

of the Army. Well, I had good experience in the Army. After I got out I had a first-class job here with a steel company. I was the chairman of the board and had a ten-year contract and that was fine. I made more money in that ten years than I had made in my whole career. And I became independent so far as that is concerned on that. Of course, the retired pay and so on. When I retired as a general, my pay was only about \$700 a month and I couldn't do any more than live in a little town at home and pay my bills and eat. I couldn't do anything. Of course, now it's about three or four times as much. For no reason at all. Well, maybe it was due all the time. But I know now as a retired officer, I get about \$2,000. In those days I only got \$700 and I had a family; well, I had a wife and so on. I haven't got anybody to support but myself and I got more money than I know what to do with. But that's the ups and downs of life.

Q: I think that your statement, "Maybe it was due all along" is true, and you just didn't get it. In 1955 when you retired, you still needed a lot more than that.

A: But we never did. We never did. Those were poverty wages in those days.

The Philippines

Q: You mentioned that you had wanted to go to the War College, but this job in the Philippines became available and had you not taken it you would have had to wait three years.

A: Oh, I never would have gotten it.

Q: I believe the job you started in there didn't have the significance of what you later did in the Philippines, as I recall?

A: Oh, it was the same thing. I was regimental commander of the 14th Engineers and Division Engineer of the Philippine Division. That was my job from the beginning.

Q: And that was just when the Engineers were first forming, is that correct?

A: Oh, no, they'd been there since the Insurrection.

Q: Oh, they did have an Engineer regiment.

A: Oh, there was the old regiment of the 14th Engineers and the old regiment had been there for, I don't know how many years, 20 or 30 years. It was all settled. We were living out at [Fort] McKinley, permanent barracks, very comfortable. They were fine people-those scouts, crackerjacks. Just as loyal. Nobody got drunk. They had a little trouble with gambling but that wasn't too much. Nobody ever got drunk. If you had any trouble with one, if he was late or he wasn't doing his duty, you would threaten not to reenlist him. That really put him on the line. Because all of them supported big families and they were doing it, the private soldiers in those days, for about \$15 and they were getting 15 pesos. We had a *barrio* which belonged to us we'd built. They were just shacks, bamboo shacks up on stilts. Well, we had one and we ran it and I think the rent on the house was only \$2.50 or something like that.

Q: That was called a *barrio*?

A: They were a *barrio* that was a town. Every regiment had its *barrio*. And they were clean and kept well and they were very much compact and all the *parientes* and relatives came in and lived with anybody that got a job as a soldier. Whether you were a private or not he supported the whole family and sometimes had ten or twelve relatives living with him. And they had only one room. It seems to me a room about as big as this, and they had a kitchen back behind. I don't think they had any bathing facilities. It was a very simple thing, but they were just crazy to get into them and live in them and they'd bring their parents, their grandparents. They had to put rules on how many people they could keep because they couldn't afford it. They'd all move in just as soon as a soldier had a house in the *barrio*.

Q: Being the Division Engineer then, you were directly on General MacArthur's staff?

A: No, no. He was not then the division commander.

Q: Oh, that's right.

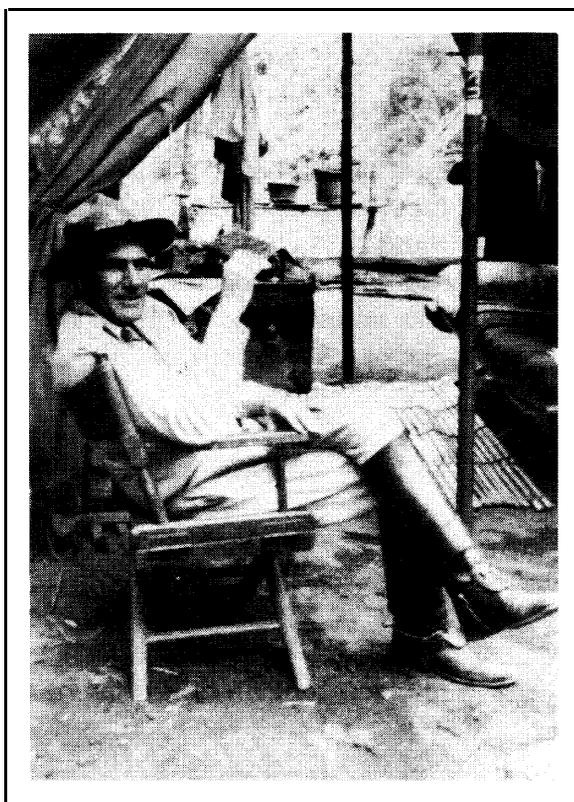
A: He didn't come over until later. I'd been there, oh, a couple of years before General MacArthur's mission came. He didn't come over there until—

Q: 1937?

A: He came over in 1937 and I was only there for one year. I went over in 1935 you see. I had been there two years.

Q: Did he bring General Eisenhower with him?

A: Yes, Eisenhower was his chief of staff at that time. He brought a staff with him. He had Jim Ord [James B. Oral, USMA 1915], who was a classmate of Eisenhower's, who was a crackerjack. But Jim was killed in an airplane accident just after I left the Philippines. Redly, Ord was the best man in the entire outfit, had more sense, and knew more about it. I didn't



Major William M. Hoge seated outside his tent in the Philippines after a day with his soldiers in the field, 1937.

think Ike—Ike was fine and he did well, but he didn't have the knowledge of things. Of course, Ike spent all his afternoons playing bridge. MacArthur and Eisenhower lived in the Manila Hotel. You see, I was on Bataan when I got this message. I was over there building those roads,

and I got this message as soon as we got back to come and see Eisenhower. Well, Eisenhower offered me this job as Engineer for the Philippine Army, and I said, "Well, first of all I'm going to stay with the 14th Engineers and I'm going to live at Fort McKinley. Now, I'm perfectly willing." We only worked in the division in the mornings; we worked up till about one o'clock; then we had all afternoons off. I said, "I'll work every afternoon for the Philippine Army but I'm going to stay there and I'm going to keep my command." Well, he said that was all right. So he took me down to General MacArthur and introduced me. They made me Chief Engineer of the new Philippine Army.

That was the most fantastic army because, as I told you before, it was based on the Swiss conception of a volunteer army or a national army, which was made up of these people who served for a year or so, then went to a first reserve, then went to a second reserve. They had these depots where they kept their weapons, and they'd go back and they'd train every summer. They'd go back and get their own weapons, go out and train for a month or whatever it was, and they'd go back into the reserves again. So that was the idea. It was all right except it wasn't fitted to the Filipino nature or his capability. It was far beyond the possibilities of finances or anything else. As I told you, the total budget was 16 million pesos, which is only \$8 million a year for an army which was visualized at around 250,000. And you had to buy the clothes and so on. Well, they did use some sense about the clothes. They brought some local things, bamboo hats made out of palms or something like that.

Q: Continuing the discussion on the Philippine Army and MacArthur's idea of modeling after the Swiss Army. Now was that originated by General MacArthur?

A: Well, as far as I know, it was brought over by him when he came there with the staff. He had an adjutant general. What was his name? I've forgotten. Eisenhower was his chief and Jim Ord was, I don't know what his particular title was, but he was a good one. He was a planner or something, G-3 [assistant military advisor].

Q: What was General Eisenhower's grade at that time?

A: He was a lieutenant colonel, as I remember it. He had an adjutant general, a doctor, and several others. He had a staff of about four or five or six people.

Q: Now did the General Staff also get off at one o'clock in the afternoon? Is that when General Eisenhower played his bridge?

A: I don't know. I never saw any of them after one o'clock in the afternoon. I used to go down there after I'd gotten through. We trained in the morning at McKinley with the regiment. It wasn't heavy training in those days, with peacetime actually. Those men had been in the service for 18 or 20 years. So, I'd just go around to inspect them, look after them, and then I'd go down to headquarters in Manila to see Ike. Sometimes I went in to see a fellow named General MacArthur, and he would talk. You never could get anything out of him. Always big ideas. And when I started to organize the Corps of Engineers, I figured out that I was supposed to have 1,600 officer personnel; and you know how many there were? I had one man who had been through some technical school as a so-called engineer. The rest of them—I had a few of them, reserve officers, but wasn't permitted to take constabulary officers who had some military training. This all had to start from scratch. And we started the Corps of Engineers with five or six officers and nothing else. We had to build the whole thing. And in addition, we had all this other work we had to do—build barracks at training camps. Oh, I don't know what all we had to do. I know we had to build barracks. Later we had to build these mobilization centers, but it went up by civil construction; it was impossible.

But the [Philippine] Army, as I say, would have been ten divisions at one time, and it was multiplied every year. So by bringing in ten new ones and these weren't first reserve and second reserve and then getting ten more, it became quite a big thing. Of course, the people who were in training camps got out and a new batch came in. I went around and inspected a lot of these training camps, and I didn't have much to do with the training. I had nothing to do. I was trying to do construction and get things organized and find out what was going on. They had a few constabulary officers, who were old ex-noncoms but had been constabulary. But the constabulary in those days was only a police force; it wasn't a military force. They had some military training. But that was

their cadre for training all over this army. We had these grandiose ideas. As I say, it was one of the most fantastic things I have ever heard of.

Q: How far along did it get?

A: It lasted as long as I was there. I was only with it a year, then [Lucius DuB., Jr.] Clay took it over and later [Hugh J.] Casey, both Engineers. They came over there on other work, to do some civil work, build dams and so on in the Philippines; and they were siphoned off when I left and one of them took over my job. I think Clay took it first and later he came back, and Casey took it over and stayed. But he was the Chief Engineer then after that. It was just out of a dream world, this army he was going to create.

Q: Did that seem to be a trend of General MacArthur's throughout his career?

A: I don't know. I don't know what you mean by trend.

Q: Well, the Inchon Landing was a classic. Nobody thought it could be done.

A: Oh, that was much better. Of course, the other was a complete failure. The defense—he had nobody to depend on. When the Japs invaded, the Philippine Army just dissolved, disappeared. They were nothing but civilians who had some guns, retreating in front of the Japs and all; they wound up in Bataan-what was left. And got over there and stayed for a year and that was over with. I used to go and see General MacArthur and try to talk to him but all he would do—he had this big room. Oh, his office was twice as big as this is long, and he'd sit me on the couch over in the corner and he'd start talking. Well, he'd talk more about football and West Point than he did about the Army. And he was always walking. He never sat down. He just walked back and forth. He was always as pleasant and nice as he could be, but I never could figure the session out: where we were going to get these officers from, what we were going to do about it. I don't know and I never did find out. I recruited some officers. I think I got about, before I left there, I had about 80 or 90 so-called officers for the Corps of Engineers out of, what did I say, 3,500

or something like that. That was my target and I'd just try to multiply this thing out and try to think what we were aiming at. It was just beyond all comprehension to do anything. It was just dreamland. As I say, when I went down there, I inspected these divisions before I left, that one down on Mindanao. The division commander said he put shoes on them. They were all lame. They couldn't march anymore. They were through.

Q: Well, you would think that giving them a year on active duty before they went into the second reserve that they would have been a little more capable?

A: Well, they were just recruits and they had no officers to speak of. The officers were trained along with them. We started a military academy and got a Filipino, a graduate of the [US] Military Academy, as superintendent and commandant. One of my officers, who was a graduate of the Military Academy, named Romero [Rufo C. Romero, USMA 193 1], went up there later as a commandant, I think. But we had almost nothing to start from. And you can't multiply that fast with that type of people. They were willing to do anything. You never went to a Filipino that he didn't salute and say, "Yes, sir, yes, sir." Always did, and he didn't know what the hell you were talking about. He didn't understand you. I remember when we were in the Philippines working out of Fort McKinley. It had come on the rainy season and we had those houses there. During the dry season, the hot season, we kept all the windows, I mean upstairs, open to let in the air and get some circulation. But when the rain started we had to get everything battened down because it just rained, it just poured, when that started. Mrs. Hoge asked me to send somebody over to close those windows in the attic, close them up before the rain started. Well, this sergeant came over and they always saluted Mrs. Hoge and called her "Yes mum" and so on. She asked, "What did you come for, sergeant?" He said, "I come to open all the windows and let in a lot of fresh air." That was all he knew about it because all Americans wanted fresh air. But he wouldn't understand that they close things up when the rain starts. They were nice people, just as loyal and good. They were way back in the Middle Ages.

Q: During that time, prior to World War II, when General MacArthur came to the Philippines, did he already have business interests established in the Philippines or did he develop those later?

A: He had no business interests that I know of in the Philippines. He was [appointed] Field Marshal of the Philippine Army by [President Manuel] Quezon but he lived in the Manila Hotel. Well, I think he got married while he was there. I know his second wife came over there on a world tour and stopped and stayed in the Manila Hotel, and she was a very fine woman.

Q: On that particular tour in the Philippines, what do you look back on as your most significant contribution or the most significant opportunities there?

A: Well, it was knowing the people, knowing the islands. I think I knew the Philippine Islands better than any other American except possibly those old-timers, who had gone over there from the very beginning. Now there were several excellent books written during General [Leonard] Wood's time and before that; that was part of it. My greatest contribution, I think, was the building of the roads and the opening up of Bataan.

We did that all with troops. We had no civilian labor at all, but I also got troops from [Camp] Stotsenberg, always got a battalion of artillery and some cavalry. They came down from Stotsenberg; I don't know [if] they ever had any infantry with me, but I had my own regiment, which of course [was] then the "Bobtail regiment, " only one battalion [and] the headquarters, that was all in the regiment. But that's what we did the road with. We got some wonderful experience and got to know the Philippines and the Filipinos. While I was on the Bataan Peninsula, Eisenhower called me up and offered me this job as chief engineer for MacArthur; and I told him at that time I would be happy to do it, but I would have to do it in extra time, that I would not give up my regiment. So, of course, in those days in the Philippines as far as troop duty was concerned, it all quit at noon. We started early in the morning, but everything stopped at noon. So I said, "I would give you every afternoon," and I did that for the rest of the time; I still maintained command of the 14th Engineers, but I also worked with MacArthur's Philippine Army.

It was an impossible thing, his ideas. Both his and Eisenhower's [plans were] just out of the blue sky. They were impossible to work with because of the facilities and the money and everything else. I don't know whether I told you, but the total budget was 16 million pesos, I think, for

the [Philippine] Army, which was organized into ten divisions. A peso was then only worth 50 cents, so that was only \$8 million and you can imagine organizing ten new divisions. And not only that—we had to build all these barracks all over the place; we had to put up cantonments; we put [up] these mobilization centers, established those all over the place, because as I remember the term of duty was only one year. And then they went to the first reserve and they stayed there for three years or five years. And they stayed in that one and then they went from that reserve to the second reserve where they stayed maybe ten years more. So, you were building up a tremendous force though they were rather ill trained, but that was what we had when the war broke out.

But the job was tremendous to try to make that money go and equip these people. Of course, you did get some free equipment like weapons and things like that from the [US] Army supply. We didn't have to buy those; but a great deal of it had to be made themselves. I think I told you about that—the division was organized down on Mindanao and I went down there to see them and they put them in shoes and they all went lame. They never had shoes on before. But all of them wanted trucks. The things that they should have had—the equipment, transportation, organized as they were because each one of them was a local. They should have had carabao carts. Carabao could move ten, fifteen miles a day, but these islands didn't have the roads and much distance to travel anyway. And a Filipino understood a carabao. Damned if he knew what a truck was, but he was crazy about it, had no conception—had to be trained and everything. But that's what they wanted was trucks, automobiles.

Q: Before we move on, is there anything else of interest about your experience in the Philippines with General MacArthur or General Eisenhower?

A: Well, my initial start on building the Alaskan Highway was the fact that I was sent over thereto build the Bataan Highway, and I did that. When this other thing came up, the Division Engineer was Colonel Sturdevant [Clarence L. Sturdevant, USMA 1908]. He became chief of military operations [Assistant Chief of Engineers, Troop Operations] or something when the Second World War broke out. They decided to build the ALCAN Highway. I think it [my selection] was based on [the fact] that he recommended me and sent me up there because of what I had done in the Philippines. I don't know of any other reason for it, but I was pulled

out of the training camp. I had that replacement training center at Belvoir. I had organized it and ran it for a year. So, I was pulled out of that and sent up to Alaska. I think that was the basis for it—the building of the Bataan Highway.

Q: Then the Alaskan Highway selection was from your experience building the Bataan Highway?

A: He was just searching around for somebody who had done that sort of work, pioneer work. Of course, that was all the Alaskan Highway was.

Q: When you left the Philippines, you went back to another district assignment in Omaha. That was in January of 1938 that you went to Omaha.

A: Yes, I stayed there until Christmas of 1940.

Q: This was your second tour as a District Engineer, and I think this time you were a lieutenant colonel.

A: I was promoted while I was in the Philippines to lieutenant colonel.

Q: Now promotion from major to lieutenant colonel is not a great monetary advantage. Was there a big monetary jump at that time?

A: It was considerable. I remember that it was the first time I got out of debt. Mrs. Hoge and I made a short trip to Europe one summer from Benning when we had academic vacation. I was an instructor down there and I had to borrow \$1,000 off of my insurance. We went to Europe. We had \$5.00 a day. I think we had \$5.00 apiece—well, we had to pay everything. We had two jobs with the Holland-American Lines, handling this gang of students. They had 1,000—I think there were 1,000—maybe 900. I don't know. Anyway, they came from universities all over the country—boys and girls and everything. It was one of the first student tours/excursions. They were all nice kids. They were all down in what used to be the steerage and that was an experience. My God, that was a trip. I spent eight days going across and I got four hours sleep a day.

There was just a riot morning and night. But anyway, we made our way over there, spent a summer in Europe, and came back. We hadn't spent our \$1,000, but it took me until we came back from the Philippines and I got a lieutenant colonel's pay to repay what I had borrowed on my insurance. That is debt—all that time.

Q: That was—let's see. 1928 to 1931.

A: That was over in 1929.

Q: You got promoted in 1937. Six years.

A: Well, that's pretty good except the interest was growing. It wasn't getting any less. It's just one of those things. We had a great trip. We couldn't afford anything except to walk. We walked all over the Alps, everywhere.

Q: Were the college kids with you?

A: No, we left them, ditched them when we landed in France, and we didn't see them until we started back again. We came back to Rotterdam and met—it wasn't the same group, thank God. They were just as wild as bucks. The group we went back with was much tamer. Those kids had never seen liquor sold over a bar. The bar was open all the time. I had to close it, and I had a fight with the stewards on the ship because they wanted to sell liquor just as long as they could do it. I forced them to quit at 11 o'clock because I had to get them to bed. Well, anyway, I had threatened to fight this great big, fat German or Dutch steward. I finally had to take him up to the captain of the ship and get him disciplined and put back in his place. But I was in charge of that student herd. We had a lively crowd. There's no question about that. We had all the big dances. We had to put on a show. We had a dance in the morning before lunch. We had games after lunch. We had another dance in the afternoon and horse races and all sorts of things for games, and then after dinner we had another dance which went on till midnight. They were fine chaps. We had them from every university in the country. And as I say, there were about a thousand of them. The chaperones weren't worth a damn. Those kids were all over the ship—in the lifeboats. I caught one boy walking the rail on the rail—in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean at

night. I was afraid to call to him, but I had to creep up on him and throw him inboard because I was afraid if I shouted at him or told him to get down he might have jumped the wrong way. You couldn't tell. Boy, they were wild, but they had never seen liquor sold openly-and they enjoyed it.

Q: I bet they did.

A: And they wanted to play craps all night, shoot craps. I finally had to solve that by getting them a stateroom way down below [in] which I turned them loose, and they could stay up all night long if they wanted. But they had to stay out of the cabin area and [away] from where the passengers were living. They could do anything they wanted to as long as they stayed down there. That was the solution to that problem. And I got a bunch of thugs. They had an orchestra which came from a university. Going over, it was the University of Pennsylvania; coming back, it was the University of North Carolina, I think. That bunch that came back were crooks. They were playing all kinds of shyster games on these other passengers, pulling knives and doing everything. I finally had to settle them, take them up to the captain because I did have a hold on them. They had had to make a deposit. They got free passage, too, but if they didn't behave they could forfeit their passage. I finally got them settled. It was a wild time that we had that summer, and we walked all over the Alps. We couldn't afford to ride. We could ride the Swiss railways. There were three railway rates. In the valleys there is one rate. I'd forgotten what it was per kilometer. When you got up on a higher level it went up about 50 percent. Then when you started up the steep ones, it got about three times as much. Well, we couldn't afford it. We rode on the lower ones, then we got out and walked, carried packs on our backs and walked everywhere, went up to Zermatt, went all over the place. Up to the Riederalp. Had a pretty good time and through a little trouble keeping within the budget, but finally managed it by buying rum. We tried to get a drink of Scotch every night, but the Scotch was costing so damned much we couldn't afford it. The Scotch was costing almost our whole day's allowance.

Q: Well, I assume you left the boys back here with friends.

A: Oh, yes, the boys. One of them was in camp someplace or school, and the other was left with my mother. She took care of him, the young one, and we went off by ourselves.

Q: I bet that was quite an experience both going and coming and while you were there.

A: It was. But it was something, and we did what we could.

Q: At Omaha again, you were the District Engineer. Was that unusual at that time to have two District Engineer tours?

A: No, I don't think so, because I had my first one when I was relatively young. I think some people went on for years as District Engineers. Some of them stayed—there was an old man that had been at Rock Island—I don't know him, but he'd been there. I'd heard of him. He'd been there for about 16 years, but that was long before the war.

Most of the work in Omaha was—we did some dredging and levee building. We straightened out the river at one or two places, put in a few dikes; but a great deal of it was on surveys up through Wyoming and Montana. And there were dams in the Dakotas. That was when I came in contact with the Bureau of Reclamation, and they were wanting to build them, too. I know we studied one in the Yellowstone, which was not approved. We had some on the Big Horn. We had one Up on the Wind River. We had some big projects and we had several on the Missouri down at—the one at Yankton. We built that one. What the hell is the name of that dam? I've forgotten. My memory's gotten so bad. We'd built two or three of them while I was there. We built the Garrison Dam below Bismarck. That was a big dam. We studied the one at Big Bend on the Missouri. There were about three or four that came out of that project, and several later.

Q: Most of those were earthen dams as I recall.

A: Yes, most of them were. The one at Yankton—what is the name of that? It's near Yankton. I've forgotten and I'd seen it mentioned a number of times.

But those dams along the Missouri—and we were always in competition with the Bureau of Reclamation because they were trying to take them over. What's his name? He was later Chief of Engineers [Lewis A. Pick]. They linked his name with the Missouri River Development and the Bureau of Reclamation [the Pick-Sloan Plan].

Fort Belvoir

Q: After Omaha you mentioned that you went back to Fort Belvoir to the Engineer Replacement Training Center. Did you organize the training center there?

A: Yes, I organized it. I went out there when it just started. I think we had 12 battalions as I remember, 1,000 men each.

Q: All training battalions?

A: All training battalions. We built that place across the road. We started from scratch.

Q: At the south post?

A: Just across the road from Belvoir.

Q: Across Route 1. I keep forgetting which one's north post and which one's south post.

A: Well, that should be north, but I'm not sure. Anyway we built all that. We developed it and we had some good training. We had all sorts of classes, innovated a number of things. I don't know whether you'd be interested, but we were the first ones that started the obstacle course, which was adopted throughout the Army. They'd murder me if they ever found out I was responsible for the beginning of that. But we were having trouble getting enough exercise outside, some sort of exercise. Paul Thompson [Paul W. Thompson, USMA 1929]—I don't know if you know Thompson or not, he was the president of the Association of Graduates—he was one of those officers that came down to Vicksburg and