

Transcription: Tim Jenkins

Today is Friday, September 7, 2012. My name is James Crabtree and this morning I'll be interviewing Mr. Tim Jenkins. This interview is taking place in the General Land Office Building in Austin, Texas, and it is being conducted in support of the Texas Veterans Land Board Voices of Veterans Oral History Program. Sir, thanks for taking the time to chat with me a little bit today.

Tim Jenkins: Thank you.

I understand you just started here at the Land Office recently, but before that you were in the Marine Corps and in the Army, correct?

Tim Jenkins: Right, my military career spanned from 1981 to 2004.

So a long career and a couple of different branches.

Tim Jenkins: Yes.

The one question I always ask before I do these interviews is to tell us a little bit about your childhood and your life before you went in the military and kind of what it was that made you want to go into the military.

Tim Jenkins: Well, even pre-dating my birth, our family was born in the manner we had ancestors who've fought since the French and Indian Wars, so our military heritage in the United States goes back through all the generations and includes ship's captains that actually helped bring over some of the Pilgrims in the Jamestown settlers.

So you learned about this sort of family history when you were a child.

Tim Jenkins: I did, the heritage, but then it was all oral history. You didn't have things like Ancestry and some really good things, so I think, and my father was serving the country at the time in the CIA, and I'd knew the background before that he'd gone through the Marines.

So definitely an influence on you and in your life.

Tim Jenkins: Yes.

Where were you born?

Tim Jenkins: Shreveport, Louisiana.

Did you grow up in Louisiana?

Tim Jenkins: I did. I was born there and then we as a family moved to Saigon for three years. My first language was Vietnamese actually.

Wow, how old were you at that time?

Tim Jenkins: I was 2 to 4. It would be 1962 to '64.

Wow, so your first language was Vietnamese. Do you still speak it?

Tim Jenkins: No, no one else learned it, so -

So you lost it.

Tim Jenkins: Now my older sister, at least she acted as though she could interpret for me. The reason I picked it up is because we had Vietnamese maids that basically raised me and took care of me as a kid, so I learned to talk and eat the same way. For years I would squat and eat with my seniors.

That would have been interesting living over there. Were you aware though at that time that you were an American or that your life might have been a little different than other folks?

Tim Jenkins: I was mainly when we moved back. My folks, dad got some new assignments and redeployed to some Latin American missions after that one. Then my mother moved us back to Shreveport and we came back and I was a little towhead running around jabbering and having a sister have to explain to people. I think it had an effect on me. I know with my brothers and sisters we were different, and my folks got a divorce around that same time, too, so a lot of transition there for the family to come back into just settling in Shreveport in the mid-1960s versus my brothers and sisters had lived, two of them were born on Saipan.

Did you know at that time, or when was it that you knew that your dad was in the CIA? Was he undercover or was he open about his job?

Tim Jenkins: No, I can remember a couple of times having to go, you know, at the beginning of school you used to fill out a form, and for father's profession, I'd have to go find my brother and ask my teacher, can I go ask my brother what I'm supposed to write down? Typically it was something like Army technical advisor is what I think we'd call it. So I had a little confusion but I knew it was something like that. We were watching James Bond movies all the time.

When was it that you eventually learned what your dad did or did he ever really talk to you about it?

Tim Jenkins: Probably around 8 or 9. In fact, I can remember at the time he was doing something off in Cambodia, and he had written me a letter and sent me a piece of shrapnel and said hey, our village just got hit. This is what it looks like when it comes in. We're OK, don't worry, I just know you're interested in this kind of thing. I remember getting that, and then there used to be a Saturday morning thing, Walter Cronkite would do like This Is Your World, or I can't remember the name of it, but it was about the time protests were starting to kick up, and my brothers were of the age that they were debating whether I don't know if I'll go or not, I hope I don't get drafted, or maybe those kind of things. I remember just going around that day, walking around my neighborhood, and my mother used to like to talk about this. I sat her down and made this very dramatic, mom, I have a decision. I've decided I have to go to Vietnam when I'm of the age.

How old were you at this time?

Tim Jenkins: 7. So she used to laugh about how serious I was, and I reached an important decision here. So yeah, it's always been there.

And you dad had been in the Marine Corps. So then when was it that you went into the Marines?

Tim Jenkins: I enlisted in 1981.

It was largely because you dad had been in the Marine Corps, you felt like it attracted you?

Tim Jenkins: I think so. That was there and just kind of the sense in '81, I don't mean to sound political or anything, but I remember being at a party, they lived in northern Virginia and I was going to school in Louisiana, and a lot of his friends, I got to know them, and the question just came up. What are you doing? What are you doing here? Reagan just got elected. You need to go where the best are. So I kind of got a little of that coaching Marine Corps guidance, look, if you're gonna go, you want to go with the best.

So did you go to MCRD San Diego?

Tim Jenkins: Yes.

When did you go?

Tim Jenkins: I enlisted in Virginia. But there's that thing if your father went to one of the – he went to San Diego because he enlisted in Louisiana. So I chose to do that, a good choice. I got made fun of, but -

That's where I went to boot camp.

Tim Jenkins: So we were the running Marines and they were the thumping Marines, at least -

Hollywood Marines, they call it, too.

Tim Jenkins: I didn't mind that a bit.

Or you say if they go to Paris Island, they're the hump wavers. They have to deal with the big hills and stuff. So when you got out there, was it what you expected when you got to boot camp?

Tim Jenkins: I was pretty well prepared. Also, I was 20. I had gotten an Associate's Degree, and had a chance to really look into it and understand what I was going into. So I'd just finished an internship at Fairfax County. I was living with dad at the time. And he backed it, go do your homework, talk to everybody, see. I remember going to the Air Force recruiter and this guy said, his big pitch was, hey, look man, you don't have to worry about the haircut thing because we've got guys who actually wear wigs to drill. So you could do that, because I had curly hair at the time. You wouldn't have to cut the hair. All right, thank you for your time.

A little different from the Marine Corps.

Tim Jenkins: Right, so I went there and then the recruiter, and it was legitimate, through cartography school, and I was interested and I ended up getting a Bachelor's Degree in geography after I got out of boot camp.

So that was your MOS in the Marine Corps?

Tim Jenkins: No, it should've been, I just wasn't patient enough. The slots were spread out and I think we only got 10 seats a year at the time and it just didn't work out.

So what did you end up with?

Tim Jenkins: Combat engineer, the next best thing, right? That's what the DI said. And I got selected for cartography, but they said OK, now what's going to happen is the school doesn't start for 5 months or something like that, and I was kind of timing things to get back to college in time for the spring semester.

So you were a Reservist then, so you went to boot camp in the summer time?

Tim Jenkins: Well, I finished in November.

So you took a semester off then or something like that?

Tim Jenkins: Yeah. And I was trying to time things. If cartography school had been within the fall sometime, even December or something, I would've certainly gone to that. But I was anxious, and in boot camp you get selected for different officer commissioning programs that they approach you with, and they had talked to me about NAPS, the Naval Academy Prep School, but I already had two years of college under my belt and I didn't want to go start again. It's just the way you think when you're that age.

So you graduated from MCRD San Diego and then you got sent to your MOS school.

Tim Jenkins: I went to Lejeune for combat engineer school.

Then after that did you go to a Reserve unit, or were you on active?

Tim Jenkins: I got accepted for the PLC program, the platoon leader's course, but timing again.

That would've been close to home in Quantico.

Tim Jenkins: I know, and my intentions were to go to like Maryland or GWU or a school up that way, but I had gotten an Associate's Degree in construction inspections, and they weren't gonna take, I would've been starting again to go up there, so I went back to the school I had gone to back in Louisiana because they converted all my credits, so I was basically two years into the program, and then I went into geography. So I was in a Reserve unit in Shreveport, actually the one my father started back in 1949, '48. He had started, part of what he did was start Reserve units in Shreveport and around Georgia.

Neat. I used to be with 123. We went to Iraq and we had a Reserve unit from Bojor City, but they were engineers, and at some point they transferred them over.

Tim Jenkins: These weren't either, it was a Dragon platoon. It was a weapons company.

Yeah, the weapons company now is here in Austin, but they moved that stuff around over the decades and such, but probably the successor from the unit that you had joined. It was Bravo Company 123 that's up there now in Bojer City.

Tim Jenkins: I need to let my dad know that. They were at the fairgrounds in Shreveport when they started. There was a Naval Reserve unit, collocated, so -

So you'd go do your one weekend a month, and two weeks in the summer and that sort of thing?

Tim Jenkins: Well, not that long. I did about four or five months of drills and didn't make it to an AT, or I forget what the Marines call it.

Yeah, an AT annual training.

Tim Jenkins: Because when I got back to my college, a good buddy of mine talked to the ROTC commander there and they came after me hard and at the same time, the PLC timing wasn't working out and it looked like I wasn't going to get to go to that first course that upcoming summer, so the Army guys got to me and started, hey we got scholarships and we got this and that, and at that point I was trying to become totally independent where I wasn't relying on folk's money for anything. So with the ROTC scholarship package, the chance that I could be in immediately and be right on a two-year track to get commissioned, and by then I think I already decided I wanted to be in military intelligence.

And they were able to give you that MOS I guess?

Tim Jenkins: Well, they are recruiter's too in their own way, so this time I got to nail it down a little more, OK, is there some weird thing, and it was exciting because they just had so much to offer and I felt like as far as the Marines go, I was kind of on an island away from Hyattsville where the PLC program was managed, so I got swayed.

Made the switch into the Army.

Tim Jenkins: Marines are romantic anyway, I mean, so literally I'd wake up in the middle of the night going, losing the vision of when my dad would hand me the saber, the commissioning father to son thing. That was part of the hardest part. He finally said son, I never really could handle a saber anyway, so let's do what's best for you. We need to get you out in the world as fast as possible. There's a few delays here, but -

Did the Army guys give you a hard time about being a Marine?

Tim Jenkins: Oh yeah, that was always, rolling up my sleeves just out of habit, I'd roll them different, and had to wear them high and tight, and Army guys just let them, anything around the elbows, it just drove me crazy.

But I guess it had to have helped you in a certain way though that you'd already been through Marine Corps basic training in West school, and you probably knew a little bit more than just the average new ROTC in that sense.

Tim Jenkins: Yeah, the good thing is we had a pretty good cadre of guys that had been, used the simultaneous membership program they called it, where you'd be in a National Guard unit or Reserve unit and be an E4 or E5. Typically you know how Reserve units are. I mean if you got a college kid who's an E4, usually he's going to, the Army's weird about not calling people corporals, but basically perform like a corporal in the Marine Corps. So I had a lot of good guys like that, and it was exciting because there was a competition thing there, and hey, the more you do, the more – and that was very appealing to me.

So when did you get commissioned?

Tim Jenkins: 1984.

Then you went on active duty at that point?

Tim Jenkins: Yes.

So where did you go to?

Tim Jenkins: Fort Wachuca for military intelligence basic course.

Out in Arizona. Did you like that?

Tim Jenkins: Oh yeah.

Out in the desert and a lot of history there. I know that's still an operational base and it's always kind of been, or it's been for a long time an intelligence -

Tim Jenkins: Yeah, it was mainly an intelligence training center and then they had that big signal command, kind of research and development signal command also there. That was actually the larger headquarters. So I think the base commander was a signals guy, not an MI guy. But mainly border surveillance started to get run out of there for a while. I think they didn't want to have it operationalize for Intel. Maybe it's because of the signal. That was above a second lieutenant, brand new knowledge, but need to know.

So you went there for your schooling and then where did you get assigned to for your full time unit?

Tim Jenkins: I ended up coming back to Fort Polk, Louisiana, with the Infantry Division.

I guess that wouldn't have been that far from your home, Shreveport.

Tim Jenkins: People had moved, and so it wasn't, really it was more of a decision that my branch manager talked me into. I was supposed to come to Fort Hood, but back then, well it's huge now, but in that Army of that time, it was so big that the basic course I went to was the first one that they had done. The Army had converted to what they called a tactical all source Intel officer, and I was in the 1st or 2nd class of that, and so the G2 at 5th Infantry had told the branch manager, look, I need those guys because at the time the big thing was to go to the national training center out at Fort Irwin, and 5th Infantry was all in. I mean if somebody cancelled, they took it. I spent more days in the field at Fort Irwin than when I was at Fort Polk. I guess my point is, so when the branch manager came, he had been at Fort Polk his first assignment and got

to be a scout platoon leader. He said the opportunities are there for you that aren't going to be at Fort Hood, because so many guys more senior to you, but right now you can go fill a captain slot and be in combat task force.

Did you like Fort Polk?

Tim Jenkins: Yeah, I loved, I didn't, the environment there was limited -

Hot, limited and kind of small.

Tim Jenkins: It was kind of not exactly the right place to train up to go to Fort Irwin and do desert warfare.

A little different, yeah.

Tim Jenkins: So I got the feel for both things. Now it's a training center itself.

That's right. I spent a little time there, a couple of weeks there in 2004, and we stayed in some old wooden World War II barracks.

Tim Jenkins: North Fork. That used to be called the Devil Brigades. They were like the special troops command, and then you had 5th Infantry Division as a mechanized division.

It was just hot and humid and those barracks, I was kind of surprised that old World War II wooden barracks would still be in existence, but they were and they were using them. It felt like we were a long way from anywhere.

Tim Jenkins: Now it's a housing. So that was enough, and I was the quarterback on our flag football team and my favorite receiver, we got to be good buddies and he had gotten the same offer from the branch manager. I forget where he was going to go. He was from Iowa State. So we drank some beers in the club that night and kind of decided together, hey, let's go do something. So they brought me and him together as kind of this pair and we got assigned competing armor battalion S2 positions. And S2 is do everything no one else wants to do when you are in garrison position, so we were public affairs officers for our two battalions. So we'd write articles every week and got this competition, it got to be a joke around the post about let's see how interesting Jenkins can make tank gunnery range that happens every week with somebody, how he's going to make it sound like it's the most unique experience anyone can have. Pete would do the same thing when his battalion would go, and it was just this kind of funny – you know, the PA on the post liked it because at least it fed something, the pictures, and I got 'em TV news back in Shreveport. So it was a fun thing for that, and real tight. The officer corps there was just extremely tight.

You ended up doing 20+ years in the Army, right?

Tim Jenkins: Yes.

What did you retire as?

Tim Jenkins: A major.

That's great. And did you stay in your specialty the whole time, Intel?

Tim Jenkins: I went from tactical Intel to strategic. I got selected for what's called the Strategic Intelligence Corps, or postgraduate intelligence program where you go to Boeing Air Force Base at Defense Intelligence Agency, and it's a degree producing program. It's required to get, you got to take that to get the strategic intelligence analyst MOS. So I was interested in that with geography background and dad's career and world affairs view of things, and I felt I'd done pretty hard duty as a tactical guy, so I got that, went to DC and got a Master's Degree in strategic intelligence and then got assigned to Pacific Command.

Where was that at?

Tim Jenkins: Camp Smith, Hawaii.

OK, that's a pretty nice spot.

Tim Jenkins: Yeah, well Custer, funny, that really was his name, the branch manager, John Custer, and yes, he looked just like George Custer.

He was in the Army?

Tim Jenkins: Yeah, and he'd been a scout platoon leader, but he was an MI guy. He still, he had put it in that after that I could pretty much pick wherever I got to go.

That's a pretty sweet gig, go out to Hawaii. How long did you spend out there?

Tim Jenkins: We were there three years, and then I got off active duty there. It was '92 when they had the big -

A lot of draw down.

Tim Jenkins: Payoff, here, we'll pay you \$40 grand to go to grad school. And yeah, my wife was getting her Master's in toxicology, and that was a good duty. But I ended up switching, I did strategic analysis for two years, folks down in southeast Asia and Muslim insurgency, and everyone yawned back then. In 1992, Muslims, what?

Some contract work, DOD contractors and that sort of thing. You definitely would have been ahead of the curve back in '92 talking about that sort of thing.

Tim Jenkins: Yeah, in fact I was the first desk analyst to use a PC.

That's amazing, you don't realize that.

Tim Jenkins: Because we had this big thing called the pix machine, and that's where we picked up all the Intel reports and regular just anything. A big screen like that with the green text. Just what the old movies showed.

That wasn't that long ago, 20 something years ago, but it's changed a lot.

Tim Jenkins: I imagine anyone would be even willing to use something like that, but so yeah, I always felt, I was always willing to be the guinea pig on things. I mean just like doing that thing to take the assignment at Fort Polk and be the first of these tactical off-source guys. Before that they stove-piped everybody. You were either a signal Intel guy, you were a human James Bond guy, or you were going to be, my TAK officer at the basic course said, we all went out to eat and drink in Tombstone one night, and this guy was funny. He was an old Vietnam vet, and he just said, and he was Infantry, you MI puker, man, you either want to be a librarian or you want to be James Bond. I can't figure you out. You all try to act like James Bond when you're in something like that, but back at the schoolhouse you act like a bunch of librarians. So this split personality of the MI person.

That's funny. And when you got out in '92, did you go into the Reserves at that point?

Tim Jenkins: Yeah, I came back here to go to grad school at UT and then went, got in, there was a battalion right there at Camp Mabry, because they were cap-stoned to the 49th Armor Division of Texas National Guard at the time, and so we were their military intelligence unit. The Russians hit the fold it, we'd have gone to the 49th, we would have gone to Fort Hood, the 3rd Corps.

I think there's always been a lot of confusion, too, with folks, at least in my mind is the difference between the Army Reserve and the National Guard, and you guys were actually Army Reserve, right?

Tim Jenkins: Right, and then it was important to have a federal unit as the MI unit because the law, I can't quote it anymore, but it was that state militias or state forces even though they're federal, they under the Department of the Army, couldn't have collection assets because I guess they thought they would use them for political purposes. So because we had signals intelligence assets, we had to be a federal Reserve unit even though everything we did and were planning to do was to be part of the 49th Armored. So we were the 549th in my battalion. We had a foot in both. Split personality.

So do they still have kind of Army Reserve units, or are they all kind of more integrated with the National Guards?

Tim Jenkins: What happened, and this was what I spent most of my Reserve career doing, once they decided to transform the Army to lighter units, they decided that the 49th was going to become the 36th Infantry, because that's what they needed more of, large armor columns, after missions started to change. So what happened on the Reserve side with MI is we had linguists in our units who, because the idea was here we go off to Europe to collect signal intelligence against Germans and Russians and Czechs, so my unit had, those were the kind of linguists I had, but what was happening, because it was a linguist unit, you know how Reserves are, you got to, people are looking, they don't want to drive halfway across Texas to go to Reserve unit. So we started getting these college kids who enlisted, got MI as their MOS, came back to school at UT and A&M, Texas State, wherever, and they were studying Arabic, and a lot of them were looking for jobs with Exxon so they were studying Tagalic, Indonesian, Pilipino, that's how rusty I got, but looking at southeast Asia, like Vietnamese because of the Spratli Islands and the oil potential there. So here we go, we got this happening, so I was an operations officer at the time, an S3, and so I had to, I didn't want to lose these kind of skills, so I started stockpiling all these linguists and turning them into analysts. And then the other trend, we were getting very IT-savvy guys. I mean I had one soldier, he had a Master's from Columbia in information systems and was

working for University of Texas, and he was a Specialist 4. I said OK, it's time, let's put the packet in. I want you to be a warrant officer. He'd go uh, uh-uh. So what we did with him, we kind of created a new type of analyst we called it. What we wanted were people that had multiple language skills. This was all a test, a thing we were doing with the training center. There's an MI training center in San Antonio. Where can we take these guys like this, repurpose them from putting earphones on and listening to the air waves, to online collection, which was all illegal now, but at the time – because that's where the work would be. So this guy was the prototype for a whole new type of analyst and what happened, all this started going on, and Army Reserve looked at it and the Department of the Army realized there was this whole new information operations thing, which isn't new, it's just a new way to call a lot of things we'd been doing. So they decided they were going to convert all these old MI battalions like ours that were cap-stoned to a National Guard combat division and convert them to linguist battalions that were meant to support deployments and all kinds of things. And then decided that they were gonna create what we called information operation centers.

Yeah, a lot of that happened after 911 or before?

Tim Jenkins: This was before. This was mid-90s. So we took what used to be a military intelligence battalion that had all source – I mean we had counterintelligence guys, linguist interpreters, interrogators, analysts, all that all packed in one battalion. So we split out the OK, what the Army really needs is linguist translators because we were doing Bosnia and all these other kind of things, so they wanted, so here we were converting these guys that had developed these skills as collectors and linguists, like that, well you don't talk. You are listening and translating, not talking to anybody. But when the big-wigs, they don't think about something like that. They just go oh, they are linguists. So we had to change, I mean we used to not even test a linguist, I mean we would test it, but it wasn't a requirement to hold their MOS. It was listening and writing, translating. So what happened was as the S3 I had to start packaging people to missions, and then this IOC thing came along, and I put my hand up to be the project officer for that. We were gonna start here in Austin. We did start it in Austin. That was really interesting. There was no guidance, nothing.

That was down at Mabry?

Tim Jenkins: Most of our drills were done at the Round Rock Public Works Department because I worked at Round Rock at the time. The mayor was a former National Guard intelligence guy, so one night it was kind of happenstance, because he was always interested, what are you doing now in the Reserves? I told him kind of what I just told you. Said well now I've got this bunch of guys that are going to be information operations guys and I've got legal clerks, I've got people that have shown this capability, and we were supposed to be, when they first started information ops, it was more like civil affairs than it was like IT. So my first purpose was to gather all these specific skills that would be people that could either do propaganda campaigns or any number of things. So I told him, but now I am the project officer for this IOC and I'm looking to command it eventually, but I don't have any computer networks, I don't have anything to practice on. He said talk to Noos, your boss, and see what – and so at the same time when I was working at the city, I was a community development guy and I had just set up a micro-enterprise center in downtown for startup businesses. Back then, T1 line, that was like wow, so I used CDBG money to set up these entrepreneurs, and most of them were IT startup types. Well it ended up about three or four of my soldiers ended up actually qualifying as low, moderate income businesses, and we created a little cell there and blended city community development with military information operations. We didn't drill in uniform. A lot of what we

had to do was required training, so what it turned out, we ended up being information assurance people because regular Army didn't want to do that, give that to the Reserves, and go do that boring stuff. So with that, drills became, the best thing I could do for drills, the soldiers could support themselves to train technically better than the Army could provide them facilities. So we'd show up, do PT in the morning, I'd do accountability, issue on their assignments, and they'd go do their training, the certificate would get produced, they would send that to me, I'd lump all that together, sign off on it, and send it to Virginia at the big IOC, and that was their drill. I forget the form numbers and all, but because you had the time tracking. They did their training, and you probably believe in it, too. You don't train to time, you train to standard. If I gave them five assignments to train on, if they were genius enough to get through it, some of those guys they probably figured out a way to go hack the system and cheat. But here, put out five certificates that say this.

Were you in that billet when 911 happened?

Tim Jenkins: I was but by then it had gotten more formalized. We weren't drilling in my basement anymore. We had gotten moved to San Antonio and they created the southwest information operations center and got a lot more formalized, at Fort Sam Houston, and so I was with that unit when 911 hit.

Did you get mobilized at all?

Tim Jenkins: Yes, I got 2002 they started calling my commander, some guys that knew me were now commanding units and requesting me by name and my commander could say yay or nay, and he kept doing that, and then finally Yukom put out, I forget what happened, the DA said hey, you can't say no anymore kind of message. So I got sent to European command to a unit in Kaiser slot in the 21st Theater support group. That's mobilization central. That's where everything gets, that's Log E command I called it, because Ramstein Air Force Base is right there, and then Lonjstool Medical was there, so we had everyone going in and the guys coming out. So I got put in the unit that was supposed to be part of the northern invasion group. We were gonna go 1st Infantry Division, we were going to be the force protection element for them as we went through Turkey, and then turn south to go into Iraq.

I remember that.

Tim Jenkins: I got a lot of opinions on that. Had it been done, I think we would have sealed off Syria and those guys wouldn't have gotten out because we kept punching up the middle and that's where they ex-filtrated.

Turkey said no.

Tim Jenkins: Because we couldn't seal it because all we did was put in an Airborne brigade and they hung around with the Kurds.

So did that keep you from being able to go into Iraq or did you get deployed?

Tim Jenkins: So we were ready to go. I was living in barracks there, and I got put in a unit that was a local Reserve unit, so all those guys lived there.

They lived in Germany?

Tim Jenkins: Yeah, they lived, so for them this was extended AT.

That's strange. I didn't know they had such a thing in Germany.

Tim Jenkins: Three of us got yanked out of our lives and sent over there, so I took the Intel officer billet, and we got a chemical officer out of Seattle who had been in IRR for six years. He hated the Army. He was a hippie living on a sailboat.

So he was involuntarily recalled.

Tim Jenkins: Oh yeah. He showed up getting ready to be court marshaled.

That's too bad.

Tim Jenkins: So I went to the commander and I said look, the biggest threat we see is chemical, right? The Kurds guys got 'em that don't like the Turks. I said why don't you give me this chemical officer, get him out from under this West Point anal retentive woman major he got assigned to, because literally the first night she wanted him court marshaled. Said this is the kind of guy he's gonna go put peanut butter on his butt and go to the doctor and try to convince him he's crazy. Let him be with Reserve guys that are just like him and this other guy from Arkansas, this other major was a real laid back cool guy, so we talked to the commander, give him to us and let's keep him out of trouble at least. You don't need this. Because everything was high vis. Any kind of weird thing like that was amplified because we were on alert. So we were on 30-minute alert so we couldn't go do the nice Germany things that you think about doing when you are in southern Germany. You know, we could go to Kaiserschlag and come back. So once the Turks voted it down to let the force come through, I started trying to get into the Airborne brigade in Italy because we knew somebody's goin'. Once SoComm took over the north, so they took it away from European command and gave northern Iraq to SoComm. Rumsfeld did that the day after the Turks – so there was a lot of speculation that that was all a diversion that we were never really gonna march 500 miles across Turkey. But we couldn't know that, but I got suspicions that maybe we were never really gonna do that. Because everyone thought Afghanistan was the model for everything. So Rummy flew over with Colin Powell when Turkey had their vote, which failed by like 5 votes, so come on. If Turkish generals wanted the vote, they would have gotten – so once all that started going down, I went and started asking for a transfer. I said do you need an Airborne MI guy? There's slots there, I'm here, just put me there. Never that easy.

So you were never able to get into Iraq.

Tim Jenkins: No, so I found out later a guy that was assigned at the Pentagon at the Army Reserve command who aren't deployable assets, by the way, flew in the night before they jumped to get his combat jump. So he had already wired it. So I was sitting there trying to plug a hole that really wasn't a hole. So I kind of went sour on things, not bad, just –

Sure, no, I understand though, there are certain -

Tim Jenkins: The high and tight starts getting fuzzy, a little less oo-ah in the hallways, so I kind of started working on my disengagement plan, and these other two guys, they were still a problem, or potential problem guys. So I did a lot of research on how they mobile, we were

illegally mobile, everyone in war time does, well actually we were supposed to go through the combat readiness center at Fort Bening and be processed.

They didn't send you there.

Tim Jenkins: Yeah, I got over there, and ran the qualification range which was OK because I used to do that a lot, and I liked doing that when I was a younger officer, but I hadn't even qualified on my 45 for beretta for 8 years because I was in this geek unit down in San Antonio. We didn't go to the woods. We certainly didn't go to qualifying range, you know. So we didn't shoot, we didn't have any weapons issued or anything, so I'd been geek man for 8 years now running the range. Fortunately this other guy from Arkansas was in a training division in Oklahoma and that's what they did, so I grabbed him and said OK, I'll do this part of it and you do the –

So when you got to about 2004 then that's when you pretty much decided I'm gonna go ahead and -

Tim Jenkins: Yeah, I got back in '03. Then because I was doing grad school and other things, I didn't go all the way through command general staff college, and to be in that unit I was in, we needed to have all these qualifications and certifications, civilian certifications about information security –

It can be a lot.

Tim Jenkins: And every year it just became more and more, and no one knew what was coming. We couldn't anticipate what the requirements were, and I always believed in leading by example. I mean we're going to ask the soldiers to suck it up and midnight courses online which compared to other military things that doesn't sound so bad, but when it's affecting people's lives and it's peace time, so I just made a choice. I liked being a major, I liked being in a project level. I felt I could serve soldiers better that, I'd commanded 40 units. I didn't need to command again.

Yeah, that's pretty good to get that many.

Tim Jenkins: So and by then my kids, I was coaching baseball and football, and pursuing a lot of training on the civilian side, so that's kind of my excuse of not going all the way and trying to make lieutenant colonel.

Well, that's a good career. So you are actually retired, so when you reach I guess it's 62 or 65 you'll be able to draw actual Reserve retirement which isn't bad. That's good. And now you're at the Land Office and you've been here for about a month, and there's quite a few veterans that work here as well. I don't know if you've gotten to meet many of them. There's quite a few that are here that are veterans.

Tim Jenkins: It's a very homey feeling. What's cool is I've got one of the projects I've been assigned is to some of their IT initiatives, call center, outreach, dashboard reporting, those kind of things, so that's really nice to be able to do.

Yeah, it's a great place to work and especially with the Veterans Land Board being part of the Land Office and all that it does for veterans and this program is just kind of an extension of that

as well, so I know Commissioner Patterson having been a veteran Marine, I'd say the VLB is probably pretty close to his heart out of all the different parts of the Land Office.

Tim Jenkins: I'll tell you when I called my dad and said hey, I'm working at the General Land Office, he was ecstatic. It sounded like whenever I enlisted and got commissioned, you know.

It's a good place to be.

Tim Jenkins: That's great, that's the place, I've been hoping that's where you'd end up if you're gonna stay in government work.

It's a good spot and a lot of good camaraderie around here and definitely a lot of appreciation for veterans, too. So I'm glad that I was able to interview you and then also glad that you are interested in doing some of these interviews because now you've had a chance to see how these interviews go. So we'll go ahead and conclude the interview now and we'll chat a little bit more. Again, thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Tim Jenkins: Thank you.

[End of recording]