

Prepared by: EWH
Date: 6/24/97

Walters

WALTERS, VERNON A.

OH-108

94 pp.

OPEN

Translator for Dwight D. Eisenhower while he was SHAPE Commander and President

DESCRIPTION: Anecdotes concerning Eisenhower prior to the SHAPE assignment; working for Eisenhower (incl. nature of Walter's job, anecdotes involving preparations for trips with Eisenhower, anecdote concerning Eisenhower's temper); comments about Eisenhower's personality; Eisenhower's relationship with [Gen. Charles] De Gaulle (incl. comments and anecdotes about both the personal and the official aspects); Walter's relationship with Eisenhower (incl. getting acquainted in Brazil, anecdote involving Walter Reed Hospital, anecdote concerning Walter's promotion to colonel, translating for Eisenhower and De Gaulle); Eisenhower's relationship with [Konrad] Adenauer; Eisenhower's relationship with other European leaders; anecdote involving Eisenhower and a white tie; remarks about General [Alfred] Gruenther (incl. anecdote concerning aircraft protocol, Gruenther's intelligence, his relationship with Eisenhower); general comments about Walter's post-Presidential contacts with Eisenhower; anecdotes concerning command decisions (incl. [Marshal Georgi] Zhukov and land mines, Eisenhower and D-Day); anecdote concerning the "Open Skies" proposal; anecdote regarding Eisenhower's relationship with [Nikita S.] Khrushchev; general comments and anecdotes concerning Eisenhower's regard for foreign leaders (incl. De Gaulle, Adenauer, the British, [Jawaharlal] Nehru, Gen. [Francisco] Franco, the Italians); anecdote regarding the New Hampshire primary; Eisenhower's acceptance of the Republican nomination (incl. anecdote regarding the announcement at SHAPE headquarters, Eisenhower's concerns in making the decision to run, the private vs. the public Eisenhower); Eisenhower's lack of foreign language facility; Eisenhower's concern for parity among SHAPE personnel (incl. awareness of pay disparities, concept of the SHAPE village); comments about Eisenhower's essential nature (incl. understanding of people, consideration of others, gregariousness); anecdote involving De Gaulle and Algeria; Eisenhower's concern for European unity; anecdote concerning Averell Harriman and politics; examination of Eisenhower's relationship with Gen. Andrew J. Goodpaster; Eisenhower's inner circle; anecdotes involving working with John Foster Dulles; anecdotes involving Eisenhower and Argentina's President Arturo Frondizi; anecdote concerning the American presidents' meeting in Panama; anecdote concerning the funeral ceremonies for Marshal Jean de Lattre de Tassigny; the translating process (incl. Eisenhower's preferences, anecdotes regarding specific speech-translation difficulties); comments involving SHAPE (incl. Eisenhower's effectiveness, his middle American values); translating for various foreign dignitaries; anecdotes concerning the U-2 incident and a Berlin meeting; Eisenhower's respect for De Gaulle; anecdote involving Pope John.

[Dwight D. Eisenhower Library Oral History Project, interview by Dr. John E. Wickman, April 21, 1970]