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Date: 5/4/93

BETTS

BETTS, THOMAS J. (OH-397) 319 pages Open

Officer in G-2 (intelligence) division, U.S. War Department, 1938-43; deputy G-2 at COSSAC and SHAEF, 1943-45

DESCRIPTION: Interview #1 [October 18, 1973; pp 1-84] Early life; travels abroad as a child. Early military career: decision to join army during World War I; commissioning of officers; coast artillery units; service in France; Camp Genicart near Bordeaux; Fort Eustis, VA, 1919-23; Philippines, 1923; Gen. Leonard Wood; service in China; return to US via Europe 1928; lack of promotions during inter-war years; Lyman Lemnitzer; coast artillery school, 1928-29. Ghostwriter in War Department, 1929-33: drafting speeches and reports for War Department, 1929-33: drafting speeches and reports for War Department officials; Patrick J. Hurley; DDE as a ghostwriter; Douglas MacArthur. Work with CCC in Illinois. G-2 (intelligence) officer at Presidio, San Francisco, 1935-37: fear of communists and labor unions. Command & General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, 1937-38. G-2 (intelligence) branch of War Department, 1938-43: organization of branch; Betts as a China expert; daily office routine; cooperation with State Department; Joseph Stilwell as military attaché in China; Japan-China War; deciphering Japanese diplomatic code (Purple); limited distribution of 1941; evaluation of State Department cable traffic; knowledge of German attack on Norway, 1940; Cordell Hull; lack of staff in G-2; importance of military attaché reports; Latin America; advance knowledge of Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Interview #2 [November 20, 1974; pp 85-129] G-2 (intelligence) branch of War Department: importance of State Department Cables; Col. Charles Baker as intelligence branch chief; inadequate mobilization plans; Col. Hayes Kroner; creation of military intelligence service to bypass staff creation of military intelligence service to bypass staff cuts; relations with War Plans Division; George Marshall, DDE cuts; relations with War Plans Division; George Marshall, DDE and Albert Wedemeyer; briefings for George Marshall; Col. Truman Smith; Charles Lindbergh's tour of German aviation industry; Betts as information source for Marshall; anecdote re Marshall with 15th Infantry in China, 1926; preparations for Allied conferences; meetings with Bill Piggott of British G-2; Sir Frederick Morgan's visit to Washington, summer 1943; selection for Betts as deputy G-2 at COSSAC, 1943. Transition from COSSAC to SHAEF, early 1944: arrival of DDE and Walter Bedell Smith; selection of head of SHAEF G-2; reassignments of P.G. Whiteford, Jock Whiteley and Kenneth Strong; selection of Harold Bull as head of SHAEF G-3 (operations); comparison of British and US staff systems.

Interview #3 [June 25, 1975; pp 130-225] Transition from COSSAC to SHAEF: arrival of DDE's staff; Alfred Gruenther; Gen. Charles Napier and railroads; G-4 (logistics); G-3 (operations); Jock Whiteley; development of post-invasion breakout plan; need for port of Cherbourg; Bernard Montgomery; dispute over narrow front vs broad front; development of SHAEF G-2 staff ; P.G. Whiteford; Edward Ford; technical intelligence

staff and German technology; Betts' trip to Africa to study AFHQ G-2; British and US attitudes toward G-2 staff; Sir Frederick Morgan, Walter B. Smith and DDE. Extensive comments on SHAEF G-2's role in Normandy invasion: Territorial Intelligence Section study of beaches; fear of quicksand on Utah Beach; distribution of G-2 reports; need for information on placement of German troops near beaches; DDE's attitude during pre-D-Day briefings; living conditions at SHAEF Forward, Portsmouth; SHAEF conferences at Portsmouth; importance of weather reports; Leigh-Mallory's fear of airdrop disaster; confusion during airborne landings; Montgomery's dislike of observers at his headquarters; liaison with Montgomery's and Omar Bradley's headquarters; cooperation in search for captured German documents; initial intelligence reports on German reaction to landings; movement of 2 German armored divisions to Normandy; activities of French resistance; movement of SHAEF to France; problems with telephone service; Hitler's instructions for counterattack; G-2's knowledge of Ultra intercepts; distribution of Ultra data to Army groups.

Interview #4 [August 16, 1976; pp 226-319] SHAEF G-2 and Normandy Invasion: security in British Isles; prevention of leaks; Irish workers; cooperation of British government; movement of power lines so guns could be transported; printing of battle maps by HMSO; control of shipping along Channel coast; fake fleet in Thames estuary; DDE's reliance on staff to handle minor matters. Betts' inspection trips to France; Edwin Sibert, G-2 of 12th Army Group; distribution of Ultra data. Battle of the Bulge: problems with Ultra during offensive; uncertainty about German objectives; Betts' visits to 1st Army and 6th Army Group; DeGaulle's argument with Jacob Devers over defense of Strasbourg; stopping the German attack; role of Montgomery. Betts' trip to Moscow with Arthur Tedder and Harold Bull: travel arrangements; Crimea-Moscow railroad; social activities in Moscow; Averell Harriman; Tedder's delay of mission until after Bulge had been eliminated; meeting with Joseph Stalin; Stalin's agreement to put pressure on eastern front so Germany would not reinforce western front; Betts' leg infection; US air force hospital at Poltava, Russia; US-Russian contacts at hospital; Betts' recuperation in Cairo. Later events at SHAEF: Rhine crossings; envelopment of Ruhr; myth of Bavarian redoubt.

[Eisenhower Library Oral History Project, interview by Dr. Maclyn Burg, 1973-76]