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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

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SUBJECT OF DOCUMENT: [use relevant bold-face introductory terms]

Oral history interview with Stuart H. Clarke
[full name of interviewee]
about ^{MSC} early recruitment efforts
[main focus of interview]

Title: 1962 - Personnel Division
[interviewee's current and/or former title and affiliation]

Interview conducted by Robert B. Merrifield, Staff
[interviewer's name/position]
Historian at ^{MSC}
[location of interview]

Transcript and tape(s). [for inventory only: # pages 3; # tapes 1]

CONTENTS:

Biographical - [date/place of birth; family background] _____

Education - _____

Career Path - *Army Ballistic Missile Agency*
U.S. Army, Huntsville, Ala ; 1961 -
Space Task Group

Topics - *Early^{personnel} recruitment efforts; establishment*
by three offices: New York, Dallas, Los Angeles;
esprit de corps of STG + MSC; attracting
personnel to Texas; importance of administrative
management at MSC; approachability of
management.

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Interview with Stuart H. Clarke
7/25/68

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Prior to coming to work for STG in July 1961, I worked for the Army in Huntsville, Alabama. After I agreed to come, they allowed me to spend about 4 days out of every 2 weeks at Hampton.

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In those days we had few people and what we had were all young. In recruiting we found that even though our people were young, it was very difficult to find anyone else as well qualified as they. In many instances we had to use people who were GS-11's, 12's, and 13's, in positions that we knew would subsequently be 15's or even supergrades and excepted positions, as they were the best qualified for the job.

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Even before the John Glenn flight we started receiving a lot of applications. Thousands of applications started pouring in after Shepherd and Grissom's flights. To handle recruitment we convinced Hjernevik of the necessity for establishing 3 area recruiting offices-- one in New York, one in Texas, and one in California. These were to handle the many applications and interviews we had, especially among college students. Al Siepert who was then Hjernevik's boss in Washington liked the idea, but decided he would take over the effort and run the recruiting offices from NASA Hqs. Bob Boyd was put in charge of the office in Los Angeles, and Gene Lovelace, in Dallas, and Bill Howe, in New York.

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Some of our early problems in recruiting revolved around the need to establish positions that we could recruit against, which is the normal procedure. We quickly decided that that wasn't feasible. Things were just moving too fast. We decided instead to establish grades on the basis

of alignment and functions which actually turned out to be a very crude way of doing it and surprisingly enough very accurate as far as classification was concerned.

Another problem was that we didn't know where we were going to be located as a Center.

61 More than any other organization I've ever been with there was an esprit de corps in STG, and subsequently in MSC. I've never seen it equaled and probably never will. This is one of the reasons we were able to attract so many of the people who were long residents of Virginia and weren't happy about having to go to Texas, and even if it meant a lot of personal sacrifices to their families. We had more than one case where the wife was so tied to her job that she left her children and went to Texas and subsequently was divorced. This was not a good thing, but it evidences some of the emotions that people had as far as their work was concerned. The only other organization I'd been with previously that had anything approaching this esprit was probably the Army Ballistic Missile Agency in Huntsville when that was established in '56.

73 Another thing that struck me then and I haven't seen since, was for the first time in my career administrative management was as important and played as important a role as the engineering and scientific side of the house. Hjernevik was a part of management and played a key decision making role. I attribute this to Hjernevik's ability to sell himself and his administration to Gilruth, Williams, etc. This required the rest of us to live up to his image. This made the administrative officers under Hjernevik more important and more interesting. It was the first time I felt really a part of management. This was highlighted by Gilruth.

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Walt Stallard and I were working on a group of excepted appointments and we presented our position descriptions and the writeups on the individuals to Gilruth and Williams. Gilruth remarked at that meeting that this was the first time he had ever had personnel people prepare these kinds of documents for him. In the past, he had to sit down, usually after hours to justify in writing the use of an excepted position. It made us feel good to participate in these kinds of assignments. It was the kind of organization where we could walk into Gilruth's office or Williams', and Hjernevik was the type individual who never got his nose out of joint when you did, although obviously we had to keep him informed as to what we were doing. In the few months I was there before we had our rapid growth, we got on a first name basis with all the managers and sub-managers and project leaders.