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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY
PROGRAM INTERVIEW OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RETIRED)
ARTHUR J. GREGG**

BY

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United States Army**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM INTERVIEW OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RETIRED) ARTHUR J. GREGG.

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: Executive Summary: Senior Officer Oral History Program Interview of Lieutenant General (Retired) Arthur J. Gregg.

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 7 APRIL 1997 PAGES 18 CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

This paper summarizes information provided by Lieutenant General (Retired) Arthur J. Gregg, during interviews conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey R. Earley in January and February 1997, as part of the U.S. Army War College / U.S. Army Military History Institute Senior Officer Oral History Program. The summary presents a brief overview of LTG Gregg's life and career. The focus of the summary concerns the importance he placed on values, ethics, selfless service, and discipline during his 35 year career. Citing examples from his career, the author provides insight into physical courage, vision and direction LTG Gregg gave to the U.S. Army. LTG Gregg also provides an interesting perspective on race and gender relations during his active duty tenure. The transcript of the interviews is in the archives of the U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013-5008.

Lieutenant General Arthur J. Gregg, U.S. Army Retired, stands out in contemporary military history as a role model that we should all try to emulate. His thirty five years of active duty as an enlisted soldier, noncommissioned officer, and commissioned officer are filled with examples of effective leadership without being a tyrant; of personal and institutional barriers that were hurdled without complaint; and focus on long range goals and objectives that would have lasting effect on the soldier and his family. I recently had the privilege of conducting the Senior Officer Oral History Interview with Lieutenant General Gregg. The transcripts of these interview sessions are available at the Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.¹

The purpose of this paper is to provide a glimpse of one of the outstanding military logisticians of this century. In addition, his insights into the logistical revolution in military affairs, based on his vision and foresight, are critical elements into how the Army and other services support and sustain themselves. Basic ideas and concepts developed in the late 1970's and early 1980's are coming to fruition today and in the near term future. Some of these major issues which he orchestrated or advocated are: common business practice application in the Post Exchange and Commissary systems, the implementation of velocity management and intransit visibility, reduction or elimination of on hand inventories, increased requirements for fast sealift and maximization of host nation and contract logistical support.

As a minority officer, serving in the Army during the racially turbulent times of the 1950's and 1960's, he was subjected to some acts of discrimination and unfair treatment. My assessment on his recounting these incidents is that he viewed them as minor setbacks and they were not to interfere with his personal and professional long

range goals and objectives. He knew quite early in life he wanted to be a soldier and nothing would dissuade him from that goal. Later, he counted these experiences as “lessons learned” and not for use as a platform to promote racial or gender advantages. “Dignity and respect for all” were, and are still the words he lives by. He remains to this day the same unpretentious, selfless individual that he was on active duty, and would prefer someone else shine in the limelight. It must be emphasized that this paper is not a result of Lieutenant General Gregg’s personal encouragement.

Arthur James Gregg was born 11 May 1928, in a rural area approximately 10 miles from Florence, South Carolina. It was there he received his elementary and religious education as well as the foundation of his values. His high school education was conducted in Newport News, Virginia where he lived with his eldest brother and his family. It was here that Arthur Gregg became impressed by the military through observation of the massive shipyard operations and the thousands of World War II soldiers and sailors who were stationed in the area. After high school he ventured off to Chicago to be trained as a laboratory technician. He got a job at a local hospital after completion of training, but soon returned to Virginia because he was not allowed to handle white patients. At 17 years old, with the necessary waivers, Arthur Gregg and his best friend enlisted in the Army. After completing one half of the training cycle, Private Arthur Gregg became the unit supply sergeant. His first duty assignment was to Germany as a medical laboratory technician. There were no openings for a medical laboratory technician so he was recruited to become the unit supply sergeant of a Quartermaster truck company. These two unit supply sergeant positions would shape

his career as a logistician. Arthur Gregg applied and was accepted for Officer Candidate School after three and one half years of military service and attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant. It was the experience of basic training and officer candidate school that shaped Arthur Gregg as a leader.

In 1950, while attending the Quartermaster Officer Basic Course at Ft. Lee, Virginia, the class prepared logistical plans using logistics Field Manual 101-10. This manual was a guide to what unit missions could be accomplished through the use of planning factors, tables and graphs. The manual made distinctions of unit capability using race as a factor. If the unit was a white unit its capability was X. If your unit was a black unit commanded by a white officers it was rated as Y. If the unit was black and commanded by black officers the capability was Z. Lieutenant Gregg and his other classmates readily dismissed any differences, moved on and did not recognize any distinction among units in any logistical programs. Arthur Gregg never again had contact with such misrepresentation, but if he had, he would have dismissed it as ridiculous as he and his basic class had done.

Because of his academic excellence and demonstrated leadership abilities as operations officer in the school brigade, Second Lieutenant Gregg was promoted to First Lieutenant ahead of his contemporaries.

In 1953, Lieutenant Gregg was assigned to the 403rd Quartermaster Depot, Korea, as the Troop Information and Education Officer. He also coordinated the Depot's Armed Forces Assistance to Korea program. While serving in the 3rd Infantry Division sector he supported French and Greek units as well as U.S. Forces. During a courtesy

call from a French supply officer who was redeploing with his entire unit to Vietnam. The French officer stated as he was departing, "I will see you in Vietnam". This prediction was more significant than either officer realized. Following his Korean tour in 1954, Lieutenant Gregg became Post Quartermaster, Camp Hakata, Japan. He was promoted to captain and assumed command of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, where his primary duty was to phase out Army activities and functions at that post.

Returning from Japan in 1956, Captain Gregg served as an advisor to several Army Reserve units in Pennsylvania. The units he advised were a quartermaster group, an armored battalion, and a military police battalion. Following this assignment, he attended the Quartermaster Advance Course at Ft. Lee, Virginia. In his Advance Course of 50 officers, six went on to become general officers; still a record for a single Quartermaster Advance Course.

In November 1959, Captain Gregg was assigned to the 95th Quartermaster Battalion in Nuernberg, Germany. He first served as the Commander, 3764th Quartermaster Direct Support Company and later as battalion operations officer. The unit was in a geographical support role to VII Corps. He spent a great deal of time and effort to develop and nurture host nation support and asset agreements and relationships. Although this concept was not new, Captain Gregg was certainly proactive in implementing its use, thereby ensuring that the units he supported would have all necessary resources to accomplish their mission.

After graduating from the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and attaining a Bachelor of Science Degree (Summa Cum Laude) from near-by Saint Benedict College in 1965, the Gregg's moved to Washington, DC. He was assigned to the Army Materiel Command (AMC). He served as a logistics plans officer and later as the assistant secretary of the General Staff. During this assignment, Major Gregg participated in developing "push packages" of supplies, equipment, and ammunition to the emerging theater of Vietnam. AMC theory was not to wait for units to requisition what was required but to determine their requirements for them and "push" the supplies forward. The supply unit on the other end would receive and distribute the supplies and equipment to the line units and soldiers. In later years it was learned this Washington policy did not accurately satisfy demands and requirements in the combat zone. In many cases, severe overages of line items were on hand. Consumption rates were far less in most commodities than anticipated. Compounding this problem was the speed in which parts and supplies arrived in country. Receiving units received so much that they became overwhelmed. Supplies and equipment were stacked up everywhere and many items lost identity and visibility. It was a mammoth job to identify parts and adjust inventory to accurately reflect what was available to sustain the troops in the field. That policy was less than perfect became clear as Lieutenant Colonel Gregg turned down a school assignment to the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia to move to Ft. Riley, Kansas, where in January 1966, he assumed command of the 96th Quartermaster Direct Support Battalion with orders to deploy the unit to Vietnam. The battalion was posted to Cam Rahn Bay and became burdened with the re-

sponsibility of receiving the “push packages” for which he had helped develop the policy and procedure for in his previous assignment. In 1967 the battalion became one of the largest in the U.S. Army with a strength of more than 3,700 soldiers. The battalion was awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation and LTC Gregg was awarded the Legion of Merit for their outstanding effort and achievement in dealing with the logistical nightmare confronting them. That Legion of Merit is the decoration that gives him the greatest sense of pride and accomplishment. It was during these frustrating days that caused General Gregg to advocate the theory and practice of “ In Transit Visibility,” a major transportation and supply program of today.

Lieutenant General Gregg on his command philosophy: “My command philosophy was not unique. I believe in exercising strong leadership, use the chain of command, be very quick to recognize and reward excellence. I also believe very strongly of having continued presence and as a result of that I typically spent very little time in the command post. I believe that constant presence with the troops made a difference since they were very good soldiers and officers and we routinely worked twelve hour days, seven days a week. Command presence among the troops had the effect of reassuring them and their efforts were being recognized as important and there was a sharing of this great demand on them.”

Lieutenant General Gregg on the racial climate : “It was extremely good in my battalion . We did not have one known racial incident during the 18 months I commanded the battalion... and there was a lot of stress being that everyone was just thrown together. The environment was one that we all could have had some racial

problems. But I believe that the spirit of that battalion, the discipline, and the sense of mission just kept everybody consumed and focused on getting the job done and we did not have a race problem. I believe that was generally true of the Army in the middle 1960's. The climate began to change in the later part of the 1960's, especially 1967, 1968, and 1969. Two things were taking place then. One was the great civil rights movement back in the United States. You became emotionally caught up in the civil rights movement as most Americans were and it was important to us how that was being played out. *But most importantly in my opinion we lost discipline in the Army!* The cumulative effect of the draft, of the short term mentality, of drugs, or the rapid turn over of people in our units, All of these things contributed to the bottom line and that in my view is we lost discipline in the Army. When we lost discipline we saw the racial incidents and the other negative attributes brought on by the loss of discipline. "

Lieutenant Colonel Gregg returned to the United States in May 1967 to attend the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks Pennsylvania. Upon graduation he was assigned to the Joint Petroleum Office, Logistics Directorate, United States European Command, where he had primary responsibility for interface between U.S. and NATO petroleum logistics. In this capacity, LTC Gregg gained experience in international relations, inter-governmental agency coordination, environmental, and community relations. This experience gave him the tools to later on in his career operate effectively in the political, joint, and service staff arenas. He again maximized efforts in the plans and use of multinational host nation support agreements and resources. These tools he utilized built the foundation of all future logistical plans and operations he orchestrated.

In February 1970, he assumed command of the Nahbollenbach Army Depot, Idar-Oberstein, Germany. In October 1970, Colonel Gregg coordinated the consolidation and merger of the combined Nahbollenbach - Giessen Depot. The depot system provided depot level supply and maintenance support on a geographical basis. Four companies of approximately 800 officers and soldiers operated the depot along with a large German civilian workforce. At this point in the Army, Colonel Gregg stated: "I devoted more time to disciplinary problems with the 800 soldiers in the depot system than I did dealing with 3,700 soldiers in Vietnam. I spoke earlier about the loss of discipline in the Army. I was greatly impacted by that fact in 1970-71. The fallout of the lack of discipline was present with us as well, to include a significantly charged racial environment, to include a rather significant use of drugs. These conditions perhaps taxed my leadership more than any other experience I've had to deal with. Soldiers might differ on timing, but I don't think there is any question about loss of discipline in the 1970's and not being turned around until well into the 1980's. This presented a challenge for all of us!" In October 1972, Arthur J. Gregg was promoted to Brigadier General.

Lieutenant General Gregg on transition from senior field grade to general officer:

"If you really do your job as lieutenant Colonel and as a Colonel in the Army, the transition to general officership is just not that great. In terms of the way you carry yourself, the way you view and the way you perform your job. I suppose some the hurdles I had dealt with, a much expanded area of responsibility, understanding what your responsibilities are, setting priorities, and managing those priorities so that you can achieve the desired results. That was a change. The other change is how I related to other

general officers. You know you come up under a system where you just have so much respect for general officers, respect for their time, respect for their position that you tend to stand back and look upon them as a coach rather than a member of the team. I had a difficulty making that transition... seeing other general officers as members of my team.”

In April 1973, Brigadier General Gregg assumed command of the Army and Air Force Exchange System (AAFES), European Exchange System, Munich, Germany. It was not an assignment he sought and it was not considered “career enhancing,” but it gave General Gregg the chance to command a very large non-appropriated fund organization. Implementation of efficient business practices were required to make the Exchange System solvent and ensure it orientation on customer service. He immediately set out to reduce inventory, implement marketing and advertising techniques, and fulfill the needs of the European customer base. Although not required to do so, General Gregg volunteered to become the Community Commander of Munich. He did so to keep his finger on the pulse of the soldier, his family and other associated quality of life issues. He received a great deal of satisfaction and reflected back as this was one of the most enjoyable assignments of his career. At the same time he was commanding AAFES Europe, his peers were being promoted to major general and Brigadier General Gregg began to ponder whether his career had stalled. After General Gregg spent two years in command, General Blanchard, Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Europe tapped him to come to Heidelberg to become the Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics. Brigadier General Gregg readily accepted and shortly after assuming duty he was promoted to

Major General. As one of the most senior logistics general officers in the theater, General Gregg continued to promote and utilize host nation agreements and assets throughout the many nations of the geographic area. He diligently worked the concept into war plans and demanded the plans be tested during war games and major maneuver exercises.

General Gregg again put into practice the most effective ingredient of his command philosophy. That practice was to get out to the division and brigade locations to determine real need and requirements vice establishing requirements from the highest level of headquarters without subordinate unit input. He was most proud of getting division commanders to take an active role in their logistics readiness posture. The division commander who personified this trait was the 3rd Infantry Division Commander, Major General "Shy" Myer. General Myer went on to become the Chief of Staff of the Army.

While Deputy chief of Staff, Logistics in Europe, General Gregg developed a "strained" relationship with another senior officer. He states the relationship became strained because the two of them never satisfactorily resolved professional differences. The other officer was older and more senior, General Gregg commented: "I didn't have the maturity and skills to confront the situation and bring it to closure. Unfortunately this strain manifested itself throughout the remainder of both our Army careers." "The lesson learned here is that as officers, we cannot allow bad blood to occur and fester. When ever it occurs we just have to muster the maturity, skill, and leadership to sit

down and resolve professional differences so they don't become personal. If not resolved, the Army may feel the impact."

In May 1977, the President of the United States nominated General Gregg for assignment as the Director of Logistics, Organization of the Joint Chief's of Staff and approved his nomination to lieutenant general on 1 July 1977. General Gregg viewed this posting as a very powerful assignment. He immediately started on improving the logistics posture and readiness of the armed forces. He found out very quickly that it was a much more laborious and difficult task than he imagined. The roles of the joint staff members had not significantly developed prior to the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act. The joint staff did not have the authority, power and responsibility they operate with today. In his capacity as the J-4, he took on a major role in identifying requirements and funding for sealift. In concert with the Department of Commerce he had oversight responsibility for logistical requirements the industrial base would be depended on to produce to support major conflict. Previous experiences in the intra-governmental agency process became valuable as he coordinated and networked service issues into Department of Defense requirements and capabilities.

As the J-4, General Gregg describes his relationship with the service chiefs as "cordial but not close." His relationships with the regional commander's in chief "were good, but if I had to do it all over again I would have made a better effort to visit the commanders on their home turf." As a supporter, he felt direct dialog was essential to understand the essence of the war fighting commanders intent and end state.

In July 1979, Lieutenant General Gregg accepted his final assignment on active

duty. He attained the premier logistics position in the United States Army, that of Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics (DCSLOG). His most significant accomplishments as the Army DCSLOG were the increased effectiveness of his staff, Army wide improvement in supply performance, enhanced readiness, host nation support agreements and provisioning of small craft to support over-the-beach operations. As the DCSLOG, he did a better job than as the J-4, in opening communications channels to all Department of Defense logistics commands and agencies. He was devoted to establishing and articulating a clear focus and vision of what was truly required to support the Army.

One of the major battles fought and won by General Gregg was in the commissary system. The system is funded with appropriated dollars and thus is under frequent attack by Congress and the commercial grocery industry. General Gregg had to ensure efficient change was implemented in the commissary methods of operation to ensure this valuable soldier entitlement was rescued from the yearly budget reduction process. Lieutenant General Gregg is most proud of his uncompromising approach to “protecting” programs that are important to the soldier and his family. As the J-4 and the Army DCSLOG, he insisted legitimate requirements would not be artificially manipulated to match budgetary constraints.

Based on past relationships and his recognition that two thirds of the logistical support structure in the Army is in the reserve components, General Gregg was a major player in advocating improved manning and equipping of the U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard.

Another area which warranted a lot of attention from General Gregg as DCSLOG was the issue of order ship time. During his tenure, vast Army wide improvements were made to reduce the amount of time required for a requested piece of equipment or supplies to arrive at the requesting unit. This is also the one area he felt much more could have been accomplished, and are still discussed by various panels and logistical forums in which he participates.

Lieutenant General Gregg's greatest legacies are his duty as a logistics soldier, his development of subordinate leaders, the application of logistics as force multiplier, his untiring service to the Army and the nation and his sense of community with the soldier and his family. He is deeply rooted in his family. His only real regret is that he wished, as many senior leaders lament, he had spent more time with his wife of 46 years, Charlene, and his daughters, Sondra and Alicia.

As a senior strategic leader, General Gregg has served his country honorably and with great pride. Since his retirement in 1981 he has served on several boards, including the Association of the United States Army and the Quartermaster Association.

He is still teaching, mentoring and coaching young men and women through his participation in the ROTC program at Morgan State University in Maryland. He also periodically sits in an advisory role with the Commander, Army Materiel Command, the Army DCSLOG, and the J-4 of the Joint Staff.

Lieutenant General Gregg is one of the premier logisticians of the twentieth century. His direct, yet compassionate approach to leadership has served himself and others well throughout his career and life. His qualities, traits and values have enabled him to be extremely successful, rising to the highest levels of the U.S. Army while his feet remain firmly planted on the ground.

ENDNOTES

¹ All quotations are extracted from interviews conducted in January and February 1997. The interview transcript is being edited by LTG Gregg. LTG Gregg's revisions will be incorporated into the final transcript, which will be printed and deposited in the Archives, U.S. Army Military History Institute. At the time this paper was submitted, the interview transcript was not available for reference.