

Major General James H. Mukoyama Oral History Interview

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Interviewed by Brett Downey & Andrew Pritzker

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DOWNEY: I'm Brett Downey with the Pritzker Military Library and we're here talking with James H. Mukoyama, Major General in the United States Army. The first question is obviously the most important, where were you born and when?

MUKOYAMA: I was born in Chicago, Illinois on August 3rd, 1944.

DOWNEY: You were born in Chicago, were you born in a local hospital?

MUKOYAMA: In Chicago, St. Elizabeth's Hospital.

DOWNEY: St. Elizabeth?

MUKOYAMA: That's right.

DOWNEY: That's what started it. Your parents, how many siblings did you have?

MUKOYAMA: My parents, my father was born in Japan, he immigrated to the United States around 1918, my mother was born, my mother's parents, immigrated from Japan but she was born in Madison, Wisconsin about 1917, around that period of time. I have one sibling, an elder brother who's still alive...

DOWNEY: How much older?

MUKOYAMA: He's about seven years older than I am.

DOWNEY: What brought your father here, especially what brought him here to Chicago?

MUKOYAMA: That's an interesting story; my grandfather was already here in the United States. [W]e come from a rural area in Japan near Mt. Fuji, in fact our family name is Mukoyama, in Japanese yama means "mountain" and muko means "over there." I liked the poetic phrase, I say "yonder mountain" is how you translate it, but from our backyard you could see Mt. Fuji every day. [T]hat's the derivation of our name. My grandfather, now we were, we were relatively well to do because he was like a mayor of a village and when I say a village, there were four or five hamlets that would be a village, let's say, and he was like the mayor. Well what happened was he invested in the, what I would refer to as the Japanese futures market, I think it was sake, actually, and he lost the family, a lot of the family fortune, so to speak. [H]e decided that he was going to come to America to try to regain the family fortune and so he could come back, you know go back to Japan. [I]n 1901, my father, now keep in mind my father was born in 1900, in 1901 my grandfather comes to the United States. [M]y father really didn't know his father because my grandfather stayed here all of that time and then when my father became 18, 17 or 18 years old my grandmother said, "Go to the United States, [and] get your father send, him back." [T]hat's what my father did, my father came here

in 1918 and he basically found his father, he knew where his father was
my grandfather was in Omaha, Nebraska actually Kearney Nebraska...

DOWNEY: Kearney?

MUKOYAMA: Yes.

DOWNEY: That's a famous military town.

MUKOYAMA: And he was in charge of a gang of Japanese laborers, basically.

DOWNEY: Railroad, or?

MUKOYAMA: Actually, I think it was sugar beets, is what I was told.

DOWNEY: That would be the Union.

MUKOYAMA: [M]y father basically got him to go back to Japan after about a year and then my father just stayed here, that's how we, and then my father he was just a great guy, he was so, he was very unusual for Japanese of his generation. Most Japanese who came here to the United States around 1918, around that time, were somewhat laid back, subdued, but my father was a happy-go-lucky guy, he was only 18 years old and he just wanted to have fun and that's what he did, he didn't get married for 15 years. He travelled throughout the West, he went down to Mexico, he was in Mexico for five or six years, came up the Mississippi River Valley, wound up in Chicago in the late '20s early '30s. In fact we were among the first Japanese, my family, was to settle in the Chicago area.

DOWNEY: When did he actually settle in Chicago?

MUKOYAMA: He settled in Chicago in the early '30s.

DOWNEY: Early '30s?

MUKOYAMA: Right. Before World War II, because before World War II there weren't a lot of Japanese in Chicago, less than 400 I think, total, and then when World War II hit you had the concentration camps which are euphemistically referred to as relocation centers, but when they put all the, took all the Japanese, people of Japanese descent, off of the West coast and put them in these concentration camps in the inner part of the United States. [A]fter about three years they released people back into the interior of the United States and that's where the population here in Chicago just exploded, we went up to 25-30,000 I believe, at one time. It might have been more than that, Japanese Americans.

DOWNEY: Your father was not in a concentration camp, or in an internment camp?

MUKOYAMA: No my father was not but my mother's family was.

DOWNEY: Were they?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, they were in California at the time of World War II so they were all put into, they were put into Manzanar and so they were in camp, in fact I still have, it's one of my cherished mementoes, I have a framed... my grandmother did embroidery and she embroidered a crane, crane in Asian culture is long life, represents long life, and she did a beautiful embroidery of a crane while she was in camp and I still have that, so that's a keepsake, a family treasure.

DOWNEY: I would think so. What happened to that end of the family after Manzanar?

MUKOYAMA: [T]hen just like most of the people they were relocated out of, out of camps back into the interior here, they came to the Midwest, some people went to the East Coast, a lot of people came to the Midwest, especially Chicago because Chicago was had a place that had jobs, a lot of jobs. And then my father and the few Japanese that were here before the war, they set up what was called a resettler's organization and they helped these people coming out of camps, they found them apartments. You have to understand, these people were in camp for three years. Just imagine you've lost everything. Here's the scenario: it's Friday night, you're at home and you get a knock on your door and it's the local FBI agent, and he says on Monday morning be at the corner of State and Madison with two suitcases and be there, and that's it. You don't know where you're going. You don't know how long you're going to be there. And that's what happened to these people, basically they lost everything, just imagine if you're a businessman you can't run your business, you can't pay the mortgage on the house so you lose your house, I mean this thing goes on and on. [T]hat's what happened to these people. [N]ow they're in camp and the government says, "Okay, you can leave camp now, but you can't go back to California", they have to come back into the interior here.

DOWNEY: Start another life.

MUKOYAMA: Right, but they have nothing! Starting, some of them they have savings, they have bank accounts, but your income is gone. And then think about

this, you're 18 years old, let's say, right? And you were a senior in high school or you just graduated from high school and you're going to go to college or let's say you're a junior in college, you're now in these camps and you've committed no crime, you're in these camps because of your race, your ethnicity, because you're Japanese, you're a US, by the way there were 120,000 people put in these camps, two-thirds of whom were US citizens, okay. [T]hese are US citizens, committed no crime, it's just because of their race they're put in these camps and they can't leave and these camps, by the way, they have barbed wire fences around they have machine gun towers with Army guards and the machineguns are facing in, not out, and some people were actually shot and killed by guards. [T]his is our country, right? [N]ow you're there, you're 18 years old, your life in total, total disarray and the local Army recruiter comes and says, "I want you to go die for your country?" How would you feel about that? The good news is, is that...?

DOWNEY: You know these people, how *did* they feel about it? That's an interesting point.

MUKOYAMA: [I]t's a mixed bag obviously, there are a lot of people, who said, forget this, give me my freedom and I'll go fight. Others said because they were patriotic just like everybody else. Keep in mind these are US citizens, Japan had attacked us, we're at war. These guys wanted to go fight, when World War II hit every able bodied guy, I'm sure, wanted to go fight for

our country because we had been attacked, and that's what the Japanese Americans wanted to do, but they were classified as, I think it was 4-C, enemy aliens, so they were not able to, in fact guys who were serving at the time were discharged because...

DOWNEY: Really?

MUKOYAMA: Yes.

DOWNEY: Most of them were in, what, reserve units in Hawaii and these places or?

MUKOYAMA: [W]hat happened was, the way the 100th/442nd which was the 100th Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the way that was formed was, a couple years into the war the Army needed, they needed units and there had been this provisional unit in Hawaii from the University of Hawaii and to make a long story short they formed a provisional battalion and that was the 100th Battalion, basically, and they trained and then the government said, well they did so well in their training that they knew they had hit something good here because these guys were really, they were extremely good. They had guys that were first of all they were, which is something they're very proud of and very few people have noticed this is that they were highly educated because the Asian culture emphasizes education and that's how we were all taught when we were kids, to get your college degree and get your education, that's how you advance. Their parents all sacrificed for that, they all worked as farmers, laborers, whatever they had to do so they could send their kids to school

and so the average Japanese-American soldier was very highly educated and secondly they were highly motivated, they were motivated to prove to other so-called Americans that they were just as loyal as anyone else and that being American has nothing to do with your race or blood, it has to do with your being a citizen of the United States of America and they were out to prove that to everybody, because the only way they could prove it was to die, was to serve. Initially they were not given that opportunity, but then after a couple of years they needed these guys so they put out the call for volunteers and people from Hawaii who, by the way were not subjected to the camps like the major Japanese American populace in the United States in the mainland were, ok the people in Hawaii, keep in mind Hawaii was not a state at that time it was a territory, but they were US citizens, so they basically didn't have to go to camp in Hawaii, they couldn't because they were the majority in Hawaii, the Japanese, you can't put the majority in, your whole economy would just collapse right? So they asked for volunteers for this Regimental Combat Team from the mainland and from Hawaii and in Hawaii the response was just incredible, they had more than they could take and from the camps they got a lot of guys volunteering from the camps also, and so they formed this Regimental Combat Team.

DOWNEY: We'll probably get back to that later because you have an alliance with it later in life as we know, but let's get to some, you were born in Chicago on

the North Side and then you lived where? Where did you grow up as a child?

MUKOYAMA: [Y]es, I was very fortunate to grow up in Logan Square on the Northwest Side of Chicago at that time it was predominantly Polish, Italian, German, a great experience as a young person to grow up in that type of an environment; a very strong neighborhood in terms of everybody knew each other, we didn't lock our doors. We played in the street because not everybody had a car in those days; it was just a wonderful experience. [I] went to a local church, was involved in Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, my father was involved in the Chamber of Commerce, he had a business.

DOWNEY: What type of business?

MUKOYAMA: Yes he was, he owned a gift shop on Milwaukee Avenue, a place called *Little Six Corners* which is where you had most people who lived in that neighborhood remember Goldblatt's. Goldblatt's was there and that was Milwaukee Avenue, Kimball and Diversey was the intersection, it was called *Little Six Corners*, *Big Six Corners* is further up, Irving Park and Milwaukee Avenue, he had a retail gift shop, he sold things like lamps, dishes, ashtrays, shadowboxes, things like that, just a small retail. [I]t was a nice business, it provided for our family. We weren't rich by any means in fact I'd say we were probably, if you were rating economically, we were lower middle class, we never owned a home. We always rented, but we did have a car, but the most important thing was we had an intact nuclear

family; mother, father, grandparents lived with us which was a standard Asian tradition to have three generations in a house. I never felt poor, in fact I always felt pretty rich because of my family.

DOWNEY: Did you like Chicago? Did you like growing up in Chicago?

MUKOYAMA: Oh yes, I loved Chicago, in fact I loved Chicago so much, I've lived on the East Coast because of the Army. I've lived on the East Coast, I've lived on the West Coast, later on in life with jobs, I've travelled out to the East Coast and West Coast, but I've always lived in Chicago outside of the Army experience because I just love this area. I love the four seasons, people say it's extreme, but you deal with that and I love the four seasons because it's just the cycle of life, but more importantly I love the people in Chicago, are really very fine people and I think it's because of our Midwestern values. I love Chicago because of the ethnic neighborhoods, the diversity, you know as a minority when I grew up in Logan Square we were the only minority family in our neighborhood, at that time we were literally...

DOWNEY: You were the most, minority of the minorities.

MUKOYAMA: Yes, I went to Avondale Grade School, we had 900 kids there. My brother and I were the only minority, we literally had no African Americans or Hispanic Americans at that time there, my whole life I've just grown up with Caucasians and people, you know like I said Polish, Italian, German, Jewish people, my best, my best friend in grammar school was Jewish and

I played in a Jewish band when I was in high school.

DOWNEY: Let's go on to your high school, you went to a rather Polish high school.

MUKOYAMA: Yes I went to Schurz, Carl Schurz High School and that was a great experience, my activities in high school were, I was very active in all kinds of organizations, I did very well in high school by the way I was valedictorian of my class.

DOWNEY: You were?

MUKOYAMA: [T]hat wasn't so hard because I graduated from summer school, so the class is only 100 and something people and normally in those days in summer school, people went to summer school were not the crème of the crop and so it wasn't that hard, but no I did very well I was in honors classes throughout high school. I graduated in three and a half years. Everything in my whole life I've always been ahead of my age group, I graduated from grammar school in seven and a half years because I went to summer school a couple times, they wouldn't double promote me, they used to double promote people, but they didn't double promote me so I got a little frustrated so I just went to summer school and they had to graduate me and then I went to high school and I got out, I graduated high school in three and a half years and then when I went to the University...

DOWNEY: Which university?

MUKOYAMA: I went to University of Illinois.

DOWNEY: Down state?

MUKOYAMA: No I started at Navy Pier.

DOWNEY: Okay.

MUKOYAMA: Because I couldn't afford, I had to take out two government loans and I played in two bands, one was the Polish band another was in a Jewish band, so I played for Polish weddings or I played for Bar Mitzvahs, so I was...

DOWNEY: You had a good time.

MUKOYAMA: Yes I had a lot of fun, but I went to Navy Pier for two years, that was before they had the University of Illinois at Chicago. And they had the University of Illinois at Navy Pier, but only the freshman and sophomore years because they hadn't built the Circle Campus yet, in order to get your bachelor's degree you had to go to Urbana for your junior and senior year. But it was great, the Navy Pier education was one of the best around because the faculty, you see there were people who, there were professors who didn't want to live in Champaign-Urbana, they wanted to live in Chicago. [T]hey were willing to teach freshman and sophomore courses, as a freshman and sophomore I never had a graduate student teach me a class, they were always PhDs,

DOWNEY: That's wonderful.

MUKOYAMA: Which is very unusual, when I went downstate it was unusual being in one of these huge classes with the graduate students teaching us in some of the discussion groups and things, we never had that at the Pier,

DOWNEY: Was there a change once you went down state, you obviously wanted to get your four years in.

MUKOYAMA: Yes, [w]hen I went to the university my goal in life, getting back to you know we were talking about high school, my activities in high school, I was in Junior ROTC in high school and I really, really enjoyed that. Now people have a misunderstanding about Junior ROTC, they think it's a feeder to the military, that is not correct, the main goal of the Junior ROTC program is to give young people an opportunity to be in an organization where they can experience being part of a team, have leadership opportunities to learn how to cooperate with other people and if you happen to go into the military later on that's fine but that's not a requirement. Chicago has the largest high school ROTC system in the country. We have about 30-something high schools and frankly for the inner-city...

DOWNEY: Was it that active then when you were in it?

MUKOYAMA: Oh yes, very important, we used to have a Cadet Day parade in May where we'd march down Michigan Avenue with the High School Cadet Corps for the for the different high schools and we'd have competitions, and they still do, that was really a great experience, that was one thing I was in. I was active and I was in Key Club I was in the National Honors Society. I was in the band, band was big deal for me. I was the first chair of clarinet at the band I was the principle woodwind of the orchestra, I was

in the marching band and then finally I was very active in my church, in my youth group at my church and I was actually considering the ministry.

DOWNEY: You obviously had, there are two things here, you're like, in college you were also in ROTC, is that right?

MUKOYAMA: Yes.

DOWNEY: You were active in that as well?

MUKOYAMA: Absolutely.

DOWNEY: Toying with the ministry. You were taking what, English and Social Studies course primarily?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, I decided that I was going to become a chaplain that was how I was going to merge my two passions in life, one was to serve god the other was to serve my country. The way to do that was to be a chaplain. I ran into a problem, which is that my denomination theologically fell of the table, now I'm in a catch-22 because if I want to be a chaplain I have to be ordained in my denomination and I wasn't buying the theology so I just decided I guess the lord wants me to move in the direction of the military. I decided that I was going to just put all my efforts into the military. [W]hen I went to the university it was a vehicle to get my commission in the army. My vision wasn't good enough for me to get into the military academy, so the next best thing was to go through ROTC, because I knew I was going to, as I mentioned before education being stressed in my family, I was the first college graduate in my immediate family so that was

my responsibility to my family.

DOWNEY: Did you feel there was pressure on you?

MUKOYAMA: No, it was an obligation, but it was something that I felt that it was something that I had to do, I wanted to do it for my family because my family had sacrificed so much, you know my parents had sacrificed and my grandparents and just for me getting my degree would make them happy as well. I had the benefit, when I was at the university, that I could take courses, it didn't make any difference what I majored in that was just my vehicle to get my commission, so now I'm saying to myself, "Okay, what am I going to major in to equip me to be the best officer I can be in the Army, to lead men?" I narrowed it down to two subjects, one was psychology and the other was English, literature not rhetoric, and I rejected psychology after taking some initial psych courses where they do all this Pavlov with his dogs, that to me was all pedantic and laboratory oriented and wasn't really to me common sense, relational type of thing. But literature, whether you read Every Man, Shakespeare, Hemingway, throughout the whole continuum of literature there are universal traits of human nature that just come out at you, if you can understand what those traits are, [and] then you know what motivates people and you can be a better leader. Then on top of that, just as an ancillary benefit, I felt just by being able to read the best writers of all time just by sheer osmosis that might rub off on me and I might be able to express myself better that was

my thought process. It wasn't my best subject, my best subject was really math and history, but I majored in English Literature for those reasons.

DOWNEY: You were a member of Pershing Rifles?

MUKOYAMA: [Yes], as you can see when I do things I'm all in and so at the university I was in the military fraternity Pershing Rifles and that took up a lot of my time, but that's what I wanted, because that actually fine-tuned and helped me in terms of my military background and career and it did in fact enable me to be, to progress and get promoted within the Cadet Corps, when I graduated as a senior, actually the Chicago Tribune used to give out medals to high school and college ROTC Cadets. I got the Tribune Gold Medal when I was a senior and I was on the Rifle Team, I was on the Drill Team, anything that smelled or walked like the military I was a part of.

DOWNEY: This is just an odd question, but you said you had astigmatism so you couldn't fly, were you a good shot?

MUKOYAMA: Oh yes. That's one thing I could do very well. I was an expert in every, I was an expert; with actually we qualified initially, are you ready for this?

DOWNEY: Yes I want to hear this.

MUKOYAMA: On M-1s. I qualified on M-1s then an M-14 then an M-16, but yes I was an expert on, one thing I couldn't do very well though was with the pistol, I don't know I might as well throw the pistol at somebody I couldn't do very well with the .45, but with the rifle I'm very good.

DOWNEY: You graduated, in essence, about 1965?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, I was a distinguished military graduate and I received a regular Army commission, infantry, volunteered for Vietnam, but before I went there, before that happened I got a resident assistantship for graduate school and I hopped all over that, I had to take out two government loans just to get my bachelor's degree. [T]his opportunity to get my master's degree came up where they were going to pay my tuition, my room and board, it's like I died and went to heaven so I went to summer school again, I got my master's degree in a year [and] I took one year leave from the Army.

DOWNEY: Had you already gone through the boot camp portion?

MUKOYAMA: No, I had gotten my commission but I hadn't gone to Officers Basic yet and so I had my commission as 2nd Lieutenant, but I went to graduate school immediately, then I got my master's degree and then I went into my Officer's Basic. [B]y the way I majored in the teaching of Social Studies, now this was the pragmatism in me because I knew I was going to be an Infantry Officer, I knew I was going into combat, the odds of my getting wounded were fairly high and so I needed to have a profession to fall back on in case I couldn't be an officer anymore, if I couldn't be in the military. I got my master's in the teaching of social studies, because I felt teaching is a noble profession, you don't have to run the 100-yard dash to be a teacher and, not only that, but 75% percent of your time as an officer is really teaching people, so I figured I might as well learn from the pro's about lesson plans and history and philosophy of education and all that

stuff and hopefully make me a better teacher. What I found out was that military, I didn't need any of that stuff, the military has an extremely fine program for training people and it's, that was what happened.

DOWNEY: In 1965, life was changing you picked up your master's at Champaign...

MUKOYAMA: In '66, right.

DOWNEY: In '66, okay. Life was really changing. Vietnam was just starting to break out in a much bigger way. You went to boot camp; let's hear a little bit about that, where did you go through training and then, now you are an Officer and you are in the service?

MUKOYAMA: Actually, it wasn't bad at all because I had four years of high school ROTC here in Chicago and by the way that was infantry oriented, at Schurz we actually had a rifle range so we actually, I was actually able to fire a rifle you know before I even went to college. Then I had four years of infantry training at the University of Illinois, now at that time ROTC was mandatory in the land-grant colleges for the first two years, if you went to University of Illinois you had to be in ROTC if you were a male, and our cadet corps, the Army alone was 2,000 cadets, that's how big it was. And we were so large that we had seven battalions and they were all branch oriented so I of course chose the infantry branch battalion, I had eight years of infantry training before I set foot at Fort Benning. [T]he Infantry Officer's Basic Course was easy for me, I was an honor graduate in the course, it was easy, I knew how to fire a weapon, I knew land

navigation, I was in good shape physically, I knew first aide, it was very, very easy for me. I volunteered for Vietnam and I went to airborne school.

DOWNEY: That was going to be my next question. You went to airborne school?

MUKOYAMA: Yes I volunteered for Airborne and Ranger at the time, but in those days and I think it might be true again, the academy graduates from West Point all had to go to Ranger School. I graduated at the same time that the academy graduates graduated and they took up all of the slots for Ranger School, so I couldn't get in. I said, "Okay, I understand, let me go to Pathfinder School". I don't know if you know what Pathfinder is, but...

DOWNEY: I know what Pathfinder is.

MUKOYAMA: But Pathfinders are the people who go in before an Airborne Operation and they actually set up.

DOWNEY: Drops zones and...

MUKOYAMA: Right, the drop zones. And prep it and everything. That takes about, that's a nine-week course or something, [and] it's an extensive course. [M]y game-plan was I would go to Pathfinder School, get that qualification, by that time the West Pointers would be gone and I could slide into to the next course. [T]hey wouldn't let me go to Pathfinders School. They said, "No, you can go to Airborne School, but that's it." I go to Airborne School, I get my jump wings and I want to go to an airborne unit. I volunteer for Vietnam and the army sends me to Korea instead, with Second Infantry Division.

DOWNEY: Did you get any break or you headed right directly for Korea?

MUKOYAMA: No, I went right to Korea, went right there. I was on the DMZ.

DOWNEY: Did you come in as a stray or did you come in with a unit?

MUKOYAMA: No, as an individual, and I was a Weapons Platoon Leader. [B]y that time now I'm a 1st Lieutenant because all that time in grade when I was in Graduate School counted. I get to Korea, I was actually a senior 2nd Lieutenant and I was promoted to 1st Lieutenant when I was there. [I]n an Infantry Company you have four platoons, one of which is a Weapons Platoon and that is normally commanded by the highest senior Lieutenant in the company, so I was the Weapons Platoon Leader in that company. We did combat patrolling on the DMZ.

DOWNEY: That was going to be my question, so you did mostly patrolling?

MUKOYAMA: Yes.

DOWNEY: Is that, were you located in the same spot all along?

MUKOYAMA: No, here's the story there, it was a 13 month tour and I was initially assigned to an infantry company on the DMZ. It was really great because we were out in the boonies by ourselves, we had our own company compound with our own mess hall, we had our own barracks, we had our fence around it, barbed wire, we basically had a guard mount, but we did combat patrolling every day. We went out on the DMZ, our mission was to interdict any North Koreans coming from the North trying to infiltrate into the South basically. When I was there, 13 months I was there, my

unit, my brigade sustained 12 KIA and 42 wounded, we had 12 killed and 40 wounded during that period of time.

DOWNEY: That's a lot for that area?

MUKOYAMA: [I]n those days Vietnam was hot, we were losing a couple dozen guys every day in Vietnam if not more, so what was happening in Korea, and we didn't have CNN in those days and so you know what happened, for example we had a patrol where nine out of ten guys were killed. If that happened today that would be world news that would be all over the place. That was page 56 on the Tribune. "Oh by the way in Korea there was this patrol that had nine out of ten guys killed." That's just the way it was. I was on the line, but only for about four months and then my Battalion Commander found out that I had a Master's degree, not only that I have a Master's degree, but I have my degree in English and he needed an S-1, which is an Adjutant, a Personnel Officer. [H]e calls me to his Headquarters one day and he said, "Lieutenant Mukoyama" he said, "How are you doing?" I said, "Sir, I'm just, couldn't be happier than a pig in a poke, I'm commanding soldiers, I'm doing combat patrolling. It's just been a great assignment." He said, "Lieutenant I'm not looking for happiness in my Battalion." He said, "How would you like to be the," actually he said, "How would you like to be the Adjutant?" I said, "Sir, I really am happy doing what I'm doing." He said, "I'm not looking for happiness." He said, "Monday morning report to Headquarters, you're going to be the

Adjutant." I became the Battalion Adjutant and after about four months, make a long story short, the Brigade Adjutant went back to the states and the Brigade Adjutant position is a major slot.

DOWNEY: Yes.

MUKOYAMA: I was selected to be the Brigade Adjutant as a 1st Lieutenant.

DOWNEY: As a 1st Lieutenant?

MUKOYAMA: Yes.

DOWNEY: That's hard to believe.

MUKOYAMA: That's what happened. I was the Brigade Adjutant and then because our combat, because we were taking casualties, we had three Battalions assigned to that Brigade, we had a fourth Battalion assigned to our Brigade and I was the Brigade Adjutant at that time. I'm obviously doing a pretty good job, at least people think I am, then it's time for me to come back to the states and I say, "Alright, I want to go back to an Airborne Unit at the states and I want to go to Fort Campbell or Fort Bragg." [T]he Army sends me to Fort Lewis, Washington.

DOWNEY: Isn't that a Training Command there, wasn't there, at that time?

MUKOYAMA: That's right; it was an Infantry Training Command. I went there, I started out, actually at the Training Command Headquarters because I had this experience as an S-1 and all that, but I told the General there, so I worked with him for about six months, but I said, "I don't want to be a desk jockey. I want to command troops." I got a Company Command as an

Infantry Training Company Commander. I did that for about a year and then I volunteered for Vietnam again, this time they took me up on my offer and I went to Vietnam in '69.

DOWNEY: In '69, Vietnam was definitely popping then.

MUKOYAMA: Right.

DOWNEY: As it turned out it was more exciting in the South than in the North, early in the war it was more exciting in the North and by the time you got there you went into where things were just starting to get exciting. You were in the 9th Infantry Division, did you come in as a stray or did you take a unit in with you or how did this work out?

MUKOYAMA: [H]ow I got into the 9th, I've got to go back to Fort Lewis. I'm at Fort Lewis, Washington. Have you ever heard of a gentleman by the name of Colonel David Hackworth?

DOWNEY: Yes.

MUKOYAMA: Colonel David H. Hackworth, who's now deceased, was one of the most highly decorated Infantry Officers in the history of the United States Army. He wrote numerous books, one of which was called *About Face* which was a best seller about his career. He was not an orphan, he was raised by his grandparents and he lied about his age, joined the Merchant Marine when he was 14 or 15 years old, they caught onto it and they kicked him out. [T]hen he joined the Army later and as an enlisted man, he was in Korea and he got a Battlefield Commission, he was awarded the

Distinguished Service Cross, our nation's second highest award for valor, and four Purple Hearts and a whole bunch of Silver Stars. Keep in mind the guy's 19 years old. And he commanded a platoon of the Wolf Hounds in the 25th Division in Korea; after Korea he gets his GED, he gets his college degree, becomes a prolific writer about small tactics, has four tours in Vietnam, commands two battalions, is awarded another Distinguished Service Cross, four more Purple Hearts. Hackworth had, I affectionately refer to him as "Hack" later on in life, when we were, when I served with him he couldn't pronounce Mukoyama and he used to call me "Mook" and I used to call him "Sir" because he was... but Hack was just a great leader, great combat leader who led by example, his eighth purple heart was earned in our battalion, I was a Company Commander with him, his eighth purple heart was earned when he landed a C&C in the middle of a firefight to extract some of our guys who were wounded. [H]e's putting these guys in this helicopter and there's no room for him to get in so he stands on the skids and they take off and he gets hit in the leg. [F]rom that point on he could tell us, "I want you to walk through that wall of fire" and we'd just say, "Where do you want us to go?" That's just the way it was. [W]hen I was at Fort Louis, I came from Korea they found out I had this Master's Degree and I was an Adjutant, they made me what was called the Secretary of the General Staff. The Secretary of the General Staff in essence is the officer who basically coordinates the schedule of all

the General Staff and the General and takes care of paperwork. I was doing that initially when Hackworth was reassigned from Vietnam to Fort Lewis, he came in as a Battalion Commander. I'm the first guy he meets when walks in the Headquarters because he's going to visit the General. I see Colonel Hackworth and I stand up and I greet him and I say, "Welcome, Colonel Hackworth to Fort Lewis." He looks at me, the first words out of his mouth: "What are you doing behind a desk?" He said, "If you want a company, I'll give you a company in my Battalion." The guy doesn't know me from Adam, I could be the world's worst officer, but he had a knack of being able to size people up within about ten seconds, you were either a stud or you were a dud, nothing in between, but if he found a stud he wanted that person. [H]e surrounded himself with the best Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers he could. And if he found people who were substandard he got rid of them, basically.

DOWNEY: What happened then?

MUKOYAMA: [H]e said, I said, I had already come to that same conclusion and I had already spoken to another Battalion Commander who offered me a company and I had accepted, so I told Hackworth I said, "Sir I'm honored that you'd even consider that, but I've already committed myself to Colonel so-and-so." [H]e said, "Well I understand." That's exactly what happened. I go to the job as a Company Commander and I was now a Company Commander of this Infantry Training Company in a battalion

that was right next door to Hackworth's battalion. [W]e were in the same area and then an incident occurred which he wrote about in his book *About Face* where there was a Drill Sergeant, now keep in mind this is the Infantry Training Unit where we have recruits, and all 99% of these guys when they finish basic training and AIT, we were an AIT unit which is Advanced Individual Training. Once they finish that they're shipping to Vietnam, 99.9% of my guys were going to Vietnam. [W]e're training the people to go fight. So I get, one night, I was a Senior Company Commander in my battalion and we did not have an Executive Officer, we had a vacancy, so I was the Senior Company Commander. Our Battalion Commander was on leave one weekend, now I'm the guy in charge. I'm the acting Battalion Commander, I get a call from my Duty Officer and he says, "We've got a problem." I said, "What happened?" He said, "One of Colonel Hackworth's Drill Sergeants beat up one of our trainees." This is bad news when a Drill Sergeant beats up a trainee, that's [an] end of career type situation. I said, "Give me some details on this." [F]ortunately the trainee was African American and the Drill Sergeant was African American so it wasn't one of these racial situations. [I] breathed sigh of relief there, but still I wasn't real happy, so I said, "Have you called Brigade yet?" He said, "No." I said, "Wait five minutes, I'll call Hackworth." I call Hackworth and I say, "Sir, we've got a problem." He said, "Let's meet, we'll meet." I meet Hackworth. The story basically, very

simply, was this trainee was going through our company area walking with his hands in his pocket, which is not, that's a no-no for trainees you don't walk with your hands in your pocket and there was a Drill Sergeant from Hackworth's Battalion who saw this. [H]e told the trainee to get his hands out of his pocket, the trainee made a big mistake, he basically swore at the Drill Sergeant; about the Drill Sergeant's mother. Not a good idea. [T]he Drill Sergeant grabs this kid by the neck, takes him into the day room and bounces him off the wall a couple times to get his attention. And in that dayroom there was nobody else except one of my NCOs and, are you familiar with the instant NCOs at that time? [H]e was an instant NCO, an instant NCO is, in Vietnam because we had such a high demand for Non-Commissioned Officers they had what they called instant NCOs were right after, out of AIT after about, they put them in a special program for about 90 days and they would get E-5 right away, that's why they were called instant Non-Commissioned Officers or NCOs. [T]he trainee says, "Well you know, you can't do that to me, I'll get you court-marshaled, I'll..." And the Drill Sergeant says, "Well you don't have any witness." [H]e looks over to my NCO who's sitting there, now there's this brotherhood of NCOs. [H]e says, "You didn't see anything, did you Sergeant?" And my NCO says, "Yeah I saw the whole thing." [N]ow we [have] a problem. Hackworth and I devised a solution to the problem, we call in the trainee and we say, I'm his Battalion Commander now and

Hackworth is sitting there as a bystander and I call in the Private and I say, "Private tell me what happened." [H]is story is "I didn't do anything, just minding my own business and for whatever reason this guy takes me into this room and hits me." There's no bruise he's not bleeding or anything, and he said, "And I have witness to this." I said, "Okay." I said, "I understand, this is not to be tolerated, I'm going to make sure that you get justice. What would you want, what would you think would be fair?" "Well, I want this guy court-marshaled." "Okay, we can look at that." Colonel Hackworth, his Battalion Commander, is right here. "What do you think Colonel Hackworth?" Colonel Hackworth says, "Yes well I agree that this, we are going to do something to make sure justice is done." And he said, "I can, we can arrange for a special court-marshal." [T]his was around December, beginning of December and this Company was about ready to graduate, it's going to graduate in two or three weeks. [A]fter graduation they would be able to go home for Christmas leave and then they'd ship out for Vietnam. I said, "Private we'll definitely work on this for you, now you've got to understand if we have a court-marshal you're going to have to be a material witness, you're going to have to testify, so probably you can't go home for Christmas because you've got to be here." [T]his is going through this guy's mind like he's going to miss the holidays with his family and Hackworth chimes in and he said, "Well there's a solution here." He said, "Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice,

Article 15," and he quotes all of the maximum penalties that he as the Battalion Commander can give to this Sergeant, he says, "Forfeiture, reduction of one grade, six months of whatever, hard labor, etc." [H]e cites all the maximum penalties that Hackworth can give him, he's not saying that he's going to give him that, he's just saying this is what I can do and he said, "So in that case, I as the Battalion Commander can do this and you won't have to stay here, we won't have to have this big thing, but I know you want justice so if you want the court-marshal we'll do the court martial." [T]he Private says "Oh no, I have faith that you and Captain Mukoyama can take care of this." I said, "Are you absolutely sure, this is your decision, we're giving you a choice." [H]e said "No, I have confidence that Colonel Hackworth can handle it." I said, "Alright, you're dismissed." I felt like taking him up one side and down the other, but I didn't want to jeopardize what we had just done, because this NCO who had really done this was really a good NCO, the guy was a Vietnam veteran, Airborne guy, he just screwed up basically thinking that this other NCO would support him. Hackworth calls the guy in and says, "Listen, what happened?" He tells him exactly what happened and Hackworth said, "Alright listen, I'm making a decision under Article 15 I'm taking away a stripe, you'll have three months of hard labor." [T]hen he said, "But it's all suspended for 90 days." [This] means that if the guy kept his nose clean for 90 days it goes away, basically, and that's what we did. That was

something that Hackworth and I did together. Hackworth ships back to Vietnam again for his third tour, now he's in Vietnam, I'm still back in Fort Lewis and he sends me a letter and he said, "Mook." He said, "We got a war going on, why don't you come." He said, "If you want a Company I'll give it to you." [T]hat's like I won the Super Bowl, I won the Lotto basically as an Infantry Officer. Keep In mind I haven't been to Vietnam yet so I took him up on his offer.

DOWNEY: Then you went to Vietnam, you came in, in essence, as a stray and then he provided you with your unit.

MUKOYAMA: Yes, and everyone told me that I'd never get to his, I'd never get to, what happened was, going back a little bit, you know the Army is, I don't know if you picked up on this, but throughout my whole career everything I asked the Army I never got, for assignments or whatever. So here I am, I'm very frustrated now, I'm at Fort Lewis, I've seen, unfortunately a trend in the Army that I didn't like at that time.

DOWNEY: We'll get into that later something tells me.

MUKOYAMA: Yes I saw where when I was in Korea, especially, as the Adjutant, I was privy to all of these personnel records, the efficiency reports. [T]he Army was tending to look for managers and politicians instead of what I felt were leaders. I looked at four Battalion Commanders of our Brigade and if I were going to rate them one, two, three and four they came out four, three, two and one because of the politics. [T]hat wasn't really

encouraging, I wasn't really happy with that. [E]very time I asked for something I never got it, then the Army came out with this great program called the Foreign Area Specialty Training Program and they Army's great with acronyms it's called FAST, F-A-S-T, and the program was really a very fine idea because with Vietnam we got caught with our pants down, the Army did, because we didn't have any experts about in the Vietnam geographic part of the world, we didn't know the politics, we didn't know the people there. [T]he Army said, "Never again. What we're going to do is we're going to develop experts in every geographical area of the world that know the politics, know the people there, [and] know the customs etcetera. So we're going to take officers and we're going to send them to Language School, we're going to send them to Graduate School about that particular part of the world and for the rest of their career we're going to alternate them between that area of the world and their basic branch." [T]hey could be assigned, let's say, to the Embassy, or they could be assigned for the Military Assistance Command. Now, here I am, ethnically I'm Japanese American, what I didn't tell you is when I went to Graduate School when I got my Master's in the teaching of Social Studies, I majored in Far Eastern Affairs, so I studied Japanese History, Political Science, Japanese Language, Chinese History, so I am a Far East expert, period. And I served in Korea. I served in East Asia, and when I was in Korea, by the way, I visited Japan and I got an award from the Japanese Army,

which is another story. [N]ow I've got all this background and the Army comes out with this FAST Program and I feel I'm a natural for it. I call the guy at the Pentagon who's in charge; they had this 800 number, "Call this number!" I call this guy, first time I had ever done that in my whole career because I never felt that I should manage my own career, I felt that if I did my job I'd be rewarded, the system would work. I call this guy at the Pentagon, the first words out of his mouth, "You haven't been to Vietnam?" I said, "Well yeah that's right I haven't, but if you look at my record you see I volunteered for Vietnam and instead of going to Vietnam I went to Korea which was not a soft spot." He said, "Nope that doesn't count." He said "The second thing is you haven't been to Career Course yet." He got me there; I haven't been to Career Course. He didn't give me any encouragement; he didn't say "Gee you're a natural for this program let me monitor your career and we'll stay in touch." He didn't give me any of that stuff. I said, "Enough is enough, the Army can't see my value there." I said, "What I'm going to do is I'm going to take Hackworth up on this offer." The next thing, I pick up the phone, I call my Infantry Branch Assignment Officer and I said, "I want to go to Vietnam, I haven't been there, I want to go again, I'm volunteering again." The guy said, "What's your phone number in case you get cut off?" I said, "But my stipulation is I have to go to the 9th Division." Because that's where Hackworth was at, he said, "Fine." This is February and I said, "How soon can I get there?"

He said, "Well I can get you there in August." I said, "No, no that's too long," He said, "How about April?" I said, "Sold." [H]e cuts the orders for me to go to Vietnam in April. [E]verybody told me I would never get to Hackworth's unit, because once you hit the Repo Depot, and an infantry captain was a dime a dozen, they would just send you wherever they needed you. They were wrong, Hackworth greased all the skids. When I got there I immediately went to the 9th Division without any "passing go" or anything. I got the 9th Division Headquarters which was at Dong Tam, the big Division Headquarters, and they had this one-week training course for the newbies, the new guys coming into the country because the delta was a special area as I'm sure you're aware. [T]he temperature was average probably 95 degrees, humidity 90 degrees, a lot of canals, elevation was below sea-level, it was a very special area and booby-traps were the big deal down there because we were fighting VC and 80% of our casualties were from booby-traps, not from engagements because as good guerillas normally do they choose the time and they evade us. I was in this one-week course about how to stay alive in the delta. Two days into the course I'm pulled out and I'm put on the helicopter and they take me down to our Fire Support Base for the Battalion. I get out of the helicopter, I'm madder than a wet hen and I see Colonel Hackworth. I say, "Sir, how can you do that to me, I'm trying to learn how to stay alive in country!" He says, "Mook," he said, "I know you're abilities." He says, "You don't need that

stuff. Don't worry about it." "Yes sir."

DOWNEY: What did he do then, did you get an assignment right off the bat?

MUKOYAMA: I was a Company Commander. Battle, Hackworth had this knack of, he was, he led by example, everybody knew his history, they knew his background, but he did small things that really raised the morale of a unit and made you feel special. For example, a Fire Support Base that we were at...

DOWNEY: Base four?

MUKOYAMA: When he got there it was called Fire Support Base Dickey, [and] it was named after somebody who had died. Dickey sounds, just doesn't sound strong, he changed the name to Fire Support Base Danger. [O]ur Battalion, our Brigade was a Recondo Brigade, we did a lot of long range patrolling operations, and so he nicknamed our battalion the Hardcore Battalion. [O]ur motto was "Hardcore Recondo". When an enlisted man saw an Officer or if you saw a Senior Officer you saluted, the standard greeting was "Hardcore Recondo" and the response which I can't say here on this, was "No *something* Slack" and it just raised the esprit-de-corps. I saw guys who were wounded on stretchers that when they saw Colonel Hackworth and Hackworth would walk up to them they would salute him and say "Hardcore Recondo". [T]hat's just how it was. [H]e took all of our Companies, instead of Alpha, Bravo, Charlie Company, he renamed them Alert, Battle and Claymore, and Dagger, so those were our four

companies, and instead of first second and third platoon he made them red, white and blue. [Y]ou were in Dagger/White or Battle/Blue or whatever, it was just an esprit thing, and then of course the most important thing was he led by example. [W]e also had the philosophy of not leaving a body behind. We never left a body behind even if we had to take more casualties to get that body back, that's what we did. [W]e all knew that, so we had this peace of mind that we knew that if anything happened to us that we'd get home, that was the commitment. There were other units that wouldn't do that, that would leave bodies behind, we just, we couldn't understand that in our unit. We took a lot of casualties, but nobody ever complained about it in our unit because Hackworth never jeopardized, he never put us in a position where we were wounded or we took casualties because it was unnecessary, there were other Commanders that did it, he never did that.

DOWNEY: When you're out, you're doing long range patrolling, at what level were you sending groups out, from the platoon level, the company level? How far out would you go?

MUKOYAMA: Basically we did company operations.

DOWNEY: Company operations.

MUKOYAMA: Yes. [W]e would, Hackworth developed, have you ever heard of the butterfly? He developed that.

DOWNEY: Really?

MUKOYAMA: Yes. The butterfly tactics is you take a unit, you get helicopters you take them out into an area, you drop them off for a while and then you let them operate there and then you pick them up and you take them and you put them over, you cover a whole area just by jumping back and forth and sometimes you have false insertions where you actually land but you don't drop the people off. Or you don't pick them up.

DOWNEY: And you can hear everything coming so...

MUKOYAMA: Right or you don't pick them up and then they think you've gone, but you're really still there. By the butterfly operation you can cover a whole large area with this one unit. That's the type of stuff we used to do. Our operations were no longer than three or four days at a time. We only took, we never resupplied, we either, we just took with us enough for the operation.

DOWNEY: So you weren't going to defend it...

MUKOYAMA: Yes, we didn't want to give away our positions or whatever.

DOWNEY: Did it work?

MUKOYAMA: Yes.

DOWNEY: Were you more VC orientated or did you actually, they were starting to come down into that area, Fishhook and other areas. Did you bump into regular units that...

MUKOYAMA: Not that much. We had some, but we were still, basically at that time they were still mostly VC that we were dealing with.

DOWNEY: Did you find them organized?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, in fact we, one of our, it was called a battle but it really wasn't a battle it was almost like a turkey shoot. We basically annihilated a VC Training Battalion. We caught them in an area and we encircled them and then that was just, it was lights off. It was a one-day battle, at the end of the day we had killed probably 40 or 50, taken, no more than that probably close to 100, we had taken maybe 20 or 30 prisoners, we had captured 50-60 weapons, we took three wounded in that operation. It was just; I was with Hackworth in the C&C that whole operation, so I could see him. It was like an orchestra conductor. [H]e was orchestrating the battlefield, from the beginning to the very end, I was with him in the TOC (the Tactical Operations Center) the night before the operation, when we had all the intelligence, and we dropped in two companies.

DOWNEY: Intelligence was obviously good in this case.

MUKOYAMA: Yes.

DOWNEY: Was it usually good?

MUKOYAMA: [I]t was, I'd say 50/50.

DOWNEY: 50/50?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, but Hack had a, he had this sixth sense of smelling out this stuff too, whether it was good or bad because it was his third tour, he had commanded a battalion of the 101st. [B]asically we dropped in two companies the night before and then in the morning we dropped the other

two companies and we just made this big, it was a big encirclement. [H]e started dropping in artillery and airstrikes and I was in that helicopter and it had happened yesterday, and he gets a call from Dagger Company and they say, "We just had a contact, killed three, got a couple weapons, they're heading Northwest." Hackworth would look at his map he said, "Mook, fifteen minutes we're going to hear from Claymore." Fifteen minutes later, Claymore comes up on the line, "We just had a contact, we killed five we got two weapons, they're heading this way." It happened all day like that, it was like a pinball machine where they're just...

DOWNEY: They couldn't get out.

MUKOYAMA: Yes, they're just bouncing off of these ambushes that we had set up, we had them all day, just the whole day, it was, [and] it was just incredible.

DOWNEY: How long were you actually in IV Corps down there?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, I was only there for about five months, four, five months and our unit was actually pulled out of Vietnam at that time. [N]ow, I'm a Company [Commander], and Hackworth, by the way, knew this was going to happen so he was transferred up to Pleiku...

DOWNEY: Okay, now I'm with it.

MUKOYAMA: And this is after he gets his eighth Purple Heart, basically they said, "You're out, we can't afford to get you killed so we're taking you out of the Battalion." [H]e went up to Pleiku to become an advisor for the...

DOWNEY: II Corps.

MUKOYAMA: Right. And he was the G-3 advisor.

DOWNEY: He was operations of all of II Corps.

MUKOYAMA: Right, all of II Corps. [H]e's up there at II Corps, I'm back with the company and we get orders to move out of Vietnam. [G]uess where we were going?

DOWNEY: I don't know, tell me.

MUKOYAMA: Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. I could have taken my Company back to Hawaii, but I was only there for four months and I said, no I've got to stay here I've got to finish this tour because at that point in time I had pretty much decided I was going to get out of the Army.

DOWNEY: Why? Actually, you've gone through this entire career and you...

MUKOYAMA: Remember I told you when I wasn't, when I had that experience with the FAST Program, I said they're not giving me anything I want so I'm pretty much, at that time I was leaning towards getting out. I said well I haven't been to Vietnam, I haven't commanded in combat, I'll go and serve with Hackworth maybe that will change my mind.

DONEY: Maybe it will change your mind.

MUKOYAMA: [H]ere I am now and I'm in the boonies with Hackworth, before he left and once again I'm really happy because I'm leading infantry troops in combat and Hackworth writes the Pentagon, he had all these connections, and he said, "Listen you jerks, you're about ready to lose a good officer, this guy is on the fence, show him some personal interest. [W]e might be able to

save him." Here I am, I'm in the boonies and I get this letter from the Pentagon and I've never gotten any communications from my Infantry Officer [Branch]. I get this letter and it says, "Dear Captain Mukoyama, we have carefully reviewed your 201 file and we believe you have potential for Graduate School." Little problem, I already had my Master's Degree, so that shows you how much the guy looked at my file. I said, "Hey Hack, that's it, I'm out of here. I'll finish my tour, but I'm gone, I'm out of here." [N]ow my Company, I could have taken my Company back to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, but I said no, I was a bachelor, I was only there for four months, I had an obligation to finish my tour, or finish *a* tour. I contacted Hackworth and I said, "Hack, can you use me?" He said, "Absolutely!" I went up to Pleiku and I finished out my tour with Hackworth at II Corps Headquarters. I was the assistant; I was the Corps G-3 Plans Advisor.

DOWNEY: He was G-3 and you were working under him?

MUKOYAMA: Right.

DOWNEY: Were you working up there with the Americal?

MUKOYAMA: No, I was working up there with the ARVNs.

DOWNEY: Okay.

MUKOYAMA: This was the ARVN Headquarters; I actually dealt with the ARVNs, the 4th Division and the ROKs. I really enjoyed working with the ROKs, because the ROKs are just, they never shared anything with us because

they knew we'd leak it because we were dealing with the ARVNs.

DOWNEY: How did you handle that, we had the same problem, I mean we were right on the same border with us.

MUKOYAMA: Yes, well, I respected that, and I didn't push the ROKs because I knew we had leaks in our Headquarters. I couldn't, can't control that, you just have to deal with it.

DOWNEY: You were back at a desk then, almost.

MUKOYAMA: Yes, we'd go out to the field every now and then. It wasn't that, I basically did briefings for the Corps Commander and our deputy, our Senior Advisor who was a Brigadier General. I remember Abrams came once, I briefed him. Every now and then we'd go out to inspect units. I went out; I remember one time very, very clearly. The Special Forces camps which were along the Cambodian border, Ben Het, Dak To, Plei Djereng, these are all Special Forces camps that were set up with the montagnard and the ARVN Marines. [W]e would go out to inspect the camps and see how they were doing. [W]e flew into one camp, I was with the Deputy Corps Advisor who is a full Colonel and the Command Sergeant Major and I was the young Captain, I carried everybody's bags. [W]e land at this camp and it comes under attack. To make a long story short the Command Sergeant Major is killed. [H]e was probably no more than 15 or 20 yards from me when this happened, it's by a rocket. This is really sad because he was going the next day to meet his wife in Hawaii for R&R, so his wife is

waiting for him in Hawaii and they were going to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary and the guy is killed. [W]hen that happened we radioed back to our Headquarters that we had one KIA, they knew it wasn't the senior, the Deputy Corps Advisor because he had a call sign and we would have said that, so it was either the Command Sergeant Major or the young Captain. [E]verybody assumed it was me, because Command Sergeant Major they figured he'd know how to take care of himself, he wouldn't get killed. [E]verybody thought I was dead. We get back to the Headquarters, I walk into my office, where my Vietnamese counterpart is and the guy turns white as a ghost when he saw me walk into the office because he had heard I had died. [T]hat was a sad, sad day. [T]hat was my experience at II Corps.

DOWNEY: After that you just, in essence, rotated out. Were you ready to go then?

MUKOYAMA: When I was at II Corps I submitted my resignation.

DOWNEY: You did?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, to be effective after I got back. [W]hen I got back I got a terminal assignment at Fort Sheridan and I served at Fort Sheridan for four months and then I was out.

DOWNEY: That was just desk job as well?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, that was nothing.

DOWNEY: Your life starts to change here, so you decided you wanted out, were you or were in the process....

MUKOYAMA: When I say out, I resigned my regular Army Commission, but I signed up for the Reserves. Because I felt very strongly that I still was going to continue to serve because I had experience. And in those days the Reserve components didn't have a lot of combat experience people, so I felt that I might be able to help. I didn't know anything about the Reserves or the National Guard, not a clue what it was about, all I knew was I was going to continue to serve. Fortunately I got into the 85th Training Division which was commanded by General Levine, William P. Levine, at that time. To show you how ignorant I was about the Reserves, I didn't know anything about it, fortunately one of my Pershing Rifle classmates from U of I who was commissioned was in the Reserves and he was in the 85th Division. I called him and I said, "What should I do? Should I join the Guard or join the Reserves?" He said, "No. Join the Reserves." [H]e said, "Come on down to our Headquarters." I didn't know if they could use me or not so I put on my greens, I had my 201 file, and I walked down to Headquarters and they swooped me up because I was, because of my record. I had just come back from Vietnam, I had been in Korea, I was regular Army and it was a Training Division, it was an Infantry Training Division and what had I done? I had been an Infantry Training Company Commander, so I was a natural for them, for the unit. [T]hey put me into the G-3 section, operations, operations and training.

DOWNEY: But you also, at the same time, you started a civilian career.

MUKOYAMA: Right.

DOWNEY: Why did you start a civilian career in options, this doesn't fit with anything you had...

MUKOYAMA: I didn't really. The first career I had, the first job I did when I came back was I worked for a Japanese trading company, it was an import/export company it was called Mitsui and Company, which was one of the largest trading companies in the world. Here I was trying to take advantage of my Asian background, my Japanese language, etc., and I had never been in business. Keep in mind I didn't have one day of Accounting or Finance formal education, all my education was English, History, Social Studies, Education, so I don't have one day of formal Accounting, Economics, any of that stuff. I go to work for this Japanese trading company and I actually worked there for five years, but I was very frustrated because there was no future in the company for me. The reason I say that was I don't speak Japanese fluently. I can speak, I can get myself to the nearest embassy, but that's about it. There was a reverse discrimination by the Japanese in my company against me because ethnically I'm Japanese, but I couldn't speak or read Japanese fluently, so they looked at me like I was the village idiot, they didn't recognize the fact that I had my Master's Degree. I had commanded an Infantry Company in combat; I had to sign for \$10 million worth of equipment as a 24-year-old, none of that counted. I didn't really have any future in the company, it was a good company, I could have

stayed there for 20 or 30 years but I would never have been able to become even a manager of a department. I wasn't looking for any guarantees, I was looking for an equal opportunity to compete and I didn't have it. [O]ne of my roommates in college who was a Pershing Rifleman also was one of the founding members of the Chicago Board Options Exchange and he called me and he knew that I wasn't real happy with what I was doing and he said, "Jim, I need some help down on the floor of the exchange, why don't you come join me?" I don't know, I didn't know the difference between a stock and a bond, much less what a stock option was and, his name was George and I said, "George, you understand, you know I don't have any experience or knowledge of economics or of these products that you're dealing in?" He said, "I know your abilities, don't worry about it, just come on down, we'll make it work." I've done that now for almost 40 years.

DOWNEY: You were actively on the floor then, working?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, I went on the floor for a year and a half and then he decided he wanted to start a discount brokerage firm, but was, he couldn't leave the floor of the exchange so he found another guy who had been a broker with Dean Witter and he, we founded, we started the company where I was part of that.

DOWNEY: That became your second career.

MUKOYAMA: Right.

DOWNEY: Let's go back to your military now. It started, you were obviously in the Reserves, how much time were you spending in the Reserves and what were you doing?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, when I joined the Reserves as I said it was an Infantry Training Division and our mission, in case of wartime, was to go to an Infantry Training Center, take over the training of the recruits so that the active duty personnel that were assigned there could then be reassigned to other units, that was the concept behind this. I started out as a Staff Officer at the Division Headquarters, then I got a Company Command, actually at the Headquarters Company of the Division, but then I got a Battalion, I was a Battalion Commander, then I became the Division G-3, the Operations Officer.

DOWNEY: What rank were you now? You were starting to move up the line quickly.

MUKOYAMA: Yes, I was actually promoted in virtually every position I had. I was promoted into a position normally of a higher, that was authorized a higher rank. For example, when I commanded my Battalion I was a Major, normally a Battalion is commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel. When I became a Brigade Commander I was a Colonel. I believe when I took over my Division much later in my career, which is normally a Major General, a two star position, I was a one star.

DOWNEY: Brigadier. Were you the youngest General then in the Army, were you made the youngest General in the Army?

MUKOYAMA: No, I was not the youngest General ever in the Army. But when I was promoted to Brigadier General, at that time I was the youngest.

DOWNEY: The youngest of the field of Generals.

MUKOYAMA: Of anybody in the Army. I was the youngest General in the Army at that time, I was 42 years old.

DOWNEY: You were 42 when you got promoted to General. I was wondering about that. You got to Major General very quickly after that as well.

MUKOYAMA: Three years.

DOWNEY: Just three years. Now we go into, you were in the 70th Division, and you were in the Training Division and Desert Storm, First Gulf War broke out, what really happened? Or how did it affect you? Let's put it that way.

MUKOYAMA: [B]efore I got to the 70th though I had worked my way up in the 85th Division. I had been in it for 18 years and I had worked my way up from Company Commander, Battalion Commander, Brigade Commander, Assistant Division Commander of the 85th Division. Then a position opened up in the 86th Army Reserve Command, which was here in the Chicago area. It was a huge command which had units in 17 states and it was a multi-branch command. In other words we had a Special Forces group, we had an Artillery Brigade, we had Psychological Operation Units, we had Civil Affairs Units, [and] we had General Hospitals. [Y]ou name it we had it, we had those huge organization, it was called the 86th Army Reserve Command and I was selected to be the Assistant, Deputy

Commanding General of that command. I moved over after 18 years strictly in Infantry Training. While I shouldn't say, the 85th Division by the way, when I was in it, changed from Infantry to Armor Training, so I had to be re-qualified as an Armor Officer during that time. Now I'm at the 85th and I'm selected to be the Deputy Commanding General of the 86th ARCOM, Army Reserve Command, where I served for four years. I'm in that command as a one-star General, that's the Deputy Commanding General position, then the Division Command of the 70th Division which is headquartered in Livonia, Michigan, which is a suburb of Detroit, opens up and I'm selected for that. I don't ask for it, they assign that to me and I'm, because of my infantry background and it's the Infantry Training Division that its mobilization station is Fort Benning, Georgia, which is home to the United States Army Infantry. I'm now the Division Commander of the 70th Division and Desert Storm starts coming up, we're not there yet, but it's starting, you can see it's going to come. I'm now the Division Commander of the 70th Division and I go down to Fort Benning and I meet the Chief of Infantry, he's the Commanding General of Fort Benning, his name is Carmen Cavezza. He's a Major General just like I am, but I am a combat veteran. I've got the patch on my right shoulder; I've got my Combat Infantryman's Badge. I go down to Fort Benning and General Cavezza and I've got the credentials to talk to him and I say, "Carmen, listen, you don't have to take my word for it, but I've got very

good soldiers here and what I want your commitment is that if my soldiers produce, I want more missions. I'm not getting enough missions out of Fort Benning." In other words I'm not getting enough training missions for my soldiers. I knew Desert Storm was coming and I wanted to get my guys trained up and he said "Deal." We worked very closely together to the point when Desert Storm hit, my Division, half of my Division was mobilized. Now there were 12 Training Divisions at that time in the Army Reserve, out of the 12 nobody had more than one brigade mobilized out of their divisions. I had half my Division mobilized and within 72 hours half my Division was at Fort Benning and my Drill Instructors were on the trail, that means training, pushing the recruits and my instructors were on the platform, that means giving the instruction, running the, doing all of the rifle ranges, all of the land navigation, the first aid, they were doing everything. The war ended so quick we all came home in 60 days. It was like I died and went to heaven. But we did our mission!

DOWNEY: Do you feel that was the peak of your career, your personal...

MUKOYAMA: [N]o, the peak of my career was when I commanded my Company in Vietnam that was the most important. That to me was, if I had to say what the thing that I enjoyed the most was, I think that would have been it, but having commanded that Infantry Division was a pretty close second, during mobilization.

DOWNEY: Number two?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, because we proved that we could do the job. For 25 years we rehearsed and we rehearsed and we rehearsed, but we didn't know, when the balloon went up, would your guys show up? And my guys performed magnificently, in spades, my Non-Commissioned Officers, here's how good they were, you'll appreciate this having been in the military as an officer. There was a brigade at Fort Benning, and this is active now, these are active soldiers and this is an active training brigade, no I'm sorry they were battalions, battalions. [O]ne of my brigades is mobilized and we arrive at Fort Benning, General Cavezza assigned the two active battalions to be subordinate to my Reserve Brigade, what that did was my Brigade Commander, therefore, wrote the officer efficiency reports for the two active duty Battalion Commanders. Unheard of! That's absolutely unheard of for reservists to have the career of active guys in his hand.

DOWNEY: I know, usually it's the other way around and it's usually a problem.

MUKOYAMA: Right, but my guys were so respected and we had developed a repoire with the guys at Fort Benning, that they knew all my officers, they knew all my people, because we had gone back and forth. I had invited them to come up to our units in Michigan and Indiana so they could see what we did at home station, they could see the training that we did to prepare our soldiers for mobilization, so they had confidence. I had a lot of Vietnam veterans who were officers.

DOWNEY: Still with you?

MUKOYAMA: Right, because once again I did that Hackworth thing, I tried to...

DOWNEY: You found people.

MUKOYAMA: Yes.

DOWNEY: How'd you go out and find them, out of curiosity, did you use his methods? He was obviously your mentor.

MUKOYAMA: No, we didn't, I didn't have the ability that he had on active duty to just cut and paste, but I could certainly, once a person was there if they weren't cutting it I could find other things for them to do.

DOWNEY: You depleted it and let the crème rise, so to speak. You worked at it from that angle? Now this, you're at the end of your career, right, basically as far as military? You decided...

MUKOYAMA: Well no, what happens then, the normal tenure for a Division Commander is four years. Desert Storm hits, my division is mobilized, I do my thing, [and] this is only two years into my tenure. At the Training and Doctrine Command Headquarters, this was called TRADOC, that's a national level headquarters, that's the headquarters that's responsible for all of the training in the United States Army and the strategy of writing our manuals for fighting. We came up with what's called the *Air-Land Battle Strategy*, which we just creamed Saddam Hussein that was our Headquarters responsibility. It's called Training and Doctrine, that's training *and* writing the doctrine. [T]he Deputy Commanding General position opens up at that Headquarters. That Headquarters was responsible for all the twelve

Training Divisions, in other words I reported to that Headquarters. [T]he position above me now opens up. I'm selected for that position. I'm now commuting from Chicago to Fort Monroe, Virginia for my drills, and I did that for four years, and that was my final assignment in the Army. I became the Army's resident expert on individual training. When I retired I was the Army's expert on individual training, even though I was a reservist, because on active duty the active guys normally don't get assigned to a training center or a training position more than once in their career. I did it for 21 out of 25 years in the Reserves, that's all I did was individual training. [I]n fact the last week I was on duty I was asked to come to the Pentagon so I could brief the Assistant Secretary of the Army on individual training.

DOWNEY: There was no third star and you didn't become a political general then?

MUKOYAMA: I could, there were times where I could have, I could have applied for Chief of Army Reserve, but I elected not to because of my family. I would have had to relocate my family. [F]or two reasons, number one I had a civilian career and I was doing okay...

DOWNEY: You were doing very well, yes.

MUKOYAMA: Number two, I had a family, and my kids at that time were teenagers, or getting close to being teenagers. I was not going to uproot them at that point in their lives, it wasn't right.

DOWNEY: That I understand. You did, after you got out you still served though, your

Japanese American Veteran's Association, there's still a mission there for you to work, you worked with the Nisei and did an outreach program.

MUKOYAMA: One thing I didn't talk to you about though was the end of my career, how my career ended. I had founded an organization called the Army Reserve Association. [T]he reason I did that was that I had seen, unfortunately, over two decades the way the Army Reserve had been treated by [the] Army. Vis-a-Vie the Army National Guard. The Army National Guard is full of great patriotic Americans who serve our country. But it is a state organization, generally, reporting to the governor of the state, although funded about 95% by the federal government it reports to the governor. Unless they're mobilized or federalized they do not have to answer to the Army or Department of Defense. [T]hey have a lot of political clout; they've got two Senators, Congressmen and the Governor that are basically supporting them. The Army Reserve, on the other hand, is a federal organization which has no mentors politically and has no political clout. As a result, whenever there [are] any organizational changes or reduction or a shuffling around of resources the Army Reserve normally took it in the chin pretty bad. As an Army Reservist I took umbrage with that, especially after Desert Storm when the Army Reserve performed extremely well. The National Guard had three combat brigades that had all of the best equipment. They had Bradley vehicles; they had Abrams tanks, when Desert Storm I, hit they were incapable of being assigned to a

combat zone. [T]he Army elected not to send them, instead sent them to the National Training Center in California, the Desert Training Center so they could train up for 90 days, but by the time that they were finished the war was over. [H]aving said that I founded the Army Reserve Association, to education congress about the Army Reserve. It was a 501c (3) organization. Now, [the] Soviet Union, early 90s, [the] Soviet Union falls apart at the seams, Desert Storm is successful, but everybody's looking for this peace dividend where they, we reduce the money going into the Defense Department, transfer it over to social services. [E]verybody's looking to cut the Army, and I know what's going to happen. The Army Reserves are going to get a bad deal out of this because we have no clout, and that's exactly what happened. Not only did it happen that way, it happened outside of the normal Army procedure for determining force structure. They went, "they" meaning the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Army Reserve, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, went to a hotel in Washington, D.C. and cut a deal, and as a result of that deal the Army Reserve, the Army Reserve Aviation was decimated, 80% of it was basically taken away from the Army Reserve and given to the Guard, as well as the Special Forces groups. There were four Special Forces groups in the Reserve components at that time, two were in the National Guard, [and] two were in the Army Reserve. [T]he Army decides, "Well we need to reduce the number, we don't need four Special Forces groups

in the reserve components, so we'll get rid of the National Guard groups, because why does the Governor need an Army, a Farsi speaking demolitions expert?" The answer is they don't, last I looked we haven't had a counter insurgency; we haven't had a guerilla operation in Illinois.

DOWNEY: Not since the Civil War, that's for sure.

MUKOYAMA: But the National Guard says, "No way, we're not going to let you do that." [T]he Army goes back to the drawing board and they say, "Okay, we'll look at readiness. Let's take a look at the four groups." [T]hey found out that the best, the most ready group, combat ready group was an Army Reserve Group, [and] the second best was a National Guard Group. [T]he solution seemed simple, we'll get rid of one Guard group, we'll get rid of one Reserve group. The National Guard would not buy that. The end result was that both Army Reserve groups were eliminated, one of which was here in Chicago, part of the 86th ARCOM that I had been the Deputy Commanding General with. I'm a big boy, I understand that there's going to be waste in taxpayers' money, waste in efficiency, I can understand that, I don't like it but I can tolerate, I can accept it. I draw the line I the sand when soldiers' lives are jeopardized. I felt, that by doing what they did, they took Army units that were combat-ready, that now, we now have non-combat-ready units because of what they did. For example, there was an Army Reserve Blackhawk helicopter Battalion out of Scott Air Force Base, Illinois that was rated one of the best Army Aviation Units period,

reserve or active. They were mobilized for Desert Storm I. They were so good that Schwarzkopf selected them for his taxi service. These guys were absolutely at the top. That unit was eliminated because of this deal and given to the Army National Guard, Illinois Army National Guard. Little problem, the Illinois Army National Guard did not have one qualified Blackhawk pilot or mechanic at that time. Once again, I'm a big boy. I say, "Okay, I can understand that, take my soldiers. Take their patches. [Take] the Reserve patches off and put the National Guard patch on, I'm okay with that." They wouldn't take the soldiers, because they're jobs for the Guard. [W]e had a unit that was C-1, that means the most highly rated combat rating that had just been to the Gulf, overnight it's C-5, C-5 means you can't send them and not only can you not send them, it's going to take you a couple years before they're even going to be able to be marginal. [W]e've now taken our force and reduced the combat readiness of it. The Army decided that they were going to have a big press conference to announce that they've had this deal between the Guard and the Reserves and everybody's happy and nobody's complaining, that wasn't true. There were a lot of people complaining about it including my Association. I tried to get the Army to hold off and not, not as a General, keep in mind I'm still an active General at this time in the Reserves. I'm also President of the Army Reserve Association as a civilian, and I'm getting calls from the field from Sergeants, Captains, Lieutenants, Privates about [how] we've

got to fight this, this is not right. And I basically fought it and I went public with it and as a result of that I was invited to testify before congress about this. I was warned by the Army, [it was] not a good idea to do that, but I had no choice in the matter. In fact I had a meeting with my family, normally before when a crisis comes up I try to bring my wife and kids into this. I told them, I said, "Here's where we're at; I've been invited to testify before Congress, if I go and testify it pretty well could affect my career. On the other hand if I don't go and testify this is going to go unchallenged, which is not right." I had no choice in the matter. "What do you think?" [M]y wife and kids just said, "You've got to do what's right, you've got to do what you think is right." My kids didn't think that it would affect my career because my career had been so good.

DOWNEY: Up until they didn't understand the politics.

MUKOYAMA: Right, they didn't understand. I went and testified and a year later I was history, basically. That's what happened.

DOWNEY: Out of curiosity did you felt it worked or, was it just a moral thing to do? Do you think the testimony, was, there an effect to it?

MUKOYAMA: There was, I knew going in that I wasn't going to win. The reason for that was the Army had already started the process, they had already started to transfer units, [and] they had already started to do things. We had asked for a GAO study and we actually got one authorized by Congress, but a GAO study normally takes six to nine months and I knew by the time that

study came out the train was so far down the track they couldn't turn it around and that's exactly what happened. In fact, though, the study did vindicate what we said. It supported everything we had said about we wasted hundreds of millions of dollars and it decreased the readiness of our units. Now, *The Army Times* actually wrote an editorial criticizing my, it didn't name us, but it actually criticized my Association by saying we were crybabies, we weren't team players. I wrote an op-ed, I just couldn't take [it]. I wrote an op-ed and in that op-ed I said, "Number one: They had said that we had said things that were not true." I said, "You haven't said what those were. Tell us in writing what our Association said that wasn't true." They couldn't, because there was nothing we said that wasn't true, but number two and I finished my article. I said, "If we go to war in the next 18 months, because of this decision there will be guys coming back in body-bags that wouldn't have." That's what I said. I wrote that in *The Army Times*. [Y]ou would think if I was chicken little and the sky was falling that they would have been inundated with letters from the field from people saying, "The General went too far." [T]hey didn't get one letter. [T]hat was the end of my Army career, now we can move on.

DOWNEY: Well you obviously didn't quit. Are you still active in that Association?

MUKOYAMA: The Association, that Association is still alive but other people are carrying that forward. I've changed, I've done other things. I was assigned, appointed by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs to be on an advisory

committee for minority veterans. I served on that committee for about five years and I was the Chairman for two years. I've also have devoted, ever since I came off of, retired from the Army, I've devoted the majority of my time to veteran's affairs and my church. And I've founded an organization called the Military Outreach Greater Chicago which is a faith-based organization to serve our military [and] their families and veterans in our communities. Because our communities nowadays, we have fewer and fewer veterans in our communities and this war, our current war, has now gone on for over a decade and we've got people who've come back from that war, and other wars, that basically need help, need assistance and a lot of our communities don't know how to provide that, how to connect the dots between the needs of the veterans and their families and the resources. There are a lot of resources out there, but they are not organized or they're not connected. The good news is that we have churches, houses of faith, in ever community. [O]ur goal is to establish a network of churches within the Chicago area that have outreach programs to our military, both active and reserve, and veterans and their family members to let them know, number one, that we appreciate what they've been doing, what they've done, what they've sacrificed, to acknowledge that service within their communities and congregations and to let them know that help is available if they need it. They can form support groups, they can send packages, and they can send letters. I understand that we are in the

internet age and I know we have Skype and all that, but anybody who's served overseas in a combat zone, if you get a letter, that's like gold. You can pull that letter out of your pocket, you can read it from time to time, you don't have electricity, you see the handwriting, sometimes if it's perfumed, just things that are special and I remember when I was overseas when I got letters, it made a big difference for my morale, and different things for the families being left behind here. The congregations or church members can babysit for the spouses, they can give them a meal, they can mow their lawn, they can shovel the snow, they can help repair the car, there are just all kinds of things that they can do to recognize and demonstrate how much we appreciate and acknowledge their service.

DOWNEY: You're still very active; you're still doing work for the Nisei, that's where I bumped into you originally.

MUKOYAMA: [T]hat's another thing too, after I retired from the Army not only did I get more involved in my church, but I was involved in a National Memorial in Washington, D.C. which is the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism. It was authorized by the United States Congress to recognize the patriotism and loyalty of Japanese Americans during World War II. I devoted seven years of my life to that memorial because we had to raise the money. Congress gave us the land, they authorized the Memorial and they said they would give us land, but they gave us a seven year deadline to raise the money, to build it, and to get it done. We had to do it all by

private donations and it mostly came from the Japanese American community because corporations saw it as an ethnic thing and they didn't want to, it was hard to get money from corporations for that. We literally had to go to the Japanese American community, which is not that large in the United States, and raise the money. But we did it, and it's one of the most beautiful memorials in Washington, D.C. It's between Union Station and the Capital Building. [I]t's gotten several awards for its architecture, but most importantly it's for the meaning. The meaning is to acknowledge what happened to a group of citizens of our country and the greatness of our nation by apologizing to that group.

DOWNEY: They deserved an apology, as many do. And you're active in the minority affairs, is that really part of this or the same type of thing, or for veterans, what did you do differently, what have you done differently? We really haven't talked a lot about that.

MUKOYAMA: Yes in the minority affairs thing, when I would work, when I was with the Department of Veterans Affairs basically what our job there was to go out throughout the country and visit different areas to make sure that the Veterans Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs programs were being effectively carried out to all veterans and what we found out is that the minorities were not taking advantage of the benefits as much as other groups. [T]hat's when I really got into this outreach thing. I really understood what the importance of outreach was, which is no more really

than getting the word out, and so I found that out, and so that's when I got more involved with understanding things that I didn't understand before. For example, Native Americans, people don't know this, the highest percentage of veterans of any minority groups are in the Native Americans and people are surprised when they hear that.

DOWNEY: Really?

MUKOYAMA: Yes. And I tell them you shouldn't be surprised for a couple of reasons, number one: there is something about the warrior ethic in the Native American Community.

DOWNEY: It's part of their culture...

MUKOYAMA: It's part of their cultural upbringing. But number two: it's a way to get off the reservation; and it's a way to raise them up. [I] got around to understanding the VA system better and the fact that veterans really don't take advantage of it because when we're separated from the service the last thing you do, and the Army does a very good job, the military does a very good job in briefing people before they leave about what their benefits are going to be and the transition to the VA. [F]rankly, when you're leaving the service you don't listen to any of that stuff. I remember when I was leaving I said, "Give me my ticket, where do I sign?" and that's it, you don't pay any attention to that. [T]he important thing now, that's why I founded this Military Outreach Greater Chicago, we've got to get the word out to the Vets. Not only get the word out to them but connect them to the

resources, there's so many good resources out there that are to help our Vets and they certainly need it now. Marriages, military marriages, unfortunately are really at a high rate of divorce, you've got a lot of people who've come back with post-traumatic stress or with traumatic brain injury. The good news is on the post-traumatic stress is it can be treated, but it's got to be identified and once again veterans are reluctant to seek help because we've always, when we're in the military you're taught you don't want to admit that you have this weakness, so we've got to change that culture so that people understand it's not a weakness it's something that's happened. It can be treated and it happens to everybody, it happens to Generals, there're Generals who've had PTSD. [W]e need to get that word out to people. [T]he most important thing is just to let people know that we understand what they're going through and that we appreciate what they've done.

DOWNEY: We certainly appreciate what you've done. I really only have one more question, there usually is some very simple questions we ask what the service has done for you, but you've more than answered any of those questions and what you've done for the service. One question we haven't really talked about at all is the change in the Army in the time you were in, obviously we were in during McNamara's 500, it was a drafted Army, there were a lot of frag incidents, it was different than it is today so you've seen it come from one type to strictly a self-serving Army, a volunteer

Army, do you have any comments on that because you've gone through the gamut from beginning to end, that's the only question I really have left.

MUKOYAMA: When the Army decided to go all-volunteer, I was not in favor of it.

DOWNEY: Really?

MUKOYAMA: I was concerned that, I was really concerned as to whether we would have a mix, a continued mix of a social-economic citizenry in the service and that has proven to be totally unwarranted. I'm extremely, extremely pleased and proud of our Armed Forces. I go to Great Lakes Naval Training Center every other Sunday as part of a Military Ministry that I've been involved in for 11 years now. I feel like I'm almost [US] Navy, almost Navy now, also, as far as Army, because I've gone up there. Because Great Lakes today is the US Navy's only Recruit Training Center. They've closed all the others, so anybody who joins the United States Navy today as an enlisted person must come to Chicago and go to Great Lakes, there's 40-50,000 a year that are training just as recruits. I've been going there now every other Sunday for the last 11 years and I'm so impressed with the young men and women that are coming through. By the way about 20 percent are women, and once again that reflects on the service as a whole. Our military has been at the forefront of equal opportunity in our society. President Truman integrated the Armed Forces in 1948, the first major institution in our culture that really integrated; women have had equal pay for equal work in the military for decades and

decades. Having said that it's been really a good experience, when the all-volunteer Army came up I was not in favor of it, but I can tell you that we now have, today, probably the most, it's got to be one of the most highly educated, you can't be a dummy and join the army today with all of the electronic stuff that's going on. [A]lso the motivation of these soldiers and sailors, especially the sailors the recruits I see, for whatever reason they join the military and we all know that when you join the military it's not always for patriotic reasons, although that's the underlying foundational thing, [they] want to gain skills, people want to, if there's a tough economy like we have today they want to have an opportunity to get employment and education is a big deal, a real big benefit of joining the military and rightfully so. I'm really pleased with the skillsets and the patriotism and the morale of our troops, it's very high and I'm very honored to be associated with them.

DOWNEY: Is there anything you want to bring up? Anything that we haven't crossed over, anything about the military, anything any subject matter?

MUKOYAMA: Yes I would say that I've been asked in the past, do I miss the military. And my answer is I don't miss the military, but I miss the people. The honor of serving with fellow citizens from all walks of life, from all ethnicities. That's the one thing about being in the military, I found myself actually forgetting people's ethnicities. I would forget people, the color of people's skins or where they're background's from, I would just think of

them as whatever their rank and their job was, Captain so-and-so, Sergeant so-and-so, whatever. One of the phrases that I used, which might sound funny, but in the Army I always saw everybody as "Olive drab".

DOWNEY: The O-D.

MUKOYAMA: Yes. They weren't brown or yellow or black or white or whatever, they were olive drab.

DOWNEY: Do you think they saw you as olive drab?

MUKOYAMA: Yes I think so. [I]t was, I think that's the trend. [Y]ou catch yourself not even thinking about it.

- Interviewers Change -

PRITZKER: I heard you mention his (Hackworth's) name once or twice. It seems like while you were in the Army it was Hackworth.

MUKOYAMA: Well no it was more than Hackworth, there were a whole bunch of guys in the Army Reserve that were my mentors, General Levine being one of them but he was so far, you have to understand Captain to Major General is a huge, a huge void there, there are a whole bunch of guys in between.

PRITZKER: It's a long table of ranks.

MUKOYAMA: Right, but I had, I'll never forget when I was at the Chief of Staff of the Division when I was on the Division Staff he really pushed me to go to the Army War College. The Army War College is one of the things that they look at when they select potential Generals and it's one of the tickets that you have to get punched, and it was something that I wasn't really that

interested in doing, but I wasn't even given an option by one of my bosses, he just said, "You're going to sign up for it".

PRITZKER: [Y]ou were talking about the War College and him, Levine pushing you to do that?

MUKOYAMA: Well, no, it wasn't General Levine who pushed me to go to the War College, but I guess if we want to talk, let me review. When I first met General Levine it was when I joined the Division, when I first joined the Division in 1970. I had come back from Vietnam and I decided to join the Army Reserves and at that time I didn't know anything about the Reserves whatsoever and I came to the Division, I was assigned in the Division General Staff as in the operations section, it's called the G-3 section. I was assigned there [and] I would see General Levine from time to time. You have to remember at that time I was a Captain and he was a Major General and you don't see the General that often unless you are his aide and his aide is a Junior Officer who basically goes with him everywhere he goes. [T]hat was not my position I was a staff officer. I would see General Levine from time to time; I wouldn't see him that often. But I can tell you the importance of him being a leader of the Division and that is his policies that were very clear from the time I got to the Division, and the standards that he had established because it was an extremely professional organization. There were people in the key positions who were all very competent professional officers and the ones that I was closer to would be

at a lower rank than the General. They would be Colonels or maybe Lieutenant Colonels that would have been my managers or supervisors. General Levine's policies permeated the Division and his influence was very clear. One of the things that I remember that I will always remember that he stressed was the importance of family. You have to understand this is an Army Reserve Unit. Reserve Unit means that the members of the unit are full time civilians with other jobs that put bread and butter on the table and the reserve function is part-time, part of their lives. In theory as reservists, you're supposed to attend one weekend drill per month and two weeks of active duty somewhere during the year, it's called, annual training. As a minimum, as a Reservist, annually, you're putting in 24 days, that's two weekend days a month plus another 14 days on active duty throughout the year, now that's the minimum. When you're in a position of responsibility as an Officer or as a Non-Commissioned Officer you devote more than that amount of time. I'm talking about the amount of time where the unit is actually meeting, but we have what are called administrative drills. Administrative drills are additional meetings that, normally, they were once a week and they would be in the evenings like a Tuesday or Wednesday evening, mid-week, and those would be times when the leaders would get together and they would plan out the functions of the drills when the whole unit would be meeting because the unit can't function, you can't function just by meeting once a month. You've got to

be, there are things that happen throughout the whole month, correspondence comes into the unit and somebody's got to deal with all of that, well the leadership does that, basically, and the leadership plans for the training, plans for how they're going to accomplish what they're being assigned. [T]here's a lot of time that a Reservist has to put in, but keep in mind they still also have their family, their family lives, so a Reservist is like a juggler, you've got these three balls that you're trying to keep up in the air at the same time. One is your family, your family commitments. Number two is your job, because that is what puts bread and butter on the table as I said, and number three is your military career. [W]hen I say career, it is a profession, and you have to continually stay abreast of different things that are going on in the military. New doctrine, new equipment, as you get promoted in rank there are different levels of military education. For example: when you're a Lieutenant there's what's called Officer's Basic Course, and that's the very first course that you take which gives you the foundation for being an officer. Then, as you're promoted, they have what's called the Advanced Course, and the Advanced Course is normally for Captains, that's for people who have been in five or six years. And then above that the next level is called a Command and General Staff College, and above that is the Army War College, which is the highest level and normally confers a Master's Degree upon completion. [T]here's a lot of requirements that you have as a

Reservist above and beyond just attending drills. [G]etting back to the influence of General Levine on recognizing the family, as a Reservist you cannot function unless your family is supporting you. There's just no way, especially if your spouse, either husband or wife, they have to sacrifice if you're in the Reserves. Just imagine you're, and it never failed, when I was gone on my Reserve training, either on the weekend or maybe my two weeks annual training. That's when the car would break down or that's when the furnace would break down or that's when we might get a snow storm, and I'm not there. My wife has to take care of all of that while she's got the children and in my case my parents were living with us. She's got to do everything while I'm gone, that's not easy, [and] that's very difficult. General Levine recognized that and he always recognized the spouses at, whenever we had any unit affairs where the family was there or at our drills he would always remind us, he would remind the unit members that you've got to appreciate and support your family members who are supporting you. And not a lot of Commanders did that, because a lot of Commanders were not as family oriented as General Levine, they would just think about, "Get your job done and do what you have to do." They wouldn't encourage the sensitivity for their other family members.

PRITZKER: That's amazing, but it sounds like Levine had his priorities set.

MUKOYAMA: [A]bsolutely and I think it's because of his combat experience. I didn't know, this is another thing about Veterans that you will find out, most

Veterans won't talk about their, especially their combat experiences if they've been in combat, for several reasons. Number one: it's something that you want to put behind you, it's something that you've experienced, it's not something that you, most of us, I believe are very proud of our service and our experience, but I don't think we want to live in the past, we want to move on. There are a lot of painful experiences or things that happened, but the human mind is very resilient and it has a good way of remembering the good things and passing over the bad things and putting them behind you.

PRITZKER: Like moving on, so to speak?

MUKOYAMA: Right, yes. [I]t's, and the other thing is most Veterans, I think, are fairly humble, they don't see themselves as heroes. I don't see myself as a hero. I see myself as someone who's served my nation and I consider myself fortunate that I have had the opportunity to serve, that I had the honor to serve with other citizens who are. You've heard the phrase "band of brothers" well band of brothers and sisters is so true, anybody who's served in the military, there's a special bond that we have because we've gone through something together that we know what it's about and other people, unless they've done it, will not be able to understand. It's a very special thing and it's something to be honored and to be enjoyed. It's an honor for me to be, for example with World War II Veterans who have been my personal heroes, especially the Japanese Americans, because

those Veterans really paved the way for equal opportunity for all Asian Americans, not just Japanese Americans, but all Asian Americans in our culture. They helped; they pushed forward the calendar or the time of equal opportunity in this nation. In the European Theater of Operations we had millions of people who served, it might have been 6 to 10 million during World War II. When you're in a combat theater of operations the reputation of units spreads like wildfire, either good or bad. If a unit is real good you'll know about it and if they're very bad you'll know about it and the Japanese American Infantry Units during World War II were the most highly decorated Infantry Units of their size in the history of the Army.

PRITZKER: That's absolutely incredible; one question this is leading me to ask is since you're Japanese American and Levine was Jewish, did you two ever discuss that? How you may have felt being of Japanese descent and how Levine felt being Jewish in a predominantly Caucasian, Christian Army?

MUKOYAMA: Yes and the answer to that very simply is no. That subject, because, now you have to understand, the military is a reflection of our society, there's no getting around that. You will have red-necks or you will have your small, very small percentage of jerks in the military just like you have anywhere else. I think I can comfortably say that it is much less in the military than it is in the general society because we live and die together and this bond is extremely special. You virtually, the subject doesn't come up because you don't see a lot of that going on. You don't see a lot of

prejudice happening because it's not going to be tolerated; it's not going to be tolerated in the good units. When you have leadership like Levine, when you have people who are sensitive and they won't tolerate it. If they see it happen, the Army has been very clear about equal opportunity. [S]ure you'll have exceptions that will occur from time to time.

PRITZKER: Recently they repealed *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* for example. Would you say that was like, the last segment to make it pretty much purely equal opportunity in the Army?

MUKOYAMA: No. I would say that first of all you're talking about two different things here. When you're talking about equal opportunity, equal opportunity has been available to everybody regardless of their race or sexual orientation as long as they weren't trying to push it on other people. That has never been a handicap, so I don't, and I see that situation of the *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*, that is a whole different conversation we could have as to whether, is that a difference of something that somebody can actually, is it an outward activity or is it something that you have. I can't change my skin. I can't change my genetics so to speak, but I can decide whether I'm going to do something or not do something, that I have control over.

PRITZKER: Yes I guess, so that's what the major difference is and why they're in completely different categories. But getting back to Levine, did he ever talk about his civilian life or his childhood or anything like that?

MUKOYAMA: No not to me. I'm sure he did to people that would have been closer in

rank to him. [L]et's say if I were Jewish, maybe if we were together at some occasion he might have shared something with me because I shared common faith or experience. But, we in the military, the fact that we are treated equal pretty well, that's why the subject doesn't come up so much within the military about prejudice, because it's not tolerated. It, should not, it is not tolerated in units. [T]hen as far as personal things, I just remembered when his first wife passed away, I remembered that, how everyone in the Division felt so bad because we knew how much his family meant to him. He had stressed so much to us the importance of family we all felt a loss, when he lost his first wife and we had lost something important also.

PRITZKER: It was a part of him that you guys all lost.

MUKOYAMA: Yes. We knew it affected him.

PRITZKER: And what affected him affected the unit.

MUKOYAMA: Right. The other thing was he emphasized professionalism in the unit and that was very clear. When I say, professionalism that a very high standard of performance, and that individuals do their jobs properly and accomplish their mission in a timely manner and work until it's done. We all knew that was what was expected. That's why we were so successful as a unit. We had a very high esprit in our unit, a very high degree of morale within the Division.

PRITZKER: That must have been very influential and motivational on so many

different fronts.

MUKOYAMA: Yes. I didn't know what his civilian job was; all I knew was that he was successful.

PRITZKER: I know he was involved in plastics. Which was I know was common at that time, including my Grandfather also did that and he was actually a chemist at Oak Ridge during World War II. And I just remember hearing that plastic was a very common profession, I guess, 40 years ago or so. It sounds like he contributed quite a bit to the Reserves and it sounded like his leadership was to the highest of standards and it sounds like he left quite an impression on you in many of the leadership positions you've been in.

MUKOYAMA: As I said, I think the fact that the people that he selected to be his immediate subordinates at the higher level were all extremely professional and competent people.

PRITZKER: Was he like Hackworth in terms of that sense that he could pick up who could do it and who couldn't right away?

MUKOYAMA: Yes, I'm sure he was although I wasn't privy to; I wasn't close enough to him at that time to know exactly when something happened whether he, how he reacted or what he did. All I could see was the results which were the choices that he made in terms of who he put in those positions and they were all very fine officers. The strength of the organization, and not only that but he had good Non-Commissioned Officers in different

positions too, it permeates throughout the whole organization. I think that his experience in combat in World War II, he landed at Normandy with the 4th Infantry Division, in fact I didn't know about that until later, after he had retired. Once again he doesn't, you don't talk about those things.

PRITZKER: What was your relationship with him outside of the military like, in more recent years? Because I remember when I went to Levine's house to meet him, Dr. Born who's writing the book mentioned your name and right now Levine is 97 years old and he can't really talk, but he can completely understand what we're saying and nod his head and he beamed, I saw a great smile on his face when your name was mentioned.

MUKOYAMA: [H]e, General Levine was; he's always taken interest in my career. I made it a point of calling him myself, at least annually, just to check in with him, to see how he was doing. To thank him for his leadership in the past and just to let him know how much I appreciated his leadership. I wanted him to understand, that even though he was out of sight, he was not out of mind in terms of the influence he had on the Division and myself. Don't forget I had served in that Division for 18 years. Now he was already gone for most of the time that I had served in that Division. But he, I don't know if you, you probably know this, he designed the patch of the Division that we wore for about, I'd say probably 10 years.

PRITZKER: That I knew and that's fascinating that he did that.

MUKOYAMA: It's a Pentagon in an octagon because 85th is the numerical division, the

numerical designation of the Division. [T]he best influence he had was just the values that he passed on to the soldiers and the sensitivity to the families was just huge. For a Reservist it is so important, people just don't understand that because it's a unique situation, there's a lot of stress for a Reservist, as I said, because of the balancing act that they have to do.

PRITZKER: Is there anything else about Levine that you wish to add?

MUKOYAMA: Yes I wish I could be more helpful to the Doctor on his biography but I really wasn't, I didn't have a lot of personal time with General Levine over the years. It's really just his influence and his demeanor. He always carried himself as I would imagine a General should.

PRITZKER: He held his head up high.

MUKOYAMA: Yes, he was always a gentleman. [T]hat's the other thing I haven't mentioned, he was a gentleman; he really was. [W]e always say that being an officer, part of that is being a gentleman, and having not only character but the way you carry yourself and it's just the way you treat people. He always treated people equally and not condescendingly, but you always felt that he cared. If I were to define the importance of General Levine in my life it's the fact of caring, and the fact that he just exuded caring for others and secondly was the professionalism.

PRITZKER: It sounds like he was quite a man.

MUKOYAMA: Absolutely, I feel honored to, and then the more you find out about him it just validates, I didn't know about his World War II experiences until

much later and it's...

PRITZKER: It sounds like he never personally talked to you about what he did when he was liberating Dachau for example.

MUKOYAMA: Oh yes, I would have had no idea about that whatsoever. It's good; it's great that somebody is actually digging into that to make sure that that's historically maintained so people know that, it's important.

PRITZKER: I'm also very glad to know that he knows we're doing it and that he he's aware that his legacy is going to be preserved and cared for.

MUKOYAMA: Right, absolutely.

PRITZKER: Because a man of his accomplishment, I can't think of anybody who could deserve that more. Based on everything I've read, heard, seen, and the way his presence is in general, I'm honored that I get to be involved in this to see this man's legacy here.

MUKOYAMA: Are you going to be seeing him again, do you think?

PRITZKER: I hope so.

MUKOYAMA: When you do, give him my regards, tell him that I said hello.

PRITZKER: Absolutely, in fact on the 10th his wife, Rhoda, is coming over here.

MUKOYAMA: Yes say hello to her for me too because she's...

PRITZKER: I will, I'll tell her to pass that on to him.

MUKOYAMA: Right. Yes. Because I, whenever I called over there and talk she would always answer the phone and I'd say hello to her and talk to her a little bit. He's had a very good life. He's, just like I have, we've, both been very

blessed, Andrew.

PRITZKER: It's something. You've had such a career. Am I correct that you were the first Asian American to Command a Battalion?

MUKOYAMA: No, an Army Division.

PRITZKER: An Army Division.

MUKOYAMA: Right. I was the first Asian American to Command an Army Division. I feel good about that because General Levine knows that too and I was one of his officers. That's one of the joys of being in the military, to see people who follow you be successful. You really feel good about that when you see someone who was, you can see them develop and go through these different stages and once they get to a certain stage you have a degree of satisfaction from that, to see that happen. I'm sure when I became a General, General Levine was very pleased about that because saw me when I was a Captain. He knew I had potential when I came in, that I remember, he knew that I was an officer that had a potential for the future.

PRITZKER: It seems like you both just had a great deal of mutual respect.

MUKOYAMA: Well absolutely, I was just very fortunate to serve under him. Being successful, a lot has to do with luck.

PRITZKER: Or making your own luck, so to speak.

MUKOYAMA: Well sometimes, but there are a lot of guys who never made General who were much more qualified than I was. They just weren't at the right place at the right time or they didn't have mentors like I did like Levine. I

recognize that, I recognize that there's a certain element of luck. Sure, you have to work hard and you have to pay your dues and you have to of course set the personal example yourself. Having said all that, there were a whole bunch of guys who worked just as hard as I did, but just weren't fortunate enough to be in the position that I was.

PRITZKER: Yes, it sounds like, it's hard work, discipline, with everything else, some luck.

MUKOYAMA: But it's also, Andrew, and I think you've seen this before because you were at some of the other functions; it's an element of faith, too. My faith is what really gives me my life's purpose. It gives me optimism in my own life. That's why my standard mantra, as you know, every day is a great day, I have my faith, my family, we live in the finest country in the world and those are my priorities in life.

PRITZKER: That's such a great attitude and I respect that a lot and it shows that nothing can be taken for granted. And that you also have to, and with you it seems you respect what all the positive things that have happened in your life and the successful direction everything seems to have gone in for the most part, so that's amazing and I have just so much respect for that.

MUKOYAMA: You know I've had my fair share of, just like anybody else Andrew, I've had my failures in life, I've made my mistakes, I've had betrayals. Having said all of that I have been so blessed and four months ago I had a heart-attack.

PRITZKER: I didn't hear that.

MUKOYAMA: I [was] in the hospital and I [was] going into the operating room and the standard procedure is they ask you, "What's your name? What's your age? How do you feel?" So here I am, I say, "Jim Mukoyama, August 3rd, '44. Every day is a great day. I've got my faith, my family, we, live in the finest country in the world." I went I had three procedures in two days. I can't tell you the conversations that generated with the doctors and the nurses. People were just asking me, "What's your faith?" "Where do you go to church?" I truly, feel that way. No matter what God decides, I've been blessed and I know what he's, whatever he has in mind is going to be the best for me, so I've got a peace of mind from my faith which carries me through anything and I'm extremely blessed.

PRITZKER: Well, that is definitely good to hear. Thank you so much for your time and sharing your stories with us.

MUKOYAMA: Oh. It was my pleasure.