arsenal.

BOYD: That's correct, and I'll add one other thing. There was just a hint of something a bit risqué that went into the naming of that airplane. The crew had assembled at Little Rock to fly this B-17 all the way to England. The night before departure, the boys were doing some partying with the local girls and one was a woman named Belle, from Memphis. The story that lingers as part of the legend of that grand old airplane relates to a brief tryst between Belle and the aircraft's commander. Much later on, when the restoration was finished and being unveiled to the public at Little Rock AFB, the elderly lady after whom the aircraft was named had been located and invited to say a few words. Her memories turned out to be fond, eager-to-be-shared, and a tad more explicit than the presiding official had expected. His discomfort, and awkward effort to restrain the length of her tale, is now part of the wonderful legend of the Memphis Belle.

Q: When you were with the Strategic Air Command branch of the tribe, did you sense the impact of the man who used to run it, and then ran for Vice President and …

BOYD: Curtis LeMay?

Q: Yes. Curtis LeMay was known for, among other things, nourishing the tight group feeling there. Was that still carrying on?

BOYD: It probably had softened a bit, but there still survived a feeling of being a bit apart from the rest of the AF, of being charged with a very important mission, one that had to do with survival of the nation. Although none would probably put it this way, I think most felt they walked in the long shadow of LeMay, the creator of this modern, elite bomber force that held the fate of the nation exclusively in their hands, long before there were ICBMs, and boomer subs. And, I think there's some credibility in that pedigree.

It was a moment in our nation's history when people were frightened—not just those unsophisticated, country folk in places like where I grew up—but educated people, in universities, government, in the press and, most of all, in our intelligence agencies. They were frightened because they had seen the power of nuclear weapons employed, and now knew that our arch enemy possessed these terrible things, in a threatening way. Curtis LeMay was tasked to create a deterrent force of bombers, as quickly as possible, as powerful as possible, as credible as possible. That capability would be the sole means, at least in the near term, for keeping the nation safe, the enemy at bay. At the peak of his task, he—the AF—was given the largest fraction of the defense budget ever given to one service since the founding of the Defense Department. So, this demanding, hard-driving, taciturn, extraordinarily effective WWII commander set out to do exactly what he had

been tasked to do, and between 1948 and 1956, LeMay did exactly that—and perhaps a bit more—at least in the eyes of the fighter forces of the AF, starved of resources. I will talk more about LeMay later on.

Q: So, how did you make the transition to this new job?

BOYD: When I moved into the Strategic Air Command, having never been around bombers in my life, I moved in at the level of deputy commander of the storied 8th Air Force—a very famous, historic numbered Air Force. Virtually all the officers on the staff had spent their careers either flying bombers, or tankers, or supporting them. This was hard core bomber country. Not surprisingly they were asking, in effect, "What the hell, why is *he* getting that job?" Well, he's getting the job because the four-star wants him to have that job, and that did not sit well with most at first. But after they worked with me for a few months all that softened. If there had been any resentment it seemed to disappear because I think they knew that, first of all, I was competent, and then second, that I was open and eager to learn from them. My attitude was that we were all learning constantly, and that, I'll get better and so will you, if we work together, helping each other. And finally, I think they knew that I had been places and done things, tougher and maybe better, than anything they had ever done, or even been asked to do. That probably cut me some slack.

So, it all worked out because, in the end, the mission is more important than the men in charge of it, and everybody deep down believed that—with, perhaps, the exception of the 8th Air Force commander. This quite senior three-star had spent his entire "life," he would say, in SAC and had, I learned, become resentful of the fact that most important positions in the AF were now held by fighter pilots. There is a reason for that which I'll touch on later, but in this part of the narrative I was the closest example upon which to focus his resentment. He put me in a tiny office down the hall from his, installed a buzzer to summon me—which he did frequently—often to rail about the unfairness of what going on in the AF. Our time together was fairly short. Gen. Chain moved him to SAC HQ and replaced him with a fine officer with whom I was quite compatible. My time with the previous chap, though, was not wasted. I learned some new things on leadership I had not seen before, negative things, about what not to do. He reminded me of LBJ as a role model for how not to be a commander in chief in time of war.

Q: Did you try flying the bombers in this new command?

BOYD: Important question. As I mentioned earlier I had a medical condition, blind spots in my vision, which prevented me from returning to the cockpit. As the years passed especially once I was in a string of fast-paced staff jobs, I really was not in a position to challenge that medical restriction. While at Ramstein, I slipped quietly down to the local F-4 squadron, commanded by one of my former Buff Planners and, without bothering to get medical approval, got back in the cockpit—but always with an instructor pilot aboard. Wonderful feeling, though with a pinch of guilt.

Once at 8th AF I thought this might be my chance, but waited until the first commander left, since I knew he would disapprove. My new commander, Lt. General Jim McCarthy, supported the idea immediately and actually took the lead with the SAC command surgeon general, and shortly had me back on flying status—recognizing that my eyes were good enough to fly safely.

Immediately following that, I headed for Castle AFB in California—the B-52 training base—and took the senior officer short check-out course. Amazingly, everything stacked up in my cerebellum from years ago was still there—a tad rusty but quickly back in full form. I did it all: basic aircraft handling; lots of landings; and, after the first one, the instructor never touched the yoke or throttles again. I did all the various bombing runs, low-level navigation, and even the toughest part—airborne refueling.

After completion of the course, I flew the beast home to Barksdale, greased it on the runway with half the staff watching, taxied in, climbed down the ladder, and was met by wife pointing a fire hose in full blast at me (with help) for the traditional christening ceremony. Once the word was out from the crew on my performance, which all the doubters were waiting to hear, I was warmly accepted into the BUF Club—the affectionate term for the B-52, Big Ugly Fu—er. For the rest of my time at 8th, I flew the B-52 regularly, as well as the KC-135, the KC -10, and even the B-1—a marvelous aircraft that flew like a giant fighter.

Q: What else did you learn in that assignment?

BOYD: Loads, but first the missiles. Like the bombers, I had learned a great deal about them from a strategic perspective in the Pentagon, working with the SIOP each year as it went through the JCS approval process. But I knew nothing about them at the operational level, the crewing of them, maintenance, training of both crew and maintainers, readiness, and the inspection process to determine it. I knew nothing about how those monstrous vehicles are placed in their silos, and removed periodically for maintenance with the extraordinary safety measures given to nuclear weapons.

Much to learn, and I did so by visiting every missile site in the command, Minutemen and the last of the Titans. I got down inside silos with maintenance troops, watching them perform their routine inspections, asking questions, studying their checklists until I could tell by watching if they were doing their tasks correctly. I spent even more time with the crew members, learning their launch procedures, their verification procedures in the whole launch process starting with the President. I ate meals with them, socialized with them to help me understand their culture, and how it differed from the bomber crews. Along the way I started to wear the missile badge on my uniform, which I was authorized to do, but did not do until I had immersed myself into their professional niche.

Finally, I took my turn, as all junior general officers in SAC did, of flying in the "Looking Glass"—SAC's airborne command post stationed aloft 24 hours a day, 365 days a year—always with a general officer aboard, as the nuclear execution method to the bases

and missile sites once Presidential approval has been received if all other communication means were destroyed.
Created by LeMay, approved by the President, of course, and a major feature of the credibility attributed to the nation's nuclear response force.

Q: Well, it sounds like you learned a lot. How did this assignment fit into your overall career?

BOYD: It was a very important piece. First of all, it got me back into the operational world, where I once believed was the only place I ever wanted to be. A subset of that, but very important to me, was that it got me back into flying, my first love, albeit a different brand than I knew before. Broadened my gauge, so to speak. The tour demystified SAC, the hermit kingdom; in, but not exactly of, our modern Air Force, I had thought. Nonsense. That view turned out to be shamefully related to my old fighter pilot prejudice. A different culture to be sure, but one equally deserving of respect.

Another way of saying all of the above is that I came out of SAC a more knowledgeable, more mature officer than I was going in. One more point before leaving this chapter of my life, because it connects to a later chapter. It has to do with LeMay, because I unwittingly left SAC walking *in*—or at least touched *by*—the long shadow of the man.

When LeMay retired I was still quite young. I actually met him when I was a second lieutenant and he was Air Force chief of staff. He came to our base in the Philippines and shook hands with all the pilots in my squadron. Many years later, when I was a two-star in SAC, long since-retired General LeMay visited Offutt AFB at the invitation of Gen. Chain. LeMay and I ended up at the same cocktail party. So, here is the famous Curtis LeMay, and of course people would go up to him and try to strike up a conversation. He would just look at them, maybe mumble a bit, then say no more. Uneasy, they'd then move along. Soon, I noticed him standing alone. So, I went over and introduced myself: "My name is Chuck Boyd, sir, may I ask you a question?" He nodded, and I said, "I've always wondered if you were as mean as everybody said you were."

Well, that got his attention. He said, "I wasn't mean, the only people who thought I was mean were the ones I fired, and the only people I fired were the ones that needed to be." Now we had a conversation going, and for the next half hour we were talking. He had not talked to anybody else, because everyone else started with small talk, and LeMay hated small talk. He wanted to talk about something serious if he was going to make an effort to talk at all. By the time that conversation ended, he knew who I was and I had the feeling he was not going to forget.

We will come back to this later.

Q: Before we leave SAC ...

BOYD: Well, there's not much more to say about that. I stayed at that job down in Louisiana until June 1988, and then I headed back to the Pentagon for two and a half more years, where mainly I was doing planning, at a higher level than before, in two different positions.

A PLANNER AGAIN (1988)

Q: So, you were a planner many times over.

BOYD: Yes, by this time I had become identified as a planner, though I had picked up some credentials as programmer too, by hauling an awful lot of budget authority back to USAFE from my POM interventions.

Q: What were your specific responsibilities this time?

BOYD: As Director of Air Force Plans I was back in my old territory in charge of all those Air Staff divisions I used to haunt as the Green Desk Planner, plucking out action officers to work specifically on Joint matters. I had Joint responsibility as the first level of general/flag review for issues not resolved at the colonel level—known in the Joint Services vernacular as AF DepOpDep.

In my AF-only hat, I had regional responsibility for planning issues in Europe (where, remember I had been the USAFE planner), the Pacific, Middle East, and Latin America. Additionally, I had programmatic responsibility as a member of the Air Staff Board, the first level of general officer review in the AF POM development.

With my experience as a Division Chief, Buff and Green Desk Planner, then a regional planner and programmer, I came to this job exceptionally well prepared, better than any of my predecessors as far back as I knew. Whose idea was this man/job match? Probably Gen. Jack Chain, mapping my future development.

Q: OK, got the job descriptions. What sort of issues might pop up for you to deal with?

BOYD: Let's take drugs in Latin America as an example. Let's say, a request comes in from another agency for us to provide some kind of specific support in drug interdiction operations. That request would come into the Director of the Joint Staff who would choose the first level for it to be addressed. In this case, too hot to start at the action-officer level, not important enough to go straight to the chiefs, it might go to the two-stars for a resolution or the three-stars. As I noted earlier, all issues could be addressed at the action-officer level, the colonel level, the two-star level, the three-star level, or finally at four-star level in the tank, the Joint Chiefs themselves. The decision system was organized by priorities; if it were not so, if everything went to the top, it would have slowed us down unacceptably, but if everything had been decided by action

officers way too many mistakes would have been risked. If you do this long enough, people develop a kind of feel for where the sweet decision spot needs to be for various kinds of issues.

Q: These were very heady times, were they not? And the U.S. military was right in the thick of them supporting U.S. diplomacy.

BOYD: Yes, indeed. Things began to happen we had never imagined.

Q: I remember interviewing Admiral William J. Crowe on this same period, after he'd been U.S. Ambassador to London. We got talking about military matters, and he went around with the head of the Soviet military, Sergey Akhromeyev, the guy who committed suicide as the USSR was collapsing.

BOYD: Yes, when Crowe was JCS Chairman he invited Akhromeyev to visit the United States. Now, this will take me into a little anecdote, if you don't mind.

Q: Please.

BOYD: I was out on the steps of the Pentagon, at the river entrance, when Akhromeyev arrived. Crowe was standing at the top of the stairs and the band was playing the Communist Internationale. And I'm thinking this is the most amazing moment. The two most significant military people on the planet are meeting and they're supposed to be adversaries. But they don't look or act like adversaries.

Q: Yes, oh, absolutely.

BOYD: The Soviet Minister of Defense and the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs are coming together in a way that had never happened before and would probably not have been possible even a year before. This was therefore a significant moment in history, to say the least.

Now, the Minister brought some other senior guys with him, of course, one of whom was an air guy. This officer, a three-star, was escorted on a visit to Langley Air Force Base, home of the Tactical Air Command, one of the premier Air Force bases in the United States and given the VIP treatment in every respect. The four-star commander showed him everything, and the old Soviet was believing nothing. He's sure he's seeing an American version of a Potemkin Village. This guy had probably been in the Soviet military for 40 years or more, and likely believed all kinds of awful things about the United States and the U.S. Air Force. He was very hesitant, very skeptical, of everything. What are all those cars doing here? Who do those cars in the parking lot belong to? Well, they belong to people who work here. Military people? Military people; enlisted people as well as officers. He didn't believe that. He thought it had all been staged. He could not imagine that an airman would have a car, or a sergeant would have a car out there in that parking lot.

The last shop he visited on the flight line was the engine shop, where engines were pulled out of airplanes and worked on. The person in charge, the NCOIC (the non-commissioned officer in charge) was a black female with zebra stripes from her elbow to her shoulder. She was introduced as the non-commissioned officer in charge. The Russian was sure we were putting him on. He thought this was complete hokum. So, he said to her, "Why would the men in the shop obey you? How could you be in charge of this, anyway?" And she answered very calmly and simply: "Because I know more than they do."

This was just an exquisitely wonderful moment of exposure to a concept that was totally alien to this man. The Soviets never had a professional NCO corps in the sense that Western nations, and particularly the United States, have. They had some bullies that beat up on conscripts, but nothing like a professional, NCO corps. So here is this senior Soviet air force officer seeing something in American life, not just in the United States Air Force, that was totally alien to anything he knew or understood.

Believe me, there was plenty we did not understand about them, too. There still is plenty we do not understand about other cultures. But the ignorance is not necessarily symmetrical. Open societies may not be as wise as they could be, but compared to closed societies, which the Soviet Union was, the advantage was massively ours.

Q: Well, in my interview with Admiral Crowe, he said that at the end of this visit the Minister admitted that we have something they did not, including that professional enlisted force. As a former enlisted Air Force man, I took this very much to heart.

BOYD: Well, of course. We have invested a great deal in building a professional NCO corps. You don't operate anything, I don't care who you are, without enlisted people, specialists, knowledgeable people, people who know how to do what needs to be done. Our NCOs don't beat up on young recruits; they help them learn and integrate into the organization. We have professional military education, the NCO Academy in the United States Air Force. I think one of the most important elements in our military ethos is that the better they are, the better you are at implementing, at flying those airplanes and all the rest that goes into making an air force effective.

Q: Absolutely.

BOYD: The issues of the day during this period were momentous. The Berlin Wall came down in November 1989, and the Warsaw Pact was pretty much over. The ramifications for the U.S. military, and indeed for the NATO alliance, were enormous. It was a confusing time, with so many issues to deal with and rethink. Luckily for all of us, our President at the time, and his group of senior national security advisers, were doing a really remarkable job.

Q: I agree wholeheartedly. The fact that we didn't lord it over the Soviet Union, that there was no overt triumphalism, was deeply wise.

BOYD: George Herbert Walker Bush made that perfectly clear to us, to everybody. He was the right man at the right time, and we had huge respect for him. But it was a confusing time, a formative time or perhaps a *re*formative time. Even without the burden of a foolish triumphalism, there was plenty to be concerned with. One had to do with money.

I remember that back in 1986, while I was still in Ramstein and had come back from the final POM development session for the next fiscal year, I warned everybody in the command that we were very likely at the peak of resource allocation, and it would only go down in the future. So, we needed to think about how to adjust wisely to that. And in fact, that's exactly what happened. It was not a promising message to bring back to my command, but it was a necessary one, because the decrease began in the last 2 years of the Reagan years, then really came down under Bush, a manpower cut of 600,000, and budget cut of 26%.

Hugely important issues were being wrestled with during this time, in the Joint arena and unilaterally, in the Air Force. I used this formative time to strengthen the planning function, by pulling some outlying functions from other organizations into Plans that I had been eyeing since my days as the Green Desk guy. The Directorate of Air Force Plans was a much stronger organization when I left after about 18 months, than when I arrived.

I briefly then was moved to be the assistant XO, they called it—a two-star who was the assistant to the Deputy Chief-of-Staff for Plans and Operations—a non-job generally, picking up the droppings behind the XO. But in my case, I had some fun with it. The AF Chief at the time was Gen. Larry Welch, a powerful intellect known to be impatient with the unprepared. It was the job of the XO, or OpDep, as he was called when doing Joint duties, to accompany the Chief for all JCS meetings. This particular chap did not like to go to these meetings, and would duck them when possible, and send his assistant. I loved to go to these meetings, eager to help the Chief, should he need it. That period lasted from August 1989 to the end of December. It seemed to me clearly a holding pattern for something else. And it was.

MAXWELL (1990)

Q: So, what happened next?

BOYD: What happened next was that I got a call one morning from the chief of staff, I just mentioned, Larry Welch, who told me that he wanted me to go to Air University,

which was a three-star post. I paused for a moment speechless, I guess. He asked me if I had a problem with that? “No sir; I have no problem with that." “So,” he said, “come see me a little later on in the morning."

Just a little bit on him I think is in order, because we talked earlier about the Aviation Cadet Program, the program for kids who did not have a college degree, but could pass a fairly tough mental exam, and of course, a demanding flight physical. Welch had been one of those kids. He graduated in 1955 and was commissioned a second lieutenant. Now, remember, this was not a program designed to create senior officers, but to produce airplane drivers who wore lieutenant’s rank insignia or maybe captain, a major at most.

Along the way, someone figured out Larry was really smart, and sent him to the Pentagon to work for a cranky old brigadier, who ran a small but exclusive analytics shop, the name of which I don’t recall. After some time there, the cranky old brigadier, thinking this lad should have a college degree, sent Larry off to the University of Maryland. A couple of years pass and the brigadier gets a call from the Dean of the Department where Larry is studying. The Dean reports that “Major Welch is about to graduate and will do so with the highest grade-point average of anyone in the history of the Department. I just thought you’d like to know." This anecdote was told to me by the brigadier, so I believe it’s true. Brings to mind another chap years later maybe with some similarities.

Welch was also a taciturn man. When I came to see him on that auspicious day, he was very direct with me. He told me that he wanted me to go to Air University, period. “Anything in particular you want me to do, any mission orders?" He said, “I want you to get Ike Skelton off my ass. Those are your mission orders." He then paused and said, "One other thing: Don’t be afraid to write big checks, the place could stand some improvement." That was it. I didn’t need him to draw a picture for me.

Ike Skelton was a Democratic congressman from Missouri who long sat on the House Armed Services Committee. He chaired the Professional Military Education Subcommittee, and in that capacity, Skelton held several hearings that resulted in a generally unflattering conclusion about all of the Services’ PME schools. What caused Welch to wince was that Ike’s most caustic criticism was for the AF schools. Skelton said—and this is in the Congressional Record—that the worst schools were in the Air Force, and the worse school of all was the Air Command Staff School.

The day after the Senate confirmed me for that three-star job I was in Ike Skelton’s office. I said, “Sir, the schools may be as bad as you say, and they may not be, but give me 60 days and I will know. Come visit me then and I’ll tell you what I’m going to do about it.”

Skelton smiled, and did exactly that, but a tad early. He waited 55 days, came down on a Sunday and for that day, evening, and all the next day I was with Ike Skelton every second except for when he was in his room sleeping. By the time he left we’d formed a partnership at the very political-military intersection I have been talking about. I told him I could and would fix these schools, but I could not do it without his help. I told him I

needed some legal authorizations I did not have, and when the authorizers were cutting up the President's Budget, I would alert him to specifics in the AF submission that were critical to me, then ask him to ensure they be saved.

Q: What legal authorizations did you want?

BOYD: I needed a big boost on what I could offer senior faculty. Most of the civilian faculty was solid, adequate to the task, but I wanted to raise the prestige of the schools, particularly the Air War College, the flagship of Air University. To do that I needed to snare a few top-drawer scholars, people whose names were known in upper academic circles. To attract such people, I would need to offer higher salaries than the law now allowed me to spend under the GS civilian pay scale.

I was at a disadvantage, I told him, even under GS rules, quality professors could be attracted to, for example, The Naval War College in Newport, RI, or to the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, or even to the Army War College in Carlyle, Pennsylvania, or to the Marine Corps School at Quantico. But to go to Montgomery, Alabama? Not likely. "So," Ike said, "what exactly do you want?" I said that I wanted to be able to pay up to tenured-professor salaries, like those at Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. I explained that I had no intention of paying everyone at that level, but only a key few, maybe just three tenured, full-professor salaries. Ike looked at me a little askance, then said, "Deal." He was as good as his word. Ike Skelton managed to put that request into law.

Q: Did that relationship endure?

BOYD: Oh yes, he remained my partner. I also took Congressman Skelton on trips to PME schools, to professional education schools, around various NATO countries and to Japan. If you really want to understand how to form the best PME schools, I told him, you need to see what we can learn from other countries that have been doing this for a long time. We went to France, to the United Kingdom, to Italy, Germany, Norway, the Czech Republic, and Japan. From these trips Skelton learned that we were in fact better than most of them, though each had something to offer that we had not discovered before.

At a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee at the end of my tour, with the Air Force Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force present, Ike congratulated them for improving the Air Force's professional military education schools. He said, and this is in the Congressional Record: "Your schools have risen to the top like cream."

May he rest in peace, Ike Skelton was a fine political leader who never flagged in his efforts to improve the armed forces of this country. Later on, he became Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and remained a great friend of mine to the end.

Q: It was an achievement to get the education system in the Air Force up to where it needed to be. Something to be proud of, yes?

BOYD: Yes, of course, but there's a little more to this story I'd like to share.

The second thing I did after getting Ike Skelton on board was to get hold of the admiral that Jimmy Carter had put in as his Director of Central Intelligence …

Q: Stansfield Turner?

BOYD: Yes. One of his early achievements as a flag officer was to reform the Naval War College, an institution never historically well regarded by the line Navy, and therefore not a place where hard-charging young officers saw value in attending. Turner figured if the line Navy was to respect the place, it had to first be a quality institution, then attendance incentive would follow. From all I could discern he had done some fine reformation work there. He had ruffled feathers, too. No one messes with Navy traditions and gets away without criticism. But he had suffered the flak and stayed with the task, earning respect for his achievement and himself at the same time.

He was a Rhodes Scholar himself and a very highly-regarded full admiral. He was someone I wanted to meet. I asked him to come to Maxwell so I could pick his brain, sent an airplane for him, and put him to work immediately upon his arrival. First, I wanted to know what he had done at Newport, then I wanted him to look at the curricula for the War College, then the Air Command and Staff College.

Later, I wanted to institute some major changes at the Air Force Institute of Technology. That place had somehow evolved into an institution in which the commander had very little to do with the substantive work of the institution. The professors had taken over and the commander had become an administrator only. The faculty determined the curriculum, did the hiring and firing of professors, and made tenure decisions. This struck me as not being right.

But instead of going in there wielding a hatchet over my head, I thought a better way would be to put together a commission with a couple of university presidents and a highly respected retired four-star who had been prominent in systems and in logistics. I also asked Turner to serve on that commission. The mission I gave them was to take a look at the whole institution and come up with recommendations for reform. So, they did that, and in a way that aligned with the reforms going on at the Air War College and Air Command Staff College. Turner's role was prominent, critical, and altogether positive.

Q: Were there other changes in the early days of your tour?

BOYD: Oh yes, many. As I mentioned above with Turner's help, we did a complete review of the curricula in the Air War College, and Air Command and Staff College. We didn't duplicate what Turner had done at Newport, much of which was not relevant to our service, but we strengthened the course work, modernized the support materials, reading lists, etc. I also initiated testing at the Air War College. That had not been the case, and I

knew it was going to be very unpopular. But the perception that Skelton and other critics had was the students were spending much of their time in a large auditorium listening to visiting speakers. The seats in the room were very comfortable, occasionally prompting snoozing. The room was called the big Blue Bedroom. No requirements stemmed from the lecture series aside from just showing up to hear them. This, critics called “passive learning." The students did have to write a few papers, plus one big one that required research while they were there. But, they played a lot of golf. Testing, with the prospect of failing, creates discipline. I encouraged the students to improve in this fine trait through testing. That did not make me popular, at least for a while.

The last major change I made to the Air University was to create an entirely new school called SAAS, School of Advanced Aerospace Studies. It was imagined to be a post-graduate school for the very best graduates of Air Command and Staff school, at a quality of instruction equal to a top university Master’s degree program. On some plaques and such I’m called the father of the school. That’s not true. Larry Welch is the real father of the school. It was his idea, and he got it funded in the AF budget. It was then left to me to actually create it.

So, I gathered some expert help and sat down to think this thing through. There was no physical space in which to house the school, no personnel identified, no director, scholars or support personnel hired, no curriculum developed, nothing. There was no way I was going to have the time to create this thing; I needed a leader, and a really good one. I knew a fast-track colonel from SAC, smart as hell, a get-things-done-now kind of guy, but currently in the “penalty box” for a minor infraction of some kind, and hoping he’d get another chance to get back on that fast track in SAC. I had a private meeting with him, told him, "Forget ever being a general; if SAC wanted to bring you back and make you a general, they would have done so by now, that train moves fast. But if you would like to do something really important as a mature colonel, something that may well have historic significance, I have a job for you.”

That was in 1990. Thirty years on, SAAS has produced hundreds of very fine graduates, highly educated in their professional academic discipline. Many became generals, all enriched the Air Force in its chartered mission.

Q: Before you got there, would an Air Force officer going through there get a master’s degree?

BOYD: No, not when I got there. One could, on their own time, take night courses at Troy State or some other local civilian institutions. But work done within the Air War College could not count toward a master’s degree. Shortly after I arrived, I set my education staff to work on an accreditation objective to at least have work done at the schools count toward degrees students were seeking at other universities. All of this takes time; it’s a very slow process. While we had some success in this first effort, the big achievement on my watch was to get SAAS accredited as a Master’s Degree program.

Q: You know, the Navy goes into foreign ports and gets involved in international events. The Army's on the ground and the same thing happens. But the Air Force kind of flies over it all. There seem to be less obvious points of political contact abroad. So what sort of things were you getting your senior officers primed to do in a political sense? And this goes back to the education piece, doesn't it?

BOYD: Good question, and you are right about education being the key here. The main purpose at Maxwell was to prepare people for more senior positions—to educate them, not train them. So, the first thing they needed to do was to understand their own service in a much broader way than they had heretofore.

That is to say, the young folks come into the AF and then become a part of one stovepipe or another. Some become pilots then go on to particular types of aircraft for specialized training—fighter pilots, bomber pilots, airlift/transport pilots, helicopter pilots, navigators. That puts them in separate major commands each with its own subculture. Other young officers may be assigned to missiles, to information systems, or as engineers in research and development, or in acquisition, and so on. By the time they become lieutenant colonels and maybe even colonels—because that is the usual rank of those who came to the Air War college—they have become accomplished in their particular field but have little understanding of the rest of the Air Force. At the base of any effective preparation for becoming a senior officer has to be an understanding of the institution as a whole.

Second, at an even higher level of integration, they needed to better understand the other Services. They also need to understand how the government actually works, which is why senior people from the various departments in the Executive Branch of government, especially those in the national security business, were invited to speak. Finally, they need to understand the role of Congress, and its relationship with the military.

And to come to the sharp point of your good question, once they understood how the U.S. government as a whole works, and what their part in it is, they had to learn how all that connects with the rest of the world. Above all, that means understanding relations with allies: How are alliances structured? What are their processes? How do we integrate efforts? How can we do that better? How does what we do have to change as technology changes? These are the kinds of questions that must be asked and pondered.

So, we were interested in studying a series of cascading intersections: the intersection between the military and the civilian aspects of government, among the parts of government, the political intersection with the military, and so on. It's one thing for military officers to know that we have civilian control of the military. Any dodo can be taught to repeat that. But that does not mean he or she really *understands* it. Exactly where does that intersection take place and what does it mean? How can you implement the military component without understanding the politics, without being politicized yourself?

So, at one level it's simple, but at another level all this is a very tricky business. To help your commander in chief and those who work for him in the civilian departments, you have to be professionally effective without becoming an advocate for a political point of view. Very few military guys at the level of a colonel really understood all this to any degree of sophistication. But, they need to understand it and that's what we tried to concentrate on.

Q: Did this training more or less parallel what was happening in Newport and Carlyle?

BOYD: Certainly, it did. They too had come under criticism from Ike Skelton. I think it's fair to say that Skelton was not as satisfied with their progress as he was with what the Air Force had done.

Newt comes back briefly into the story about now. When I became the commander of Air University, I started inviting Gingrich down to speak. I would always have him over for dinner the night before. We became friends. I introduced him to all kinds of people through that, and it was a learning process in many ways for him. He grew up an Army brat—his stepfather was in the military, but not at a very high level. So, at that time, he probably thought he knew more about how things worked than he really did. One of the people I introduced Newt to, for example, was John Keegan. At that time, I think Keegan was the greatest living military historian in the world. I also introduced him to the guy who was the principal adviser to the SACEUR on Soviet affairs, a brilliant Brit named Chris Donnelly. And many others.

Q: You were at Maxwell when the Soviet Union broke up at the end of 1991, right?

BOYD: Yes, I was actually in Moscow in 1991, just as it was coming apart. Gorbachev had taken one of the S's out of USSR and made it the Union of Socialist Republics, discarding the "Soviet." But that had not helped; the thing was clearly coming apart, notwithstanding.

I was there in November 1991. The vote as to whether Ukraine would stay in the USR or become a separate country was supposed to take place around the first of December. Everybody in the Soviet government predicted that the vote was going to be 80/20 for the Ukraine to stay. I asked a taxi driver through my translator to predict the vote, and he offered up the same numbers, but reversed. He said it would be 80/20 to leave, and of course the taxi driver was right.

On that same trip I met with Marshall Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, who was an Air Force officer, the only one, I believe, to ever become minister of defense. He asked me to become the first U.S. general to speak to any one of the Soviet military education schools.

Well, the Commandant at the school, the Gagarin Institute, a three-star, with what looked like a lot of wear and tear on his rotund body, was not at all happy with my visit, but the

Minister of Defense had directed it and that was that. The Commandant and I took the stage together, to no applause. He introduced me in two or three curt sentences, then motioned with head jerk for me to take center stage, without a lectern. Didn't matter, I had no prepared speech, only a few thoughts in my head. I spoke briefly, telling the students at the outset I was not there to lecture them, but hoped only to have a useful exchange, which we could do in a question and answer period. I told them I would answer any question they asked, and if a question concerned something classified, I would so indicate, but not lie about it.

The audience members were quite naturally suspicious of me in the beginning and asked me mostly non-substantive questions. I answered all questions, even those which required speaking critically about the United States and its military in order to remain honest. They started to gain some confidence that they could go a little farther with me, and finally it got to the point where they were having fun. One guy asked me whether promotion to general in my service was purely political like it is in theirs. At this point the old three-star, with blood-shot eyes, and steel teeth almost had steam coming out of his ears.

That was amusing. But a lot of the students asked good, serious questions: about command and control issues; about training, both early, and continuation training; how many sorties per month, per year, with ordinance or without; what makes their tactical forces less effective than ours, with our superiority a given; and other questions of that sort. I answered everything as honestly as I could and, at the end, got a standing ovation. I might have been the only speaker they ever had who did not try to blow smoke up their backsides. Some of them probably got in trouble as a result of their questions, but they too knew their own country was coming apart, and ours was not. It was a very eerie time to be in the Soviet Union, maybe a little like being on a beach as the water suddenly starts receding rapidly, indicating a tsunami is on the way.

Q: It must have been a very interesting time to be there.

BOYD: Very interesting. Just another quick anecdote to give a sense of how quickly things deteriorated in the last days of the Soviet Union. In 1990, I was asked by the Australian Air Force to attend a conference on the 75th anniversary of their service's birth the following year. They asked me specifically to debate a Soviet three-star on the subject of doctrine. I accepted, as did the Soviet general, but between the invitation and the event, the first Gulf War intervened, displaying a dramatic rout of Soviet equipment, training, and doctrine in Iraq. I showed up in Canberra, but the Soviet guy cancelled. Who could blame him?

Clearly, this was a period in which the Soviet Union had crumbled and Soviet/Russian society as well as their military was in chaos. It was sad for them and, though we didn't think about it this way at the time, it was sad for us as well—we were losing an enemy we understood, and about to acquire one we did not.

Q: Did you have any fun in that assignment, or were you just driving yourself hard like you did in the Pentagon?

BOYD: No, I loved every minute of that assignment. The work was fun, so that means it was not work. Reforming the schools and creating SAAS was very satisfying, and I think I was able to do it in a way that made people feel like they were part of something that would make the place better. I did not tell people the place you have been satisfied with before is not good enough. I said, "Look, never mind Skelton's criticism. What matters is that he is now our partner and we have a great opportunity to put this place on the map." I took Gen. Welch at his word and wrote some big checks. Then I had to get the Senate appropriators—of both parties—on board; which I did. In my last 2 years there we had new buildings popping up like popcorn.

There were many other ways I had fun in that job. I had a healthy travel budget, and I had three C-21s, Lear jets, at my disposal. I could invite retired generals, some historic figures, to come speak to my students, and send a jet for their transportation; guys who would not come on airliners; I could bring congressmen, who also would not come without a jet. I had travel funds to bring famous scholars to speak, some from as far as Europe. And when they came, I would have a private dinner for them in the grand old home that served as my quarters, a mansion really, built in the Depression with WPA money. Some of those dinners were particularly memorable. Curtis LeMay, for example, was no longer traveling but remembered my name from the time we met at SAC HQ and agreed to come. With a little bit of devilment in mind, I also invited a guy named Pete Quesada—Lt. General Ret. Quesada—who was a tactical guy, a fighter guy, who had been the component commander supporting Patton's 3rd Army in its march across Europe.

Q: Yes, I remember his name.

BOYD: So, back in the day when the Air Force was new as an independent Service, Congress initially gave the Air Force two four-star billets, one for Chief of Staff, and one for the Vice Chief. A bit later Congress authorized a third four-star billet creating a critical institution decision on where the AF would place its primary emphasis—on tactical, or strategic air, on Quesada, or LeMay. Well, the nod went to LeMay, and Quesada, with his nose out of joint, turned in his retirement papers. Retirement was not all that bad for Pete. He got into the construction business, built L'Enfant Plaza in Washington, played a major part in the building of Dulles Airport and many other things, but he and LeMay were never to be friends again.

Now, one of my dinner guests asked Quesada: "When you worked for Patton, what did you think of him?" Pete answered, without hesitation, "Patton wasn't worth a shit."

Q: What?

BOYD: That's what he said. He said if it hadn't been for Patton's PIO—Public Information Officer—nobody would ever have known his name. So, naturally, somebody

asked, "Who was his PIO?" And Pete turned to LeMay, "Who was that guy? You know, the guy who went to work for Drew Pearson after the war? Oh yeah, Jack Anderson" (later one of the most famous, notorious, columnists in the country).

Q: Yes.

BOYD: And then, out of nowhere it seemed, Pete Quesada said, "LeMay wasn't worth a shit either." Suddenly the atmosphere at that little dinner table turned so tense you could cut it with a knife. LeMay doesn't think he heard that right, so he's trying to turn up his hearing aid. And, of course, both of these guys are crusty old curmudgeons at this point, but titans in their day, unaccustomed to anyone speaking ill of them sitting right there at the same table.

So, Quesada continued, saying that everything LeMay built had to do with strategic air forces and neglected the stuff that we were actually going to need to fight the most likely kinds of wars. But then Quesada paused for a moment and said, with unmistakable sincerity, "There's one thing LeMay could do better than anybody I ever knew, and that was to lead men in combat." With that, all the tension went out of the room—like air from a released balloon. It was a weird sort of moment, but in fact historic: two great men, long hostile to each other resulting from a hugely consequential decision in the Air Force, now reconciled in one short sentence. I felt privileged to be present.

One last LeMay story and then I'll get back on track, but I think these little vignettes are a part of the history of the Air Force that hardly anyone knows.

The last time I had LeMay as my guest while commander of Air University, was in the fall of 1990. As usual I had a small, private dinner for him, but this time I added the three-star OpDeps of each of the four Services, who were visiting to speak the next day. LeMay was sitting on my right and the Navy three-star, Snuffy Smith, was on my left. Since all were in civilian clothes LeMay didn't know to which Service each of the four belonged. The table conversation goes on for a while, then LeMay figures out that Snuffy is in the Navy. Previously mostly silent, LeMay is now on full alert and begins to bore in on Snuffy.

LeMay, we soon learned, did not like the Navy—any of it—and we also learned why. When LeMay was sent out to the Pacific to form the 20th Air Force, the B-29 organization developed to take the air war to Japan, General Marshal directed Admiral Nimitz to provide a logistic support system for him. Nimitz simply ignored the order, requiring LeMay to waste precious time and resources in building the system from scratch, thus delaying the start of his bombing campaign against Japan. Fifty-six years is a long time to stay mad, but LeMay was not counting. Poor Snuffy Smith had to sit there all evening taking abuse for the sins of his ancestors.

At the end of the evening LeMay asked me if he could come to my office the next day. That had never happened before. I agreed, of course, but was curious about his reason.

Once in my office he talked for 2 hours about all the things that were wrong with the Air Force and what should be done to fix them. Afterwards, I took him into the hallway where there's a large painting of Billy Mitchell, and I had his photograph taken standing beside it. Five days later he was dead. That was his last photograph.

Following LeMay's funeral, another retired four-star, Ross Milton, called to tell me that 10 days before LeMay died he had asked Ross to come speak with him. Milton had become a writer after he retired, and a good one. He told me that LeMay had talked to him more on that day than he had since 1943. I said well, 5 days before he died, he spent 2 hours talking to me, which I also took to be out of character for him. Milton explained it all to me: LeMay knew he was going to die and wanted to talk to two people: a writer and the guy in charge of education. He was a strategic thinker to the end.

Q: I'm glad for these stories, because he comes through as being a rather one-dimensional man, you know.

BOYD: I had dinner at an earlier time with LeMay at my table, but this time with Newt Gingrich there as well. Newt is an historian, you know, and afterward Newt said to me, "I always thought LeMay was just an old bomber general, but now I realized that it would not have mattered when he lived—in the time of Alexander or Napoleon or Frederick the Great—he'd have been a great general, and he'd have picked the technology with which to whip your ass."

The Air University tour was a wonderful time in my life, interesting and meaningful work, creative work in many ways. It was also a wonderful time for our family. Milc assumed the traditional role of the Commander's wife, gently bringing other wives together to focus on family issues in the military community and to develop social activity apart from their husbands' work. She was a person easy to like, with a warmth people instantly felt.

My children, then in their teens, secure in that military base, had the run of the place. There was a relaxed environment unlike the high tension of the Pentagon. My daughter had her first date while we were there, a milestone in any teenage girl's life. My son became an Eagle Scout, a tribute to his ability to set and achieve a goal, and also a tribute to a loving and persistent mother.

With the third year of this assignment nearing its end, a traditional tour length for AU commanders, I remember telling my wife, that if I were to be offered the option of staying here to retirement, or getting a fourth star, I'd opt to stay right here. Such options, of course, are not a part of a disciplined personnel system. Choices are made by the Chief and Secretary to serve the interests of the institution, not the whims of the individual. Shortly after that conversation, I got a call from the Chief of Staff, Gen. Tony McPeak, to inform me that he had submitted my name, along with two assignment choices to Gen. Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. The two assignments were: Deputy

Commander in Chief of the US European Command, and Commander of the US Air Forces in the Pacific.

All four-star nominations go first to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, then to the SecDef, finally to the President, before going to the Senate for confirmation. Since the European assignment was a joint assignment, Powell got to choose and selected me. I must say I had a tinge of disappointment. The idea of being back in the operational world, commanding all AF flying units in my old theater where I had cut my teeth as a fighter pilot, then later fought my war was a sweet thought. My desire aside, Powell knew me, knew my background in Europe and my accomplishments in Joint Staff work, so selecting Europe for me was the logical decision. Confirmation went smoothly. In fact, when my nomination reached the Armed Services Committee, Senator Sam Nunn, the Chairman, waived a confirmation hearing—the only time I had ever heard of that happening. The committee staff director later told me that Nunn said, "Who's going to vote no on Boyd?" With poignant musings about staying at Maxwell now not even an afterthought, we bundled up our little family and headed for Europe.

One final thought before leaving Maxwell. Sadly, the reforms I cared so deeply about gradually came unglued after I left. Larry Welch's successor, once removed, decided to combine education with Air Training Command, a decision I strongly opposed on the grounds that the differences between training and education are fundamental and profound and that in any such union, education—lesser in size and budgetary clout—would receive short shrift. The Chief waited until I was gone, then promptly joined the two with HQ at the Training Command. Many years later, after I was retired, I served on the board of trustees at the Air War College for several years, and became convinced that exactly what I feared had happened to the professional education schools in the Air Force.

STUTTGART (1992)

Q: OK, so now let's get you back to Europe.

BOYD: Right. I arrived at my new headquarters in Stuttgart-Vaihingen in early December. I accepted the Command flag from my predecessor, Gen. Jim McCarthy who was also my second boss at Barksdale and personal friend, in a formal ceremony with staff in attendance, troops on parade and, to my surprise, numerous German community leaders, including Manfred Rommel, Oberburgermeister of the greater Stuttgart area. Rommel, the son of Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, was to become my closest German friend while in Europe and continuing until his death in 2013.

The European Command (EUCOM)structure I was entering was unique, a creature of our Cold War priority on defending Europe against the menacing threat of the Soviet Union. We had maintained a stable troop strength of around 326,000 for many years under the

command of a US four-star, who also commanded all of the European forces committed to NATO. So, he was both CINCEUR and SACEUR. Now that is a pretty big job, too big for any one person to do effectively, so traditionally we also put a four-star in Stuttgart as the Deputy Commander in Chief of all U.S. forces. That deputy actually functioned, in civilian terms, as a COO—a chief operating officer. Large policy decisions remained the responsibility of the CINCEUR, but the Deputy had operational command of all U.S. forces in Europe: Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Marine Corps. That was me.

When I got to EUCOM in December 1992, I walked into several hot issues that McCarthy had under control, but which could not stand even a short term without a firm hand on the control stick. The First task was a quick study—something I had learned to do well, as indicated in earlier chapters of this narrative. The next was to move about the Command as quickly as possible to get a sense of the people who were in charge of the subordinate levels of execution.

The first big issue was the drawdown of forces following the end of the Cold War, which was causing disruption throughout the Command. One of the two Army Corps in Europe had been withdrawn to support the invasion of Kuwait, along with numerous smaller support units. As the U.S. forces began their withdrawal from the first Gulf War after the liberation of Kuwait, those forces that had come from Europe were to be sent back to the US rather than return to Europe. They became part of the general post-Cold War drawdown—not only troops and their families, but massive amounts of munitions, reserve tanks and all manner of vehicles stored in Europe for the big war that never occurred. Many of the disruptions could be managed by subordinate commands, but the economic disruption, caused by what Germans now recognized as a permanent withdrawal, sparked political protests at the provincial and even the national level. These required higher level attention. The withdrawal affected a vast number of services Germans had been providing for many decades, putting hundreds of businesses and thousands of Germans out of work—a huge issue all over West Germany. Our Congress, in its typical wisdom, had demanded withdrawal of forces and equipment and base closures, but then demanded that we sell the empty bases back to the Germans at handsome prices. A worse bargaining position I cannot imagine.

The next big issue was that the war in Bosnia was escalating. This was happening as the Bush Administration was leaving, and the Clinton Administration beginning. Bush had been very cautious about getting involved, wisely thinking the US had no vital security interests in Bosnia and, in any event, this was a European affair, not ours. The Clinton people differed in that our security interests were less relevant than were humanitarian considerations. Moreover, their receptivity to European pleas to get involved were much greater than that of the Bush team. They seemed eager to get involved, but uncertain just how. Some people in the State Department, with whom I visited prior to my departure for Europe, lobbied me to support the use of military force on behalf of the Bosniacs (Muslims) against the Serbs. I responded that I would consider that after spending time in the area to better understand the nature of the conflict.

Q: Was your staff well equipped to help you get up to speed on these issues?

BOYD: Overall, it was a solid staff, spotty in some areas, stronger in others. But I had been spoiled by my long association with the Air Staff, where the best and brightest are drawn like moths to the light. I bolstered the EUCOM staff with two powerful additions, both discoveries I made in the Air Staff years before. The first was Major General Chuck Link, a fighter pilot by trade but a planner by inclination. Chuck had a discerning, curious intellect, soft spoken—one who won arguments without ever raising his voice. As good a planner as I ever met. The second, Michael Hayden, was a lieutenant colonel I discovered when I was Director of Plans at the Air Staff—a brilliant young officer who wrote like an angel and briefed like a hypnotist. I sent him to the NSC where Brent Scowcroft, Bush 41's National Security Advisor, agreed with my assessment, got him promoted to colonel and sent him back to the Air Staff where the Secretary of the AF, Don Rice, put him in charge of the Secretary's Staff Group—a prestigious, highly-selective gathering of brain power. Hayden was now a brigadier, and I grabbed him while others were thinking about what to do with him. I made him my Director of Intelligence to help me figure out what was going on in the Balkans. As I'm sure you know, Hayden went on to become head of NSA and then CIA—the best intelligence officer of his generation.

As a brief aside, one other wise man helped me with understanding the Balkans, Former Secretary of State, Jim Baker. In April of '93, four months into my tour, President Ozal of Turkey died. Baker was chosen by Clinton to head the US Delegation to the funeral, and I to be his Deputy. All national delegations were formed to follow on foot the caisson moving the President's body from the Parliament Building to the Mosque. That little trek took three and a half hours, which delighted me. The pace was slow, giving me a marvelous opportunity to pick this highly respected man's brain. One of the many questions I asked was about the Balkans. Baker replied, "Just remember this, general, there are no Boy Scouts down there, one side is just as deceitful and murderous as the other, it all depends on which side has the upper hand at the moment. The Clinton folks haven't figured that out yet."

Q: Which of the two issues you described had the best outcome?

Boyd: Well, I suppose the drawdown disruptions naturally softened over time. The processes to move people and equipment out of Europe became more efficient with practice, and on the German side, these are people who have overcome far worse disruptions in their recent history with good outcomes. Imagine what it is like to have your country virtually destroyed, then take a deep breath, and begin cleaning up the mess, rebuild all the means of production, establish a new government and, within 10 years, be a thriving economy again and, in 20 years, the economic powerhouse of Europe. The most unpleasant part for me, and I think for our ambassador in Bonn, Richard Holbrooke, was to negotiate the sale of our bases back to a buyer who knew we had to get rid of them regardless of the price, then take the criticism from our Congress for not recouping sufficient return.

Q: How about Bosnia?

BOYD: Bosnia was a sore that was not going to heal on its own in a way the Clinton Administration preferred. In short order, our intelligence organization, under Hayden's leadership, knew more about what was going on in Bosnia than anyone in the US government. This was maybe not so hard given that neither CIA nor DIA had any assets on the ground anywhere in Bosnia or in Serbia or Croatia for that matter. On one occasion I got a call from CJCS Colin Powell early in the afternoon. He asked whether I had anyone on the ground in Bosnia. I said, "Not at the moment." He said, "I'm joining Jim Woolsey (Director of CIA) for breakfast, and I want to let him know we have more intelligence capability there than he does. Maybe I can shame him into putting some capability there too." I said, "I'll have a couple there before dark," and I did.

Q: What else was going on in your area at this time?

BOYD: Sadly, a terrible blow to our family. In March of '93, Milc and I took an executive physical together at Ramstein AB, the best military medical facility in Europe, leaving with a clean bill of health. In May she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Eleven months later we lost her.

During those 11 months my daughter Jessica, in college in Alabama, absorbed the blow alone with only phone calls from her father. Son Dallas was with me in Stuttgart but alone much of that period between diagnosis and loss, as I was trying to run a command in Europe and Africa, while spending as much time as possible with my wife hospitalized at Walter Reed in Washington. The toll on that 16-17 year-old, was heavy. He went from being an A student to failing grades, a truant at times, with no one to console him at home in my absences but our family dog, Kaiser. Denny Sauer, a trusted Marine NCO and good friend and his wife took the initiative, unasked, to take him under their wing. We had a house staff, of course, to take care of his basic needs plus security outside. Still, it was a very tough time. The effect on both of my children, now thriving adults, is not evident but surely there.

Q: What effect did this family tragedy have on you and EUCOM?

BOYD: On the latter, little I think. The numerous Atlantic crossings that year consumed every last measure of me—between my wife and my responsibilities in Europe—though I believe no one could notice any effect on the Command. On me, there was exhaustion and depression, measured by my personal staff to have bottomed 40 days following Milc's death before a quick climb back to full, apparent health.

Q: Can we go back to where your narrative left off before your wife's death?

BOYD: Yes of course. Disruptions from the drawdown and Bosnia aside, the former Warsaw Pact countries were still reeling from the collapse of the Soviet Union, happy to be free from their old masters, but uncertain just how to put together something new and

viable, governmentally, economically, culturally, militarily. We at EUCOM could not be very helpful with most of their rebuilding, but we could with the military piece.

Before my arrival, the idea had emerged to build a school at Garmisch-Partenkirchen and to call it the Marshall Center. The exact mission was not altogether clear, something about re-educating former Warsaw Pact military officers. Resources had been committed to the project, but not much else. This struck me at first as something like the re-education North Vietnam had imposed on South Vietnam. But after thinking about it a bit, I decided we could make something good out of it. All we needed was to decide exactly what the mission was to be, then put some drive into it.

One of the wonderful things about the military is that when the big boss, in this case the four-star, gets interested in something, lots of other folks get really interested, too. In short order we had a mission: to teach field grade officers the essential structure of a modern military service operating under civilian control in a democratic society. No generals would be allowed to attend; too late for them to change. I hired a fine classics scholar I had come to admire during my AU days who had a particular interest in the evolution of military leadership over the centuries beginning with the ancient Greeks. He developed the curriculum, hired the faculty and became the first Director. We raised the flag in early June, 1993.

Q: Does that school still exist?

BOYD: Yes, though I think it has evolved somewhat, just as those former Warsaw Pact countries have evolved. But I think all would agree, it was the right school, as developed, for the time. I should add that we developed all manner of small military training teams to help those countries with modern maintenance systems, communications systems, etc. What we quickly learned was that none of those militaries had anything like a professional NCO corps—just like the old Soviet military.

I called the NCO in charge of the AF NCO Academy at AU, the finest NCO I had ever met, to ask if he could identify top NCOs in each of the other three Services, close to his own prominence. He replied, "Yes, but to what purpose?" I said, “I would like to bring those four to Europe to spend a month or 6 weeks in Eastern Europe teaching those military Services how to develop a professional NCO corps." He said, "Sure, I’ll put it together." I then called each of the Service Chiefs who all agreed, and within a couple of weeks those guys were making their way from country to country with a detailed, structured program and how to execute it. By the way, the AF NCO whom I contacted first, Chief Master Sergeant Ray White, with two Master’s degrees and a PhD, is now the Executive VP at Troy State University in Alabama.

Q: Anything else you were doing in Eastern Europe?

BOYD: One other significant thing beyond traveling to the various countries to take the measure of the senior people, military and civilian, on the work we were doing for them and on whatever
other help we might provide. The other significant thing was to bring in a former JAG from the Navy and specialist in the appeals process of the UCMJ. I asked her to come to Europe and teach classes in the various FWP countries on developing judicial systems for their military Services similar to the UCMJ—something none of them ever had.

Q: You mentioned Africa earlier. What were your responsibilities there?

BOYD: I had evacuation responsibilities for all US diplomatic communities throughout Africa. In case of natural disasters, wars, coup d'état, etc.—where our diplomats and their families were at risk—it was our job to go after them and get them to safety. All security assistance programs, arms sales and their support in the various African countries were managed by EUCOM as well.

Q: Did you do any evacuations during your tour?

BOYD: No, but I did provide all the ambassadors with satellite telephones so they could contact EUCOM if they were in trouble, and all other communication systems were down in their countries.

The Rwanda crisis, in the summer of 1994, became our responsibility for a humanitarian intervention following the Clinton Administration's painfully extended indecision. We watched the genocide campaign expand to epic dimensions, inquiring almost daily up our chain if we should be preparing for any contingencies, and each time were told to stand by, the White House is thinking. Finally, when the massacre reached its apex—with thousands, tens of thousands of refugees collected around Goma, Zaire, suffering from a huge outbreak of cholera—we were released to help.

We swung into action, first sending a three-star and troops with specialized skills to set up a Joint Task Force HQ at Goma. Next, we marshalled C-5s loaded with water purification equipment, huge bulldozers, and other equipment. Initially, the French-controlled airport could not manage the offload of such large aircraft—taking nearly a day to offload one C-5 while other planes circling overhead waiting to land ran low on fuel and had to return to other airports to refuel.

What followed was beautiful to see. Our JTF commander went to the French commander and said, "We're in charge of this airport now." He had a C-5 with proper ground handling equipment inbound, put an AF chief master sergeant in charge of all airport operations and, in short order, was offloading a C-5 in 30 minutes and taking off with another C-5 already on final approach. At the time our people took charge, there were 2500 to 3500 people per day dying of cholera. In less than a week, that number was reduced to between 100-200. All we needed was to have the President make a decision, then get out of the way.

Q: As you're in Europe dealing with your personal issues along with all these air forces, you were representing the only air force that really had a successful modern experience. None of the allies had much occasion to use their air force in combat, right?

BOYD: Certainly, none of the other air forces in the Alliance had air capability similar to ours. But that was not a practical issue during my time at EUCOM. The only air operations of any consequence during my tour were to maintain the "No Fly Zone" over Northern Iraq and the humanitarian airlift operation over Bosnia that we set up and maintained. In the first instance, that No Fly Zone had been established following Gulf War I to protect the Kurds from Saddam Hussain. Three nations participated: the UK, France, and the US. In terms of command and control, this was an odd arrangement since EUCOM had responsibility only for US forces in Europe, not forces in these other countries. Sometime prior to my time, an arrangement was agreed upon for this operation to be run by EUCOM, but without command over the aircraft of the other two nations.

This worked fine until we asked the other two to do something they didn't want to do. In that case the disagreement became a national one and fell into my lap to resolve. I would take the problem to the two defense chiefs and our CJCS and work to find a resolution. In the case of the Bosnian airlift operations, Germany joined the above two for part of the time I was there. The mission was simple: dropping humanitarian goods, food, medicines, blankets to Bosniacs trapped in Srebrenica and other locations by Serbs.

The only interesting thing that stands out in my memory was that, in the beginning, Serbs objected loudly to this operation, claiming we were dropping weapons and other combat gear. So, I made a proposal that the three ethnic groups send a representative to Rhein Main to inspect each cargo load before takeoff to ensure that only humanitarian goods were onboard. I further offered that we would pay for their lodging and a per diem fee for food and other necessities.

When the Croat, Serb, and Bosniac arrived, they would not speak to one another—would not even look at each other. The hatred was manifest. After a while, with no thawing of tension, one of the AF captains, a C-130 pilot, invited all three to his quarters, along with numerous other air crew members and their wives, for an outdoor cookout with hamburgers, beer, etc. In this environment all three were reserved, but still would not speak to each other. The following weekend, another guy from the squadron repeated this social event, and yet another event followed that. When I talked to the squadron commander a couple of months later, he told me all three had become friends—not just socializing when invited to an American's quarters, but going to the swimming pool together, playing tennis, etc.—ethnic hatreds completely gone. Aircrew members: unintentional diplomats.

Q: That's a great story, and there must be many more in your memory log. Any more issues during your time at Stuttgart that you'd like to share?

BOYD: The final 15 months of the tour following Milc's death took a subtle shift for me. I devoted more time to my son, neglected during the previous year as you've heard. I developed a slightly different perspective on my own health. Watching my wife, a woman of robust health, decline so rapidly made me less certain of my own indestructibility. I had looked tough odds in the face numerous times in my life, always ducking them with confidence. That confidence was now frayed a bit.

I addressed both issues with more biking—especially with Dallas. I had my bike brought to work so I could ride it back to my quarters at the end of the day, a 45-minute trip, with some good climbing involved. Dallas and I took two tours during that 15 months. One started in Burgundy and went down the Rhone Valley ending at the Mediterranean. The following year we rode from Bordeaux up the west coast of France to the English Channel, on to Dunkirk, and back down to Paris. We rode into the heart of Paris on a Saturday night—against the advice of the US Embassy, the French Air Force, and the Gendarmerie—got off our bikes, and gave each other high-fives.

As for my command responsibilities, I took two trips to Africa, which I had earlier neglected, covering half our AOR countries on each trip. The drawdown of forces in Europe, which had demanded much of my time in the beginning, slowed toward the end as we reached close to our objective of 109,000. That drawdown brought no joy to me, an old cold warrior and Europhile. While I recognized the world was changing and our force requirements with it, I remembered my comfort with 326,000 first-class forces surrounding me in a safe and stable Europe.

After building a fine intelligence capability—the best in our country on the Balkans—with strong supporting evidence for our resistance to getting US forces involved in Bosnia, we lost the argument when our SecDef, Bill Perry, went to the NATO Defense Ministers meeting in August of '94 arguing to commit NATO air forces to restart a conflict which had essentially ended earlier in the summer. The results were not consistent with US preferences. I, and most people I knew, who understood the history of the South Slavs, had supported the Vance-Owens Plan for the cantonization of Bosnia to reduce ethnic conflict, or eliminate it, as had been done in Switzerland so successfully long ago. Those in our government who had fashioned our Bosnia policy were informed by a multicultural ideology believing that all people would see the benefits of multicultural integration following a few F-16 airstrikes.

My tour in EUCOM drew to a close with a certain poignancy, hard to describe, but strongly felt, even if not evident to those about me. First, it meant the end of a career that was deeply embedded in my soul. Douglas MacArthur said of his uniform, "It is the symbol of my life. Whatever I have done that really matters, I've done while wearing it." Lacking his eloquence, I'll let him speak for my feeling.

I was 57 years old, strong, healthy, and, I believe, wise. I made few mistakes at this point, I'd made them all before and learned from them. I knew how to lead men and women. Some of it I think I was born with, the rest I'd learned from the best. I had learned how to

move and improve very large institutions. I'd learned how to get the military and civilian arms of government working toward a common goal. I'd learned how to work closely with allies and even, sometimes, with putative adversaries. To have reached mandatary retirement, with so much more to give, troubled me—a feeling hard to shake.

I had left some tracks at EUCOM as I always had in past assignments, but fewer, I felt, in this one. This was partly because a big ship is hard to turn in a short time. More, though, because I was a deputy, constrained with time wasted on having to explain my intentions, when speed always gets more done.

Last, and the one that bit the hardest, was that I was never going to have a regional command of my own, or be a Service Chief, or the Chairman. I had made up a lot of distance in my career after having fallen 10 years behind in prison and in school, but not quite enough.

In the last few years, I had lost my wife and, as I retired, believed—wrongly as it turned out —that it would mean giving up being a pilot, my passion since childhood. All in all, it was not a happy time.

AFTER THE AIR FORCE (1995)

Q: Well, I guess briefly, what have you done with yourself since then?

BOYD: The immediate aftermath was one in which Newt Gingrich, then the Speaker of the House, asked me to come work with him. I said, "To do what?" He said, "Well, to help bring about the revitalization of the country." And I said, "Would you care to be a little more specific about that?"

What he really wanted me to do was to help think through the strategic opportunities of the Republican Party. I said, "Well, I won't work on a staff, and I won't run one; I'm done with that. If you can figure out a way that I can be in the civilian sector outside of government and still be helpful to you, I'll do that." He put me in a 501(c)(4)—a type of non-governmental organization—called the Congressional Institute. That's where I resided, but I spent at least part of the day with him on the Hill. He wanted me in every meeting on a daily basis with the Republican leadership of the Congress, and he wanted me to travel with him on virtually every trip he made through the election of 1996.

I did that for a couple of years but found it very dissatisfying. I liked Gingrich, but I was not having any significant influence; I was wasting my time. So, I told him I didn't want to do that anymore. He thought about that for a bit, then said, "You have to be involved, or have some kind of a role in government, lest your experience, talent and perspective is wasted."

So, he went to President Clinton with a proposal to form a blue-ribbon commission to examine the nation's security apparatus in a comprehensive way—something that had not been done since the National Security Act of 1947. While incremental changes had been made over the years, no President had called for a comprehensive look to see if we were properly structured for the Post- Cold War environment, or for the coming century. It needed to be done. This was to become the US Commission on National Security/21st Century (aka Hart-Rudman Commission).

I doubt that Clinton found the idea particularly interesting, but some kind of tradeoff took place I presume, and he agreed to it. Moreover, at some point, and I don't know how or when, Gingrich said to Clinton, "We need to get a guy named Boyd to run it." Clinton had met me on a couple of occasions, but I doubt he remembered; he was simply giving Newt anything he wanted. While I had agreed earlier to run it, it was only with certain conditions: one, that I would write the charter, two I would design the process by which the commissioners were to be chosen, and three, I would have sole authority on hiring and firing of staff. Gingrich agreed, and probably never bothered to ask Clinton.

I wrote the Charter, directing three separate products to be delivered: 1) Determine what kind of world we will be living in 25 years from now, 2) Develop a national security strategy relevant to that world and, 3) Define necessary changes to the current national security structure in order to execute the strategy in #2 effectively—i.e. Defense, State, and Treasury Departments, CIA and FBI. Next, I devised a process by which to choose commissioners. I would prepare a menu listing prominent Democrats and Republicans from which the trio of SecDef, SecState and the President's National Security Advisor would select seven from each Party.

Q: How was this commission to be funded? Did you have to go to Congress?

BOYD: Good questions. Clinton tasked Secretary Cohen at Defense to establish the Commission under the Federal Advisory Commission Act, thus making us legal. He also told Cohen to fund us. One of Cohen's people asked me to prepare a budget proposal, which I did, whereupon a negotiation began. After a fight I got $10.4M. Fast forward to February 2001 when I briefed the new Secretary, Don Rumsfeld on our product. I said, "This may be an historic moment. I am delivering my contracted product on time, over spec and under budget. I'm giving you back $1.8M."

Q: Indeed, that surely must have been a first at the Pentagon. So, how did this all work?

BOYD: Extremely well. Aside from my best times in the military, this was one of the most intellectually satisfying times in my life. The commissioners, with a couple of exceptions, were terrific. The co-chairs, Warren Rudman, and Gary Hart, were superb, beyond compare.
I built a staff of 50 full- and part-time members—military, foreign service, intelligence officers, scholars from various disciplines, plus young interns in or freshly out of graduate schools—all amazingly excited with what we were doing and having fun doing

it. In the first phase, we held numerous conferences bringing in all manner of experts, scholars, and futurists to help us think about the next 25 years. We visited 28 countries around the world with entre from our embassies to meet with presidents, prime ministers, defense, foreign and finance ministers, senior military officers, business leaders, members of the press, and police. All knew what we were trying to do and seemed eager to tell us where their countries or regions were likely to be over the next quarter century. We wrote papers internally as we absorbed this flood of new ideas and perspectives then debated until we found consensus. We met quarterly with our Commissioners in the beginning, then every other month, finally once a month in the final year as they became more and more deeply interested and involved.

At the outset, in 1998, Clinton and Gingrich intended the results of our labors to be a gift to the next President, whomever that might be. That person would not be encumbered by devotion to existing policies or existing institutional practices. The idea was to give a new President some genuinely new and non-partisan options. Well, it turned out that the new President and his Vice were not interested in the gift. The Vice President's wife had served on the Commission for a while and left in a huff—which may have had something to do with White House disinterest.

Q: There must be a story behind that …?

Boyd: Yes, as Paul Harvey used to say, "Now, for the rest of the story." As the commission's executive director, I was determined from the outset to keep our work nonpartisan. I told the commissioners, at our first meeting, that if there was a hint of partisan bias, our study would have no value at the end. Lynne Cheney wanted it to be …

Q: She's probably one of the most partisan …

BOYD: Absolutely.

Q: And very effective.

BOYD: Well, she was not effective in this environment because I was not tolerating it and she ended up disliking me, I'm sure. She tried to get the Republicans on her side, contacting them individually. But none sided with her so she resigned. After the President and the Vice President declined our brief, the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and the National Security Advisor did receive it, with mild interest. But the message was: if the President and the Vice President are not interested, neither are we.

It was a pity because we produced a serious, high-quality product with an insightful set of 50 major recommendations for organizational reform. The leading seven had to do with catastrophic terrorism as a new security threat to the United States. Americans are going to die on their own soil, we said, perhaps in large numbers, and these are the things we need to do to prepare for that.

So here we are, we have a labor of love produced by a fine group of commissioners aided by a superlative staff. If you look back at the history of many blue-ribbon commissions, with important names associated, you find that the prominent people often didn't attend the meetings but signed off on the thing anyway. That was not the way this one worked. On the 11th day of the following September the wisdom of our thinking became apparent.

As a side note, we did have a press rollout of our results and recommendations. Nobody from the press of any importance came. It was pretty sad. But at about noon on the day of the 9/11 attacks, I got a call from someone at the *Washington Post* asking would I write an op-ed for tomorrow's paper. I said, "You son of a bitch, you didn't come to the rollout, but you knew who to call, didn't you?" I was furious, because I believed then, and I still believe today, that had we been taken seriously when the report was released early in 2001, we would have had at least an even chance of preventing the disaster that befell us on 9/11. But I swallowed hard and wrote the op-ed anyway, and if you look up the September 12, 2001 edition of the *Washington Post* you'll see it. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2001/09/12/vulnerable-to-hate/488b9f4e-2d57-4e18-b5a8-7cf3283efde7/)

I closed the door on the Hart-Rudman effort; sad, but also proud. Sometimes in life very good things don't have very good endings. That's just the way it is.

CFR AND BENS (2001)

Q: So, what's your next mountain to climb?

BOYD: Not much of a mountain, but something new. After we finished Hart-Rudman, Les Gelb, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, who had been one of the 14 commissioners, asked me to run the Council's Washington office. I agreed but soon Les began to help me run it—gratuitous help. I count it as my fault for not recognizing at the outset that this was a deputy job, not one in which I was the boss.

A bit before, as the Bush '43 people were putting together the new administration, Brent Scowcroft called to see if he could nominate me to be the new Deputy Secretary of Defense. It took me no more than a second or two to say no. Taken aback, he said, "Why not?" "I'm through with being a deputy," I said, "but thanks for asking."

As I was looking for a way to gracefully leave the CFR job, a convenient offer came in to be the President and CEO of an organization called BENS, Business Executives for National Security. I did some quick research and found BENS to be an organization devoted to offering the business experience, proven practices and acumen of successful business leaders to the Department of Defense for the purpose of improving efficiencies in that storied institution. The organization, its purpose and people looked good and so I quietly moved from CFR to BENS.

Q: Did that turn out to be a better fit?

BOYD: Absolutely. It is a membership organization of those who bring their knowledge to the table, from which the staff finds applications to shaky practices in DoD and other national security agencies. I found good people to start, in membership, staff, and on the Board, and it became my immediate goal to make those three components even better. To brag just a bit, I recruited Jeff Bezos of Amazon, Fred Smith of FedEx, Hank Greenberg of AIG, and many more—less prominent, but high-value individuals.

I decided it would be of useful to take members to locations around the world where the US has significant security interests. Over the years I took members to most of the countries of Eastern Europe, West and East Africa, plus three trips to the Horn of Africa. Wars were going on at the time, so I took small but hardy groups to Iraq seven times, Afghanistan four times, and Pakistan twice. As sort of my last hurrah, I managed to get an official visit for a small delegation to North Korea—the only trip of its kind ever to occur up to that time.

Q: That's amazing, must have been fascinating.

BOYD: Yes, my whole time at BENS was fascinating, a wonderful organization, wonderful people, and interesting mission and many successes. Maybe the best among the good things that happened during those years was that I married a woman who brought happiness and stability to my life, that had been missing for the 12 years following the loss of my first wife. An accomplished, and interesting woman, Jessica Mathews, improved my life in more ways than I can count.

I stepped down from BENS January 1, 2010. I remained on some boards, but I gradually stepped down from all of those except for the Center for the National Interest, another fine organization where I have been a member of the board now for many years and Chairman for the last six. That's my last footprint in the world of foreign and national security policy and I am looking for a new chairman to replace me as we speak.

***

Q: Well, you have had a fascinating and productive career. I must say I'm very impressed. You have *used your time in this world well.*

BOYD: Well, thank you. It's been a good ride, but I never thought of my life as being particularly remarkable, only as being fortunate. I'm with Frost, "I took the road less traveled by, and that made all the difference." In 1960, somewhere between 1200-1500 young men wanted, and were privileged to become, Air Force pilots and a small fraction of those became fighter pilots. I remember with clarity driving my brand-new

Volkswagen Beetle down the Salt River Canyon in Arizona toward Luke Air Force base where I was on my way to learn to fly the F-100 and all the skills of the fighter pilot that went with it. I said out loud to myself, “I wouldn’t trade jobs with any son-of-a-bitch in the world." That thought never changed.

There was a speed bump or two along the way, but the institution kept me viable until I got on my feet again. Then, others senior to me watched as I gained momentum and opened new opportunities for me—each bigger than the last. That farm boy from Iowa cum Aviation Cadet found himself in a world he never could have imagined in the beginning, but once there, knew this was exactly where he belonged.

So, with a salute to the Air Force and to others, from teachers, flight instructors, fellow warriors in combat, POWs and a trainload of others, junior and senior who helped me along the way, thanks for the help and the memories.

End of interview