

being a brigadier general at this stage too. In Atlanta before I went to Morocco I got promoted to brigadier general, so that would have been in '53. I must have been on the promotion list when Sturgis told me I was going to Morocco.

Well, one thing, I waited 26 years before I was really stationed in Washington: Of course, I had been stationed close at Fort Belvoir when it was Fort Humphreys, but I also waited until I was entitled to have a car to take me around the big city and also until I was entitled to have a parking space right by my office! And all of these things were very useful. I moved into military construction, and it wasn't too hard to do because many of the people in there had been working with me in Morocco one way or another, supervising me, needing me, or helping me, but I knew a lot of them.

Q: Was it something like your going from Mobile to Atlanta in terms of experiences?

A: To some extent. I had seen them at work. I had been back two or three times and days on end fighting for things and getting to know them. So it was easy to move in as assistant chief for military construction without any great problem.

When I got there I found to my sorrow that Sam Sturgis, the Chief of Engineers, was definitely in bad shape. He was ill. He wasn't effective at the office very often. In fact, I hardly saw him. It made me sad because I saw him so little as assistant chief. I had thought I would go in and talk with him about my job. I'd seen him during the war. I had called on him out in the Philippines. He was Sixth Army Engineer, and I enjoyed talking with him and finding out how they did things. But he now had Parkinson's disease and it showed up particularly when he went up to the Army War College to give a talk and just about collapsed in the middle of it and they had to get him off. So it was obvious something had to happen.

General Itschner was made Chief of Engineers--he had been assistant chief for civil works--and to my shock. he announced to me that I was going to be deputy chief of engineers for construction, which shook me no end. I hadn't expected anything like that.

- Q: I recall in listening to the brief interview you had in Washington that you said that you were not sure why you were chosen, and you said about yourself and Itschner, "We're different." Would you like to elaborate on that?
- A: Okay. I was deputy chief of engineers on November 27 1956, and was promoted to major general on March 25, 1957. I was surprised because I had known Em Itschner for some time, but not very intimately. I felt that he and I often approached things quite differently. I knew he was brilliant, but I was just shocked to be selected one of his two deputies. But there I was.
- Q: What kind of differing approach do you think you had? This is important because in 1961 you would succeed him as Chief of Engineers.
- A: Let me put it to you as I said in some of these other articles. Em Itschner was a workaholic. It used to bother me to see the amount of work he took home every night, and I used to try and soften that load so he wouldn't get swamped. One day I succeeded on a Friday in getting it so he didn't have anything on his desk. I was real proud of myself. I put a lot of stuff in the drawer of my desk that I would just let flow to him the next week. He wandered into my office along about quitting time with the longest face I ever saw. He said, 'I don't know what's happened, but I don't have anything to do this weekend.' I said, "Can't you get out and play a little tennis, or a little golf?" "Yeah, I can do that but I like to work on something." "You mean you're unhappy because you don't have any papers to carry home?" "Yeah." I said, "Go sit back at your desk for just a few minutes/' I came in with a stack several inches deep, and he was very happy! This is serious. He liked to read everything in detail himself. Me, I'd stay at the Chief's office until one or two o'clock in the morning on occasions to clean my desk off, but I did not carry anything home, and I would not carry anything home. If I felt that it had to be done, I'd stay there and get it done, and eat or not eat when I got home. But that was one difference.

We were also different in that he went into great detail on things, and I didn't think I very often went into great detail. Maybe I'm wrong,. but at any rate it was a different approach to things.

Q: What about the different parts of the Corps' work? Right at this point when he became Chief he went from civil works and you were in military. It's said that he favored one and you the other.

A: Em never did like the military end. He got a poor impression of the people in military construction when he was working in there right after World War II And he continued that impression. It ended up with me devoting a lot of effort to protecting the military construction organization during his regime as Chief.

Q: Protecting it from what?

A: From the Chief of Engineers. Some of the best people up in military construction never could say the right thing in front of the Chief of Engineers. Some of them--one or two--Harry Zackerson was a fine guy, pretty sharp and all that. but he was brusque, matter-of-fact, and if he had an idea he said it, zoom! He just rubbed Em Itschner the wrong way every time he got in the same room with him.

Q: Did you have a feeling that the military side of OCE was going to be cut back or anything like that?

A: No, I'm just talking about in the daily life. He wasn't going to try to emasculate it or anything, but he didn't have confidence in them.

Q: And you wanted to change that?

A: Well, if you work for a long time in that kind of a situation and realize your head knocker doesn't have any confidence in you it doesn't help your morale or your output.

Q: Do you think you succeeded?

A: Oh, I think I softened the blow considerably. There was another thing that bothered me. Em said, "Who should I put into your position in military

construction?" And I talked with him and he finally said, "What about so-and-so?*"'

Q: Which position would this be?

A: Assistant chief for military construction. "What about Eddie Brown?" Well, I said, "Em, Eddie Brown quit working just a little bit before World War II was over in the Philippines." He looked at me kind of funny, but I told him it was a fact, he didn't do any work. He thought he'd be a good assistant chief for military construction, and I said, "I think he'd be the worst assistant chief you could put in there." Well, he said, "I'm sorry, I'm going to put him." So he put him, and I helped struggle to try and keep him out of trouble, not too successfully.

Q: There were others you would rather have seen?

A: I would rather have seen several in preference to Eddie Brown. But don't get me wrong. Eddie is a friend of mine, and I like him.

Q: Well, that must not have helped morale when you couldn't get the one you wanted.

A: No, it didn't help. And then I had a classmate who was an outstanding expert in military construction but I didn't think belonged as assistant chief because he was too much involved in detail. In both cases I recommended against them. In both cases Em went ahead and put them in there, and both times within a matter of two or three months he was back to see me wanting to know what he could do about moving them. He just didn't like the way it was operating. I'm not saying that critically of Em Itschner. I think he probably had a bear by the tail. I think Eddie Brown had not satisfied somebody in the Pentagon in his previous position. He was in the TLO [Technical Liaison Office] over in the Pentagon.

Q: And they wanted him out of that position?

A: I think they wanted him out of that position, and so Em *was putting him in the first position that came along, but he didn't tell me that. We actually worked together very well because I made

it my point to find out what his views were on things, and then from then on that was my view except in discussions with him. Em and I got along fine. I told him frankly what I thought, but after I told him and he made his decision, that was it as far as I was concerned. I didn't hesitate to speak up in opposition to what I knew he was about to come out with if I thought I ought to, but again I didn't carry it on past that occasion.

One of the officers, who later got to be a three-star general, was the executive officer in the Chief's office. He did his best to do just exactly what Em Itschner wanted, and I knew he did. So when it came time for the efficiency reports it was expected that I would rate him and Em would endorse him. But I told Em that the executive officer [Lieutenant General Carroll H. Dunn] and I crossed swords every now and then and if I gave an honest appraisal on an efficiency report it wouldn't help him, and I told Em I didn't think he wanted me to do that. So he said he'd do it, and the officer ultimately got to be a three-star general. I like him. I think he's good, but on that particular job I think he was looking after the interests of the Chief individually as opposed to the interests of the Corps, if you know what I mean. Really I have a high regard for this man and later handpicked him for one of the key jobs in the Corps. I just thought Em's rating would do him more good than mine at that time.

But again, Em and I got along fine. While he was away I went to the things he was supposed to go to and when he was in, I stayed away from them. I kept him informed of everything I thought he needed to know. Every now and then I tried to work around a little bit and soften some of his edicts. He had a hex [sic] against inspection boats. Well, I'm convinced that if the District Engineer has a means of getting out on the water in his District and seeing what's going on, he has a far better relationship with the towing industry than if he has no means of doing it. So I think it's part of the job that you ought to get out some on weekends: go around and say hello to folks and find out what they are thinking, where the trouble is in the channel and all this kind of business. But Em

just didn't agree with that. So he announced that he was going to get rid of all the inspection boats, which he did.

Then I went down to Norfolk and found there was one still there. It was a Transportation Corps boat transferred to the Corps of Engineers. It wasn't plush or anything. I said, "Look boys, if you want to keep this, don't show this to the Chief of Engineers. Put it in a back channel someplace anytime he comes to town." And it wasn't over three months before he came in one day and said, "Did you know they had an inspection boat down in the Norfolk District? They carefully got it out to give me a ride on it." I said, "I knew they had one, but I didn't know they carefully got it out for you to take a ride on. I'm sorry you found it. I thought it was useful. I guess it's gone now." And he said, "Yes, it's gone now."

Now this goes in surges. They're back in several Districts again. I don't know whether the Mobile District has one that's any good, but a lot of Districts do. We just had different personalities, but he chose me. I must have satisfied him because I became Chief of Engineers when he retired. Since he was on the board that recommended me, I'm sure he had something to do with the selection. But at the time I would never have thought he'd pick me to be his deputy.

Q: And what was your prior connection with him?

A: Oh, I'd been a District Engineer and I'd seen him as a Division Engineer. As I mentioned earlier, I had visited him in advance section in Belgium in February 1945, and I had seen him on several occasions while I was Division Engineer, SAD [South Atlantic Division]. I had seen very little of him when he was in military construction in OCE because I wasn't involved in military construction at that time. I saw him frequently in the Chief's office the six months I headed military construction, since he headed civil works.

Q: What major projects were you involved with as assistant chief for military construction? I realize it is hard to separate out some of the projects, as they continued while you were deputy chief and Chief.

A: I don't remember offhand what we were doing except that there was a good-sized worldwide construction program under way. There was still work going on in Morocco. There was a lot of work still going on in Korea. We had activities in the Philippines and all through the Pacific, in Okinawa and Japan, but I would have to cogitate to remember which specific projects were in the forefront during that six months in the summer of 1956.

I was also back again in the permafrost business: and snow, ice, and permafrost in my positions in OCE. I felt that I was seeing an old friend. We were trying to build a facility up at Dartmouth in Hanover to house the combined research staff. That finished up much later [1963].

Q: Since it overlapped, I thought we might discuss your involvement in the space program as a general question covering both your assignments as deputy chief and Chief. But perhaps you'd like to touch on your assignment as commander of the Engineer School at Fort Belvoir first.

A: It might be better to talk about Belvoir now, including the selection as Chief, and get it out of the way, and then we can go back.

I had completed over four years in the Chief's office as assistant chief for military construction and deputy for construction. That was a considerable period and, frankly, I was poohed out. It was a pretty drastic life, and going to Fort Belvoir from OCE was my idea of going to heaven. You weren't too far away from the action and you lived in beautiful Quarters One. It was fun going back to the academic world and supervising the Engineer School, and I looked forward to it. As far as I was concerned, that was to be my last assignment. I was going to go to Fort Belvoir, and then when the time came I was going to retire. In '61 I had 32 years' service, which was not too far from the routine retirement time. After a couple of years at Belvoir I'd be ready to retire and be real pleased with life. It was fun getting back to being with troops and with the school and trying to stir some things up, but it was a relatively simple life. The pressures were manageable, and I enjoyed it. I had a good staff.