

Proculo L. Mojica interview, 28 July 1985

I went [to Vietnam] with the Freedom Company. [At that time I was already out of the Philippine Armed Forces.] I was a former guerrilla officer, captain. Later I was commissioned in the AUS. . . . I was the security officer of General Lansdale [in] 1954, '55, '56, '57. [As a member of the Saigon Military Mission, I was responsible] only for the house of General Lansdale, for him personally. Because they believed that it was better that security be of the same color as the Vietnamese, rather than a white man. I was always with the Colonel.

. . . Frisco San Juan and the other Hunter officers picked up the former Hunter officers--the other guerrillas--and they told us to organize the Freedom Company. Then we were introduced to . . . Colonel Lansdale.

I saw to it that everything there--including the household people--were under me. I had to watch all this and watch, of course, all the guests that came in. I was always armed.

One of my duties also was to see to it that all the cars of all the officers who were with us were inspected for mines. There were several bombings of military jeeps. Some were instigated, of course, by the French. Whenever he would go out, he would ask us to come along, we could pose as driver.

There were [also] times when he was in conferences . . . and felt that some of these were not exactly trustworthy. He would ask us, if you see anything strange, start shooting. That's how he is. Don't ask--start shooting. We went prepared to do that. . . . When friends of his come in, like General Trinh Minh The's guerrillas, I was always peeping from my door. And he would come to my room and say, take it easy, because my gun was always at my side. Take it easy.

We had a lot of arms, an arsenal. [I used a] .38. Lots of ammunition. We could have taken a siege, except for big guns . . . . We had arms to fight, and then with their communication system, a lot of the Saigon boys would be coming over. We were not afraid.

[In 1955 he lived at] number 65 Rue Duitan. Before the French name was Carcrie. Then it was changed to Duitan. . . . It was a two-story affair, and within the same compound as the house was a back house for cooks, the launderer. There was a drive where about 5-6 cars parked. I saw to it that these are safe from mines.

We had a dog, Pierre. He loved that dog so much. I think he was a gray poodle. The both of us cut his hair.

[There was a wall around the compound.] When Col Napoleon Valeriano was with us, thieves were able to get into the house and . . . we were all taken unawares. [The thief] was particularly interested in the decorations of Col. Valeriano. I don't know what else he was able to get. Pierre was sleeping there beside the Colonel's room, but later on the dog sided with me. For security reasons he better be with me.

[There were] 8 officers, maybe I count 10 [in the house]. There was

captains, and there were LTCs, full colonel. . . . I not only took care of security, I had to also become a server of the people, so I was both security officer and the mess officer, and then personal bodyguard, of course. Whenever he goes to conferences, I have to go.

. . . He wanted me to keep the weapon . . . not exposed . . . but I had to make a good watch, because sometimes only the two of us go around, in Cao Dai country where we know nobody. He has a lot of friends, of course, but we can never tell what are friends or what not. Sometimes, I fear when he goes into a particularly wooded woods and I had to force myself to go. I don't like the places where he goes. [LAUGHTER]

[By 1968, EGL living at 194 Cong Le.] The former [street name was] General De Gaulle that goes to the airport has been renamed as Cong Le. [I was by that time no longer working for EGL but for Ecoy, but in 1968] during the heat of the firefighting in Cholon, we could see the Americans who were occupying the PX building, about 4-6 stories [high]. There were Americans in the back of our compound and they could see the building and we could see the fire. We asked by radio, we asked the GIs at our back, can you see there in front of us? They say, yes, the fire is already burning here. (summary: called his friend who was now EGLs security officer to tell EGL to do something about the Americans at the PX bldg; in danger and cannot get out, streets barricaded. Told him he could confirm by calling the Americans at their back. Sent a big force.) (much material about Tet fighting omitted; has actually nothing to do with EGL.) So after Tet, I don't know where he was assigned, but he did help us a lot during the worst of Tet in Saigon.

I was chosen [to be EGLs bodyguard] by Colonel Bohannan . . . . It was LT Smith who gave me the briefing: you are to act as the personal bodyguard of the colonel. You are to act as the security officer of this compound. You are to have whatever is necessary for the upkeep of the house, like going to the commissary for all of them, and to see that what is cooked is safe. See that everything is in order and no bombs. That was my job.

[When EGL wanted to leave for somewhere] he just [say] let's go. Just come along. He doesn't inquire whether I have a gun, I have it all the time. Sometimes we would go to a meeting and I would just guard the car. There were times we would go outside the city, and there is where I begin to have goose flesh. [LAUGHTER]

I never see him worry. He loves the Vietnamese . . .

He was a friendly fellow. He was not very particular about what uniform you wear. He is unorthodox. But when he talks with others, they are all serious. I really kept quiet when he becomes serious. He is respected by all the colonels around him. When he talks business, he was serious. He can be grave if he wants to and I have seen him. But he is a jolly fellow, he easily mix with people, VNese and Filipinos. . . . He was concerned with the smallest details of what we were [doing] in Saigon at those times. He would ask in the middle of the night, how are you, Prock? Sort of fatherly; well, like a friend. Even during . . . the crisis, he could throw jokes and you forget the crisis around you.

One time when we were eating, when claymore mines were all over Saigon and so many American jeeps actually were blown up; it was a rainy day and because of my job as security, there was a loud thunder clap--I stood up, and Ed said, Prock, take it easy; that's a thunder clap. (LAUGHTER) They were all laughing at me, and Ed said, relax, Prock. I felt embarrassed.

In our days in Saigon, after they had come from TRIM, all the officers would be asking the VNese bartender, give us drink; how about you, Prock? I don't drink. All I drink is soda pop. He liked me more because I could stay on duty sober all the time. He was very happy. He heard me playing my guitar. Oh, you know how to play a guitar. Then he went upstairs and came down with a harmonica. From time to time when there are guests in the house, the next number on the program will be a duet between myself and Prock. He would play the harmonica all those old American songs. Prock, will you kindly sing some Hunter songs for us. I do that.