Interview

General William M. Hoge

Background and Early Childhood

Q: What we'd like to do on this is just to get a general overview of your entire career, but first going back to your family influences. I'd be interested in hearing more about your father and his knowing Will Rogers.

A: Well, that was quite incidental.

Q: You're from a military family, I believe.

A: No. My father was always connected with military schools, but he was not an officer himself. He was in the National Guard. He wore a uniform, but he couldn't salute. He was a teacher; he was principal at Kemper Military School in Boonville [Missouri]. I was born on that campus and grew up there until I was ten years old, when my father bought an interest in Wentworth [Military School], which is up in Lexington, near Kansas City. He bought a half interest in that, and he went up there as associate to the superintendent, which led to superintendent. He stayed there until 1916 when he sold his interest and moved to Culver Military Academy [Canton, Missouri], where he remained as a department head until his retirement ten or fifteen years later.

Q: Was your father a native of Missouri?

A: No, he was born in Virginia, but he moved out there as a young boy. He spent all of his life there up until later. He first was teaching there. He was principal of Kemper and was devoted to old Mr. Kemper who had founded the school, but later he became the principal of the school. Then later he sold his interest in that school, and he went with the University of Missouri for a couple of years. That was with an extension course. Then he bought a half interest in Wentworth up at Lexington, which is only about 100 miles west of there—just outside of Kansas City. We lived

there until I went to West Point. It was there [Wentworth] that I began my association with the military. I spent about six years as a cadet and student at Wentworth.

Q: That was essentially a military elementary and high school?

A: It wasn't very good scholastically, but I graduated from it when I was 16 years old. Then I took a couple of extra years primarily to play football for a while. I didn't learn anything-then I went to Brandon's-it was then at Highland Falls, New York. You know old man Brandon-he founded that Brandon's Preparatory and ran it for a number of years. It's owned now by, well, the same one as Sullivan in Cornwall. Jerry Sullivan owns it now, but the name has changed because Sullivan sold his interest to a naval man who opened a Brandon's school down near Annapolis or Washington someplace. But that isn't the same Brandon's school. It has the name, and he was associated with Sullivan. Sullivan sold the name but founded his own school up at Cornwall, New York, and he still runs that.

Q: I understand it's quite a good school. You went to prep school then for one year before going into West Point?

A: I went to prep school and I took my examination from Brandon's Prep School up at Highland Falls.

Q: You mentioned you played two more years of football. Was that at Kemper where you stayed on two more years?

A: No, at Wentworth. Well, I was too young to go into West Point, and I got my appointment to go there when I was 17. I didn't enter until I was 18, but I had that year and I finished that football season when I was 17, I guess, at Wentworth and then went up to Brandon's. No, I was 17—it was in 1911. I graduated in 1910 from Wentworth and then I went to stay on one full year as a post-graduate at Wentworth until I got old enough to take the examination, or to get my appointment to West Point. Then I spent a half a year that fall at Wentworth and then went up to Brandon's and took my examination from there. I would never have gotten into West Point without going to Brandon's. He had a wonderful course. He

was a tough old devil—swearing. He had a wild group, too, that were there but he disciplined them, handled them. The old man would walk down the aisle in the morning and give us all hell. But he was very thorough. He wrote a lot of books on the entrance examinations that had been passed and we studied. There's where I really learned all I knew when I went to West Point.

Q: So you found that it was not only worthwhile but essential?

A: Well, I would never have gotten in without it.

Q: I believe you received a congressional appointment?

A: I had one from a senator from Missouri. Got that myself through friends who were lawyers and doctors and bankers around Lexington. They got it for me. I didn't meet Senator Reed until after I had been graduated from West Point. In St. Louis I met him when I was, I believe, a major or a captain-I guess a major at that time—but my appointment was entirely through friends.

West Point

Q: When did you decide that you wanted to go to West Point?

A: Well, I knew it all the time, plus the influence of Wentworth. One of the most influential men [on me] I had there at school. Of course, I had a brother [Benjamin F. Hoge] who went to West Point, and he was captain of the football team in 1914. No, he graduated in 1914, but he was captain in 1913. That was one reason, but I would have gone anyway. But it was a colonel, well, he wasn't a colonel at that time, I think he was a lieutenant or captain of cavalry in the Army, who was detailed at Wentworth as the PMS&T [professor of military science and tactics] and he also acted as commandant. He was the greatest man with boys I ever knew, and he took me under his wing. He gave me his dog, he let me ride his horses, and he was just the greatest chap I ever knew. We used to go hunting with him and everything. He was much older than I was—he was a graduate of VMI but he had been in the Army since about 1901 or 1902; I don't know when he entered. He was a great person, and

I think he had more influence on my desire for the Army than anybody else.

Q: What was his name?

A: Edwin A. Hickman.

Q: H-i-c-k-m-a-n, Edwin A. Hickman. I'm sure a lot of the people they put in the schools now as PMS&T would like to have that background, because you know we have a big push now to get a better quality officer, a very motivated officer, into the colleges and universities.

A: I know they tried to. They need something. I see they got an appointment for a girl to go to West Point. I saw that in the paper.

Q: Yes, sir, that's right.

A: A week or so ago.

Q: Air Force Academy and West Point, sent one to each.

A: Well, that's not going to help the football team.

Q: Well, it may, sir; it couldn't hurt it right now.

A: That was awful.

Q: Sure was a bad year. I'm sure your mother was in favor of your going.

A: Oh, yes, she was.

Q: Let's see, you had the one older brother and I believe—

A: I had a younger brother [Kenneth G. Hoge], Class of 1920, who died two years ago [27 December 1972]. He was retired, too. Both of them were colonels and both of them had been in the Cavalry. One of them retired from the Cavalry. The other later transferred to the Adjutant General's Department and he retired from the Army, but then went with [some] association.

Q: The Retired Officers' Association?

A: No. It was taking care of all soldiers. What is that thing that benefits them? It's some name. It's like the Army [Emergency] Relief except it's much bigger [Army Mutual Aid Association]. The Army [Emergency] Relief used to be very small, but then during the war they started this other one which became quite large-took in the entire Army. He was executive officer of that until he retired. He died in 1972.

Q: You entered the Military Academy in 1912?

A: 1912.

Q: Your brother was still there?

A: Yes, my brother was there for two years while I was there.

Q: And he was on the football team.

A: He was on it. I was kind of a scrub. I did win my letter. I got to play a little bit in one Navy game, but I wasn't as prominent as he was.

Q: Well, you had quite a few prominent people on the football team back in that time frame.

A: Oh, yes. We had [Vernon E.] Prichard and [Elmer Q.] Oliphant and [Alexander M.] Weyand-he was a classmate of mine–and [Louis A., Jr.] Merillat, who was a great All-American. There were several All-Americans up thereat that time. There was [Leland S.] Devore in the

Class of 1913. Merillat was in Class of 1913, too. No, he wasn't. Merillat was 1915. I don't know whether Babe Weyand was All-American. I don't think Babe ever made it, but he was captain of the team my senior year.

Q: Let's see, you graduated the year following General Eisenhower. He was in the Class of 1915.

A: Eisenhower was there. He was in the class ahead of me.

Q: He was the manager of the football team?

A: No, he played football the first year I was there and then he got hurt. He hurt his knee, and he didn't play anymore. He coached Cullum Hall. In those days Cullum Hall was, I guess you'd call it the—we were not on the football squad—whatever you call them now. I don't know whether they have it anymore. We played high schools and small colleges and things like that. I played on Cullum Hall one year.

Q: That's the B Squad, and I think they kept the Cullum Squad name for a number of years.

A: Eisenhower helped coach that one or two years. I've forgotten.

Q: Did you ever know General MacArthur?

A: He was 1903. I knew General MacArthur-served with him several times later.

Q: I wanted to get into that. Particularly the experiences in the Philippines with General MacArthur.

A: A very interesting period.

Q: Philippine Corps of Engineers. What are some of the reminiscences you have of West Point? I'm sure you and your class, just like everybody else, got into mischief and—

A: Oh, yes. We didn't all get put on the area or anything like that. We missed that one. We didn't silence a TAC, but a couple of years before that they had silenced one of the TACs. He was still a TAC when I was there. It nearly ruined his life.

Q: Now that's a new one, sir—the Corps of Cadets silencing a tactical officer?

A: Yes. And I have forgotten what it was for because it was before I entered there. But they silenced him. When he came to the mess hall as the officer-in-charge everybody stopped eating-just quit. And he took that I think once or twice. Then he stood the whole Corps up and marched them out without dinner, and they all went back to the barracks and couldn't get their dinner. They followed that up for several days after that, but they finally broke it. I don't know whether they put anybody on the area or not. That was before my time.

Q: I never heard of that being done—silencing a tactical officer. Of course, they silenced cadets for breaking the Honor Code, but I hadn't heard of TACs being silenced.

A: I think he was a battalion TAC.

Q: I'm sure the football teams back then, well, they were stronger than last year's team, but Army was sort of growing as a national power at that time, wasn't it?

A: I saw the first Notre Dame game; that's when Notre Dame came up. We saw two really great games up there. In those days we played pretty good games. We played Yale and several of the big schools. We had a much simpler schedule, too. We didn't have two or three big games, but we did play Yale and Harvard once in a while. We had Charlie Daly [Charles D. Daly, USMA 1905] as our coach. He was a great coach and a great little man. He had been an All-American at Harvard, and then he

came to West Point and became an All-American the second time. Then he resigned from the Army and went back to Boston and coached at Harvard. I've forgotten how, but at some period in there—whether he got in bad with politicians–he was also a fire commissioner [1910-12] or something that was supplementing his salary. But he got dissatisfied, and he came back to West Point and got recommissioned in the Army by a special Act of Congress [1919]. I think he'd been out five, six years, or more than that. But he coached all the time I was at West Point. Not all of it, "Pop" Graves was coach the last year I was there. But we played pretty good football. I saw the first Notre Dame game. That really was something because that revolutionized all of football. That was the first time the East knew anything about the forward pass. And then the pair-Rockne was an end and Duryea was the quarterback-they put on an exhibition you couldn't beat. They beat us by] about 20, well, I don' t know whether it was 25 or 30. Maybe we made a score, I don't know.

Q: I don't think so.

A: But I did play one year against Notre Dame. I think it was the next year when we beat them. That's one of the few times we beat them. But Rockne and Duryea had gone. I think I played the whole game. We didn't have an offensive and a defensive team in those days. Sometimes we'd play the four quarters straight through.

Q: In both directions.

A: Played all the game. I think I played the entire game of that one. That was the biggest, that was the highlight—except that we beat the Navy during those years, three times. We lost when I was a plebe, the only time we saw an Army defeat [to Navy]. But we won the next three years that I was a cadet, which was a great thing.

Q: Do you put the same importance on the athletic program at West Point as General MacArthur's words over the gym reflect: "The fields of friendly strife?"

A: Well, I don't know whether that's true. We had very little time to do anything else because the corps was very small in those days. At one

time, they were down to, I think, 450. We got to about 600; that's all we had in the corps.

Q: I think there were about 182 in your class?

A: Oh no, we only had 125. We had many turn-backs in my class. The big class was the Class of 1915 that was ahead of us. They were too big, so they began to 'find" ["found" to be deficient in either academics or discipline] them and turn them back. We got maybe as many as 20 turn-backs from the Class of 1915.

Q: That turned out to be a mighty big class as far as the success of the members of that class.

A: Oh, it was a wonderful class. That and the Class of 1917 did extremely well. My class didn't do very well and I don't know why, except, well, there is a thing in there about classes, too, because of opportunity. You don't get it unless you get an opportunity, and some of them were off on training camps and doing some other duty. I remember Eisenhower was out at Leavenworth when we were out there organizing the 7th Engineers. And there were several of 1915 in my regiment at that time; we had four 1915ers. Now that doesn't bear me out on 1915 and the better chance, but they got promoted a little early and they all had to stay back in the States. We weren't promoted until we got to France. You see, I was a captain before I had been in the service a year.

Q: Right at the start of World War I?

A: World War I, and I was a major when I was, well, in 1918. I'd only been out two years; later I was a major three times.

Q: I noticed that in your promotion list.

A: Back-and-forth temporaries. We had little time for football or anything else. We went to school until four o'clock in the afternoon. We never got off for afternoon practice except after school. I don't think we got excused from parades. They didn't have a parade every evening in those

days. We weren't excused from inspection, Saturday inspection; except those on the football squad had a separate inspection earlier so they could get dressed for the game. We didn't have but an hour or so a day except on Saturdays or times like that. There wasn't much athletics in those days. We had an indoor meet and outdoor meet. We had a basketball team and a baseball team.

Q: You played baseball too, I believe.

A: No, I didn't play baseball.

Q: You didn't play baseball?

A: No, I did not. I won my numerals in the indoor meet, and I also won one in the outdoor meet my last year when we had an outdoor meet.

Q: Had you already decided to go into the Corps of Engineers early in your time at West Point?

A: No, I wanted to go into Artillery, Field Artillery; that's what I had hoped for. I was going into the Cavalry anyway. I knew I could make that all right. The reason I went to the Engineers was all on the spur of the moment. When we signed up for branch choices—you know how you do that. I don't know whether you do it now. Stand in column in order of class standing.

Q: The way we do it now is just stand up when your name is called.

A: We all went over and signed up our three choices. Well, the man ahead of me was Bob Neyland [Robert R. Neyland, USMA 1916]. He was a great pitcher and a very good football player; and Bob Neyland ranked me one file, and Bob signed up for the Engineers. While I was standing there watching him, I suddenly thought, "Why that so-and-so, if he can do that, I'll do it too. " That was my first thought. Then I asked for Engineers, Artillery, and Cavalry. I didn't have much hope because they hadn't taken in the years before more than four or five officers in the Corps of Engineers. But that year they took, well, I don't know, I was 29, and I

know there were two Engineers below me. But that was a big expansion. They were just beginning the Mexican Border affair and for some reason they expanded the Engineers. I was on graduation leave when I got word that I had been commissioned a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers. Well, I went to my future wife and spilled it to her that I thought I had to resign, that I couldn't stand that. I saw Colonel Hickman, who was still at Wentworth in those days, and I said something to him about it. He said by all means take it, go on and do it. So I did and I stuck with it. But I was very much worried at that time that I couldn't possibly stay in the Corps of Engineers. I didn't think I had the brains.

Q: Well, evidently you did.

A: I didn't have the brains. I did stay with it, and I'm very happy that I did. I think I got more experience in the Engineers than anybody in my class in other branches, and I had, well, we had several good Engineers in the class but we had—I think it must have been around 15 or 16. I know Tom Finley later became a general. He was a great, very close friend of mine in the Engineers but he decided to transfer. His father had been a cavalryman, his grandfather had been a cavalryman, and he wanted to be a cavalryman. We went through the First World War; he was sent off to school to teach when we got to France. Tom came out very much disgusted, and he said he'd be damned if he was going to be a desk soldier all his life and he was going someplace he'd get service. So, he transferred to the Infantry. He ranked about five in the class. He later did very well, but he didn't get the experience that I got staying in the Engineers.

I had more experience than anyone, various experiences, and I wouldn't change it because the time came after the First World War when they had all those people in camps and what not. A lot of the people had to go do that. They fiddled around, and they didn't have any soldiers. There was nothing to do on the post. I had a very active life as an Engineer in those times. I was busy all the time. Teaching school was something else, but I did get a chance after I'd gone to school at MIT. I came out and had a year at district work, which was very poor. Then I went to teach at Belvoir for three years, and then I got orders to Leavenworth in the Class of 1928. So, those years were busy years, and after that I went to the Infantry School as an instructor and spent three years there. Then I went

over to the Mississippi River Commission, and I was very fortunate in that, with people I ran into. I was dissatisfied with my first year there because I had nothing to do. They were trying to make me write a book on cost accounting and so on—you know, that cost manual.

Q: This is while you were at Vicksburg.

A: I had no idea of anything on that.

Q: Well, you had a previous duty assignment at Rock Island. Is that the one you didn't like?

A: Yes, I didn't like that.

Q: That was your first experience in district engineer work.

A: Well, I'd been a short time, when was that?

Q: Oh, Kansas City in September—

A: When I came back from World War I, I spent about three months in Kansas City and then I went to VMI as the assistant PMS&T. And I spent, I don 't know, two or three years there. Two years, I guess, and then I went to MIT. But as I say, my life in those years was always very active. You see, I didn't have any time. But those people who were in the other branches of the service besides Engineers just stood around and did garrison duty. They had no soldiers, everything was going downhill. They were sent off to these camps; what did they call those camps?

Q: Were they training camps?

A: No, they took all those boys away from the cities and so on. Put these camps all over the United States.

Q: Oh, the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps]?

A: CCC. A great many officers had to do that. Well, that wasn't too bad except they were off by themselves in woods and so on. But during that period I had this district work and then I got the assignment to the Philippines.

Q: Let's go back. We've gotten into your career some after you graduated from the Military Academy and how you decided to accept your commission in the Corps of Engineers. I found that a very interesting story because branch selection is normally a very long, thought-out process.

A: Well, I thought it out too, but I never thought about the Corps of Engineers.

Fort Brown, Texas, and Washington Barracks

Q: An awful lot of them do that. My roommate at the Military Academy made a spot decision to go to the Air Force after having planned on going to the Corps of Engineers, if he were high enough. It turned out he was high enough, but he decided to go into the Air Force. That was a spur-of-the-moment decision also. Just after commissioning you went to the 1st Engineer Regiment in Fort Brown, Texas, but you only stayed there about four months. Was that a basic training unit?

A: Oh, no, it was troop duty. We stayed there until the war was declared, the First World War. I was assigned to a regiment. I was a company officer and we built and maintained roads around, made reconnaissances and surveys, all up and down the border.

Q: Working out of Fort Brown?

A: Out of Fort Brown.

Q: You were a platoon leader then?

A: I was a platoon leader.

Q: What were your initial impressions of the Army? Prior to World War I when you graduated from the Military Academy and went down to Fort Brown, Texas, did you know at that time that you were going to make a career of the Army?

A: I was dedicated to the Army, I have been all my life. I intended to be. It [border duty] was just a wild young buck's experience. I was interested in everything I saw. I enjoyed the border. I enjoyed the work I had and the people I associated with; and after West Point it was freedom. We weren't entirely puritan about the whole business. We used to go downtown and get a bottle of liquor and come back and sit by the stove and drink it. We did make one expedition over into Mexico [for which] we could have been court martialed and kicked out of the Army at that time. The division all went on maneuvers, and I happened to be detailed for some reason to take over a searchlight platoon. That was the only searchlight platoon in the United States Army at that time. Oh, I don't know what it was for, battlefield illumination or something. Anyway, I had to take it over. So they went off on maneuvers; and "Bugs" Oliver [Lunsford E. Oliver, USMA 1913], who was the supply officer at the regiment, and there was another officer there, what the hell was he doing? Well, his name was [Hugh C.] Minton and he later became a major general in Ordnance and came in the Regular Army; he was left back.

So, one night, we decided to go to Mexico, and it was forbidden to go across the bridge. So we put on civilian clothes and we went across, and we told them we were buyers from Kansas City when we went across. When we got over there, hell, they knew all about us. By the time we arrived at Matamoros in the plaza, the band started up an American tune and all the boys and girls were parading back and forth around in circles around the square, and the band-they all stopped and played American tunes. Well, anyway, we went around and visited, oh, I don't know how many places. We went to saloons. We didn't do anything wrong. Then we went to a theater and saw a play. We didn't understand it, but it came about time to go back to Texas and damned if the bridge wasn't closed and we couldn't get across. So we went up to this hotel. Right about that time there were people being shot. During the Villa troubles, there were bandits all over the place and they were shooting up strangers on the street, and we didn't want to be found on the street. As Americans we were trying to hide our identity. So we went to this hotel. Well, we got a room, the three of us a great big room. Absolutely bare, there was a bed in it and a table and a couple of chairs. We started to go to bed at

about midnight and we pulled back the covers, I never saw as many bedbugs in one place. They were under the pillow! There wasn't room for them to get in the mattress. They were just all over the place. Well, we decided we couldn't do that. So we put the chairs on top of the table and we sat on the chairs all night long. And we had this hack driver, a Mexican boy with a pony, who was to call for us the next morning-Fedora or somebody like that. He arrived about daybreak, and we couldn't go across the main bridge at that time. So we had to go down the river and cross on a ferry and get over on the other side and then get back to Fort Brown without being identified. That was a wild night, but it was all just trying to do something you weren't supposed to do.

Q: Everybody does that.

A: It was all right.

Q: Now, is Fort Brown, is that in existence today as another post?

A: No, it has been turned over to the state. There's now a state college or something. I don't know what it is, but it was turned over to the state with all the buildings and everything else, and they opened up some sort of school there, state school. I think mostly for Mexicans.

Q: With Europe already in the war in 1916-17, do you remember the build-up for the American entry into the war, how the Army felt about it, how the public felt about it, and anything that caused changes in those feelings?

A: Oh, I don't know. I don't remember that. We were all interested in it. Of course, when I was still a cadet at West Point, we were studying the war. We had lectures on it, on [the] first years of the world war. So we were acquainted with it. At that time we went to the border. We were more interested in the border business and [Pancho] Villa and so on. We were not particularly involved on that end of the border; the activities took place over around El Paso and around that area. But we were on patrol and we watched people. We were forbidden to go across. I don't know. It took a long time to build up. [President Woodrow] Wilson had trouble

building up interest enough to get into the war. Whether he wanted to or intended to, I'm not sure.

Q: Well, Wilson was on record initially as—

A: 'Peace at any price" and all that business, and he wasn't going to do anything to stir up war; but he led us into it. I' m sure of that. I don't remember whether he—I don't think his incident was as blatant as [Franklin D.] Roosevelt's was to get us into the Second World War, but he wasn't averse to it. I don't think he had—what was it—the *Lusitania* or some ship torpedoed. We lost a lot of people. That was really the key point.

Q: Well, that built the public support that sparked the patriotism.

A: Public support—

Q: When you were studying at West Point, studying the war in Europe, was the consensus then that eventually we would get into it?

A: No, nobody—I don't know what the other people were—as cadets we weren't worried one way or the other. We were interested in it, studying, trying to find out what the war was all about. We weren't that serious; if we were going in we'd go in, that was all there was to it.

Q: How about when we did get into it? Do you think that the Army had had enough warning to properly prepare for the entry? Do you think the training was sufficient before then?

A: No, we hadn't. But we were working hard. We had nothing before we got into it. Then we started to prepare. We started at Plattsburg Camp [New York]. Well, we had started that before. Then we started to get recruits. We had the draft and training. We trained hard. We were working ten or twelve hours a day on training. Of course my regiment, my company at that time in the regiment I was in, was almost entirely volunteers. We had no general draft at that time, and they 'd come in. But we started out with about, well, up, I think, we only had about 35

men after it split per company and we went up to 250. But we had all volunteers. We had nobody with experience, but we had some crackerjack men. I'll tell you this for my company. We worked like hell, and we did well. And I remember when we were at Leavenworth we had a boxing tournament, a post boxing tournament. There was nobody on the post except our regiment, and a lot of Signal Corps and a few post personnel, but we had a boxing tournament. I don't know how many classes—there were about six or seven lightweights on up to heavyweights. You know, my company won five of them. I had the damndest lot of platoon sergeants. Every platoon sergeant that I had—he had one challenge, he'd lick any man in the platoon. And they were good ones, they were crackerjacks. Just as tough, and they had been before that the misfits. Most of them had been the misfits of the Army. Most of them had spent their time in the guardhouse from AWOL [absent without leave] or what not. But they buckled down, and they turned [out] to be the best. They hadn't had an opportunity before, but when it came, they accepted the challenge. Before the war was over, I got three or four of those sergeants commissioned as officers. Oh, my first sergeant I got out of the Disciplinary Barracks [Fort Leavenworth Military Prison]; he had been a deserter from the Marine Corps.

Q: Your first sergeant?

A: He had served his time. I was hard up because I lost all my good men. They went off to start new regiments. They were commissioned. I had about three first sergeants before that, primed one right after the other, and every one of them would get an offer of a commission—go off with some new regiment. So you were down to all recruits. Well, I had this old fellow, he was a fine-looking chap. He hadn't much brains. He deserted from the Marine Corps, and he'd served his time in the Disciplinary Barracks. But he was out and I got him. He came over; he did all right. He wasn't very brainy, but he was a fine-looking soldier. He looked a perfect soldier, but he wasn't much of a soldier. But, anyway, that was the type of people we were working.

Q: All of them being volunteers, I guess most of them were motivated by the spirit to get into the war and support?

A: They were right. I didn't have any draftees at all. I think the draftees are all right. I never served with them. We were all volunteers; they had come in without being forced in.

Q: Well, I guess that answers another question I had about the morale of the troops. It sounds like the morale was extremely high.

A: It was, it was tops. They would try anything. Not only that, they would lead. Yes, and follow you anyplace, anywhere. I had some good ones.

William M. Hoge as an engineer lieutenant in full dress uniform.

Fort Leavenworth

Q: I have that in May 1917 to March 1918 you were assigned to the 7th Engineers at Fort Leavenworth.

A; Wait a minute—those dates. I went from Brown to Washington Barracks at DC, which is now the National War College [Fort Lesley J. McNair]. See, that was the old Engineer post in those days. We only had three regiments of Engineers in the Army: the lst, 2d, and 3d. Well, at that time battalions expanded from two companies of the old 1st Engineers to become a regiment—and we all drew lots for regimental assignment. Our regiment was assigned to form the 1st, 6th, and 7th Regiments; we were officers

for those three regiments. We drew lots on that and of course the choice everybody wanted was the 1st Engineers. It was the first one to go overseas but we had nothing to do with that—we just drew lots and I was assigned to the 7th Engineers. We went out to Leavenworth and a company joined us from the border. I was with B Company in the 1st when the 1st came up from the border—another company came up from the border and formed the 2d Battalion of the 7th Engineers. We formed the 1st Battalion from B Company, 1st Engineers.

Q: I see, so the 7th Engineers was actually born out of the 1st Engineers through the drawing of lots?

A: The 1st Engineers, the old 1st Engineers, formed three regiments.

France and Luxembourg

Q: That was in preparation for the war?

A: That was just after the war was declared and we went to Leavenworth, and we stayed out there and organized the 7th Engineers until we were ordered to France in March of 1918. I think we were ordered there in February. I know we were for I missed the birth of my first son. He was born in February but we were already on the way to the port of debarkation. So, I never saw him until he was a year and a half old. He was walking and talking when I came home. We went to France and the regiment was then split. Well, my company-the company I had—was assigned to the construction of the hospital at Rimaucourte, a base hospital.

Q: Rimaucourte, is that correct, sir?

A: Rimaucourte. What the hell is the name of that province? Anyway, it's up near the border. It was the Haute-Marne.

Q: The Belgium border.

A: Not the Belgium border—the German border. But I went to this place and our battalion was split and each company had a construction job. Two or three of them were on hospitals and some back in the advance sections of the SOS [Services of Supply]. We stayed there until we were mobilized for the St. Mihiel Offensive, and that was the first time we had heard shots. We'd gone over in the mountains before that. I had been shot at when I had gone on patrols out in the enemy lines several times; but I was a volunteer. It was just static warfare.

Q: I was interested that you mentioned that each Engineer unit had a separate construction job assigned.

A: Well, I was assigned after leaving Rimaucourte to the French Army, and I went up attached to the French. I stayed with them, oh, a little while, and then we were detached and the regiment came up. We were ahead of the regiment, but we went into the line up near St. Die—outside of St. Die. We had nothing there but trench warfare. We were in trenches all the time. All we did was patrol a little.

Q: Now, you mentioned that was volunteer. You weren't assigned to an infantry or line unit?

A: No, we went out there—to blow up some barbed wire or to do something like that. It was more just as an experience, and I went along. I wasn't supposed to go, but I was captain of the company and we only sent about a squad or so. But we did; we were up in the front line and we never had suffered any casualties. Remember, we got a couple of shellings that went on during that, but nobody was hurt. We were digging deep shelters most of the time—underground shelters—and that was what we were doing most of that period.

Q: Were you advising the infantry at that time?

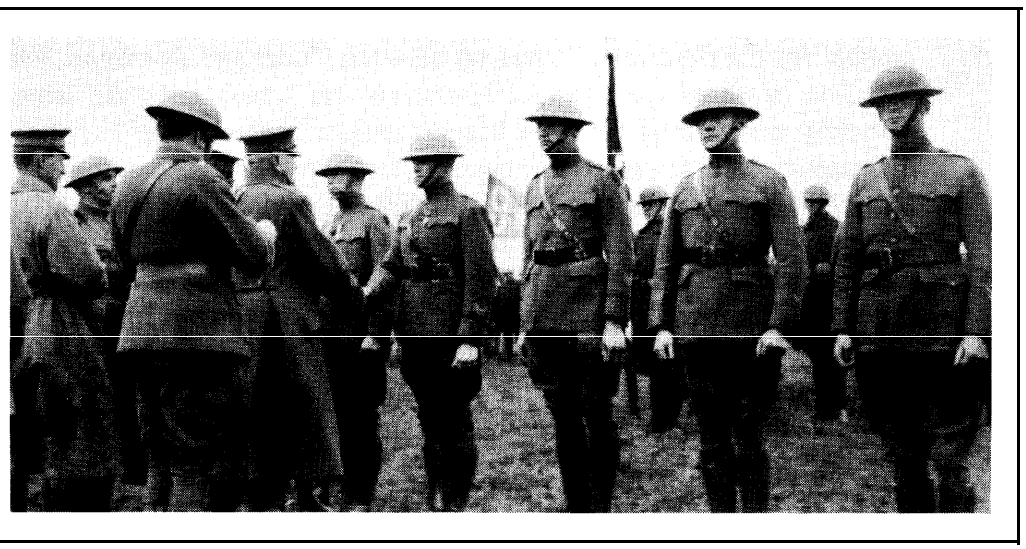
A: No, we weren't advising at all. We were doing the work. We were stringing barbed wire where we had to and putting up defenses. It was all defensive. Then we were mobilized for the St. Mihiel Offensive. And we got the regiment together then and went up into the St. Mihiel sector. I know I was behind the 6th Infantry at the time, and we did mostly

patrolling and opening up roads and so on. But we did do something out in front. We got shelled a little bit, but suffered no casualties-it was simple. I don't think we had any casualties during that period.

Then we moved over to the Meuse-Argonne sector after the Meuse-Argonne had started. We made our movements all by night, marched every night and bivouacked in the daytime. Part of it was by truck. Then later when we got closer up into the line, I had infantry combat for the first time. It was up between Cunel and Romagne, and my battalion captured the town of Romagne, for which later the Romagne cemetery was named. It's the biggest national cemetery in Europe. We did capture the town of Romagne. But we went across there. The infantry on our left—I've forgotten, I think it was the 33d Division—hadn't come up, so the brigade commander ordered us in. We were attached to the 10th Infantry Brigade, and the brigade commander ordered us up thereto cover that gap on the left of the 6th Infantry, which was wide open; and that's where I went in and that's when we captured the town of Romagne. Then the infantry pulled out, and we stayed there. Well, we did get ready for an attack or two. We did make an attack from that line later. That was vicious in there, very tough fighting. The Germans were pretty rough to go through. We did go in and had to carry small bridges up to cross a creek that was up there ahead of the infantry. We did that, but I got one of my best company commanders killed, lost not a great many men, and we stayed up there after the infantry. Well, no, we were pulled back. The regimental commander came up and protested the use of Engineers in that job, so he raised hell with the people. They were supposed to be doing something else. But General Malone was the brigade commander, and he was a crackerjack. He'd come over from the 2d Division; no, it was the 1st Division. He had been a regimental commander over there. He was a good one. He came to be my brigade commander. I was attached to his brigade most of the time. Then we pulled out of there and went over near Dun-sur-Meuse on the Meuse River. I went in at Brieulles and that's where we crossed by putting pontoon bridges across, opposite Brieulles. I think we had the first bridge across. Anyway, we got one across and we got some wagons across. We had to go across and get on a levee to get out of that hole.

Q: You had to cross the bridge?

A: We crossed that and then we came to a levee and we had to go up the levee for a distance until we could get off onto a road; it was very congested. We got across there. You see, I guess that's when I got a DSC [Distinguished Service Cross]. I got a DSC. I didn't get a DSM in the first war. I got a Silver Star in the St. Mihiel Offensive. I got the DSC in crossing the Meuse River.



General Pershing presents Hoge with the Distinguished Service Cross, 1919.

Q: That was the action putting up the bridge?

A: Yes, we had a French pontoon train. I remember that we couldn't talk to them, but we had practiced before that with this equipment so we knew how to work it. We'd practiced back in the woods.

Q: Did we have any US bridging thereat that time, or did you use all French equipment?

A: No, I don't think so. It was only French, but we had practiced back in the woods and they came up in the night. We went over to Brieulles, oh, I don't know, for a couple of days, a day or two, and the crossing was aborted. They couldn't get the infantry to go out ahead for cover. Actually, we put the foot bridges across for the infantry to go and then

stood in the water in this canal and river and held some of the little pontoon boats up with the infantry crossing over on top of them. And then we put in the wagon bridge. But we had no way out, it was all very congested on the levee and you only had one-way traffic for some distance. I remember the corps commander came down there. I tried to raise hell with him because he was going against our traffic and we only had one-way traffic. Everything would stop when he'd come down to see it. He came down on the far side.

Q: Let me ask about the doctrine of Engineer utilization then. You mentioned earlier that at St. Die when you were in the static warfare, you actually did the work of laying the barbed wire and digging the trenches and so forth. Was that the doctrine at that time—the Engineers did that—or were they to advise the infantry?

A: We mostly did it. The infantry had to do it when they—but we weren't building many trenches. They'd all been built—they'd been in use there for four years, a whole network of them. We went out and put up a little wire and we went out to destroy German wire once, but that was about all the warfare we saw in those times.

Q: Now, it's always of interest to try to convince people that all troops in the line are responsible for mine warfare and building fortifications.

A: I know, I've taught that business several times, but I didn't get very far. It isn't popular.

Q: No, that's usually the case.

A: That was taught at Leavenworth, but it's labor they don't like. Then, of course, the whole principle changed in the Second World War from long lines of trenches with communication trenches in between to nothing but foxholes. That was our type of construction during the Second World War. I was with the 7th Engineers all the time. I came back with it. I stayed with it from its organization until it was reorganized in the United States.

Q: At Fort Gordon?

A: Yes, but I had already been ordered to Kansas City at that time. I wasn't present actually, but there was nothing but a skeleton left because the men were discharged soon and I think it was less than company strength in the whole regiment after that.

Q: I think the Germans used gas warfare at Meuse-Argonne, didn't they?

A: Yes, we went through one of the gas attacks. I took my battalion through that time we went in as infantry. We had to wear gas masks. It wasn't much fun. I don't know how bad—there was gas around, no question about that; but we had to advance across open fields up towards the Cunel-Romagne line and there was gas in that. In fact, we had to wear gas masks, and we had it, I guess, throughout the war.

Q: I imagine that when you had it you didn't have much of a problem with gas discipline—or did you have much problem convincing the troops to take care of the masks?

A: Oh, I don't remember. We didn't experience a great deal of it because we were back generally-we were not in the front line. It was only when we got up forward that we worried about the gas. The damned gas alarms would start at one end of the line. They'd start blowing these sirens—gas, gas! And they would start 20 or 30 miles away and just go like a wave all along the front line. These sirens would blow and everybody would put on gas masks. Well, the gas was way off, but that's the way the thing would go.

Q: You know we always picture General John J. Pershing as sort of a personal-type leader; he got down to every level, every troop knew him, everybody in AEF seemed to know—

A: 1 don't think so. I never saw General Pershing but once. He gave me a DSC [Distinguished Service Cross] then after the war was over. He was tough. Tough old disciplinarian. He's a fine commander, I'm all for him, but he didn't get around.

Q: I guess it was just the reputation.

A: Yes, that's all hooey. He didn't do that because he was up at GHQ [General Headquarters], and we never saw him.

Q: He didn't get around the battlefield much then. You mentioned before that you initially were assigned directly or attached to the French.

A: When we started into the line, I was attached to a French division. It was all spread out. Our division was just arriving; the 5th Division was my American assignment. But they had just come over and were training and so on. We were sent up into the front line up in the Vosges Mountains to learn something about it, and that's the first time I ever saw an attack at night by one of these, what do they call it? Went out to capture prisoners and they put down barrages, box barrages; I did see that one from up on the hilltop.

Q: Was it a reconnaissance-in-force then to capture prisoners?

A: They were all in the line. They were not—except to get prisoners and find out what was going on. It was to capture prisoners. They did that quite often in those days. They'd send out these parties to capture the prisoners. They never were trying to take land. We stayed with them, oh, it wasn't too long. I don 't know whether I mentioned this before or not, but we were going in the line. In those days they paid the troops in cash on payday, and the officers paid them. Well, I was just behind the line—you couldn't cross until dark and I was in bivouac there behind this restraining line, and the colonel and the adjutant or somebody came up with my company payroll all in cash. And it was getting dark and I had to get rid of that damned money. I had to walk, carry this, and I couldn't carry that much cash and I didn't want to have it on me. So I got the company lined up just at twilight. I lined them up and everybody had to sign the payroll when they received their money. Well, then it started to rain. So I had a poncho held over me. I paid them, whole company in the half dark in the rain, and I got rid of everything but for one man. He was absent. And you know, I came back to the United States, I still had his pay. It wasn't much. It was only about five or six francs or something. I never did find out where he was, whether he was alive or not, and I don't know what ever happened to him. But when I came back

after the war was over, to the States, I took out some old clothes or something and I had his pay still in my pocket in those pants.

Q: Was the accounting as strict then that you had to turn that back into Finance and all that?

A: No, everybody forgot about that and I never turned it back. It wasn't worth a dollar. I don't know who he was or I don't remember anything about that. I don't think I ever could use it because it was French money in the United States. Anyway, that's one of those little incidents.

Q: What was the reaction to the French when you joined them?

A: Oh, they were very nice to us. They didn't understand us, and we didn't understand them. I know we got up there and we were supposed to build dugouts and so on, reinforce the French. We started to work as soon as we got there. We were very much interested in doing our part in the war, learning something about it. We started right to work. Well, I think we'd been up there about a day and it was Bastille Day. I didn't know anything about the 14th of July. We went to work on the 14th of July. That just put the French back on their heels. They couldn't understand that. They didn't know what we were doing. Then when we left the French and we started off on our own, we had to rejoin our division up a couple of sectors to the north and we had to march over. We were still—I guess we were behind the blackout line; anyway we had marched that day. We'd march always at night. Well, we got up close to the place where we were going into the line and we had breakfast and so on. We started up in plain daylight. I hadn't seen any Germans or German planes or anything, and if we did see one—once in a while a reconnaissance plane came over—when it did we'd stop and get off to the side of the road until after the plane had disappeared over the hill. We then went back and started marching again. Some Frenchman saw us from up in the line, and he was horrified. "These Americans, these crazy Americans, marching up there plastered. " Well, we finally got into our place up in the line, and I was called up to the regimental commander, or whatever he was, and was told a few things. Didn't know what the hell he was talking about, and it didn't mean anything to me. We were supposed to go to our place. That was just how much we knew.

Q: So you just marched right on up?

A: We just marched, and whenever the reconnaissance plane came over we'd stop and get off the road. We weren't shelled, so I guess it was all right.

Q: Just as long as you made it. When you left France, did you actually go to Camp Gordon at that time?

A: I never went to Camp Gordon because I left. I went on leave to see my wife and only son after we'd landed in New York. I got a leave and got over to see them. Had never seen the boy and I had, oh, about ten days' leave. In the meantime, I got orders to go to Kansas City, so I never went to Camp Gordon as I remember. I don't think so.

Kansas City and Virginia Military Institute

Q: You returned to New York, I believe, in July 1919. Is that right?

A: Let me see, seems to me it was about the first of August. I know it was the last of July or the first of August.

Q: And you only got ten days' leave?

A: Oh, yes. And I was lucky to get that. Very few people got it, but my regimental commander objected to that very much. He wanted to see his family, too. I won out for that much, and I got these few days off. And it was while I was on that leave that I got orders to Kansas City, and I went out there and stayed only a couple of months. Then I landed down in Lexington, Virginia, at VMI [Virginia Military Institute] the day before Armistice Day—I remember that—that was in 1919, I guess.

Q: You returned from Europe as a major.

A: I was a major.

Q: Let's see, I think you were promoted to captain in May of 1917.

A; Oh, I had been captain at Washington Barracks. We were all promoted. You see then they had branch promotions. My brother, who graduated two years ahead of me, was still a first lieutenant when I was a captain because he was in the Cavalry and their promotions were very slow. But it wasn't until after the war that they got the single promotion list. In those days the Engineer promotions were very fast. So I was a major, no, I was a captain when I went to Leavenworth. I didn't have my majority and that was one reason why these people in 1915—they got their majorities ahead of us—we were waiting for orders but there was no place for them to go in Europe. They'd had their command; they couldn't command companies anymore and there were no battalions ready for them, so they had to go off to training camps. We were very fortunate that we didn't get our promotions in the way they did, until we got to France. Promotion to a major, seems to me, was in July of that year.

Q: Let's see, I have 1 August 1918.

A: About the end of July or the first of August, and I stayed on with the battalion. I took over the battalion from my previous battalion commander.

Q: So, you were able to command a battalion as a major?

A: Yes, I commanded a battalion all through the war. Towards the end of the war, a lieutenant colonel had been relieved, and I acted as lieutenant colonel of the regiment; but I never did get promoted to lieutenant colonel. When we got back, I went to VMI as a major. That's when I got busted.

Q: Did you consider that as a "bust"? Everybody was being reverted, I think.

A: Everybody-colonels went down, even brigadier generals went down to captains, I think, or some of them. I have heard of them in the Cavalry or something like that.

Q: What did that do to the morale of the officer corps?

A: It was bad for those people. But the officer corps wasn't very large. See, when I entered the Army, the entire officer corps including Medical was only five thousand, and they were split up in all these branches and so on. But when I got up to captain, I stayed a captain. There was one thing about our promotion that we got before, let's see, we got our promotions back to majors. No, we didn't either–we got busted back, but we kept our pay as a major—what do you call that?

Q: Were you reimbursed or [did you] receive retroactive pay?

A: No, you can't reverse it. You couldn't in those days. Your pay stayed the same—except that there was a to-do about a Colonel Peck and I've forgotten what he was in. But anyway, somebody had been with the 35th Division and he had made some enemies among congressmen and particularly in the Kansas-Missouri area. They were from Kansas and Missouri-the 35th Division—and when he came up for promotion, they stopped all promotion but we had gotten promoted just before that so we held our pay even though we were busted, but they didn't. And the tail end of my class, at least half of my class, maybe not quite that many-a lot of my class didn't get over that barrier in time to retain their pay, and it stopped them; but we continued to draw major's pay though we were captains. I stayed at VMI for two years, I believe, and went to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]; and while up there, I got promoted back again.

Q: So you were a major again in April of 1921. Were most of the Engineer officers returning to graduate school at that time?

A: All of them were. All the bunch from West Point were. There were only about four officers who had come from civilian universities, and they had already been through a civilian institution and had degrees in engineering, but everybody else had to go to an engineering school to take this engineering training.

Q: Was there any controversy in the Army or Congress about the Army sending the Engineer officers back to school?

A: No, I don't think so. I didn't hear of any.

Q: That's come under attack again now.

A: Well, all officers go, Infantry and everybody else, don't they?

Q: No, sir, not all of them.

A: I think many of them.

Q: A large number.

A: They take all sorts of courses and advance courses in civilian colleges—not only in engineering.

Q: But it's being cut back somewhat now. There is some criticism about the Army overeducating their people and the cost is getting prohibitive. While at VMI, that was, I believe, your only instructor tour with a civilian institution on ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] assignment.

A: Yes.

Q: How did you like your assignment there?

A: Well, it was all right. We were split into little units and my unit was the small one. We had Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, and Engineers, and they took them by choice. Had one hell of a time trying to get enough men to meet my quota because the rest of them, the Cavalry particularly and the Artillery, were offering all these inducements because of the riding horses and doing all that sort of thing, teaching horsemanship. They had the big drag, and I was losing too many of them. So, I got a group of engineering instructors, civilian, and I got them to work for me and got Washington to send me down a lot of extra equipment. Things like photographic equipment and all sorts of things—and then I got these assistant professors to help me recruit these cadets. So, I did get up to about, oh, I think maybe the strength in my unit was about 25 or something like that. That unit expired after my tour, I think. I don't

know whether anybody took it over after that. I recommended against it myself. There were not enough men for four units.

Q: Not enough interest in the Corps then?

A: No, the take was so small it was hardly worth it. But I did everything to get my people in there and get them recruited and stay in; and we did all sorts of extra things, but I didn't have the horses to attract them. That seemed to be the big pull, and these other—the PMS&T was a doughboy–and all the senior instructors there were artillerymen and cavalrymen. I was certainly at the bottom of the heap. I had to work all the time to get enough people to do it. But we did get by—of course, we didn't have enough to even qualify. I didn't think it—I wouldn't want to say anything against VMI—but I didn't think it was up to standards in engineering. I had a couple of good friends in engineering; they were professors of engineering-particularly chemical and civil engineers. They were pretty good friends of mine but they were behind; well, I'll tell you—when I left, here's an example of their standard of education. When I left VMI and went to MIT there were two graduates; there were several graduates of VMI went up the same year. We, as West Point graduates, only had to take one year to get our degree. Those people had to start back as sophomores.

Q: And go through three more years to get the degree?

A: So that's just the difference. That was a secondary college in their quality of education.

Q: I think they've improved a great deal now. It's a good system now. You mentioned the problem of getting cadets into the Engineer portion of the ROTC unit there. Did you find after World War I—I guess we hit it after every war: there's a loss of interest in the military, the drastic reductions in military-did you find that kids were more reluctant to come to VMI or any other military or ROTC school?

A: I don't remember. It seems to me that VMI was full up to their quota. Of course, they only had a total corps there of, oh, around four or five hundred at that time. I have a great admiration for VMI graduates, and

I've known them in the Army. I think the greatest man I ever knew was a VMI graduate, greatest American-that's General [George C.] Marshall.

Q: Yes, sir.

A: Without doubt, he tops them all. He's the greatest man I ever knew, and I think he's the greatest American in my time.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Q: I'd like to talk more about him later on and some of the other general officers, the very successful ones. Well, let's see, after you left VMI, you went up to MIT. You did get your degree in one year?

A: Yes.

Q: Your master's in civil engineering?

A: We didn't get master' s—we only got bachelors. West Point did not give a B.S. at that time.

Rock Island

Q: Oh, you got bachelor's, I'm sorry. And then you had your, I guess, your second tour, no, this would be your first tour in a district, in the Office of the District Engineer in Rock Island, Illinois.

A: I went there from MIT to Rock Island. My first short period was in Kansas City after the First World War, but that was only a matter of two or three months.

Q: What type of work was the District engaged in at that time; you were there almost two years?

A: Most of it was building some levees. We had a dredge or so. We had very little work; we had very little money. I had charge of rebuilding the

piers of the bridge across the Mississippi River at that time, but that was not under the Corps. The bridge belonged to the Army, and it was under the Rock Island Arsenal, and they asked us to rebuild these piers. They were worried about the structure. That was the main railroad bridge. The Rock Island railroad went across there. It was a highway bridge too, and they were worried about the erosion underwater around these piers. So, we had to cofferdam them off and put a casing of concrete around the pier about 2 feet thick all the way up to the top. That was the principal job I had.

Q: Was that under the civil works program?

A: Yes, but it was paid for, I don't know who, the Rock Island Arsenal paid for it. Some way, they got the money because they owned the bridge. You see, that went from the Rock Island Arsenal island across the Mississippi at that point over to Davenport, Iowa.

Q: But you mentioned the Civil Works function there was rather short of money?

A: Oh, they didn't have much money. We had an inspection boat. Fiddled around with a few levees. I don 't know whether—they didn't have much of anything.

Q: Did you have the same interest from the congressmen from Illinois that we have now?

A: Not at that time. I've forgotten what the budget was but it wasn't great and we didn't have a large force.

Q: Did you do most of the work with troop labor or your own labor or did you contract it out?

A: Oh, no, we had hired labor.

Q: Civilians?

A: And most of them were purchase and hire. That is, when I rebuilt the piers it was [with] civilian government labor. There were no soldiers on it except me.

Q: Much the same as it is now, I guess—mostly civilian?

A: It was good experience. I don't think I did a very good job, but I did the best I could with the limited funds. Of course, that's a rock bottom under that part of the Mississippi River so you couldn't drive piling, steel piling, down. You had to put down a cofferdam, a wooden cofferdam around it. I did learn something from that. I had this cofferdam filled with sand around these piers, and then I tried to pump out the inside of the cofferdam to get down to do the work in the dry. You couldn't bring the water down at all because it seeped in so fast that you'd get it down maybe a foot with all the pumps you had, and it wouldn't come down. I was fooling with that and somebody said I'll tell you what you do. Get this fly ash from up here at the Arsenal power plant and take it out there on a barge around the cofferdam and start your pumps. When the pumps just start, begin throwing fly ash on the surface of the water, and the suction pulls it down into the crevices of the small holes. It just worked like a charm. I pulled that water—I'd gotten a dredge one time, trying to add a big pump, oh, about a 30-inch pump on it—and I tried to pull it down without this and I couldn't do anything with that. I put the suction inside and it pumped like hell and it wouldn't come down. But the minute I got the fly ash, I could hold it down with a little 6-inch pump after that.

Q: After you got the fly ash?

A: After the fly ash. But I had to keep the pumps going after that. If you didn't keep it pumped out, then the fly ash would suck out and then you'd have to do it all over again. So you had to keep the pumps going day and night, but I didn't need but a 6-inch, what do you call that pump? It's a common pump that you put down on the bottom. We had one that went on the bottom.

Q: Sump pump or centrifugal pump?

A: I put one of those in and it would hold it. It would hold the water down and it kept it down and I finally got the thing finished; but I had a hell of a time for a while. It was winter and very cold.

Q: We had problems like that in Vietnam in building holding tanks for huge storm drains-couldn't stop the water from seeping into the bottom. We had to put raw concrete in, raw cement, to seal it.

A: Well, you can do the same thing; I mean you can hold it when you want to work in the dry-you can hold it with fly ash—or bentonite is a good thing. We had a leak in the Fort Peck Dam where water began to seep through and they used bentonite; of course, it had the advantage. It goes inside and swells under water.

Q: Yes, sir, and sets.

A: And sets. Where the fly ash still had the same flotation. When the pressure got off, the fly ash would all come out. So you had to keep pressure all the time.

Q: Who gave you the idea to use fly ash, sir, a local contractor?

A: No, it was a local man and I've forgotten. It wasn't a contractor. I've forgotten who he was; he was an old resident of Rock Island. A friend of mine, I've forgotten his name now, but he was a nice old chap.

Q: From sources like that I guess we learn an awful lot?

A: He suggested it; tried that and it worked. It worked like a charm.

Q: Starting back then and, well, I guess further back than that, there's always been the debate as to whether or not the Civil Works function should remain with the Corps of Engineers, or should it be transferred to the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior. Did you have any views on that back at that time?

A: We weren't under pressure in those days, but it wasn't enough money to amount to anything. We didn't really get any pressure on that competition with the Bureau of Reclamation until we got working on those dams up the Missouri River. That was much later.

Q: There was a lot of money involved in it, but you had no intergovernmental competition at that time.

A: No intergovernmental competition and nobody objected to it, but the bureau tried to run us out of that work on those dams on the upper Missouri.

Q: After you left there about January 24, you then had your school instructor assignment?

A: I went to Fort Belvoir, then it was Humphreys. It was just a little camp. I think the total garrison with the officers and soldiers and everybody else was only about 500 people. They were out there in the woods, almost no road into Alexandria. There was one piece of fairly little concrete but not much. It was way off in the woods, and I taught there for—I think it was until I went to Leavenworth. That was in 1927.

Q: September 1927. Of course, Fort Humphreys is now Fort Belvoir.

A: At first when we went down there, it was only an encampment. Later it was declared a permanent post, and then it became Fort Humphreys; but it wasn't any bigger.

Q: Big health center there now, too, and it's growing a little larger. You had a full three-year tour there at Fort Humphreys?

A: Yes, I had a hell of a time getting to Leavenworth. I just deviled personnel, man in charge of personnel, Colonel [R. C.] Moore, until he finally threatened to throw me out of the office if I didn't leave him alone. Just about every time I got in Washington, I'd go see Colonel Moore and ask him what my chances were to get to Leavenworth.

Q: Did they have the same type of selection system then that they have now: the branch primarily makes the selection?

A: They were only sending so many. I've forgotten how many were gotten from the Engineers, but we only had about 10 or 12 in the Engineers' outfit .

Q: What did you teach when you were at Humphreys?

A: Military Engineering. I had the Department of Military Engineering.

Q: Now this is getting about seven years after the completion of World War I. The Army had drawn down quite a bit at that time?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Did you ever have any thoughts of reverting to a civilian career back in those days?

A: Only right after the First World War. I had some offers [from] men who had been temporary officers in the Army, engineers who went back in civil life. I'd known one or two of them. They wrote me and wanted me to go in business with them—contracting and so on. I thought of it at the time because it was out in Rock Island, no, it was in Kansas City and VMI and I don't know, it wasn't very satisfactory. But my wife wouldn't hear of it. She loved the Army and she wanted to stay with it, and I'm glad I did. But I don't know whether I'd have made any more money or not. I might have gone completely broke. I didn't make much money in the Army—I know that. But they did have the Engineer School there. The Engineer School. The Engineer Post had been at Washington Barracks, which is now the National War College.

Q: Fort McNair?

A: Fort McNair. It was then known as Washington Barracks. But they kicked us out of there after the war and we were forced to move down to Belvoir. That was the only place we had to go.

Q: Did Washington Barracks cease to exist then, the city took it over?

A: No, it became the National War College.

Q: Oh, I see. They forced the Engineers out—down to Humphreys.

A: But before that it had been entirely an engineering post. It was the home of the Engineers.

Fort Leavenworth, Again

Q: We got you accepted at Leavenworth. You said you kept asking Colonel Moore. Was he the branch chief or was he your assignment officer?

A: He was in charge of personnel, military personnel.

Q: For the branch?

A: Yes. He later became a major general. He was later G-4 of the Army.

Q: I'll have to look him up. I'm getting some of the names that I want to go back and maybe bring them up on later interviews.

A: I've forgotten his first name. I used to know him very well. He was always a great help when we were in France; he was attached to GHQ and he used to visit us sometimes at regimental headquarters.

Q: Oh, I see. You had known him before?

A: I had known him a little bit.

Q: Did you find that that helped, to know the people in branch throughout your early career?

A: I always do. I think the people–acquaintances-make a great deal of difference, and it's very important too.

Q: Yes, sir.

A: And find out their strong points and their deficiencies. Some of them you'd better stay away from. I've had some marvelous friends throughout my career. It's been a great help to me.

Q: You know that's one of the great things about the Army. You meet so many different people and make such strong friendships, I think, and always come back to them. That's one of the great advantages.

A: Well, I've got several that are close friends; and one of my best friends is John Leonard [John W. Leonard, US MA 1915], who retired as a lieutenant general down in San Antonio. He was a class ahead of me. We were in St. Mihiel together, and he was wounded when I was with him up on the Romagne-Cunel Line.

Q: We have a Colonel Rich Leonard from the Class of 1953 at the Military Academy. Is there any relation there?

A: Oh, no. I don't think so. He only has one son. He's a very brilliant boy. He's chief engineer for this big construction company. I don't know. They're a worldwide [company].

Q: Pomeroy?

A: No, two or three names.

Q: Pomeroy is out in California.

A: Two or three names hooked together—and he worked all over the world. He's the chief engineer, a little hunchback but he's just as bright as he can be, smart. It is Morrison-Knudsen.

Q: Well, when you went to Leavenworth, did you still only have the one son?

A: I had two sons. One was born at Belvoir, the younger one, that's George. William, Jr., was born just after I had left Leavenworth. He was born actually in Lexington, Missouri; but I was on the train going to the port of embarkation, and when I got off on the other end they notified me I had a son.

Q: Were you notified then through the Red Cross, as we are now?

A: Well, I don't know. This classmate of mine had gotten the word, but he was a good friend of my wife—[Major General Thomas D.] Finley it was—and he later became commander of the 89th Division during the Second World War.

Q: So William, Jr., was the only child you had when you went to Leavenworth.

A: Yes. No, it wasn't.

Q: Oh, that's right, George was born at Belvoir.

A: George was born at Belvoir, 1 January 1925.

Q: So you had the two.

A: He [George] almost died out there because he got pneumonia. My father-in-law, who was a doctor, actually saved his life. The medical people had neglected him. I couldn't get any service there. I called up the doctor in Leavenworth town to come out there and see him; and then the commandant at Leavenworth got word of it, and he wanted to know why I had to call someone from Leavenworth City. I said I couldn't get a doctor over at the hospital. They were all out playing golf, and this boy was dying. The old man raised hell; he was [Major General] Edward King. He's a tough old bastard. He just raised hell with the hospital after that. But my father-in-law came up and stayed with us for about a week and saved the boy's life, but he almost died.

Q: Was Leavenworth at that time a family post?

A: We all lived on the post. We lived in a converted barracks. One of the old "Beehive" was one of my barracks during the First World War, one of them. We had a battalion up there; no, we had two battalions in that line up along there.

Q: I've never been to Leavenworth, but I went to the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk. But when my wife went with her father to Leavenworth as a student, they lived in the Beehive. It's still there, I understand.

A: At that time we had converted some of the old barracks down—what's that road, it's just beyond the hospital? It's the road parallel to the one that goes by the Beehive; oh, you wouldn't know anyway. That's where we lived when we went to school.

Q: Did you have rigorous courses at that time?

A: Very; it was tough as can be. It was just one year. A little bit later they changed it to two years. It was hard. They had had a number of suicides before that. People got so overworked. I don't know if they've loosened it up any, but they took out the great competition. They stopped giving honor graduates and distinguished graduates. They just ranked you by how you graduated, and they didn't tell you particularly one way or the other. There used to be great competition being honor graduate and that was only the top, maybe, ten. And then the distinguished maybe were the next ten or twenty and the rest of it was just graduates. But they had a number of suicides after that, during that period before they decided to change it over and take the competition out. But we had a stiff course.

Q: It's still quite rigorous, but I don't think it would be that rigorous anymore.

A: Well, I studied hard. I never worked as hard in my life as I did at MIT because I had been out of school, you see, since my graduation. I hadn't been to school until I went to MIT in 1921. I guess for five years I

hadn't opened a book. And to go there and make up all that back time. We had a little more than a year. We went in the summer earlier, and we went to summer school until the regular term opened; then we took the regular course at civil engineering. In those days we only took civil engineering. I don't know whether later they expanded that or not. I'm sure some of them take it because I've got a grandson-in-law who took an electrical engineering course.

Q: We have a lot of nuclear engineers graduated from MIT now.

A: That's the toughest course I've ever had; and I worked harder at it but I took Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning off. I had to start working then right after dinner on Sunday, and I worked every night until 12 o'clock. I couldn't add. We had in the first period these earthwork and railroad construction problems, and you had to make a lot of calculations and add up figures; you'd get columns that would be 50 series of numbers in figuring out this earthwork. Why you'd have to add those up, I couldn't ever add the same thing twice. Just worked like hell all the time.

Q: They still have the tremendous amount of calculations, but they are teaching all the Engineer students to use computers. You mentioned that the competition had gotten so keen that they cut it out for a while when you were at Leavenworth?

A: Oh, that particular competition was still there. Everybody wanted to graduate high; but there was no rating and it didn't go on your record at Leavenworth, and that took out some of the urge for competition.

Q: Did they have academic reports at that time which made your records?

A: When you graduated you had a class standing in the class. You were listed in order, but they didn't give you any particular designation for it.

Q: So, probably the competition was still there but it was not as strong?

A: It wasn't as strong.

Q: Well, you mentioned that General Eisenhower graduated as the distinguished graduate.

A: No, he was the honor graduate. He was number one, if I remember correctly.

Q: And you mentioned having known him before—of course, you knew him at West Point—and you didn't think of him as that distinguished a student. Was he just a hard worker?

A: I don't know how he did it. Eisenhower's great forte was getting along with people. Now, why he would do so well—I never thought he was as good a soldier as some of the rest of them–particularly Bradley. I thought Bradley was the best of our active soldiers—other than Marshall. But Eisenhower's great forte was his ability to manage people and to compromise and to get along with all those different nations. So that was his forte and his strength, and he did it very well.

Q: A great diplomat?

A: Yes, he could be tough, but he did have the ability to make people like it.

Q: I'd like to discuss him some more, too, a little later on, and some of the other generals or other men that you have known. On Leavenworth again. When the Army school system comes up, one of the things that many people think is an important aspect of the Army system, in addition to what you learn and the people you meet, is an opportunity for those people who gain entry into the schools from hard work a chance to relax and reflect a little bit. Did you ever have any thought on that philosophy?

A: We didn't have much reflection on this. We had a committee which we'd formed. They were voluntary entirely when I was a student there. We had one or two infantrymen, an Air Corps man, and an artilleryman, and somebody else we had. We had one from all the branches and I was the Engineer. We got together once a week and discussed whatever we thought was coming up on the next marked problem. We would discuss the principles that that branch taught and try to get further in it. I didn't think the instruction was particularly good at Leavenworth except it was

hard and you had to make these written-no, they weren't written either—they were exercises, but there was the association there with these other people. For instance, in our committee, one of them was Westover [Oscar Westover, USMA 1906]. He was Air Force or the Air Corps representative. He was with us and I got to know him very well. There were several others; Fenton [Chauncey L. Fenton, USMA 1904] was later head of the Chemistry Department at West Point. He was my next door neighbor when I lived in the same building. Those were good people. "Petey" Uhl [Frederick Elwood Uhl, USMA 1911] later became a corps commander. He had been a TAC when I was a cadet. He had one of the corps area commands [Service Commands during World War II]. That was the type of people that we became acquainted with, and we would learn something about their branch relations. I thought the instruction at Benning was far superior to the instruction at Leavenworth.

Fort Benning

Q: Did you go to the Infantry course, the Advance Course, at Benning?

A: No, but I taught there.

Q: Right, you've taught there.

A: But I thought their instruction was the best of any place in the Army. They had a wonderful group of instructors and they all became successful. General [George C.] Marshall was the main motive for that. He was assistant commandant of the Infantry School in those days, and he made the Infantry School. And he had all these wonderful people with him. He inspired, he inspired everybody. You did your best to work had.

Q: That was your assignment immediately after Leavenworth. You went to the Infantry School.

A: Yes, I didn't want to go, I wanted to do something else. I'd gotten tired of teaching school. I enjoyed it down there. It was all right, and I made some very good friends there while at Benning.

Q: You were either a student or teaching school from November 1919 through July 1931. You had almost 12 years in the academic atmosphere.

A: Well, I got out of it for a while.

Q: The Rock Island job was in that period.

A: The rest of it was all school and I was getting tired of schools. I wanted to do something else. But I was forced into it.

Q: You had a full three-year tour there. Was General Marshall there the entire time?

A: Yes, he was there.

Q: Well, that's interesting—your comparison with the level of instruction. I'm sure you were the instructor on the Engineer staff, the engineer committee there. Were you primarily associated with the basic course, or did they have a basic?

A: I taught all of them. I mean, I taught the basic, company, and advanced. But our engineering was limited. We only had a few classes throughout the year. Not much. We taught field fortifications as most of it. I had one assistant who taught map reading and sketching and that course, but he was an Infantry officer. I was the only Engineer officer on duty. I spent most of my time at Benning off on construction work. We had something they called a recreation center board. And the recreation center—I don't know where they got that name. We had no money in those days, and they were building all of the facilities—swimming pools, basketball courts, handball courts, baseball fields; everything was built with soldier labor. We built the children's school with soldier labor. We had no money whatsoever; and later I designed the present officers' club at Benning and got it started, but we didn't have much money. We had to use soldiers. I got enough together, but General Marshall called me in one day and said the club officer had absconded with all the club funds. I've forgotten how much, but he embezzled it all and deserted, left. We had the club in an old wooden barracks, and he was very much interested in getting a decent club there. So I designed most of the new club and

started it. I left there before much more than a foundation was in, and I went over to Vicksburg at that time. But we got it started. It's enlarged now, but it's essentially the same club that I designed.

Q: That's a beautiful club with that big ballroom there.

A: But we did that with soldier labor, and there is one thing our soldiers could build—arches. We built that stadium at Benning, too, with soldier labor. About the only thing they could do was build arches, and if you look at the design of that stadium, it was all arched fronts. So when we got started on this other, I had to cut my own lumber out in the woods. We had a Negro forestry company out there—a sawmill company sawing up trees-and I know when we put part of the roof on some of the children's school, it was so green the sap was running out. But that's all we had.

Q: I'll bet many of them are still standing. I know the officers' club and the stadium are still there.

A: Well, the children's school is still there. It's been enlarged, that is, one or two of them. The children's school used to be horrible. An old wooden shack. I was made school officer at Belvoir when I first went down there because Mrs. Hoge kicked about the school. Our son was then seven years old, I guess; and he had been to a good school up at Davenport, Iowa, a Catholic convent school in which he was a day pupil. He had had good instruction, but he went to Belvoir and they had one room with a potbellied stove in the middle of it. One teacher taught seven classes, all of them. And it was awful. But she raised hell with the commanding officer at Belvoir about that.

Q: Belvoir or Benning?

A: Belvoir. And he said, "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do, Mrs. Hoge, I'll appoint Hoge school officer. " So I caught it. But I did build up the school and I hired a teacher. I had great difficulty getting any money. I made a tax. That's the only time I know of I got a tax through on post personnel which was entirely voluntary. I taxed everybody that lived in a big set of quarters a dollar a month. I charged everybody that lived in

a smaller set of officers' quarters 50 cents a month, and all the noncommissioned officers who had public quarters were charged 25 cents a month. So that way I got about $100 a month, and then I got permission from the moving picture industry of Army motion pictures to give me one movie a month which was free. I mean it was given to me. I took all the profits. They'd sell the tickets and I got the take. I made about $100 a month off of that. We struggled along with that—I got a couple of teachers and we needed some more money. Then I found out the state of Virginia was collecting a Virginia tax on all people, children at Fort Belvoir, but weren't giving us a penny. So, I went after that and I got that money; I got enough to run the school. I had about four teachers.

Q: Let's see, that was at Belvoir. What time frame was that? That was 1924 to 1927 when you instructed at the Engineer School. It was Fort Humphreys then, not Fort Belvoir?

A: You had to do it. There was no money. The Army wasn't giving us any money. We got no money for teaching school children. They were charging a proportionate part of the school for this one-room school, and it was costing $7.50 per month per pupil. I know there was the bandmaster at Belvoir at that time who had seven children, and he couldn't possibly pay it. So he had to send his children into a parochial school in town where he could get it cheaper or free. But they had to go into Alexandria to be educated. They couldn't afford to pay much.

Q: That was a long trip then, I imagine, from Belvoir to Alexandria?

A: It was a long trip. The bus service was very poor and erratic.

Q: Well, that experience in running a school system helped when you got down to Benning to build a school.

A: What was the foundation of the Sears Roebuck Company? A fellow named Rosenthal or something like that. He was a big philanthropist and he was giving money to schools around the country. He didn't give us any, but he was doing it and he had some designs for schools. I got one of those plans, and on that basis we built this school. They [the troops]

could do everything but lay bricks. We had to hire a civilian in town to come out and lay the brick. My soldiers were not very expert. They'd just work hard, that's all. They could make concrete and they could pour arches.

Q: Well, let's see-more on the Benning job. Up to this time all your assignments had been school or Engineer oriented. While you were at Benning and associated mostly with the Infantry, did you have any second thoughts then about desiring to be in a combat arm? Of course this was a peacetime Army at that time.

A: No, I didn't particularly. I wanted to find out something about the Corps of Engineers somewhere or other. And I'd had a very poor experience and very little bit. Mrs. Hoge wanted me to transfer to the Infantry or something else, but I never thought seriously about it. The great inspiration there was the association with General Marshall and the other officers who were there—Bradley [Omar N. Bradley, USMA 1915], Collins [J. Lawton Collins, USMA April 1917], Ridgway [Matthew B. Ridgway, USMA April 1917], they were all instructors. I've forgotten, there's a list there as long as your arm. All the people became either Army commanders or corps commanders or division commanders.

Q: They were all instructors there during that time frame?

A: Yes, it was a great group and Marshall inspired them. We did a great deal of riding down there. Rode at a hunt, several hunts. We had fox hunts, wildcat hunts, pig hunts on Sundays, and we rode a lot just for pleasure. Then we always had horse shows. Most of the time I spent there was doing riding and this recreation center work. Actually I got very little other experience.

Q: Sounds like you got more construction experience there than you had in the previous district job. Were most of the other instructors there at the time—Ridgway and Collins—were they all majors also at that time?

A: No, captains, I guess. I'm not sure whether they were captains or majors. See, my class had gotten ahead of these others.

Q: Oh, that's when you went to France.

A: Well, no, but then the class after 1916, they cut off promotions down there. The hump came in after the First World War. They took in all these civilian officers-nonregular troops—and they came in and got ahead of this group. So a great many of those classes were behind the hump, and they were stopped ten or twelve years before promotion.

Q: You were a major for 16 years after you made it the second time. Actually you were promoted to major in August of 1918, promoted to lieutenant colonel in August of 1937. So while you were at Benning you were a major, and I guess at that time you still had a lot of service. Staying in one grade for a long time, did you think about that very much?

A: No, the rest of the Army was the same, or worse off.

Q: Everybody else was the same.

A: Everybody. We were all hard up for money and it was terrible trying to make ends meet. I would wind up every month—if I'd had $5.00 left from the previous month when the last day came—payday came—I was lucky. And you charged everything at the commissary or someplace so that you got it paid on your cuff. We didn't have anything.

Q: I imagine those were hard times, but we're talking about the 1930s, when nobody had any money.

A: Yes, I'm talking about the 1920s and the 1930s.

Q: That wouldn't have been a good time to give much consideration to getting out because there wasn't much going on anywhere else.

A: I was lucky. During the Depression I know we got a tremendous number of people in the Corps of Engineers who were excellent engineers and had good jobs but were out [of work] in civil life completely, and they hired them as engineers in the Corps, civilian engineers; and they were a fine class of people but they had earned much more money than that. There

was a fellow who was graduated from Annapolis who resigned from the Army, I mean the Navy, named Smith. He worked for Raymond Pile Company and made a lot of money, but he was out of a job. So he had come to Memphis and he came in as an engineer. I think that was his grade. And he was very happy he had it. He was a crackerjack man. He later got out of the Engineers after things got better and-no, he didn't, he went to the War Department after that. I've forgotten what all he did. I had correspondence with him for several years, but I've lost track of him. I don't know where he is now.

Q: I guess during those times there at Benning and, well prior to that, too, during the Depression, things were sort of hard. Did you find that for recreational activity you did more with the other officers; you had more pot-luck-dinner-type things or were just getting with the other officers for talks and so forth?

A: Entirely, that plus our riding, and we did some hunting; there wasn't much fishing. But we did hunt quail and turkey and things like that.

Q: This probably gave you a better opportunity actually to get to know them as individuals?

A: Well, many of them I'd known, of course, at West Point. Joe Collins and Ridgway and in that group I'd known Bradley. Bradley lived just two doors from me.

Q: Oh, he was there, too, at the same time that you were there?

A: He was teaching.

Q: Was he a captain at that time?

A: I guess so, a captain or major. I'm not sure what he was.

Q: Was there much rank distinction among you since your class jumped ahead?

A: No. A lieutenant colonel or something like that had quite a distinction.

Q: How about the young officers that you had at that time; this was 1928 to 1931 at the height of the Depression. Did you have better people coming into the Army at the time that you were training at Benning as a result of the hard times?

A: No, we didn't. Those people had come in before—most of them. But you didn't go to Benning until you had several years of service and then the Company Officer's class. I don't know whether we still had the basic or not. They cut the basic out after a while, and I've forgotten when they stopped the basic. It was sometime previous to that. But we had the Company Officer's class and the Advance class. Those officers all had had eight or ten years' service. They had been through World War I. They were getting along in years. But I don't remember any new ones coming in. Of course, I had nothing in the Engineering line because there was only one company of Engineers on duty there at Benning and that was commanded by Captain [William F.] Heavey, who later became a brigadier general. I didn't have much to do with them except watch them while they put on a demonstration—putting up wire or something like that.

Q: For the classes?

A: And putting in float equipment. Several times we put on a bridging operation over the Chattahoochee River, and we had to send over assault boats and put over pontoon bridges and send over the infantry and later artillery and what not.

Q: Did you have much friendly interbranch rivalry there at Benning?

A: No. It was almost all Infantry. We only had the instructors, There was a battalion of Field Artillery there and two regiments of Infantry on duty there. There was, of course, a company of tanks. Tanks couldn't go across the parade ground without breaking down. They were all World War I French tanks. So there wasn't a great deal of competition. Actually there was a Cavalry instructor there, and they had a pretty good stable and paid a lot of attention to riding.

Q: What would you say was the Army's biggest problem from your perception from the Infantry School at that time, besides not having money? Or I guess that would be the biggest problem.

A: I don't know. They had one—quarters were very scarce. Many officers built their own quarters out of any old lumber they could salvage or anything else. They'd build their own fireplaces and anything else. They had them scattered all over Benning. And they later established some way you could get something out of them by selling–couldn't sell the land, you could sell the house. You did own the house, and when somebody would move away he could sell his shack to somebody else. We lived in permanent quarters. We had some of those old brick quarters but there were very few of those. There were a couple of rows in one circle of brick houses which had been built, I've forgotten when. Once the appropriation of a few years before—before that the appropriation for construction of houses was to run out and they had to get them started before the fiscal year and they didn't have any plans. So somebody sent a set of plans for officers' quarters from Washington that were designed for Fort Ethan Allen, Vermont, and that was all they had and they built all those sets. There must have been a hundred of them in all built from those plans. They were hot as heck, but it was a house and it had a couple of bathrooms in it and a heating plant and so on. It was all right.

Q: Must have been well insulated to have been designed for Vermont and built in Benning.

A: They had roofs that just went right up to a point, you know.

Q: Yes, sir, I've seen some of those quarters.

A: To shed the snow.

Mississippi River Commission

Q: Now let's see-after Benning, you had a little over a year with another district assignment in Vicksburg.

A: I went down there with the Mississippi River Commission. That was the time they assigned me to write the cost manual. I was assistant to the president. And he took exception to anybody on the staff associating with some of the people in town. Well, the people in Vicksburg—it was a poor town and it still showed the ravages of the Civil War and the siege, but there were some of the nicest people there I ever knew. I made some very good friends. We had an awful time getting a place to live.

Q: There would have been no post quarters there.

A: No, there were none. There were no quarters.

Q: Was that the initial establishment of the Mississippi River Commission there at Vicksburg, sir? Were you part of the initial contingent of Engineers?

A: No. I think it started up at St. Louis and they moved down there. They had moved out on the park–national battlefield, national park there–and they had built a couple of wooden offices out there. I didn't have anything to do and I was very dissatisfied. I then actually contemplated transferring from the Engineers because I had gotten fed up with it. But about that time this president of the Mississippi River Commission [Brigadier General Thomas J. Jackson] decided I was insubordinate or so on and he would send me to Memphis to be under [Brehon B.] Somervell, who was District Engineer up there and was supposed to be a tough disciplinarian. Well, I had known Somervell pretty well as a cadet and he was a tough master.

Well, a peculiar thing happened. When the new president of the Mississippi River Commission came in, it was General [Harley B.] Ferguson; and while I was waiting to move up to Memphis, my family was all gone up to Canada for the summer, and I had this house. I couldn't rent a house in town, but I found an old house that had possibilities. It had been floated down the Mississippi River, oh, years ago on a raft and was pulled up there on top of the bluff and had been assembled. But it had fallen in disrepair and it had been raided and they had tom out the bathroom fixtures and so on, vandals and what not. But it was livable. So I offered this man, if he would fix it up—fix up the bathrooms and paper it and paint it some–I would rent it at $100 a

month. Or, if he wasn't willing to do that, I would have this work done and charge him in rent for it and I wouldn't start paying rent until I'd used up my $100 a month, which would have taken about a year. Well, actually I lived there and we had quite a group. When Mrs. Hoge was away I had a cook, a good cook, and a houseboy. We heated entirely by fireplaces so this houseboy came and made the fires and did that work, and the cook took care of the house. That summer, when everybody started moving around, I know they sent a class down there to go to the waterways station, what do you call that?

Q: Waterways Experiment Station.

A: They sent a class of young engineers down there. They'd been out of West Point about three or four years. They sent them down there to take the course and all these, oh, about eight of them, I think, these boys came in and they had no place to stay. So I had a partially empty house, four or five bedrooms, and I told them that I would take them, let them stay there, and they could pay their part of the meals. They wouldn't have to pay any rent or anything else. Just pay for their portion of meals and I'd appoint one of them the mess officer and he'd keep accounts and charge everybody their portion of the meals.

Memphis

And then Oliver was there, "Bugs" Oliver; he was leaving, and somebody else and General Ferguson came to town, and he had no place to stay and I offered him to come up there and stay until I had to leave. So they all did. And we had a brigadier general and a couple of colonels and these six, about six, lieutenants and myself all living in this house, splitting up the food; and everybody had his own keg of whiskey, moonshine, and we'd get out and have a happy hour in the evenings in front of the fireplace. It was a right comfortable place and they all enjoyed it. Those kids thought it was fine. They did a lot of dancing and hell-raising all night long, and they'd come in at midnight or two o'clock in the morning and go to work at the laboratory the next day. They were all over Louisiana, Mississippi, up into Arkansas. I don't know where all they went. They enjoyed it. I stayed there until I had to move to Memphis that fall, and I went up there as assistant to Somervell and we got along all right. I was his number three down the line, but I worked there on

surveys and running the—I've forgotten what I was doing. I was working on the river mostly. Anyway, Somervell didn't get along well with Ferguson because he'd had a run-in with Ferguson in Washington, DC. So he began to finagle around to get out from under Ferguson, and he was only there about a year and he got an assignment to Turkey. When this other officer, who was above me, got another change of assignment, I was the senior officer there. I was only a major then. I guess I was a major. I was way down the line. That was the biggest district in the United States, spending more money and covering the largest territory. Ferguson liked me and he offered me the District Engineer. I got the appointment. So I was District Engineer when I wound up. I wound up on top of the heap with Somervell going to Turkey, so I was the boss of the lot and I stayed there.

I wanted to go to the War College, but there was only one opportunity to go to the Philippines for an officer of my rank, and I wanted to get that foreign service and I wanted to go to the Philippines. That vacancy was coming due that year, and it wouldn't be open again for three years. There was only one position for my rank. So I asked General [Edward M.] Markham, who was Chief of Engineers then, to give me that assignment, and he did, very much to my surprise. So I got that assignment to the Philippines and went there.

Q: You went to the Philippines in May of 1935. You had the District for almost 18 months as the District Engineer.

A: Yes, I was up in Memphis for about two and a half years, I guess, I don't remember.

Q: Yes, sir, you were in Memphis from September 1932 to May 1935, about two and a half years, and the last part of it as District Engineer. Well, being the District Engineer, did that sort of solve your previous disappointment with Engineer work?

A: Oh, that was a great job. I was all over the place. I had a lot to do building levees, had a lot of contracts. I think at one time I was employing about 14,000 between the contract work and the hired labor work on dikes and levee construction, and I was working under General Ferguson, who was one of the greatest persons I ever knew.

Q: He was the Division Engineer working out of Vicksburg?

A: He was the president of the Mississippi River Commission and Division Engineer. He had Memphis, Vicksburg under him—Memphis, Vicksburg, and New Orleans District, the second district. The first was down on the Gulf; they worked out in the Gulf. The other worked on these levees. Our principal problem was levee construction, and we had a lot of that.

Q: Did you have any rechanneling work at that time for flood control?

A: We started it. General Ferguson was the one who introduced that because before that—well, the plan which they originally had was going to have this floodway. We had opened up the New Madrid floodway, which is right opposite the mouth of the Ohio where it comes over and down through Missouri. There's a dike that could be, I mean a levee that could be topped with a certain height of water and that was a relief on the major plug. And there were other plans, but they were disapproved. But General Ferguson started this making cutoffs in the river. That had always been thought to be very dangerous and had never proved right. But he started the cutoff business and made several of those. We were doing a lot of dredging. We got dustpan dredges from the ocean. We had big suction dredges. We had about, I think, about three or four big dredges in my district alone and they were big ones.

Q: You know now one of the biggest considerations for any type of flood control or river work is the ecology of the area and environmental considerations.

A: I know-that's all new.

Q: You didn't have any of that to contend with at that time?

A: Except the taking of lands and so on and setting back of levees. Of course, we had to do that from time to time. There was this Atchafalaya proposition down off of the Red River.

Q: Atchafalaya?

A: Atchafalaya floodway which was built. It's down below where the Red River, just before the Red River comes into the Mississippi. The Atchafalaya floodway was built from that. That also had a dike that could be topped and go out at a certain height of water so it would relieve the Mississippi. The big problem was relieving New Orleans itself, and they built a spillway above New Orleans. That concrete, what's the name of that? A classmate of mine was in charge of that. That was under the New Orleans District Engineers. I had nothing to do with that. At a certain point, that went out and they could divert water. And it went out into the Gulf to bypass New Orleans.

Q: They have a similar project going on around Tampa now. They are putting a bypass canal around the city of Tampa to prevent flooding. Of course, they couldn't complete the part of the cross-Florida canal. The project was inflicting trouble [environmental]. So that sort of restored your faith in being an Engineer, I guess, being District Engineer?

A: Yes, it was all right. I got along fine. General Ferguson was a great person, had a great sense of humor, great number of stories. He was a good engineer, and he was original. He wasn't following things that for a hundred years they had said wouldn't work. The old idea was that once you shortened the Mississippi River that all it would do was cut through someplace else, and his theory was that you could make these cutoffs around these big bends and shorten it. And by proper handling of it and dredging at the time the cutoff was made to develop it, it would work; and it did. They lowered the flood level by several feet. I don't know how much above Natchez and Greenville and so on.

Q: So that relieved the upper part of the river?

A: Well, it relieved wherever they made the cut down below. There was an interesting anecdote: General Ferguson always took everything back to North Carolina, where he was born and grew up as a boy. There was a fellow named Dean who was an engineer down in New Orleans. Dean was a pusher—always trying to get ahead on something. And they started these cutoffs, and Dean came up one day with a roll of maps to plan some cutoffs. He had more cutoffs that you could think of, and he was cutting

off every neck of land. General Ferguson had just started, I think he had one or two under way, and was working with them to find out how they worked. And Dean spent all Saturday morning explaining his plans on these cutoffs. And the old man was smoking a pipe; he looked at it and said, "Dean, I'll tell you about this old Tom Jeffries [or somebody, I've forgotten his name now] down in North Carolina. He came down to the comer store one day. He sat around talking with some of his cronies around the stove, and an old fellow said, 'Tom, what you got your coat on for, you cold?' Tom said, 'No, I ain't cold.' 'Well, why you wearing your coat then?' 'Well, I ain't got no shirt.' 'Well,' he said, 'why ain't you got a shirt?' He said, 'I'm getting it washed.' And the fellow said, 'Ain't you got but one shirt?' He said, 'Hell, no. You think a fellow wants a million shirts.'" General Ferguson said, "That's the way I feel about cut-offs. I got one good one and I don't want a million. " He always had some story like that to illustrate his experiences to pound it home.

He was a great friend of mine. He used to give big parties to all of his District Engineers down in New Orleans at Mardi Gras. He gave us the greatest [parties]. He'd take the inspection boat, the *Mississippi,* down and all the officers. Their wives would go down and stay with Mrs. Ferguson in their house. They had a house in New Orleans, though General Ferguson was living in Vicksburg. But they'd go and stay with her. He had tickets to all the balls. He had membership to the Boston Club, which was the swank club of New Orleans, and we just partied all the time. We had the biggest to-do you ever saw. We'd spend most of the night going around to these balls and so on. Go home in the morning in a taxi, go back to the boat—we officers were sleeping on the boat—in broad daylight, and we started out again about noon. That was a great time. I don't know whether Mardi Gras is like that now with those parades and the balls and all the festivities.

Q: Well, they must be; the New Orleans District is still considered a good assignment.

A: It would be a good one.

Q: Most of them along there are. Well, General, before we get into the Philippines, I want to go back over some of this.

A: I don't know where this comes in or if it has anything to do with it. But I'll say this—that I would not change my career, my opportunities, for any other profession or anything I've ever known. I've got a cousin who is a lawyer and has been very successful. I have other friends who have been very fortunate and wealthy as doctors and engineers in civil life, but as far as I' m concerned, there is nothing like my military career-its satisfactions. I wouldn't trade it for anything that I've ever known. It's been most rewarding, most satisfactory. I don't know that it's done anybody else any good, but personally I think it's the greatest thing I've ever known and I would not change it for anything, any experience or any profession that I've ever heard of or any experiences. And I've seen a number of them. To me, it's been a great opportunity, marvelous opportunity, to serve. I' m not over patriotic. I believe in this country and all that. Just personal satisfaction. The opportunity that I've had, the places I've been, the things I've done, have been the greatest satisfaction and I don't know of anyone who has done better. I've got lots of friends around in different fields, but I don' t know anyone who can offer as much as the things I have known and thought. Some have been hard. Some have been tough as could be, absolutely devastating. Some have been right on top of the world. I've lived; I've slept with a goat in a ditch as a brigadier general and I've lived in castles and palaces, but I wouldn't trade any and it's all good experience.

Q: You certainly made a great contribution, General.

A: I haven't made any contribution. It was just something I enjoyed and I wouldn't give up any of those experiences for any of them. The good ones and the bad ones. I've been scared to death. I've been cold. I've been hot as hell. I've gone from 65 below zero and I have been in heat in the desert at 156. So, it hasn't been all pleasure. But you had it all. You've tried everything there is and it's all been interesting and worthwhile. That's all I've got to say about it.

Q: Well, that's marvelous, sir. I wish we could get that word out to everybody right now when the Army again is in the bad part—

A: 1 wouldn't trade it. I've been through some awfully poor times when I scraped two nickels together in my pocket and I didn't know where the next one was coming from. I've been up on the top, too, after I got out

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.

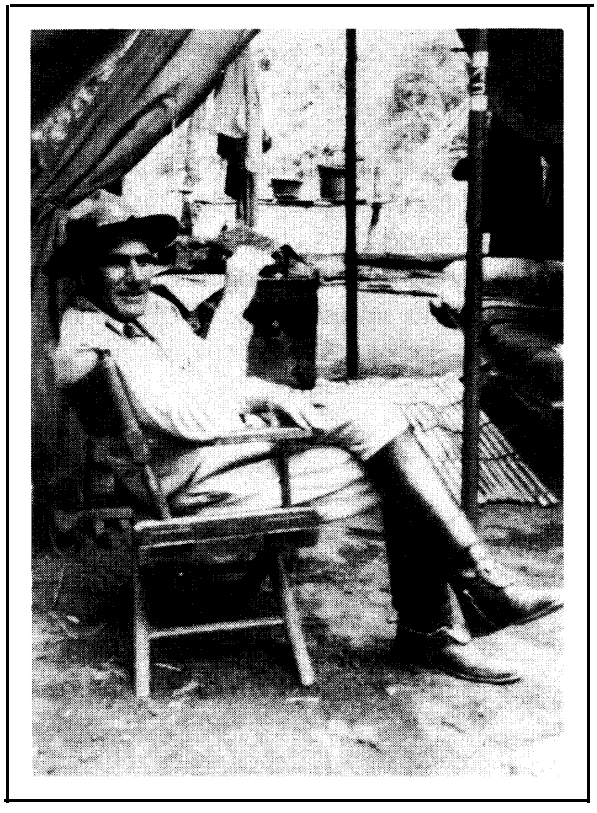
A: He didn't come over until later. I'd been there, oh, a couple of years before General MacArthur's mission came. He didn't come over there until—

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 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,



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

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 1,000-1 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, everyplace.

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.

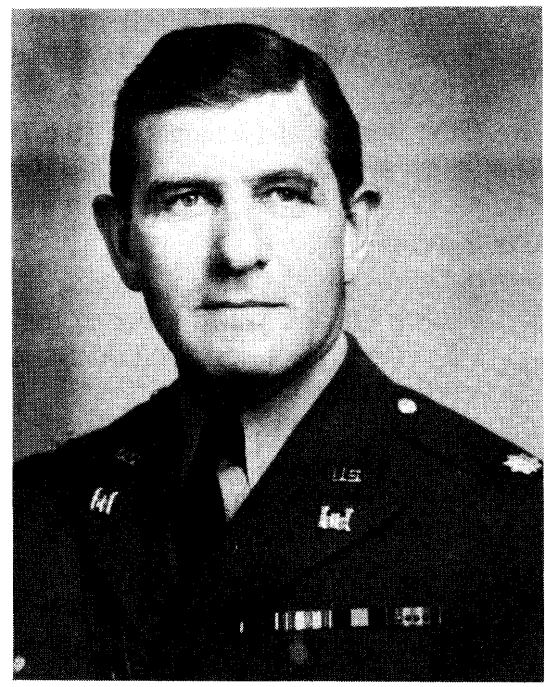
Q: At the south post?

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]—1 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

lived with me for one summer. He had been to Germany to go to school and spent a year over there as an attache. Paul came back and I said, "What in the hell do the Germans do to get exercise for their men? They have much less area than we have." Well, he said they had these obstacle courses and he sort of described it. We went out and designed our own, and we built them. They weren't worth a damn, but it was a challenge. You could run through—the trouble was it wasn't enough length to it. We put in everything we could think of. We went over walls. We went over hurdles. We crossed streams on logs, a little bog or anything. We were always testing something. We went under barbed wire. We did everything else you could think of in a short space. But if you were good at it and you ran it, you could do it in about five or ten minutes at the most. We used to put the companies through there before breakfast. General Marshall came down or somebody, I'm not sure whether—I'm sure General Marshall saw it when he was Chief of Staff. But anyway they liked it. So, they sent this around all over the Army and that started the obstacle courses. I know people could murder me for that.



Lieutenant Colonel William M. Hoge, commanding officer of the Engineer Replacement Training Center, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1941.

Q: Only when they're running.

A: There was a lot of crawling through concrete pipes. Don't know what all. We did everything we could think of in a short space. We limited the whole business. It wasn't as big as a city block from beginning to end,

but you did all these things in a short space. You'd run, climb walls, jump over ditches, crawl through pipes, walk logs over running streams. I don't know what all we didn't try. We did everything we could which we could put in that space.

Q: The idea originally came through—

A: Through Paul Thompson. He didn't describe it to us, but he told me something about it. We got together with an officer out there on infantry training and we worked this thing out and designed this. We built two of them and they took on throughout the Army.

Q: And they're still in existence.

A: I think it was General Marshall who was very much interested in this thing. He sent it out to everybody.

Q: The training center then—was that primarily for recruit training?

A: It was all draftees. They came there right fresh from the very beginning. We had–what was it? Sixteen weeks to start with. They were changing all the time. Sometimes when the demand for troops got heavy, we'd drop down to 14 weeks and sometimes—well, generally, the standard course was 16 weeks as I remember; and then you could keep some along for specialist training, like heavy equipment operators and surveyors for maybe four more weeks.

Q: Did you start that training in November 1940, or not until later on?

A: We started in the beginning of 1940 as I remember.

Q: You arrived there November 1940.

A: It was the following year, 1941.

Q: Just at the beginning when we entered World War II.

A: No, we hadn't entered yet because it was in December of that year that we entered the war. I stayed there for a year. I don't know how many battalions we turned out. We classified men. We started the study of—what do you call it—our ability to do things.

Q: MOS [military occupational specialty] training?

A: Yes, and went on and gave them examinations. I thought it was pretty good. We had some experts from the University of Virginia or someplace to design these tests.

Q: Oh, the AFQT, the Armed Forces Qualification Test?

A: It was a question of whether you wanted carpenters or machine operators, any kind of different types. Aptitude is what we were studying, trying to sort these men out. We would get requisitions from all over the Army for certain numbers of these people.

Q: Was that the first time the qualifications testing had been done that you know of?

A: I don't know-we started it there—whether other people were doing it. We were one of the first training centers that was started-at Belvoir. That was one of the beginnings.

Q: And that was only for training Engineer troops?

A: That was only Engineers. They later started one at Leonard Wood, which became another Engineer training center.

Q: How had the basic training been conducted before? Just Army-type training?

A: Oh, it was always done in the unit.

Q: The basic recruit went right to the unit and he got his training there?

A: Or you went to a recruit depot and maybe got a little close-order drill or something like that, but that was all you got. Maybe that would be a week or two weeks; but you got your training when you were assigned to a unit and then you were put under soldiers in that unit. But we were multiplying so fast. You didn't have time to—well, you didn't have enough units. They were swamped. We ran a good training center down there. This General Moore I was talking about was the one when I got down there. I saw the encroachment of filling stations and hot dog stands and what not down [US] Highway 1, and the land prices were going up. so I went out and bought, I think it was, 10,000 acres. I'd arranged for it and I got more down there.

Q: 10,000 acres?

A: Well, we didn't have much.

Q: Oh, this was Fort Belvoir?

A: Belvoir—and it was over on the other side. We had land for almost anything you wanted. I don 't know whether you know Belvoir.

Q: Yes, sir.

A: That side of the road.

Q: It's between Route 1 and Shirley Highway.

A: Well, we started there. We bought all of that property around Woodlawn Mansion. I could have bought Woodlawn Mansion, but I was afraid of it because it was too domineering-and I didn't know what to do with it. That was the end of my project, but I bought all the land around it.

Q: That would have made a great country club.

A: I thought it was too imposing and too expensive. We built our own clubs over there. We had demolition grounds. Oh, all sorts of things. All that golf course out there we bought at that time.

Q: The big golf course is on that side.

A: We built that golf course, too. I built that later. It was later years when I went back there, but I used the heavy equipment training to work that thing out.

Q: I guess that was allowed then. Today you can't get away with that.

A: Well, we had to train-we had heavy equipment. We had schools, and you had to get someplace you could use bulldozers and use, I don't know, all kinds of things—all the equipment. There was nothing to do except turn the same pile of dirt over and over. So, we started out to smooth out some of those contours and then I got Jones, that big golfer-developer-designer.

Q: Bobby Jones?

A: Well, he isn't the great professional. There is another Jones [Robert Trent Jones] who is—was supposed to be one of the great golf course designers. Not the golf player but golf course architect, and he knew [Lawrence W.] "Biff" Jones, and he'd been up and designed-worked on the West Point design when Biff was up there in some capacity [Head Coach, Football, 1925 and 1926]. I don't know what Biff was doing, but anyway Biff had retired and was living down near Belvoir. Jones came by to see him, and he got Jones to come out and look my course over—this land which we had tentatively laid out, but it was all wrong. This professional, Jones, came out and told us what to do. I think we got a pretty good golf course. At that time we had that little golf course on the south of Highway 1, which was only nine holes and was flat as could be. It wasn't anything and all the officers at Belvoir had to go down to Quantico to play golf if they wanted to. But we built a course at Belvoir later which was as good as the Quantico course, I think.

Q: That's one of the better courses in the area.

A: We did that with soldier labor mostly, and there was the time when they broke up the funds that had been generated by the service clubs and all that after the war. They offered it to all the permanent posts in the Army. If you could present a project which would be approved, you could get some money from that. So, I presented a number of them and one of them was that golf course. I got some money from that to carry that on and to put in the water—we needed water up there on the hill and some other things. But that was a great help. Then those two field houses, we built those with soldier labor.

Q: Specter Field House and–

A: Well, there's two of them. You know how that came about? I got an offer at the end of the war-I was down there as commandant-of Air Force hangars that were surplus. They'd give them to you. So, I asked for four of them. I didn't know what in the hell I was going to do with them, but I got four. I decided I was going to build two field houses, one north of the road and one south of the road. We were going to put one on top of the other, one of these hangars on top of the other, and insulate them in between, put spacers so as to get something in. Try to fill them with cotton or something, wool or something for insulation. I got a bargain that somebody offered. I didn't have any floor, and somebody said I could have the dunnage off the ships that were coming back from Europe. There was a lot of dunnage in the ships, and they were going in to dry dock or dead storage, the ships were. I could have it free. So, I got a lot of dunnage. It was all oak but it was just rough stuff. And then I had to get the stuff made into floors. So, I traded-I found a mill someplace who would trade me. I think it was on the basis of 50-50. He would make me tongue and groove flooring if I gave him the rest of the lumber. So, I got enough for both field houses. We floored-and we did that with soldier labor. They're not bad field houses. We had had no indoor place. You didn't have room indoors to bat a handball around on that whole post anyplace, north or south of the road. So, we built those two. And they use them. Later they were expanded. They got some shower baths in and toilets. We didn't have that to start with. But I put one battalion north of the road and one battalion south, Engineer battalions, in competition to build these. Each one of them had a project of putting together one of these field houses.

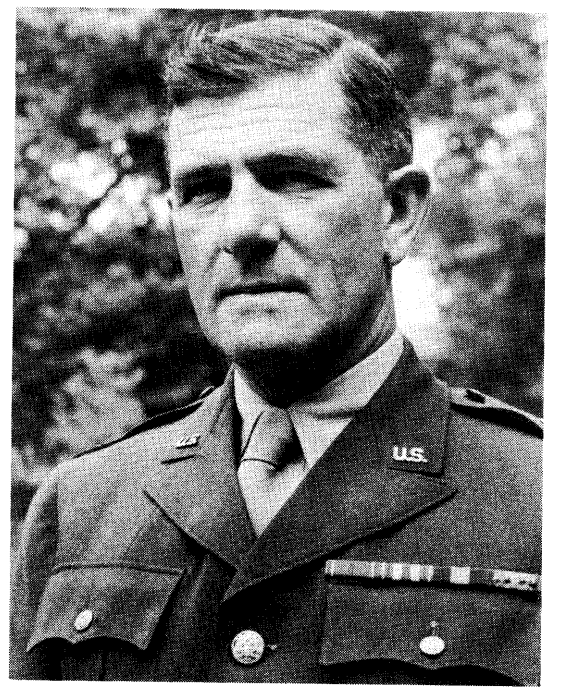
Q: It's too bad we can't do that type of thing today.

A: Well, we did. Nobody paid too much attention.

The Alaska Highway

Q: You left Belvoir to go to Alaska then in November of 1942?

A: No. I went up to Alaska first on New Year's Day of 1942. No, not New Year's Day. It was Valentine's Day. I remember I was in northern Canada on Valentine's Day of 1942. I took my first reconnaissance up there and then I came back and got my troops, some of them, ready. First I only had the—what was it? The 38th Engineers? I think it was the 38th. I'm not sure. Anyway that was the first regular regiment [35th Engineer Regiment (Combat)]. Then I got–I had some of those 400s. They were draftees entirely. Then I got a couple of Negro regiments. I had six regiments that finally came up there.



Brigadier General William M. Hoge as commanding general of the Alaska Highway Project, 1942.

Q: About how many men in each regiment did you have?

A: There were about 2,000 men, I guess.

Q: Per regiment?

A: Yes.

Q: Well, that was quite a feat.

A: When we went up there first with that first regiment, the trouble was getting anyplace into this road. You could start on both ends. You could start on the south end and you start up around in Alaska coming south. But that would be a hell of a long way. How long is that road? I've forgotten. I used to know. It seems to me about 1,000 miles or maybe 2,000 miles. Anyway it would take a long time to build from end to end. So, we had to find some ways of breaking it into segments. The first idea was to take this first regiment we got there—and we had to get up there while the ice was in because you couldn't get across those rivers-and get one regiment inside up around Fort Nelson [British Columbia], which was about 250 miles inland, before the ice thawed. We had to get supplies up there for them until we could work in from the southern end and get supplies to them. So, we put one regiment; I think it was the 38th Engineers [35th]. Took them in over—got them up there about the 1st of March, sometime early in March, put them up the railroad as far as we could go, to Dawson Creek; and then we took them off and put them on overland-headed for Fort Nelson, which is about 250-300 miles away just across the prairie and through the woods. It was nothing but Indian trails or something like that.

Q: All virgin land?

A: We didn't know where we were going actually at that time, but I knew we had to go to Fort Nelson. We only had a few points in there we had to go. I don't know whether there's better routes or not. If you wanted a better route, I think I would come up from Vancouver and go up the Rocky Mountain trench, which is due north and is a very peculiar trench in there that doesn't go very high. I think probably the highest elevation is maybe 1,000 feet and that would have gone straight up to wherever we were headed for, which was Whitehorse. But we had to go to the airfields that were selected. They hadn't been built yet. There's one at Fort Nelson. There's one at where we're started down there off the mainline near Dawson Creek. What the hell's the name of that? Fort St. John [British

Columbia]. That's where we started. There was an airfield there already built, but then they were going to build one at Fort Nelson. Another at—up on the—what the hell is the name of that? My memory is getting so bad. Knew it so well.

Q: Up on the north end?

A: It's where the Liard River turns east, comes down from the north and turns there and heads east. Then we had to go over to Whitehorse, then up to a place called North Field. Gee, it's awful when your memory's gone. Anyway, it's halfway up towards the Yukon.

Q: Let's talk some more about the particular engineering problems that you had.

A: Well, there were no plans on that except we had to go to these points where airfields were to be built. Somebody had made a partial air survey of this route. They didn't know where they were going. They had this laid out purely from air photos. There were a lot of places where no one had been. I later got up in there and I couldn't even find an Indian who'd been over parts of it, Indian guides or anybody else. So, part of it was to head out and to start this. We had several ways we wanted to enter to get on to this road. One was to come up the Stikine River and cross over the mountains near the coast in that way. Well, that didn't prove very satisfactory, but we could come in at Whitehorse [Yukon Territory] and head north and south from there. We got in there up on the route we wanted to come. You could deploy two regiments that way, and you could bring this one regiment we had in at Fort Nelson. We only worked that one west. We didn't turn back. They had to be joined up by regiments from Fort St. John. We had a regiment coming in from that way. Everybody had about 250-300 miles to go to hook up with the next, but everybody was going in one direction, every regiment.

We came in at Valdez in Alaska, where they are talking about bringing the oil line from the North Slope. We brought a regiment in there [the 97th Engineer Regiment (General Service)-a black unit]. It's hard to remember now. I know I had—it seems to me I had six regiments. I brought three regiments in at Skagway and brought them up to Whitehorse in that way [the 18th Engineer Regiment (Combat), the 93d Engineer

Regiment (General Service), and the 340th Engineer Regiment (General Service)]. There were two white ones [18th and 340th] and a black one [93d]. I think we started up going north only, north and west [18th]. Everybody was hooked up so that you had about 250-300 miles to go. We did eventually make 14 miles a day with all of them. We had to organize. We had a number of ways of doing it. We leapfrogged. We tried different systems. I think the most successful was putting a company in front. They would build as fast as they could, but when the one caught up behind, the first one was just sort of a pioneer.

Q: Pioneer trail company?

A: Well, it was all pioneer then, but when the one behind finished their work, they would leapfrog ahead of the lead company and take over, and they would push as fast as they could.

Q: I see-and finish up a section.

A: They would finish a section; but when you finished your section and hooked up to the one ahead, then you'd leap-frog over the ones that were ahead of you. That way you kept continuously working. You put your kitchens-the kitchens were on sleds and they dragged along. They moved all the time. It was quite an experience, and I never saw the type of men that we had because they were nothing but ribbon clerks. They didn't know anything about it. Didn't know where in the hell they were. Didn't know how to run a bulldozer or anything else. Well, some of them that landed up there had landed at Skagway [Alaska], had to be trained down in Skagway to operate bulldozers before they went up on the road.

Q: Did you have pretty good equipment then?

A: Oh, we had good equipment. We had trouble getting it because after we got started-when we got started, everything was fine. We were number one, but as soon as we got started, we became way back down the line. We became number six or eight [in priority]. I had to go back to Washington once or twice to get something up there, to get additional equipment and so on. But they would supply somebody else who had

started. They started that Canada oil [CANOL] project-the oil line from over on the Mackenzie River to come into Whitehorse-and that took priority for a while. They would get all of our equipment. We were already up there. We would starve to death if we didn't keep going. But the specifications for our road were that you had to supply the troops, and you had to have a decent road to get food, gasoline, and equipment up to the troops that were working. I tested the turns, the radius on curves and what not, till I was sure that I could get our trucks and so on around them. That was the limit.

Q: That was the criteria. You had no design specs [specifications] or anything?

A: Our grades were limited to 10 percent. That was the maximum grade we had. But it was quite a project. We worked like hell and we trained a lot of men. But those men turned out—we were working 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our only rests were these shifts. We were working, I think, eight-hour shifts. No, let's see-I know we had maintenance time in there about four hours every day, but we worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Q: You ran three eight-hour shifts?

A: Three eight-hour shifts.

Q: And the shifts were by companies, I imagine.

A: I don't remember. I guess they were.

Q: I guess they were, because on the same section the company would have to shift also. Well, you stayed in Alaska until September 1942. Did you finish that fast? Was the road finished when you came out in September?

A: No. We had gotten–I stayed up until–when was it? [10 September] About the 1st of November? Anyway we had gotten through. We had gotten trucks through when I left. We didn't have the road finished. Actually, I'm not sure if the road's finished today.

Q: Not totally. You can travel it.

A: Oh, you can travel it. I have been over it since then. It's been several years-oh, it's been 10 to 15 years ago that I came back down from an inspection trip from Alaska. But it's dirt. The Canadian part hasn't been surfaced. It hadn't then. It was still dirt and the dust was terrific because it's all that glacial dust. It's very light. But when I came out, we had gotten trucks through all the way up, but we didn't have traffic. That's when I came out and went down to the Armored Center.

I can give you a little background on this. Don't know whether it means anything. I'd known Somervell, and I'd told you I relieved him [replaced him] once in Memphis–but he was a vindictive person and he was very particular about his own reputation and so on. But when we were up in Alaska, I had no instructions on civilians who came up there. But *Time* [magazine] sent one of their principal reporters [Arthur Northwood, Jr.] up there, and he stayed with me. He had a perfect right to do it. I showed him around a little bit, what was going on, talked to him. I didn't give him any secrets or anything else. *Time* published quite an article on that at that time [31 August 1942], and I think Somervell after a fashion was jealous of that publicity. I didn't seek it and I know the War Department called me up. They wanted to stop this business. It was supposed to be a secret mission, but I had no ability to keep people out of that territory. They came into Canadian territory, and they had a passport and they had a perfect right to be there.

All I did was talk to him and show him around a little bit. I didn't give him any state secrets of any kind. But I remember they called me up at one time from Washington about some information that had gotten out into the newspapers back home. Actually that information came from my G-4 [Lieutenant Colonel E. C. Mueller, Quartermaster Corps]. He was the one that did the talking. I sent him off on the first run up there separately to locate supplies and railroads and the facilities to get in that place. He talked with the newspaper people. He didn't come through meat all, but he told them a whole lot that maybe wasn't right. But I didn't know anything about it. I was off looking at the place up at Fort Nelson to move this regiment, went out reconnoitering the country trying to find out where to go, flying all over the place.

Hoge relied heavily on local airlines as commander of the Alaska Highway effort.

I had a bush pilot [Les Cook], who was a civilian. This Canadian bush pilot was just a crackerjack. He's the one that showed me the route to follow because when I first went up there I didn't have any plane. You were just helpless because there were no roads and there was no transportation. Well, the railroad [from Edmonton, Alberta] ended at Dawson Creek [British Columbia] and it only ran twice a week. It came up there on a single track line. So, I had no way of getting around. I hired this bush pilot who knew the country and had flown all over it. The first time I was up there, I had to ride on oil barrels. He was delivering oil to one of these construction outfits back in the woods by airplane. So, I had to ride on top of an oil drum, gas drum, to go. On the way back he would take me by different routes, and he showed me a pass over the mountains. They were the Rocky Mountains-down to the Yukon River from back on the Liard River. That was the bad part and he showed me where to go. Well, I got over to the pass and by following creeks-I think the top elevation I remember was 3,000 feet-the place that they had mapped out for me to go was up above the timber line and was in the snow country. It would have been one hell of a job to get up there and then get down, and it wasn't as nearly direct as the other.

They just picked it [the route] off of a map someplace, an airplane map or something. They had no information. They had a few photographs that they'd taken by air, but that was all that they knew about it. So, it was through this Les Cook, who was the civilian and I hired him, that I learned more about that country. He would go anyplace. He would land

on water. I finally got a couple of planes of my own. The Air Corps let me have one of those Canadian planes. I've forgotten the name of it now. Beaver or something like that [de Haviland [Canada] Beaver; US designation was U-6A]. And I also had a number-five Beechcraft. It was an American plane and I got a pilot with that, an American pilot. He was a good boy. He was a youngster, but he had been a pilot for Eastern Airlines. He'd been commissioned. But Les Cook was the great one. Les took me everyplace. He went between the mountains. We went down at elevations. We got lost, but I got to know the country pretty well and the streams by this flying back and forth.

It was through that that I learned much about the country and whereto go. I also learned from air that I could distinguish the type soil from the type of timber on it. I could identify—for instance, cedar always grew on gravelly soil, wherever you saw cedar. When you saw spruce that was usually mucky, and it was soft soil. You had to have something besides some gravel and you couldn't haul gravel very far. We used no gravel at all practically in the beginning. And then there was another-poplar and birch always grew on sandy soil. But you could fly over that and identify the type of soil you were going to run into down below.

Q: By the trees on it?

A: By the trees that were growing, and by that way I would fly back and forth over this country and identify the type of soil and also learn the passes and soon in and out of that country. I didn't have any advice until I got to Whitehorse. There was an old chap there. He was chairman of the board of White Pass and Yukon Railroad, a Canadian. He was an Irishman named Herb Wheeler. He was a great help to me and told me more about that country-he had built the airport at Skagway and also built one at Whitehorse. So he knew something about construction, and he also had built roads. He had a stagecoach line at one time that went up to Dawson along the Yukon River, but that had gone out completely. He gave me more good information on the type of country and the way of construction than anybody I ran into. He was very helpful.

Q: That and your experience with the cofferdams really support the old rule. Some of the best engineering advice you can get is from the people who

grew up around the area where you're doing the work. So, you think it was partly through the *Time* magazine article that General—

A: Approximately that. Anyway I had gotten through, and they had promised me they were going to take all [of the] men out and take them back to the States for the winter and then bring them back in the spring to work again. But they reneged on that, and those men—many of them—those regiments stayed on all through the winter up there. And many of them stayed in Alaska, and Somervell wanted me to build a road from Fairbanks out to Nome. He didn't know that country. He didn't know about permafrost, and that is the worst type of soil that you could run into because you can't uncover it. I heard a lot about muskeg before I went up there, and I heard a lot from the Canadians. The first permafrost I ran into was on my own road when I was building it up north of Whitehorse. I remember there was a spot where I had the road and everything was all right, and I went back over it and it was all full of water and muddy. I couldn't understand it because it had been dry before. I discovered that there was an ice lens underneath. The ice lens was quite large, but it was just isolated. I didn't run into any more of that until I got over beyond Lake Kluane heading north again, and then I got into country after I crossed the Slim River. It came off the mountains and ran off all sorts of ways. There were three different ways. Part of it emptied into the Columbia, part of it emptied into the Yukon, and part of it went on down I think into the Mississippi. But that would depend on when the snow would melt. You had big floods.

Well, anyway, I got across this place and built some bridges. I'd gotten over on the other side heading north along the Kluane Lake on the west side—going just to beat hell. I was making more mileage than I'd ever made—we got up to about 25-30 miles. When we came back, there was water in the road, and that's when I really ran into it. The only thing you could do—gravel wasn't available in many places—you had to corduroy the road to get it through. That was the start, but I first tried to uncover this. My way of going through was to cut a swath through the woods 100 feet wide for the right of way. My road was only 25 feet wide, but I had that much and I let the sun in there. Well, that was all right until we got into this ice problem. That was what you needed on muskeg and places like that, but when you got into this frozen ground, permafrost, that was the wrong thing to do. I had discovered that the hard way. The only thing to do with that was to cut the timber and then throw it back on top, make a mat of timber and the branches and everything else to protect it,

and then put dirt around that and anything else. But I had to put a blanket over the permafrost.

Q: To keep the sun from getting to it and thawing.

A: Yes. That finally worked, but it was considerable work. It slowed things up a lot.

Q: How did you handle just the roadbed itself?

A: The whole thing wherever we went over. I didn't use the bulldozer to scrape off the soil. I'd started that, and that was my way before I got into permafrost. I cleared all the timber out and the roots and everything else and took them out of there and pushed them off to the side. I let the sun in to let it dry out. That was absolutely wrong with permafrost, and you had to do exactly the reverse. You had to save all this and put it right back on and cover it over with dirt. I didn't have gravel, but that made a blanket that protected it, and it would work.

Q: That's interesting. The problem was not quite that severe in Vietnam, trying to get across the paddies where they had this very thick layer of muck and organic-type soil.

A: You always had in the bottom of the paddy, though, you had hard clay.

Q: If you went deep enough. You could either go down deep enough and fill it in with 4 or 5 feet of rock or put sand blankets under it and then raise up over that about 4 feet. That would distribute the load enough to carry it.

A: We didn't have time to–we had to make speed and all I was trying to do was to get this road behind me. My specifications, as I told you, were to supply the troops that were ahead. I always had about two regiments at the most up ahead, and I had to keep them supplied with food and fuel and all the repair parts and what not, which was a job in itself; but that made a road. I finally punched the thing through, got across the Smith River, and got down to the stream that goes by Fairbanks and joins the

Yukon on down the line beyond Fairbanks [Tanana River]. But I got through, and I got trucks through to Fairbanks before I was relieved.

Q: General Somervell, what was his position at that time?

A: He was G-4.

Q: So, he was on the Army staff. He pulled you out before the job was actually finished.

A: Well, as I say, the job isn't finished yet.

Q: There was someone to go up to take your place at that time?

A: Yes, they turned it over to another [Brigadier General James A. O'Connor]. You see, when I first went there I had charge of the entire thing. Well, I couldn't cover it all. It was impossible flying, and the weather would be so bad that for days you were stuck up there three or four days. You couldn't move on account of storms and clouds and so on. I remember one time we were up at Fort Nelson trying to get back. I had my own plane, and I asked one of these pilots if he'd fly me. I stayed up there at Fort Nelson for a couple of days, and I got so damned sick and tired of just doing nothing. I couldn't do anything. I had no communications with anybody, and I said, "By God, I'm going to get back to Fort St. John, " then my headquarters, "some way or the other. " So, I studied the map and I decided that if I followed-there was a river called the Prophet that came in just to the west of Fort Nelson and flows and runs into Fort Nelson River eventually and on north. But by going to that river, I figured out I could go up the—follow the Prophet, fly low enough, and when I got to the river called the Crutch, I could turn left and get out of that thing. I knew about how far to go. You couldn't see anything, and then I turned south and I could just fly over the tree tops and then get on back.

Well, we got up there. We missed the Crutch, the river, and the first thing I knew we were right in a canyon of the Rocky Mountains, and you could almost reach out and touch the mountains. This man that was with me—public roads man-he was along just advising. He didn't have any

people in there. They were going to take over later. We had to sit on barrack bags. We sat in column in these little planes with the pilot up in front. We sat behind him on barrack bags. There was a third one sitting behind me on a barrack bag. We suddenly came up to a blank wall. I don't think we were 200-300 feet from it when it suddenly loomed up. We turned quick enough, and we got back down and finally found the Crutch off the Prophet and turned and did what I was going to do. But we'd missed it the first time.

Q: Was that Cook flying you then, or one of your Air Force pilots?

A: I think it was Cook. But all the way back, if you could get your foot out of the door, you could touch the top of the trees. Those were hair-raising experiences. But it was interesting, and we worked like hell all the time. The mosquitoes were all over.

Q: In that cold weather, too?

A: The worst I ever saw. They'll run the caribou into the woods. And they'll run them into the Arctic Ocean up north of that. They get worse when you get up there. We didn't have any mosquito nets either. Nobody else knew the mosquitoes were there.

Q: You wouldn't think that.

A: They were not poisonous mosquitoes, but they were just—you had to eat with your head net on, and you would raise the head net and by the time you got food on the spoon up to your mouth it would be covered with mosquitoes. You were eating mosquitoes half the time, and then you had to pull it right down again.

Q: You know, we always think of that as being a problem in the tropics.

A: Oh, in the cold up there. But the only good part about it was they were not poisonous. They didn't carry malaria or anything else, but there were all kinds. They came right out of the snow. As the snow melted, you'd see them all over. Those were the big ones. They didn't sting so much

and weren't so bad. As the later ones got smaller, they were more vicious. I'd put my hand on my neck and [would] pull it back and it would be covered with blood from my neck.

Q: Let's go back and cover the Alaskan period.

A: First of all, my instructions for the construction of the ALCAN Highway came from the Chief of Engineers. The War Department, other than just what you would call a supervisory of the thing, had nothing directly to do. My instructions came from the Chief of Engineers. My instructions were to build a highway and pioneer road, as fast as we could, and that when winter came we would be brought to the United States until spring came when we would go back to work again. That was one of the reasons for it, the speed and so on. Also very few people knew what that country was like. Actually, I doubt that any American knew anything about it, until I discovered a great deal about the permafrost end of it. Everyone talked of muskeg and everybody talked of mountains and crossing lakes and rivers; but they had never heard of permafrost, which was the worst thing we had to contend with. Well, you didn't run into permafrost until you got up north of Whitehorse. That's when I first discovered it, and I had to work out how to cure it at that time. Prior to that we had always cleared a swath through the timber, which was about 200 feet wide; took all the trees out, cleared it down, and then built the road over that. But as soon as you got up north of Whitehorse and the sun got in on that, then you ran into this permafrost, and it melted. I don't know how deep it is. I know in places, as you get further north, it goes down 1,000 maybe 2,000 feet, 10,000 feet in depth; there's no limit to it. Now the Russians knew something about it. Later, after I got back to the States, I guess it was after the war, I was down at Fort Belvoir. I found some Russian pamphlets. They knew something about it. After that time, we did organize an Engineer force group up north to study that permafrost. The handling of it was after the war when everything was over. That was up at Fort Churchill. I visited them up there at one time.

Well, anyway, let me see now, General Somervell-now I'm not trying to deprecate him, but he was a great showman. He loved to front and show, but he didn't know anything about the country and he didn't know anything about my instructions; but he came up there all bluster, and he had two or three ideas. Number one was he wanted to go on north to Nome, across beyond the Yukon, and carry the road to Nome. General

[Simon B.] Buckner, who was commanding the [Alaska] Department, didn't want that at all; had no interest in that. Somervell had no idea what it would be going across there, because that would have been all permafrost, wherever you got up on the land.

Q: Was General Buckner chief of the department; was that Chief of Engineers?

A: No, General Buckner was the Department Commander at Anchorage. He commanded the Alaska Department. Anyway we went there. We went up to see Buckner. Buckner discouraged the whole business. He had no interest in going on beyond. Well, Anchorage would be far enough. He wanted to go as far as Fairbanks. That was enough, and then connect across from Fairbanks down to Anchorage; that was all he cared about. He just wanted that communication. Well, that was the number one thing.

The number two was that Somervell had always wanted to build up a big establishment. He wanted buildings put up and some quarters for the visiting people and make a big show of it. Well, the Bureau of Public Roads [Public Roads Administration (PRA)] was up there, following me with some contractors. They brought in building materials and built some permanent establishments, which were rather, well, they were just barracks; we didn't have that and we couldn't have used them because we were moving. We even had our kitchens on sleds and dragged them behind because we moved every day. They were always mobile. Housing or anything of that sort would have been in the way and a hindrance. Furthermore, we couldn't take the time for that. That was the number one consideration. The second one was [that] I had been there the winter before, or early that winter, that is, and had been with the Canadians and some of those contractors that were working for Canada up in that country. They were living in tents, and they lived there all winter. They put two tents, one on top of the other, and they'd bank up the side with snow. They had these oil drums that were made into stoves, and they kept perfectly warm, taking care of themselves. They lived there all winter long.

When I began to see it was getting to the end of the time, I was almost completely through with my pioneer road; it was just a question of pushing that and getting it on through before winter descended on us. However, as a partial preparation, I did get a sawmill for each of the

regiments. They were up there and put that in operation, and we did cut some timber and made planks and boards out of it so that we could build some form of shelter if we needed it. We had started that already because we knew that there'd be some maintenance crews left, and we didn't want to be entirely dependent on tents. However, we were getting near the end of the thing; but Somervell, he came up there and looked that place over. Furthermore, he did not know the congestion. We had one narrow-gauge railroad that came from Skagway up to Whitehorse; that was our only communication. All of our food, all of this stuff for the materials, and the equipment for these contractors had to come over that railroad, in addition to whatever supplies we were getting. They only made one run a day, so it was congested and was very difficult to get anything up there. so we were very limited on the supplies we could get in to build anything. But I didn't feel it was necessary; my mission was to get the thing through as fast as we could, and *only* the pioneer road. Then we could turn it over to the Bureau of Public Roads and the contractors.

Some of the enlisted men of the Army would be in there, but mainly we would get out and they would take over and finish the road. Well, that basically was the trouble. He [Somervell] was under the misconception that he wanted this big establishment built. Well, he came up there and we were living in tents. I had an old Mounted Police barracks in Whitehorse that I used as my headquarters. There were only a few old houses there, old barracks; it didn't accommodate much, but there was enough for my headquarters detachment. We did take over a building or so in the town of Whitehorse as supply buildings and so on; but otherwise everything went on the road. Well, that didn't suit Somervell; he wanted a big show, so he started out immediately to survey the whole thing. He wanted to extend it on beyond where we were, and he didn't know what my instructions were. Well, that's the reason he got sore about the whole thing. He got my relief, which was very fortunate as it turned out for me, because I would have been stuck there for maybe a year or two.

The war was on, and I got transferred to the Armored Force. When the Armored forces reorganized at one time, I had to go back to the Engineers, and I took that amphibious brigade over, two of them, during the landing in Normandy. Then, after that I went back to the Armored Force. But that was the history of that.

It was purely a misunderstanding and a misconception of our mission. Somervell didn't know what my instructions were, I don't think. He had

no idea, but he came up there. That little town of Whitehorse was crowded. They had only one hotel and people were sleeping in that—you had the same room being used by three people. They'd sleep eight hours then they'd get up and somebody else would get in the same beds and sleep. Well, I had this little house that the railroad had built for me. I put him and [Major General Eugene] Reybold up. Reybold was then Chief of Engineers. When they came up there, I put them up in my house. Well, their quarters were very skimpy and small, but it was so much better than anything that was available locally. If they'd gone over with the public roads, they could probably have gotten much better; but my people were all living in tents except for me. The railroad had built me that house because my wife was coming up. Prior to that time I had lived in a tent. That's the way the thing happened.

Then he decided that I wasn't making a big enough show and spread. It didn't suit him and he wanted to have–he always worked for the show—the big things and did not want to be connected with any smaller enterprise; it had to be the biggest, most expensive that anybody could have. He did that all through his life. His history in the Second World War was like that. Now, I' m not deprecating Somervell because in some respects he's a great person. He's one of the best, but he was just as flatsided on that side of show and making the biggest thing and spending money than anyone I've ever known. That was his worst feature. He called himself a "mean son-of-a-bitch, " and he was.

Q: Did the Chief of Engineers, General Reybold, go along with him up there?

A: Yes, Reybold was his man. Reybold had relieved me when I went to the Philippines and took over from the District Engineer in Memphis; but Reybold was just a puppet in Somervell's hands.

Q: From what I read, General Somervell was a strong individual, a very dynamic fellow.

A: Oh, tremendously strong, and very fixed and set in his own opinions. You were only right if you were on Somervell's side, only right if you could spend more money—the bigger you made your job look, that was the important thing. It wasn't what you were accomplishing. It was the

size of it and how much money you were spending. He was a perfect person to work for FDR because FDR had the same idea. Well, I just wanted to finish that up, and that goes back to the fundamentals of why I was relieved up there. I wasn't satisfying Somervell's conception of the show and bigness or making that thing a permanent establishment. Well, if I had built all the buildings he was thinking about, they wouldn't have done me any good to start with except a base camp, which would have been left several hundred miles behind in each case. But they couldn't have been lived in. We had to move.

Q: That same argument existed in Vietnam also, when the various divisions went in and built up a huge base camp; and many claimed that that was totally wrong, that we should have lived out of tents instead of building temporary wooden barracks.

A: I don't know anything about the conditions there, but you weren't moving as fast as we were, were you?

Q: No, sir, because we were tied to that base camp quite a bit.

A: But we had to move. That was the reason we were there, and as I told you, I think our average daily mileage on building that road was 14 miles a day.

Q: And you had to stay right with it.

A: And you had to go every day. We made up our columns and leapfrogged constantly. We had a task force ahead which was clearing with big bulldozers and small manpower. Then they were followed by the first company who cleared up, cleared the timber away and got something prepared. Then they put in some culverts, and they were followed by other companies. When one of them had completed its section, it would then leapfrog forward, so that when you finished a section, that company picked up and went to the head of the column and passed on ahead.

Q: Sounds like an excellent technique for a road that length.

A: Well, you couldn't do anything else, and it was different from anybody else's. Somervell knew nothing about the country, absolutely nothing. He didn't know what permafrost was. He had no conception of the difficulties of supply or anything else, but he had a preconceived notion. He wanted to make the big show, as he always did with everything. Well, I just wanted to settle that part of it because that was the reason he was dissatisfied with me; there was no question about that. But I think it was a misconception; and I was doing what the Chief of Engineers had sent me up there to do, and those were my instructions. Somervell didn't even know what they were. He had never seen those instructions from the Chief's office. Sturdevant was the Chief of [Troop] Operations at that time. General Sturdevant in the Chief's office was really my liaison man back in the Chief's office.

Q: But speaking of your mission order, were you given a rather sketchy mission order or was it a detailed type thing?

A: No, there were no details about it. They had a few. The airplane maps were about the best we had. They were on a scale of—I think a lot of them came out of the *National Geographic Magazine—they* were scaled about 50 miles to the inch or something like that. So, you know what was on them. All I knew was my points. I started at the end of the railroad [that] would take me [from Edmonton, Alberta]. That was Dawson Creek. From there I had to make a road into Fort Nelson. Well, first it was—

Q: Let's see. I've got some maps out in the car. Would you like to look at those?

A: Well, it might refresh my memory a little bit, but I know exactly—

Q: You had six regiments later on, and you had them dispersed?

A: At first we had six, but in the beginning I think I only had–I had the 36th Engineers, or was it the 38th [18th]? They were a white regiment, and I had another white regiment up there, the 440th [340th] I think it was. Those two regiments plus–as I remember it, there was a Negro regiment [93d] which came in at Skagway and came up to Carcross, near

Whitehorse. See, we had to get into the road from as many places as we could. You couldn't make speed if you were always working one behind the other. You'd be slowed up, and you were always held up by the one that was ahead of you, and you couldn't go any faster. But we split that road into about six pieces by getting regiments in. Well, that first one [35th] we took up there went in over the ice to Fort Nelson; there were no supplies there. They took their supplies with them and went in over the ice, and that was the first regiment that went in. They were isolated until contact was made with them by one coming up from the south [341st]. What in the hell was that fort in there? I started out to try to find that fort, and I don't see it now.

Q: Let's see, I've got it on this map. I had Fort Nelson marked on here.

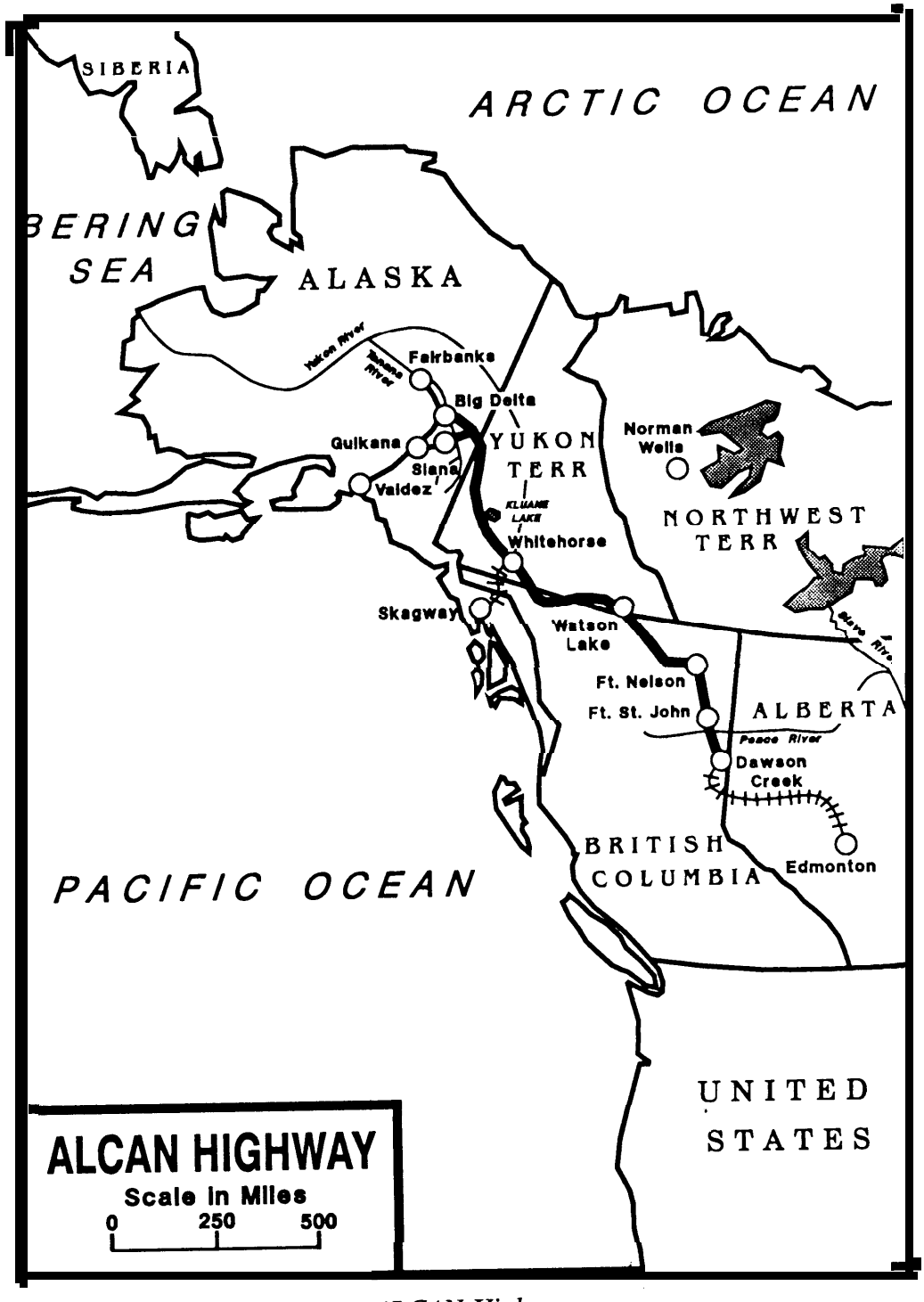
A: No, that's south of Fort Nelson. There's a fort in there, an old Hudson Bay post. Fort St. John was the one. See, I put a regiment, rather two regiments in Fort St. John, in addition to taking one in over the ice. A black regiment [95th Engineer Regiment (General Service)] and a white one [34 1st] went in there. They had to connect up with the one that was at Fort Nelson, which never turned around to come south; it was always working west and north. They were using the supplies that they carried with them. They lived on C-rations for about three months; that was all they had. They only had three things: vegetable hash, meat hash, and chili con came. Sometimes they had chili con came for breakfast and sometimes they had it for dinner, but they always had three choices.

Q: Let's see. Was that the 18th Regiment?

A: No, that was the 38th; wasn't it the 38th or 36th?

Q: You had the 35th ER [Engineer Regiment], the 340th, 341st, 18th, 97th, 93d, and 95th.

A: 36th [35th] was the one that went first. That was the one that went in over the ice to Fort Nelson. They were later connected up by a white regiment and a Negro one which came up from Fort St. John.



ALCAN Highway

Q: I see. The 97th Regiment started down at Valdez.

A: Yes, that was following the 440th [340th], I guess it was. Was that 400th Rusty Lyons's regiment? Your present Chief of Engineers [Lieutenant General William C. Gribble, Jr., USMA 1941] was a lieutenant. He was the only other regular officer, I think, with that outfit, except for Captain [Colonel] Lyons.

Q: General Gribble, sir.

A: Yes.

Q: Well, I'll be darned.

A: He was just a youngster in those days. He was a fine youngster, too. He has done very well since then. But Rusty Lyons was a great regimental commander.

Q: It was the 341st Regiment that went from Fort St. John to Fort Nelson.

A: From Fort St. John–

Q: —to Fort Nelson.

A: That was one of the backup regiments.

Q: They completed it.

A: Yes, they backed up and made the connection. But the one I was thinking of was the other one that came in down at, you get so mixed up in these old names. Well, anyway, we came in up here. I don't see Juneau. I see Juneau all right. Oh, Skagway is there all right. See, we brought the two of them. I've forgotten that regiment's number. It was the one that Rusty Lyons had [340th]. It was a white regiment, backed up by this Negro regiment [93d], which I've forgotten which one that was. It was the 90-something.

Q: 97th maybe?

A: No, the 97th came in up at Valdez; I'm almost positive. They [93d] backed up the one [340th] that came in there [Skagway].

Q: I have one more question on the ALCAN Highway. I went back through my questions, and about July 1942, Secretary [Harold] Ickes [Secretary of the Interior] prior to that time had told you that the road must be through in one year.

A: Ickes said it would be. Ickes didn't have anything to do with it. He had no conception of what it was. He had announced that it would be in one year. He knew nothing about it. He didn't know whether it was possible, and furthermore the Secretary of the Interior had nothing to do with it, just a busybody; and his mouth was running all the time, shooting off, telling stuff he had no business talking about. He didn't know anything about it.

Q: He was the same Secretary who made the memorandum of understanding with the Corps of Engineers on the Corps work versus Bureau of Reclamation work.

A: He may have done that. He had something to do with the Bureau of Reclamation, but he had nothing to do with the Army. He was Secretary of the Interior. Now that was pure shooting off his mouth about something he had nothing to do with.

Q: That might have been his—

A: He knew nothing about it. He didn't know whether it was possible. He had never seen the country. He didn't know what it was like. And I don't think he ever did see the country. He's never been up there, as far as I know.

Q: I couldn't find anything in research that he had gone there.

A: He was irresponsible and had nothing to do with it.

Q: Well, was the Public Roads Administration under the Interior at that time?

A: I think they were. They did send us some help, but that was afterwards; they were only back-ups. We only turned over to them. Their idea was that when we finished the pioneer road, they would back us up and improve it and finish it up. And they did do that, and they were good people.

Q: In one of the references it said that in July [1942], when it was obvious it was going to be very tough to get the pioneer road through before the cold weather got too bad, there were about 6,000 civilians belonging to the Public Roads Administration [PRA] who moved in with the Engineer troops and worked on the pioneer road.

A: They were not with us. They were always behind us, always.

Q: So they never did go up and work on the pioneer road.

A: Never worked on the pioneer road. The only time I did use some public works people was after we came through the Tanana River at Tanacross; and then we had to start south [to] hook up with the 18th Engineers, which was coming north, and we were concentrating in military. And then we had to make the tie-in. We did have a tie-in by the diverse route, by the old Richardson Highway, back to Fairbanks. There was a road, you see, the old Richardson Highway, and we had crossed the Richardson Highway back behind it, so we did have a connection with Fairbanks. It wasn't a good one, but it was a connection. But when we got to Tanacross and we started south with the military people, then I got in contractors that were with the public works to start north from Tanacross and to go up the Tanana River to Fairbanks and make connection up at Big Delta. That's the only time I ever knew of their being on what was the pioneer road. I don't know what was going on then in the Southern Sector because we had had to separate [in May 1942]. As I told you, when I first went up there I was in charge of the whole business from Dawson Creek all the way to Fairbanks. And the communications between the parts of it were at times cut off for as much as two weeks at

a time; they were just isolated. There I had these airplanes. I had two airplanes at my disposal, and I had two in the Southern Sector. I had a Beaver and an A-5, or something like that. I had a civilian pilot and a military pilot for both of them. But we couldn't do it on account of the fog, and there were times you couldn't fly at all.

Q: Was there another brigadier general in the Southern Sector later on, General Sturdevant?

A: No, Sturdevant was Chief of [Troop] Operations in the Engineer Office. O'Connor [James A. O'Connor, USMA 1907] came in [May 1942] and took command of the Southern Sector. He later was made a brigadier general, but at that time, he was a colonel. He had been an instructor of mine—he was an Engineer-at Leavenworth, and he came up there to command the Southern Sector. And later he was the one who relieved me after, when I was relieved. Well, he didn't immediately relieve me, but he eventually took over the road.

Q: You went down to the Armored Center before you went with the 9th Armored Division?

A: No, I was assigned to the Armored Center for briefing and some training. I was there—I was attached to the 8th Armored at that time. But it was just a training division, and I stayed there—as I remember I went out to Leavenworth, from there I got to [Fort] Riley on Armistice Day, I think, 1942, the 1lth of November.

Q: That was down at Fort Knox?

A: Well, I was at Fort Knox with the Armored Center, and I stayed there after I came back from Alaska. I was there about a month, and then I stayed there and was briefed. I went through a training cycle for armored operations. I didn't learn a hell of a lot there. Then I was assigned to the 9th Armored at Fort Riley, and I went out there. As I remember, I got there—it sure seemed to me around Armistice Day, but the 9th Armored then was just being organized. It was all recruit training. We were just getting our troops together.

Q: That was organized at Fort Riley?

A: Yes, it was organized from the Cavalry division. We had the 14th Cavalry and the 2d Cavalry. They were the basis, and then we had the 3d Field Artillery, which was with the old Cavalry division. It was the 2d Cavalry Division, which had been broken up. The units were kept there at Riley and formed into the 9th Armored. Everybody was new. The nice thing about Armored was everybody was working together. Nobody knew anything about it. It was just Indian country, and you were wide open to try and do anything. It was all good. The people who didn't do as well in armor were those who had had training in armor before. Because all they knew was—they had been with the armor-was how to fix tanks and how to run tanks. The mechanics, they knew all of that. They'd been schooled. They knew all the theory of engines; but as far as the operation of units and tank warfare, they didn't know anything and they didn't care particularly about it. That was my feeling about the old-timers, the tankers, the ones that had been with the tanks since they'd started. I knew several of them; as far as I know, they were not particularly good tank commanders.

Q: So, you were developing your own tank doctrine?

A: Everything was being developed. We were learning together.

Q: Were most of the officers there Cavalry officers or were the branches pretty well split out?

A: They were split out. There was an Engineer battalion which had come from the old 2d Cavalry Division, but the rest of them were from all branches-Infantry, Artillery, and Cavalry. Cavalry should have grabbed it. They missed out on a lot of it. Cavalry was a natural to become armored troops by their tactics and their training, but they didn't take it. They wanted to stay with horses. I know a lot of them felt that way.

Q: You were assigned initially to Fort Knox to begin your [armored] training. You implied that a number of officers, not Cavalry officers and not former Armored officers, were brought in to be trained in armor operations?

A: There were Engineers. I know [Lunsford E.] Oliver commanded the 5th Armored later, at one time was Engineer for the Armored Force, and designed the pontoon bridges [treadway bridge] that were later used when he got over into the command. Bob Crawford [Robert W. Crawford, USMA 1914] was down there. He didn't stay. He went back to the staff as G-4 or G-3, I think, of War Department staff [G-4, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces, SHAEF, 1944-45]. He was down there at the same time. But that was like—that was just Indian warfare. Everything was new and anything you did was worthwhile and you could get away with it. You could try it because nobody had all this knowledge. There were old Armored people-I told you this before–there were old Armored people who had been in the Armored Force long before. But they had been technicians more than anything else. They knew all about how to repair tanks and engines and efficiency, but they didn't know anything about the tactics. We were absolutely free to develop our own doctrine.

Q: Did you use any other sources for your tactics development, such as some of the German generals' writings?

A: No, I didn't know what that was. I hadn't heard about it until after the war and came in contact with it.

Q: So, you developed it from scratch?

A: Well, mostly everything was from scratch in those days.

Q: Was the training you received there primarily officer training, senior officer training?

A: It was just observing. There was a training division. It was the 8th [Armored Division], which was not operative. It was a training division entirely at that time. It later became an operating division. We were assigned to that. I had a cavalryman in command and we just went around and watched the training more than anything else. Just reconnaissance around Fort Knox and fiddled around and didn't do much. I was only there about a month when I was assigned to the 9th Armored [Division] which was then being formed and went out to Riley.

Q: Did you seek this assignment, knowing that you would then participate in World War II as an Armored officer rather than an Engineer?

A: No, I didn't.

Q: So, actually your initial contact with armor was when you were moved out of Alaska. Well, General Somervell actually pulled you out then. Was that tantamount to a relief of the job?

A: Yes, it was. He asked General Devers [Jacob L. Devers, USMA 1909], who was then head of the Armored Force, if he'd take me. He said yes. Devers and I became great friends. He was an instructor when I was a cadet, but I didn't know him then particularly. But later he became a great friend and he was a great man. He's still alive [died 15 October 1979]. He really was the father of the Armored Force. They talk about Chaffee [Adna R. Chaffee, Jr., USMA 1906] and the rest of them, but they were more theorists. Chaffee was a cavalryman heart and soul. He came out and gave us a lecture on armor, but he talked more about horses than he did about armor.

Fort Riley

Q: So, again, this was another one of those chance happenings that turned out for the best. So, when you left Alaska and went down to Knox, it was with the distinct intent to go into armor.

A: Yes, I think so.

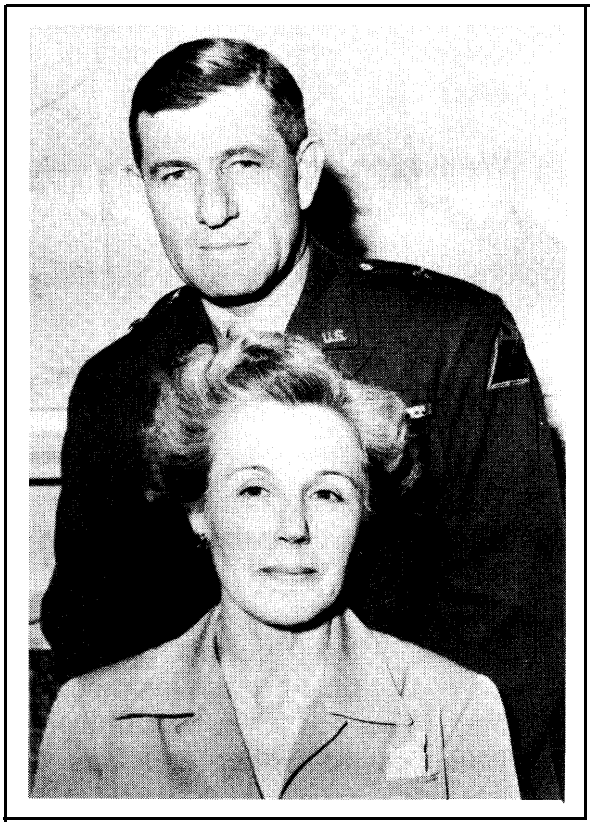
Q: It seemed to turn out quite well.

A: Eventually it did.

Q: Then when you went to Fort Riley, you went there and joined the 9th Division and it was just being formed at that time?

A: It was being formed out of the 2d and 14th Cavalries plus this 3d Artillery. We had the 9th Engineers. They were all part of the old 2d

Cavalry Division which had been disbanded. It was reorganized and went to the border; and they turned these two regiments over, and the rest of the Armored Force became all white after that.



Brigadier General and Mrs. (Nettie) Hoge, Fort Riley, Kansas, 1943.

Q: Now, what was your initial assignment there? Did you initially take the combat command?

A: I had a combat command. There were two brigadier. They changed its organization. There were two brigadier and a major general. It had two. A and B were the active combat commands and R was the reserve command. But they were all interchangeable. You could use any one of them and take one out and rest it or use it in reserve or anything else.

Q: Was the reserve command also commanded by a brigadier general?

A: No, it was a colonel. Later, when they organized the armor, they took away the brigadier general, one of the brigadiers, and they took away the artillery commander who was a brigadier. They busted it down to—one brigadier and one major general in the division after that. And the strength of the division was cut greatly. These later regiments were much lighter and less in strength. I think the strength of the armored division dropped from about 16,000 or 17,000 down to about 8,000 or 10,000.

Q: Well, in your combat command, did you have any support elements assigned or were they all part of division headquarters or the division base?

A: We didn't have any.

Q: You had strictly maneuver battalions within—

A: We had maneuver battalions-we had headquarters, but all the other support came from the division.

Q: You had Combat Command B. Were you assigned that initially at Fort Riley during the training and went with it into Europe? Who had A at that time, sir?

A: "Honk" Allen [Brigadier General Frank A. Allen, Jr.] had it first, and then when they had the invasion he had A. He was a brigadier at that time. That was when we still had the heavy division, and he went with Patton on the landing in Africa. He'd known Patton. I don't know whether you've ever heard of Allen or not. He didn't do very well as—well, I don't know whether he would have or not. He finally became a public relations man. He got in terribly bad by giving prewarming to the newspaper people about the armistice or the surrender, and he was practically court-martialed for that. But then it was a big scandal in that time. But he went off with that and he still stayed a brigadier. As I say, he went over in public relations. He was more of a newspaper man.

Q: What was the make-up of the troops at that time? Were they mostly draftees that were fresh? Brought in from the draft?

A: Well, they were coming in all that time. I guess they were draftees.

Q: Did you have any particular problems?

A: The nucleus of this was people who were already there from these old cavalry regiments and the others.

Q: Which gave you a cadre for training.

A: We had a cadre, but we were constantly being stripped of men because of these various projects that they had coming along. One was sending people to the Air Corps and they got to select. By our qualifications we were supposed to have people with IQs of 105. Hell, we got down to 85. They went through us and stripped us of all these men with intelligence for the Air Corps, and they had some scheme that came out to train a lot of students and send them off to special schools, civilian schools. I don't know whatever came of that, and I don't think it ever worked out. But they stripped us of these men, and there were officer training camps that were being organized. They took all of our top men. So, we were pretty hard up to get anybody who had an IQ of 105. We had some.

Q: Did you have any particular problems in training the troops? Were they pretty well charged up knowing they were going to Europe?

A: They were all right. There was no trouble about that with our officer personnel. We had very few regular officers, and we lost a number of those. We were disappointed. I remember one group we had. We had three that were battalion commanders or maybe a regimental commander who had gotten in trouble. Some of them were drunks and-one of them was a drunk and one of them ran around with an officer's wife and went AWOL.

We didn't have [any quality officers]. Now the first four or five armored divisions [that] were organized all had training at Benning and the Artillery School and what not—they were trained back then. They were partially trained and [had] very high quality officers. But when we got along, we had to make our own. We had that trouble in the 9th Armored all along. When I lost an officer, particularly a battalion commander or a company commander, I didn't have anybody to replace them. Sometimes I'd send back and get somebody else, and they wouldn't be sufficient, and noncoms were the best we had. The younger officers were all right. They were just new as lieutenants, but when we got to captain and a battalion commander, they were almost irreplaceable. I had some poor ones, too. When I got with the 4th Armored, I found an entirely different situation. When I got with the 4th Armored Division, when there was a wounded or killed battalion commander, I always had a replacement right behind him. But with the 9th Armored, we didn't have

any of that, and I'd go back to division headquarters and ask for somebody else. I remember at Remagen getting clear down to nothing and I went back to division headquarters. Well, they said they had a captain there in the ordnance who would be perfectly willing to come up. The captain lasted a day. He went back in an ambulance, wounded. So, I lost him. We were down to the point where the companies were commanded by a brave bunch of lieutenants just out of these training camps or [by] noncoms.

Q: What did you do for battalion commanders? When you lost a battalion commander, did you put in a major?

A: Or a captain. I had to put them in several times. I had to baby them all along and watch over them all the time, keep them going. I got several cases like that. I had problems one or two times—tremendous. One of them was when we got the bridge at Remagen. I had waited there to be sure we had the bridge. I had received orders to do something else. I knew they didn't know I had the bridge. I wanted to be sure that we got a battalion guarding the bridge over on the other side. I went back to division headquarters to tell them. When I went back I met General Leonard [John W. Leonard, USMA 1915] at my headquarters. He arrived just about the same time I did and I told him. And while I was standing there talking to him, the infantry battalion commander showed up. He was the man that was supposed to be commanding the infantry battalion across the river. I said, "What n the hell are you doing here?" He said, "1 came back to get supplies. " I had to relieve him.

Q: I'll get off the track a little bit. While on that trip before you met General Leonard-in the book written by the captain in General S. L. A. Marshall's historical section, Ken Hechler, he mentions that on a trip going back to your division headquarters, your aide in the back seat of the jeep was shot and killed by a sniper?

A: No, my aide was killed before then. I had been without an aide since then. The aide was killed about a week before. Before we got to the Rhine [on 4 March while General Hoge was driving into Bodenheim].

Q: I'll go over that later when we get up to it. From your comments now and from the material I've been able to find-and from at least one officer who thinks a great deal more of you for it—you obviously did not seek publicity and didn't much give a damn about it. You reinforced that at the time. Well, back on the training before you took the combat command, was there any other headquarters? You had no intermediate subordinates between you and your battalions in the combat command. Is that correct?

A: No, I had nobody. I had a headquarters company, and I had an S-3–an S-4 in my staff.

Q: What was the grade level of your staff-lieutenant colonels or majors?

A: Majors, and eventually one of them got to be a lieutenant colonel. He was a crackerjack.

Q: How many maneuver battalions did you have? Five?

A: Well, it changed. We could have three. There was a mixture of armor and infantry. Actually we didn't have enough of the latter to operate efficiently. We didn't have enough infantry to take over some of the things. Armor should not be slowed down by taking these places. I mean by going in and occupying and cleaning out. The thing to do is to rush the place and overcome the Germans. Then they'd hole up in the houses. Then you'd have to take infantry in and clean them out.

Q: And let the armor move on,

A: Armor had to move. Armor is no good standing still. Its forte is to move, move and shoot, the most important part is the moving. Armor—I'm talking about armor now–is not the big important thing. No. They did put a lot of armor on and it's all right to have. The best thing to have is a good gun that will penetrate and have maneuverability. It's got to be mobile. It's got to move fast.

Q: Then you'd be of the school of a lighter, faster, more maneuverable vehicle with a heavier gun rather than the heavy armament?

A: Well, you couldn't do too much with the heavy armor. We later got it after the war when I was back in Germany. Later there were tanks that were absolutely unusable. They were gas hogs. You would almost have to have a pipeline behind to keep them supplied. They were far too heavy.

Q: That debate is still going on. I guess it always will with the demise of the MBT-70 and now the XM803, or whatever the new designation of the main battle tank is?

A: I haven't followed that up, but I know that the Patton was a pretty good tank. But they began to add more armor to it and they got the thing too heavy and slowed it up and then the gas consumption was too great. The first Patton–not the Patton tank–

Q: The Sherman?

A: Yes, the Sherman was a good tank and it could go about 100 miles on a tankful of gas. But later we got down to the point where we couldn't go 25 miles. Later on they developed them so heavy and they were such gas consumers. Of course, we should have had diesel. We did in the beginning and the Marine Corps or somebody got all the diesel engines. I think it was the Marines, and we had to go back to gasoline engines which were not as economical as the diesel. The diesel [engines] were good. I'm not a technician, and I know very little about them except supplying them and then moving and handling them. I can do that, but I don't know the technique and all that. But I do know they got them too damned heavy, and then they got worried about the amount of armor. Of course, some of those—I've seen a tank shot right straight through. Armor piercing, go in one side, come right out the other.

Q: I guess that debate will go on as long as we have armor. Which way it should go. Well, how long did you train at Fort Riley?

A: We trained-then we went out to the desert. We left Fort Riley on about the 1st of June, as I remember, and went to the desert. It's a desert training center. We spent three or four months. That was when they cut the division down in size and they relieved [some of us]. They only left one brigadier general, and they knocked out all the artillery and the Engineer brigadier and what not. It was left entirely to cavalry and infantry. I was at that time made available to the Engineers. I went with the amphibious force.

Q: Your term "relief" there is just reassignment?

A: Reassigned, but that was a result of reduction in the number of general officers and the cutting down of the size of the division. As I say, they cleaned out the artillerymen who were commanding. First of all, they took the Engineers out who were brigadier generals and then they made them available to the Engineers. Then they took out the artillerymen. So, they had left only the infantry and the cavalrymen generally-the commanders. That was the time they reduced it down to one brigadier.

Q: Then you went down to Camp Gordon Johnston, Florida, I believe, to the 4th Engineer Special Brigade.

A: I think it was the–it was the 4th. I was down there learning something about that. I had never been with the amphibious force, and I had only been there a few weeks when my orders were changed and I was ordered to London to organize and command the 5th [Engineer Special] Brigade. Later I was added to the 6th Brigade.

Q: Were you only at Camp Gordon Johnston in October and November 1943?

European Theater of Operation

A: I got over to England in November. I was supposed to go by way of Africa, but I had to stop to get the yellow fever shots for some reason and then after I got them I had to sit around for a couple of weeks and then they decided to send me up by way of Iceland. So, I had to take off by myself and head up north and get a plane going out of New York.

Q: This was from Florida?

A: From Florida. I went by way of Iceland and on to England that way, and went to London to join the headquarters over there.

Q: It was about Christmas of 1943?

A: It was before Christmas. It was about the 1st of December.

Q: Your time at Camp Gordon Johnston, even though you were the CG of the special brigade being formed there, you weren't there really long enough to—

A: 1 wasn't. I turned it over to my relief. He took it over to the Pacific, and I went the other way.

Q: The 4th went to the Southwest Pacific?

A: Yes, the 4th went to the Pacific.

Q: Then you got to the 5th in England.

A: The 5th joined me in England. I was over there when they came in. I took them on out to Wales.

Q: Did you do any training in England?

A: Oh, yes. We trained there for—we were in Wales till—let's see, we were there through the spring up till summer and then we were moved down south into Devon near the beaches. We there loaded out to go to France.

Q: I guess you were there from about November 1943 to March 1944. You went into OMAHA Beach in June. So, you continued to train with the 5th and later the 6th. The 6th joined in about March?

A: They came in about that time. I had two brigades. Again we were short on officers. Officers were a big thing and the commanders of these brigades I shifted around. They weren't very lasting either. I remember Paul Thompson [Commanding Officer, 6th Engineer Special Brigade]. He was a crackerjack, and [on] the day of the landing the first thing he did was get shot through the throat and came out on the other side, just missed his vital organs, and he got shot through the shoulder. So, I lost him. I had to improvise with somebody else in that job.

Q: Well, in your training, did you know at that time what mission you were training for?

A: Yes, I knew.

Q: Did the troops?

A: Yes, and we were practicing landing—and then we had maneuvers, went to Slapton Sands in south England, and made a landing there on an English cove, and we had practiced landings in several other places.

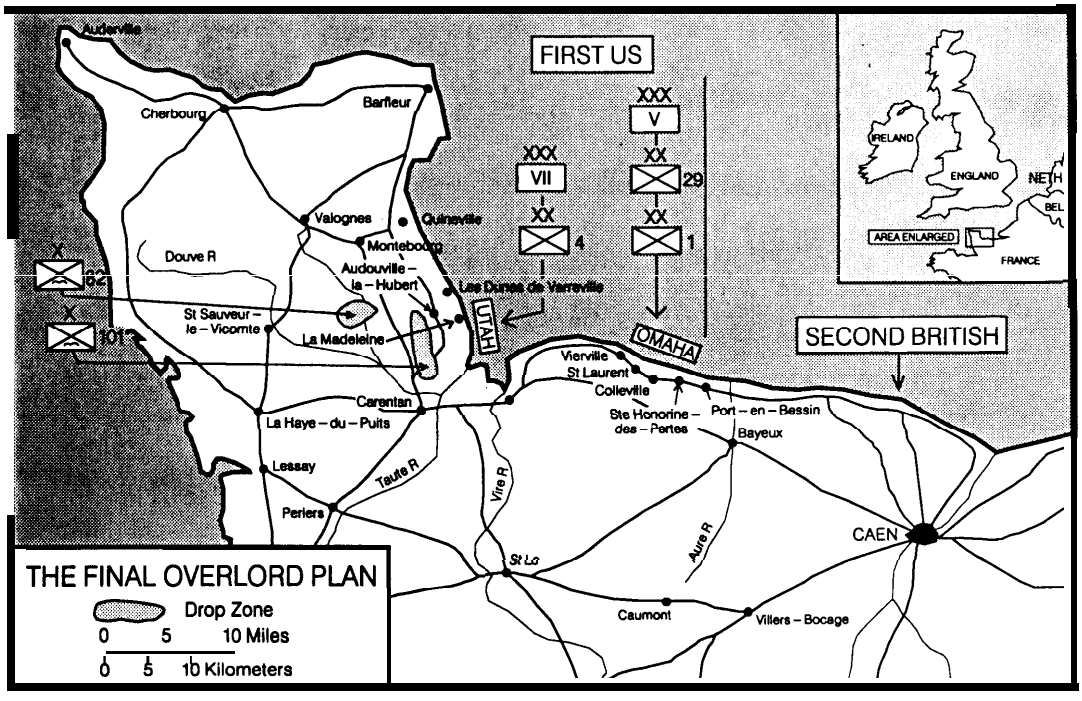
Q: How about the battalions that you had in either the 5th or the 6th?

A: Oh, we had all sorts-those special brigades were a mixture of all types of units. There were straight line Engineers, operators of equipment. We had every type of thing you could think of. We had a medical outfit. We had special supply. People who were stevedores. We had several battalions. There must have been 10 or 12 different types of units.

The organization was built around the Engineer battalion, that was the heart of it, but we had all these other things that were—we didn't have any artillery. Well, we didn't have any riflemen except these Engineers that were trained in it.

Q: What was the doctrine for the landings that you were practicing, i.e., the time that each wave of Engineers would go in, their initial assignments when they hit the beach, this type of thing?

A: We were leading and we were supporting all these other units, infantry, artillery, and what not, right behind them. We were to get ashore as soon as we could and start building landing places and roads across the beaches and get them back into the country. We didn't go back. We had also established areas for the delivery of supplies. For instance, various artillery ammunition, food, and dumps and soon back in the country. We had those only on a map, but we had [it] all set out so that we'd know where to go.



The Final OVERLORD Plan

Q: You also worked on establishing depots, supply depots, beyond the beach?

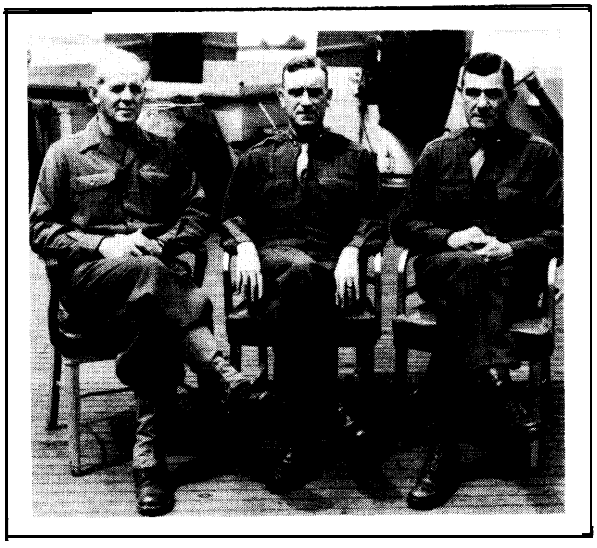
A: We put in these dumps. They weren't depots. They were just dumps out in the fields. When we got these various materials off of the ships, we transported them back to these dumps and stocked those. The combat units, divisions, would come back there to get their supplies, ammunition, food, gas, and what not.

Q: And all that was preplanned. You knew exactly where they were going?

A: Preplanned. We did that before the landing. I'm not sure whether it was very good. Originally one of the battalions we had was a DUKW [amphibious truck] battalion. That was a wonderful piece of equipment, too. But people didn't know how to use it. That landing was a mess from our standpoint. Of course, we started to make the landing on the 5th of June. We got out—all got on board ship, all loaded up—and we got out in the middle of the channel and we all came back. The next morning we were back home again because the storm had come up. There was a warning about that.

Q: You went back into England?

A: And then the decision had to be made that we were going in—that was when Eisenhower had the decision to make because of the tides and so on—we had to be timed in on the tides. You see, the tides in the [English] Channel-on the English coast they aren't so high but over on the French coast they went around 20-25 feet in high tide. SO, your landings were sometimes made half a mile or so off the regular coast and you had to get this thing unloaded. So, we had to go out and put out parties to deactivate these mines that were buried and strung on posts of all kinds. [Field Marshal Erwin] Rommel had been over there and had been in charge of that defense. He put out a great amount of mines and



Before D-Day: Major General Hubner, commanding general, 1st Infantry Division; Lieutenant General Gerow," commander, V Corps; Brigadier General Hoge, commanding general, Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group.

barbed wire and so on. We had to breakthrough that so as to get the infantry through to make the landing.

Q: Were those your Engineers that went in to clear the beaches?

A: Yes. But so much of that was amphibious handling. I had some criticism of the way it was. I think the way it was done in Europe was wrong because we separated the responsibility between the Navy and the Army at the wrong spot. The Navy was responsible for bringing the ships in and furnishing the boats that took the supplies off, and we had the stevedores. We had to get these stevedores on the boats to unload, but we were dependent on the Navy to keep their time schedule. Well, on the beach at France, there were several times we'd put a battalion down—sent it down to the beach waiting for the boats to go out to the ship—and they wouldn't show up at all. They'd just stay there. The men just sat on the beach all night long waiting for the Navy. The dividing line of the responsibility-it should have been-the Navy should bring the stuff all the way in or bring its boats in and have the Army—as they had it in the Pacific-the Army had all the boats. You see they had boat battalions. We didn't have any boat battalions.

Q: So all the LSTs, landing crafts—

A: Everything was Navy. And they wouldn't keep their appointments. They were the damndest people to get along with I'd ever met in my life. They were always alibiing. One of the troubles, too, was a mix-up on the notification of the cargo that was on the various ships. The day after we made the landing, that coast there along the beaches that we were going in would get covered with ships of all kinds, transports and supply ships. We didn't know what was on them, but it had been arranged back in London that they were to furnish the manifest for every one of those boats. But somebody had sent these mail sacks of manifests over on a separate thing, and they'd been delivered to some sergeant or somebody down the line. He didn't know what the hell they were for. It wasn't any of our men; he was just keeping them. Bradley would want a certain type of ammunition. I didn't know what ship had ammunition. He wanted 105s or 155s or something like that, 410s or mortars or what not. But I couldn't tell. I had to get in a small boat and go out and hail the ships, talk over a loudspeaker to the captain of the ship; and some often

wouldn't tell me what they had on board. So, I didn't know which one to unload.

Q: So, you had the total beach responsibility from the stevedore responsibility to off-load—

A: That's right. All we didn't have control of was these unloading boats. But we had to put the personnel on board to do the manual labor. We had the stevedore battalions, but the separation was in the transportation. I remember during that landing, Bradley was anxious to get more supplies in. Our worst time after the landing was that a storm had occurred at about the 16th of June. That storm caused more damage than we had on the landing. It was an awful storm, and you couldn't get from the shore to the water. There were boats of all kinds piled up. They'd been shoved in—you had to crawl in and out and over. They were sometimes three and four deep between you and the water because of these wrecks.

Q: They'd been washed up?

A: Washed up. That caused more trouble than most anything. Anyway just as a sample of our difficulty, Bradley decided there was a—what was the name of that? It wasn't Grandpree. There was a little town up there that had a harbor, peacetime harbor [Grandcamp-les-Bains], up the coast about 15 miles. And they decided we could get some of those unloading barges into that harbor. But you could only do it at a certain time on account of this tide. It was 24 feet high. But I had all sorts of excuses from the Navy about doing this. First of all they didn't know where they were going. I had all these French pilots that knew the channel and where to go. I told them several times but they never–there were a couple of days there that we didn't make contact at all. And the pilots stood around and the boats didn't go out. Well, anyway I got the Navy down and I lined up the captains on one side. The captains of these unloaders, these LSTs–not LSTs–well, some of them were LSTs. But whatever they were—unloading the ships. And I put the captains in a line on one side and I put the pilots opposite. I took them over and I made them shake hands because they said they couldn't make contact-'' shake hands, this pilot is going to take you into that harbor and he'll guide you. " By God, even with that they missed them. But we finally got through some way. We did unload some ships up there.

Q: Was that all just concerned with OMAHA Beach or did you have responsibility of all the beaches?

A: I only had OMAHA.

Q: And the harbor was part of OMAHA Beach?

A: Yes, it was part of it. It was within OMAHA. They didn't have nearly as much trouble up on the peninsula near Cherbourg, up in that area.

Q: Did they have Engineer Special Brigades up there supporting those landings?

A: They had a special brigade-well, it wasn't, it was a regiment that had been brought up there from Africa. They had made landings down in Africa [lst Engineer Special Brigade]. My men were all green. They'd never operated these practices in England, but they were all right. They were capable enough. My trouble was with contact with the Navy. I had one hell of a time trying to get them straightened out. We eventually did, but that was the worst trouble that we had.

Q: Did you put liaison officers out there with them or people on the ships to maintain contact with you?

A: No. The ships were coming and going all the time. I never could do that. We lost these mail sacks with the manifests so we didn't know what was on the ships or where the ships were.

Q: I guess you eventually found the manifest but probably too late?

A: It was long afterwards. Somebody came up two or three weeks later. They had found these manifests that this sergeant had down in his shack a couple of miles away.

Q: He wasn't part of the brigade?

A: No, he wasn't.

Q: I guess you stayed on the beach there until August of 1944—June, July, and August?

A: No. They turned it over after we got through back into the line where we were holding, pushed back; then they turned the rest of that over to the SOS, the advance party or the Advanced Section of the SOS. So, I was relieved.

Q: What was that SOS?

A: The Services of Supply.

Q: Oh, I see. The Transportation Corps?

A: No, it wasn't Transportation Corps.

Q: Quartermaster?

A: Quartermaster mostly. That was a totally different organization. And after we'd gotten through and gotten back inland about ten miles, that was where we were stopped at the hedgerow, and we stayed there. We didn't break through that until the end of July or early August. So, I went back to England, and I went back to London waiting for another assignment. I was assigned to the Transportation Corps for duty after we got through. So, I took over a new outfit and went back to France again; then I worked out towards Brest. We'd broken through. That was the time the 4th Armored-well, let's see. Did Patton break through there? I guess he did. He was in command of the Third Army. When the Third Army finally came over, they broke in through the line up there where the hedgerows were. After they had made that breakthrough, we went around the end. They decided they had to get a port open beside the beaches and Cherbourg. I believe Cherbourg was open at that time, but it was very slow with supplies. They had planned to use the railroads over to the west. By that time, they made that rush through the gap, opened up, and got behind the German front line. They then decided to open up Brest out

on the end of the peninsula. Brest had been a big port in the First World War, but that was one hell of a way out, about 300 or 400 miles out there; and Brest was still holding out. Well, anyway, the VIII Corps was ordered to capture Brest, and I was attached to the VIII Corps then to support them and open up beaches out on the peninsula. So, I went to a place, St. Michel-en-Greve, as I remember it. Open the beach and you could land LSTs in there. I brought in a lot of LSTs, [first on 11 August], unloaded a lot of ammunition. We were bedeviled by mines all along the roads and fields and everyplace else. We had to clear places to store this stuff as we unloaded it. But that was only part of it. We got out there and Brest was holding. I think Brest didn't surrender for months [18 September 1944]. They gave it up finally, and about that time, I turned around and was ordered to Antwerp-we had captured Antwerp [4 September 1944].

Antwerp had one of the best harbors and it was virtually undamaged. All the other harbors along the coast had been badly mined, and sunken ships in them had made them practically unusable. So, I went to Antwerp and got there just after the British had captured the town. Antwerp was practically unspoiled and undamaged, but there was artillery still falling in the town, and the Scheldt River was not open. It was held by that [Walcheren] island out there in the entrance, and they couldn't get ships through and the British weren't doing a damned thing to open it. So, they finally got the Canadians-the British were just having a big time in Antwerp celebrating. Nobody was doing anything. Nobody was fighting the war at all. That was Montgomery's outfit, but it finally got so crucial, the supply route, that they finally sent the Canadian Army out there and took that island and opened the river to the sea and brought in ships. That became the major supply point for all the front, and it shortened the route carrying supplies by hundreds of miles.

Q: Well, that came before the port of Le Havre?

A: No. We had opened up the port of Le Havre before that. But that wasn't particularly good; but Antwerp was a good one.

Q: Oh, you opened both of them, Le Havre and Antwerp?

A: Yes. I went to Le Havre first and that was badly mined. They even sunk the naval commander's boat right in the harbor. He was an American naval commander. That one had all these oyster mines in them, and they were deep in the water. They were set to go off after a certain number of pulsations in them, and you could set them for any number of pulsations.

Q: They were bottom mines.

A: They were bottom mines, and they were set so that if a ship passed over them once or three times or five, then they'd explode. But the harbor of Le Havre was packed with them. Then we moved up the Seine [River] and got up as far as—we were unloading ships as far as Rouen, I think, on the Seine beginning on 13 October 1944].

Q: So, Antwerp did become the major port?

A: Antwerp did eventually. After I'd been there—we'd opened up Le Havre and got that thing working, then I was ordered to see about opening up the one at Antwerp. At about that time I got orders [on 21 October] to join the 9th Armored again. [Antwerp was not opened until 28 November 1944*]

Q: That was about November 1944 you joined the 9th Armored and then took command of Combat Command B again?

A: Yes. I was dissatisfied with my job with the Transportation Corps. I told John C. H. Lee, who was the commanding general of the Communications Zone, I didn't want any more of that business. I was sick of it. I was trained to be a soldier, and there were plenty of other people that could handle the transportation work, ships and boats, and unloading ships. I wasn't trained for that, and I didn't give a damn about it. I wanted to get back with a combat unit, and Lee was kind of sore about it. He was a damned fool if there ever was one. He'd come over to inspect me. I was trying to get the mines cleared out, and the roads opened, and unload ships; and he'd correct soldiers if their hats weren't on straight and their helmets weren't on straight. He'd go around and sample the garbage pails and so on. He'd reach in and take some of the garbage out and eat it and

he'd say, "You see, I can eat it and you're throwing this away. People are going hungry. " He'd do that stuff.

He walked up to one soldier whom he had stopped on this hat business–he had stopped this soldier, he'd been correcting them all. He'd spend his time doing that picayunish stuff instead of the things that really mattered. He always insisted on driving his own jeep and getting in trouble. Anyway this soldier made him mad. He said, "Soldier, is my helmet on straight?" The soldier said, "No, sir. It's a little over on the right side. " He pushed it up. He said, "Is it on straight now?" "No, you just pushed it a little too far the other way. " 'Well, " he said, getting sore, 'is it straight now?" "No, you ought to tip it back a little. " He finally gave up and let the soldier go on. That man finally got to him.

Q: Was that a young private?

A: I don't know if he was young or not. I was told this story by somebody who saw it happen.

Q: So, that stopped him on the hat business.

A: He was still just as big a damned fool, go around sampling—

Q: Which Lee was that?

A: John C. H. Lee. He was a lieutenant general.

Q: John C. H. Lee. Well, did General Lee arrange for you or make you available, or did you use other contacts?

A: He said, "Do you know anybody that would take you?" I said, "I don't know if anybody would take me, but the 9th Armored Division has just arrived over here and I think that John Leonard would take me back again as he is the division commander. " Some way they got in touch with Leonard and through Bradley they transferred the combat commander they had out and made a place for me, got me back. I had rejoined the 9th

Armored Division up in Luxembourg. That was just before the Battle of the Bulge.

Q: So it was your appeal to General Lee, the COMZ commander, to leave the 16th Major Port and get back to a combat unit which led to your commanding the Combat Command B of the 9th when you captured the Remagen bridge. Is that the only time that you have sought to move from one assignment to another actively?

A: I think so. I was not qualified for services supply. I'd done my part and the rest of it was just being in SOS for the rest of my career. And I felt [that] here I'd spent my life being trained to be a soldier and that there were many civilians who were more capable of running ports or running truck trains and opening up supply depots. I had no training in that line and I had no liking for it. But I felt that I could. It was that urge to be a soldier and I would not have been a soldier if I had stayed with that. I had some good people with me, some excellent people.

And at the time, the job was important; but it became terribly frustrating to just stand around, and Lee was no great help. He's one of the worst I've ever had anything to do with. You needn't get that on the tape. He was a damned fool if there ever was one. But he had been a friend of mine in many respects, but he had also done some things in the days when I was back at Vicksburg–I mean at Memphis. He didn't help at all. He tried to be helpful. I remember when they started the Fort Peck Dam. [Tom] Larkin went up there to build it. Lee came by and I said that there were big offers to go to my staff and I couldn't stand in the way of them; I mean the civilian engineers and so on. I couldn't stand in the way of them, but they were wrecking me and I had an important job to do right there. Well, he carried tales and immediately went up to Fort Peck and poured out this tale about how sore I was at Larkin and all of them for trying to sabotage my command, and it hadn't been that at all. But he was a busybody—always carrying tales around and getting in somebody's hair.

But his handling of the SOS was disastrous. When he was still in England before the invasion, he was a troublemaker. He came around in a special train to inspect; everybody had to turn out, and I remember when he came to Swansea. I had my headquarters there at that time. He insisted on having the mayor come to dinner—I mean to breakfast-and that was

about five or six o'clock in the morning. They had double daylight savings so you can imagine how dark it was. Nothing [more] special about his breakfast than anybody else's. I had to drag the mayor down to this train and I went down, dark as a pocket, all to satisfy this thing, put this show on. Well, that's just one of the instances.

And after we got to France he absorbed all the transportation, built that big village [Valognes] south of Cherbourg [for his] headquarters, most elaborate thing. I remember they had 5,000 buildings transported across there and erected, and he did it in villages around the center. There was a center complex which was the headquarters and then here was G-1 and G-2 and G-3. I don't know how many buildings there were in each one of these with his staff and so on. The thing wasn't finished until Paris was captured, and then the whole outfit took off for Paris as fast as they could get in an automobile and took over the best hotels in Paris and set up all that business. Then he came around following me. I was opening up Le Havre. Hell, the place was all covered with mines. The harbor was mined. There were ships sunk in the harbor. It was one hell of a place. We were trying our damndest to get the mines out of the way that were on the beaches alone, but we had to bring in something. We couldn't use the harbor. They had these oyster mines in there and they'd blow up; you know how they operated.

Well, the whole place was in a mess and he came up there and went around and inspected GI cans. I told you that, didn't I. That was typical. Well, I just got fed up with it. Then he ordered me up to Antwerp. I was to go up there and start opening a port there. Hell, the British were all in the place and the port was in excellent shape, but the Germans were still shelling the town and the British were having a regular holiday. The place sounded like Mardi Gras in town. They were just parading up and down the streets and the bands were playing and the women and everything was going, and there wasn't an effort made to get that channel open. See, there was a fort or so down the line. The gates and the cranes were all in operation. That was one of the few ports in all of Europe that hadn't been destroyed. Everything was destroyed in most of them. You'd get one and it was no good. It was just another place to clear out and try to get some landing craft or something like that in. But Antwerp was capable of handling 20,000 tons of cargo a day. It was enough to supply us all, and it cut the communication line by hundreds of miles. We were still hauling our supplies from Cherbourg and from the beaches back in Normandy.

Battle of the Bulge

Q: I would like to continue on and particularly get into your experiences with the 9th Armored Division and Remagen and so forth. I think this is a point that you and I both have been looking forward to. I wonder if you'd just start from—you mentioned how you got the job in Combat Command B—first your initial impressions of the unit when you took Combat Command B, the type of officer and NCO they had at that time compared to your knowledge of them at Fort Riley, and then your initial combat with them?

Brigadier General Hoge as commanding general, CCB, 9th Armored Division, Battle of the Bulge, December 1944.

A: Well, they were the same people. They had more discipline, but we were still short of experienced officers particularly in the higher groups. We had so few that were competent in the battalion grades or anything like that. That was the big problem. The men were all right and willing. We spent time on the front line. We were in the mountains before the Battle of the Bulge started. My combat command was separated from the division. It was attached to the 2d Infantry Division in the V Corps, and we were trying to break through to destroy or open up those dams on the Roer River

which they were afraid that once we started across on the lower part would be opened up and flood the whole area to the north, which the Germans eventually did. But the infantry couldn't break through the minefield, which they'd been trying to do.

The day that the Battle of the Bulge started [16 December 1944], I went up north to the town of Monschau to see if I could get across up there and come down parallel to the front and break through the German lines and release the 2d Infantry Division. Then I was to go on out, take my combat command and go out and open up or destroy those dams on the Roer River. That was the day the Battle of the Bulge started. Then while I was up there making a reconnaissance at Monschau, I saw an attack come over against the infantry-I think it was the 99th Division—at that point. They were capturing these Germans and had a lot of them prisoners. Then I got a message to call corps-I was attached to the V Corps at that time—call corps as soon as I could. So, I went back and got a telephone back to corps, and they told me that I had been reassigned-out of the V Corps and to the [VIII] and was to go back to St. Vith and report to the commanding officer [Major General Alan W. Jones] down there. A new division had just come over, the 106th Division. Well, that division had lost two of its infantry regiments [422d and 423d Infantry Regiments] in the attack and was a shambles. They had nothing left.

But I got there, reported in to the commanding general. He was jittery and knew nothing. I had known him before but I never did think anything of him, Anyway I was told first I was to go east and capture a place called Schonberg, where these regiments were in the line beyond that, these infantry regiments belonging to the 106th Division. But the Germans had moved in there and in the meantime, the CG, 106th Division, had gotten word that the 7th Armored [Division] was coming down to assist in the defense of St. Vith, and I was to go south of St. Vith, across the river. Let's see, what river was that? (Our River) I don't remember. I'd have to have a map. Anyway I went down there and we launched an attack the next day. We got on top of the high ground. We captured a number of German prisoners, but I got no support.

The division commander [Jones] had about deserted his division by that time, but he sent the assistant division commander [Brigadier General Herbert T. Perrin] down to see me. He said, "You can continue this attack on towards this back country, but you must be back on this side of

the river by nightfall. " Well, hell, it was afternoon then. What in the hell is the use at that point in making an attack and turning around and coming back if I was successful, give it up. Well, I had been successful up to that point. It was tough ground and there were a lot of Germans in there. So, instead of that I just went back and took up a defensive line southeast of St. Vith and stayed there. Then, my armored infantry battalion commander [Lieutenant Colonel George W. Seeley] died of a heart attack. I think he did. That was just another one of those things that had been happening all those times when we were so short. But anyway we were caught there with no roads through dense woods in the Ardennes. By that time I helped to defend St. Vith before the 7th Armored got in there. I was there a day before the 7th Armored showed up at all, but the 106th Division had disappeared completely. Anyway, the Germans were coming down from the north. They had broken through up above, and they were coming down threatening St. Vith from its rear. So, I sent a tank destroyer battalion up there—a company or two. I don't know what it was. Anyway I sent them up there and they knocked several German tanks out. By that time Combat Command B of the 7th had arrived and they took over the defense around St. Vith, and I took up the one around the south of there joining with them. We had no commander in common. I was still attached to the 106th Division which had disappeared.

Q: I think both the 422d and the 423d Infantry Regiments, 106th Division, were cut off when you were directed south of St. Vith to take Winterspelt, I believe. Was your mission originally to go through Winterspelt and try to connect and relieve the two regiments of the 106th?

A: No, it was just to blunt an attack from that direction. The idea was just attack. It started at Winterspelt which went back some distance behind the Our [River]. Well, it's a stream that ran down south anyway. The 106th Division had lost two-thirds of its command.

Q: The 424th is the only one that got out.

A: And that's where Jones initially ordered me to go to relieve that, cover that flank of the division down there. Well, that's where we started, but by that time the Germans were pouring around that flank and that outfit. Those regiments had disappeared. Pieces of them came back and were

assembled back behind the line, but they were useless. You couldn't do anything with them. They cried a lot and wanted help. Hell, we were fighting for our lives. We couldn't help anybody.

Q: During the defense of St. Vith on 17 December 1944, I believe it was Peiper, who was the battle group commander of the 1st SS Panzer Division, who ordered or allowed the Malmedy Massacre; and you lost some people, I think, from the 27th Armored Infantry Battalion. How quick did that story of the Malmedy Massacre get through your unit and what was the reaction of the troops?

A: We never got that until afterwards. We heard that there was that thing, but we were, I think, about that time in full retreat. Peiper went around my flank and hit the rear end of my column when it was headed for St. Vith, and that's why they caught the tail end of my column and got those men that we lost [Battery B, 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion]. But then, after that we were so involved and we dropped back trying to save our own necks, so we didn't know about it until afterwards. Of course, we got Peiper eventually. The Engineers did a great deal in that, which they never gave them credit [for], but the Engineers-that is, the Communications Zone Engineers-did a lot to defend those bridges and turn that gasoline loose down the hill on Peiper and so on; that stopped them. But we didn't know about that until—

Q: Well, following that news, did you get any type of orders from division or any other level of command having to do with taking no SS or paratroop prisoners?

A: No, we had no such order. We never had those orders.

Q: I think the 328th Infantry is the only one that had even a mention of that possibility. Another interesting item during the defense of St. Vith was when a large part of the headquarters staff of the 27th Armored Infantry Battalion again was captured. That was, I think, the night of 21-22 December. Do you recall the capture of that battalion element, and the following day it was freed by a tank-infantry combat team? I think one of the men captured was the S-2 named Glen Strange, who escaped.

A: I remember when they attacked our headquarters back there [Neubrueck], they came through that grove and we had nobody back there to defend ourselves but some cooks and truck drivers and so on. We got out of it ahead of them. We had to fight to do it and we were headquarters. Headquarters of 27th Infantry was caught in the headquarters building. I had told them to stay out of there; we had moved out of there just a few days before that and I said, "Get out of here, don't stop here because it is under surveillance and they know where we are and for God's sake don't come in here." But they did it and they moved in right behind me and they were captured, the whole thing; and then is when I sent this tank company up, and we got clear up to the building—fired right through the windows of this farm house. All the American prisoners plus the Germans were down in the basement trying to get away from us. Well, we freed our men; we lost a few, but not many. We lost, I remember, the S-4 of that regiment—battalion; he was captured and was killed, I think, there, but we got most of them and we captured the Germans that were in there.

But we had to abandon that place and we were getting ready to pull back gradually. We were trying to keep abreast of the CCB [of the 7th Armored Division] at the same time, so that we wouldn't be overrun or outflanked; so we had to move slowly. So we were moving out all the time, and I remember definitely telling that battalion commander, "For God's sake, stay out of that building because that is under observation and is subject to attack and the avenues are there to capture you." He paid no attention to me. I had trouble with command in that battalion. The original battalion commander had a heart attack; that was right early in that St. Vith business—the first day or so, I think, after we had attacked to go to Winterspelt and had been forced back.

We weren't forced back, but we would have been forced back. But the division commander, Jones, sent word up to me–we were already attacking and we had lost a couple of tanks, but we were making progress someway—and Jones sent word to me, "You can attack if you want to, but tonight you've got to pull back." I said, "What the hell is the use of that; we are losing men all the time, pulling back in the middle of the night to a defensive position on this side of the river; it's senseless." I said, "To hell with that, we are going to quit right now, and we are going to draw back during daylight."

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platoon of Pershing tanks, and he sent those out and got those destroyed, ahead of time, by the Germans. That's when I relieved him. [Major Murray Deevers took command at 1431 on 1 March 1945 and remained in command through VE Day.] He tagged around for a while. I never let him get back in command or anything to do with it. Finally put in a Class B against him. I don't know if he ever got it. He's still in the Army as far as I know.

Q: Was that the 27th?

A: That was the 27th [Armored] Infantry.

Q: In the description General [Bruce C.] Clarke gave of trying to get his Combat Command B, 7th Armored Division, down to St. Vith, he said that it was an almost impossible move. It took him three hours to move about a mile with the people coming back.

A: Well, that whole thing just melted away. Clarke was the 7th Armored Combat [Command] B. Bruce Clarke. Anyway, Clarke was a damned good fighter. We played it just by mutual conferences. He'd tell me what he was going to do and I'd tell him. He would tell me where we were threatened and I'd tell him, and we would support back and forth as best we could. We were holding, in addition to St. Vith, we had all the southern end, and St. Vith was practically surrounded. Then a regiment of a division to the south was attached-let's see, what division was that? [28th Infantry Division.] There was some other division a long distance to the south of us down in Luxembourg, an infantry division. But I was stretched out all over that ground and we had a river and no roads through it and a dense woods behind us. So, I said to Clarke, "Tonight I' m going to move back behind that line to someplace where I can move around and have a chance of getting out if I'm attacked along the line. " So, that night after dark I started and moved my combat command, one battalion at a time, up through St. Vith and turned around and came back down south on the back side of this river and took up a defensive position there. That was quite a move to make at night in the face of the enemy, and it was all parallel to the enemy lines. But there was no crossing, there were no bridges except at St. Vith. There was a river behind us—no, there was a deep railroad cut.

When I realized that there was no use in attacking, losing more men and tanks-and we weren't getting anyplace; and then he was ordering us to withdraw under cover of darkness, which was worse, and we were not winning anything. We were not relieving [anybody]-all of what was left of the 106th Division were already back behind our lines. We weren't relieving anybody; he was going to attack the Germans in prepared positions, and then we were to withdraw. Biggest damned fool order I'd ever heard of. Well, anyway, I said, 'The hell with that, I'm going to withdraw. I' m going to quit the attack right now. I' m going to get back and take a defensive position behind the river. " That was the Our River. Anyway, it was on the high ground. It was that night that this battalion commander had his heart attack. [Lieutenant Colonel George W. Seeley, 27th Armored Infantry Battalion, was evacuated on 18 December 1944.] He [Seeley] was a veteran of the First World War; he was a good man; he was a Reserve officer. But he had been a good battalion commander. Then I had one hell of a time. I sent up to get this [other] officer, a liaison officer with the 2d Division, which was on the north side there; and I sent for him to bring him back to take command of that battalion, for I had nobody else. He was a West Point graduate, should have been a good man. He was the biggest damned fool I'd ever run into, I think.

Q: Was he a major at the time?

A: He was a major, I think, or a lieutenant colonel, I' m not sure. Anyway, just as an example of things he did, we had issued to us prior to that–I didn't know anything about it—but we had some no-sleep pills issued in case of an emergency. When you got to the point where you were just exhausted and you still had to fight on, you were supposed to take these pills. Well, the first thing he did–we hadn't been in the fight more than a day, so we still had some time to sleep, and we didn't know why or what the future was going to be—he issued these to all of his company commanders and platoon commanders. Well, he knocked them all out when we needed them. That was one of the things he did. Then later—what the hell else did he do–he had flaps all the way around. I kept him until we were starting up to cross the Rhine, that same fellow; then he disobeyed my orders. I had given them orders: they were to attack going up to the Rhine—a unified attack all along the front. At that time, I had some additional troops, and we were spread out over a frontage of about two or three miles. I wanted a coordinated attack, damned if he did. And you were talking about the Pershing tanks. He had one

and they were taking some of it. Anyway we moved backwards very slowly. It took about three or four days.

Q: Is that when General Clarke had to delay a little bit to get his battalion out?

A: Yes, a couple of times he did that, and I would wait too. We finally got back to this hilltop. That was where Matt Ridgway came in to see me and he gave me orders to get out. I was all ready to go and make a final withdrawal behind the American lines during the night. But Clarke said, "I can't move because I'll lose a whole battalion. I've got to stay here until that battalion is relieved. " So I stayed with him. I said, "We'll wait. I'll stay with you. We'll wait until tomorrow night. " He got the battalion released. It was an infantry battalion of Clarke's. Got it out, back to rejoin his combat command. It was daylight then and when I got orders just about daybreak [0605, 23 December 1944], I had to move now or I wasn't going to move at all and to get out of there right now! So, there wasn't anything to do but go by daybreak. Of course, by that time everybody was free; we could move. So, we started with the withdrawal. I had my infantry companies spread out in the front along the line—I think six or seven miles ahead of me—and I had tanks up there too. So, I started pulling them off by echelons from the left side. A tank company would move back, loaded up the infantry, and they'd go by the next one and they'd stand there and hold on till that tank company had gotten by, and then the next tank company would come by and pick up that company. We finally got them out, but as I say, that was the day—first day we'd seen the air and it was clear. We'd had snow and fog and ice, cold as hell always before that. But that day the sun came out bright and we got air support.

Q: That was in January of 1945?

A: No, it was 16-23 December 1944. Anyway, I got my outfit out and we got back behind the lines of the 82d Airborne—we had the 82d Airborne Division just come up and we got inside their line or alongside of them fairly easily and we got back into the line. After we'd gotten back, there was one hell of an attack that night by the Germans. You see, that fellow Peiper *[Kampfgruppe Peiper* consisted of the 1st SS Panzer Regiment with 1st and 2d SS Panzer Grenadier Regiments of the 1st SS Panzer Division],

That was it. That came in there. And there were no bridges across it. There was one little weak bridge. It would handle a jeep or something like that, but that was the only thing they had. There were no roads from that. So, by morning I had my entire combat command back behind this deep railroad cut. Well, I was in the woods, but I had a chance to defend it. I strung my combat command out until we made contact with Clarke on the north and this infantry division on the south. We were very strung out if we were attacked, and we had attacks every night and day. Not big ones but they were being made and I had no reserve. When a [position] was not under attack, I'd pull a battalion out or a company out and shift it along my line. I couldn't use my tanks because the woods were so dense, but I'd pull a company out and bring it up the line. They would fight there for a while until we stopped that attack and then we'd move them back quickly before the enemy found an opening down below. We stayed there for—I know we got driven out slowly—from the banks we went back on the road. We got driven out of our headquarters back there. We had to move out. The Germans were coming up all along and so we started our retreat back towards the American lines.

Q: How long did you and General Clarke work independently? You worked together but independent of a higher headquarters?

A: Well, it was about three or four days and he would support me and I would support him. But it was all by conferences because we had no common commander. His division commander was way back too, and he only had that combat command. My division commander was way south of the bulge down around Luxembourg City. But I was attached to this 106th which had disappeared, had gone completely jittery. Anyway, I remember the defense there and holding out. Jones sent for me one night, sent his aide, wanted me to come back to headquarters back around Vielsalm or somewhere back in there. So, we went back. This aide came after midnight and drove me back to his headquarters. Well, the [VIII] Corps commander told me that I could be relieved now to rejoin my division down south. Communications were cut off in the middle of the conversation, but I couldn't do it because Clarke was there. If one of us moved out, it would leave the other exposed. We had to move together because the Germans were pressing us on all fronts and everyplace, and they were trying to get around behind us. Actually the Germans were taking rations and supplies out of dumps of the 106th that were left behind the lines. They were coming in—we were using some of those supplies

I think his name was, was running wild back there. He had that German force, armored force. He ran wild all around and damned near succeeded in stopping us. But the Engineers primarily-they set fire to a lot of gasoline. The 30th Division was coming in from above to support on the left side of the 82d, so that we were gaining some strength. Somebody had to hold them back because Peiper was beating them all along there and was trying to break through. But he was stopped several times by Engineers blowing up bridges in his face, or in one case they emptied this gasoline down the road right ahead of him and set it on fire. That stopped him, and he was out of gas, too. He finally chased us back through the line, but always on a flank. But we got back and got within the lines.

When we got in there that evening, we thought we were safe, but there was a big attack came at that time. They penetrated the line up to a point and we came under fire that night. So, we had to move again further back and we stayed there two or three days. The whole line was beginning to move back. I was in reserve for, as I remember, the 82d Division and I was in a town called Chevron or something [Vaux Chavanne] [around Malempre]. Anyway, we started to move as I remember [on] Christmas Eve. When we were safe, Christmas morning, woke up in a bed back behind the line, but that night there was a peculiar thing that happened. I had my time to go. I wasn't to move until 12 o'clock and I was supposedly behind the 82d Airborne lines. Well, when I started out everything was quiet. We got down the road a ways and I saw some firing before we turned to go north. There was a junction down there near Manhay when we turned north to this place we were ordered. I had my headquarters company ahead and the rest of the combat commanders behind me on the road. This German attack came. I saw it happen, saw the 7th [Armored] Division was fighting in this town, but we got through. We had a few shots fired at us but went on and turned north a ways. Then I discovered the rest of my column wasn't there. They had been cut by this German attack right between my headquarters and the lead combat unit behind me. Fortunately the man who was back there had enough sense to take a side road and turn north before he got to this town [Manhay] and he rejoined us later.

Q: Was that one of your battalion commanders?

A: Yes. And he got back there and rejoined us back at this bivouac area, and then I went into reserve for the XVIII Airborne Corps, Ridgway's corps.

Q: The XVIII Corps?

A: XVIII Corps. And I became the reserve for the corps and also deputy corps commander. Ridgway appointed me to that position, but we'd lost all the 106th Division completely. Ridgway at that time offered me command of that to reorganize it. I didn't want any part of that. I'd rather stay with the 9th Armored; I knew that one. I could depend on it. Anyway, we had some fights in there in that line. I know the 75th Division was brand new and fresh. They had never been in battle before and they were then in a dense woods and the Germans were attacking all along the front and they went up in the air. So I went down to get them straightened out. They were trying to man the front lines with deep thickets and you couldn't see anything. The Germans would infiltrate and get behind them and then they'd start firing with these rapid-firing pistols and what not. They made a lot of noise. They were behind them so they scared hell out of these new soldiers—so, we reorganized that division and put a light force out in front along that line. I put mobile reserves behind where they could move into the threatened point if there were a real attack. Most of this was just infiltration of a few patrols, but they'd make a hell of a lot of noise when they got back, and they'd scare hell out of these new people. That was a time, too, when they were supposed to have had Germans dressed in American uniforms, and you had to identify yourself everyplace. We had armed sentries out along the line, and they'd stop you—anybody, whether you were a general officer or what. They'd question you—something about who won the baseball pennant and so on. And you had to identify yourself, but we did that for a while, back and forth. It ended when we were finally consolidated [in] a line, and I finally was relieved and sent back to my division.

I rejoined the division down near Metz. When we were down there we were refitted and straightened out, and then when we started the advance into Germany we turned around and went up north again. I crossed the Roer River-that was after they had made that crossing and there was some pontoon bridges over it. We went in there. I think the whole division was together. I know I was at one time attached to the V Corps and one time with the 1st Infantry Division. We had some fighting across there from time to time. It was all relatively minor, but it was hard enough for us. I was responsible for being a reserve for this corps. I had to go in and be assigned to anyplace I could to support them with tanks. We were all trying to get up to the line and that's when eventually it

started-I remember an experience up there on—I've forgotten what river. I need a map to trace it up.

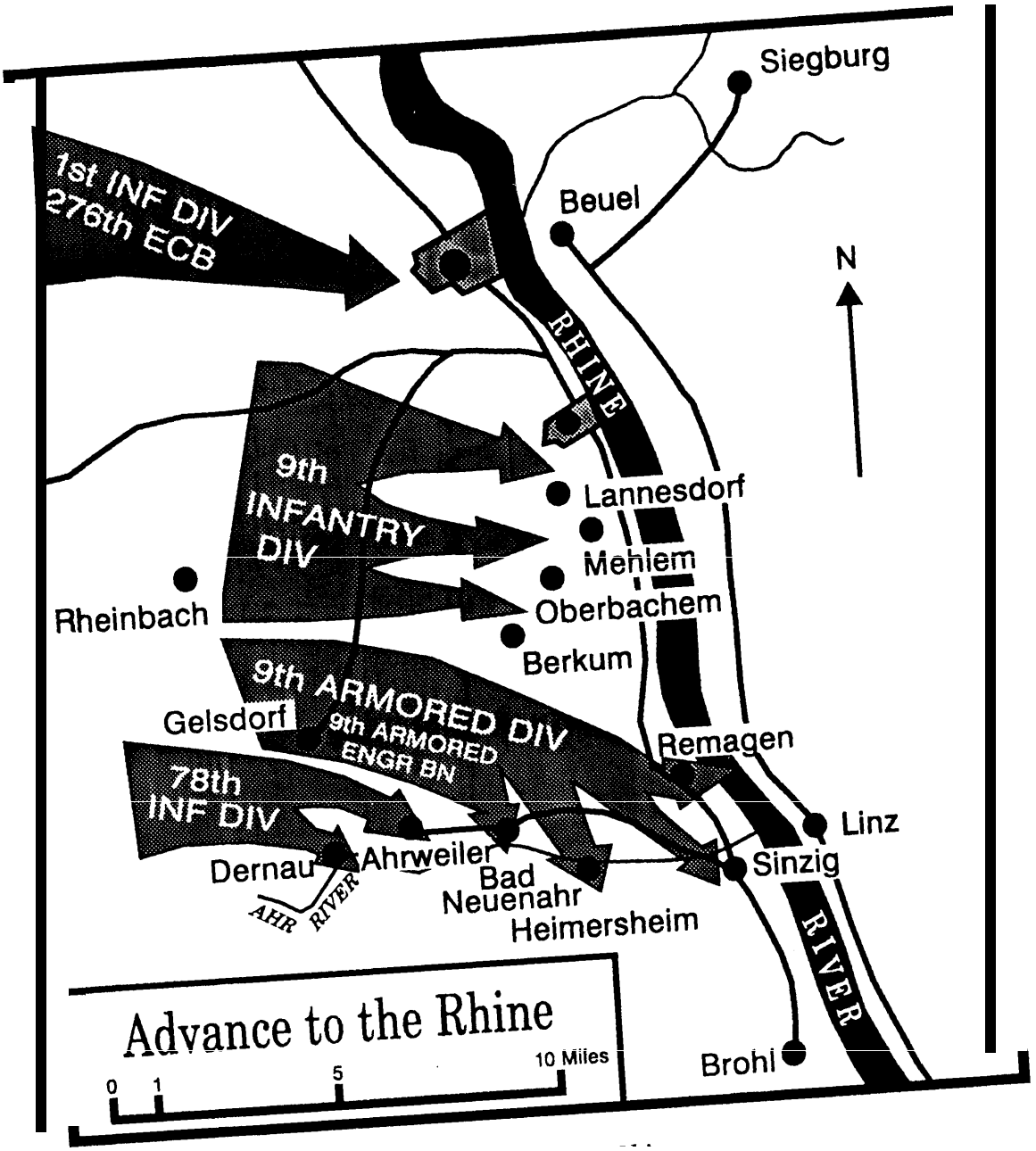
Anyway we went over there. There was a German-a town holding out with Germans. We weren't making any progress, and I went over to see this infantry company and there was a tank company over there too. The tanks were just sitting on the hill doing nothing. The infantry were just sitting in a trench doing nothing. I went up there and got after them. I went over there and told the tank company to start out towards this town, and then I had to get out and kick the infantry out of the trenches. There were some German trenches that they had dug up there on the hill with civilian labor. I remember while we were getting that lined up, I was in the trench there kneeling down. You could hear these mortar shells coming over. I heard them coming. So, I ducked down. There was one mortar shell that landed on my left side and another one on my right side, and I could reach over the side of this trench and I could put my hand in each one. It had just thrown dirt on top of me. Well, we finally kicked this infantry company out and went down and took the village. From then on we started towards the Rhine.

Q: You're moving south then, I believe, to join Third Army?

A: No, we were going generally east. We had to cross, then we turned up one of the smaller rivers; and when we got down there six or eight miles we turned east again and started towards the Rhine.

Q: You were still concerning yourself with V Corps reserve at the time when you were moving east?

A: I was there for a while. But I had rejoined the division. We were split when we got up there to make that final attack towards the Rhine, and I reverted back to the division. But I had helped the other divisions when I had been attached to these various divisions for limited operations only. Then I'd revert back to corps reserve.



Advance to the Rhine

Q: How long did you serve as deputy corps commander with General Ridgway?

A: Oh, that wasn't long. That was when I went back to rejoin the division in early January.

Remagen Bridge

We moved east towards the Rhine. We crossed the Roer and we headed across those hills back there. Then we headed east towards the Rhine, generally east. Part of the time I had to go north to hit the proper roads. Well, we were together again-I am trying to remember—I rejoined the division at some point in there, I guess after we got straightened out. I had a very good infantry division alongside of me. I remember their code name was "Diploma." I've forgotten its number [9th or 78th]. Anyway they were a good outfit, and they had good commanders. They stuck by me when we finally went across the Rhine.

But we moved up and then is when we were split again-we were in the division, but the main job then was to turn south and close that pocket because the Germans were trying to escape from the Saar Valley and cross the Rhine, get back towards the Rhine. Combat Command A was on my right and they were to clean out that back side, and my job primarily was to go up and get near the Rhine and close that. But it was primarily to grab those bridges over the Ahr River and stop any Germans coming in from that side and to open a way of getting on south. That was my prime mission. By that time I had another battalion of infantry with me. So, I had more strength, and I had a good battalion at that time with a good commander. But he was only attached. He was from the other combat command. But that's when I got up towards the Rhine. But the day we made the attack I was first supposed to capture Bonn up north of Remagen; but the night I'd issued my orders to start the next day towards Bonn–that direction, that was due east-it was changed that night. I had to change the orders during the night, get my battalion commanders in, and we were then headed south of Remagen primarily to capture these Ahr bridges and close up to the Rhine. We were then at Stadt Meckenheim. I was badly shelled, but we weren't getting any great damage at the time. That's when we started, and I had split my command-well, to keep contact on my left I had my reconnaissance troop over on that left. We could make contact with the 9th Infantry Division

which was on that flank. Then I had ordered my force, about half of it headed directly towards Remagen and to the Rhine over there.

There was Sinzig, another place down the Rhine, that I was supposed to capture; the other force was to go down and hook up with CCA which was on my right and capture these bridges over the Ahr. Well, that seemed to be the most important mission. So, I started out the next morning following this right column which was the one they had put most importance on, and I wanted to see how they were going. The other column went due east towards Remagen. Well, I got down south, kept radio contact in the command car along with this battalion commander who was in charge of the south task force. He reported to me about noon that he had captured the bridges over the Ahr River. "I have taken one and have positions on the other side. " So, that was the main mission. Then is when I went back to see how my headquarters, which was with the middle column, was doing, and they had gone towards the Rhine.

When I got back to my headquarters, he sent me word that the Rhine bridge was still standing, and they could see it. So I immediately got in the car and went up to join that task force commander [Lieutenant Colonel Leonard E. Engeman, 14th Tank Battalion], who had the infantry battalion and a tank company and some other unit. As I went up, got to the Rhine, I passed through a lot of the troops on the way and some prisoners coming back. There were a few snipers in the woods, but no damage. I got up to the Rhine and stood there on the bank and looked down, and there it was. The bridge was there right above the town. I couldn't believe it was true. I issued an order right away to go down and grab that bridge, go down through the town and put tanks on both sides of the bridge, firing parallel to it. I had some support artillery. It wasn't any regular artillery, but it was made up of support guns from the reconnaissance troop. They had made up provisional batteries. They couldn't hit the side of a barn. They didn't know anything about it—but anyway I put them up there on the hill to smoke that big hill that stood on the other side and cover it so they couldn't see what we were doing. We moved on down into the valley and through the town, and got to the bridge.

I had gotten a prisoner-I don't know whether he was any good or not—but a German prisoner who reported to me that the bridge was to be blown up at 4:00. It was then about 3:00 in the afternoon, 3:00 or 3:30. And I said, "You got to get that thing quick 'cause it's going up at 4:00. It's going to be blown. " The battalion commander, tank battalion, said,

" We're all right down here waiting to go. " While we were waiting there, they blew a big crater in the approaches, which we could get around. We could use bulldozers and fill that so we could get over it. Then we started to go across the bridge and an explosion went off on the bridge at this panel point about midstream and blew out one big panel point. It was about 20 or 30 feet in diameter. Just one whole side of the bridge out, but all the charges had failed to go off for some reason. Whether it had been cut by artillery fire or something else, I don't know. But they failed to go. I think, it seems to me I read someplace, that the Germans had to go out and put a hand fuse on the charge that did go off because that had been damaged too—the wiring back to it.

I issued my orders. First we sent the infantry across. Right with them I sent a squad of Engineers to remove any demolitions that were on the bridge, and we found maybe 1,000 pounds or something like that underneath. They cut those loose and dropped them into the river.

We still had foot passage across and the bridge was still standing. That was when I didn't know what was going to happen. I was waiting for the thing to fall and luckily it didn't do it. We got across and then we put a company of tanks across. We put more than that, I guess, in the attack. We had more than that. But one of the heavier things I started across with was a tank destroyer company, and they were bigger and they were not as good drivers as the tankers. Anyway they ran into a hole they'd blown in the middle of the roadway and the damned thing got stuck and fell down into this hole. But it didn't go through to the river. It just stuck there and blocked the bridge. So, we had a hell of a fix there and you couldn't move the damned thing. It couldn't move under its own power, and I told them to cut it loose and let it drop into the river. It didn't make any difference. I had to get rid of it because it was blocking all the traffic of reinforcements and everything. Well, they couldn't do that. So, they finally sent a tank back from the far side, the east side of the Rhine, and hooked a cable on the front end of this tank destroyer and pulled it out; and that opened up the bridge. Then the traffic began to flow. We took the infantry across.

In the meantime I got some pontoon bridges there. They had diverted everything to me after I reported I had captured this bridge. Anyway while I was looking at it and we were started across the bridge, I got orders to abandon my previous mission and head southward to Koblenz on the west bank of the Rhine. Well, I was already half across the river

and I decided I'll wait and see whether the bridge stands up. Then I'll go back and tell them what's happening. I disobeyed the order, but I think I was right.

Q: It proved to be right and I think that decision had to go all the way to Eisenhower before you were proved right. Didn't it?

A: No, my division commander, I met him back there, and he approved it right away and sent word back to the corps and the corps sent it to the Army and they went back to Eisenhower.

Q: Corps did not approve it, as I recall. They did not make the decision, the corps commander.

A: I don't remember. The corps commander [Major General John Millikin] was later relieved, and we got [Major General James] Van Fleet in as corps commander afterwards. But that was the sequence of the thing, and I turned over my mission down along the Ahr River to CCA, which took that over. I got that outfit over and reinforced my combat command on the other side of the Rhine. Then I got this infantry regiment from—four hundred and something–division. I've forgotten. The four hundred and something regiment. I can't remember who they were. They were a National Guard regiment and they were good. [310th Infantry Regiment, 78th Infantry Division.] We got them across and then everybody began coming, the 9th Infantry Division—but I used the bridge there until we got the pontoons across and I didn't have any traffic coming back. They later criticized me for not sending over bedding rolls for the men who were first over there. Hell, we didn't have a chance to send them. It was warm enough then. You could sleep in your overcoat or something like that. We couldn't stop. The only traffic I allowed back was ambulances coming back until we got these bridges, pontoon bridges, over. We got two of those across. They were knocked out a couple of times when building, but they later got them up.

Well, I moved over myself. I had my operations officer with me and my communications man. That was all I had on my side of the river. The rest of them were on the other side. The artillery was on the west bank. They were the supporting-they could see better from the west bank than they could from the other side, and the Rhine at that point was only

maybe 500 or 600 yards wide. So, the observation was better from the west bank than it would have been down on the east bank till we got some ground. Then I immediately began to expand my bridgehead, as I got these troops in. I had it plotted. There were ones I wanted to cover, to protect, the bridge. I used the first infantry battalion, my own battalion, just on the north side of the river and took the high ground in there. Then I sent the recon outfit up on the hill to get rid of the antiaircraft battery which was on top; then I sent the next battalion on the right side of the bridge to expand the bridgehead. But they began to come, and then I had to draw goose eggs all over the map, where I wanted the next battalion to go. But there was a period in there when I was commanding damned near a corps and I only had this one operations officer and the rest of the division was on the west side. But we expanded. I had the 78th Division. And I had the 9th Infantry Division for a while, and I had my own outfit. I had about three divisions under me and commanded it all.

Q: Everything on the east bank was yours?

A: Everything on the east bank was mine. Well, I stood there—I didn't have any communications or anything else with these other people. But finally this deputy corps commander sent over a division commander [Major General Louis A. Craig], 9th Infantry Division. Well, his division was mostly over there anyway by that time. They sent him over, and he took over from me and then I was in reserve, became a reserve of that force on that side. I stayed there for about—well, the bridge stood I know-it was about ten days, but we spread out up and down the river; and then I got word to move south towards Koblenz on that side of the river and capture—what was that—I've forgotten. It was really a nice town. Anyway we got down there and that's when I got orders relieving me and assigning me to command of 4th Armored [Division]. But I stayed with them until that afternoon to see that that mission was at least under control, and then I went back and got my stuff together and moved down south on the Moselle River and joined the 4th Armored. Reported in to the corps commander.

Q: Based on your experience at Remagen, do you think that it's better to seek all the information you can get and have participation by other individuals involved who might be involved with the results of that decision or to move quickly with the information you have?

A: I think it's fine to get as much help as you can, advice of other people, but that doesn't mean that you're going to follow that blindly. You've got to make your own decisions. But they must be made on the basis of knowledge and sometimes you've got a feeling of what is right and what is wrong. It's like that thing at Remagen. My orders actually were not to cross. Well, somebody remarked that if there's a bridge there, grab it, or do something, but nobody paid any attention to that; and actually my orders, later on while I was attacking the bridge, were to give up all previous missions and head south and join up with the Third Army at Koblenz. I was to abandon all those missions that I had before. And up until that time, my main mission in heading towards the Rhine had been to get those crossings over the Roer River so that we could make that connection to the south. But while I was there, I'd given the orders to cross. I'd sent the tanks down to get flanked on each side of the bridge and to bring fire parallel to keep my resistance down, and I'd gotten this battalion of infantry ready to push across. That's when I decided to change that mission, make the attempt. But that was more intuition than it was—I knew it was right. I felt inside me that I could never live with the knowledge that I had given up that opportunity without making a try for it. I couldn't have spent the rest of my life—and I knew it was, well, a dangerous thing, unheard of; but I just had the feeling that here was the opportunity of a lifetime and it must be grasped immediately. It couldn't wait. If you had waited, the opportunity [would be] gone. That was probably the greatest turning point in my whole career as a soldier—to capture Remagen.

Q: Yes, that was one of my following questions.

A: I'd have been retired as a colonel, I think, if it hadn't been for Remagen. I was sort of a nondescript. I had a good reputation, but there were hundreds and hundreds of officers who had been promoted over my head. They were commanding divisions—men I'd served with and I was senior to. That staff at Army Ground Forces or whoever it was, McNair's staff [in] Washington, picked all these division commanders when they were organizing during the Second World War. They were picked out of people in the States and people that he knew, and many of them were on his staff there at the ground forces headquarters.

Q: So, General Leonard supported you completely at Remagen; when he heard about Remagen he is quoted as saying, 'That's a hell of a note. Now we've got a bull by the tail and caused a lot of trouble. But let's push it and then put it up to corps. "

A: That's what he said and he sent me help right then. I remember a remark he made. I said, "John, I have disregarded my mission. My mission was changed while I was up there and it was to go south toward Koblenz, but I decided on my own that opportunity should not be dropped and I took the bull by the horns and made the crossing. And now I' m responsible. " And John said, "Well, I remember as a young officer, a general officer once told me that you may not like the mission you're getting, but I've decided on the mission and I have many more facts to decide on than you've got. And if I give you a mission, I expect it to be carried out because I know more than you do about the situation. " Well, that happened to be an instance that I knew more about the situation than anybody.

Q: Yes, you had a reverse situation. He seemed to be concerned about General Millikin, the commander of III Corps.

A: Well, Millikin didn't push us or support us. He was all right, but he didn't come over. It was on that basis that Millikin was relieved right after that, and Van Fleet took over the corps. I don't know. I liked Millikin all right. I had known him. He'd been an instructor of mine at Leavenworth. He was a cavalryman, but he didn't have much force about him, much drive; and I think he once came across the bridge at Remagen and visited my headquarters. He didn't stay long, but it took somebody like Van Fleet to come and push somebody over there to help me.

Q: Well, General Courtney Hodges, who was then First Army commander, pushed it even before going back to General Bradley.

A: Everybody pushed all along the line. There's no question about that. Everybody supported me from the first minute. Actually, Millikin supported it. It went to the corps. Then it went on back to the Army. Then it went back to Eisenhower, and all along the line everybody gave a hundred percent support. But Millikin wasn't a forceful person. Millikin had suggested that it might be possible to get a bridge across.

There was no order about it at the time before I left and went up to the river.

Q: You are quoted again by Hechler. Well, you weren't quoted, but when you heard about Remagen and you cut across country, I think you or one of the other task forces on the right moved parallel.

A: Well, it was the important one, you see, up to that time. It was the one to get those crossings across the Roer River, which separated the Third Army area.

Q: It was parallel to the Rhine.

A: The purpose of the whole operation was to join up those two and for me to drive south and join the Third Army.

Q: Your operations officer at that time was a major, Major Ben Cothran, and Cothran recognized the importance of this even before Colonel [Leonard] Engeman. Colonel Engeman must have been the tank force commander of the task force on the left.

A: He was the tank battalion commander.

Q: And Cothran recognized the importance before Engeman did, called you immediately. You came across country; and then Hechler goes on to say that when you arrived there, Colonel Engeman, who was still trying to size up the situation and take careful action, was spurred into action and issued a series of decisive orders to subordinates. "Directly or indirectly, every man felt the wrath of the general who demanded and got results and satisfied that his calculated display of anger had speeded up the operation and saved many precious minutes, General Hoge began to think about the bridge that incredibly still stood before his eyes. " This leads one to think about what a lot of people say of good commanders, that they have to be actors, that they might form or show an entirely different character or personality in a command position than they would in a staff position. However, I haven't found that in a review of your career. It seems like you've always had a very hard-driving attitude. Do you recall in

approaching Engeman and Cothran at this time that you did calculate that anger just to get people moving or—?

A: No, it was just because I just couldn't get them to move fast enough. Engeman was a good man, a good tank commander, but he was very cautious and he wasn't moving fast enough to get down to that bridge. The question was minutes, and while we were standing there we'd captured some German who told us at the time that the bridge was to be blown at 4:00 that afternoon. It was then about 3:30 or 3:00, and Engeman was still cautiously moving down, and I told him to get them down there now and get going—move.

Q: His lead platoon at that time was led by Lieutenant Timmerman.

A: Yes, he was the company commander, I think.

Q: Yes, that's correct. He was the company commander, and he was a second lieutenant at the time and had two other second lieutenants in his company. But it seems that he was a very decisive young individual. He really moved out.

A: Oh, he was. Timmerman was all right, a good man. I don't remember him at all. He just carried out the orders, but when he got the orders he pushed them and they pushed. I had a battalion commander at that time, infantry battalion commander in that task force, who wasn't worth a damn. He's the one I finally got across with this task force, the 1st Battalion. The infantry battalion got over first, then a damned tank destroyer fell through the bridge and blocked traffic for a while—couldn't move anything. But I had gotten this battalion over the river and I was waiting. I had to go back to headquarters and report what the situation was—to find Leonard, because at that time no word had gone back. Maybe a radio message had gone back, I don't know; but I decided to wait until I could see that there was somebody over there, so I could go back and make up a report that that was the situation. So as soon as I found this out I went back and fortunately I met Leonard at my headquarters, which was back about six or eight miles behind the river, and told him about this thing. Well, while I was there, it seems to me I got supper. I got my jeep loaded up and Cothran went with me and I had a radio operator. That was all the staff I had with me. The rest of my

staff I left on the other side of the river. Do you know who should straggle into my headquarters, [that] is back there eight miles behind the line, but this infantry battalion commander. I said, "What in the hell are you doing here?" "Well," he said, "I came back to get supplies. " I said, "I'll tend to the supplies; you go back and command your battalion. " So I had to get rid of him, relieve him. He got killed during the Korean thing in an airplane accident. That's when Cothran and I went down. We found all confusion down below with this tank through the bridge-and I mean this [tank] destroyer blocking everything, and it was raining at that time, dark as a pocket, and Engeman was in a flap, all excited, cussing, and his headquarters was in a mess; but we got them all straightened out and got them across the river and moving.

Q: There's a good description in the book here on that.

A: Well, that book of Hechler's is an excellent account. I gave him a great deal of it, and then he was up there.

Q: Yes, he did an awful lot of research on that.

A: He did a fine job. His worse job was when he had sold his movie rights and that film that was put out, which was awful.

Q: Yes, I saw that. It was terrible. But I think that this discussion of Remagen gives us a good rundown on your method of decision making, speed with which you can make the decisions and weigh the consequences of a decision that might not coincide with your former plans or your former orders. Going on to information handling and administrative communications, General Ridgway was one who questioned a great deal the reports that he got from staff and he wanted to go out himself; and you're the same way about getting firsthand information. Throughout your career, how did you handle your written and verbal communications from staff or lower commanders? Did you always try to seek verification of that or depend on the individual from whom you were getting the information?

A: Well, generally, it's the individual and the situation. You kept abreast of what was going on. You could judge and make some judgment as to

whether it was reasonable or possible, and then you had to know something about it to make your decisions. That fellow Cothran who was with me was a crackerjack. He was one of the best staff officers that I ever had, and he helped me more than any other staff officer I've ever known.

Q: Did he go with you when you went to the 4th Division?

A: No, he stayed with the 9th. He was only a Reserve officer or he was a temporary officer. He finally retired as a colonel and he died, must have been five or six years ago.

Q: Were there any particular junior officers who had worked for you that you did take along on other assignments or seek to have assigned to you based on their previous experience?

A: No, I did not. I never believed in that idea that you had to take your own people with you. There were officers who were transferred and took their key staff along with them to start up the next one. Maybe that's necessary, but I always felt that you were leaving something that had to go on. It wasn't right to wreck that headquarters to take these people. You had to use what you found on the ground; and I never had anybody that followed me except an aide, and most of my aides were not much. I never wanted to take a West Pointer for an aide. I felt that was a waste of the talents. Generally I kept away from that and I picked some officer who would do the job, pleasant, and could arrange itineraries and things of that sort. I thought that was one of the bad things. There were commanders who had to move and they would only move if they could take along their chief of staff and maybe other key staff officers. Well, they denuded whatever was left behind that was worthwhile. If that headquarters was being dismantled completely, it wasn't right for the new commander to come in.

Q: Who were some of those you knew that did that? Patton, I think, kept his staff pretty much the same as he did—

A: Well, he didn't move but many of them did that. I think that was a general way of doing things among the higher commanders. They took

their staffs with them. Hodges took his, for instance. I'm not sure of that, but I know Bill Kean was chief of staff of the First Army. I don't remember but I know that that was a very common practice for officers to move on to another job, and they'd take along the people they knew and, well, they didn't know any more about the new situation than anybody else. It was better to find someone on the ground who was acquainted with it.

Q: Until you could gain knowledge of it? Well, back to information. I think you've covered this generally. You liked to get detailed information and firsthand information from which to base your decisions.

A: Well, this fellow Cothran was great and we developed a system of orders. A part of it was from the German concept, and we'd draw a map of where we wanted to do it; but the map had to have a key to it to know what the coordinates were that you oriented on, you see, and that was the best way of issuing a quick, clean-cut order I have ever seen and Cothran was an expert at that. He could write an order that was clear and understandable. All you had to have was what your key points were to make this usable. Do they still use that in the Army?

Q: The overlay—yes, sir.

A: It was an overlay, that's all it was. But you had to know the coordinates to tie it in. But your main points of effort, places of holding and all, were just shown by a couple of signs. You could write right on the overlay, exactly who was to do it. It was the simplest form of an order I've ever seen and the clearest. Of course the things like administration, your supply, and all that would have to be covered by an order. I' m talking about an operations order.

Q: But you went in primarily for short, concise, and clear orders rather than the long details.

A: Yes, absolutely. But the five-paragraph order is sound, absolutely, and it's a good check to know whether you've gotten the information over. But it's long and some of them reach the point that you haven't got time to read the damned thing, you get so much of it. But with those other

orders, those overlay orders, you could almost grasp it all in a few minutes. In just a little bit you got the whole concept of who was where and what they were going to do, and it was all easy to do. But the five-paragraph order is absolutely sound. No question about that. Of course now I' m talking about when I was doing that with a combat command. Division orders became much different, but there you had a big staff and you were handling your supplies and all the rest of it, which made a difference in what you did. A combat unit, a combat command, is an operational unit primarily. It had very little supply. We depended on somebody else to do that. Cothran is the best staff officer I ever had.

Q: On the organization of the combat command, I think the triangular division or the triangular concept was introduced in the Army just during the training for World War II. You know, the two-up, one-back concept, which was new at that time. What were your thoughts of that particular divisional organization?

A: Well, it was much more flexible than the usual and it wasn't as heavy. The old square division was too heavy and too cumbersome. The triangular division was much more flexible, and it answered all the purposes. So, that triangular system was carried out not only in the division but in the regiment and everything else. But the four [regiment] square division and that four unit was all brought over from the First World War.

Q: When your combat commands were organized you had A, B, and R. Were they all organized about the same way or were the combat commands task-oriented?

A: No, they were all organized about the same. You could change them if you needed some additional force from the one that was in reserve. You could add up to a company or a battalion to that from the reserve. Usually the R combat command or R unit in the combat command was not as active as the other two. A and B were the active units there. But it was possible. You could have taken a badly chewed up combat command and moved it back, if that was true, and brought R up and put it in its place. I don't know that that's ever been done because usually R acted as a replacement for these units that were decimated or worn out or something like that, the ones that were up front.

Q: It was sort of a support unit then.

A: It could have been and that was the original concept, I think. I'm not sure. It was supposed to be interchangeable as a whole command, within the combat command.

Q: A few days after the capture of the Remagen Bridge, you were ordered out of the 9th Armored Division and went to take the 4th Armored Division. And I believe you took over the 4th in March of 1945.

A: I think it was March the 19th [23 March], I'm not sure, but that's about the date. I know it was the day, the night before the 5th Infantry Division had ferried across the Rhine at Oppenheim and had a bridgehead there; and that next day they threw the first pontoon bridge over, and we crossed on that as soon as it was finished. The 4th Armored did, and from there on we went on to the end of the war.

Q: Was Lieutenant Colonel Creighton Abrams still commanding one of the battalions?

A: He was commanding one of the combat commands, was one of the best men I ever saw.

Q: Yes, he established quite a reputation.

A: All the way around. The best fighter-and he's excellent; he's a thinker, too. I didn't think he was much at the time. I knew he was a crackerjack fighter; the best we had. I've never seen a better combat commander than he was, but I thought he only knew the combat side of it. Well, when I was sent to the Philippines to make that survey, I was relieved from the 4th Armored then and I came back to the War Department, reported in there and got my instructions and got this group together and I went from there on over to the Philippines. Well, he begged to go with me. I didn't know why, but I thought anybody that's done as well as he has deserved anything he could have. I didn't think he would do any good. I didn't expect him to do much, but I took him along to advise on armored warfare. You see, I had an artilleryman, an Engineer, and an infan-

tryman, one from each combat service. Well, Abrams was the best man I had of any of them. He was a crackerjack. Many of them were no good, but Abrams was just a workhorse and had a fine brain and was a thinker; he was a great help.

Q: So he joined you when you left Europe then in June 1945?

A: He went with me, came back to the United States, and went with me over to the Philippines.

Q: That's when you were assigned to the Office of Assistant Chief of Staff of the Army in June 1945 to December 1945 and you were assigned to make the Philippines Postwar Defense survey?

A: Yes, also the time I was in the Philippines at that time. I wrote my report and then I was relieved from that assignment.

Q: You took over the 4th Armored Division in March and kept the division until VE-Day. Were you involved in any of the discussions or briefings or do you have any thoughts on our direction, the American Army's direction, to stop at the Elbe? What were your thoughts about the Russians coming into Berlin and meeting at the Elbe River?

A: I didn't have anything to do with that. We turned south of there. We captured a lot of land, the 4th Armored did, that was later turned over. All of Thuringia, for instance-we captured that. Then a great deal of the rest of Germany, which was later turned over to the Russians. We still have that zone in between that we've had all that trouble over, which was just giving it away. But it was up north of there that they first met the Russians. I didn't meet the Russians until after we'd turned south and entered. We stayed up north in that sector. We got up to the, not the Elbe River, but the one that goes south from Bavaria, and we stopped there and then we were turned around and moved down into Bavaria. We turned it over to an infantry division; and the 4th Armored then went down into Bavaria and came up through Bavaria into Czechoslovakia, and we went into Czechoslovakia and met the Russians down there.

Q: Then you were pulled back out after the Armistice?

A: We stayed there, oh, maybe a week; then we came back and went down to Bavaria. We stayed down there and that's where I left the division. There was an old German barracks down there in a German cantonment.

Q: Well, I might have my 4th Division history here.

A: Oh, I've got a 4th Division history back here somewhere.

Q: I brought it along; I can dig that out sometime.

A: It was there we met the Russians, down in Czechoslovakia.

Q: Let's see -- around Landshut, Germany.

A: We moved back to Landshut. That's where we came back to. And that's where I left the division when I was sent to the Philippines.

Q: Let's see. Combat Command A set up its CP [command post] there at Strakonice and B at Horazdovice. This is in Czechoslovakia and division headquarters was at Susice, and that was your last restraining line and where you were on VE Day.

A: And that's where we met the Russians. The Russians didn't want to observe that line and tried to go through, and they paid no attention to it. We both had the restraining line set up, but they paid no attention to it. So when I told them, they just laughed at me; so I just put some tanks across the road and blocked the road. Then they turned north and went on up north of that line.

Q: So even then they would only negotiate—

A: Oh, they weren't negotiating with anybody. They were rabble, they were raiding and everything. We had a big celebration up there though with,

I guess it was, the armored corps. It was the damndest celebration I ever saw. The Russians invite us first to a big dinner.

Q: That's the German XII Corps or the Russian XII Corps.

A: No, it was the American XII Corps. They put on this thing and they had all these people. They looked as if they'd come from the best theater in Moscow, St. Petersburg, or someplace. They had a great dinner, lots of drinking of toasts and carryings on. They fired a salute. They just turned loose everything with live ammunition—fired right across the German territory. They fired I don't know how many guns; they'd fire in batteries all the salvos. There must have been 100 cannons in that thing. Then the American XII Corps gave an answering party a day or so later. We couldn't put on the show they put on, but we gave them a demonstration of saluting also. They had I don't know how many batteries of artillery-fired salvos, and then in addition they had several battalions of antiaircraft guns which lined up and fired thousands and thousands of rounds. It was just like a sweep of sound everywhere, just curtained with the sound. Well, they were pretty good after that. That's when we turned over that area. There were some Russians who had defected to the Germans before that and they were trying to get back into the American lines because they knew they would be sent to Siberia if they were ever caught by the Russians themselves. But we had the line established. We wouldn't let them come back; and the Russians came and finally gathered them all together and took them someplace, I don't know where. They never showed up again.

Q: You are probably right; they probably wound up in Siberia.

A: But that day of the surrender, you couldn't stop those Germans trying to get back into the American lines. And the order had been that all Germans would stop in place, pull off the road, lay down their arms, and wait to be taken over by whose zone they were in. Well, all these thousands and thousands of Germans were in the Russian zone. A number of them committed suicide because the Russians came and took them. I don't know whatever happened to them, either.

Q: Yes. This little history pamphlet said 80,000 Germans tried to surrender to the 4th Armored Division, so they could get back into Germany.

A: I had to send out planes and threaten to bomb them to stop them and make them get off the road. Those were the orders. We hadn't signed the surrender terms. The Germans and the Russians had signed it along with us. They were their terms. We were just obeying what their terms were.

Q: Oh, the Germans were trying to get back to you.

A: They were trying to do anything to get inside American lines.

Q: One note here is that one German panzer division borrowed gasoline to drive their tanks from the woods to surrender. Were you familiar with that story, sir?

A: No, I don't remember that. I know we stopped an outfit up there that tried to get back in our lines, and I think they were all Russians, but they had fought with the Germans and it was an armored division, I believe.

Q: Those were mostly Ukrainians probably that joined the Germans.

A: I don't know who they were, but they tried to get back and surrender to us. But the orders were to stop in place and they didn't stop; they kept going on. We had to stop them.

Q: That was probably a difficult order for you to carry out.

A: We didn't give a damn. We didn't know anything about the Russians—

Q: At that point.

A: They were our allies, and we had been fighting the Germans at that time. At that point the Russians were great friends.

Q: Evidently, except for General Patton. From some of his readings, he recognized some of the problems that might be caused in the future. Okay, so we've gotten through to VE Day and with your experiences in the Philippines; and, of course, your assignment chronology stated that you were assigned to the Chief of Staff's office in Washington. I assumed that was a tour in the Pentagon, but I'm kind of glad to hear you say that you were not actually there.

A: I was never assigned to the Pentagon. As I say, I was only there to get those instructions and organize my party. I had that to do twice, once when I went to the Philippines and again when I had to go to Alaska and straighten out a command situation there; that was after the war was well over. That was in 1946.

Q: Your assignment to the Philippines was to conduct a postwar defense study—to review the organization there and to determine what type of bases we should have?

A: It was just what areas we wished to have for any purpose, from training areas or airfields or harbors and what not. And the Philippines had promised that we could have anything we wanted; so does the agreement.

Q: The war in the Pacific was still going on at that time?

A: Well, I tell you, when we were leaving San Francisco, the first bomb fell, first of the atomic bombs, fell on Hiroshima that afternoon or evening we left to fly to the Philippines. The second one didn't fall for, well, we were in the Philippines at the time, I think, and the second one fell on Nagasaki, wasn't it?

Q: Yes, sir. That was in August 1945. Taking advantage of the fact that we are now talking about the atomic bomb, what was the first that you knew of it—after it occurred, or when it was announced in the newspapers?

A: I knew nothing about it until—"Snake" Young, who was an Engineer with me, he knew what it was about. He's the only one, I think, who knew. The night we heard it, we were waiting at the airport to take off for the Philippines, and he remarked that they'd finally made it work and they'd

dropped it. Before that nobody knew it would work. They made that experiment down in the desert, but it hadn't been used at all.

Q: It hadn't been dropped from an airplane.

A: Of course, I knew Tom Farrell very well. He had a great deal to do with the development of that bomb. He was an Engineer, too.

Q: He worked with General Leslie Groves at the Manhattan project?

A: As I remember it, he was there and went with the first plane that dropped the first bomb; went along with the pilot over Japan, Farrell did.

Q: What were your impressions or did you recognize the significance at that time of just how much impact that might have on future strategy?

A: I knew nothing about it. I didn't know what it did have, except the reports that we got and the destruction. And of course after the second one dropped, then the surrender came. But while we were there, we were all getting ready for the invasion from what is it—Okinawa-on up into Japan. We would have lost more men in that attempt than the Japs lost in the bombing because that awful storm hit just at that time. The whole fleet, with all the transports, would have been at sea and would have been wrecked. We would have lost that, in addition to the losses we would have gotten on the landing itself.

Q: So you never had any second thoughts about the morality or the rightness of it?

A: No. Mine has been that it was always right. We had every right to do it, and it was most humane all the way around. It's true we killed a lot of innocent Japs—supposedly innocent women, children, all kinds-but we would have lost as many or more able-bodied Americans if we hadn't done it.

Q: Well, after you came back from the Philippines—

A: I was in command, I know, at Belvoir. I got the group together and went up to Alaska and was present and supervised the American part of the turning over of equipment and so on to the Canadians. We had the ceremony up north while we were up—where in the hell was that? We were up there north of Whitehorse, but the Canadians came and we turned our bulldozers and trucks and so on over to them, and they took them and drove off. That was when we turned over the road; and then we went from there on up to Alaska to make that survey that I spoke of when we were trying to get them, I think, coordinated out of all that mess it was in [with] these various bases and so on all working separately.

Q: This was at Fort Richardson and Elmendorf and all the—

A: No, this was out along the chain mostly.

Q: Oh, on the islands?

A: It was all out on the Aleutian chain. We went all the way up as far as Adak. But there were posts all along there. I've forgotten what the name of the place, where there's a base there still. I know we stopped at the various bases in turn and Adak I think it was—wasn't Adak the base up there on that chain? It's about halfway over.

Q: Let's see. This map doesn't go out—oh yes, it does. Attu Island.

A: Attu is the end of the chain. That's the last one. Now Adak, I think it's Adak, is back about midway down the chain.

Q: There's an Adak.

A: Beyond Dutch Harbor. Oh, we stopped at Dutch Harbor. The biggest establishment, I think, was at Adak and that was where all of them were together. Had three establishments of everything.

Q: That's the three services-Army, Navy, Air Force.

A: Yes. As I said, chapels, post exchanges, everything was separate.

Q: Were you able to get them back together on acceptable terms?

A: Yes, we got them back together. Well, we had nothing to do with, of course, that was all Navy back on the, what's that island just off of Alaska? It's a Navy base. I know where it is.

Q: Atkas or Cape Shaw—

A: No. Anyway, I think it's still a Naval base. I'm not sure of that; it may not be.

Q: Well, just off Seward there's St. Lawrence island.

A: No, that's up further north. That's up the north side of the chain.

Q: Yes, sir, it's way up north of the chain. You want Kodiak or—

A: Kodiak was the island.

Q: Well, then, after you went to the Philippines, you came back. You were actually assigned as Division Engineer to Boston, but it didn't appear that you ever made it.

A: I was up there about two weeks, I think, or a week [13 December 1945 -10 January 1946]. At that time Pat Timothy, who was in command at Belvoir, [was retiring], and I was given that; I took command at Belvoir. So I was only at Boston about two weeks, I think.

Q: Well, you hadn't moved your family up there yet then.

A: My wife was there, that was all. We hadn't gotten a house. We were living in a hotel over in Cambridge.

Q: Well, you're fortunate you didn't move too fast and buy.

A: I was very happy, too.

Q: Now, when you were at the Engineer School, you commanded that from January 1946 until June 1948. Is that the time that you expanded Belvoir and built the field houses?

A: I built that at the time that I built the field houses. That's the time it became the Engineer Center. Before that it was all separate. The school was separate and the troops were separate and the experimental station was separate, and I took the lead from, well, principally from the Infantry School which had the Infantry Center. I got approval from the Chief of Engineers to change the name of it, and we combined them all under my command.

Q: And it still exists that way now.

A: It's still the same thing. Well, I guess they've gotten rid of the Combat Developments now.

Q: Yes, sir, that's done. But it was still known as the Engineer Center in Fort Belvoir.

A: Well, it is; that's what it is. But that's the time it was changed because prior to that there were all these separate ones.

Q: Well, during that two-year period following World War II, did we go through a similar demobilization [as] that we have recently gone through following Vietnam? I know we demobilized rather rapidly after World War II.

A: We demobilized quite a bit, but, well, they closed, I think, the training center. No, I' m not sure whether the training center was still running in those days or not. I think it had already closed. All the post was there and that's where I had built the field houses, one on each side of the road; and I put a battalion of Engineers in charge of one side and another on the

other side. We had nothing down there at Belvoir. We didn't have even a basketball court. There was nothing you could get together under cover, and that's the time somebody came along and offered me the airplane hangars, four of them. So I grabbed them. I wasn't sure what we were going to do with them, but I decided and I had to use them. Bidgood [Clarence Bidgood, USMA 1935] was with me and several other good Engineer officers. We worked it out so that by putting one hangar on top of another and separating them with timbers we had between the two, then filling that space with some sort of a fiber—

Q: Insulation?

A: Insulation—that we were able to do. And then, of course, we had no floors there; it was all dirt. And that's when somebody offered me all the dunnage that was coming back on merchant ships and so on, which had been carrying supplies to Europe. There was a hell of a lot of dunnage and that was all hard wood. So I got the dunnage delivered up to the post. We had no money. Well, I did get some money, a little bit. It seemed to me that it was about that time that they broke up the wartime officers' club and the enlisted men's clubs, and they distributed the assets among the different posts. But you had to put in a project, and it had to be approved at the War Department. So I got some money from that. And one of my projects was to build these field houses. Another was to build that golf course, which we built at that time. Then we took this dunnage. One of my helpers found a man at a sawmill, and he was willing to saw up this dunnage into flooring for, I think I had to give him half of it. I gave him half of it, and I got the other half sawed up and made into floors. They were tongue and groove. It was all right. With that we got a floor. Oh, we had a hell of a time just getting things together and trying to make it work out of nothing. And we eventually did. I think the field house has been pretty good.

Q: Yes, sir, it's still in use.

A: I don't know whether the one across the road was ever used.

Q: Well, the one on the main post is used quite a bit.

A: I know it is. That's where they have the Engineer Dinner. Well, it was trouble getting any water in there and any toilets and so on and any heat, but we finally worked something out on that. Of course, it was just a shell to start with. But by everybody working together and doing something, we had some good workmen. We had to teach a lot of them. A lot of the men had never done any flooring, tongue and groove work. You had to teach them on the job and they learned how to do this.

Q: Well, we still do.

A: And they were all right; they were enthusiastic. Well, I look back on some of those things and I think they did some good. That was the time we built the golf course. We were running a school, heavy equipment school, and all they were doing was just moving one pile of dirt to another pile of dirt, back and forth, learning how to handle a shovel or bulldozer or whatnot. And I decided that we had that ground out there, and if it ever became necessary to use it for training, we could always turn it back. Their training area was just a training area at that time—just lying fallow. We had to do some scrounging around to get help, but first I had some golf enthusiast on the post who tried to design the golf course. Biff Jones, I don't know whether you know Biff Jones or not; he used to be Athletic Director at West Point and he was football coach.

Q: Yes, sir, I've heard of him.

A: He was a great friend of that professional golf man whose name is Jones [Robert Trent Jones]. Not the—

Q: Bobby Jones.

A: Not Bobby. Bobby was a golf player and there's another Jones though who was a professional-designed some of the best golf courses in the country-and Biff got him to come down there and look my place over, and he gave me free advice. He took the whole thing apart, the way we'd laid it out. He said it was no good and redesigned it; and I think he designed a good course. I don't know.

Q: Yes, it's an excellent course.

A: But at that time anybody who wanted to play golf at Belvoir had to go down to Quantico because that was the closest place. We had that little nine hole course, that flat course on the south side of the road. [The] post side of the road, but that one didn't amount to anything. But Jones designed the new course, and then I had trouble getting waterworks in there. Well, we built a club house on the hill and we got some water in and a sprinkler system around and I think it's a good course now.

Q: Yes, it's a very good course there. Did you have any deterioration of morale among the troops following the war? Evidently all the things you were doing there for troop welfare kept them busy and kept it up pretty well?

A: Trying to keep people busy—no, we had no particular trouble with that. I wouldn't say they were inspired with a great deal of enthusiasm over a military career, but they were finishing out and we kept them busy as best we could.

Q: Were most of the troops you had then those who were brought in and trained to enter World War II but did not enter?

A: They had been. Some of them still hadn't finished their training. We stayed on there; I don' t know, maybe it was before I got there that they closed the camp; I' m not sure about that. I think they probably closed the training camp at that time, and they were just getting rid of the last of them, sending them out. Of course the Army was still active, and there was a demand for men in Germany and the Philippines and Japan and so on. There was a need for some. It wasn't as it had been during the war. So we got rid of those people. I don't know who we had on post. We had a couple of equipment companies, I guess, and we had a battalion, I know, and a battalion on the south side and a battalion on the north side, while the 91st was Negro, wasn't it? Usually those 90s were all Negro. I've forgotten the one Bidgood had. He had a white battalion. He was on the south side.

Q: The 91st was the battalion there when I was at West Point in 1954. The 91st always came up and supported the training.

A: Well, were they white or—?

Q: Been integrated by then. The Army was integrated in 1952.

A: Yes, I remember that. I remember the integration. That took place in Korea. That was a great integration because the blacks had failed with all-black units. We had tried some integration during the war by having companies and platoons of blacks in a white regiment. That had done a little bit, but it was when we were in Korea that we had trouble with the black units. And it was when, I guess, Van Fleet was in command at that time. I' m sure he was, when we broke up that Negro regiment. And I think it was the 24th Infantry. They took their name off the rolls. I'm sure it was, because they had been at Benning when I was down there before the war-service troops but you couldn't depend on them in combat.

Q: Well, before you went into Korea, I think you had your only assignment with a military mission. You were commanding general of the US troops in Trieste for a little over two years, June 1948 to March 1951.

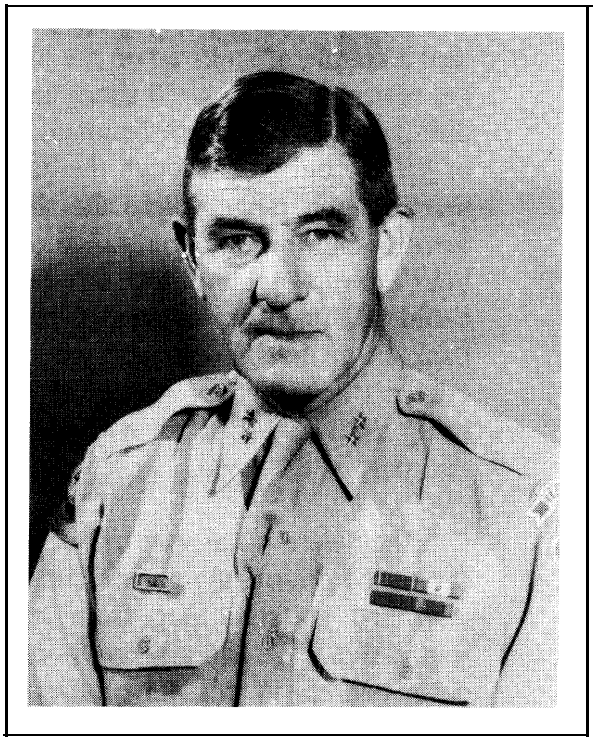
A: That's right.

Q: What were your thoughts on that type duty?

A: It was fine. I enjoyed it tremendously because we were half and half with the British. We had the same number of British troops, same as Americans, and the British commander was the civil chief; he commanded but he was really in command of the civil end of it. I had no civil duties, but the population of Trieste was very cosmopolitan and delightful; and there were all kinds of people-Austrians, there were some Italians, not so many Italians as there were Austrians and Greeks, Yugoslavians-they were very kind and hospitable and we had a very good time.

Q: Well, how many troops did you have?

A: We had five thousand each. Five thousand American and five thousand British, that was the limit.



Major General Hoge as commanding general of TRUST, 1949.

Q: And what was the primary mission there—to support the civil government?

A: It was to hold the area; no, it was to return to Italy. See, we were the governors. It was then an independent territory. It didn't belong to Italy. Italy was trying to get it, and Yugoslavia was claiming it. There was conflict constantly between the Yugoslavs and the Italians; and they were fighting, and the Yugoslavs are just as mean as hell on the other side. Well, I know they would have those lines around there. I know a British soldier up there on sentry duty on the outpost who stepped across the line. I don't think he was as far as you are from me. He was seen by this Yugoslav sentry and killed right there. And they would not allow the British to get that body, wouldn't permit them to take it home. All the British commander wanted was to get it back for burial. He tried to get it back, and they wouldn't let them have the body. The body lay there with flies all over it. I don't know how they finally got it back, but they eventually did and buried the soldier; but it was just as mean as it could be.

I know they would threaten me all the time. We had these outposts along the line, and I don't know how many posts we had, but it was just four or five men at each of these posts watching the line because we were afraid of being invaded. And they sent word to me one day that they objected to the officer of the day's jeep shining his lights when he went up to check on the outposts, shining his lights into Yugoslavia; and if he

showed up anymore they were going to shoot the lights out. Well, I just sent a couple of tanks up on the hill and I said, "All right. Whenever YOU get ready to shoot, we'll shoot back. " We had no trouble then, and they didn't shoot. We were hemmed in there, and our only way at that time of getting out was through the harbor of Trieste, which was then within machine-gun range where the ships docked and all that. Those docks were within machine-gun range of the Yugoslavs right across the line. I built a resort up there, too, but the idea was that if we had to evacuate we could take them up there and that would be ten or twelve, fifteen miles back from the border, and we could get them out on ships. But you couldn't have if they wanted to stop us in Trieste. You couldn't even bring the Navy in there without bombarding Yugoslavia and destroying that part of the town.

Oh, they were mean sons of bitches. I remember one of the celebrations. It was the 4th of July parade and they had—I guess it was the man before who had gotten a flag from every state in the Union; it was quite impressive. We had all the 48—at that time there were 48—states and the color bearers in this 4th of July parade came down the street with this mass of colors. Yugoslavia said those were captive nations of the United States, in bondage; that it was these flags that we were showing. Anyway, they'd chisel the Italians just as bad. There were Jugs who lived over in Trieste and some of them were buried in the cemetery, and they had Yugoslav names on the tombstones. You know those bastards made them chisel off the names of Jug language.

Q: I was going to say, were those Serbs who were buried there?

A: Those were Serbs, but they were in Italy in the Italian population.

Q: Oh, I see, and the Italians made them chisel the names off.

A: They were fighting all the time to get control of that city, and there was constantly some row going on between the Yugoslavs and the Italians or ourselves. Of course, we were the governing people. We were under—was it the United Nations or I don't know. We came under the British and American Joint Chiefs of Staff, I guess. We had taken it over right after the war, moved in there at the end of the war, and took that territory which had been Austrian, I guess, during the war or at the

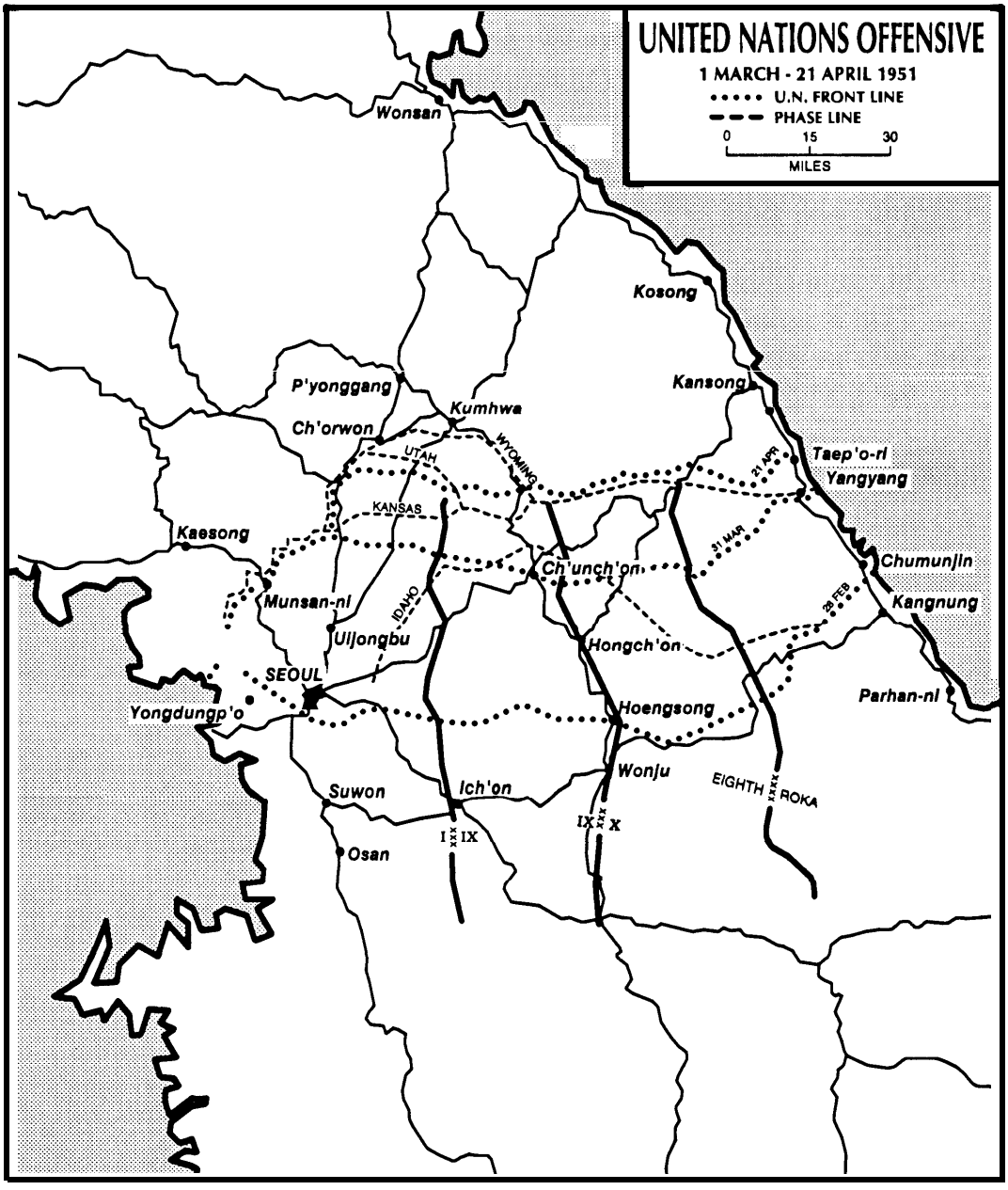
beginning of the war. The Germans had captured it or the Yugoslavs had and they wanted to keep it. Of course, the harbor at Trieste is an excellent harbor and a very valuable one, but there was a constant fight, rowing and carrying on.

Q: You were more or less a peace-keeping force?

A: We were peace-keeping, that was all. Our five thousand men were made up of a regiment of infantry. What was that regiment? 351st, I think that was it. We had a company of tanks, and we had motor transports and I don't know what all. We had a conglomeration to make up our five thousand. The British had separate, what they called, regiments; they were really battalions, but they would change them every so often. I remember the Royal Scots were there once, and the South Lanes were there at one time. I've forgotten the rest of them. They were nice people; we got along with the British beautifully.

Q: Well now, when you came out in March 1951, was that the end of the occupation of Trieste?

A: No, it went on. I was ordered to Korea; they kept it up for some years after that. I've forgotten when it was finally turned over to Italy, but that was a number of years later. That was when I was ordered to Korea.



United Nations Offensive

Korea

Q: You went to Korea in March 1951.

A: No, it was in—was it March? I thought it was in January, but I'm not sure of that.

Q: Well, you became CG—I think you're right. You went there earlier, but you became CG of the IX Corps in Korea, March 1951; but I believe General Ridgway [Commanding General, Eighth US Army, December 195 l-April 1952] had asked for you to come over.

A: Well, they were trying to beat the Marines because the previous commander [Lieutenant General Bryant E. Moore] had had a heart attack. He'd had a helicopter accident. He wasn't hurt in the accident, but he had a heart attack as a result of the accident and died. The next senior person was a Marine colonel named Smith and–

Q: He was a major general. Was he a colonel at that time?

A: Who?

Q: Major General Oliver P. Smith.

A: Yes, he was only a colonel, as I remember, at that time. Anyway, he would have been the next one. So that's when Ridgway sent for me, and I had to hurry over there to get there in time because they were breathing down his neck.

Q: He only kept command for two weeks.

A: He was [in command] until I got there.

Q: Yes, you took command the 5th of March 1951, and commanded through the 23d of December 1951. I believe also during that time, didn't you work as a special deputy to General Ridgway on some inspection trips?

A: No, I was the deputy to replace the American negotiator for the peace terms, and I didn't ever act as there was a Naval officer, what was he, a rear admiral? Seems to me there was a Naval rear admiral who was the head of the American mission, but they wanted to have some continuity; so every day they'd send a courier over to my headquarters with the report of the previous day's transactions so I could keep abreast of what was going on. I never had to act, thank God, because it was impossible. But I consider that as the finest command that I ever had. I mean just as a command. It wasn't the biggest, but I had more experience and got more. And I did, I think, an excellent job; I don't know. We drove them back. We could have broken through the lines. I don't know how many Chinese were killed, but we had a lot of trouble with the Koreans. I had one Korean division, the 2d, which turned out to be excellent. I never saw better soldiers. We had the 6th, which was one that was there, and their commander was no good. He ran once and lost his whole division, just took off. We had to fight to get back to the line again.

There was a Commonwealth Brigade of British in there with us under my command, and they were holding part of the line. Well, of course, they had Armistice or Dardanelles Day or whatever they call that. It went back to the First World War, and the Turks and the British ever since—then the Turks and the Anzacs—had always celebrated Anzac Day together. See, I had a Turkish brigade in there, too. And so they and the Turks—when the Anzac Day came along, the first thing I knew the whole damned line had disappeared. Well, fortunately I got hold of the 5th Cavalry and threw them in there. Those Australians are wonderful fighters and so was that Anzac outfit, the artillery, but they'd gone off. Their commander had taken them off to celebrate Anzac Day, and they left this great big hole. They damned near drove us back to Seoul. We were back on the outskirts. We had to fight our way all the way back and drive them out north of the line. But we did; we drove them clear back into their own territory and could have gone on up into China if we wanted to. But I consider that was the best command duty, combat command, I ever had. And I'm proud of what I did. Well, I had good combat commanders. I had Ridgway at first and then Van Fleet, and they were both crackerjack soldiers. They both supported me. There were a couple of other corps in there, too, at the same time. The X Corps was on my right. That was, what's that fellow's name? He had been MacArthur's chief of staff.

Q: General Almond?

A: Almond, yes.

Q: Well, General MacArthur kept General Almond in the X Corps under his command for much of the war.

A: I know, and he was always getting favoritism from that fact. He still retained his office, for a while, as Chief of Staff and that was finally dissolved. He had a regular traveling circus with him. He had more damned prefabs and what not. He built up this tremendous headquarters. He was overrun once or twice.

Q: Well, when you had the IX, was General Almond still under MacArthur with the X?

A: Yes, and it was during that time that he came out. He had come out from under that double command. He had this private line or this special line to MacArthur's headquarters, and he got all the soup and nuts and good treatment.

Q: Yes, I recall that was quite a problem for General Ridgway. He never was too happy with that situation.

A: No, he wasn't. I'm sure he wasn't. Ridgway was one of the best commanders I ever saw. He's a good one. And Van Fleet is, too [Commanding General, Eighth US Army, April 195 l-February 1953]. They are somewhat different. Both of them are fighters. I remember when I was commanding that corps, and I tried to keep in touch with the front line all the time. I went up daily in helicopters or, if closer, I'd go up by jeep or an airplane. I remember one day we had recaptured some town after it had been captured by the Chinese, but we had driven them out and we had retaken it. The first thing in the morning I decided that I wanted to go up and see how they were getting along. So I got a helicopter; no, I guess I got a light plane and went up there and I arrived up there, oh, it was about 10:00 in the morning, I guess, and I had to land in the street. The telephone lines were all across the road, and poles were down and everything. But we got down and I went up to this

headquarters, and I went in there and I found that Ridgway had already been there. He beat me in. He was all over the place.

Q: He was never one for staying in the back. He always wanted firsthand information.

A: Yes, and he got it. I think he's the best combat commander I know of.

Q: I made some notes—

A: He had more brains, and he had plenty of brains but along with his bravery.

Q: I had some notes from General Ridgway's interview on that subject-of some of his principles. One was to make sure he knew what was going on. He didn't trust staff reports.

A: He was there constantly–

Q: As a matter of fact, he wanted people who would report directly to him. As a matter of fact, he said that was one reason he wanted you. He had known you from World War II.

A: Well, he had known me as a cadet. He was just a class behind me at the Academy. He had been manager of the football team. I was playing on the football team at the time. So we had that acquaintance. And we'd known each other at Benning before the war.

Q: And he made a comment that [it was] you and one other general that he wanted to pull up to work directly for him and to be his eyes and ears in the field, because he could trust you and he never knew if he was getting the straight information back through channels. He said if he couldn't get out there himself, he wanted somebody that he knew would.

A: Well, he was there and he helped me a great deal later.

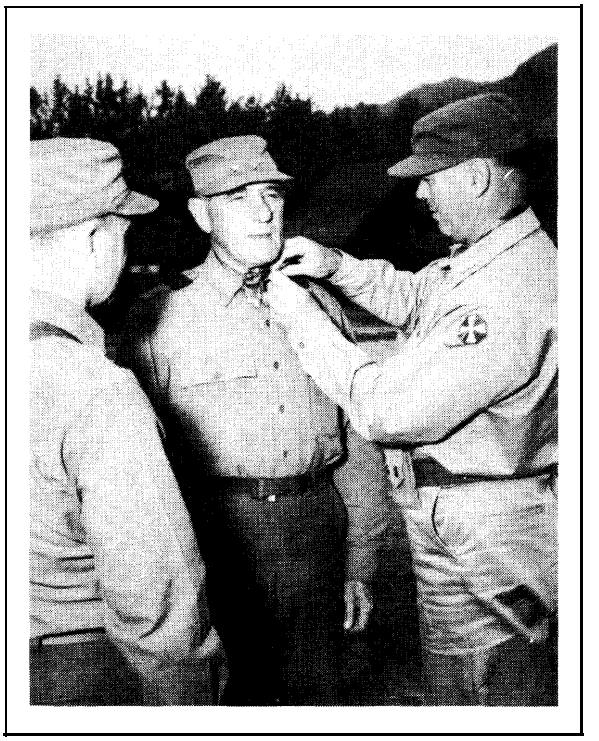
Q: General, you mentioned that you thought that your command of the IX Corps in Korea was probably the most successful of your commands and most interesting. I'd like to go back and review your assignment to Korea. You took command on the 5th of March 1951, took over from a Marine general who had commanded them for a two week period. What was the background for your selection for the command and [for] moving so quickly into Korea?

A: I have no idea except what I was told. I got word from EUCOM [European Command] that they'd send a special plane for me; and I was to leave there the next day and go directly to Korea, so I didn't stop. We stopped to refuel at a couple of points on those islands out in the middle of the Atlantic. I think it was the Portuguese islands or something.

Q: The Azores?

A: Azores, yes, and then we went on, landed in Massachusetts long enough to refuel there. And then we took right off across the country and refueled in Portland or Seattle, and then took off directly across the Pacific by way of Alaska, and then to Tokyo; and I reported in at Tokyo and got my instructions. What I got was to report immediately over to Ridgway in Korea, and I did that. At that time, they had just suffered the setback, though they had started the return. We lost Seoul, and we were back behind Seoul at the time; then we'd just started the operation. I forget what they called it, KILLER [began 21 February 1951] or something, and from then on it was just a continuous operation. We had several setbacks, and we almost made a lot of progress; but it was tough going and you had to make your roads. We were bottled up there behind the mountains, and you couldn't get out. You almost had to hand-carry the stuff over the mountains, so I built some roads up through the mountains. Finally broke through and we got into that valley; I think it's the Han River. I'm not sure; no, it isn't the Han. It's well north of the Han. Anyway, it's that river that runs from west to east, and that's when we broke the Iron Triangle-it was so called Iron Triangle-and we captured all of that except that one high hill and we drove them out of there. We went through that valley right behind there, drove them back up into—almost out of Korea completely; but that's when I had the great experience with the 2d ROK [Republic of Korea] Division. They were crackerjacks.

Q: You are quoted in the corps history on your opinion of the integration of the United Nations units. You stated that in a coordinated United Nations command it presented a surprisingly small number of problems, none of which proved to be too difficult to resolve. Planning and execution of tactical operations were accomplished in large measure due to the similarities of staff concepts and actions of United Nations units. What cannot be overlooked, however, was that the large proportion of United States troops to other United Nations troops with the extensive use of U.S. equipment were important factors in solving tactical and logistical problems.



Lieutenant General Van Fleet promotes Hoge to lieutenant general.

A: Well, we were the main force. We had the Turkish division; then we had the Commonwealth Battalion, and we had another British battalion, mixed units. We had a Dutch company, I think. We had a Luxembourg, maybe it was only a platoon, I've forgotten. I know we had some Mexican Air Force. We had a battalion from Colombia, South America. We had a Greek battalion; they were all good soldiers. We had some excellent fighters and they were all most cooperative. We got one battalion from Thailand. They were little rascals and they issued them American equipment. It got warm but they were still wearing those cold weather boots, and the boots were all too big for them. They were just as long in the foot as they were from the ground to the knee, and to see these little rascals jogging along in hot weather wearing these—what do they call them? The shoe packs. Well, then with their food, their cooking, and so on, they had to have some special food brought in. I went over to inspect

them—it was the stinkingest place; it smelled. They had no idea of sanitation in the latrines. I went and inspected their kitchen. There was a big tarpaulin across one end of the kitchen. I didn't know what that was. The stoves or whatever were out in front where they served. I went over there and pulled that up. It was just full of these little Thailanders in there asleep on the food sacks, and there must have been twenty of them behind this canvas. They were willing, but they had no concept of fighting. They had never done anything. They had a commander in charge. He was a graduate of Sandhurst, I think, but he spoke English—most of them couldn't speak English. We had an Ethiopian battalion which was excellent. They were just as tough as they could be. Those fellows go up a mountain just like goats at double time. They just seemed to be tireless. They were long, skinny chaps, thin, agile. They were pretty good soldiers, but you were always in trouble with translating or getting somebody to interpret for you to know what you were doing.

Q: Did each of the Allied commanders have an interpreter?

A: Well, they had a liaison officer, an American, I think. It was always an American, with each one of these outfits. He was sort of a supervisor. They had those with the Korean battalions, too, and they knew some language or they had somebody in the command who could translate for them and they could get word down.

Q: You didn't have many problems with the coordination and cooperation?

A: Oh, you had problems, but you had to explain things over. That fellow, what's his name—Willard—he's a lieutenant general now; he's retired. He was one of the advisors to an ROK battalion or an ROK regiment, I guess. No, it was more than that; it was an ROK division. He was excellent. I've forgotten his name now. I've seen his name recently. He got promoted. Last time I believe he was a lieutenant general. I think he's retired by now.

Q: Does he speak Korean?

A: No, he knew a few words but nothing more. Did you ever go to a Korean dinner?

Q: No, sir. I've been to some Vietnamese dinners, but never went to a Korean dinner.

A: That cooking had stuff called Kimchi-just stinks, just awful—and they had so much garlic and fish heads and old cabbage, something like sauerkraut in a way, except they'd thrown everything else in with it. There was meat and pieces of fish. I don't know how they could stomach it, but I went there once or twice. I couldn't eat.

Q: What were the differences in your command experience at corps level? You mentioned that the commander, no matter what size of unit he's commanding, is the all important factor in the success of the unit. You commanded the Combat Command and the 4th Armored Division in Europe and then the corps and later armies. What made the corps command in Korea different from your other commands?

A: Well, it was the first time I had that much independence. Before, I'd always been under some top supervision. You see, as a division commander, you always had a corps commander over you. Not that I had any trouble with them, and I had some good corps commanders in Europe, but when I got to Korea I was more or less independent. I was directly under, first, Ridgway and then, later, Van Fleet; and the handling of divisions was less detailed than getting down to handling combat commands or battalions or things of that sort. You could deal on the larger scale. It was more satisfactory. I liked the corps command best of all on that account. And I had a great deal of independence.

I planned a number of operations and I always got excellent support from, oh, all the way down from MacArthur, Ridgway, and Van Fleet. It couldn't have been better. In that respect, it was very highly satisfactory and I planned a number of those operations. There's one that isn't mentioned in that book which I thought was one of the best. Of course, a lot of that business in that country with no roads, you had to use men with packs; we had no pack animals. Oh, there were a few, but almost nothing. We captured a few pack animals from the Chinese, but most of it was done on men's backs. Well, we put on one of the final operations way up there in the north just before I left; I supported them with American troops on the flanks, but had to go through the center and the Koreans, who were much better in the hill country than the Americans

were. They were used to that tough backpacking. That was the first use I had of helicopters, that is, on a scale other than personal. I had a helicopter just for myself, for one person, with one other for reconnaissance and for getting around the area. Then later, at the end of that operation, we borrowed a couple of helicopters from the Marines. They had larger ones that would transport and that saved hundreds of pack men who were carrying over that hill. Well, we crossed over those mountains up there on the northeast comer of the American zone and cut in behind the Chinese in the X Corps. I've forgotten the name of that river. It comes down from the north and runs into the Han. What the hell is the name of it?

Q: The Imjin?

A: No, it's over further than that.

Q: The Pukhan?

A: I think it was the Pukhan. It came down and it separated the X Corps and the IX Corps.

Q: Yes, that was the Pukhan.

A: I think that was it. Well, we crossed above that behind whatever, the Chinese or Koreans or North Koreans, who were facing the IX Corps, and made them pull back, get out of there, which was a great relief on the flank of my corps and also for the X Corps. I supported it with my artillery from the flank and I used 155 [-mm.] guns—put them on a hill and fired direct, which was a great help. You'd fire at these bunkers, knock bunkers out. They were helping them all the time, but the actual fighting was carried on by the ROK division, which did a tough job.

Q: The 2d ROK?

A: The 2d ROK.

Q: You didn't have the 2d ROK Division under the corps the whole time you were there?

A: No, I got it later. The 2d ROK was in one of those routs before and had been completely routed and disbanded, lost everything. They had run. I don't know when it was—before I got there—but anyway it was reorganized and they'd gotten this new division commander. I've forgotten his name now, but he had been a paratrooper in the Japanese Army and he was a tough rascal. He couldn't speak English very well, but I remember one or two operations. I used to go there to his CP. I'd issue the orders from the TAC, and there'd be a couple of American divisions and maybe the 2d ROK mixed up. Actually, the operations orders after I got them across were better when they were issued by this 2d ROK Division than from the Americans. He was a first-class man. He was tough. He would walk the front line with a pistol in his hand, and he'd shoot anybody that ran.

Q: Well, that reminds me of some other questions that I want to get into later on, styles of leadership. I have some quotes on you in that respect. What was the difference in your use of staffs in the various levels? You talked about your staff before, that you weren't fortunate enough in World War II to have a very strong staff, but how about the use of staff at corps level?

A: Well, I had an excellent chief of staff. I had a top operations G-3. I had a good staff at the Corps. Later they were rotated and I lost them. But they were good. G-3 was named Kunzig and there were several of those Kunzigs. There was an old [father] Kunzig [Louis A., USMA 1906], colonel in the Army, and I've known two of them at least. This was Bill Kunzig [William B., USMA 1932]. I'd known Bing Kunzig [Henry B., USMA 1930] before that, but I thought Bill was one of the best operations men I ever knew, and I had a good intelligence officer in those days—I've forgotten. They were all changed about then—before I left they had been rotated. Peploe [George B., USMA 1925] was my chief of staff in the beginning, and he was first class. He had been in the fighting from the very beginning. I remember the last time he was there, I pinned about—I know it was a DSC and two or three Silver Stars on him, and he'd gotten a whole mess of decorations.

Lieutenant General William M. Hoge, commanding general of IX Corps, Korea, 1951.

Van Fleet was fine. I remember Van Fleet though—he'd given me a—I've forgotten whether it was a platoon or a battery of 8-inch howitzers. That was a great gun, very accurate; it carried a lot of power. But the ammunition was very heavy. We were backpacking a lot of that stuff up into the hills to serve those guns. Van came up one day and criticized me. He said, "I want to see you fire those 8-inch howitzers more. They were sent here for you to use." "Well, that's all right, but you carry the ammunition to them because it takes one hell of an effort to get every round of ammunition and I'm trying to make every round pay; you can't waste it." He was a great person for firepower. You couldn't shoot enough for him. It didn't make any difference what kind of a cannon or gun it was, but he wanted just an avalanche of artillery poured on everything. But when you had to carry it, and all the labor of getting that supply of ammunition up to those guns, that was quite a problem. It was all right if you had a road and trucks. You could get them, but we couldn't [use them beyond] a certain distance. It [ammunition] had to be all carried on the backs and we had so few roads. I think we only had about one road per corps.

Q: Well, it mentioned in the history here that the 36th Engineer Group—I think you had in your corps-that you had them building roads practically all the time, seeking roads out?

A: Well, we used them a great deal. I've forgotten which one that was but they're all mixed up. I don't remember units.

Q: I think the 36th Group which remained in Korea at least through—I think they were still in 1965, 1966. There is an Engineer group in Korea now, but it isn't the 36th Group. There was something mentioned about the amount of artillery that was fired. Evidently, it was used extensively throughout Korea.

A: Well, Van Fleet was a great person on shooting. A normal day of fire was not one day of fire. It would be two days to satisfy him, or three days. You couldn't shoot enough to satisfy him. Well, that was all right when you could get the ammunition to them, but I'll tell you, when you had to back-carry a lot of it, after we got knee deep in the country, you had to be a little bit more conservative.

Q: Logistics became very difficult?

A: Oh, yes. Well, I asked Van Fleet if he felt that way about it. He said, "I'm going to take that battery of 8-inch howitzers away from you if you don't shoot them enough. " I said, "All right. You come up and carry the ammunition. I'll shoot them as long as you carry the ammunition, but I' m the one that's got to get it up there to the people. " He was always fine. Old Van was a great soldier. I've known him ever since cadet days. We played football together. Both of us played in the backfield. I saw him years later at the beginning of the First World War. We were neighbors side by side at Fort Leavenworth and later down at Benning.

Q: Were you and he on the staff at the same time down at Benning?

A: Well, I was the Engineer instructor. Van Fleet was a student in those days.

Q: After Korea, you returned to command the Fourth Army. How did you receive that command?

A: See, when I was in Korea, Collins called me up and said, 'Can you go back to the States right away? Can you go back by Christmas or get started?" There was a rule that you could not take command of an army unless you had at least one year active duty left at that time. It was creeping up on me, and I said sure I'd go. Well, I got away. I had three Christmas dinners that Christmas. All of them were legitimate and all of them were at different places. I had a Christmas dinner in Tokyo. I had another Christmas dinner on some island. Oh, it was one of those islands out in the Pacific; that was before midnight. And then we crossed the date line, and I got to Honolulu on Christmas Day. I ate another Christmas dinner in Honolulu, and I came back the next day. Well, then I got command of the Fourth Army down at San Antonio and I was down there. I hadn't been there about a year, I guess, and that was supposed to be my last station. Collins called me up, I think it was Christmas Eve [1952], and he said, "Will you go to Germany to take command of the Seventh Army?" And he said, "I'll give you time to ask Mrs. Hoge whether she's willing to go. " I said, "You don't have to ask her. I know what her answer will be. " So I gave him the answer, and I got that assignment right away. And went to Germany to command the Seventh.

Q: You commanded the Fourth Army at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, from February 1952 until March 1953. So, I guess, that was Christmas.

A: I thought it was at Christmas. I thought it was a Christmas. I know it was a Christmas Eve—

Q: That's probably when he called you to go. I think you took command of the Seventh Army in April 1953.

A: Well, I had to go to various places. I had to stop at the War Department and get special instructions and there were several other things: I had to stop at the USAREUR—not USAREUR, but the Command and the Army—

Q: That's CINCUSAREUR. I don't think they had the EUCOM headquarters there.

A: What's that overall command in Europe? SHAPE. It wasn't SHAPE in those days but it later became SHAPE. Handy [General Thomas T.] had it at that time and I had to go stop there and get instructions, and I finally went down to the Seventh Army and took over. And I guess it was in March, I don't know. And I stayed there until [General Charles] Bolte, who had been there before me and had gone up to the command at USAREUR, was designated to be a Deputy Chief of Staff [Vice Chief of Staff]; so he came back to the States and I was given the command.

General Hoge as commanding general, Seventh Army, 1953.

Q: That was in September 1953.

A: Yes, something like that. See, by that time I was a couple of years over; they had told me I was going to be retired. I didn't mind it. They were all good commands and I always did what I thought was right. I got in trouble once or twice, not through my fault. One was on the insurance business. They pulled a fast one, and that was again where the staff let me down because I was in Heidelberg at the time and we had an insurance officer. I don' t know whether we still have those or not, but we had one and he was supposed to handle all these insurance agents and so on. Well, I don't know where they came from but they got me involved someway and invited me to a luncheon or something with these insurance people. Hell, they had more damned insurance companies than I knew; they had Metropolitan, they took Prudential-all of them, all the big names. But all of them had been organized in Texas or someplace, and

they were not worth a damn. They were just gyps. Well, I didn't know anything about it. I went up there to see them and I think I gave them a little talk about how I was for insurance. I always believed in it and it was a good thing for the soldier. But it wasn't; it was all a gyp, because they would sell these soldiers insurance with big promises. Well, then the soldier couldn't keep up his payments so they took the premiums and the down payments and pocketed them. Well, I didn't know that. My insurance man should have told me that. He let me down. And the first thing I knew, there was a couple of congressmen over there to investigate this situation. I didn't know what they were talking about, and it turned out that that was the trouble.

Q: You weren't getting the word?

A: They weren't passing it on to me. And another one was this shenanigan on the Class VI supplies. There was a crook that was supposed to be a great friend of Eisenhower's; I've forgotten his name. He's with a gyp liquor firm in business. It's not a reputable liquor firm, but they were taking liquor to Belgium in barrels. It wasn't bonded liquor at all, but they'd get it into Belgium just as cheap liquor; and by some finagling of the law, they got it bonded and bottled in Belgium and then they'd sell it to the Class VI people. It was just a crooked deal. Well, somebody got hold of that and they raised hell on that subject, too. Both of them were not my fault unless I'd dug into each one of these things. You didn't have time to do all that. You expected your insurance man and your liquor man to tell you these things. You know we always handled first-class liquor, most of it, and a great deal of it was bonded and it was sold as bonded; but this firm was selling the cheap stuff and getting away with it. Well, that's two of my mistakes. I figure they let me down, but I don't know how I could have known all of these little facts.

Q: This type thing still goes on. I'm sure you're familiar with the big blowup on the Army club system in Europe and then in Vietnam?

A: I had that trouble in Belvoir, and I busted that up. I don't know whether you ever heard of that, but when I first went to Belvoir with all those slot machines, there were slot machines on both sides of the post; and they were owned by a company in town. Their agent would come out and service these machines, but he took a big percentage of the receipts. I

don't know what we got but we got a very small amount proportionately of the receipts of these things, and we were the people who were paying it. And the clubs were supporting it; they were keeping them running. So I decided that that was a waste of money, that we would buy the machines; and service them ourselves. Well, we did. We got rid of these agents from town and then we put them in the club. We had some in the enlisted men's clubs and some in both clubs on both sides of the road.

In the officers' club, we were getting a return of about $15,000-$16,000 a month out of the slot machines; and that went on for a while and suddenly it dropped to around $5,000. I used to get a report from the club once a month, and it was just something you glanced at, to see where they stood. I didn't study it. You could just pick that up and just see it right off. Well, suddenly they dropped from $15,000 to $5,000-$6,000. I said, "There's something wrong here. I don't know what it is, but I know it's wrong. I think somebody's stealing from the machines. " So, I changed all the locks on the machines. I only had one key, and I gave instructions that those machines would not be opened except with one disinterested officer. A club officer and a club steward could be present when they opened them up and took the money out. Well, that went on and the minute we started that they bounced right back again up to where they had been, $15,000-$16,000 a month.

Well, then it went on that way maybe several months. Suddenly it dropped again. I said, "Where in the hell is the key?" Well, it was supposed to be kept in the headquarters' safe. We looked in the headquarters' safe and it wasn't there. Somebody had stolen the key. So we had all locks changed again and then it went right back up again. Well, then the same thing happened in the noncoms' club. They hadn't been making as much money, but the noncoms' club had been making around $7,000 or $8,000 a month. Maybe not that much, $5,000 maybe. But suddenly that dropped down to $2,000. So I did the same thing with them and put them under supervision. They came right back again, too. Never did find out who was stealing the money. When we had that supervision, and the key to open the machine was kept in the office safe and was only permitted out by the chief of staff or the officer of the day or somebody who supervised it, you just watched that; it was just like a barometer. If the key was missing, it meant that somebody was stealing.

Q: Well, that was SOP in Europe for the duty officer. He went around to all the clubs every night and got with the club steward and removed the money and counted it while he was there; and then the club officer had to take it back, lock it up in the safe, and put it in the bank the next day. Not the club officer, the duty officer. So that might have started with you at Belvoir.

A: I don't know; I didn't pass it on. But we lost a considerable amount of money from both clubs until we rigidly enforced control of the key.

Q: Well, as you know, the slot machines have been banned from all Army clubs.

A: Yes, I know. It was later done in the United States. They did it all over the United States. In those days, it was our main source of revenue for the clubs. We ran the clubs on the liquor sales and the slot machine sales. The liquor and the meals and everything else were reasonable from the profits of the club.

Q: Well, that's been taken away now primarily by congressional pressure. But I'm sure that those people who gambled then are probably still gambling some other way, particularly overseas; but did you have any thoughts about the slot machines being there and the propriety of it?

A: Where?

Q: In the clubs both in Europe and Belvoir.

A: No, I never had any. The order came out that they were to be stopped, and we stopped them. We had to close them all down. That was in the United States. As I remember, in Europe it was still going on.

Q: Yes, until 1970 or 1971. It was in that time frame. But EUCOM fought it. The CINCUSAREUR and the EUCOM commander, the joint command headquarters, fought it rather stringently because, of course, you've got free gambling all over Germany anyway, and those slot machines were what maintained the clubs or pretty close to it.

A: Well, that was what we had in the States. Slot machines ran our clubs. I've seen these things happen in other places, but if you don't watch, somebody's got sticky fingers all the time. But just watch when you see some sergeant major or somebody suddenly change his old lifestyle, and he's driving a Cadillac around the post, then be suspicious.

Q: Of course, they found that later the sergeant major of the Army had been involved in that in Europe.

A: He got involved in that. I didn't know any of those people, but I know they got into it. But it's just one of those things that you've got to be constantly watching.

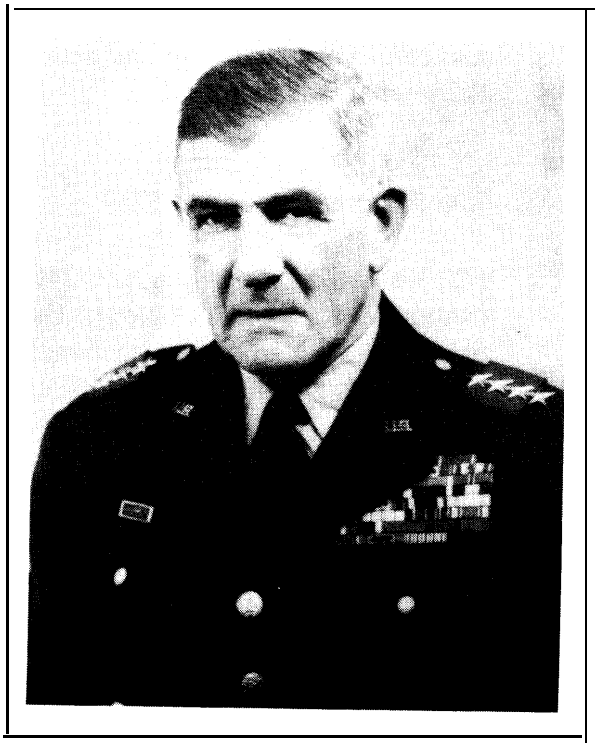
Q: I'd like to discuss ethics within the Army, both in the officer and enlisted ranks, later on. That takes us up to your retirement in January 1955. We'll want to go back and talk about some more details on part of these a little later on.

We talked about some of the leadership styles of various people before. I want to go back and talk a little bit more about your command, primarily when you returned to Europe as the CG of the Seventh Army in April of 1953 and remained in Europe until January 1955 as CINCUSAREUR. At that time we had a national strategy policy, I guess you could call it massive retaliation, instead of flexible response, the thing we have now. What was your view of the readiness of the Seventh Army to meet any possible threat from the Soviet Union and your capability in the way of men and equipment in Europe at that time?

A: Well, I wasn't in total agreement with parts of the policy. There was a scorched-earth policy in there which I disagreed with completely, and I later changed that or tried to take action, and, I think, I did modify it. But initially, everybody was to get out; we were to bum everything in the place: all the oil supplies, destroy all bridges, towns, everything in the way. My conception of that was that all we would do would make enemies of the German people, and our effects on the Russians would have been relatively small.

Q: So that was in the event of an attack from the Soviet Union?

A: That was in the event of an attack from the Soviet Union. We were supposed to set up lines of destruction along the way, and we had it all set. We were to bum certain things—destroy towns, all facilities—and retreat ahead of this thing and get back behind the Rhine, which I considered a very bad policy.



General William M. Hoge as commander in chief of US Amy Europe, 1954.

Q: Well, I think that's been changed now.

A: Well, I took steps to change it while I was there because I objected to it. It was all wrong to destroy a country—a friendly country. It would have been different if we had been in Russia or someplace like that; it would have been different. But people you are supposed to defend—and then to destroy them, that's worse than the Russians would have done. I never could take that and I did my best to change. I don't know how effective I was, but I know I did issue some orders before I left Seventh Army to that effect.

Q: To change the—

A: To change that concept.

Q: Well, did you agree at that time with the nuclear retaliation? You'd be trading space for time under that conventional strategy.

A: Yes, that was tied in and within limits; we had to use what we could in nuclear. Of course, we had several things to use it with; we could fire that—what was that gun?

Q: The Honest John or the 175?

A: No, we had a bigger gun, the 240 or something like that [280-mm. gun cannon M-66, atomic cannon]. I've forgotten. I know we fired it several times, not with an atomic head on it, but it would carry a head. And then there was a smaller gun that would carry a shell.

Q: The 8-inch will carry it and 175 carries it.

A: I think the 175. We had the guns around. They were quite cumbersome and big and a hell of a thing to move. I think it should have been used if we had to. There wasn't any objection to it. We'd probably get it back so—but what the hell, you've got to do the best you can; you don't go all humanitarian and expect somebody like the Russians to obey your impulses or follow that example. They weren't there to do that; they were there to destroy us. But I thought we should fight a delaying action and use whatever means we had. We had some maneuvers in those days under Marshal Juin [Marshal Alphonse Juin, Commander in Chief, Land Forces, Central Europe]. He was commanding at that time all the Allied armies and he had his headquarters in Paris and we had some maneuvers and critiques [in] which we discussed these things. I don't know if any decision was ever arrived at. But I remember several problems in which, I guess, Montgomery was in on it. He held to this damned schoolmaster business—ridiculous; he was a damned fool if there ever was one.

Q: Field Marshal Montgomery?

A: Yes. He was head of the Allied forces at that time from Paris and he conducted this. He had set up a regular schoolroom. All sitting in benches around sort of like a medical operating room. Anyway, he was sitting in the middle of the table, and he carried a bell like a schoolmaster and he would ring the bell to start the class. And then he had a big tray of cough drops, and if anybody coughed he would immediately have somebody carry him over a cough drop.

Q: That was while they were critiquing the maneuvers?

A: Well, that was the maneuver we had; it was afterwards. He held those things about once a year or something like that.

Q: What were the French and German thoughts on the use of tac nuclear weapons and the policy at that time?

A: Never heard the Germans-the Germans were not involved with us at that time. They were taken in later; about the time that I left there they began to be integrated. I don't know that the French expressed much one way or the other. They didn't have anything at that time to use; we had to furnish it. We had nuclear weapons at various-I don't remember how many-depots, but I remember we had them. We had these things stored. They were under high-security guards of our own around through the zone and they could have been used. I think they were mostly in the form of artillery weapons or something. Big ones!

Q: I think they had the Davy Crockett at that time, too.

A: They were always getting out something new. I am not sure—well, maybe the Davy Crockett—I am not sure I ever saw those fired. I did see the big gun! I've forgotten what it was, the 240 or something. We hauled that around several times and got it into maneuvers.

Q: What were your thoughts later on, when France withdrew from NATO?

A: Well, I thought it was an extremely bad move. We had supported France; we had done everything to defend her and here were all of our supply depots back in there. We had a pipeline across from the Atlantic coast right across France. They took that away from us. We were depending on getting petroleum supplies and so on in by ship through Germany down the Rhine—that way. It was just another one of de Gaulle's—He was a hard one to deal with: stubborn, mean. I thought the French had turned on us. In fact, somewhat of a traitor to the Allied forces, particularly the Americans. Because, by God, we certainly defended them in my lifetime. I've been over there and fought for their damned country twice. First

World War, maybe we turned the tide in the First World War. I'm sure [in] the Second World War we were the determining factor.

Q: Well, what did you think of the strength of NATO at that time as a military organization?

A: Well, it wasn't particularly strong. I think the strongest element in the whole thing was the American forces—Seventh Army. Of course, I commanded in that time the Central Army Group [CENTAG], which included the First French Army and the Seventh US Army, plus, I guess, we later, just toward the end, got some German forces in there. They were subordinate; they were not major units. We didn't have anything as big as a division or corps as I remember. I know the First French Army was part of my command and that was a good outfit. I've forgotten that little fellow's name. He was a commander of the First French Army down at Baden-Baden, [which] was his headquarters.

Q: The French forces were still there when I was in Europe in 1959. Was the defensive planning at that time predicated on the assumption that an attack would come across the Fulda plain and through the Central Army Group?

A: I don't remember what the thought was on that at this time. I can't remember.

Q: I saw the classic scenario where the US forces were located. How about your troop morale at that time; you know, recently we have had many difficulties with troop morale in Europe?

A: I know. We had high morale, had fine troops and good men. Conducted some good maneuvers and I had some good exercises of it. Grafenwohr and Wildflecken, we had that one and we had another one; there was a third one, it's down in the southern part.

Q: Grafenwohr was down in the south.

A: Well, that was further east, but this was west of that and somewhat south near the French zone. But we held maneuvers down there. Grafenwohr, of course, was the big one and the best. We held maneuvers pretty well over Germany. We had to pay some damages—destroyed fences, roads, and so on—but they were cooperative; they were all right.

Q: Are there any items that stand out as your biggest problems while you were commanding the Seventh Army or USAREUR?

A: I don't remember any major problems. Of course, you always had morale problems, and you had to maintain that. And their training. We'd hold those alerts constantly: regiment, battalion, division, and what not.

Q: What about your war reserve stock?

A: We had pretty good stocks and we built up that place on the west bank of the Rhine. You know, it is over in—what the hell is the name [Kaiserslautern].

Q: Garmisch?

A: No, it isn't that; it became an American colony back there, really a city. And they brought all of those tanks and things, thousands of tanks and trucks and everything else under cover.

Q: Yes, sir, that was the forerunner of the Reforger: the prestocked supplies for CONUS-based troops.

A: It was just a reserve supply we had, as the demobilization didn't take them back; and they put them over there in a zone—what the hell was that? It was under my command at that time, the big area that was quite a colony of supply.

Q: Was this in France or Germany, sir?

A: It's in Germany, just in back—

Q: Did you have a special unit that maintained that equipment?

A: There was a special unit, and we had a major general back then in there, who was in command of the thing. I've even forgotten his name now. Two or three different ones.

Q: Yes, that was under COMZ, I guess. They still had the communication zone at that time.

A: It was under the Seventh Army.

Q: Oh, it was under Seventh Army?

A: At least under USAREUR, it wasn't back under COMZ; the big headquarters at Paris which commanded all of them.

Q: SHAPE.

A: It was under US Army, well, now SHAPE, but in those days—Handy was in command of it when I went over there and I think he was there—I don't remember who took it after he left. I guess he was still there when I left; I am not sure. Yes, I guess he was, because they tried to get us to move into their house in Heidelberg and we didn't do it. The Handys had a great big chateau, tremendous house, that was requisitioned from the Germans; and I think the expense was rather great and maintaining it and a lot of servants. And there had been an objection at that time of the expense being too great. We got that from headquarters COMZ—no, that was the Communications Zone, that wasn't it—had all of them, the Army and the Navy and the Air Force were all under this command. USAREUR was under that.

Q: EUCOM?

A: EUCOM is the one that I am thinking of. They were up in Frankfurt when I first went in there. They had been at Heidelberg and they were moved up to Frankfurt and they took over that big—

Q: I. G. Farben Building?

A: And they occupied that, and that was when we were down at Heidelberg. We were all separated in those days, had the Seventh Army down at Stuttgart and USAREUR was up at Heidelberg and whatcha-m'-callit moved up to Frankfurt. Nowadays I think they all are combined. Now, of course, SHAPE has taken over.

Q: SHAPE is now in Belgium; EUCOM is at Patch Barracks, Stuttgart; and USAREUR is still at Heidelberg, I think.

A: USAREUR and the Seventh Army have been combined. They are both up at Heidelberg now. The commander of the Seventh Army is deputy commander of USAREUR and they both are in the same headquarters.

Q: Yes, and CENTAG is also located there, right? CENTAG headquarters?

A: I don't know, it all has changed so much since. We were spread out quite a bit in those days. There was always that fight for quarters.

Q: It still is.

A: At the time I went in there, I remember, I had to move up to Heidelberg when I took over USAREUR; and Handy was still living in Heidelberg, but he had to commute daily up to Frankfurt to his headquarters. It was a hell of a mess. But the women wouldn't move; somebody had to move and Mrs. Handy wouldn't move. They had this big house and they tried their damndest to get us to take over that house. But economy had begun to come in. We didn't want it anyway; we had a very comfortable house down there on the river bank, Wolfgang, just outside Heidelberg.

Q: Seckenheim?

A: No, it's Wolfgang. It's just a suburb of Heidelberg right along the river. It had belonged to the German postal people. It was quite nice grounds and a decent house. We did considerable changing and fixing it up, but

Bolte had lived there before. He had been forced into [it] when he moved up to Heidelberg; he was ahead of me. He couldn't move in because all of these houses were taken. It was always jammed up because nobody would move, the women wouldn't move. So they opened up this house and we moved in there and it was perfectly comfortable. And later after this thing cleared up, we wouldn't take the rest of the houses. We just turned them back to the Germans.

Q: Did they go back to the German government or back to the original owners?

A: They went back to the original owners, as far as I know. Everything was on requisition—houses, furniture. That clock there, for instance, that belonged to [Albert] Speer. His wife was living in Heidelberg at the time. That clock was in my quarters in Heidelberg. It wasn't running at that time, hadn't been running for years. So, we asked around to find out who it belonged to, if it could be bought. And finally had a hell of a time, sort of a skullduggery going on in the property division, particularly among the Germans. They had this stuff spotted and they weren't telling. They wouldn't trace this stuff, because they hoped, if finally the Americans evacuated, [we] wouldn't know who this stuff belonged to and they would get it for nothing or very cheaply. Well, we finally traced that clock down. And we found out that it belonged to Mrs. Speer or Speer himself. He was in prison then up in Berlin. He was one of those three prisoners. He is now out and he wrote that book *[Inside the Third Reich].* Mrs. Speer came down to our house and talked to my wife. Their daughter had been to school in England or America, and she spoke English very well. She came with her. Mrs. Speer agreed to sell the clock to us, so we bought it from her and I've got the receipt for it. There was some stealing that went on among some of these Americans. One was a chaplain who stole some pianos. Don't you remember that?

Q: No, I have not heard about that.

A: And jewelry and all sorts of things, silver plates, and all this stolen from some of those castles and so on by Americans-picked it up and brought it home. I've got the receipt for that clock in the drawer there, from Mrs. Speer. So, I had no trouble bringing it back to the United States, but there were two Ordnance officers that came over to dinner one night and

the clock was standing there in the living room. It wasn't running, hadn't been running. We tried to get the Germans to fix it, and we couldn't get anybody to fix it. One of these—I don't know whether you ever knew General Shermberg; he was an Ordnance officer. He is dead now; he's just died in the last couple of years, a very fine person. I've forgotten the other Ordnance officer. They were there for dinner one night and were talking about that clock, and Shermberg was an enthusiastic clock man. They took it right down in the living room floor, and he said, "Just let me take it home. " He got it, took the works out, put them back, brought it back, and it ran perfectly And it runs right now as well as any clock runs except an electric clock—keeps perfect time. I've had some trouble with it since I've got it back here, and it's cost me several times to get it repaired back here than the original clock cost.

Q: Yes, it's a beautiful old clock.

A: That clock is over two hundred years old. That man was a clock maker for one of the kings of England, one of the Jameses. I think it was around 1700 that he lived, and he was one of the most prominent clock makers. But the clock was ticking; English was still inscribed, but it was bought by somebody and got over in Germany. But I traced it back to England; there are a number of them made in England.

Q: You mentioned you had quite a bit of pilferage that went on by some of the Americans in requisition housing?

A: Terrible! Stealing of jewelry and silver plates and all sorts of things. As I say, one of them was a chaplain who stole pianos; I don't know how many pianos it was. Maybe just one, but I remember that.

Q: We've covered your corps command, sir, and then you went and took the Fourth Army at Sam Houston and then to Europe, Seventh Army commander. Looking back over your command experience, all through your career, you primarily were an operations command type?

A: That's true and that's probably a great shortcoming of mine. I feel that, but I have no ability on staff lines. I enjoy operations and I enjoy being in the thick of it and I always have, and I take direct control. I always

tried to be up and see what the men were doing up on the front line or anyplace else. I did that in the First World War. I led over in the Vosges mountains in the First World War. I led a patrol that blew up German wire with a Bangalore torpedo. I led the patrol out.

Q: I think you also personally conducted the reconnaissance of the Meuse River?

A: I did. Yes, I did. I did that for several days before we picked the site that we would cross and I led the pontoon train. They were all French. They couldn't speak English—oh, they could speak a little English—and I wasn't sure what you could do with them. I had to lead them down to the river personally. I didn't know whether they would stay with us or not. But we got our pontoons down to the riverbank and got the transport away from there before we started building.

Q: You cited that crossing as an excellent example of how well textbook methods could work in a combat situation in your articles that you wrote about the Meuse crossing; and you cited several examples of how that related, how the textbook or the school situation did apply in combat. Did you find that all through your career? Did you find that you had to have more flexibility and sometimes you had to throw the book away?

A: Oh yes, that's true. You couldn't follow it slavishly at any time. But the whole principle behind river crossings had been taught by a German-written book. I remember, we used it when I was an instructor at the Engineer School. That was our basic text, this German textbook on river crossing. But that gave all the principles of the reconnaissance: getting the covering force across, the bringing-up of the small boats. They didn't have footbridges in those days; they used boats and then got the pontoons in. But the whole principle of the broad scope of river crossing is classic and you had to follow that; you couldn't follow it slavishly.

Q: Another thing . found interesting in one of your lessons learned from that was the broad front. You had a very wide front along the Meuse which evidently confused the enemy. You did not choose the logical crossing

point but chose one that was somewhat obscured from observation by the enemy.

A: It wasn't so much that. That was the only place we could get across. The problem was getting communications on the far bank of the river; and at the place we crossed I had to use a towpath along the canal for a long distance before I could get off just a single track. I remember during that period, right after we'd gotten that bridge across at that section, we were on the flank of the Germans. Why, the corps [111 Corps] commander, General Hines [John L. Hines, USMA 1891], came down that road to inspect in an automobile. He just disrupted the whole business because the road was only wide enough for single traffic, and you had to be very careful of that if you went off the road. You were on this embankment towpath; you were either in the river or in a ditch, and you stopped everything. That was our whole supply line until we could get back to get to some roads to branch off, and it was two or three miles up the river before we could get off to the bank land. So that was the problem.

Q: Yes, limited approaches to the—

A: And that was possibly one reason why and how the Germans put up, I guess, more resistance back up at the crossing that was made by the other battalion of the 7th Engineers after we had crossed down below.

Q: Yes, and you had, I think, elements of the 308th Engineer Battalion with you. I think E and F companies were involved in the crossing.

A: I don't remember. I know we had a bridge train which came up later. I'm not sure that we ever used those because they came in later, and we'd already used this French battalion to get the initial boats across.

Q: Well, going back to your experiences primarily in operations and as commander and your method of leadership. You're described by Ken Hechler in his Bridge at Remagen book as "utterly fearless and expected his men to follow his example. If they faltered, his normally quiet voice took on sharpness and lacerated the offenders. Quick to make decisions, he had the reputation of being a bulldog in carrying them out and a cat in jumping to meet new circumstances, " which describes your flexibility y.

But evidently through all the reading you've done you are always quick on decisions and able to inspire men a great deal. Do you feel that this was one of the most important aspects of your successful leadership, being with the men and inspiration?

A: Well, I felt it. I had to know what the men were up against constantly, and I never was satisfied unless I knew what the opposition was so I could do something for them, tell them whereto go. This thing of giving orders and not knowing whether it could be carried out just because it's an order and it looks on paper that it would be a good thing to do. There were always two principles I used in evaluating orders when I gave them. One, was it possible to do that thing? Not that it's the normal thing, but is it possible? Can it be done by somebody or you could do it or not? The other is are you yourself willing to be on that mission? Not that you want to be, but would you—would you do it? Would you flunk out on it? And if you couldn't answer in the affirmative on both of those points, you should find some other way of doing it or change your orders.

Q: So you found it necessary to put yourself in the position of the man to whom you were giving the orders?

A: And that was one reason for always being up someplace to find out what the men were up against. It's all right to sit back and it looks nice to take a certain piece of ground or make a certain advance, but do you know that it can be done? It may be a very difficult job, but is it possible? Is there some way that it can be done?

Q: Well, from that description you were as much motivated towards the men as you were towards the mission, but combine the two.

A: Well, it was the part of the men that made the mission possible. If you couldn't have the man, there was no use in having the mission, if you didn't have the means to carry it out.

Q: Well, in your career progression, you've hit on a sore subject with a lot of officers in today's Army and one of the main reasons for the creation of a new officer personnel management system, which allows a man who is particularly good in a field to stay in that field and not jump from one

type of job to another so he can be a total generalist. And one of the terms used for this is ticket punching. In other words, you had to command your platoon, your company, the battalion. You had to be on a high staff; you had to be on the DA [Department of the Army] staff. Do you agree that this new approach of allowing a man to specialize and achieve success in the Army is better than doing a little bit of everything and being a total generalist?

A: I don't know that I could answer that. You've got to follow your own capabilities, and I don't think everybody is a well-rounded man. For instance, I could never be a staff officer and there was no point in my being trained to be a G-2 or G-3 or anything else. I may have been able to do it and I could have gotten by with it, but I had no liking for it and I didn't have the ability along that line.

Q: Well, did you consciously avoid being on the DA staff or high-level staffs?

A: I never tried one way or the other. There's one thing I tried to avoid, and that was being stationed in the Pentagon.

Q: Yes, and successful at it.

A: But otherwise, I never made an effort one way or the other. And I think a lot of people wouldn't have had me on their staff anyway.

Q: Well, you evidently had a reputation for being an excellent commander and that's where most of your assignments came. That was part of the purpose of my question about your going to Korea. In the interview of General Ridgway two years ago, he commented that he went out of his way to get you into Korea out of Trieste. That's why I had asked you if your previous contact with Ridgway helped in that assignment and others.

A: I think they did all along. Just like when you know someone, and, well, I'd known Ridgway very well and I admired him. We had been together ever since cadet days and several times in the Army. I was a great admirer of him and I respected him. I think that is the point. I've forgotten what we started-the question was?

Q: Knowing people gives you a lot of opportunities—

A: The knowing of people-that's been true all along. I have never made any effort to bootlick anybody and never went around with that purpose in mind, but I know that the people with whom I have associated have been a great help throughout my career and they have helped me by their advice, by their giving me their support and giving me the opportunity to do things. I don't know where that came from. They had confidence in me, but I look back on my acquaintance with these various people as being vital, not from the standpoint of favoritism or selection, but in understanding them and being able to think along their lines or help them because they helped me. The whole thing is mutual. You don't get anything by giving it all to somebody else. He helps you some; you help him whenever you can. Loyalty is a great thing. I can't remember, but in every scope of my career there's been always somebody who's been a great friend. I'll tell you who that [VIII] Corps commander was who was a great friend of mine. It was Troy Middleton. He was a fine soldier. He was the one that commanded the [VIII] Corps and went over to take Brest. I followed him and later he was in command in that area that was attacked in the Battle of the Bulge. Eisenhower asked for Troy Middleton as a corps commander, and they sent word back from the Department of the Army that Troy Middleton was sick; he wasn't able. Eisenhower replied, "I'd rather have Troy Middleton on crutches than most of these people. "

Q: Of course, General Middleton had been out of the service for quite some time.

A: Oh, yes, he'd been out; he'd resigned from the service. I forgot I was with him in the Philippines for a while and then he retired. He had a heart attack. He went down to Louisiana State University and became its president. But he had been PMS&T down there before, and after he retired he went back there and became president of the university and he was that until the war broke out. Then he volunteered again and came in, and he got to be a major general. I guess he eventually retired as a lieutenant general or more. He was a good top man. There was no show about him. He didn' t show off all the time or try to make an impression. It was just good common sense. Well, I've always found friends like that. For instance, Courtney Hodges was a close friend of mine. Bradley was

always a good friend of mine. Collins, Ridgway, and all of them have been tremendous help by their advice, by giving me opportunities.

Q: It was rather obvious throughout your career that you'd never tied yourself to any one particular man who was marked for greatness.

A: No, I never did. I somehow admired Omar Bradley almost more than any except for General Marshall. I think he's the greatest of all the generals-the top commander. I put him ahead of MacArthur, Eisenhower, and Patton. Each of them had his strengths, but they were more or less specialists, it seems to me—Patton as a tactical commander, MacArthur more as a strategic commander, Eisenhower with his ability to coordinate and get along with people. They were all fine. I'm not sure whether Bradley could have done those jobs. I think he could have, because he's a well-rounded man with a great deal of intelligence and just good common sense. I always thought he was one of the greats. He's always been a close friend of mine.

Q: Have you had any recent contact with General Bradley?

A: Yes, I've seen him. I went to Europe with him for the 25th anniversary of the landing in Normandy-he took me along. And I'm supposed to go on the 30th, but I'm not going; I'm not able to. I'd just be in the way. Too much care.

Q: Is General Bradley going to try to make that trip?

A: As well as I know, he's going. They got a group together. I don't know who. Somebody called me up from the Department of the Army and asked me whether I was willing to go. They first sent me an invitation, and it was more or less travel by commercial aircraft or something. Well, I knew I wasn't going on that one. It was too much of a hassle. It wasn't a question of expense—it was too much trouble. Then he came back and said that, I think, the Chief of Staff or somebody had made his own private plane available and that Bradley and his wife were going, Collins and his wife, I think Ridgway was going, and I was invited. I don't remember who else was in the group. I haven't heard anymore from that. I told them I would reconsider. I didn't say I would go, and they were

supposed to call me later. But since then I've had these troubles with rheumatism and tiring and so on, so I decided that I'd better not do it. I would just be a burden to the other people.

Q: Well, I wouldn't think so.

A: No, it's too much. I might get over there and pass out or something, have another of those blackouts.

Q: We were talking about the various generals, sir. When we were here before I gave you a little comparison sheet on various techniques of leadership and how different people approach it. Well, on this chart we've been talking about some of the methods of leadership and decision making. I'd like to go right down this sheet that is used at the War College to try to pick out various characteristics and traits of leadership and the various methods used by different successful generals. The first area covered is decision making, and rather than paraphrase what you've said before, I know what the answer to most of these are with you. But do you make decisions yourself or delegate the authority for decisions in command positions?

A: Generally, I made the decision if it was of any importance. I delegated as much as I could if I could trust the people, and I asked for their help. As I told you before, I think one of my weaknesses is that I never had very many or much of a staff I could depend on and had confidence in.

Q: How do you think General Eisenhower would respond to that, or what's your evaluation of Eisenhower's method in decision making?

A: I'm not sure whether I can. I think Ike makes his own decisions; I don't think there's any doubt about that. He's decisive enough. I' m not sure.

Q: Of the generals that you mentioned that you had known-Patton, Bradley, Marshall, Ridgway, Van Fleet–do you think any one of those or any other general that you knew stood out as being very pragmatic and very decisive?

A: Oh, I think Marshall did. I'm not sure of the meaning of pragmatic myself—it means you've got some rule that you follow without question. I don't know of any of them who did that. You've got to have some intuition about what's right and what's wrong. You've got to know the situation to make decisions. You can't just make it because it sounds good. It has been done before. No two situations are alike. They must be evaluated and they must be decided on the merits, pros and cons of that particular situation.

Q: Looking back on all your commands and jobs, you mentioned that probably Remagen was the turning point of your career, but by that time you were already a brigadier general. What would you say prior to that time was the thing that contributed the most to your eventual success?

A: I had a period of stagnation there for a long time. My biggest job up to the beginning of the war-well, I started out pretty good—I organized the first training camp at Belvoir and was one of the first in the United States. And we developed a number of systems of training—it wasn't a great big one. I think we had 12 battalions, 12,000 men at a time. And we had various courses that would change sometimes; it was 16 weeks and sometimes 14 weeks. It varied according to how many men they needed. Then we started those various specialty courses in equipment and so on. That was quite a good job and a very interesting job, and I had some crackerjack men that were helping me. Particularly a man, General Pence, Arthur Pence, he was my top man. I had a number of others that were head of different departments. We did a very good job. I think we put in the first obstacle course in the Army. I don't know whether that would draw any great acclaim; Paul Thompson was the one. He had been in Germany as a student officer and had gotten his degree at some German university, and he came back. I had known Paul since he was a boy. He stayed with me while he was going to Waterways Experiment Station, and I thought a great deal of him. Well, when Paul got back we were cramped for room for physical exercise, training, and I said to him, "What did the Germans do; they are much more restricted than we are?" Then, he told me about right there in the courtyard, or the city square, they had all this development of physical exercise. Bars of all kinds, obstacles you scale, but something that got exercise. So from that, we designed and built that first obstacle course. And then we built a second one. Well, General Marshall, I think he came down to see it, and he sent word out throughout the Army about this. It wasn't as good as it should

have been because you could go through it too fast. We could run that obstacle course and we did everything we could think of. We had you walk planks-narrow, made out of four-by-fours—cross streams. YOU had to jump ditches; you had to crawl through sewage pipes, climb over walls, go through barbed wire—everything we could think of, but all in a limited space. And you could run the entire course, from end to end, in about ten minutes; that wasn't enough exercise!

Q: To get through that fast, I imagine you had to be—

A: You went in two or three pairs and yet it was quite difficult at times—had to scale walls, I think, almost as high as this ceiling. All sorts of things that you had to do—went over ladders that you went hand-over-hand and crossed streams. We did what we could within that limited space and things we had—natural obstacles like streams and woods and it was all right, it was an innovation.

Q: Did you have an Officer Candidate School there also at that time?

A: We had one, but I had nothing to do with it. That was separate. It was over under the school itself. Mine were entirely enlisted men, training these enlisted men, draftees. We later, as I say, expanded into various schools such as carpenter school and plumbers and electricians and heavy equipment operators. That was about six weeks or more or eight weeks added to the other courses. And lots of experiments in trying to evaluate people and what their capabilities were. We gave those as examinations; I don't know how good they are. I think they found out something about people's abilities—these tests, I've forgotten what they called them.

Q: The Armed Forces Qualification Tests?

A: That wasn't the name of it. But you tried these different people and you could determine whether a man had the ability to be a carpenter or a plumber or an equipment operator. And from that we would select certain men. They would send in requisitions from the new regiments that when their replacements came in they wanted so many carpenters or so many equipment operators and what not. Well, we would send men who had shown the aptitude, picking some of them out; we couldn't do all of them,

but we could do something. I thought the ALCAN Highway was a great opportunity and a great challenge, and that was a tough job! There were three jobs that were classified. The toughest job, the one that you couldn't see a solution to, was the ALCAN Highway. When we went up there, nobody had ever been there; nobody knew what the country was; nobody knew where the road was going except those few points that we were going to stop at, that was all.

Q: Where the airfields were?

A: So, it was a challenge from beginning to end. And you could never, until we had gotten pretty well into it, know whether it could ever be solved. And then when we hit the permafrost, almost impossible. But it was all whipped. The second one was the most impossible job—frustration-was that on the beach landing. That was primarily due to the Navy. The division there of landing forces was absolutely wrong. You've got to draw the line. You see, in the Pacific, they had the amphibious forces; engineer forces were organized near the boats and so on, and they had the stevedores and everything else. They went out and unloaded the ships, had the boats under their control, took them to shore, unloaded them, and disposed of the cargo. That was possible.

Q: All under the control of the Army?

A: You had a definite dividing line; the Navy was responsible for delivering the stuff on shipboard and opening the hatches and assisting on the cranes and what not, in getting the stuff out and into the various ships, like the landing craft and DUKWs and so on. That was possible because you could draw a line. But when we got to Europe-on that one the Navy controlled all the boats. We had the responsibility for the depots on the land and for unloading this stuff. We also controlled the stevedores, but we had no control over the ships. And it was impossible to get coordination between them. I know time after time I would order a battalion of stevedores down to the beach to unload the ships, and the boats would never show up. They would sit there all night long, just waiting, and nobody would show up. That type of thing. And they wouldn't cooperate at all with where you wanted to go. The Navy could control it all right had they been responsible for landing it on the beach. Then we could take it over—you had a definite dividing line. But that

was all wrong; that was a most frustrating, impossible job and was primarily due to cooperation. The third experience, so dangerous and hopeless-looking I never expected to come through, was the Battle of the Bulge. I never expected to live through that. I wasn't going to give up! I was going to fight to the end, but I just could see no way of getting out of there—that we all wouldn't be killed. But we all hung together and we fought our way out and we got out. Those three experiences I have always thought stood out in their respective categories. Of course, the luckiest thing I ever had was Remagen Bridge. But that was relatively easy compared with some of these other things. It was quick and brought results and worked fine.

Q: I imagine a lot of the other experiences though prepared you for that type of quick decision in recognizing the value of—

A: Luck—the opportunity was there and I was very fortunate to get it. You go a lifetime and never get—you had to have some luck too, you know, as you go along. I could never have been at Remagen for instance. It was just luck that I happened to be there under those circumstances. But you were talking about—you said something about the orders and what not of Remagen. I remember after all those people supported the line, but I had disobeyed orders. Now remember I found it later among Mrs. Hoge's papers, one of those letters that we wrote. What do you call those letters, sent through the mail during the war where all you had to do was seal them up? I told her I expected to be court-martialed. I had the bull by the tail and I didn't know whether I would come out or not. I might be busted and sent home.

Q: I think everybody all up and down the line recognized the value of that, except for—

A: Well, that's luck–right place–

Q: Being in the right place at the right time. But it wasn't something that you got into by planning. Many people will put themselves in a position like that.

A: I know several other people that tried to get a bridge. One up at Cologne before that and I think another tried south of Remagen to get across, and the bridge was blown up in their face and they never made it. But we were just lucky.

Q: And you took, when you commanded the 4th Armored Division, you took two more bridges across the Main River at Tolz also, didn't you?

A: That wasn't too difficult.

Q: With the 4th Armored-the 4th Armored was known as the point of Patton's Third Army.

A: It was his favorite division, no question about that.

Q: Used to have stories about Patton outrunning his fuel supplies. Did you have many problems like that?

A: Yes, we had that; sometimes we had to fly it in. Not often, but we did at times—we ran out. But they would always give it to us and get it in some way, fly it in behind us.

Q: Was that before they put the heavy armor plate on your Sherman tanks? You had mentioned that the additional armor that was put on the Sherman cut the range from 100 miles to 25 miles.

A: Oh yes, that was long before that. Those changes that would take place were after the war. That's when they ruined it; the Sherman tank wasn't too bad as it was used during the Second World War. It was after they began to improve it. Whoever was running or designing tanks didn't know what a tank was. A tank has two or three fine characteristics, and one—the major one—is mobility. But somebody was always trying to put heavy armor on it to protect it. Well, you want protection against-you must have it certainly up to all machine-gun bullets, including the .50-caliber. But beyond that, it's nice to have something; but when you weigh the thing down to where it can't move, it becomes useless. Now, you need a good gun. The primary thing is mobility; your second one is

a good gun and shooting ability. They've loaded the tanks at the present time; I haven't seen one for years, but they've loaded it on with so much equipment and made them so complicated. Of course, nowadays, I don't think they sight using ordinary sighters or anything like that; everything is computerized.

Q: Computerized and range-finding equipment on the guns.

A: And they have to make the crew comfortable and all of that stuff. But in those days, we didn't worry about that. But the Sherman tank was not a bad tank; it wasn't as good as the Russian tank, I don't think. I am sure it wasn't. I think it was better than the British. I don't know. I never ran any of those; I never saw them. But it was more active. And somebody who knew how to use them-like [Creighton] Abrams, he really could use them; and he used his mobility constantly. He could get as much out of a light tank as many people could get out of these heavy ones. Well, you moved so fast because the main thing with a tank was to get behind them—break through and get behind them. Once you get behind a man, you scare him; then he is going to quit. And you get on his supply line behind him, then you've got him on the run. That was the main principle, you should never attack towns with tanks-run through the outskirts, but never get tied up in a town. Go around it and get on the other side; let the infantry follow and go through the town.

Q: You would be in agreement with those who today say we are getting our tanks too heavy?

A: We are. I knew that just before I left USAREUR when we had maneuvers. Well, you had to have almost a pipeline dragging behind you to keep a tank going. We could run about a hundred miles on a tankful of gas with the old Sherman, maybe go a little over a hundred. But our radius of action was about a hundred miles. We would have liked to have two hundred, but I am talking about what you could carry.

Q: There is an example of an order that you had given to the Combat Command wherein you directed them to bypass the town and let the infantry clean those up and just keep the tanks moving. That's when you were heading south to join with the Third Army before Remagen. Well,

do you think with the advent of long-range guided missiles, which are now in the hands of the infantry, do you think that will reduce the role of the tank on a modem conventional battlefield?

A: I doubt it. The tank still has its place; I am not up enough on what's happening in changes. I think the tank, by getting behind, rolling behind there—of course, the machine guns, the .50-caliber machine gun is a great weapon. We had all of our tanks in the 4th Armored equipped with .50-caliber machine guns up on the turret. Most of the tanks were equipped with a normal .30-caliber, but ours were .50-caliber. And when I tell you they burst into action, they really made an impression. When we rolled on these highways, autobahns particularly, just rolling and shooting at everything that was moving ahead of you. Well, you had a lot of destroyed bridges and you had to bypass a lot of places, go through gulleys and up the other side. But that was a great boon to the American Army, the autobahns.

Q: You mentioned earlier two of the greatest mistakes you think the US government made during the 20th century or during your lifetime. I would like for you to go over those two items again.

A: My opinions—purely the effect on the people themselves—but I think, of course, the prohibition era was wrong in its inception. And it tried to tell people what you could do, and too much prohibition—people have got to learn something. There is no question that liquor can be overdone and there were lots of drunks. But the crowd of crooks that were brought in by the introduction of prohibition that started a whole cycle of underworld, I don't think we have overcome it yet. We still suffer effects of it. That was my objection to prohibition, and it made a lot of hypocrites. We didn't stop drinking, nobody did. Even the preachers and some of the old ladies. I know, my father-in-law was a physician, and these old ladies would come up to him and ask him, "Doctor, give me a prescription, I need it for my rheumatism. " He said, "No, I won't give you any, Mrs. Bess; you voted for that prohibition and I'm not going to help you out of it. You put that on the books and you got to live with it. " He was a very temperate man, but those old ladies and old men would just come around and beg. But they were the ones who were leading the prohibition parades. It was all right for them; the liquor was good. But you were not to be trusted—the common man. Well, of course, there

were a lot of barroom bums and people spent their pay and everything else, but that wasn't as bad as what was going on.

As far as the Vietnam War, I just think we expended time trying to instill some of our thoughts and way of living, our political system, on a totally foreign people, of which we knew nothing. That type of thing may be exactly right for them. And we have no right to dictate to the world that everybody is going to be a Democrat or Republican or any other particular thing. That's what the Russians are trying to do, dictate everybody will be a Communist. I think that's wrong. I think communism is probably better for those people than anything they've ever had. I don't know, that's just my feeling. And it's done a great deal of harm to the Vietnamese people and the expenditure that we had in money; but not only that, the loss of life and the suffering we had among our young men is absolutely unwarranted.

Q: It certainly had a great effect on the will of the American people and the public in support.

A: Why, sure it had. Trying to follow an ideal which we are trying to force on other people—we shouldn't be in that business.

Q: Of course, that wasn't the primary motivation for it, but to try to let them choose their own way rather than have something forced on them.

A: Well, that may have been, but it isn't what it wound up with. I don't know anything about—I was against it from the very beginning because we were meddling in something that was none of our business. Going out of our way. And we don't understand those people and I don't know that we ever will. I don't know the Vietnamese, but I have lived with the Filipinos enough to know something about the Oriental and his way of life and his way of thinking, and it doesn't follow our pattern. It may be right for him and maybe it probably is—he developed that. And as long as he keeps out of poverty and suffering–there is no question that they have got plenty of poverty and anything will be an advantage over some of the lives they live. But it isn't through becoming Democrats and Republicans. It's from an economic standpoint. They could get out from under the oppression of capitalism or whatever you want to call it; and I am not sure it's capitalism, but the top men have all the money and oppress the

peasant type, the lower people. But I saw plenty of that in the Philippines. Few families—some of them were Americans, but most of them were Spanish and a few Filipinos—they had the money and they ran the country and the other people were practically slaves. It seems to me a farmer in those days for planting rice got about 20 cents a day working in the fields. Well, the Mexicans are going through the same thing and have been for years. We are going to have trouble down there if we haven't already got it. But there is a wealthy class that is dominating and the others are just downtrodden and oppressed. I don't know anything about politics, that's just my feelings.

Q: Many attribute to the Vietnam War a lot of the problems we have now and have had a long time; other problems have come in the—particularly in the 1960s and up through now, the racial tension, the drugs, and sort of a breakdown in discipline within the society. What effect do you think that has on the Army, and do you think the Army will be able to recover its discipline that it had before?

A: I understand-I don't know, I have no contact-I understand that it is improving a great deal in the Army. I've seen some articles, I've seen one in the last week or so that showed enlistment has gone way up and morale is higher. I think they are being overpaid; I don't see how we can afford [it], because I think a private gets more than I got as a second lieutenant. A private coming into the Army gets more than I got after going four years to the Academy and graduating.

Q: I guess he does now.

A: Well, I don't know, he may get as much as a captain. I know a major or lieutenant colonel nowadays gets more than I got as a lieutenant general or general, when 1 retired.

Q: And it all happened in the last ten years.

A: The question of expense, I have no objection to that. I question some of the organization for taking away some of the responsibility for cooking and mess maintenance. I don't see how you are going to take the field without the ability to take care of yourself.

Q: They still maintain the cooks and mess stewards, but the KP [kitchen police] duty is performed by civilians.

A: I didn't know they still had the cooks.

Q: Yes, they still have the MOS [military occupational specialty] for cooks. It's changing now, but we have had a relatively short period of command time for the young company commander. Particularly in Vietnam, the most he could get was 12 months; and it got to a point, when we had the most troops in Vietnam, where the battalion commanders were changing every six months. Do you think this is enough time, or what are your views on the length of time officers should spend in seasoning?

A: I think you need more than that much time to know your people and for them to know you and to understand their problems and be able to solve them and do things. I've always felt that the most important time in your career was as a company commander; that is basic. The rest of it—some of it is good and some of it is bad, but company commander is really boss—he used to be. I don't know what he is today. He impressed his command and personality on them, and he learned something about them. I don't know what he has now in the way of discipline; I don't think he has the powers that we had in the way of imposing various disciplinary actions. Do they or not?

Q: Yes, he has a little bit more, but it has to be more carefully used. The Article 15 is still in existence.

A: I know there have been changes, and there was a time when they tried to take it all away. Everything had to be tried in a court. That is just like telling a father you can't discipline your children. You've got to send them to a schoolmaster or the police. What does the father mean—his word means nothing after you have carried that out. If you are going to lead men into battle, you damned well better be able to tell them and have them believe what you are talking about.

Q: Yes, you better be able to discipline them. The Army now is trying to establish minimum command tours, and for a company command it's 12 months minimum and 18 months preferred.

A: Well, of course, in the old days, I think, it never was in my time, but I know back before the First World War there were command periods that went for 10, 15, 20 years as a company commander. That was nothing; you lost everything in those days. But I think you've got to be a commander for two to four years-two years probably—to get the feel of your people, to find who they are and what they can do and how they react. Maybe after four years will be enough, more than enough, you stagnate.

Q: Well, do you think that time is compressed during wartime?

A: Well, you get promotions and moving all the time. Well, I never have commanded long enough. In my experience they were getting killed or sick or wounded or something. So, I never was bothered with that, it was just a question of holding long enough–

Q: Well, let me ask you a couple of questions to go back to engineering a little bit, sir. We discussed during our first session some of your Civil Works assignments in Vicksburg and the Mississippi River Commission. We have an officer that's doing individual study; in fact, you probably knew his father, General Galloway, Jerry Galloway.

A: Yes, I knew him very well; he was my engineer with the IX Corps in Korea for a while, his father was.

Q: Jerry graduated in the Class of 1957; he just was promoted to a full colonel in February and is doing extremely well. He is doing an individual project on the Civil Works effort in the Corps of Engineers and just a whole study of the role of the Corps of Engineers in the Civil Works field. You have generally answered these questions, but I will just ask them in a block and pass them on to him. How do you view the Civil Works efforts of the Corps of Engineers?

A: I think it is very important. It is excellent when you get out and do some work. I don't think shoving papers around in an office does any good, but making surveys and carrying on projects and initiating projects, flood controls, navigation is extremely important. It fills in so much stagnating time in the Army. To me that was a great thing about the Corps. Those days when the Depression was on, the Army was just nothing. You had nobody to drill, you had no money to work with, no maneuvers; and a great many of them were sent over to these conservation camps–CCC camps—so it was deadly in those days. But we were kept alive; we had plenty to do, that is, in my time. Of course, I don't consider my time on the Mississippi River Commission to be worth anything because I wasted that year down there. They tried to have me write a manual on cost keeping-I knew nothing about cost keeping. There had been a manual written by [Philip] Fleming, which I suppose was all right. It went into great detail. The best I could think of was to simplify it, get down to costs you could keep, not study every detail working out back down to where the pennies went and all that. I tried to get the thing on a larger scale, and I've forgotten it's been so many years ago, but I tried to initiate that. Well, I got out of that; and I think after I got up to Memphis and particularly after I got to be District Engineer, I had some very broad and wide experience, excellent. In management, handling of men, we had—well, I've forgotten now—but I'd say a contracting force—We were supervising them and you had to go and see how they were doing their work. And you had to exercise some discipline because there were abuses, particularly the Negro laborers. I remember one case where I had to cancel a contract with a contractor. He got a Negro in and one of them held a pistol on him and the other beat him to death, right in the office. And I had a hell of a time getting those men tried. The civil people wouldn't handle it; I finally got, I think, I got the contract canceled. I don't know whether that was in Mississippi or Arkansas, but one of those states-could not get anybody to take action. And yet it was evident what happened. Those things you had to supervise. And you had to supervise the performance of the contracts, and there were a great many surveys at that time [by] which we were opening up all of those areas out in the west. At that time the Memphis District extended as far as Denver and down to Santa Fe on that side, down to the Red River on the south. It was quite large. There were a number of projects that came in under the WPA [Works Progress Administration] or PWA [Public Works Administration], I guess it was, for dams and whatnot to be built.

Q: You know, many argue that—

A: 1 had some good staffs; I had some excellent civilian engineers.

Q: Well, many people argue that a lot of good is done by it, but it could probably be done just as well by the Bureau of Reclamation of the Department of the Interior. But one of the counterarguments of that is that the experience gained by the Corps of Engineers—

A: Well, I think that is the major thing, but I think the Corps of Engineers does as good a job as these other people do. I've worked with the one that you've just mentioned.

Q: The Bureau of Reclamation?

A: I don't think they did their work any better than we did. We fought a lot with them. "Old Pick" [Lewis A. Pick] relieved me up in there. I guess he came in after I thought of joining up with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers-there is a constant contest there. Of course, that wasn't too good, I think, because that competition and the urge to get the bigger jobs, maybe they were worthwhile and maybe they weren't. But the bigger your job was, supposedly, the better it was. It didn't make any difference whether it was worthwhile; it was a question of how much it cost us.

Q: That's one of the big things that kept the Corps of Engineers in the business, I think, particularly the integrity of the Corps.

A: I never knew any lack of integrity in the Corps, not that I know of; as far as I know, the Bureau of Reclamation is perfectly reliable. I never ran into any skullduggery among them, but we had some hot competition.

Q: Well, do you think your Civil Works experience benefited you later on in the Army career?

A: Well, it was just a question of management of people and funds and equipment. I don't know of any; I can't point my finger at anything specific that applied.

Q: Well, the management of something like the road in the Philippines?

A: That was the handling of equipment, and we had that experience back on the Mississippi River jobs. So, we had experience with heavy equipment and we were able to do it and evaluate what was good equipment and what was bad equipment.

Q: And the management of large-scale jobs.

A: I think that part was very valuable. I don't know any other place you can get it unless you got it through Civil Works, because the Army as a rule doesn't have anything like it even if they turned it all over to them. The amount of money available to build barracks and posts and so on isn't enough, and those are relatively small jobs.

Q: Most of that has to be done by contract now; you can't use troops on it. Do you think the Civil Works effort diverts the Corps of Engineers from Army in any way, diverts the attention of the Corps too much?

A: I don't think so. I think it used to be. I know we had quite an argument when I was a young officer down on first duty at the Engineer School as an instructor, and [John C. H.] Lee was one of those we objected to. General [Lieutenant Colonel] Lee was in the chief's office. I've forgotten what job he had, but we objected to the amount of emphasis put on the Civil Works against the military. And he came down and gave us a lecture on it. "These youngsters, " he said we were young Turks and we didn't know what we were talking about; trying to raise a revolution. But at that time the Corps did shunt their military duties, and the all-important thing was Civil Works. They were gravitating to that, and they felt their time was wasted unless they got on civil jobs.

Q: That's when you were at the basic course?

A: No, I never took the basic course. That was when I was a junior officer back in the 1920s. In those years civil works was everything. Military was kind of class B when you had to take a military job.

Q: The emphasis is the other way now. The emphasis is now that the Corps of Engineers' primary mission is to support the infantry division or the fighting divisions.

A: That's all right; there is nothing wrong with that. What I am talking about was that military duty—the military duty of the Corps-in those days was downgraded; and anybody who had to take a division engineer job before the First World War, and those years right afterwards, was in the doghouse to have to do that. All the good jobs were being District Engineers or working on district work. Those were the ones that were sought after and fought.

Q: Did you see a change in that attitude later on?

A: I think it was, well, the wars, of course, always brought on a big change. I haven't been connected with the Corps since—my last connection was at Belvoir, the Engineer Center, but actually that was supervisory there—command job—and had nothing—no direct interest in engineering or anything else; it was management. So actually my last job as an engineer was really on the [Alaska] Highway.

Q: Well, if we go through a long period of peace, which we all hope we do, if that emphasis shifts again where the engineer officer feels that the Civil Works area is the place he should be rather than the military, do you think under that circumstance it would be better to turn the Civil Works function over to a nondefense agency?

A: I don't think so, no. That wouldn't help you any. If the work is interesting and you've got enough work, keep the engineer learning something as a military engineer; that's all right. But if the work isn't there, you still want to have him available when wartime comes. So, you've got to get him trained someplace. But to [allow him to] just lie idle or just sit and twiddle his thumbs doing nothing because you have taken the one work he's got—I consider the Civil Works very important

and those are dull times. Now in wartime I do not—no question it was very important in war.

Q: In wartime, that Civil Works experience pays off dividends for the Army?

A: That carries you over those dull times in peace when you have very little to do.

Q: But also keeps you trained for your wartime mission?

A: I think it is necessary and I think it is a very valuable training, personally.

Q: Yes, I would agree wholeheartedly. We were discussing the value done during wartimes.

A: It seems that when I was busiest, I read more. For instance, when I was doing work on the Mississippi River, I always carried paperbound books in my pocket on the trips. I would read Dickens a great deal in those days. But I was going back to the day the dam broke, which was how rumors spread. I made everybody read it.

Q: That's the great Battle of the Bulge.

A: Yes, that's a great story. Thurber tells a story, the rumor went out in Columbus that the dam had broken on some river-goes through Columbus—some river; it isn't a big river.

Q: Chattahoochee, Columbus, Georgia?

A: No, this is Columbus, Ohio. And rumors started up and down the town that the dam had broken. So they started to leave town; everybody who could walk and run or had a car started out for high ground. They all took off. And I remember one part of it; they took out past the officers' club at Fort Hayes in Columbus and all of these old soldiers were sitting out in front and they got their sabers and they got out and they said, "Morgan's cavalry is coming, " and they took out down the road. Well,

after they had all run until they couldn't breathe anymore and the town was practically deserted, we suddenly discovered that had the dam broken it still wouldn't have ever gotten in town because the top of the dam was well below the streets of the town. But the rumor got started and the whole town just took off for the high ground. I made them all read that.

Q: All your commanders, didn't they?

A: Well, it wasn't only commanders, it was those in my headquarters.

Q: It's said that General Eisenhower was an avid reader, but he primarily read western novels.

A: He liked westerns. I read anything I could lay my hands on. I like history more than anything, but I like humor. And one of my favorites was James Thurber; he wrote some wonderful stories all to a poem—I don't know, there are two or three in that one. Just wonderful. He was always writing about dogs. You remember Rex; they had him as a boy, and Rex was always bringing something home. He would get people's furniture or anything in the back alley and he would bring it home and deposit it in the Thurber's yard. One day, Rex got a big two-by-four. It was about 12 feet long and he got it so it would balance in his mouth and he started home and he couldn't get through the gate—the thing in his mouth balanced like that was too wide. He tried several times and jolted himself. So, Rex backed off and thought the thing over, grabbed the two-by-four by one end and dragged it through. The last thing Rex did was to—they heard a thumping on the front steps and they went out and Rex was dragging an old bureau with the drawers still in it that he had found down on the salvage heap someplace. He was bringing that home and he was dragging it up to the front steps and left it and then died right in the front yard. I knew so many of those stories; I liked them very much.

Q: Was that your primary method of relaxation, in reading?

A: Yes, reading; I read my eyes out.

Q: You mentioned you rode quite a bit. Did you and Mrs. Hoge?

A: I've ridden all my life. Even from a boy. Colonel Hickman was the start of that. I think I mentioned him; he was a great inspiration. He loaned me his horses. He had two racehorses, I remember, he got on a bad debt. They weren't good racehorses, but they were nice thoroughbred horses—wild as could be. But take them on the track and they always thought they could run themselves out, just take them around and around the track. But they later broke them down and they got pretty good. I rode those, and Colonel Hickman had his own private mount that I rode more than he did. He loaned it to me and I exercised that. I had a pony when I was a boy. Actually the pony wasn't mine, he was my brother's, who was sick at the time that they designated he needed to get out in the open and ride a pony. The boy wasn't big enough to ride much—I rode the pony almost entirely until he got too big. Took care of him. And then I later played polo. We used to have great polo games at Belvoir. I never got very good. I know I had a one-goal handicap; I might have gotten up to two. We played a lot. We had a great competition. We were always picking teams, and we would go out and meet after school was over about four o'clock in the afternoon. We had a string of horses there.

Q: So, you evidently remained active athletically practically all the way through your career?

A: As long as I could stand up. I played tennis for a while; I was never an expert. I played some golf, but that took too much time; and then there came a period in there where there were no golf courses available. Of course, in the war that was completely out, no time and anyplace else. Well, in Germany in occupation there were practically no golf courses in Germany, one or two; they may have more now, but we played tennis and then I got to playing badminton. Badminton is a great game; I think it is one of the best.

Q: Yes, it is a fast game.

A: It is a fast game, and I think after a while tennis is too strenuous, to play good tennis. I liked to play doubles all the time, and if you do that a fast game of tennis takes a good strong heart and muscle. And as you get

older I don't believe you can stand it if you [have] any dissipation at all in your other life, smoking or anything like that. But I kept up badminton; I liked badminton very much.

Q: I imagine you stressed physical fitness among your troops quite a bit, too, from creating the obstacle course?

A: I tried to do it. As a company commander I used to go take them out every day for the morning sit-up exercises, and we went through them all. And I led them just as we used to do at West Point under old Colonel Wheeler. And I hiked with them; I hiked as far as 30 or 35 miles a day.

Q: Well, that's turned out to be extremely important and worthwhile in combat, I am sure?

A: Well, you have got to have stamina enough to stay, because you've got long periods when you live a rather sedentary life and then you go soft.

Q: You have to prevent that as much as possible, particularly troops in a peacetime army.

A: Did you read those four volumes by [Douglas Southall] Freeman?

Q: No, sir. I haven't read them all.

A: And later Washington's biography by Freeman was excellent. I've got them all and read them all. And I like Stonewall Jackson—what was the fellow who wrote the classic on Stonewall Jackson? He was an Englishman—he was a peculiar person but a great one [George F. R. Henderson, *Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War].*

Q: Stonewall Jackson. I remember the comment you made before, "a person has to learn by doing, " and yet you study a great deal or studied history [and] a great deal of biographies.

A: I never tried to imitate somebody else. You have got to do it your way, but you do learn and you get inspiration from what these other people did. I thought Robert E. Lee was the greatest general we ever had in America, absolutely marvelous.

Q: What characteristics of Lee or any other generals would you say contributed the most to his being a great leader?

A: His understanding of operations and tactics and diagnosing what the enemy was going to do. It was classic the way he carried out some of his maneuvers; for instance, that Wilderness Campaign for the Richmond Defense—with a half or third, at times, of what the other people had. But he was always ahead of them; he would anticipate, he made moves. Of course, they claim that he had learned a great deal about his opponents from his acquaintance with them in the old army. He knew whether a man had initiative or was impulsive or timid by his old associations, and from that he could judge opponents as to what they would do. How much of that I don't know, but he demonstrated in that Mexican Campaign—his demonstration of his ability when Scott went into Mexico. He was absolutely everyplace, knew the country, was all over it. And just his intelligence, his integrity and his ability—he knew what good tactics were. He wasn't making frontal assaults like some of those people were and losing thousands of men uselessly; he was using maneuver, and he did some classic ones.

Q: What modern-day general or 20th-century general do you think came the closest to having the ability of Lee, tactically?

A: Well, I think maybe Bradley is as close as any. I think Bradley is a great man.

Q: Would you say that he is probably the greatest field general that we had?

A: He is the greatest one–that's my opinion, in the Second World War. I don't know that we had any great ones in the First World War. Of course, there we were all bound in.

Q: Yes, that was a defensive war.

A: We were copying other people. We had no experience; we were doing what the British had done. But a man like Bradley or Lee would never lose all those men that they lost in those useless attacks on the western front in the First World War-just mass murder.

Q: Patton was known for—

A: Patton was tough, and he was a great tactical [leader]. I don't think Patton—that's just my opinion, I have nothing to judge it from—I think strategically he was not equal to Bradley, and his lack of judgment in some things—like he would lose his temper. There is no question that he was a great general, but he was limited in his conception. Bradley was so forethinking and he is so kindly. I stopped at his headquarters. I was a brigadier general at that time and I remember when I left the SOS and joined the 9th Armored Division up in Luxembourg, I had to stop by and report in to Bradley before I went up to the 9th Armored. Old Bradley was in his office when I got there and came in. He sat down, as busy as he was and he was commanding an army [group] at that time and explained to me what the situation was, what he intended to do, and all about it. He was just so kindly; it was like a friend, a father, talking to you. And to have wasted that time on me. And so in many other respects Bradley showed consideration for the other people. But he could make a decision-and he could be just as tough and mean as was necessary. But he had resolution, carried out what he intended to do.

Q: Did you see the film *Patton?*

A: *Yes.*

Q: Do you think that properly portrayed Bradley in *Patton?*

A: I think Bradley was the best character, though he had a very small part.

Q: Yes, it was.

A: Very, very small.

Q: But it brought out a personality.

A: Bradley sent me complimentary tickets when the first showing took place here.

Q: Generals Bradley and Patton were somewhat of a study in contrast, where Bradley gave the impression of being kind, considerate, and Patton was a hard-charging, bombastic type; and they came over that way pretty much in the movie.

A: I didn't think there was anything particularly to be learned from the film of Patton. I wouldn't rate it as high as the movie industry did in acclaim. I didn't see anything particularly about it. I was just talking about his consideration and understanding of other people. I remember after the Second World War, [in] which I was late in getting my second star. I went most of the war with one star; and then I came down to Belvoir, whenever it was, I came back and was commander at Belvoir. And about that time the permanent list of MGs—and they were general officers, before that we were all temporary, you know, and they were selecting for the permanent general officers. I knew who the members of the board were. I didn't ever talk to any of them. I knew I had several people that knew me pretty well. I thought there was one man who didn't like me worth a damn, so I didn't expect much consideration. When I was down there at Belvoir in command, temporary major general, I knew you could get busted back. I knew some major generals went back to a colonel, who had been a major general much longer than I was. Bradley called me up one day. He was Chief of Staff of the Army at that time in Washington. He said he wanted to take his bird dog down to A. P. Hill, and I used to sometimes go down there. It wasn't too far from Belvoir, maybe 30 or 40 miles, and he wanted to know if there were any quail down there; and I said, "I don't know, but we could go down there and look. " I hadn't hunted there much. I didn't have a dog at that time myself, but I had been down there. So he called-he wanted to go down there one day. We made an appointment and went down there. We hunted, exercised his dog that nice day. I don't know if we got any birds or not. Anyway, in some way or other Bradley managed to convey to me that I was on that permanent list for ages. I thought that was just

kindness, it was thoughtfulness—he had no reason to do it, nothing else. I had never spoken to him about it. I had no reason to expect any-he even thought of that, but he managed to do it. It was just one of the big-hearted, nice things he was always doing.

Q: Yes, I guess that's what made him so admired by his troops; that type of reputation permeated his entire command, I understand?

A: I don't know how many knew it. If you saw a soldier anyplace and asked him what he was in, he would say Patton's Army. He might have served sometimes; nobody served as an army except if you happened to be inside of an army headquarters because army, division, and corps will constantly change between armies. But I never saw a soldier—nine out of ten of them, if you ask them where did you serve in World War II, they would say Patton's Army; that's a great thing. Patton took the eye of the soldier in spite of some of his behavior in slapping.

Q: Did the word of that get around to the other commanders much when that happened?

A: I don't remember. I remember hearing of it, knowing that had happened and that he had been relieved on account of it. It seems to me that Patton was in command down there in North Africa; Bradley was one of his corps commanders, and then when they got up to Sicily, Bradley went in as a corps commander [and] wound up taking Patton's place—that was after the slapping incident. That was over in Sicily, wasn't it; it seems to me it was. I am not sure, I think it was. That was the time he got in the doghouse and he didn't get back; was sent back to the States, as I remember, after that slapping incident. And then he came over with the Third Army—that's later, after the invasion; Bradley had gone on direct to England.

Recap

Q: Well, General, I went back and reviewed my list of questions and original manuscript and it looks like we have covered most everything, but there are a few gaps I would like to fill in. I'd like to first go back to our original discussion, sir, on your being from a military family. You told

me your father wasn't in the military, but you had an older brother who went to West Point and I think he graduated in 1914, Benjamin F. Hoge.

A: He was captain of the football team.

Q: In 1913, I believe. And did you have a younger brother?

A: I had a younger brother, he's dead now, Kenneth. He graduated in 1920.

Q: And, of course, your two sons, William Morns, Jr., and George Freedon Hoge, both attended the Military Academy and graduated in 1941 and 1945. George Hoge is now Colonel George Hoge and is stationed at Fort Leavenworth.

A: He retires this year, in January or November—it is on the month of his birthday and his birthday is January the lst. I think it will probably be the last day of January, I don't know.

Q: So, he will retire after 30 years' service.

A: I don't know if it is 30 years' service or not, but it's that promotion business. If you are not recommended for the next step by the time you are a certain age, you go out. It's all changed now from what it used to be; that's the thing he got caught in. And he got caught. Primarily, he had an excellent record-Vietnam ruined him. He was just crazy to get to Vietnam. He got over there first as an advisor, went over for the combat development people, and he wangled an assistant division commander's job. I've forgotten what division he was with—he stuck with it when he got kicked out, but he was on his way to Vietnam when the big Tet thing happened and he was diverted and had to go down to the Philippines and eventually he got to Vietnam. But the man he was supposed to relieve was on leave up in Hong Kong. His G-3 or his chief of staff of that division was away too. He arrived there absolutely cold in the middle of all this mess. It wasn't his fault. I think he finally came out all right, but when the division commander finally came back, he put all the blame on George. George hadn't come in until after this thing had happened, and the people who knew something about it [were gone]. He may have known some of his commanders, combat commanders or

regimental commanders. I don't know what the organization was, but he had no acquaintance with them other than casual, and he was thrown right in the middle of the worst period they ever had in Vietnam. He was blamed for their troubles and they canned him; he wouldn't give up, so he stayed in Vietnam and he went around looking for a job and he finally got one with a fellow in the 1st Cavalry Division, I think. They took him on as support commander.

Q: I think he was support commander for the 10lst.

A: Well, whatever it was. Well, anyway, he finished his tour there and he had made a very good reputation, but that wasn't what he wanted; he wanted combat. But he was very lucky, and he finished his tour with 101st. But his trouble was not his; his deficiency came from his division commander, who was away in Hong Kong, and his—I don't know whether his chief of staff or—all of the people who should have helped him that knew something about the organization and where they were, were away on leave when he arrived in the middle of all this turmoil. Everything was in a mess and he caught the blame for it. But there wasn't anything he could do; there was no use in trying to fight anything like that. You just swallow it and make the best of it that you can.

Q: That brings me to another question that I was going to ask later on, but it's appropriate now to bring it up, and that's the effect of that type of thing which reflects on the efficiency reports. What are your feelings about the Army efficiency report system?

A: I don't think they are worth a damn. We have had so many of them since I was in the service. All kinds-and most of them were made out without—just to keep from condemning somebody, and you rated everybody as satisfactory, very satisfactory, excellent, so only time—once in a while you had a man who would stand out and you had nerve enough to give him superior; and it was very seldom that you ever rated a man inferior and class-B'd him because that always caused a fight, too. So to suggest a question, the rest of it didn't mean anything. Satisfactory, very satisfactory, or one of those ratings meant absolutely nothing. Just meant he didn't know you very well or he had nothing particularly against you or for you. There were only two ratings that meant anything and that was the top one and the very bottom one. Those were the only two you could

do much about. I was very careful about the ratings on the excellent, and I was extremely careful on the inferior. But otherwise it was more or less routine and meaningless. I've never seen my own efficiency reports, never looked at it; I have no idea what they say.

Q: You never went by [Army personnel to review your record]?

A: I never went by, I have no conception of what's in them, good or bad or anything else.

Q: Well, the question of efficiency reports brings up another question that bothers the-Army man and is often discussed, and that is the question of ethics. It's been particularly leveled at the battalion command level, which is the lowest level that the troops see of what he thinks is Department of Army structure. There have been some charges leveled at the battalion commander today that he is more interested in getting a good efficiency report than he is in doing a good job; and in order to protect that efficiency report, [he] sometimes had to lower his own code of ethics in order to report to his commander the things he thought the commander wanted to hear, rather than what was actual truth.

A: I don't believe in that. I don't know whether it's practiced nowadays or not. Personally I am absolutely opposed to it, have no tolerance of that sort of behavior.

Q: Well, did you find this type of behavior in any of your experiences?

A: I don't think so. I don't remember any particular instances of that. You evaluate them and you don't just make broad judgment of these things. You are on a scale when those things come up; you are very careful. That is, I always was and I suppose the rest of them were. But I never thought that was a major element.

Q: I don't think that is major now. It happens, but I think it's the exception rather than the rule.

A: Well, if it is, the commander shouldn't be there, that's all. He should have somebody else, because he doesn't deserve it.

Q: Well, when you were in Seventh Army in USAREUR, had they instituted the Army readiness reporting system, where the units were rated according to their combat readiness?

A: I don't remember. We had constant tests of combat readiness. We had alerts and maneuvers and all of that. Whether there was any rating of those, I don't remember. I don't think so.

Q: How about the Command Maintenance Management Inspection, the CMMI; did you have that at that time?

A: I don't think so; I don't remember.

Q: I don't think that came in until later on. Let me go back to your family a little bit, sir, particularly to your sons. Did they ever approach you for advice on your philosophy of the Army and, if so, what type of advice did you give them?

A: I can't say definitely. There were few times when they came in to ask for advice or guidance or anything else. I did advise George when he got in his trouble that you had to stick it out and keep your mouth shut and do the best you could; you couldn't fight it. In Bill's case, he had a lot of trouble; he was very strong-headed; he was always sort of a lonely person ever since he was a boy.

He got in trouble at West Point, got turned back, got court-martialed. They were ready to kick him out of West Point. While he was there—I don't know what had happened-anyway, he was in the hospital. I think he had a fight with some other person. Anyway, he was in the hospital with, I don't know, a broken hand or something; and he decided he wasn't going to stick around there all the time, just lying in the bed. So one night he got up, slipped out of the window, and went down to Highland Falls and got some beer. Well, in those days any alcohol was a matter of dismissal. As you mentioned, in my class there were four of those men who came back that had been kicked out four or five years ago

because they had a bottle of beer on the maneuver, and that was all they had. There wasn't any drunkenness. But the rule in those days—well, anyway, Bill was court-martialed. I was in the Philippines at the time and a classmate of mine, who was at West Point, sent me a cable in the Philippines. I couldn't do a thing about it because the mail in those days took a month. And there was nobody-but wiring, or something like that, a cable to get back; but I had a cousin who was a lawyer here in Cleveland. He was a law partner of Newton D. Baker. He was also a very strong man. He went to West Point, went to see the superintendent and interceded in some way. I've forgotten, but they got Bud's dismissal changed to a year's suspension, and he was turned back a class. So he went off and went to Kansas State University. I think my brother-in-law was out there at KSU—stayed with them for a year and then went back to West Point and finally graduated.

But he always had the reputation of being highly independent, sort of tough. He made a good record in the war. He was wounded twice; he stayed on for a while, but he still limps or is lame from that. He was shot through the back of the knee and [the bullet] cut the nerves so that he was absolutely paralyzed from the knee down in one of his legs; and he also had a bullet wound someplace else during the Fulda Gap business, but he made a good record as a soldier. But he got disgusted with the whole thing. He had a lot of service around the world. He was an instructor at the Artillery School—did an excellent job, I understood, I heard—some people told me about it, that he was an excellent instructor. He later was an instructor at Leavenworth. He got in trouble there with a fellow he says is a liar, and he called him that. He was his supervisor, head of a section, and he told him to his face that he was lying; and the man got sore about it and finally practically ran him out of Leavenworth.

Well, then he went off some other place. But he was in Taiwan as an advisor, and he was also in Saudi Arabia as an advisor. Both of those tours were two years, I guess. He made a good reputation and he did very well. But he was always so damned independent. He knew what was right; his principles, he never varied, absolutely honest and straightforward; but sometimes he got in trouble, as he did by that instructor that headed his section. But he told him right to his face in the man's office that he was lying about something that he charged, and the man got on his tail and finally drove him out. Well, that's very personal and you fight those things. I never had that much trouble with anybody

in my period, but you do and the only thing you can do is stick with it and fight it out if you are on the right side and you believe in yourself.

Q: Yes, I think you would have done the same thing yourself. When they were youngsters, did you have to use any personal influence to get them to go to West Point?

A: No, they were just crazy to go. I helped in many ways to get an appointment; I know the one I got for Bud was while I was District Engineer in Memphis. And there was a congressman up in Arkansas along the Mississippi River just north of Memphis; he was a good friend of mine. My office happened to be across the river, so I could claim my residence in Arkansas. I was living over in Memphis, but my office was in Arkansas. Bud took the competitive-I didn't ask for a special appointment. I said, "You will take an examination against anybody, " and he took one. This congressman gave a competitive examination for his appointment and Bud came out way up to the top, ahead of–Well, all of them were so far below him there was no question of the choice. I think he got about 90 on his entrance examination and the next one closest to him was 45 or 50. George got his own appointment, but he had a number of alternates from different friends.

We had lived so many places, but he had an alternate from Arkansas, one from Missouri; he had one from Florida; he had one from Nebraska; they were all alternates. But he chose to take the alternate from Missouri because that's where our home was—our roots. And he took the competitive examination. I think he took the competitive examination; no, I think he got the principal, Dewey Short, to appoint him. I've never known Dewey, but he got it through friends that knew Dewey Short. At any rate, I can remember I was at Trieste at the time. Dewey Short then was chairman of the Military Affairs Committee, I think, in Congress. He was making a tour trip to the west. Anyway, I went out to meet their plane and I knew who appointed George to West Point; and I was going to say as soon as Mr. Short got off the plane-I'd never met him—I was going to greet him, and then I was going to say, 'You appointed my son to West Point. " Dewey Short came down the steps of the plane, had his hand out: "I appointed your son to West Point. " But Dewey stayed with us a couple of days, enjoyed him. He had been on a big drunk. He had lost his hat. Mrs. Hoge took him downtown, and he had met two of these nice girls in the hat shop down there. He didn't buy one hat, he bought

two; and he was just overwhelmed with these girls, and he finally took off. He was a great guy.

Q: Well, would you have influenced your boys in any other way?

A: I didn't. We purposely sent Bud to an Episcopal high school in Alexandria for his precollege education, so that he could see what civilian life was and associate with people. It was done purposely because we did not want him to feel that he was bound to the Military Academy; but after he went there, he had only one ambition—to go to West Point.

Q: That's marvelous. I am sure that your service contributions had a lot to do with them. They were obviously very proud of your record.

A: Bud entered West Point in—I know the year that we went to the Philippines, he went with us by ship, by transport from New York to San Francisco; and then he got off the boat at San Francisco and took the train back to West Point to enter; and we went on to the Philippines.

Q: It must have been about 1936.

A: It was about that time.

Q: You mentioned your wife and her importance to your Army career. I'd like to talk a little bit about that—primarily because we had some captains visit the War College this week and neither of the two young fellows were very interested in whether or not their wives did have an interest in the Army. And they tried to separate totally the two careers, or rather they tried to separate their careers from their family life or from their wives, which seems to me an impossible task.

A: Well, it is. But my wife was always behind me a hundred percent, and she was always delighted to make a move no matter how nice, how much she liked the place we were. When we got orders to go someplace else and just up and moved to go try something new, she loved it. She was a great soldier. I don't know-I may have neglected her a lot for I was away a great deal of time in the various wars and so on—though there was

a period in between there. But she stuck with me and gave me a great deal of help.

Nettie Fredendall Hoge taken about 1954.

Q: That's very important and is the most important part of a successful Army career, I think. Was your wife a Missouri girl also, sir?

A: Yes.

Q: Was she a hometown girl?

A: She was from Lexington, Missouri. I had known her. I had gone to kindergarten with her. Not kindergarten, but down in the primary school. I had known her a little while; then I'd gone to Wentworth as a cadet. I knew her in those days when she used to come to the dances and so on. Then I knew her at West Point. She went to school at Bryn Mawr and she used to come up to West Point—Hundredth Night and various times. We got married just after World War I was declared, actually.

Q: So, you remained a bachelor for a short time after graduation. You did have a little bit of bachelor life after you graduated?

A: Oh, just down on the border in Fort Brown.

Q: Shifting to another subject in a way, you are a little unusual in the career pattern in that you never worked on the Army Staff or in the Office of the

Joint Chiefs. Did you ever feel that was a hindrance to you in the performance of high command?

A: No, I never was interested in it at all. I don't think I would have done well with it. I had no interest in it and I wasn't interested in that side of it. I don't feel I qualified for staff work.

Q: Well, didn't you sometimes feel that those people back at Department of Army didn't know what they were doing when you were in the field?

A: I never thought much about it. There were times, of course, when you always criticize somebody; that's perfectly normal, but I don't know. As far as I was concerned I had good support-the little bit I had to refer back and get support from the War Department, the Department of the Army, and all the rest of them.

Q: Your tour at the Infantry School—you've commented that the best school you've seen in the Army system was the Infantry School.

A: Under General Marshall.

Q: Yes, and he was a colonel at that time, I believe, sir, the assistant commandant?

A: He was the assistant commandant.

Q: Some of the other instructors there you mentioned included General J. Lawton Collins and General Ridgway.

A: Stilwell was there. The whole outfit-Arnold, who was the division commander in field artillery. Bradley was there. Practically everybody that was at that place at that time later became a division commander or higher, and they all took top commands. There was nothing—nothing unusual about the selection of people that went there, but I think their training and Marshall's inspiration had a great deal to do with it. By the way, did you ever read that last book of Forrest Pogue's on Marshall, *General Marshall, Organizer of Victory?*

Q: No, sir, I didn't, but I will.

A: That is the greatest history of World War II. It covers a different side, but it gives you a different picture of World War II than any other. That should be absolutely must reading.

Q: What was the name of that book again, sir?

A: *George C. Marshall, Organizer of Victory. I've* got a copy, but I've loaned it to a friend of mine and he has it now and I can't show it. It's by Forrest Pogue. It's published by the Association of Marshall Memorial thing down at Lexington, Virginia. He is something—whether he is director—or—he wrote the book though. And it gives you a—I don't know-picture of the inside workings and the dealings and difficulties of all them throughout—Churchill and Roosevelt, and, of course, Eisenhower is in it. Marshall backed Eisenhower to the hilt. Marshall wanted to be commanding that force in Europe, the invasion force, and he was urged to do it. I think it was very fortunate that he didn't because there is nobody that could have done the job he did back in Washington in keeping together the British and American Chiefs of Staff and the French and all the rest of them and his planning of the whole thing; also his handling of MacArthur-though they were not very friendly at the time, MacArthur and Marshall-but he handled him perfectly. It just glorifies the man, and it should be read and studied, that book.

Q: Well, I will pass that along and make a point to read that.

A: You should read it.

Q: Because I have often wondered as I am sure many others have, that General Marshall stayed on as Chief of Staff during World War II.

A: No one could have filled his position as Chief of Staff of the Army.

Q: So you feel it was fortunate that way rather than the reverse?

A: Very fortunate, but he was always helping Eisenhower. He never interfered with him. He advised him several times and helped him, and he supported all the rest of them. But his fights with Churchill and Roosevelt are really something.

Q: That would be very interesting reading to see the power of the military as advisor to civilian leaders.

A: He did it all; he was it.

Q: You mentioned, I believe, in one of our earlier conversations that General Marshall also advised General Eisenhower on a personal matter that recently came to view in the Truman book.

A: I never mentioned that and I never heard of it; that came out in the newspaper.

Q: Yes, sir, I guess that's why we discussed it before.

A: I don't know whether that is true or not. I heard those rumors at the time about Eisenhower's liaison with a British WAC [Kay Summersby], a secretary, but I don't know whether it was true and I had no reason to believe it was.

Q: I don't think he touches on that at all. That came out in Truman's memoirs, and some newspaperman got a hold of that. It isn't in his book at all. Going back to the Infantry School and your comment on the value of the Infantry School and the people there, all of whom later achieved greatness, did you ever feel that you might have missed something by not attending one of the senior service colleges, the Army War College?

A: I wanted to go to the Army War College; as I told you, I think, in one earlier conference, I intended and I had been after the War College all the time. But this opportunity that came to go to the Philippines and there was only one vacancy for a person of my rank in the Philippines and that only came up after a full tour of duty, and it happened when I was in Memphis. I had been promised that I would go to the War College the

next fall. But I asked the Chief of Engineers to cancel that and let me go to the Philippines because I would have never gotten to the Philippines—I never [would have] had that opportunity.

Q: Well, on your return from the Philippines you had–

A: Well, I was too old then. I had gone on district work in Omaha and then later, of course, the war broke out; so it was all over with.

Q: But you do think it might have been valuable, as was the Infantry School?

A: I am sure the War College was very valuable, and I had wanted it. That's the only other college I wanted to go to, but I gave it up on that account. It was either that or I'd never go to the Philippines. I wouldn't have had that experience or that foreign service. And Mrs. Hoge wanted to go very much.

Q: Well, shifting subjects again, sir, we talked a little bit about your reflections on the professionalism of the Army, the officers, and NCO corps. Is there any particular time where you thought it was low, perhaps between World Wars I and II, and when the professionalism and capability of the officer and NCO was the best?

A: Well, I knew it went awfully low between the two wars up until after demobilization in 1921 or something like that; we got down to nothing, just barely could live. Units were down; maybe a company would be 25 men if they had that many. At that time, we had some extra noncoms. There weren't many and you couldn't hold anybody and you couldn't get recruits. The pay in those days was so small; I think about that time it was $18 a month or something like that. So you couldn't get new ones in. We had some fine old noncoms, but there was none of this corps of noncoms at the time or any of the building up that has taken place since then. Each organization had its own noncoms and there was no transferring back and forth. Of course, we had gotten some wonderful noncoms in the First World War, who all became officers. I knew practically every man I had—some went as high as a colonel after the war came out—from a sergeant to a colonel. There were many of them who were captains and company commanders, some battalion commanders,

supply officers. They were fine people, but they were old career soldiers who had been in—some of them had combat in the Spanish-American War. But then they disappeared completely. I got down to where I didn't have anybody except a lot of people who were in the guardhouse, and they turned out in that first company I had with the 7th Engineers. I had all the bums, the guardhouse-when we got those people. But when you gave them responsibility and put it on them, I'll say this: when I went to France with that outfit, I had the best noncoms in the Army; we could do anything. And they all jumped from privates; they were buglers, guardhouse people, everything. They had gone from that to what was the senior—higher than the sergeant first class—anyway, it was platoon sergeant. But they had tops—one of these platoon sergeants, his boast was he'd lick any man in his platoon.

Q: Sometimes, I think it's unfortunate that type of discipline is gone.

A: They were all right and they were highly respected. A number of them got to be commissioned to officers. Now those, that second group, they went up to lieutenants and higher, who had before that spent most of their time in the guardhouse, before the war.

Q: Well, do you see any parallel now between the draw down of the Army and the armed forces and the demobilization after World War I?

A: I don't think it is nearly as bad now as it was at that time. But I know so little about it, but it's much superior now than after the First World War. That was absolutely getting down to nothing; we were just barely able to live, to get somebody to cook or serve or take care of the barracks. There was nothing.

Q: We haven't gone that far.

A: We were down to dregs. We only had a few of the old men. They were good men. There was no question about that, but that was all that was left.

Q: Well, now with the high personnel cost, we have a relatively small standing army with the augmentation by the National Guard and Reserve forces under the one-army policy or total force policy. What are your thoughts on the capabilities of the National Guard and Reserve to quickly mobilize and augment a small standing army?

A: They must improve a hell of a lot since any of my experience with them. I've been on maneuvers with them when I was still commanding the Fourth Army and I had little wonder—one or two divisions down there that were pretty good. I remember there was one from Minnesota that was pretty good. This Ohio division wasn't worth a damn. They didn't know anything; they didn't have discipline; they couldn't shoot; they couldn't maneuver; they would starve to death if you put them out. And I think many of the rest of them are the same way. Now they can improve but their officers were ill equipped; it was all political. Of course, that all goes back—we are talking back now to 1952 or 1953; that's the last time I had anything to do with them. But they were no good at that time; I wouldn't trust them anyplace.

Q: What do you think could be done to make them more capable?

A: I think this integration, I thought it went on. I don't know whether it did or not, but the fact that the training in the Army—go through the first year or something and then they were transferred. Wasn't that the policy for a while? And they could take the National Guard or the Reserve and finish out their enlistment. They had enough basic training. The trouble is the National Guardsmen didn't have any basic training; he had—what was it—once a month or once in two weeks. He went down for an hour's drill. Well most of them had no drill at all. They would just sit around and chew the rag. And the officers didn't know anything; they were incapable. I thought the ones I had in Texas in those days were absolutely useless, and I saw the same thing before the First World War when they had the mobilization on the border. I saw a whole division—no, it wasn't a division, it was an artillery brigade—routed by rain, and they just took off in the middle of the night. They were on a maneuver down towards Port Isabel, south of Brownsville, and I wasn't with them except I was maintaining a road; that was my job. But I had to go out there. And that morning right after the rain, the woods were just full; and there was about a mile wide and they were all heading for town. They had abandoned their rifles, their tents, everything, and the rainstorm had just taken all.

And the commanding general of the brigade was on a horse and he was headed with them and he had a couple of men hanging on his stirrups, dragging them into town. It was an excellent rout, and it was all done by rainstorm.

Q: That was at Brownsville along the border?

A: That was 1917.

Q: Between the world wars, we had sort of a volunteer army; what was in was volunteers. Do you believe the present attempt to achieve an all-volunteer army in today's social atmosphere is realistic?

A: I don't know; I question it. They seem to be making headway. It seems to me that the expense must be terrific. I don't understand that, the pay and all of that and the privileges; and they seem to be drawing men from what our reports say here. I saw something here, a report from the Secretary of the Army. The other day I got a report from the War Department on that mailing list, and they showed the Army was ahead of their quotas on—

Q: Overall, it's holding up.

A: For a while the Air Force and the Navy were getting all the—and we were dragging behind, but recently the Army has come up. I don't know how it is going to work out.

Q: You know part of the all-volunteer army, of course, is the increase in personnel cost, the increase of personnel pay. But it seems like every time we get something like that, we come under fire from Congress for spending too much money, and they start cutting away at some of the traditional benefits, such as commissary, PX, medical care, and so forth. What are your thoughts on possible reductions in these traditional side benefits for Army personnel?

A: I don't know about this; there have always been attacks on the post exchanges. That's been all throughout my career-and the

commissaries-that is brought on by the merchants and so on in nearby towns. I don't know whether it's going to turn out or not. Well, of course, the advocacy of a volunteer army came from Congress itself, and Senator Kennedy is one of the big proponents; he is a proposer of it. So we have—the only person that can take the blame of the volunteer army has to go back to Congress because they are the ones that proposed it. So it may last; whether they will stand for the expenses is another question.

Q: Well, these fringe benefits that we are discussing, particularly medical care, do you think those fringe benefits-medical care, commissary, PX, and so forth-do you think that those are worthwhile items which attract people to join and stay in the Army, or [what] do you think that their value is?

A: I don't think they help to stay in. They make them more satisfied. I don't know that anybody ever came into the Army on that account; if they didn't have them, they would have more difficulty and trouble in getting them. And, of course, whether it's true today as much as it used to be, the army post, cantonments, and so on were so isolated from markets and so on that the commissary and that part became essential. We would be 10, 15 miles away from the nearest supermarket and that was the reason. Later, of course, they got to building them closer into town; as soon as you get close to a town, the merchants all rise up and demand the closing of the commissary and PX. And when we were at Belvoir, I don't know how—in those early days when it was then Camp Humphreys—how you would have ever gotten your groceries or food. The closest place was Alexandria, which was about 12 miles away and was over a road that at that time was practically impossible.

Q: So you think the value of the—traditional value of the commissary within the United States is probably less now than it was?

A: It may be less now. I am not sure whether commissary prices-I've known in many cases where commissary prices were not competitive with the civilian prices. I've heard that, but I don't know.

Q: In some items.

A: In some items. I've heard the same thing on the Class VI stores. You can buy liquor at cut-rate stores in town cheaper than you can at the Class VI. I don't know how true that is.

Q: It's true around Washington. Have you heard about the Army's Project 100,000, wherein we bring in people in category 4, the less educated people, and try to train them and then give them back to society better trained and a more useful individual? Are you familiar with that program?

A: No, I am not.

Q: In that light do you think the Army as an institution should be involved with the correction of some of the social problems in the country?

A: I don't think so; but I think by the type of recruit, we've got to do some of that work to make him a decent soldier. I know at one time we had to start classes in reading and writing and simple arithmetic, just grammar school classes in the Army, but that was before this requirement. You had people that couldn't understand instructions-they couldn't read a letter, they couldn't read orders–and we started that. We had schools, and I've forgotten now the hours, but I remember that they were during your duty; and it seemed to me every afternoon and maybe part of the morning and the afternoon, we had schools that were educating these soldiers that didn't have the basic education, enough to know what they were listening to. Well, when you get that type of recruit, you've got to do something with him.

Q: Or turn them back, eliminate them from your service?

A: Well, in those days we couldn't get anything else. I don't know. I don't think the Army should be put in a job to educate the civilians, no. If you have that then you are going to miss your military purpose of being there; you are wasting money, to spend the money on military and do some educational work.

Q: I am sure you have heard the story from many people that many of the troops that got in trouble, and I heard this as late as 1959 in Europe, would have a man constantly getting in trouble and finally asked him why he came in the Army. He says—well, a judge gave him a choice of going to jail or going into the Army. Do you think this type of man should be in the Army?

A: We have had this a long time. No, he shouldn't be taken. We should not be used as a penal institution. There is no question about that, and that has been turned down for years. That's an old thing that goes back 40 or 50 years throughout all my service. There used to be judges or justices of the peace or something like that, who would give the man-I suppose he was a petty criminal-but they would give him the choice of either going to jail or enlisting in the Army. And they would take that choice, but that wasn't a good break; that was against the law, and it has been outlawed for years. But it was done; I don't know whether it's done now or not.

Q: Not openly.

A: Well, it shouldn't be. And whenever it comes to light it should be stopped, because you shouldn't get that reputation.

Q: Well, I am going to shift subjects again. You have always been a user of equipment as an operator and commander in the field and you have never been involved, I don't think, with the Army Procurement, Research and Development System. What are your thoughts on the R&D and procurement system of the Army; do you think the Army has always gotten the type of weapons it needed?

A: I really am not qualified to talk on that. I know so little about it. I know we were deficient at times and there were times when we had to take over from the Marines or somebody else that had a better weapon and sometimes they had to take it from us.

Q: Well, you made a comment on the weight of the tank; I believe that you had one company in each armor battalion with the Pershing tanks and two companies with—

A: That was later in the war that we got the Pershing.

Q: Do you think it was that great an improvement over the Sherman?

A: No, I don't think so; it had a better gun.

Q: It had a 90-mm. gun.

A: Much better gun. I thought the Pershing in the old days was a pretty good thing except the gun was underpowered. When we got that 76-mm. high velocity—of course, the original gun was only a 75-mm. as I understand-that was relatively low velocity. The Germans were using an 88-mm. and that was a wonderful gun; the Germans had that in the First World War.

Q: So you think the main thing wrong with the Sherman was the gun?

A: It wasn't the only thing; you got advances, but the Sherman was a damned sight better than they developed after they spent all this money and slowed things off. But I think they went off on the wrong track myself. My views are what I told you the other day—the tank is supposed to move and if it doesn't move it's no longer a tank. It loses its value-and it's got to be quick. Now firepower is the next, to me. The mobility is number one, number two is firepower, and number three is protection. But the trouble is with these later tanks everything went into protection; heavy armor weighed them down. Of course, I think there always has been the trouble with the engine. We made a great mistake in the Second World War and we lost the diesel engine, which would have been a great saving and they are much more efficient. The Marines got the diesel; we had to give it up and there wasn't enough of them to go around, so we took gasoline engines.

Q: Colonel George Hoge has had two assignments with the Combat Development Command which represent your views. Have you had any discussions with him over the modem-day methods?

A: No, I have never discussed it.

Q: Sir, you mentioned yesterday that you enjoy reading history. What are your thoughts on the value of history and tradition for the modern soldier?

A: Well, it's a great inspiration to know what can be done; I have enjoyed history more than any other subject. And you can't imitate other people. You've got to be yourself, but you can learn from other people. As I told you, I think Robert E. Lee was the greatest of all, and his Freeman biography is an excellent one—and George Washington. There are numbers of others, I don't know how many; I must have a hundred or more different biographies and histories back here that I've read and enjoyed very much.

Q: Well, in Seventh Army, sir, do you think enough time was devoted in the training period to instill a feeling of tradition among the troops? Going back to any of your commands, sir, do you think they really got enough on history and tradition of the Army?

A: Oh, no, I don't think so; that was never emphasized.

Q: You feel it should be?

A: Well, I don't know that you've got time with the soldiers; the officers should get as much as they can of that. You are so busy with soldiers, training them, that you can't put that other in. You've got to train them to march and shoot, [to] take care of themselves in the field, and to obey orders. There are a number of those things that are basic and you—when you get up into the tradition, that's beyond them, but it belongs to the Officer Corps, there is no question about that—and the higher noncoms too. I don't understand this present noncom situation; it's so new to me. They have tried to elevate them to something, and I have no objection to it. But I don't know anything about it and I haven't had any experience with it.

Q: I think it's settling back now that we will keep the supergrades E-8, E-9, probably; but some of the so-called instant NCOs that we were getting during Vietnam, that program has been stopped. Let me get back into your high command experience, particularly in Europe as Seventh Army

and CINCUSAREUR. Today there is quite a debate between the elements of Department of Defense, particularly between the service and the Office of Secretary of Defense, having to do with the amount of warning time we can expect in Europe in case of an attack by the Soviet Union. Do you feel that the Soviet capabilities and intentions can be interpreted far enough in advance to allow sufficient warning time to reinforce troops and equipment in Europe?

A: I don't know anything about that. I couldn't tell you. Of course, they have changed so much with the ability to air-transport; that was demonstrated in the last war [October 1973] in Israel, moved all those tanks and equipment very fast over there. So the possibility is so much more. I don' t know what we know about the Russian intentions.

Q: Some have compared the October War, the Yom Kippur War, and the techniques used by the Egyptians as the same techniques we could expect the Soviets to use if there were ever a conflict or approached a conflict. But many of our valuable people think there will be enough diplomatic and military warning to give us the time to get these—

A: That's other people. I don't know what we can know about them. I doubt that we know much because they are very secretive and how much we know-Mr. Kissinger is doing a great job, I think, and maybe we've got good G-2s and military attaches have learned something. I don't know about that. I wouldn't trust the bastards anyplace. They are entirely out in their whole concept that they must dominate the world—that's what I object to. You were asking why I object to the Vietnam business—we are trying to dominate. We are trying to do what the Russians are trying to do all over the world, except they are trying to reverse it—they want to make us all Communists, we want to make them all Democrats. And I don't think—you've got to suit the people themselves; that's none of our business. That's purely my own philosophy and it has nothing to do with my knowledge or experience or anything. The only experience I've had with the Russians-I did personally have relations with General Grechko, who is now the Minister of Defense, when I was in command in Europe, several times; it was only casual. I visited him and he visited me, and we exchanged Christmas presents every year. He is the top man, the Minister of Defense; he is a tough old bastard, too.

Q: Yes, sir, many of them are. They are masters of negotiations because of their philosophies, I guess. You mentioned yesterday that you changed the planning for the conventional defense of Europe from the give-ground-and-save-time philosophy and scorch-the-earth philosophy into a stand-and-hold more organized defense and retrograde.

A: Well, I recommended how far it went—but I stopped that. When I was there it was just going to be one grand rush to the rear destroying everything behind you, which I felt was absolutely wrong; and it would have discouraged any allies we had—to bum everything, to destroy the country behind us and to move out just as fast as you could—there is no excuse for that.

Q: Well, do you think the Seventh Army had at that time the capability to stop a Russian attack?

A: We weren't stopping anything. It was a delaying action, but we could fight. I don't object to destroying bridges ahead of them that they could use, if you are fighting on the way back to delay their advance, but this business of this scorched earth, which was then the policy, and to run like hell—everybody get up and move.

Q: Was that a political or military policy?

A: I don't know. It was one that I found was there, and I made every effort to change it. How effective it was—because I didn't stay there long enough with the Seventh Army, but I recommended it.

Q: Did the approval for that change have to come back to the Department of the Army, or did you have the approval of—

A: It went on up to USAREUR or EUCOM; how far back it had to go, I don't know. But I changed it within my capabilities at that time. And I left—see I went up to USAREUR in November, October maybe; that year we had been on maneuvers and we had discussed these plans before that. We had never put them into effect and I know we had groups out there. The engineers were one of them, particularly, whose mission

was—because I went out there and saw them and talked to them—whose mission was to carry this plan out.

Q: In your experience you have been involved in two so-called total wars, World War I and World War II, and "limited war" in Korea, and the recent experience in Vietnam. Do you think that this concept of total war is completely gone now because of the mass destruction capability held by modem armies?

A: I couldn't tell you that; I couldn't say. When we get into a war, you know, there is no substitute for winning. You've got to win a war however you've got to do it. When you get into a major war, there is no substitute for victory.

Q: In a major war, [but] how about the limited-type thing, as in Vietnam or Korea?

A: I don't know how that's going to work out or not. If the thing gets big enough, it is going to become a major war now, because the thing is going to be to defeat the enemy and make it knuckle under as fast as you can do it. That I would think would be the policy; you can't drag it on. That, of course, is beyond my sphere and everything else, but I would suspect that.

Q: Much of the philosophy of many of the high level government officials says that the concept of no substitute for victory is giving away to negotiation.

A: That's all right as long as you can get by with it; but when it gets you down and you are going to lose it, I don't think we can negotiate very far with the present Russians because he is not going to take defeat or setbacks. He makes up his mind that he is going to go out and win the war, I believe. That's my belief, and I don't think there is going to be any halfway steps about it.

Q: Yes, sir, if he can do it without shooting, he'll do it that way.

A: He'll do it any way, but when he gets into it, he is in it to win. And it is going to wind up eventually that way.

Q: Do you think the United Nations is a viable form to prevent war?

A: No, I think it's practically useless; as far as I can see, they've done nothing, nothing so far. Well, of course, they've let in all these other people now, with all the little countries and the Africans and what not in it, and they all are disruptive. If it was limited to the major powers, we might get someplace. Today I think it is absolutely a forum, a debating forum that means nothing.

Q: Do you think there should be an adjunct to the United Nations representing the major powers of the world?

A: Well, I don't know what the adjunct is; I don't think this other thing is worth anything. Those people have no right to decide what's going to happen, but they have just as much a voice. They can get up and debate and carry on and disrupt the whole proceedings, and they have done that any number of times. And some of them only represent maybe 200,000 or 300,000 people, some of these nations, and they have a full voice in there; of course, they are not on the Security Council. The Security Council is the only thing worth anything, I believe, in the United Nations. The rest of it takes up time and it's a waste of money and everything else.

Q: Do you think the veto policy in the Security Council prevents it from making any major lasting decisions?

A: Well, I guess you've got to have it, because if you didn't have the veto it could override-of course, the Security Council is limited to how many nations—only about six or eight.

Q: It was five.

A: But really the only ones that count in that are Russia and the United States, plus Great Britain and France have dropped out. Japan has

developed considerably. I don't know whether China is in that now or not; are they on the Security Council?

Q: I believe they are now.

A: Most of those people are nothing, mean nothing, and it is just used to waste money and sound off. Nobody pays any attention to them.

Q: Well, the Korean conflict-we fought in that under the United Nations flag.

A: And the only reason we were able was the Russians weren't represented, because he would have vetoed it. That was a big mistake on the Russian's part; he wasn't present at the time that war was declared.

Q: Let me change subjects again, sir; I want to get to something that's been rather ticklish since Vietnam or came out of Korea and that's on the Code of Conduct. What are your thoughts on the Code of Conduct—whether or not the average soldier understands it, and do you think it is too restrictive or not restrictive enough?

A: The Code of Conduct, I think, is all right. I believe in the Code of Conduct as enunciated. I don't know if Vietnam has changed a lot of that with imprisonment, and I don't know what those people had a right to do when they were incarcerated with nobody to help them for years. I don't know what they suffered. You get so many different reports. It's all nothing but newspaper that I've ever heard about the thing.

Q: A lot of the newspaper reports, particularly after the prisoners were released, were accurate. Going from that to another situation related, you probably heard the news yesterday or today that Secretary of the Army has reduced [the sentence of] Lieutenant Calley, who was involved in the My Lai massacre, for the murder of 22 civilians. His sentence was reduced from 20 to 10 years because of the possibility that he might have been, in his own mind, following orders and doing a legal thing. Do you have any thoughts on that thing?

A: I think it's fine that they did it. I think he has suffered enough. Of course, you take a young lieutenant like that who came in from civilian life. I don't know what his education or background was, but to put him in that situation and then hold him wholly responsible for that massacre. There are things that went on I don't know. I am just talking about what I've read in the newspapers and heard from reports, but the Vietnamese I don't think were so innocent of the whole business; and I think there were mines set off and of all sorts. Maybe there was infiltration from North Vietnam, I don't know, but you couldn't trust anything whether they were man or woman or child at the time. As I remember the accounts of his attack, there had been a massacre of some Americans in that same area not long before, and they were either killed by mines or something like that.

Q: Ambushed.

A: The whole thing is so mixed up as to who is Vietnamese north and who is the south, and then you had those communists mixed in with the whole thing. I don't think anybody could tell friend from foe. Is that right?

Q: Yes, that's true, whether a Viet Cong or NVA [North Vietnamese Army] or—

A: So, those people were protecting their own lives; and those soldiers went sort of wild, but there were soldiers who had friends who were killed previous to that. They were out for revenge, shoot anything that moved. I think he was unjustly convicted.

Q: After you retired in Europe in 1955, you became Chairman of the Board of Interlake Steel?

A: Interlake Steel, Interlake Iron at that time. It is now Interlake Steel,

Q: What were your feelings on your transition from your high military position into that relatively high business position?

A: Well, I was delighted to have the opportunity. I was going to seed so damned fast in that little town in Missouri, nothing to do, poor as a church mouse. I hadn't gotten a raise. I had been reduced in my pay. I was later raised back to drawing retirement pay of a general, but at that time, I had to go back to major general; and I could live on it all right but I couldn't do anything. And I got this office which to me was fabulous, and the amount of money. So I immediately grabbed it and came here, and they treated me marvelously well. I knew nothing about the steel industry, iron industry, or any of the rest of it, but they all helped me in every way. There was never any jealousy that I know of, and I don't know that I did much for them. Except that we were in some contract difficulties with some plant we were building over in Chicago. They were slow and were running way ahead of estimate, and I got that straightened out; but they were two or three times over our budget, and we couldn't keep up with the money we were spending. We were building coke ovens and a conveyer belt across from the Chicago side—it was all in Chicago, but it went across a distance of a couple of miles—to carry the coke from the coke ovens over to the furnaces, which were on the other side. The thing worked all right, except I did have trouble. It broke down once or twice, due to the poor design; and as I say, the estimate they were slow in getting anything finished, and we finally got that straightened out. That's about the only thing I could add to their help. I went up and saw the mines. I learned slowly, I learned on the job. But it was a good experience. I was dealing with good men, and they were very helpful. I was all over the Mesabi Range [Minnesota], went to a number of our mines with other people. We were associated at that time with the Bethlehem Steel and the Steel Company of Canada, very close. We were in partnership, and we later opened up some mines in Manitoba-no, Labrador, under the same group. All that part was very interesting. It ran into considerable money. I don't know that I did them any good.

Q: Well, did you find that with your experience in the military, you were so adaptive in so many different jobs that you did; you think that prepared you quite well?

A: Well, primarily it was dealing with those contractors; that was about the only experience I had. But trying to get the contractor straightened out—and they were not doing a damned thing except getting deeper and deeper in debt. I did get that thing whipped around until we got it back on a decent basis.

Q: Well, did your experience as District Engineer, in working with contractors, help any?

A: I think that it helped me considerably. It's the only experience that I had with contractors. I had some idea what a contractor was and what the performance should be, so I was able to press that point. I don't know that I did them any good. But they were fine, and there was no backlighting; there was no jealousy among those people. They couldn't have treated me better.

Q: How about the management techniques of the Army versus the business community?

A: I don't know. There was not a great deal of difference between the management technique we had in the Corps of Engineers or Civil Works; that is, as far as I know, there was not. I had no difficulty in adjusting to that. We had the cost keeping, the budgeting, and all of that in the engineer works, and we had the same thing when we got in business.

Q: Did you find any difference in the reaction time to your directives in the Army versus business?

A: I don't know whether I can answer.

Q: Some retired military officers complained that in the Army they put out an order and they could depend on it being done. In a civilian community, you put out an order and it may or may not be done.

A: Well, if they didn't, you followed up on it. I don't know if I had any particular difficulty with it. Well, they were cooperative, very helpful, nice people to work with; and it was a salvation for me to get anything to do, except die of dry rot, which I was doing fast. I wouldn't have lasted a year or two back there in retirement.

Q: How long were you in retirement before you went with Interlake?

A: Oh, about a year-yes, a year and a half. I had retired in January of 1955. I came here in February. We spent a year-six or eight months in Europe, before I came home. We came back to the United States in 1955, fall of 1955, and I came to Cleveland in 1956. I was back there maybe a year, living in Lexington after I retired, doing nothing.

Q: Yes, you retired in January 1955.

A: Well, I spent the rest of that year-I didn't get back to the States until that fall, sometime like that, and then we went to Lexington to fix up the old home, which was inherited-and that was a great mistake and a waste of money. But what little I had was all in that house, and when I wound up, I had nothing. You couldn't take that old house or do anything with it. But I was finally able to sell it after, later after Mrs. Hoge died. She was devoted to the place and primarily desired that we went back there to live. I had no plans, and I think that is a great mistake with people who retire. You should have something; all I thought about it was that I'd have my fill of doing hunting and fishing and traveling. Well, I had no money for traveling. There wasn't any fishing nearby. There was very little hunting in Missouri, but otherwise I had nothing to do except cut the grass and lawn work. I was just going to seed.

But this opportunity came along; it furnished what we needed in the way of income and an interesting job. Now I think an Army officer who retires has got one thing he should do; go someplace where he has some other officers, friends to be with. That's the reason I do think you should go to a place like Florida, California, or maybe San Antonio. Washington, DC, isn't bad, because I have many classmates around Washington; not many, but those I have are there. Anybody to be associated with. But when you've been away from your hometown for 40 years, and most of the people have died that I knew as a boy or young man, and when I got back there I was spending more time being a pallbearer for somebody's funeral. All of them are too old and I had nothing in common with them except that they were all nice to me. They wanted to elect me mayor of the town. I wouldn't take that, but anyway I was very fortunate to get the job at Interlake. But my advice would be to plan something, some activity, before you retire; and by all means, unless you have some activity that will take up your time, go where your friends are that you've known in recent times–your Army friends, that's about all you have then. And these retirement colonies that you have in

these various places are all right; but this other thing, of just coming out into civilian life that you had known 40 years or 50 years before, is no good.

Q: Yes, I imagine that it is very good advice.

A: I think one of the things was Mrs. Hoge's longing to go back to her own home. She had two or three girl friends, women friends, who were living there; I had one or two men friends, but they were dying, or did die, and I never had anything to do, just waste time. About the biggest thing I ever had to do was to go to the Rotary Club whenever they had it, once a month—it was terrible.

Q: Sir, we've covered an awful lot of topics in about 12 hours of our discussion, and I feel I might have restricted you a little bit on some of the things you might have liked to talk about. Are there any subjects you would like to bring up that we haven't discussed or something you'd like to add.

A: I don't know of anything. I'm willing to try to answer anything you want to know about.

Q: This has been one of the best experiences I have had. I personally appreciate your hospitality in engaging in this.

A: I haven't been very hospitable. I have not been in the position to do it. Daisy has been sick quite often, and sometimes I think she won't be able to get my meals or anything even on the table or to cook; and she has been in the hospital two or three times, so I didn't have very much to offer you.

Q: It has been very fine, sir, as far as the program is concerned. I'm sure I can speak for General Davis, the Commandant, and Colonel Pappas [George S. Pappas, USMA 1944], Director of the MHRC [Military History Research Collection], who were very appreciative of your participation in this program. And if later on, readers get as much out of

it as I have discussing it with you, I' m sure it's going to be extremely worthwhile.

A: I hope so, but I doubt if anybody will ever see it.