

INTERVIEW WITH

Thomas T. Handy

on

November 6, 1972

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

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This is an interview conducted with Gen. Thomas T. Handy at General Handy's home in San Antonio, Texas, on November 6, 1972. The interviewer is Dr. Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library Staff. Present for the interview are General Handy and Dr. Burg.

DR. BURG: Let me ask you, you were born in Virginia, General?

GEN. HANDY: No, I was born in Tennessee.

DR. BURG: I see, in the eastern end of the state?

GEN. HANDY: Yes, Spring City, Tennessee.

DR. BURG: So, you were educated, say, up through high school, in eastern Tennessee?

GEN. HANDY: No, we moved to Virginia when I was very young and I grew up in Virginia--out in southwest Virginia.

DR. BURG: Now, what took you to VMI? Did you have a scholarship or--

GEN. HANDY: No, I just went to VMI--I knew a few people there.

DR. BURG: Were you drawn to a military career, General?

GEN. HANDY: Well, not exactly--I had made some effort to get an appointment, but hadn't gotten it to West Point or Annapolis.



BURG: I see. Now, General Marshall also attended VMI?

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: And was he there--

HANDY: Oh, no.

BURG:--ahead of you?

HANDY: I graduated in 1914, and I think General Marshall--about 1900, or sometime near it. I could look it up, but it was several years, a good deal earlier. He was older than I am.

BURG: Now, when you completed your studies at VMI--and, by the way, did you tell me that you were interested in military history?

HANDY: Well, to a certain extent, yes, you might say.

BURG: Did you read a fair amount of it at VMI?

HANDY: Well, I think so. I don't know whether I read a lot of it, but I read some, I'm sure.



BURG: Now, when you finished your work there in 1914, did you then accept a commission?

HANDY: No, there weren't any commissions. As a matter of fact, they didn't have enough vacancies for the graduates of West Point. The army was very, very small. And in 1916, you know, I don't know what they called it--the First National Defense Act, was enacted. The war had broken out in Europe in the meantime, and the Act provided for increases in the army, and that's when I came into the service.



BURG: And you were commissioned in the field artillery branch?

HANDY: Yes. I think it was November 30th, 1916.

BURG: Now, had artillery been one of your interests?

HANDY: Well, not particularly, but it was a mounted branch, and I liked that.

BURG: You didn't have to walk any place.

HANDY: No.

BURG: Now, what was your experience, then, after the commissioning in '16, and you went into the field artillery--did you then join a battery?

HANDY: Well, in the first place, we were all commissioned as what they called "provisional lieutenants"--supposed to be on a two-year trial basis--and they sent us out to Leavenworth for about three months. Then I joined a regiment, the 7th, right here in San Antonio, as a matter of fact.

BURG: Was it stationed at Ft. Sam Houston or Leon Springs?

HANDY: Yes, well, it was stationed at one of these areas outside the post, Camp Wilson, I think they called it in those days. It's been Camp Travis and Camp Wilson. But we were in a tent camp.

BURG: Now, General Eisenhower, if I remember correctly, had done some training of provisional 2nd lieutenants, but not a group that you were associated with?

HANDY: No.



BURG: Right. So did your regiment then go overseas in 1917, or was it later than that?

HANDY: Well, when we first started to send troops to Europe, the First Division, they picked out some infantry regiments down on the border, some of them had been in Mexico with Pershing, I think. They didn't know then just what a division was going to be, and at first there were to be two regiments of artillery in a division. The 6th, which was out at Douglas, Arizona, and the 5th at El Paso were to be the two regiments in the First Division. So, they put the 5th and 6th up to strength, and they sent a bunch of us from the 7th down to El Paso to the 5th. We got down there, and the regiment was supposed to go overseas right away, but they got a delaying order, and we didn't go until sometime in the latter part of July--I don't remember exactly when. Meantime, they decided they were going to be three regiments, and they took the 7th, also. But I went over as a member of the 5th Field Artillery from El Paso.

BURG: What were they equipped with, as far as guns were concerned?



HANDY: Well, when we got over to France, we were given hundred and fifty-five howitzers--we had some old six-inch howitzers in El Paso, but--in France we got the French hundred and fifty-five howitzers. The other two regiments had seventy-fives. Incidentally, most of my service afterwards was with the seventy-fives and not with the hundred and fifty-fives.

BURG: Now in that 5th Regiment, were there any officers that you later worked with extensively in World War II?

HANDY: Well, not so much in World War II--George Van Horn Moseley was in it.

BURG: Later, General Moseley.

HANDY: Yes, he was in it--and I'm trying to think of others. You see, when we went to France, the colonel of the regiment was Colonel Charles Thomas Menoher and they made him a general shortly after we got there--And they sent General Menoher up to command the 42nd Division. Incidentally that's the first place I ever knew General MacArthur; he was chief of staff of that division.



BURG: That was the Rainbow Division?

HANDY: Yes, General Menoher had me ordered to the Division as his aide, and I served there in the division headquarters for sometime. I was always trying to get out, and I finally got out and was assigned to a regiment in the division, the 151st-- a seventy-five regiment. I served in it until the end of the war.

BURG: Was it your feeling, General, that you wanted out of division staff so that you'd have combat experience on your record?

HANDY: Well, I never was very keen on going to the headquarters and I certainly wanted to get out.

BURG: Oh, you didn't want to go to the 42nd--?

HANDY: Well, I wasn't keen on leaving the outfit I was in, but I don't think that makes much difference.

BURG: Well, it probably ties in ultimately with all the things that you do later on; and we have a problem of



General Eisenhower being kept here in the States to train troops, which was very much against his wishes. And it probably had a certain kind of effect upon him and upon his later career.

HANDY: Well, I'm sure it did. As a matter of fact, I served practically the whole of World War II right in Washington, you see. And everybody was trying to get out of there, including me. But I decided after making my position clear that I wasn't going to continually bother the boss--somebody had to be there, as you know.

BURG: Precisely.



HANDY: And, well, I had a lot of young fellows, you know, in Operations; we had an awful good outfit there, and they were all raring to get out, and we tried to let them go as we could. I figured that I had been more fortunate than a lot of others in World War I, because I had about eighteen months service in France. A lot of them had none at all, like Ike and Bradley as you know, and others. But I felt that a Regular officer, with a war

on, who never got into it, was to a certain extent penalized, don't you see? And I think most others felt somewhat the same way.

BURG: Yes. Now, my thought was that you would be more understanding of this situation later on, because you, yourself, had had some staff work in World War I, and you'd also seen combat duty there, too. After the war was over--by the way, what rank had you reached by the end of the war?

HANDY: I was a "Mex" ? Major. Had a battalion.



BURG: And when the war ended, what happened to you?

HANDY: Well, I came back to this country in 1919--I think the division came back toward the middle of the year--June, July--and I was ordered to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma.

BURG: Had you had a little bit of occupation duty at Coblenz?

HANDY: Oh, yes. We were in Germany for several months but not at Coblenz.

BURG: And then you came back here?

HANDY: With the Army of Occupation, yes. We went up right after the Armistice, you see. I was stationed for several months at Heimershiem on the Ahr River, not too far from the Rhine.

BURG: Now, when you came back here to the United States, was anything indicated to you about the prospects for you to remain in the army?

HANDY: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, I had appeared before a board over in Europe, and I believe they said it was O.K.

BURG: For you to stay? And by then was that also your desire?

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Because so many of you, I know, had opportunities to go into civilian life, and many of you made the decision to stay in the Regular army. And that was your choice, too?

HANDY: Yes. As a matter of fact, I was originally commissioned in the Regular Army.

BURG: May I ask this, were you married at that time?



HANDY: No.

BURG: Uh-huh. So, what rank did you then revert to?

HANDY: Well, I went to Sill--went with a regiment there, the 9th-- and stayed in the regiment 'till after the first of the year, 1920, when I was ordered to the F.A. School, the Battery Officers' Course, as they called it in those days.

BURG: Was that like the infantry school that Benning was running?

HANDY: Yes. And, we had a grand--I've forgotten the date-- but a grand "busting" day. See, we had colonels in the class; everybody with higher temporary rank was busted--everybody, all the students, the same day.



BURG: Oh, they did!

HANDY: And I went back to a captain; I was fortunate to do that.

BURG: So you had a regular rank, a permanent rank, of captain? After, they busted the group.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Now, having finished the school--and by the way, was that school based, then, on the practical experiences of handling artillery in World War I?

HANDY: Oh, yes.

BURG: And yet you have just come through that. May I ask you, Did you learn from that experience?

HANDY: A great deal.

BURG: Did you really?

HANDY: Yes, sir. After all, you get so you can do things, you know, when you have to, when you are at the front, but there was a lot to be learned, still.

BURG: Were you sharing among the class, you were sharing experiences you had all had?

HANDY: Oh, yes.

BURG: So that would tend to add to your knowledge.



HANDY: Oh, yes. Yes, we went to school at Sill for practically twelve months, one of the longest army schools. There I saw and did an awful lot of shooting and everything. It was a good school. Then I went back to Sill later (1925) for the Advanced Class.

BURG: Oh, you did? How long, after, was that?



HANDY: Well, it was several years. At the end of the course, I guess it was December--this would be 1920--I was ordered here to San Antonio to the 15th Field Artillery. I think they then called it Camp Travis--something like that. We were in the 2nd Division. I had a battery and everything was fine, and then all of a sudden I was ordered to VMI--middle of the summer of '21--and I spent the next four years there on ROTC duty.

BURG: I see. As professor of military science and tactics?

HANDY: An assistant PMS and T: I wasn't the senior, but I had the artillery end of things at VMI for four years, from '21 to '25.

BURG: Who was your senior man, may I ask?

HANDY: Well, first, it was a cavalryman named Albert Dockery, and then later Harding Polk came. Incidentally, this General Polk who recently retired from the command in Europe--he was a little shaver like that when I knew him in Lexington. His daddy, Harding Polk was the PMS and T.

BURG: Uh-huh. Four years of that duty, how did you like that?

HANDY: I found it very interesting. We had many advantages at VMI they didn't have at other places. We gave the cadets these courses at the Institute and then we took them to camp when they were second classmen, you know, for six weeks in the summer. Also we were fortunate in that all our people--practically all of them--accepted commissions in the Reserve. I thought the government got good value for the money spent on them.

BURG: I see. Was one of the advantages the fact that this was a four-year military school in comparison with, say, an agricultural college?



HANDY: Yes, the military wasn't voluntary at all. As a matter of fact, a lot of schools were worried about academic credits, you know, for ROTC work. We didn't have to worry about that at all, because it didn't make any difference how few credits we got; the guy had to have the credits to graduate. And all cadets were required to take the ROTC courses. They couldn't belong to ROTC if they were physically disqualified, don't you see. But they had to take the course, the same as the rest of the cadets. So, we had many advantages that schools where the ROTC was entirely voluntary did not have. There wasn't any question about it.



BURG: Plus the fact that you, yourself, were really a relatively few years out of your own experiences as a cadet at VMI.

HANDY: Well, yes; I graduated in 1914, and this was '21.

BURG: Now, at the end of your VMI service, what was the next assignment that they gave to you?

HANDY: Well, believe it or not, the next assignment was to go back to Sill to take the Advanced Course. They had a battery

officers' course, and then they had an advanced course, I spent nine months, approximately, at Sill. I went there in the fall of '25, and we graduated in '26.

BURG: Now, presumably, the first course you took was all predicated towards building your experiences as a battery officer--

HANDY: That's right.

BURG:--did the advance course move--

HANDY: Oh, yes, they went into tactics more.

BURG: Let me just ask you this, if you recollect the syllabus.

Were the artillery tactics that you learned in 1926 significantly different from the tactics that you had been applying on the western front?

HANDY: Well, now, I've got to jump ahead a little bit--since you've asked that question, but I'll expound on it in a minute. When I left Sill I went to Leavenworth the next year.

BURG: '27?

HANDY: Yes, '26 and '27--see, we went in the middle of the



year. I finished at Leavenworth in 1927--didn't have any business being there because I was still a captain, way junior, but, anyhow, I did. From Leavenworth I was ordered to Ft. Lewis, Washington, and had a battery in the 10th F.A. I also did some duty in Brigade Headquarters. And from Lewis I was ordered to Panama, on the general staff of General Malin Craig. Again which I hardly had any business being on the G.S. you see. And that was 1929. So I served for a couple of years in Panama on the department staff, '29 to '31. In 1931 I came back to Sill for the third time, this time for duty with the school--this is what I'm coming to.

BURG: As an instructor?



HANDY: Yes. And the Assistant Commandant of the school--I don't know whether you know how they run these service schools--but the Assistant Commandant is the boy that really runs the school. There was a commander over all the post but everything in the school was under the Assistant Commandant, a lieutenant colonel named Lesley J. McNair. He was one of the most capable people we had in the army, from my experience. He was assistant commandant, and a

very remarkable man: I think he knew more about every course in the school than the people who were teaching them--but all in a very quiet way. Many of the things that I think were responsible for the effectiveness of our artillery in World War II were under development there, then. As a matter of fact, the schools were laboratory-like and served as laboratories for development of new tactics and techniques. An important, probably the most important example was in fire direction which made the big difference in the effectiveness of our artillery. Our artillery was awfully good in World War II, and in fire direction we had the techniques to make it so. And we got some fairly good new material--one of the best things we ever did was giving all those seventy-fives to the British. Fire Direction was developed, was under development, right there at Sill under Colonel McNair. So, when you asked about the new ideas and so on, Colonel McNair had plenty of new ideas and the school worked them out, time and again, don't you see. And that fire direction system was the big difference that made it feasible to really control and maneuver your fire.



That was the big difference. I think our fire control was better than that of the Germans, or anybody else's.

BURG: Is it safe for me to say, General, that there was one instance where we entered a war, World War II, having profited from and improved greatly upon the lessons we had learned in the previous war?

HANDY: Well, I don't know about the lessons of the previous war--as a matter of fact, I guess everybody always wanted to control fire, you see, but nobody had developed the techniques and the system to do it effectively. McNair and the school did it there. Colonel McNair, you know, is the fellow who organized the PID down here in Texas.

BURG: PID, sir?

HANDY: Provisional Infantry Division--an experimental division. This war was the first one we ever went into with the basic organization of the division developed and one with which, with



minor changes, we went through the war. That had never happened before; we had always changed organization radically. Certainly we did in World War I. And McNair had developed that division down here.

BURG: Now, was that the triangular division?

HANDY: Yes, sir.



BURG: We had monkeyed around a bit with the square divisions, and so on.

HANDY: Well, we had the square, big, divisions back in World War I, you know, when we had two brigades each of two regiments. Twenty-seven thousand men in a division, back in World War I.

BURG: Then the triangular drops that to three regiments of infantry and perhaps fifteen thousand men?

HANDY: Yes, fifteen, sixteen--around there, yes.

BURG: All right, fine. Let's retrace our steps just a little bit, and take you back to going to Command and General Staff

School at Leavenworth--now, you spoke about the fact, with a smile on your face, that you didn't deserve to be there: you were a captain at the time?

HANDY: Yes, they didn't send such juniors.

BURG: Let me ask, How come General Handy goes there as a captain?

HANDY: Well, I don't know. Maybe there was a policy change. But I was very fortunate, not only on that, but on many other things.

BURG: Well, very fortunate, General, or had you come to somebody's attention who assisted in steering you there?

HANDY: I don't think so. I tell you--you know, I'm so old now I guess I can philosophize or "yak" a little bit, but we had a very, in a way, discouraging period between wars in the army. We were way down in strength and everything else, don't you see. When people talk about economy nowadays, I tell them they don't know what economy is. You know, we were down to a hundred and seventeen thousand men and it was quite discouraging. And I think



the school system, really, was responsible for the fact that we did as well as we did in World War II. We did continue the school system, and that was very good. But, you know, I get back to General George C. Marshall--General Marshall went a long time, as you probably know, without a promotion. He was supposed to have been promoted in World War I, and they didn't quite make it. He was in the same bracket with Hugh A. Drum, Douglas MacArthur and those people--all of whom were promoted and continued as general officers. Well, he (General Marshall) was a lieutenant colonel and spent years in that grade. General Pershing finally told them in the War Department 'If you don't hurry up and promote George Marshall, he can't ever be Chief of Staff of the Army.' It was quite discouraging to General Marshall, I'm sure. But he told me one time, talking about jobs and all that, 'I don't think you can control these things.' He said, "The only thing you can do," and this is pretty damned sound, I think, "is to--and you can do this--you can be prepared for it if the opportunity comes." And that's where a hell of a lot of people have fallen down; they



weren't ready when the opportunity came. And I think your man, Ike, was a good illustration. He went along in these not so "piping" times of peace for many years. Of course, he had interesting jobs: he was in the War Department with MacArthur, and then he went to the Philippines, and all that.

BURG: And he had been with Fox Connor, too.

HANDY: Oh, yes, who was one--

BURG: Which it seems to me--

HANDY:--of the very best--and he (Ike) had a very high opinion of Fox Connor. Incidentally, did he ever tell you what Fox Connor said one time?

BURG: No.

HANDY: Well, I think Ike thought about it, maybe, later on. You know, it isn't simple or easy, this business of making war with Allies, even though you speak the same language and everything.

BURG: Right, I know.



HANDY: It's quite a complicated affair. Fox Connor was Pershing's G-3, you know, back in World War I and he is supposed to have said this--"If you want to have a decent war, run an effective war, the first thing you ought to do, by God, is get rid of all your allies."

BURG: Leaves you a less complicated war to fight.

HANDY: Very much less. But I know Ike had a very high opinion of Fox Connor.

BURG: Yes, he did.

HANDY: Quite a remarkable man, quite a remarkable man.

BURG: Now with you harking back to General Marshall's advice, opportunity came when you were still a captain--

HANDY: Well, I went to Leavenworth and Leavenworth was pretty hard to get to in those days. I used to tell my Navy friends later on at the War College--they'd talk about selection--I said, "You guys haven't got any strong selection system at all." But back there, for instance, in my own branch, when it came time



to go to the War College, there were something like five or six hundred people who were, by age and everything, in the bracket to go to the War College, and, hell, we had about twenty or twenty-five to go. And these other fellows, most of them never could go; they would get too old, don't you see. It was automatic. So I said, 'We've got a very selective selection system,' and that's what it was. You know, you had to get to Leavenworth and these schools if you were going to have any chance for eventual promotion. However I don't think most guys thought much about that. We figured we would be lucky if we ended up as colonels.

BURG: Well, given the kind of promotion that you were getting in the 1920's, why--

HANDY: Oh, boy! We had people that stayed lieutenants for seventeen years.

BURG: Yes. Reminds you of the Indian-fighting army before the turn of the century. Where you had gray-haired 2nd lieutenants.



HANDY: Yes. Well, we had lieutenants with seventeen years service.

BURG: Now, when you did get to Leavenworth, did you find that you were prepared for the kind of work that you did there for that year?

HANDY: Oh, yes. I'd had a year just before that in the Advanced Class at Sill. And all this business--combat orders, a lot of things--we'd had to solve map problem and all that, you know, at Sill. And you had this: I don't know, maybe we were better prepared than fellows that come right out of school--we hadn't come right out of school--but you at least had the "canned" language, you know what I mean. And furthermore, I think we had this, which to my mind is very important. At Leavenworth we had a few, three or four, captains there, but we had colonels in the class, I mean real colonels. Well, they were always saying that they were 'Sending people too old,' My observation was that a man's mental ability or alertness or the way he got along in school, if you want, was not so much a function of his age--none of them were old enough to be senile, you see. But it was a function, if you want to call it that, of his mental habits or practices. Now, for instance, I remember one particularly



because later he was my boss in Panama--

(Interruption)

HANDY: Colonel Aubrey Lippincott had come to Leavenworth from the Cavalry School--I think he was assistant commandant or had one of the departments in cavalry school at Ft. Riley. In other words, he had been in the school business, and had to study and so on. He was a full colonel. Well, he was far more mentally alert and more capable of taking the school than majors who hadn't cracked a book for seven or eight years, if you know what I mean. In other words, it was a question of mental habits or what they had been doing--whether they had really kept their minds active or not. At the school at Leavenworth--I think everybody was qualified, some had more difficulty than others, but I think everybody they sent there they had been subject to quite a selective process, and were perfectly capable of taking what the school had to give. You had to be careful that you didn't, weren't too inclined to believe everything



the school told you.

BURG: I see, yes. But you don't put that so strongly that you watched, you were careful about everything--in other words, the school, you felt, was at a pretty high level of achievement, itself.

HANDY: Oh, yes, there's no question about it. They gave a very good foundation in techniques of staff work and in handling a division.

BURG: They used the syndicate system?

HANDY: What do you mean by syndicate?

BURG: Where they would group you up to solve a problem?

HANDY: Oh, certain ones, but not near as much as they did in the War College or in the Naval War College. A lot of it was individual work--where you had individual problems, map problems--you sweat blood over those, and worked like hell and sometimes come up with a big fat juicy "U"--which was an unsatisfactory solution.



BURG: I see. The solution didn't appeal to the staff--

HANDY: That's right, there was an approved solution. You didn't have to have it exactly, you see--it came out later on--but you had to be in the bracket. But Leavenworth was a good school.

BURG: Now, May I ask where you graduated in your class?

HANDY: Well, as a matter of fact, I think I was reasonably well up in the class, fortunately.

BURG: Yeah. You don't happen to remember your placement--that you were "X" in a field of two hundred and fifty or something like that?

HANDY: Well, I really have forgotten, but I think I was in the first ten percent.

BURG: I wouldn't be a bit surprised, judging from what occurred later on. Let me ask you this, Again, do you recollect from your Leavenworth experience any officers that you later came to work with closely in World War II?



HANDY: Oh, yes. I'm trying to think--ask me something else. I ran into various ones of them, but I don't seem to be able to list them right now.

BURG: If the names come to you, perhaps you could note them down because we would be interested in seeing whether you made contacts there that later helped you in the kind of work you had to do throughout World War II. For example, my thought would be that if you observe a man, one of your Leavenworth classmates, it might stick in your mind that there was a very keen mind and--



HANDY: Well, that's right, although you asked about the syndicate thing. I think that was--I won't say the trouble; they probably had to do it that way because they couldn't do otherwise. But, you learned more about your classmates' ability at Sill than you did at Leavenworth, because at Sill you were continually doing a lot of field work where you'd be on this fellows' staff today and he would be on yours tomorrow. He'd be the commander today for this problem, you'd be the commander tomorrow, don't you see, and so on. At Leavenworth it was more individual work and a

lot of it was solving problems on paper. Not so much of this at Sill. So there you got an idea of the capabilities, of the people you were in the class with. Also, it was a much smaller class; there were only about twenty-seven of us in the class at Sill and you knew a lot more about them than you did about your classmates at Leavenworth.

BURG: At Leavenworth, was it your habit to study on your own?

HANDY: Well, we used to get together and have "bull fests"-- Which was a very good thing. But, a lot of it was individual study and the solution of the problems was individual. They put you down in the map room and gave you a problem, and you on your own had to write an estimate of the situation or write an order and decide what you were going to do. They had--also, toward the end of the course, GTEs, General Terrain Exercises, where you went out and solved the problem on the ground, you see. But the work was turned in as individual solutions, generally.



BURG: So, it seems to me, they, that what results is that you come out of your year at Leavenworth with a pretty firm appre-

ciation of your own abilities to cope with these situations-- that is, in a way it's giving you a great deal of confidence in yourself.

HANDY: Well, of course, they had--a lot of people thought they had too many problems at Leavenworth, you see, but that was it: they were trying to train you to make decisions. So they gave you a lot of them to make.

BURG: Because I note later on in the war, examples of great confidence among leaders of armies, and corps, and divisions-- they make decisions and seem to make them firmly. When I say, "without hesitation," I don't mean hurriedly, but I mean, the decisions were there to be made, and these men made them with what seemed to be great confidence.

HANDY: Yes. And they taught you quite a bit of technique, too, you know, issuing of orders and all that. But, I think they were trying to train you, as much as anything else, for decisions. Of course, the course was supposed to qualify you for command duty, and also for general staff duty.



BURG: Now, General, as you look back on it, later on, was anything outstandingly wrong in the kind of preparation you got at Leavenworth for the work you actually then did?

(Interruption)

HANDY: I said this before: I think, and like everything else, our school systems are certainly subject to improvement; but I still believe they did a darned good job, overall, and the results showed it. But--you asked me what was wrong. There was one thing I think our school system fell down on, and I don't mean just Leavenworth, but the War College, too--I went to the War College afterwards. They taught you quite a bit about operations, and ours were pretty good, I believe. They also taught you quite a bit about logistics, maybe not as much as they should have, but quite a bit--at least you had an idea of the scale of the problems involved, and how dependent everything was on it. And they taught you quite a bit about intelligence. I guess, we messed up the G-2 business badly in the beginning of the war, but before we got through we got pretty good at it. The one thing--and these were the four big things, you see--where I think the schools fell down--maybe it wasn't their fault--was this: --personnel, the handling



of the personnel, which of course is basic to everything else. I asked a lot of our senior commanders after the war, "Now, you all were trained, and so on, in the schools; did you get anything that was really worthwhile, or did you even get a hold of the real personnel problems from the schools?" Well, practically all of them said no. And every commander will tell you that--I say seventy-five percent, probably ninety percent or better, of their problems are not of operations, and not of logistics, and not of intelligence, but of personnel. And if you solve the personnel problems, the others all fall into place. They're the most difficult of all. Now, the real problems--for example take the replacement thing; General Marshall said once during the war that he was sick and tired of going through one crisis after another (which we did), about replacements. Those kind of problems. Now, maybe they can't teach such things to you in school, but my criticism would be that that is one thing, or one big subject, that our school system might have done a good deal better on.



BURG: Now, you're speaking now of personnel on the broad scale-- for example--

HANDY: Oh, yes. In the schools you made out a few G-1 reports and all that, don't you see, but I'm not talking about that. I'm

talking about the really gutty problems with personnel, which are the big, well, I'd say they were basic, to all other problems. But I don't have to tell you that--you know that. It's true, not only true in the army, but it's true everywhere else, I think.

BURG: Right, getting the bodies who can do the job.

HANDY: I don't--know, maybe you can't teach a guy that in a school. But, most of these commanders agreed--as a matter of fact I never heard one disagree. I said, 'Did you ever, did you get out of your experience in the army school systems a grasp of, or in any way ability to handle the real personnel problems that came up later?' And most of them said no, they hadn't; but that they had gotten other things out of the schools.



BURG: Right. And to make it clear, you were not so much concerned with personnel in the sense of 'Where do I get the three corps commanders and ten division commanders that I need,' but rather the problem of, 'How much manpower will we have available to us, how many divisions will we need, how will we train those divisions and move them into combat and provide replacements for them,' and this kind of thing?

HANDY: Yes, particularly that last, keeping them going. You have a lot of difficulty in putting divisions in combat and keeping them going. That's one thing we did a good job on-- there were great difficulties, but we kept our divisions going but it was not easy.

BURG: Right. And I'm right, am I not, that our system was that the division could pretty much stay in the line; the replacements came to it, unlike the British who often would allow a battalion-- well, not in this war, but I was thinking of the First World War, where a British battalion would go through an offensive, be very low in numbers, have to be pulled out of the line, drafts brought up from the service battalions and sent back in.



HANDY: Well, yes. We did a lot of that in World War I, too, particularly with the infantry; the artillery never got out of line.

BURG: Right. Well, all right, later on that will be something that I want to talk to you about, because I can see that it was one of the huge headaches that you had to cope with throughout your experiences in World War II. Now, after Leavenworth, you again got a little more schooling, in effect.

HANDY: Well, I went to a regiment out at Lewis--I told you.

BURG: Oh, that was when you went to the regiment at Lewis?

HANDY: Yes, and after two years there I went to Panama and served a couple of years on the staff down there under General Malin Craig, who was department commander, and then under General P. Brown--I don't know whether you've ever heard of him. He was supposed to be the meanest man in the army, but one of the most brilliant minds I've ever been associated with.

BURG: Is he alive, General?

HANDY: Oh, no, he's been dead for several years.

BURG: Now, how about your rank, may I ask you that, too--at Ft. Lewis and then in Panama?

HANDY: I was made a major at Lewis. When I was at Lewis I was promoted, and I was a major all the time I was in Panama. As a matter of fact, I was, after I came back to Washington--I've forgotten the dates when I made lieutenant colonel. But I was made a major at Lewis.



BURG: Now, you also attended the War College. Was that immediately after Panama?

HANDY: No, I went back to Sill and was at Sill from '31 to '34-- three years with Colonel McNair. That's when I told you about him developing our fire direction system and a good many other things. But, now wait a minute, '34--I'll get it right--I went from Sill to the War College in 1934, that's right. I was at the War College '34 and '35, and then they sent a few of us from there to the Naval War College. I was there for the next year.

BURG: I noted that you had had both experiences. Was that a fairly new development at the time that you went?



HANDY: No, they'd been sending people right along, a few. They had a few people at our War College, the Navy did. I think there were four or five of us who went to Newport--something like that.

BURG: I would assume that you found that to be a valuable experience-- in later events.

HANDY: Oh, yes, and very interesting, because a lot of it was new to me. Of course I--I don't know if you ought to put this on the recording or not--but after the war, you know, it was very evident

that we needed more coordination. We were all for the idea of a National War College, you see--some coordination--but I was a little hesitant about the Navy. I wasn't sure they knew what a War College really was. At the time I went to the Naval War College, they had a junior course which was purely tactical and technical and then they had a senior course. We took the senior course. Also they had a group of fairly senior officers at the College, who were doing what they called "advanced studies." They were studying mobilization and things like that. But I felt that much of the course we took was on the Leavenworth rather than the War College level--in other words, we fought lots of problems. They had an immense big game room there, with thousand meter squares on the floor and you moved the ships and flew the airplanes--you know, all the--

BURG: Oh, they were handling tactical naval matters.

HANDY: Absolutely, a lot of them. They had a department of tactics and a department of strategy. Incidentally, every time anybody talks about strategy and tactics, I say, "What do you mean?" Because everybody has a different meaning for these terms as you know. The Navy had a good rule to make the distinction--It got a little complicated with air and submarines, but if you could see the other guy it was tactics; if you couldn't see him, it was strategy.



BURG: Oh, that's pretty good!

HANDY: It is not bad at all!

BURG: That's pretty good, indeed!

HANDY: Yes. Well, that was the dividing line between their tactical and strategic problems. As I said, the submarines and air kind of messed it up a little. But the course was interesting, varied; it was a very pleasant year, too. I enjoyed it, and I am sure that in later association with the Navy it was advantageous. I went from the Naval War College in 1936 to Washington--that's the first time I'd ever been stationed there except at the Army War College which was in Washington then. But the first time I was ever stationed in Washington, as a regular station, was '36. I went to the War Plans Division. Besides handling War Plans and Projects we did the work on the Joint Planning Committee and handled most of the business with the Navy.



BURG: Right. Well, that's something that I think I will probably start with in our next interview--that period. Let me ask one more question before I go today: looking back at your Army War College experience and your Leavenworth experience, did you find

that you had to work harder at the War College than you had at Leavenworth, or was your level of work load about the same at both places?

HANDY: Well, I would say that as far as drudgery of work was concerned Leavenworth was much more. You see, what they were trying to do at Leavenworth was teach you tactics and technique; while at the War College you were supposed to develop them. It was that kind of a thing. Oftentimes they tried to put the War College back on the Leavenworth basis. Some people had ideas, you know, on that level, where you went by a bunch of rules and so on. But the one advantage of the War College was--that you could stick your feet up on the desk and do a little thinking and it was one of the first times you had ever had a chance to do it. And the sky was the limit for solutions for anything. You see, at Leavenworth, very definitely, it was set pieces and so on. They taught you doctrine while at the War College you were supposed to develop doctrine. And that was OK. A guy's got to really know the rules before he is able to intelligently break them, you know. Like they say about the great artist: he's got to really know all the techniques before he's capable of deciding when he can depart



from them. You see what I mean? And that was the type of course, and it was very good at the War College. As you can surmise, some people didn't work too hard, particularly some of our visiting friends.

BURG: Visiting, that is, from other countries, or perhaps from the Navy?

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Those from the Navy?

HANDY: Well, some of them did, but some of them were just putting in a year. But it was interesting and pleasant. They used the committee system. They'd assign a committee a subject to study, you know, and you had so long to research it, and then you had to get up and write a report and present it to the class. Such subjects as mobilization, promotion, organization, etc. A lot of logistics problems, and then toward the end of the year we had war games.

BURG: Oh, they did?

HANDY: Oh, yes, Yes, sir.

BURG: Now, war games physically using troops in the field?

HANDY: Oh, no, it was all theory. It was all on paper.



BURG: Because I hadn't been aware that there was that much of a practical application.

HANDY: Oh, no, not at all. As a matter of fact, to go back--now, I'm spending a lot of time talking about this school business--one disadvantage at Leavenworth was that it was purely theoretical--you never handled troops there at all, whereas at Sill you did. What you were studying at Sill--the major tactical unit, anyhow, in artillery is a battalion--was how to handle a battalion. You had to take a battalion out in the field, and put it in position, and establish communications and fire. We had a lot of field work at Sill. That was due mostly to the numbers involved and the fact they didn't have the troops at Leavenworth--you were playing around with divisions, not battalions, you see. Leavenworth is mainly theory and the War College is, too; it has to be.



BURG: But a much more exploratory kind of theory at the War College.

HANDY: Yes. In other words, you were supposed to develop the tactics or the strategy, or develop ideas about them.

BURG: Do you remember anyone who now stands out in your mind as being a pretty promising fellow student of yours at the War College?

HANDY: Well--Art Wilson was quite a guy there, and I'd have to think back. Johnny Hodges was a classmate of mine in the War College. Another was Joe Swing--He's the fellow that Ike made Commissioner of Immigration--he was a classmate of Ike's at West Point. Incidentally, I was also at Sill with Swing. Joe had the 11th Airborne Division, and had a corps out in the Pacific. Ike made him Commissioner of Immigration, if you remember and he was one of the few guys that Kennedy held on there for a year or so. He now lives in San Francisco.

BURG: Well, the reason I probably don't recognize his name is that, on the military side, we don't do much with the Pacific War; most of our work is with North Africa, Sicily, Italy, up to northwest Europe.

HANDY: Well, Joe served in the Pacific there--but we sent him to Europe as an observer at the Sicily operation. He was serving with one of the airborne outfits here in the States--I think as the artillery commander or assistant division commander with Matt Ridgway. We sent him over to observe the airborne operation in Sicily. It was terrible you remember when we shot down our own planes and all that? A real mess. When Joe came back, he came in and told me the story--it was awful. And I said, "We're going in



and tell this to the Old Man." So he told General Marshall, and General Marshall said, "Swing, I want you to go down and tell Arnold just exactly what you have told me." Hap Arnold was quite a remarkable man and in many ways a hell of a "doer". In fact, I believe we never would have had the Air Force we had if we hadn't had a guy like Hap Arnold. When he heard Swing's report he hit that squawk box on about a dozen keys at once and started talking into it. He really tore that so-called troop carrier command to pieces right then and there, you know; it wasn't ten minutes 'till they had a new commander and everything else.



BURG: Oh, boy! So much work the night

in with Messin Africa, Sicily, Italy, as

HANDY: Well, Joe Swing's report, you see--it was awful, on that thing in Sicily. Of course, we were fumbling around, as you know, on a lot of things and that operation was a mess. It wasn't the only mess, as you know, that we had. We had plenty of messes--we had plenty of them in Africa.

BURG: Yeah. Well, it added to the hesitation, I'm sure about using the 82nd and the 101st there in Normandy. I suppose Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory was remembering it.

HANDY: Of course. You know what happened between Leigh-Mallory and Ike?

BURG: Uh-huh, the story of his great reluctance to let them go, and the very heavy casualties that he predicted.

HANDY: And it certainly put Ike on the spot.

BURG: Indeed.

HANDY: This guy was, you might say Ike's principal air advisor. Of course Ike had Tedder as a Deputy but Leigh-Mallory was the Tactical Air Commander. He was an honest fellow, you see, and if he really believed that the airborne operation would be a disaster it was his job to tell Ike that. That's one time old Monty came through.

BURG: Oh, he did?

HANDY: Oh, yes, the fellows who were present tell me Monty really came through. He told Leigh-Mallory, "You don't talk like that at this stage of the game." And you don't.

BURG: Yes, it was all laid on and Leigh-Mallory had second thoughts.



HANDY: Oh, it was too late, then, don't you see. But if he felt that it was going to be a disaster, it was his duty to say so-- but he should have told Ike a hell of a long time before the operation was to take place. That's the whole thing. Monty was absolutely right. That wasn't the time to talk about it, but it put Ike on a hell of a spot.

BURG: Sure did.



This interview is being conducted in San Antonio on May 22nd, 1973 with General Thomas Handy and the people present are General Handy and Dr. Burg from the Eisenhower Library staff.



DR BURG: We have a list of questions which I sent to General Handy and General Handy has made some notes on these various questions. What we'll do is start with General Handy's going to Washington in 1936, where he was assigned to the Joint Planning Division. In today's sessions we'll just go until General Handy tells me to stop. So we'll be governed by you, sir; any time you want to just chop it off, fine and dandy, because I'll get back down here to San Antonio with some frequency. So if we start with that assignment to Washington, you told me the last time I was here that was your first real stationing in Washington. You went to War Plans and to the Joint Planning Division. Now what kind of duty did you do then?

GENERAL HANDY: War Plans Division was a division of the General Staff like G-1, G-2, and so forth and so on. And it wasn't any separate joint planning staff. There was a joint board, made up of the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations, and the heads of two war plans division, Navy and Army.



BURG: Right.

HANDY: Then there was the joint planning committee, which is down on the working level, members of war plans [divisions] of the Army and Navy. They're the ones that, you know, produced the papers and did the work under the direction of the general board. And after I had been there for a year or two--I've forgotten just how long--in the war plans division, I was a member of the joint planning committee that did take part in some of the general planning.

BURG: So by the time that you were taking part in joint planning, it was probably about 1937-38?

HANDY: Might have been.

BURG: General, do you remember, compared to what happened later, was there a sense of urgency in your group? Did you feel the pressure of events as you did your work?

HANDY: No, not in 1936 and '37. As time went on and the situation got hotter in Europe, I think what you call "the

sense of urgency" built up. Now as I recall it--when was it? '39? When the Germans bombed Warsaw, wasn't it?



BURG: Yes, they hit Poland in September of '39.

HANDY: Yeah. Certainly it was quite urgent in all the fields.

BURG: Right. Now your work in planning dealt with planning for the Pacific and planning with regard to what might happen in Europe, too?

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Now were you one of those officers at that time who came to believe, let's say in 1939 and '40, that our chief enemy was probably going to be in Europe and our chief effort, whatever it might be, would be in Europe?

HANDY: Well, I don't--I wouldn't say that my thinking was that clear-cut and definite at that time.

BURG: As far as you were concerned your job was to look at both sides of the world.



HANDY: After all, you see, the Navy particularly, and us to a certain extent, for years figured that the main threat was the other way, in the Pacific, you know. We were looking at Japan awfully hard, particularly the Navy, for years. And I was trying to think of the color. We had "color" plans in those days.

BURG: The Rainbow plans?

HANDY: No, that came on shortly before we got in the war, but this was--I think the Japanese thing was the orange plan. And that was--I think everybody considered it the most critical and the most important, you see. And at that time we didn't have anything I would class as definite enough to call it a plan for war in Europe against Germany, or against England; you know these color plans went all over the world, that's the way we designated it.

BURG: And these were contingency plans--

HANDY: Oh, yes, yes.

BURG: --in case something did break. Now you remained on that duty and were on that duty when the war broke out--I mean, when Japan attacked us? Or had you--



HANDY: No, no. I left Washington in 1940. See, my tour expired and we had this "Manchu" Act. I had been there four years on the General Staff and that's as long as you were supposed to serve there. There was a law against it, you know, the Manchu Act they called it. And I thought, and hoped, I was through with Washington forever. [Laughter] No, I went down and spent a year with the 2nd Armored Division at Benning. That's where I first met Georgie Patton; he got to be the division commander before I left.

BURG: Uh-huh, I see.

HANDY: And then in the summer of 1941--see, things had changed in Washington and gotten a lot hotter and [Brig. Gen. Leonard T.] Gerow was back there as head of War Plans. He'd been in the division at one time when I was in it before; he was the executive of it. And I don't know whether it was "Gee", or

somebody, got me ordered back. I was only away for about a year and I went back in the middle of 1941 and joined War Plans again, and that's where I stayed.



BURG: Do you remember what your feelings were when they pulled you out of 2nd Armored and sent you back to Washington, D.C.?

HANDY: Well, I'll put it this way, not pleased, to say the least. Because I thought I was rid of the whole thing. I had an outfit in the 2nd Armored and we were, I thought, getting along all right; and it was very interesting, and I thought I was really finished with Washington.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: Hoped so anyhow.

BURG: Now in the 2nd Armored, were you working then under George Patton? Was he--

HANDY: Yeah. At first, when the division was organized, old

[Gen. Charles L.] Scott, General Scott, was in command and they had a brigadier in Georgie, who was the brigadier. Then later on Scott went up to the Armored force at Knox and Georgie got the division; he was the division commander.

BURG: Was that your first close contact with Patton, sir?

HANDY: Yes, first close contact. I had met him, but--

BURG: Uh-huh. How did you react to him as a commanding officer, General?

HANDY: Well, I'll tell you. I've often said this about Georgia Patton. He could--I'll say this first--actually, that fellow could get more out of officers and men than anybody I've ever seen. It was very remarkable. Now, he did a lot of what appeared to be wild and crazy things but somebody said, "Patton is crazy; yeah, he's crazy like a fox."

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: He was smart, but he did have the ability. Boy! I



think he was one of the most remarkable commanders I've ever seen. He would give you immortal hell but he wasn't a nagger, don't you see. And he was just as quick if he felt you did something right, and just as excessive in praising you as he was the other way. [Laughter]

BURG: I see, I see.

HANDY: No, I think that he was quite a remarkable person. Now this is not the place to go into a long dissertation on Georgie Patton. But certainly he had his faults, and sometimes he did things you wondered why he did them; they looked crazy and all that, but--to go back and repeat what I said, I think he could get more out of officers and men than any man I've ever seen.

BURG: Were you leading on armored formation at that time?

HANDY: I had one of the artillery battalions in the division. 78th Field Artillery.

BURG: Uh-huh, right. Let me just ask this before we move on. Did it seem to you that artillery in that armored outfit



was being used in a new and significant and useful kind of way?



HANDY: Well, it certainly was being used in a useful way. I don't know whether it was so new or not. I don't know whether-- it wasn't any different from the way we had been doing before, basically. There was a great deal more mobility, and so on, and we could move faster and more often than we had been able to with the horses. And the people you were basically supporting --we had some infantry in the division, too.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: Our particular job was to form a direct support for the 1st Infantry. But in supporting it, and the tanks, too, it was different from supporting straight foot infantry, don't you see?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Because the movement was a great deal faster.

BURG: It sounds to me as though this kind of use of field artillery appealed to you.

HANDY: Oh, yeah! Well, everybody was--in that division anyhow--was very enthusiastic, don't you see?

BURG: Probably because of the nature of the commanding officer and the way he--

HANDY: Well that always has an effect. You see, that was the first armored division we'd ever had.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: We'd had the mechanized cavalry at Knox but--mechanized forced they called it--but they organized the 1st and 2nd Armored at that time. The 1st was at Knox and we were at Benning, the 2nd. And it was really the first armored division. We were in that hike to Panama City, Florida, and not too long after that I had a hell of a time. Had to send up and get trucks, and people went to Detroit, and everything else. But it was a hell of a go-ahead outfit.



BURG: Yes. And remained that way. It had that kind of reputation in the war, too.

HANDY: Ike said once after these maneuvers, you know, down here when he was Krueger's chief of staff. Something came up about the 2nd Armored and Ike said, "Well, that division's got a soul."

BURG: Yes. I can believe that. What was the motto? "Hell on Wheels", wasn't it, in that division?

HANDY: Yeah. [Laughter]

BURG: Well, when you went to Washington, General, to whom did you report?

HANDY: To Gerow, the executive officer.

BURG: Do you happen to remember what he said to you when you walked into the office?

HANDY: No. I figured he wouldn't think I was too well pleased to be there. I don't remember what he said to me. He was, I think--incidentally, I keep digressing--



BURG: That's all right.

HANDY: --one of the finest people I've ever known. Gerow.

BURG: What qualities did you admire in him, General?



HANDY: Well, I'll tell you one thing, I just won't attempt to point out all his qualities, and I couldn't. But you see, I was there during the Pearl Harbor thing, and so on, and it really--we had a G-2 then. War Plans wasn't at that time what it became later, operations, don't you see, and we weren't really--in a way, if you want to go into it, we weren't responsible for the intelligence to tell what the Japs were going to do. G-2 was, you see.

BURG: Uh-huh, sure.

HANDY: But, after it was all over and the thing really exploded, and I read--you asked about the Roberts report; I didn't read it, but most of these others I've read, and also was questioned once or twice. And then they tried to blame the old man, you know, later on, and had all that big thing.

BURG: General Marshall?

HANDY: Yeah. The only man, if you go through that, that I ever saw or heard of that took any responsibility, whatsoever, on himself for Pearl Harbor--besides General Marshall--was Gerow, and he could have very easily said, "it wasn't my business."

BURG: But he did take responsibility.

HANDY: He took some responsibility and he was the only guy of all of them, the G-2er's and everybody else. And you got to admire a fellow like that.

BURG: General Handy, did he feel that he could have perhaps impressed the people in Pearl Harbor with a little more of the urgency of the situation?

HANDY: We aren't going to get into a disucssion of Pearl Harbor, are we? [Laugther]

BURG: No, no. But since it does--since General Gerow did assume some responsibility--



HANDY: Yeah.

BURG: --I wondered where he felt he had--



HANDY: Well, you know this Monday morning quarterbacking; you see a lot of things that you might do different. I don't know, maybe he would have. I wouldn't answer that. But all this Pearl Harbor business, you know; they wrote all kinds of things on it, and so on. This one fellow wrote a paper--I've forgotten who it was--submitted it up there on Pearl Harbor. And he said--they asked me to look it over--and he said in there, and he wasn't the only one that said it, with all the information we had, and so on, what you couldn't understand was that Pearl Harbor happened as, practically, a complete surprise, see?

BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: With all the warnings, all the communications, and everything else, that that was the unanswered question. I said, "Hell, as far as I'm concerned it isn't unanswered at all!" I said this before. I said, "I think I know the reason

for Pearl Harbor." And they said, "What is it?" I said, "By God, nobody believed it could happen!" Now I don't care what you tell a man, if he fundamentally believes--and none of us believed it could happen without any warning. Now that included the people in Washington and the people out in Hawaii, too! They had plenty of warning! If you go through the stuff that was sent out there; people have torn their shirts off with much less warning. Everybody was trying to blame everybody else--



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --after it was over. But I think myself that that was the fundamental explanation for Pearl Harbor! We never had any conception! Now if the Japs had hit the Philippines, or hit down around Camranh Bay; we'd studied all those things; we wouldn't have been really shocked and surprised.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: One of those outfits asked me if Pearl Harbor was a

surprise to me, I said, "My God, it was a complete shock."

BURG: Yes. Well the reaction--

HANDY: Just couldn't believe it.

BURG: --within the country shows that, too.

HANDY: Well, and to my mind--

BURG: We were stunned.

HANDY: --as I say, I don't care--if you're convinced that you know a thing and believe a thing, I can sit here and tell you this might not happen, but I'm not going to first base, don't you see?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And this was practically universal. Of all the people, and I always had a little doubt of this--I won't mention his name--who were in any kind of a key position around the War Department or Navy Department at that time, I only know one guy that got up there and said he expected it.



BURG: One man did.

HANDY: Well, I won't--

BURG: --Naval officer?

HANDY: --I won't go into that. [Laughter]

BURG: Can you go that far? Can you tell if it was a Naval officer?

HANDY: Well, it wasn't an Army--but--

BURG: Thank you. [Laughter]

HANDY: --hell, we just couldn't believe it--

BURG: That's right.

HANDY: --you see. And it wasn't me, that was universal. And to my mind that is the real explanation for Pearl Harbor; nobody believed it could possibly happen without any warning!

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: And if anybody had told you that you could move the whole carrier task force all the way across the Pacific--see, the Navy had assured us they had practically all the capital ships spotted and they could trace them, don't you see?

BURG: Right.

HANDY: And before--I don't know whether it was immediately before--but if they had said that can be done, you'd have said, "It's just a wild dream, crazy dream; it's impossible!"

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Now, so if you got something that nobody believes is going to happen, I don't care how much warning, they're awful apt to get caught with their pants down.

BURG: Right, right.

HANDY: Well, maybe I'm all wrong. We aren't talking about--

BURG: Well,--

HANDY: --Pearl Harbor, anyhow.



BURG: --I appreciate that view, and that covers our first question on the Roberts report.



HANDY: Well, I didn't read that report; that's my answer to that.

BURG: All right. Then that second question, in the period of June '41, June '42, somewhere, Dr. Ambrose stated in his book, Supreme Commander, that you urged realism in 1942 in advising Marshall and Eisenhower. That you felt that the United States could not contribute in any important way to a 1942 invasion and that the British could not go it alone. Now we'd like to know, how well was your view received at that time?

HANDY: Well, let me answer this question in this way--these are my notes.

BURG: All right.

HANDY: To me this seems to miss the main point of the whole business. Our feeling was that the important thing was to get headed in the right direction; to decide on a major purpose and

primary or first objective. Unless there was a general agreement--it had to be a real agreement, Allied--on where we were going and everybody put his shoulder to the wheel, we would probably end up by scattering our resources all over and never reach a position where we could make a decisive move. Incidentally, the soundness of this view was shown by the continued, and at times almost desperate, efforts on our part to avoid this scatteration, even in the face of several so-called acceptances of the idea by the British of a cross-Channel invasion. The foregoing represents the real basis or reason for advocating a 1942 operation, without going into it. Certainly we always tried to be realistic and of course--whenever you say you'll be realistic, that's ABC--and of course, there was question as to the feasibility of an invasion in '42. However, if everybody had kept their eye on the ball and avoided all efforts not essential--such as, for example, TORCH--there can be made a case for an invasion in 1943.

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: We forgot that the build-up had been started in the UK and that we moved a lot of troops. The U.S. had moved U.S. troops to England, then we moved British and U.S. troops to Africa, and then brought them back again after TORCH was completed. This cost was dear, doubly dear; see, this double movement in what was always a key bottleneck, shipping.



BURG: Right, right.

HANDY: What could have happened if we had used everything for the UK buildup from the United States and forgotten about TORCH? Well--

BURG: That's clearly a strong belief of yours now, and that's the way you felt about it then, too?

HANDY: Well, yeah, we all did. What we were afraid of, and we were continually up against it, you see--they said we were stubborn and all that--unless we got headed in the right direction, we were going to end up--there were always demands for everything you have.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Now--cut off this thing and I'll tell you something--

[Interruption]

HANDY: --it was the UK. We had them there and in Ireland.
Northern Ireland. You know.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Then we turned around and moved that whole outfit or
the bulk of it to Africa, and the British all down there. And
we had to move them back before we could have the invasion!
Now what would we have done if we'd forgotten about the other
thing?

BURG: Uh-huh, uh-huh. But you were up against British ideas
that this was essential to do?

HANDY: Well, furthermore, I think I've got a note later on--

BURG: O.K.



HANDY: --when we go into TORCH business. I was never in favor of it myself. Maybe it isn't a nice thing to say now, since it went so well, but a lot of us were very doubtful of it.

BURG: Were you doubtful that it would go well, or were you just--

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: --you didn't even think that it would go well.

HANDY: Well, we thought that--I don't think--now, this is just my personal opinion--

BURG: Yes, sir.

HANDY: --we never put on an operation during the war where the risk was higher than in TORCH.

BURG: Never did? In either section of the war, the Pacific or in Europe?

HANDY: Well, let me qualify it, since we've gotten on the--



BURG: All right.

HANDY: --TORCH business. I want to say this. And furthermore, the reason, I think the real reason we did it, the President and the Prime Minister told us to. And there were many reasons. We were building up this big army and we didn't have any place to use them. Had to go and get a place, don't you see. All that.

BURG: Yes, indeed.

HANDY: And they wanted some action. And certainly it worked out. It had great advantages, don't you see, but in the first place, we still had in the back of our minds all the time this main objective not being put away.

BURG: No penny-packets all over the world.

HANDY: Well, this was certainly started in a major way, but the most important thing, single thing--if I had to pick out one thing in making war, this business--that you can have is possession of the initiative. You stop and think about it. In other words, having the other fellow scared of what you're going to do. My



God, we'd spent a year or so just scared to death of what the Germans were going to do, and we knew what it was, don't you see.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: Where they were going to move next--and you can't cover everything.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And, hell, it was not only in the Atlantic but in the Pacific. We were just about to get shoved out of the whole western Pacific; the Japs were in the process of it. And the Jap was a fellow that never stabilized; if you didn't push the hell out of him, he pushed the hell out of you. It was that kind of thing. Now in my view--and I'm getting way beyond anything you got here--I think the turning point of the war in Europe, in spite of all I said against TORCH and so on, was TORCH. Was the success of the North African operation, because after that, we were pushing the Boche and they were scared of what we were going to do; where we were coming next!



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And, boy, it's the difference between black and white. As a matter of fact, I would say the same thing about Guadalcanal in the Pacific. We were in the position of being pushed out of the Pacific, and we damned near were. And our people, as you know, hung on there for a long time just by the eyelash--

BURG: Right.

HANDY: --on Guadalcanal. Well--now this is not for any record, but if you search all the records you'll probably find out it's true. [Laughter] Both MacArthur and Nimitz, as bold as they were, said this thing wasn't feasible to do, this Guadalcanal operation, taking the offensive.

BURG: Oh, they didn't think it was feasible?

HANDY: The risk was too big.



BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: The Chiefs of Staff told them to do it, anyhow. Well, by God, that was the turning point of the war in the Pacific.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: After that, we were pushing the Jap instead of him pushing us. Now, maybe I'm all wet, but my view is that the turning point of the war, real turning point in Europe, was the North African invasion, and in the Pacific it was Guadalcanal. After that the other guy was scared of what we were going to do, and you can't have any bigger advantage than that.

BURG: So maybe if there had been no invasion until 19--

HANDY: So, what I'm going to end up by saying is this. I said it was, in my opinion, the biggest risk we took. But in looking back on it, the fact that it did give us a chance to seize the initiative maybe justified the risk. In other words, we wouldn't have been justified in taking risks like that at a later stage in the war. We couldn't possibly have justified it. But at



that time so much was at stake, and we were getting, you know, kicked right down the throat everywhere, all over the world! There weren't any damned successes anywhere! It was godawful, I want to tell you, when you're sitting there struggling and trying to cover everything and getting kicked here and there. So from that standpoint, it was justified I think. You can justify it. But, remember this. Nobody's wise enough, I don't think--regardless of all these guys talking about our strategy and being smart, and everything else--you can figure out what you think is the best thing and give it the best thought that you've got. I don't mean to say you can pull these things out of the hat.



BURG: No.

HANDY: But after you've done that, whether it succeeds or fails is beyond you, I don't care what anybody says.

TORCH could have been a failure. Hell, we were told definitely that it was impossible, and all the weather records showed it, to land on the west coast of Africa at that time of the year. Well, our people insisted and I think rightly. We were all

[bent] on having a toehold on the west coast, because we didn't know what the hell was going to happen inside and we wanted some way to get out.

BURG: Oh, yes.

HANDY: We dumped everything into the Mediterranean. The Germans, all they had to do-- they were looking right down our throats, counting every airplane that landed in Gibraltar, and everything else. You know, through that wire fence-- [Laughter]

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: --it was godawful. Well, everybody's name--I think it could have been a complete disaster; maybe it's fate, or God having you by the hand, or something else. And nobody is wise enough to know how these things are going to happen ahead of time, I don't care what--

BURG: Yeah.

HANDY: --any of them say. But I believe that if the thing had gone the other way, which it could have--you say something in here about a 50-50 chance--

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --I doubt, if you'd sit down and analyze it, if there really was a 50-50 chance on the things we knew about. Now we didn't know what the French were going to do and [lost several words],

BURG: Or Spain.

HANDY: Yeah, on certain things...



[Interruption]

HANDY: Oh, it was on.

BURG: I turned it back on when we got off the private part.

HANDY: Oh, that's terrible.

BURG: No. [Laughter]

HANDY: I don't know that I ought to have sounded off so, in case of rebuttal. What I started to say was that I think everybody--help yourself, that's still hot. If it isn't, I can heat it up.

BURG: Would you like some more?

HANDY: No, thanks, not now. I think everybody's name connected with it would have been mud.

BURG: Yes. Your point, too, is if you had waited until 1943 and made a cross-Channel invasion, there would have been an extra year without initiative.

HANDY: Now, if you know the [Word lost - context, conflict contest ?], you could make a case for it.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: Now whether it could have been done, I don't know.

BURG: Yeah. Well, we would have been a year more without initiative in Europe, a year--



HANDY: Yes.

BURG: --of waiting, and Lord knows what could have happened--

HANDY: That's right.

BURG: --in that period of time.

HANDY: Well, so I think on this 1942 business the question there--

BURG: Well, I was--

HANDY: --is beside the point.

BURG: I was interested then in this next question, too, which dealt with '42, which was brought to mind by a volume in the official history, Washington Command Post. You at that time indicated you weren't at all sure that we had to move in England or Russia would go down. The impression we get is that your view at the time was maybe one of giving Russia more credit for durability than others did at the time.

HANDY: Well, I doubt that. Now here's what I said--

BURG: O.K.



HANDY: --you don't, or certainly shouldn't make flat statements as to inevitability in war--

BURG: Uh-huh. [Laughter]

HANDY: --it's not that kind of business. Certainly it looked very much like Germany was going to take the Russians, and I think most of us thought that they were, there in the War Department

BURG: I see.



HANDY: --and the greatest possible effort on our part to avoid this was called for.

BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: In fact, in looking back one can wonder that if Germany was good enough to knock Russia out of the war, wouldn't this have happened in spite of anything the Allies might do? Speculating on "what if?" and "defeat unless" generally is not very productive. This question is about why the build-up came.

BURG: Yeah, yeah. Well, our view seemed to be that it showed that quality of your mind; that you were not a man to accept that something might be inevitable, and that kind of interested us.

HANDY: Well, I think you've got to--as I say, in this war business, these things aren't inevitable, see.

BURG: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

HANDY: And it's an uncertain business. There's another guy in this thing that you don't know too much about, [Laughter] or what he's going to do, or anything. Furthermore, what the hell good does it do you whether it's inevitable or not? If it happens then you're confronted with a new situation and you got to count up your cards and see what the hell you're going to do.

BURG: Yeah, yeah.

HANDY: Don't you see?

BURG: Right.

HANDY: In other words, it doesn't do you any good to try to



influence your actions by something--your present actions, that are called for and definite--by something you think might happen in the future. It's a dangerous business.

BURG: So in other words, you saw the necessity of getting troops into the United Kingdom and--

HANDY: Oh, yes



BURG: --getting the initiative, whether Russia went down or not.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: You saw the course that you had to follow and went for it.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: O.K. The next question that I had here came out of the War Papers. We read there that you had had sort of a review session with General Eisenhower on that memo which had established Germany as the principal target. Now the memo was the 25th of March 1942, and we just wanted to know if you remembered having a conversation--

HANDY: Here is my answer to that. I do not recall any particular review session on the 25th of March '42. While General Eisenhower was in OPD we had many discussions, not only of overall strategy but of what we had to do in the Pacific. The desperate and hopeless conditions of the Philippines, and so forth; all those things came up.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: And as I remember it, I think we were all, or most of us agreed that Germany came first, and the memorandum you've mentioned may have been a record of it.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Now that's all I can tell you about it.

BURG: Do you remember anybody in OPD who was very strongly pro-Pacific?

HANDY: No, I don't.

BURG: By and large then, most of the people, as you remember it, were--



HANDY: Yeah. Well as a matter of fact, you've read about the ABC meetings and conversations that happened before the war.

BURG: Uh-huh, uh-huh, I have read about them.

HANDY: Well, as a matter of fact, the overall strategy was decided then.

BURG: Yes, before we really got in.



HANDY: Right. Long before. As a matter of fact, I wasn't around the War Department when they had these conversations.

BURG: Yes. Well, I wondered if there had been any hold-over in the group who had resisted the general conclusion that had been reached.

HANDY: Well, I think that certainly at that time, Pearl Harbor attack, we hated the Japs--and that was common with the American public--more than we hated the Germans. [Laughter]

BURG: Those of us on the West Coast were especially afraid of

the Japanese, I'll tell you that. [Laughter] Well, our next question then, General, we drew from Ambrose's account, The Supreme Commander, and it dealt with a plan for April of 1943, which would strike somewhere between Le Havre and Boulogne. And we noted that you and General Eisenhower had reviewed that plan and we wondered if you remembered anything about it, and what happened to the plan as the two of you discussed it?

HANDY: Well, I said, I do not recall this particular plan. During this period we were studying the invasion and a lot of possibilities were considered. You mentioned Boulogne and somewhere else where there's--

BURG: Le Havre.

HANDY: --Le Havre. Well, for example, Al Wedemeyer and his group at one time, I believe, took a close look at the entire coast from Spain to the North Sea for landing sites. In other words, I would class most of the work as studies rather than definite plans. I don't recall any--



BURG: Good point.

HANDY: --one particular plan. And I think most of them, you'd call that.

BURG: Right. I see. So we're not talking here about something that looked to you to be a concrete thing, it was merely one possibility--

HANDY: That's right.



BURG: --out of many.

HANDY: Along--of the general idea. They all followed the general line, don't you see.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: We always figured that if you're going to lick the Germans, you have to go after them and fight them.

BURG: Right. All right. On our next question, which centers on that period May, June, 1942, we noted, again from Stephen Ambrose, that just before General Eisenhower went to England in

June, he had spent about two weeks preparing--

HANDY: Hey, wait a minute, which one is that?

BURG: This is bottom of page 2.

HANDY: Oh, yeah, I skipped one. O.K.



BURG: And he reminds us that most of this time General Eisenhower's spent with you, and we wondered what kinds of things he might have discussed with you in that two week period of time. And another question we had, did he offer you any advice on handling the job which you were now going to take over? And we also wondered if he had any particular philosophy about that work he had been doing which he might have passed on to you?

HANDY: Well, I said, again here, I get the impression of an attempt--perfectly natural, I suppose, for a historian--to tie a thing to specific dates and times. General Eisenhower and I had daily discussions. His "philosophy and advice" was conveyed more by the way he did things and his way of thinking about

things as they came up than by any discussions devoted to these subjects as such.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: I do recall that General Eisenhower, after he knew he was going to England, spent quite a bit of time establishing even closer relations with the British in Washington, with the embassy and all, you know.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: Certainly he was busier with this than with giving me so-called advice and philosophy.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: O.K. [Laughter]

BURG: Well, you and General Eisenhower had been working together on these matters for months by that time and my presumption was that you probably did see eye to eye on things.



HANDY: Oh, yeah. I don't think there's any question about that. I think you got to do that with your boss if you're going to do the job. If you're in any kind of a key position, you see.

BURG: Do you happen to remember who the senior British military officer was that he might have talked to at that period of time?

HANDY: Oh, I think Sir John was there.

BURG: Oh, had he come over? Well, he probably had come over by then, yes.

HANDY: Oh, yes. and incidentally--

BURG: [Field Marshal] Sir John Dill.

HANDY: Yeah, there was a fellow over there, one of his aides-- what's his name? I got two or three letters from him. He must be writing a book on old Sir John. I don't think--

BURG: Oh.



HANDY: --Sir John has never gotten the credit he's due.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: I think he, probably more than any other one individual, was responsible for the effective coordination of the British-American efforts. He was really a remarkable man. All our people thought the world of him.

BURG: That's the impression I get.



HANDY: Oh, yeah, no question about it. General Marshall particularly, but all of them. Even people like old Ernie King, who [Laughter] didn't love the British at all; well, they had great respect for Sir John.

BURG: What did there seem to be about that man that made him so effective in that job? Just general personality?

HANDY: Well, I think to some extent it was his nature and disposition. I might ask you why they always say this thing, they liked Ike? And that was true all his political time, and

everything else. Why? Don't you see?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Well, Sir John was that kind of a fellow, and he was unassuming and all that. But I think that the real basis maybe of his strength and influence with our people was this; they knew, or were convinced, that Sir John was devoted primarily to winning the war and the best way to do it. Just like General Marshall was. That's the reason they got along so well and understood each other. And it wasn't British or American, or anything else, it was winning the war. And I think that people realized that was his main motivation.



BURG: Let me ask you--

HANDY: And he was a very remarkable man. I don't think the British ever appreciated him. See, he'd been relieved as CIGS, you know. He'd been Chief of the Imperial General Staff--I guess after Dunkirk, or sometime back there--and had been relieved. And one of the most fortunate selections they ever

made was sending him over here as head of the British mission.

BURG: Would it be your recollection now, General, that he stood very high among those who--well, I want to put it another way. That's a clumsy way to put it. What I'm seeking to know is, was he a rare British officer in his dedication to winning the war, that coming first?

HANDY: Well, I don't know about that. He certainly was in a very key position, and he was in a very difficult position, you see, because he was a representative over there of the British Chiefs of Staff. As a matter of fact, the so-called Combined Chiefs of Staff met about once a week and the British came in on that, don't you see.

BURG: Sure.



HANDY: Sir John and his people. In other words, they were acting as the British Chiefs of Staff. And he didn't lose his British viewpoint. I don't think you have to. General Marshall didn't lose his American viewpoint. But there is

such a thing as taking a broader and more objective view when you've got an end in view which is certainly far more important than either one of the participants in it. And I think Sir John had that.

BURG: Right. And I gather from what you're saying that not everybody was as farsighted and clear in their thoughts on this matter as Sir John Dill and--

HANDY: --General Marshall.

HANDY: Of course, another great asset --and a lot of these things I've said, as I've indicated, that caused it--was the confidence our people had in him all along.

BURG: Right. Do you remember the--

HANDY: I sent a guy out to a theater, you know, and he'd come back, and a lot of times things weren't going too hot and the British were involved in it. General Marshall would say, "You go over and tell Sir John just exactly what you've told me."



BURG: I see.

HANDY: Time and again that happened. And the people didn't hesitate to do it.

BURG: Right. So they had confidence that Sir John would listen carefully and take note of what they said and pass it on.

HANDY: Or not pass it on. [Laughter] But pass it on in the way it would do some good.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Let's put it that way.

BURG: I see. [Laughter] He might turn them down.

HANDY: Sir John was a very remarkable person. I, personally, was very fond of him and I think everybody was.

BURG: Do you happen to remember the name of that aide, General Handy? We can get it later.



HANDY: Wynn.

BURG: Wynn?

HANDY: I think, yeah.

BURG: Do you know how he spells that, sir?

HANDY: Well, now wait a minute. Let's see if I've got a letter in here from him. [John J.] ? McCloy wrote me about this guy. Apparently he's published one thing.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: And asked me if he would--said he wanted to get in touch with somebody that knew something about Sir John.

BURG: All right.



[Interruption]

HANDY: --demanded anything or--one time there they held us up on a flight to England and this was, I guess, early in, fairly early in '42. I don't know. But anyhow I had met him

early in '43--I guess it was in '42, yes. Anyhow, we had a hell of a time and the damned plane went bad, and we got up there to Gander or Goose and tied up again. And I finally called up Al [Jevwick?], and I said, "It doesn't make a damned bit of difference about me, but you got an ex-Chief from the Imperial General Staff--." Well, not a word of complaint from Sir John. He just took it nicely and calmly and casually. We figured we had to get there, and we were ferrying those bombers over then and they were leaving, you know, in the middle of the night.

BURG: Right.



HANDY: And so we rigged up a place back there with a bunk in one of these bombers. There wasn't any heat in it; we tried to put a heater in there, you know, for the old man. We were going in it.

BURG: Yeah.

HANDY: Well, actually, we didn't have to go. They got on the job and got a plane up there for us.

BURG: More of a commercial type--

HANDY: That's right.

BURG: --than military, uh-huh.

HANDY: Yeah. But not a word of complaint. Everybody else was bellyaching, but not Sir John.

BURG: I see. A gentlemen--

HANDY: Oh, boy.

BURG: --in these matters.

HANDY: Yes, sir.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: He was really a wonderful person.

BURG: Well, the thing that I wanted to do was, if no one was doing a study on him, I wanted to ask you about him.

HANDY: Well this fellow, as I recall it--and, of course,



already published it and he's trying to write something more.

BURG: Well, that's good.

HANDY: And he's got very good intentions. Whether he's going to accomplish anything, I don't know.

BURG: Well, I thought what I might do--I will be in London this summer and I think I'll give him a call.

HANDY: Oh, yeah. I'm sorry. If I--

BURG: That's all right, I--

HANDY: --can locate his address I'll furnish it to you.

BURG: Yeah. I can get in contact--

HANDY: But McCloy--my memory is so damned bad--but if you're really interested, why McCloy has had this correspondence.

BURG: Right. All right, I'll check that out. The next question we had for you comes in this period of June-August, 1942 and I drew the question out of the Marshall, General



Marshall, correspondence file at the Library. And we wanted to ask whether you remember General Arnold's reactions to the withdrawal of some air corps units in the United Kingdom so that they could strengthen TORCH. And as a second part of that question, could you tell us about Admiral King's response to withdrawal of air strength from the Pacific for the same purpose.

HANDY: Well, I have no exact recollections. General Arnold was generally quite cooperative. No doubt about that, and particularly if he got the idea that's what the old man wanted. He was extremely loyal to General Marshall and a strong supporter of him--

BURG: Interesting.



HANDY: --but he was always wanted to build up the thing in the UK, the bomber, don't you see?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Now Admiral King was not in favor of reducing strength

in the Pacific as a general thing. However, once committed to an operation, he could be a hell of a big help. And whether he actually refused to do anything, I don't know. You see, we don't give these guys the credit they're due-- later on in here, when you talk about these conversations on the landing craft--you see, the Navy dug up a lot. We didn't even know that they were having them built, way up the Ohio River and everywhere else. They were a hell of a big help. Old Ernie King was meaner than hell, but he was a strong man. He was a hell of a big asset in my opinion. Hell of a big asset to the war effort, don't you see.

BURG: Right.



HANDY: And once he was committed, boy, he was a big help. Now I don't know the particulars, but I'll say that in general about him.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: You've got something about the battleships later on--

[Rear Admiral Charles M.] Savvy Cooke [Jr.] was my opposite number, you see. He was head of the operations over there. I worked with him very closely, and he was just a mean as old Ernie. And, boy, they'd fight you on a thing, but once committed they were damned good guys.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: They found ways to do it.

BURG: Savvy is a nickname, S-a-v-v-y?

HANDY: Yeah.

BURG: For having lots of "savvy" about--

HANDY: Absolutely.

BURG: --yes, I see.

HANDY: He had plenty of it. That's what he is known as in the Navy, Savvy Cooke.

BURG: So in the case of Admiral Cooke and Admiral King, we're



talking about men who would put up all the fight that they felt they had to put up until a decision had been reached, then they were the kind who immediately gave whole-hearted--

HANDY: They were pretty good after you got in an operation.

BURG: Yes, yes.

HANDY: And boy, boy, they could take the bumps. Old Ernie took some awful bumps out there in the Pacific; you remember when [Rear Admiral Richmond] Kelly Turner got two or three cruisers shot right out from under him. [Laughter]

BURG: Was that Savo? Savo Island?

HANDY: And Ernie was a cool one but, boy, he could be hard-boiled.

BURG: Did you have to ever deal with him or was your dealing always with Cooke?

HANDY: Well, I'll say this much about Admiral King--Ed Hull and I, and Ike, too, when he was there--we had easier times



I think with Ernie than his own people did. We weren't--

BURG: Oh, you did? [Laughter]

HANDY: Yeah. And he was always a great backer of Ike.

BURG: Oh, he was.

HANDY: Oh, yeah. And the question came up whether he wanted to support Ike all out, you see.

BURG: That's interesting to know, General.

HANDY: Oh, yeah. He was. And he was a strong character.

He had--we used to call it the holy of holies over there.

[Laughter] You know, he was not only Chief of Naval Operations but he had himself made Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Fleet with an "and" on it, so he was the Commander also, don't you see. And he had a little staff up there and he had a little intelligence room and submarine map. Ike and I used to go up and look at it. Hell! People from Secretary of the Navy or naval intelligence couldn't find it! [Laughter]



BURG: But you two men could and you did, huh? [Laughter]

HANDY: Oh, yeah. And old Ernie was--this is getting far beyond--but Ike I think was present. It became--one of Ike's first tasks, as you know, was to try to do something about the Pacific. We were in a desperate situation in the Philippines, and I think everybody knew as a practical matter that it was a hopeless thing, you see. But--you're going to lose--but that doesn't excuse you after you're committed and you got your own people in there. You got to do for them what you can, you see. Well, we were struggling every way trying to give those people a hand, you see?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And we begged the navy; we tried various things: "Let us put some of our P-40's"--we didn't know if they could--"on a carrier and send them in there," you know. And ammunition. We were about to run out of anti-air-craft ammunition. And before Ernie came in there--see, he was out with the Atlantic fleet at the time of Pearl Harbor. He came in and relieved old



[Admiral Harold Raynsford] Billy Stark, who was CNO.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Well, we tried and tried and suggested these messages, and all that. Well, the navy was still living under this thing that it was some kind of a dire, unforgiveable crime to lose a ship, you see; they got over it before the war was over, but at that time they weren't. Well the mess--they'd agreed that the message would go out, but when you got the message and looked at it carefully, there was always a way out, don't you see; "if the rink isn't too great," or something like that.

BURG: This is the kind of message they would give to naval commanders out there in the--

HANDY: Absolutely.

BURG: --in the Pacific. I see.



HANDY: We went over there--and I'm pretty sure that Ike was the one that did it and I was with him, you see--and saw Ernie, shortly after he'd got in there, and put the case up to him. And, boy, he didn't hesitate at all. He wrote what the navy calls a signal. When they sent it out there, it said in effect, "By God,

take the ammunition in there, period." Well they did it with a submarine, and did it several times, three or four times, after that and they never lost a sub. But that was Ernie King.

BURG: Uh-huh. No qualifications, no escape clauses; just go in, do it."

HANDY: Yeah. Period.

BURG: Yes, I see.



HANDY: And that was him. And I want to tell you it was a great relief to do business with a guy like that. You always knew exactly where you stood, don't you see.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: Sometimes he'd take unreasonable stands, at least we thought they were, and so on. [Laughter] And he could be stubborn, and all that, but he was--I had a very high opinion of Admiral King.

BURG: Do you happen to recollect, General, any one case where you did think he was definitely wrong?

HANDY: Oh, we never did agree on the whole overall strategy in the Pacific, and he was like everybody else in the navy. They just hated, literally, MacArthur; hated MacArthur, you see.

[Laughter]

BURG: Uh-huh, uh-huh.



HANDY: And they, they never forgave MacArthur for some of those messages he sent at the beginning of the war. And you couldn't--whenever MacArthur's name was mentioned, it kind of threw reason out of the window when you were trying to discuss anything with the navy.

BURG: I see, I see. And that even affected Admiral King--

HANDY: Oh, yeah.

BURG: He, too, would react that way.

HANDY: Oh, yeah. There wasn't any guy that was more partisan than King.

BURG: Interesting, though, that this man who does react that

way to General MacArthur, did not react that way to General Eisenhower.

HANDY: Oh, no, he was always a backer of Ike. Strong backer of Ike.

BURG: Well, that's very good information to have. We appreciate that. Now in our next question, General, which we have dated roughly to the summer of 1942, and which we took from Steve Ambrose; the question is, did General Eisenhower ever tell you much about the conditions in London vis-à-vis the American organization there, after he got over and started working with this group. And we wondered, too, if he ever spoke with you about his relationships with Ambassador [John] Winant.

HANDY: My answer to that: I do not recall General Eisenhower saying anything about his relations with Ambassador Winant. He may have, but I don't recall it.

BURG: O.K.



HANDY: I got the impression that General Eisenhower was not enthusiastic about the group in London.

BURG: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Would you care to be more specific than that? Did he ever pin down wherein that group was not doing the job?

HANDY: Well, I don't think that--I got the impression he didn't feel they they were acting like the urgency of the situation demanded and in line with the position that they were in. That may have been not too much their fault. See, they were sent there on an observer status, remember, before we got in the war.

BURG: Uh-huh. I wondered if there might not be a reason for them to be a little bit at sea.

HANDY: Yeah. Well, they didn't know the status. Of course, I think Chaney was viewed by General Marshall, possibly, as a-- he was always looking for an air fellow over there, you know, as a possible commander. But he wasn't and hadn't been made



one, you see. But I don't think that he felt that some of those people were doing all they might have done. I said here 'not enthusiastic' about the group in London. I think that expresses it.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: I don't know that he was too definite.



BURG: That seems to tie in then with the next question, too, doesn't it?

HANDY: Yes, I said: the observation you quote represented General Eisenhower's feelings, I believe.

BURG: Right. And that quotation we'll get on the record, General, General Eisenhower reported, "It is necessary to get a punch behind the job or we'll never be ready by spring, 1943 to attack. We must get going."

HANDY: Yeah.

BURG: And that quotation comes from Washington Command Post.

And I believe that I've asked General Handy about the London group and I asked, "Did Chaney's group lack sufficient data upon which they might act, or was there a lack of push by Chaney?" And General Handy has responded that part of the problem may have been that those men had been sent over as observers and didn't have full command of the information that the two of you had back in Washington. So maybe urgency hadn't yet sunk in. All right, now we had another question here which we put in at this point because it seems to come out of the period around July of 1942. It comes from the [Charles Kenon] Gailey [Jr.] correspondence file. Colonel Gailey's letters frequently--

[Interruption]



BURG: --the letters in that file often referred to Colonel [James] Stack's great competence and I wondered if you could comment on Stack's particular talents for the work he performed.

HANDY: Well, I said: Stack was an excellent office manager with great capability for getting things done.

BURG: Uh-huh. Qualities that he had, I think, just as an individual human being, and then, qualities that may have been

developed in the kind of work that he had been doing at Ft. Lewis--

HANDY: Yeah.

BURG: --in the 3rd Division. And at the time, General--let me ask you this--Colonel Stack had come out of the enlisted ranks and had been commissioned and brought to the War Department. Do you recollect your feelings about that sort of thing? Did you wonder whether this was going to work out with Stack?

HANDY: No. You see I--Charley Gailey, in my view and I think Ike's also, was an excellent executive. See, he'd been executive of OPD and Charley was the guy that brought him in there to organize the thing. He--cut that thing off. I hate to say these things out on the record.

BURG: Well, are you sure we couldn't leave it on, and then when the transcript comes back you can take a look and decide.

HANDY: O.K. Well, what I was going to say was that--see, the



War Department--I'm very doubtful about these so-called "pros." We had some old pros around the general staff there, chief clerks, and so on, you know--

BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: --that had been there for years and should have been a hell of a big help. Well some of them were, but some of them were--it was completely beyond them.

BURG: I see.



HANDY: Now the fellow--and Charley Gailey realized that and knew he had to get in a new outfit, so he got Stack, got [Captain V. W.] ? Bond, and a few of them like that, and they took the thing over and ran the records, and so on, of operations. Matter of fact, we carried this fellow on and he got to the point where he was running the civilian payroll or something like that. In other words, the thing was not functioning. It was one of those damned things you couldn't have a lot of theory about it. When you're called for a paper, the old

man hit his buzzer, you had to have the information right then. You couldn't have somebody shuffling through files, and you had to have an organization that would work on that kind of a basis and Gailey set it up. And Stack had a lot to do with it.

BURG: So what you had inherited was a sort of a peacetime organization that could function--

HANDY: Yeah.



BURG: --under those conditions and wasn't up to responding swiftly to the war situation.

HANDY: Yeah. Well, some people just never realized that they were in a different ball park. Now I don't say that was true of all of them.

BURG: No.

HANDY: The fact that the man served there didn't condemn him, but there was a tendency that way, and in that case I know we

had it, but Charley reorganized the whole thing.

BURG: Yeah. I wonder if Colonel Gailey heard about Stack through Eisenhower.

HANDY: I don't know, I wouldn't know.

BURG: Because Colonel Stack always thought that that was probably what had done it; he had worked enough with Eisenhower.

HANDY: I don't know, I don't know.

BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: That's possible, but I don't know that of personal knowledge.

BURG: Uh-huh. But in Stack we had there an individual of great competence who was put into the right job and performed that job.

HANDY: Yeah, he had great capacity for getting things done. Boy, boy! Old Stack was a good one. I'll tell you one thing,



I'm delaying here with all this gossip and conversation,
but--

BURG: This is part of what we want.

HANDY: --one time--this illustrates Stack's method of
operation--I asked Stack to make some reservations for me.
We were going up--my daughter was up at Vassar at the football
game in New York at that time.

BURG: I see.



HANDY: And I said, "Now, listen." I knew Stack's way of
operation [Laughter]. I said, "this is purely a personal
matter with me and I don't want any of these official telephone
calls or anything else. I'll pay for all of it, don't you
see? And I want you to see that that's done." Well, Stack
came in in a little while and had all the reservations and
everything. I said, "How the hell did you do it?" "Well,"
he said, "no official call." "Well," I said, "you had to do it by
the telephone. [Laughter] Whose telephone did you use?" Stack

said, "Well, hell, the FBI's got a private line up there we can use whenever we want to." [Laughter] Well that was Stack, don't you see.

BURG: He knew how to do things in the quickest way.

HANDY: Oh, he had it set up, yeah.

BURG: That sounds like the Jim Stack I knew.

HANDY: Yeah. But he sure could get results.

BURG: Oh, he sure could. Well, that--I wanted to confirm that with you. I'd hoped for a story like that to illustrate this. Now this next question, General, comes from your own correspondence file in the Eisenhower Library. You remarked to General Eisenhower I believe that a British officer might be placed with the "strategy committee" and that he could attend meetings of the joint planners, but you said that the U.S. Navy might seize upon this as an opportunity to sabotage the "strategy committee," and you added that they had attempted to do so more than once. We would appreciate having your



comments upon this assignment of a British officer, and we would like to have you discuss this whole matter concerning the Navy's effort to sabotage the "strategy committee." Of course, I now know from your remarks about Admiral King that it was not as straightforward as this question would appear to be, but we would like to have any comments you would make.

HANDY: O.K. This is too big a question I think for extended comment. It calls for extended comment. Now if you mean by the "strategy committee" that strategic survey committee we set up with [Lieutenant] General [Stanley D.] Embick--is that what you mean by the strategy committee?



BURG: We only had your letter to go on and your letter--

HANDY: Well, maybe so. You see, it became evident to us that in theory, the planners handled all these questions because we were snowed, and General Marshall thought it was a good idea and we set up a kind of a elder statesmen--General Embick and [Major General Muir S.] Fairchild from the Air Force and Admiral King. We called it I think the strategic survey committee;

they were looking into long range things.

BURG: That sounds like the group.

HANDY: Absolutely. Well, Admiral King--I think I've got it in here. As I recall it, the navy wasn't too keen on the establishment of this committee. They had a hunch that Admiral King agreed to it to find a good place for a [Vice' Admiral [Russell] Willson who had been his Chief of Staff.

BURG: I see. [Laughter]

HANDY: Now actually, I'm giving you what--that was just our hunch. The navy accepted--then you got more on this--the overall strategy of Germany first, possibly with some tongue-in-the-cheek. However, they always did not want the Pacific "neglected" in any way. And I quote "Neglected". I hardly think it fair to say that their sole belief was that the Pacific should always take precedence. The navy never disagreed. As a matter of fact, the first plan we had--our chairman was over there as a planner in the early days for the cross-channel thing, [Brig. Gen.



Robert W.] Crawford; he and Al Wedemeyer were the main authors of it and they agreed to Germany first. But they didn't want the Pacific neglected and, furthermore, you have to remember that at least three-fourths of our naval effort was in the Pacific all the time.

BURG: Yes, indeed.

HANDY: And also you got to remember a lot of other things. The navy had the worst blow they ever had in Pearl Harbor.

BURG: Right, right.

HANDY: And there was in the Navy Department, certainly after Pearl Harbor, something approaching the state --maybe it's too strong a word--demoralization, don't you see.

BURG: Yes, I can well imagine that.

HANDY: Well, I went over there and talked to them and they said, "Well," this guy said, "the first thing we've got to do is"--see, I knew some of them pretty well; I went to the



Naval War College and they were classmates of mine--

BURG: I remember.

HANDY: --"and so the first thing I've got to do is try all those skippers." Now this was after Pearl Harbor. I said, "My God, what the hell are you talking about?" I said, "I know something about your fleet anchorage plans, and everything else. How elaborate they are, and how little the skipper has to say about where his ship is parked." You see, when you're running the whole damned fleet in, it has to be that way. "Now," I said, "if any of those guys failed to carry out orders or to take precautions, try them. But the fact they got the damned--the ship was in Pearl Harbor and torpedoed--hell, the skipper, you and I know, didn't have really a damned thing to do with it! He was carrying out orders." You see? But that was the attitude.

BURG: General Handy, do you mean to say that they were going to try these men for anchoring--



HANDY: I didn't say they were going to, but I said that's what this fellow said. I don't think the Navy would ever have done it, but--

BURG: Oh, I hope not.

HANDY: --I think that it illustrated some of the thought and the--as I say, demoralization was too strong--of thinking over there in some areas in the Navy.

BURG: Yes. Their first reactions to--

HANDY: Yeah.



BURG: --what had happened.

HANDY: Boy, it was just the most ungodly shock in the world to them.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And believe me it was awful. That was another thing that was good about bringing Ernie King in. Old man Stark was a hell of a nice fellow, you know, but--

BURG: Yes. So in effect, while they could give an intellectual acceptance to the idea of Germany first, emotionally what had happened to them in the Pacific still was a strong factor.

HANDY: My God, put yourself in their position.

BURG: Sure, sure.

HANDY: I think your reaction and mine, probably, would be very much the same, and I can understand it very well.

BURG: Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed.

HANDY: And nobody who didn't live through that thing at close quarters could realize what kind of a damned thing it was. It was absolutely, as I said, unexpected.

BURG: Yes. They had lost ships that were household names with them, and had been for twenty-five years. And the impact--

HANDY: Oh, they never believed that a thing like that was possible.



BURG: And hadn't lost them in open battle on the high seas--

HANDY: That's right.

BURG: --but had lost them in port. That's right. All right, the next question, sir, comes roughly out of the period August of 1942 and it's drawn from Stephen Ambrose. He mentions there the fact that you were in England during this month of August, and we wondered whether it was your recollection that General Eisenhower's thinking about TORCH, as an operation, generally conformed to the ideas that you had in the War Department. Or was there any strong disagreement from him about what should be done?

HANDY: Well, you have to be careful about the ideas of the War Department. I recall no serious differences as to points mentioned.

BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: We discussed TORCH at length, of course, you see, at that time. I was always opposed to it and you should find in the



records a copy of a message I sent to the War Department, one of them, expressing my views. I don't know whether you ever saw it.

BURG: I don't know that I have seen it, General.

HANDY: Well, boy, it--somebody said, "You condemned yourself.", after it went fine. [Laughter] This message, the draft of it, was gone into with General Eisenhower and General Clark and modified to some extent. They didn't want it to go as strong as I had originally, you see. Among the other matters--you asked about other things that came up. You see, we were committed to the operation, and maybe I had no business sticking my foot in there. But after we were committed to it, you don't tell your people, or let your people know you don't believe in it. This war business, as I say, isn't that kind of an animal.



BURG: Uh-huh, right.

HANDY: Ike told me one time, for instance--I'm skip--digressing very far--

BURG: No, no, no.

HANDY: --this was after they were on the continent. He went around there inspecting, see, one time, visiting divisions. And he went down and said the fellow was in a hole in the ground and two or three of his colonels were there, of this division commander. The guy was telling him what they were supposed to do; they were supposed to go around here and take this and that, and Ike said this guy's whole attitude was, "Damn it. This is swampy ground and they haven't got a real chance of doing it."



BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: And Ike said that he, as soon as he could get out of there, was looking for the corps and army commander. If that was the kind of thinking division commanders had, better look at the people higher up. Well, they both were looking for him to get this guy to leave, you see. In other words, boy, you can't--if you're the head of the thing, you can't take a defeatist attitude toward it. See?

BURG: Right.

HANDY: You just don't do that. Ike was supposed to be in charge of this thing, and it was pretty well under way then, don't you see.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: At least the thinking about it. Well, he wasn't going to say, "I'm opposed to it." And if he felt strongly enough about it the only thing for him to do was tell them to get somebody else to do the job. But a hell of a lot of jobs have been done that a lot of people thought were impossible. You win wars by doing the impossible thing! Hell, the Germans had been doing it for years! All through the first part of the war, things that everybody said was impossible!

BURG: Right.

HANDY: That's the way you win!

BURG: Right.





HANDY: If you stick to absolutely doing the possible, you're never going to win; the other fellow's going to lick you! Well that's wild philosophy. [Laughter] Now during this visit, among other matters that came up you might be interested in, I think it was [Lt. Gen. Frank Noel] Mason-MacFarlane who was then Governor of Gibraltar, a Britisher, was there with his RAF officer, see, one time.

BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: They painted a gloomy picture, particularly of German knowledge of our activities, especially air, through Gibraltar. See, the damned Germans weren't down through Spain, but there wasn't much to keep them from coming. And they said, "Hell, they are taking the tail numbers, and all they have to do is look at the fin of every plane you land in Gibraltar." don't you see.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And he painted--that is, this RAF fellow did--a very

gloomy picture, for old Mason-MacFarlane. And then he was asked, in view of this, if he opposed the operation. And he said, very emphatically, "No." He didn't oppose it; that he was all for it, because the Germans had never believed we would dare go inside that Mediterranean--that we'd be big enough fools to--and for that reason, we'd get away with it! And by gosh, he was right! [Laughter] Also it seems to me, the way I recall it, that it was on this visit to UK that Mountbatten came in and give Ike the dope on the Dieppe disaster; it was right after Dieppe.



BURG: Ah, yes, yes.

HANDY: And that was a mess.

BURG: It sure was.

HANDY: Mountbatten came in and told Ike about it. I think I was present then.

BURG: How was that information taken? Was Eisenhower rather

discouraged to hear the details of Dieppe?

HANDY: Well, I think he knew them before Mountbatten had come in to give him the dope, and so I don't think that he was any more discouraged than he was before. It convinced us, some of us; I don't know about Ike. But you see, the British, we always felt--and Lord knows they were way ahead of us on planning, don't you see. But we always felt that we were ahead of them on execution. The main reason was we would put one guy in charge of the thing and let him run it and they wouldn't. They just couldn't with that system of theirs.

BURG: They used that committee system.

HANDY: Now we--that's right. We always had this thought of--big hopes of this combined operation. Lord Louis had it, you see. And we thought for Dieppe they had a unified command. Well, hell! They didn't at all. You know it was one of those things where they'd say, "Well, this is the date we're going to do it," and the navy would say, "Well, the water won't be right," or the air people would say, "The weather won't be right; we want it put off till then." Well there was nobody who could say,



"All right, boys. We've considered all of this and now, by God, we're going to do it, period!" Don't you see? Nobody could, including Mountbatten! He didn't have the authority. There was a facade up there but he didn't really have the authority. And the whole business on Diepee, the critical thing, was they monkeyed around so damned long about it that, hell, I think the Boche knew all about it, the Germans.

BURG: I see, I see.

HANDY: And he shot them like sitting ducks. [Brig. Gen.] Lucian [K.] Truscott was on it. That air fellow who got his legs shot off--I've forgotten his name--of ours was there. And, you see, they'd been watching this set-up and this build-up, and everything else for the thing. And our conclusion was that the British didn't have, and just seemed to be unable to get, anything like our idea of unified command.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: Well, look at the Middle East. General Marshall said



one time that of all areas that was a mess and critical at times, as you know--they had these three commanders-in-chief, army and navy and air, and they all reported back to London. And General Marshall said the nearest they ever approached to unified command and coordination under someone on the ground, you know who they got? An Australian, a civilian ambassador; this fellow [Richard Gardiner] Casey, or whatever his name was. That's as close as they ever got. [Laughter]

BURG: For goodness sakes.

HANDY: It's--well, that was it! Now people forget that Ike was up against a lot of that same stuff with the British system.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And I think that is the basic reason why--although the British, as I say, I think we finally began to catch up with them on the planning. But in the beginning, we were babes in the woods, you see, they were much better than we were. But I think we were always better than they were on execution, and I think that was the fundamental reason for it.



BURG: Yes. You make a very strong point. When you're talking about the Middle East, you have that situation of Admiral [of the Fleet, Sir A. B.] Cunningham and Air Marshall [Sir A. W.] Tedder--and I've forgotten now who would have been the army commander at that time [General Sir H. R. Alexander]--but each man sort of working, often at cross purposes, with his officer--

HANDY: Yeah, they both--their boss was back in London.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: You see the British Chiefs of Staff never would give up, like our Chiefs of Staff did, the authority to the man who was on the ground, even though they just had one man.

BURG: Yes, yes.

HANDY: And they carried it all the way through. Now this shouldn't be on this record, but I'll tell you. When I was in Germany, after the war you know, and McCloy was High Commissioner, they'd have some arguments up there, or something,

and I--McCloy would be--we'd be discussing it, you know
[lost several words] He would say, "Well, the British
could go even harder, and maybe give us a British commander,
as agreed." --don't you see, and Robinson was the High
Commissioner--"and he says so-and-so." Well, I said, "Look
now, Mr. McCloy." I said, "You know and I know that Robinson
hasn't got anything like the authority that you have to make
decisions. He's got to go back to London on things you
wouldn't think about having to go back to Washington."

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: I said, "That's the same thing that's true with
Harding and me. I'm in charge of certain things and able to
do certain things that Harding couldn't even approach unless
he got the OK from the High Commissioner. We're in a different
ball park." Well, we were, even then. You see? Now Ike had
that whole thing, you know, on the back of his neck, that whole
system, including a guy that was one of the most persuasive--
if you want to call it that [Laughter]--presistent people in



the world; a guy by the name of Winston Churchill. [Laughter]

BURG: Right, right. Having to cope with that strong personality.



HANDY: The sun lamp-- [Laughter]

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --Ike said, "When he turns the sun lamp on--" [Laughter]
O.K.

BURG: Well, did Admiral Mountbatten--he gave you the information on Diepee--

HANDY: Oh, he didn't cover up.

BURG: What was his feeling about TORCH? He had gone through Diepee--

HANDY: I don't know. I don't remember his particular views on it.

BURG: I wonder if he was sanguine about your chances with TORCH, or whether he was very hesitant about it?



HANDY: Well, I don't remember him discussing TORCH; maybe he did, everybody was talking about it.

BURG: Of course, one thing that comes to mind is that the German defenses on the Atlantic coast, or the Channel coast opposite England, would be quite a different thing from what other defenses might exist along the North African littoral.

HANDY: That's right.

BURG: Well, still it would have been pretty saddening news to be given information on Diepee on the eve of TORCH.

HANDY: Well, it was some time--this was August, I think, you see--before TORCH, but Diepee was not heartening.

BURG: No.

HANDY: And the Canadians never forgave them, you know. Boy, they had their people really slaughtered there.



BURG: Yes, indeed, they did.

HANDY: They never--the Canadians that talked to me about it later, they never forgave the British; they figured they messed it up. And I think the critical thing was they monkeyed around so damned long, because nobody could say, "Now we've considered all that, and to the hell with the water, or the weather conditions; we're going to do it!" And somebody has to have that if you're going to put one of these things over. There's always a hell of a lot of good reasons for not doing them, you know.

BURG: Yeah. So, in effect, they seem to have waited for this condition to be right, or that condition--

HANDY: Well, if some guy would say, "No, you can't do it then ", don't you see.

BURG: Yeah.

HANDY: Lucian Truscott and those people said, "Hell, they put it off any number of times." You see?

BURG: And ultimately put it off so many times they probably tipped it off.

HANDY: Well, hell, the Germans knew all about it. At least the people that were in it felt like that. It looked like it.

BURG: And it would have its bad effect, its additional bad effect, on British thinking about a cross-Channel invasion--

HANDY: Oh, boy, boy!

BURG: --and make it doubly difficult.

HANDY: It was this thing, like the PM said to Mr. Stimson, about the beaches running with blood and the Channel full of corpses. [Laughter] I might have told you that. Incidentally, did I tell you about that?

BURG: Well, I'm not sure whether you did.

HANDY: Well, this illustrates the point we were talking about



awhile ago, that you don't say you're licked, you see, before you start to fight. Remember?



BURG: Right.

HANDY: Well, Mr. Stimson--and, boy, he was a tower of strength, see, to us. We were extremely fortunate to have him and people like [Assist. Sec. of War for Air Robert A.] Lovett and McCloy, who just passed away, in the War Department. I think they all were devoted to winning the war, not to making their own reputation or anything else. Well, Mr. Stimson was always strong. He felt this was an American idea and our idea. He was absolutely in thorough agreement with our ideas and backed them strongly. Well, he went over to England at that time --and of course the PM I don't think ever wanted it, you know. He finally accepted it, but half-heartedly. Anyhow, he got to talking to Mr. Stimson about it. Mr. Stimson told us this when he came back. And he said, "Oh, he painted this horrible picture, and he used this expression--you know how he could use the English language.

BURG: Yes, indeed.



HANDY: --about a Channel full of corpses and beaches running with blood! And old man Stimson told him, he said, "Now, look," he said, "You and I are old men and," he said, "we've been involved in some difficult undertakings." And he said, "you know and I know, if you have any idea of doing a thing and making it succeed, by God, you don't start to talking about beaches running with blood and Channel full of corpses!" He said, "of course they're going to be corpses in the Channel and there's going to be blood on the beaches, but that isn't what you talk about before the operation!" You see.

BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: Well, it's the God's truth.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: If you have any real intention of doing it, you know in the back of your head, just as he said, of course there's going to be corpses and there are going to be beaches running with



blood. That's part of the game. But you don't emphasize that before the thing. You see. And it is certainly true and that, I think, illustrates the point I was trying to make very well. And old man Stimson told him. Don't.

BURG: That's interesting that he would speak out as bluntly as that.

HANDY: Who? Stimson?

BURG: Stimson, uh-huh.

HANDY: Don't worry about him speaking out.

BURG: Well, Mr. Churchill must still have had in his mind, not only Dieppe, but he would have in his mind the Somme, Gallipoli.

HANDY: Absolutely!

BURG: I've tried to contact Field Marshal Montgomery to ask him if there is a possibility of my interviewing him about his experiences in the First World War, because it struck me that



many of his views on how to conduct an operation grew out of what he had seen in the First War. I don't know whether Montgomery will accept my proposal.

HANDY: I don't know what kind of shape he's in. I know some Britisher--the last word I had of authenticity is some time ago, before I left Washington. They had some kind of meeting of these hot shot historians, and [Dr. Forrest C.] Pogue had them down there at the Cosmos Club, you know--

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --for cocktails, and so on. And he asked [General John E.] Ed Hull and Jackie Devers and a few of us to drop in, you see, and they had [met ?] Russians and British, and all the rest of them. Well--you know, these historians--there was quite a group of them, and I asked this Britisher, see, about the Field Marshal, about Monty. I had heard he was in pretty bad shape, and he said, "I don't think so." He said he had talked to him not too long before and he seemed fairly alert, and so on. He said of course he was getting along--

BURG: How long ago was that--

HANDY: Well, that was--I came down here two years ago this summer--

BURG: I see.

HANDY: --and it was before that; it's been more than two years ago. Because it was when I was staying in Washington. Now I don't remember exactly when it was but it was certainly over two years ago.

BURG: Well, I thought if I stayed off--since we have his books and everything about World War II--if I stayed off that he might be willing to speak about World War I. And it seemed to me he couldn't help but tell me a few things about World War II in doing it.

HANDY: Oh, well, [laughter] there wouldn't be any question about it. He would tell you all about--

BURG: I bet he would!



HANDY: --tell you all about a lot of the people that were in it, [laughter] including the man you're studying!

BURG: Well--oh, yes, indeed. [Laughter]

HANDY: I was amused--this can go off the record, too--but some of these things amuse you. I remember after Ike came over there in the end; you know, SHAPE and the NATO thing--

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --the British--not with any great reluctance at all--the British Chiefs of Staff agreed to release Monty to be Ike's deputy. [Laughter] But--

BURG: A left-handed present! [Laughter]

HANDY: --Ike was talking about Monty one time and he said, "At long last," he said, "I think Monty's gotten to a point where he is willing to tip his hat to me." [Laughter] Well, I think it was about the truth, don't you--

[Interruption - Reel #2]



BURG: Now in September in '42, and from the Marshall correspondence file, in a letter to Marshall, 1 December '42, Eisenhower spoke of his need to be cautious in approaching the press because he had inherited a situation that was "anything but rosy" and we would like to know whether you can tell us to what Eisenhower was referring. And then a second thing, the letter also stated DDE's attention was focused upon "the negro problem, concerning which many of our agitators are attempting to embarrass us," and here, too, we would like to have your commentary on the issues involved?



HANDY: [On the] first question, not specifically. When you ask if I knew specifically what he was referring to.

BURG: On that deal about "anything but rosy."

HANDY: Yeah. You know as much about the agitators, probably more than I do. The British had always been inclined to look down their noses at us on handling colored people, a kind of superior attitude: "we've been doing this for years without all the trouble you're having," that kind of thing.

BURG: That was the British attitude?

HANDY: Yeah. However, after--for the first time--they had large numbers of colored troops in England, they, the British, realized for the first time what difficult problems arose and lost a lot of their superior feeling, you see. And agitators on the colored thing, there were undoubtedly a few of them; there always are, see.

BURG: Now this was about the first time then, to your knowledge, that the British had masses of--

HANDY: I remember Sir John Dill told General Marshall once that he 'realized now, but never did before, the problems you all have'. He realized it after we got a lot of these people in England. See, they had never had it happen before.

BURG: What kind of problems arose, do you remember, General?

HANDY: Oh, you know, social and everything else. Relations between the colored people and the civilian population; they were relatively scattered all over, and all that. We had a lot of it in this country and you know it.



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --the problems that arose.



BURG: I see. All right our next question is again from the Marshall files, September of '42, and it was with reference to a trip General Mark Clark made to Washington prior to TORCH, and we would like to receive from you data about why Clark did visit on this occasion. And we wanted to know whether you yourself had conferred with Clark. And we would like to have, if you can give it to us, your impressions and opinions on Clark's personality and abilities?

HANDY: Well, I don't remember much about this trip of his. Undoubtedly, I talked to him when he was in Washington. See, he was Ike's deputy for this thing--

BURG: Yes. But nothing that you now remember as being of great significance?

HANDY: No. I said, I'm not in position to evaluate Mark Clark, except to say that he had great ability, determination and energy. No question about it.

BURG: Uh-huh. No weaknesses as a commander that you are aware of?

HANDY: Well, I would say just about what I've said about him. I'm not in a position to evaluate.

BURG: All right, General. In the same month, September of '42, from the Marshall file of correspondence, a letter in which General Marshall reminds Eisenhower to speak out whenever he disagrees with Marshall and to do so without an apologetic approach. Our question to you, General Handy, was General Marshall attempting to get all of his commanders to forthrightly state their views, or was he just concerned that only Eisenhower might be hesitant to do so?

HANDY: My answer: General Marshall emphasized this attitude to all principal subordinates. I'm sure he was not concerned only with General Eisenhower.

BURG: Uh-huh. Did General Marshall ever speak to you--perhaps laughingly or wistfully--that his own stature was such that some of his subordinates tended to be too hesitant?



HANDY: No. I--and I don't think he would have ever said a thing like that.

BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: I think there was some truth in it, but--maybe he realized it, but he didn't like to be told that.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: One time, I remember some fellow came in there and had some briefing, or something important on something, and this guy was having a hell of a time. He was hesitant and when the old man asked him a lot of pointed questions, his answers weren't, you know, very definite and to the point. The old man didn't have much patience with that. And when this fellow left, he said to me, he said, "What was the matter with that fellow, anyhow?" He said, "He was hemming around and hesitating and everything else." He said, "He's supposed to be a pretty good man," he said, "what was the matter with him?" I said, "General, do you really want to know?" And he said, "Yes, or I wouldn't have asked you." "Well," I said, "he was just scared to death of





you." He said, "What do you mean?!" He didn't like it at all. He said, "Am I not always courteous to everybody that comes in here?" I said, "You certainly are. But," I said, "you asked me and that's the truth." I said, "I know exactly how that guy felt; I was the same way for several months around here in approaching you." [Laughter] I said, "There isn't any question about it.", Hell, down there in my office--I think I was in the can--and this buzz-box was just buzzing; you know, the squawk-box--

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --and I finally rushed out there to see what the hell was the matter, and the old man's button was down. And this girl--she was kind of a pinch-hitter, I think. Secretary--she was in there and I said to her--I answered, too--and I said afterwards to her, "Why didn't you answer that?" "Well," she said, "it was General Marshall's button." Hell she wouldn't any more touch that thing than she'd touch a rattlesnake.

BURG: I'll be darned!

HANDY: Oh, boy, the old man was very reserved, don't you see, and I don't think he intended it that way at all, but there isn't any question--now he may have felt there was a little hesitancy--but there isn't any question of what he told Ike. I think he told everybody else. First time I went over to a meeting of the Chiefs of Staff with him--see, I guess Gerow had left and Ike had taken over--and Ike said, "You go--I was the head planner, you see--"with the old man." And we went in there, over there in the Public Health building, or somewhere; met Arnold and King and all these people, and General Marshall passed me a note. I had it around for years but I've destroyed it now. And he said, "I want you to not only feel free but to speak right out on anything that's brought up or any issue. Say what you please, what you think, regardless of whether it's what I think or not." See. Passed me a little handwritten note. No, he always--now: "I think you better have a hell of a good reason," you see.

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: And oftentimes when you expressed these views you didn't know the old man's reaction at all. He just listened.

BURG: I see. You could advance a point of view and you might not get so much as a nod of the head, or anything else.

HANDY: Oh, no. No. Matter of fact, we used to brief him for these JCS and CCS meetings, you know, on papers that were coming up and we'd say what we thought ought to be done about this particular thing, and a hell of a lot of times you wouldn't know what the old man was going to do. You wouldn't find out till he went to the meeting.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: And maybe he didn't know himself. You see, in all those things, and he was smart enough to know it, he hadn't heard the other guy's side of it. What the navy said, or the air people said, might have a marked influence on the decision. And a lot of times you didn't know; he didn't say 'this is it' or 'that's it'.



BURG: General, when you briefed General Marshall, he did not take notes--

HANDY: No.

BURG: --of what you were saying.

HANDY: No.

BURG: And he would then go almost immediately to the meeting, I presume within a--

HANDY: Well, maybe it would be in the morning, and it would be that afternoon that--

BURG: Yes. Was it your impression as you sat in these meetings that the briefing that you gentlemen had given him was right there in his mind?

HANDY: Oh, yeah. He listened, boy, boy! That's the reason that you had to be--he wasn't an easy man to brief. You see he listened very carefully to everything you said, and by God you better know what you were talking about. And he didn't want any



wishy-washy, or around the post. "What do YOU think?

What would YOU do?"

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: See.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: When you told him--gave him one of these wishy-washy, two-sided answers, see.

BURG: You, in your own thinking--

HANDY: But he had one of the most retentive memories that I've ever seen. Oh, I've never seen anything like it, and he made a great impression down on the Hill from beginning, you know, never having a note. And I heard him down there two or three times, when they couldn't call it that, when they had practically a joint session. They'd go over in the Library of Congress to have it, you know, certainly all the key people of the House and the Senate. But he would go over weeks of operations. Now so far as I know he read that little log with



selected messages there every morning and we briefed him every morning, you see, on the situation all over. And I got some expert briefers. He told Bedell Smith over there at Fontainbleau one time or Versailles, when they were there. You'd better send somebody back to the War Department to learn how to put on a briefing!" [Laughter] But he loved to needle Beetle. Now that, so far as I know, was all he had. He'd get down there and he'd trace the movements of each division. Of course all these things--the divisions and the commanders, and so on--he was very close and intimate with all of them.



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And with all the operations. But he'd trace them for weeks down there without a note or anything else. It beat any damned thing I've ever seen.

BURG: Yes, an amazing quality of mind--

HANDY: Oh, yeah.

BURG: --to be able to do that.

HANDY: That's the reason, I think, that so much attention can be paid to these things that Pogue had; those conversations.

BURG: Yes, indeed. That's right. And I think that those volumes have turned out to be just excellent of their kind. So when he said to Eisenhower that he didn't want him to be hesitant, that was the kind of information that he was giving to all his commanders--



HANDY: Oh, yeah.

BURG: --and he wanted frank and forthright statements from all.

HANDY: Absolutely, and he emphasized it.

BURG: And from you too. From all of you.

HANDY: Oh, yeah. He said, "What do YOU think?" And he wanted you to tell him.

BURG: Uh-huh. O.K. Now the next question comes from October in '42, again from the Marshall correspondence. Some note

there in the correspondence must have engendered this question. I wondered if you can remember General Marshall's opinion of [Major] General [Walter H.] Frank of the Air Corps, an officer that the correspondence seems to show General Arnold personally did not like.

HANDY: My answer is 'no'.



BURG: You don't remember that. All right.

HANDY: Then you've got a question on [Major General Russell P.] Scruppy Hartle and [Major General Lloyd Ralston] Fredendall.

BURG: Yes. The question wondered whether you remembered the reason, or reasons--

HANDY: I don't know and can't give all the reasons as to why Fredendall was selected over Scruppy Hartle. Those responsible evidently felt he was better for the job.

BURG: But you don't know the particulars of the circumstance at all.

HANDY: No.

BURG: This was a question that wondered why Hartle was left in London instead of being given command of the TORCH center task force.

HANDY: There isn't any question in my mind that Ike probably preferred somebody else, don't you see.

BURG: Preferred Fredendall to Hartle.

HANDY: Yeah, or somebody. I think Fredendall was selected back here, with Ike's approval.

BURG: Yes. The difficulty being, at that stage in the war nobody's performance in combat was known. There was no way to know it; we had not--

HANDY: Or all his characteristics, you see.

BURG: Yeah. It only could be revealed in maneuvers, peacetime maneuvers, and this kind of thing.



HANDY: That's right.

BURG: Yeah. All right, our next question, from October of '42, again the Marshall file. There was a mention of Beetle Smith's arrival in London that caused us to wonder whether you could tell us of General Marshall's assessment of General Smith. And we would like your assessment of General Smith, too.

HANDY: I'm sure General Marshall had the highest opinion of Beetle Smith. At times, however, he seemed to enjoy needling Beetle a little. Examples: the army band; the briefing that I just mentioned, you know, when he [Marshall] sent the army band over--I think I got a note on it later--you know, to North Africa to get some publicity, and he never heard anything about the band. And he just gave Beetle hell and said that he was going to put a lieutenant of marines in charge of it and get some worthwhile publicity! [Laughter] I went over there and Beetle said, "For God's sake!" he said, "Can't you get the old man off my back about this band. He's just giving me hell." [Laughter] Now Ike concurred fully in General Marshall's opinion of Beetle Smith. Quite a remarkable fellow.

BURG: Had you ever served with General Smith before the war came along?



HANDY: No, no. He was secretary of the general staff there when I came back to Washington, you know, before Pearl Harbor in 1941.

BURG: Right, right. He had a reputation for having a fairly acid tongue.

HANDY: Oh, yeah.

BURG: And sarcasm. Were people generally able to see beyond that and see the great capability of the man.

HANDY: I think so. Yeah. And Beetle, you know, particularly in the position he was in--and I guess it caused resentment on the part of a lot of people, which is perfectly natural. But Beetle was quite a guy, quite a guy. Ike thought a lot of him, I know.

BURG: Had, had Eisenhower selected Smith deliberately, General Handy, for that position.

HANDY: I think so. You see, he waited quite awhile to get



Beetle; as a matter of fact, once or twice after he went over, he sent word back, "When are you going to send Smith?"

BURG: Now it has been said, I think by various people--it's been proposed by historians--that a good part of Eisenhower's effectiveness was Smith.

HANDY: Oh, no.

BURG: Uh-huh, that would be my impression, too, but--

HANDY: Yeah.

BURG: --I'm glad to have that--

HANDY: I don't think so at all. I think Beetle--furthermore, Beetle was always perfectly loyal to Ike. And above all, you need a chief of staff who's willing to, you know, disregard and bury himself under the boss, and I think Ike felt that he had that in Beetle, see.

BURG: Uh-huh, uh-huh.



HANDY: I think he was awful glad when Beetle arrived. See, Clark had been his deputy, and he'd had Al Gruenther and some other people around there, but he wanted--I'm sure he wanted Bedeill.



BURG: Right. Now a second thing that has been said in the past--

HANDY: But I wouldn't say for a minute that Ike's success was due to Beetle. Of course, any man's success is due to having somebody else do the jobs where one guy couldn't do much himself, personally as individual.

BURG: Right. Now this is the second thing that has sometime come up that I wanted your impression on. Some have said, "Well, when it came to a job of having to axe somebody, remove them, or anything of this sort, Eisenhower would use Beetle as the hatchet man." That he would not do it himself, or wasn't capable of doing it himself. Would you accept that as a judgment of Eisenhower?

HANDY: No. No, I wouldn't. Undoubtedly, there were times when

Beetle maybe conveyed the message, and so on, but I think Ike did it. You see, you got something else in here about this relief. People have to remember this. That is the most difficult and almost heart-rending thing a fellow has to do. Remember, these people weren't bad; they're damned good or they wouldn't be where they are.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And--

BURG: Speaking now of the Fredendall's and others.

HANDY: Oh, yeah.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: And you know you're jeopardizing the fellow's whole career, see?

BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: And it isn't because he's lazy or failed to put out or



anything else, damn it, but you just figure he can't do the job, or somebody else can do it better. And it's one of the most difficult things in the world and it's one of the most difficult to handle.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And you can only do this; if a commander loses confidence in his subordinates, then it's time for him to get others, you see. Now if he gets so bad and his judgment is so poor, you don't tell him he can't relieve this guy. You get another commander. That's your only answer to that. And General Marshall universally backed these people up in the theaters and all of that.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: See he'd seen all of this thing back in World War I when a great many had to be relieved. General Pershing relieved them.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And it's a terrible thing. I say later on in these notes-- you bring up the question of [Major General Orlando] Pink Ward,



and I think I've got it later on; maybe I shouldn't insert it here, but you brought this up. Sometimes, and I think it was true in the case of Pink Ward--see, Pink Ward had been a good friend of mine for a long time. I served with him at Sill, and then when he was secretary of the staff in Washington, and so on. I thought a hell of a lot of him. And I think, essentially, Pink Ward's relief was due to the fact that he was such a hell of a fine person.



BURG: I see.

HANDY: It--hell, now you've got a hint of it in here. Somebody said "Why," he said, "Pink can't stand it. If he loses an officer or a man in that division, by God, it's just like losing his own son. He doesn't get over it."

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Well, a division commander cannot function like that!

BURG: That's right.

HANDY: It's too much strain on him, and I think to quite an extent that was true of Pink Ward.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: The fact that he was just--you admire that. And a guy, to be like that, means he's a hell of a fine person.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Well, I think, myself--there were other things, too-- but I think, myself, the main reason that Pink Ward was relieved was because he was such a hell of a fine guy.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Basically.

BURG: Right. A splendid man to have on your side, but not in that position.

HANDY: That's right.

BURG: Where he had to send men to death, or--



HANDY: Yeah, he just couldn't stand it. No guy can take that.

BURG: No, no.

HANDY: And apparently Pink couldn't get over it. It was as the fellow said, "Hell, every time he gets a man killed, it's like losing his own son." Well, a guy can't be a division commander and take that, that's all there is to it.

BURG: Yeah. Now I think the correspondence did make that clear. That in his case, he was a sensitive man and this was an intolerable situation for him to be in.

HANDY: Yeah. There were other things; Fredendall, and a lot of other things, but--and misunderstandings. Furthermore, we were fumbling around quite a bit, you know. We weren't experts then.

BURG: Surely, surely.

HANDY: I remember Ike said after Kasserine Pass there that



he was convinced of one thing. By God, training had to be continued, even in combat. Continually, continually! Our people weren't too hot. They were a hell of a lot better than they'd ever been before, initially, in a war, but they weren't perfect.

BURG: Of course. Well, they were up against a very practiced and determined enemy.

HANDY: Oh, yeah.

BURG: Who had not neglected these things.

HANDY: Well, you go ahead. I'm wandering here again.

BURG: Now in November of 1942, from the War Papers, we have a letter from General Eisenhower to you which indicated that you were kind of keeping in touch with Mrs. Eisenhower, and we would like to know how frequently you were able to do this, and how you were able to do it. There was another question here. We wondered if you had known about Mrs. Eisenhower's difficulty with the inner ear, because that seems to have cropped up there



in Washington during the war perhaps for the first time.

HANDY: Well, I would go over to see Mrs. Eisenhower at the Wardman Park when there was a reason to do so. There'd be some message from Ike, or something, that they would think she should know--

BURG: Right.

HANDY: --and talk to her. Sometimes it was to give her certain information, such as someone having seen Ike and so on, don't you see--

BURG: Yes, uh-huh.

HANDY: --things like that. And other times to see if there was anything we could do for her in OPD. She knew we could do things that other people couldn't.

BURG: In passing on messages and things of this sort.

HANDY: Yeah, and all of that. I was not informed about her inner ear problem.



BURG: Uh-huh. Well, it seemed to come on her--if I remember her story--it seemed to come on her quite suddenly.

HANDY: I think so.

BURG: Suddenly there was this condition.

HANDY: Yeah.

BURG: Now let me ask you this, General. Did she ever--when I said "make demands" upon you or upon OPD. I don't mean come in and strike a posture and--

HANDY: No, not to me, she certainly never did. She was always very gracious.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: And seemed always very cordial and seemed to appreciate, you know, me coming. And particularly--you know it makes a lot of difference to these people. General Marshall never forgot this. I remember, I came back off a long trip one time and called up somebody's wife. I told him I'd call her up and he



told me afterwards, "A hell of a lot of guys said they'd do it but you are the only one who ever did."

BURG: I see.

HANDY: Well, General Marshall always called the wives when he came back. He'd talked to them and seen them; it made a lot of difference.

BURG: Yes. Yes, indeed.



HANDY: And of course if we'd seen Ike or anybody when we went over there, why we would give them the dope on it, and that interested them, naturally. But she was always very gracious to me.

BURG: O.K. That's good. I rather thought that was what had happened. Now, December '42, again from the War Papers, here we noted a very long letter on the TORCH operations up to that date, that is up to about December the 7th of '42. And we ask, was this letter written to you because Eisenhower had frequently conferred with you about TORCH, or was it because you had

requested him to tell you about this operation, or was it an indirect means that Eisenhower might have taken to inform General Marshall about his problems? We wondered, too, was it because TORCH was Eisenhower's first major command and he needed a sympathetic, informed friend, you, with whom he could share some of his thoughts? It was a lengthy and very detailed good letter to you. We just wondered what might have motivated it?

HANDY: Well, my answer to that was this: I do not think I ever asked General Eisenhower to tell me about any operation. The answer to all the other questions is probably 'yes' to some extent. [Laughter] As you know, General Eisenhower was generous in his correspondence and expressed his thoughts very well.



BURG: Yes, indeed.

HANDY: I doubt if he intended to use me as what you call "an indirect means of informing General Marshall." He wrote General Marshall rather fully.

BURG: Uh-huh. Yeah, I wondered if there was any kind of situation here such as General Patton dropping a few ideas to you.

HANDY: No, I don't think so. See, Ike knew how things worked back there and he knew I saw the old man every day. And maybe at times he said--General Marshall used to send these messages to Beetle Smith all the time, you know, [Laughter] and he knew Beetle was going to tell Ike about them. But he could beat Beetle over the head with them. [Laughter] You know, those kind of things. I don't think it was a by-passing. If he'd had anything that he wanted Ike to have directly, he'd have given it to him.

BURG: Yes, right. And your view is that it would work the same way from Eisenhower to Marshall.



HANDY: Oh, yeah.

BURG: So anything that he told you about TORCH was, as you say, a combination of things--

HANDY: Oh, yeah, and I'm certain I showed his letter--I always did--to General Marshall.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: We discussed it. As a matter of fact, the General encouraged that kind of a thing. He could pick up things from a letter from Ike to me he wouldn't pick up with the regular correspondence sometimes, you know.

BURG: Yes, sure, right. All right. Then in January of 1943, this is from the Marshall correspondence file, and the way I have this worded here is: evidently General Marshall gave General Eisenhower the idea that Eisenhower might appoint General Patton to a position as a kind of deputy commander. And Eisenhower, in a letter of 17 January '43, said he might make Patton, and I quote, "deputy commander for ground forces." In the event, this was not done, was it?

HANDY: No.

BURG: Never was done. And we went on: in view of DDE's refusal



later to grant a similar position to Bernard Montgomery, it would be interesting to have your opinion as to why Eisenhower would not grant this one to Patton. Do you happen to know the answer?

HANDY: No, I do not know why this was not given to Patton. I can speculate, however, that his reasons, Ike's reasons, for not making Patton deputy for ground forces could have been, and probably were, quite different in the case of Montgomery.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: It was a different barrel of fish, you know, altogether.

BURG: Indeed.

HANDY: There are a lot of things that come into this; I don't remember all of them. You see, I don't know whether this happened before Bradley went over or not.

BURG: And I don't either; I'm not sure of the timing.



HANDY: See, General Marshall suggested this--he thought Ike had too much of him--of sending Bradley over there as eyes and ears and, you know, Ike agreed. And remember, Patton commanded a corps when they went in there. As a matter of fact, he was relieved from II Corps and Bradley put in command when Patton was designated for Sicily, you know.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: He was waiting for it.

BURG: Right, right.

HANDY: So Patton was the principal ground commander there until-- I've forgotten just what stage of the campaign--but you see, Bradley took over the II Corps from Patton. At first Bradley wasn't sent over there as a commander; he was sent over as eyes and ears, you remember.

BURG: Yes, I do. O.K. I think you're probably right. The Montgomery thing is so totally different.



HANDY: Oh, that's a different barrel of fish. The reason that he asked for Montgomery was entirely different. In the first place, you're dealing with an American and a Britisher which, after all, makes a difference, but more important you're dealing with Monty and Georgie Patton. Georgie Patton was a hell of a loyal guy; he'd toe the line, too.



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: You see. And maybe he'd kick over the traces, but you were dealing with a different animal when you're dealing with Montgomery.

BURG: Yes, that's right. Well, this next question that we put to you was long--sorry about that--but it was derived from Stephen Ambrose's book and talked about the Casablanca--

HANDY: Yeah.

BURG: --Conference settling upon Italy--I'm sorry, Sicily-- as the next objective after Tunisia was secure. Ambrose makes the statement that General Marshall, Wedemeyer, Hull, and Gailey

were very disappointed and that the last three named was OPD representatives to Casablanca. It is my understanding that you yourself did not attend the Casablanca--

HANDY: That's right.

BURG: Uh-huh. And Ambrose says that Eisenhower wrote to you to soften the blow, urging OPD not "to deal with military problems on an American versus British basis." I wondered if you felt that Eisenhower himself was inclined to see this--pardon me, I wondered if you yourself--

[Interruption]

BURG: --let me put it this way, Do you think that you were inclined to put it on an American versus British basis?

HANDY: O.K. Now here's the notes I had on that whole question, the whole series of questions.

BURG: All right. There sure were [Laughter]



HANDY: An attempt to answer follows: I was not at Casablanca. Al Wedemeyer went as OPD representatives; Hull and Gailey joined later, I believe, from a trip they were on through the Middle East. I think that everyone, and I mean the British as well as us, were influenced by their own national opinions and backgrounds. That's to be expected. After all, we were Americans and they were British; you couldn't change that. However, some people on both sides felt so strongly that their judgment was affected. The only time this feeling was really serious was when it overrode the important thing: What was the best thing to do to win the war as quickly as possible?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: I recall nothing about the floating research center. It sounds like one of Lord Louis Mountbatten's ideas. [Laughter] That's very much like Lord Louis.

BURG: I should add that General Handy's response here was in answer to a question. The British evidently fitted out a six



thousand ton freighter as sort of a floating research center for Casablanca, so we were asking General Handy if he had known about that.

HANDY: Yeah.

BURG: Well, how about that next one--

HANDY: The last question. Al Wedemeyer was right. [Laughter] We were snowed under at Casablanca on the planning level. There wasn't any question about it. Al Wedemeyer and Savvy Cooke were practically alone and were faced with relays of well-informed British planners, all set on most any subject. We learned our lesson, however, and saw to it that for future conferences, we would be in a position to grab the ball.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: Al came back and told me about this thing. It was God-awful. And we started to training people in teams. And when we went to these conferences in the future, you know, it's a hell of a big advantage if you get the discussion started



on your own paper--if you have a paper on this thing, or ideas on it--when the subject comes up. You can't pull them out of the hat and do it then.

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: And you're at a big advantage if you can slap your proposal on the table and start discussion on the basis of that instead of the other guy's. And this brings out the point that I said before. The British were old hands at this planning business and they were a hell of a lot better than we were. But we figured we had to get on the ball or we were going to be in a hell of a fix, and Al and Savvy Cooke just had a hell of a time. They were the only two there and they were trying to carry the whole burden.

BURG: Casablanca then was about the last time that we really got caught as badly as this?

HANDY: Yeah. Caught really with our pants down. Al, when he says we, we--

BURG: We came, we listened-- [Laughter]

HANDY: We came, we listened, and we were conquered. There wasn't any question about it, and Al said we got to do something about it and he was absolutely right. And we tried to do something about it and I think did it with a fair degree of success.

BURG: So we responded quickly to this unusual circumstance.

HANDY: Yeah, well, it was all the way through. [Brig. Gen. Howard A.] Pink Craig was out there with Ike when I saw him in Algiers. He said, "Hell, what we need above all else is some expert planners." See, he was in headquarters there in the G-3 section, involved with the planning at that time. And he said the British were just so far ahead of us in this business, there isn't any question. And they were.

BURG: But, General, we had men who had been planning. They did planning work. What was the difference? Was it that ours were just not accustomed to detailed studies?



HANDY: Well, I think one reason was this. The British were far ahead of us on keeping the people informed, you see. That is, the various services, and the government, and everything else. That secretariat system that they had. It was just a wonderful thing. General Marshall tried to get it instituted in the United States without any success. They started to yell about a 'man on horseback', or something. He realized that whoever headed it up had to be somebody of stature, like Averell Harriman, for instance. He mentioned his name, don't you see. Lord Ismay did it. He was chief of staff to the Prime Minister, and those guys knew everything that everybody was doing, and we didn't. And you'd think you had them headed off here, they could come up at you a half dozen other ways! One thing that they understood, and the Prime Minister above all, was the principle of the objective. They never forgot what they were after. You headed them off here, they'd come at you another way. And they had all that planning, throughout, much better coordinated than we had.

BURG: Everyone in touch.



HANDY: Absolutely.

BURG: And passing viewpoints back and forth.

HANDY: Yeah, they did it with that secretariat system.

BURG: I see. So if you're talking to a Royal Air Force Marshal, he's going to be able to present the navy's view and army's view.

HANDY: Or he knows what the navy's view is and what they've gotten together and decided on as the British view.



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Well, you don't know what your own navy and your air people--how they're going off, don't you see.

BURG: Right, right.

HANDY: Well, we were--I've said it two or three times; no use to repeat it--on this planning business, we were behind the eight ball. We were kind of babes in wood. But we got

so we could hold our own and sometimes grab the ball. There were cases later, Teheran for instance, [lost this] the hell out of them at their own game.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: We got [the invasion of] Southern France put through.

[Laughter]

BURG: Yes, yes. Did any of the British officers comment on the fact that we were learning? [Laughter]

HANDY: Well, they said that we drew up the plans before we went to Teheran. We didn't actually.

BURG: But they accused us of having the plans already--

HANDY: They said we couldn't have done it over night. I was up there. You see, they agreed down in Cairo that they were going up to see Joe Stalin, see, and the British were dead set against Southern France.

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: And it was agreed down there--we thought we had lost the fight--they'd more or less be guided by what Stalin wanted. See, they were going to Teheran. And they all figured he'd want an operation down there nearer to him, maybe to wander through southeastern Europe or something, don't you see. And so we went up there feeling kind of hopeless. Well when they laid it on the table up there, old Joe--the British accused us [Laughter] looked like we had a double deal-- he came out and gave them a hell of a lot of the same damned arguments we'd been giving them! If they really wanted to help this thing along, they had to have something near it to give it a push. He was all for it.



BURG: He didn't want them in the Balkans or southeast Europe.

HANDY: No! So General Marshall came back and told me what had happened, you see, in this meeting. He said, "We're going to have a meeting again on it in the morning and," he said, "the British now say we can't do it." You see.

BURG: Can't do--

HANDY: What, what did we call that thing?

BURG: In southern France, ANVIL.

HANDY: Yeah. Can't do ANVIL, see. We haven't got the resources and shipping up there, and all that. He said, "See if you can get me some notes on it." Well we had some good guys up there, Bill Somervell, Savvy Cooke and [Colonel Emmett] Rosie O'Donnell [Jr.] up there, and we got together after dinner and I told them the proposition and I said, "What we got to do is draw up an outline plan. And I'll try to take the ground side of it and, Rosie, you take the air; and, Savvy, you take the naval support and shipping, and Bill, you take the logistics support."

BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: "And let's get us something together and see if we can put it together." Well about two o'clock that morning, we came up with the outline plan, believe it or not. Furthermore, we had [Captain Forrest] Royal [U.S.N.] and those people alerted, the secretary side of it, and they mimeographed the thing. So our people went down there the next morning with an



outlined plan of something they said couldn't be done, showing where the stuff was coming from and so on. Incidentally--now, we'd had plenty of studies on this before; I don't mean this was all pulled out of the hat. And incidentally, the major points in this outlined plan was what they did months later in August, or whenever it was they landed in southern France, the ANVIL operation.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: But that was one time the British swore we couldn't have done that. But that thing, [they said] we came up there with it all set and had it undercover from them.

BURG: And that simply wasn't true?

HANDY: No, it wasn't true.

BURG: Put together right on the scene.

HANDY: But we licked them right there. You see? Because they said it couldn't be done and we showed--and you had to



do that. You had to make an outline plan to show where this stuff was coming from and everything else; how you were going to use it. It was no--but you had knowledgeable people who had been working with that for months, you know, and weeks. And they were, they were damned good, those kind of people. They always talked about Rosie O'Donnell. Rosie O'Donnell in my mind was a hell of a big asset, with all of his craziness and dirty stories. [Laughter]

BURG: And this time the British were the ones with their pants caught down.

HANDY: Yeah. You see, it had been agreed that the planners wouldn't go up there. We had a whole planning staff back in Cairo, these various teams, don't you see.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And that each Chief of Staff would take one man with him and they'd take Royal, he was a naval officer who was secretary of the staff, and a couple of the clerks. See? That's



what we took to Teheran. The British, the same thing. They had no planning staff. So we were it. Somervell, and myself, and Cooke and Rosie O'Donnell. That's all anybody had. They brought Somervell along. He was always a hell of a good guy to have along on this logistic thing. But anyhow, that was the story. Now that's my story, somebody else might tell it differently.

BURG: Did the British, in presenting their plan, had they also prepared an outline plan of what they--

HANDY: No, no. They just said it couldn't be done.

BURG: So they were caught twice--

HANDY: That was their answer to Joe Stalin when he advocated just what we'd been advocating and gave a lot of the same reasons we'd been giving.

BURG: Yeah.

HANDY: Did you ever see, speaking of that, the castigation of ANVIL? That paper?



BURG: No, no.

HANDY: Pogue said he had been it. That was one of the most remarkable things. See, this argument went on for weeks-- matter of fact, months--after that. Mind you, this was all long before the invasion--

BURG: Sure.

HANDY: --was made, what we're talking about.

BURG: It was still going on at the time of the invasion.

HANDY: Oh, yeah, the arguments went on; and the Prime Minister, damn it, he went down there in England and tried to divert those people around to Brest or something, when they were actually loading out for the operation.

BURG: Yes, yes.

HANDY: Remember?

BURG: That's right.



HANDY: So they never gave up, they never forgot the objective. Well [Colonel George A.] Abe Lincoln--I'm sure it was Abe, one of the Abe's. They were there with me in operations; I guess it was big Abe--anyhow, he got a paper together which consisted of nothing but direct quotes from British papers, or what they had said about ANVIL, you see, and this was after ANVIL. After it had gone like a house afire. And he designated the paper "The Castigation of ANVIL." Well, boy, it was the most damning thing you've ever read! [Laughter]

BURG: And you say Forrest Pogue has seen it?

HANDY: Yeah. Old man Stimson just got fat over it!

BURG: Where do you suppose it went to?

HANDY: I don't know. You ask Pogue. But I mentioned it down here to him. He said he'd seen it.

BURG: We'll chase that thing down.

HANDY: But it was the damnedest thing you ever saw, you see.



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Because it had no arguments. Nothing we'd ever said, or anything else, it was just the--

BURG: Just the British.

HANDY: --British. It showed how wrong they had been. Well, [laughter] they could have been right, too, you know. It's like a lot of these things. The old man said to me, after we had had all this battle and after that thing started and we had that Task Force Butler. And it was going like a house afire, a hell of a lot faster than we ever expected or hoped it would, you know. And we'd go down there in the briefing room and, boy, in the morning, I went down there and it looked awful good. These guys going here and there and like a house afire. The old man said to me, very quietly--after they'd all left, the briefers and everything--he said, "Well," he said, "we were a damned sight better strategists than we ever had any idea we were, weren't we?" [Laughter] A lot of these high-powered strategic things are like that. They're wise as hell after the event.



BURG: Yes, yeah.

HANDY: But that's what he said in that case. Well, we felt that we were right, and it was our best thought. And that was one case where events, I think, showed us very definitely to be right. Incidentally, I think Ike had to resist the Prime Minister on that very, very strongly, and Ike stuck to his guns. He had the same view we had.

BURG: Uh-huh, yes. Because he was pressured.

HANDY: And that's when he said, "When he turned the sunlamp on...", and that was something when that old guy turned the sunlamp on! He would quote back from ancient history and classics and everything else, you know, and he could really bear down! [Laughter]

BURG: Yes, yes he could.

HANDY: And he had the position. After all, he was Prime Minister of Great Britain and certainly as [General Sir Frederick] Freddy Morgan said, the greatest Englishman of his



time, and maybe the greatest of all time. He was a powerful world figure.

BURG: Yeah.

HANDY: See?

BURG: That's right. Now pressure from him was, was--

HANDY: It wasn't chicken feed.

BURG: That's right, it was not.

HANDY: Well, I'm taking up your time here.



BURG: Nope, all of this is right along the line and we're happy to have it. In January of '43, from the War Papers, a letter from Eisenhower to you spoke of how much you had had to put up with in supporting TORCH. We would like to know what had you had to "put up with," and I've asked the question, was it static from the navy and the "Pacific-first" types? Was it from the air corps or other people in OPD? Who had put the pressure on you in supporting TORCH?

HANDY: Well, here's my answer to that. You have a lot "to put up with" when you're heading up operations, particularly for the first major one. That's part of the job, and undoubtedly General Eisenhower had that in mind. He realized it fully. Also added to this was the feeling on the part of several of us as to the fundamental soundness of the undertaking, you see. You had that in the back of your head.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: Your remark about static from the navy, air corps, and so forth, does not ring a bell with me. You're always pressured, as I said before, when you're trying to stay on top of operations in a major war. That's a normal thing about it. And I think Ike realized that just as well as anybody. We had one hell of a time, for example, trying to get this Patton expedition going, see, with shipping and every other damn thing.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Getting enough ammunition for them. That's the first



time I realized how far we'd gone with automatic weapons and so on. Bill Somervell came up to me and--they were awful good. They really put their shoulder to the wheel, and talk about doing the impossible, they did it time and again. And that's the way we win. You got to do the impossible. And, you see, we were asking for a hell of a lot of ammunition. We didn't think it was too much. Bill said, "Have you got any idea how much ammunition you're asking for?" "Well," I said, "we're sending those boys a hell of a long way off and God knows what's going to happen to communications. We hope they'll get some help over there, and maybe they'll have to give a little ammunition to the Frogs, and a few other things like that. We don't think it's an unreasonable request." See? Matter of fact, we never did get it, and we couldn't have room on the ships for it, anyhow.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: It was too big a load. But he said, "You're asking-- in small arms ammunition alone--you are asking for more than the



entire AEF expended in World War I in Europe." Nobody had any idea--

BURG: That's true.

HANDY: --and that's the first time it brought it home to me. You gave every man at least a semi-automatic weapon. No use to give them those things unless you give them the ammunition to shoot, and this thing just snowballs on you. Gets to be of astronomical proportions. Well, things you got to put up with, that was an example.

BURG: In a way, what Eisenhower was saying to you was, that having held the job that you then held, he knew--

HANDY: It wasn't easy.

BURG: --yeah, he knew it wasn't easy.

HANDY: [Lost this phase]

BURG: Right. And he's just sort of apologizing to you [laughter] for the--



HANDY: I don't think he was apologizing.

BURG: --the things he knew you would have to go through, because he'd been going through it.

HANDY: Well, absolutely. He knew. And maybe our difficulties weren't anything like as great as his. After all, he was the guy that was responsible.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: O.K.



BURG: April '43. This is from the Gaily correspondence file. Colonel Gailey told General Eisenhower that you were going to leave on a trip 6 April '43 and that you would probably be seeing Eisenhower, and he wanted Eisenhower to make you relax; although Gailey admitted that Handy is, and I quote, "just as chipper, alert and healthy now as when you left. I don't see how he does it". We wanted to know how did you relax under those war-time stresses?

HANDY: You asked about my health.

BURG: And your health.

HANDY: My answer to that question. As far as I know, my health was O.K. In fact, we were so busy we didn't have time to be unhealthy. [Laughter]

BURG: Well, do you remember during those wartime years, General Marshall could go down to Leesburg and try to unwind a bit. How did you unwind and--

HANDY: Well, I tell you the old man, you know, used to say-- he used to give me hell every now and then and asked me how long I was working, and so on, you see?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: He said anybody that couldn't finish up their work by five o'clock was inefficient [lost this] . And he would go, and it got so, more and more, after he got a little confidence in the way things were going--and I think, in us-- he would go over the weekends--



BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: --right along. And he could do it. And he would leave his office in the middle of the afternoon. He wasn't a guy to stick around if there wasn't anything to do.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: See? And he never made work. That kind of thing. But I noticed this--I've been hem-hawing around--when he hit there in the morning, he'd like to have the dope ready and the action suggested, and all of that.

BURG: Yes, yes.



HANDY: You see? And we were kind of behind the eight-ball, because they had the time edge on us. They had the day and they could pile everything in on us and it would get to us at night, and we had to get the answers out the next day, you know, so it wasn't easy. Now those boys I had in those theater groups, they handled most of these things. You know, the current matter. We tried, and I think very successfully, to get out

an answer in twenty-four hours. Now lots of times we couldn't answer the question, you know, but it--

BURG: Right.

HANDY: --certainly told the guy what we knew and what we were doing. In other words, he got an answer of some kind in twenty-four hours. Well, thousands of messages were coming in there and it was a hell of an undertaking. Those boys worked practically all night. Oftentimes.

BURG: Colonel Stack, I think, spoke of the Green Hornet--

HANDY: Oh, boy.

BURG: --system of flagging inquiries.

HANDY: Yeah, when this thing has to be done right now. And you see in the morning, we finally got the old man so he'd-- it used to be, when I first got in there, he'd be hitting his buzzer the first thing in the morning: "What about this?" Hell, you hadn't even had a chance to read the damned message he was talking about, don't you see.



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: We got him so finally he took it a little easier. And as Pasco [?] said, took his "morning's morning," and we'd go down about nine o'clock to brief him, see. Sometimes if something was hot, awful hot, he'd call you before that, but he got so most of the time he didn't. And it was a hell of a good thing for us. I used to get down there shortly after seven; by seven-thirty, anyhow. Well my theater people had all been together with the briefers from about four o'clock and gone over everything, and they were ready to brief me and Ed Hull, you see, at about seven-thirty and suggest action on all these things.

BURG: So they were actually there at four o'clock?

HANDY: Oh, a hell of a lot of times they were. They had to be, and the briefers had to be, to prepare the briefing, you see, all the stuff, and get the briefing ready on the situation. Then we'd go down about nine, maybe a little before, with our maps and everything else and put on the briefing for the old man, you see.



BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: But they'd briefed us, our people had, before that. And, as a matter of fact, Arnold [?] was almost always there, you see. And right in that time, in about an hour--didn't take much more than that, sometimes it stretched out longer--hell, that's where the war was won. We decided these questions that were up, or said what was going to be done about them or not be done, or O.K. what you had suggested, and so on.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: And then you'd go ahead and have the rest of the day to carry out what had been said.

BURG: When would a day end for you, personally? About what time?

HANDY: Oh, it would all depend but I would be lucky if I'd get home by eight o'clock, something like that. We got maybe a little better toward the end. I know how rough it would



get when Ed Hull said, "The next time a guy comes in here with a message with his hat on--." These guys would work down there till the last damned minute, knowing we had to pass this stuff and get it down. They were sweating blood, too, you know, I'm not blaming them; but bringing it up at the last minute, that's what Ed meant, and then we had to do all our work on it. "The next guy that comes up here with a message with his hat on," he said, "kick him out of here." [Laughter]

BURG: A man all set to leave the building, and he dropped it on you--

HANDY: Absolutely. He'd done his part on it--

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --and was dumping it in your lap.

BURG: Yeah.

HANDY: Well, that's what you got to expect, and sometimes the things were longer and sometimes they weren't.



BURG: Did you for relaxation, did you go to movies--

HANDY: Not much.

BURG: --or did you read at home?

HANDY: Oh, maybe some. Read the paper a little, but generally by the time I got home and got dinner, I was ready to hit the bunk, because it'd wear me out, kind of weary.

BURG: But yet your health did hold up all during these years--

HANDY: Well, I think when you're working hard your health holds out.

BURG: Yeah. There are others who fall apart under strain, even less strain than you were under.

HANDY: Well, I was a good deal younger then and I think age has something to do with it. See, General Marshall said to me, talking about this thing, that it looked to him like--see, we were having a hell of a time--how people all these young fellows, wanted to get out of there, very naturally.



BURG: Get out to combat, yes.

HANDY: Yeah. And he said, "Maybe we're missing the bat." We had a lot of the--General McNair called them the PhD.'s of the army." These fellows that were colonels, and had been through all the schools and everything, were damned well qualified people but resented that they weren't going to be promoted, you see. They were a little over on the age and all that.



BURG: Uh-huh.

HANDY: And he said, "What do you think? Maybe we ought to try to use those people." "Well," I said, "General, maybe you're right. We got a lot of youngsters raring at the bit, here; I'll try it." Well, I did try it with several of them. Well, I'll tell you, frankly, they couldn't take it. Now, it wasn't because they weren't willing; God, they just worked their hearts out. But this business of twelve, fourteen, or fifteen hours a day and seven days a week, and no relief; the first thing you know they got to the point where they were going through the motions. You see, they continued to do that,

and it was all right for routine work. But it's like General Marshall used to say when he was talking on this subject, that he wanted staff officers around there that could smell the dynamite in a thing. That you could get them for a dime a dozen to do routine work.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Well, you got to have guys that will show imagination and initiative, and all that business, and keep on doing it! And the guy that's older just wasn't able to do it. And it wasn't because they didn't try and it's nothing to their disgrace, but it wasn't an overall success.

BURG: Fatigue would set in, and they weren't thinking clearly--

HANDY: Well that's just it--

BURG: --as they ought to have.

HANDY: --they got so they were, as I expressed it, they were more or less going through the motions. My God, those guys just worked their hearts out. But you got to have something more than that.



BURG: And so it was your belief, after a time, that you just had to go with younger men who could stand that--

HANDY: Well, we had younger men. I think Gerow and Charley Gailey had assembled a lot of those people and did it right along, but they just picked them from all over and ordered them in there. That's when I--well, I don't know that I mean exactly--but when I was ordered back, Al Wedemeyer, [Maj. Gen. Leven C.] Lev Allen, [Col. A. F.] Frank Kibler, a whole bunch of us--[Col. Charles W.] Charley Bundy--you know, who were there in the early days--Fred Harper--they were picking them up from all over.

BURG: Bringing them back in.

HANDY: Oh, yeah. They were, they were damned good. Well, they had to be. That was a remarkable group of people that we had there in operations, very remarkable. O.K.

BURG: Now here in this question, General, we have touched on this before. This is the April 1943 question from the Marshall



file where Eisenhower told General Marshall that General Fredendall just couldn't seem to develop a happy family in his outfit--

HANDY: Yes.



BURG: --and that Ward was too sensitive to criticism and the loss of friends and subordinates in combat. And then there was a comment about [Brig. Gen. Raymond E.] McQuillin, that while he was viewed as quite good by some, including [Maj. Gen. Ernest Mason] Harmon, he was viewed by Eisenhower as being average and not inspirational. And I was going to ask you to tell us how those three cases were handled, and to ask how these three men performed in their later assignments?

HANDY: I said, I'm hardly qualified to comment as I was not there. These reliefs were essentially handled in the theater where chain of command is viewed as taking precedence. This relief--some of this I've told you before--

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --while in combat was one of the most difficult, if not the most difficult, problems confronting the commander and one over which much blood is spilled.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: You can't expect a commander to function if he loses confidence in his subordinates. If you're not prepared to accept his view the only answer is to get another commander. I believe that Pink Ward functioned very well after his relief. Maybe I'm prejudiced because he was and is a very good friend of mine. In a way, as I said before, he was a victim of being such a very fine person.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: As someone said the loss of any man under him was a personal loss to him; it was like losing his own son. No division commander can stand this and continue to function effectively.

BURG: Right.



HANDY: And I don't know about the others, Fredendall and McQuillin. I didn't know them personally to watch how they functioned.

BURG: All right. That we can probably determine elsewhere.



This interview is being taped with General Thomas Handy in Gen. Handy's home in San Antonio on December the 18th, 1975. And present for the interview General Handy and Dr. Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff.

DR. BURG: General, when we finished last time, we were ready to start on a question that covers a period, April-May, 1943 and the questions came out of The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years, General Eisenhower's war papers, and we asked a series of questions concerning the purposes, or purpose, of your trip to North Africa in the spring of 1943. And I wonder if you could respond then to our questions.

GEN. HANDY: All right. You want me to go ahead?



DR. BURG: Sure.

GEN. HANDY: The main purpose of my trip to North Africa was to see the situation there. In OPD we always tried to keep in as close touch as possible with the various theaters. Incidentally, this trip with General [George E.] Stratemeyer on it, Arnold's chief of staff, extended through the Middle East, India, and China. I was not there to evaluate General Eisenhower. He did ask me to discuss the air support situation with Spaatz when I saw him in Constantine. He, Eisenhower, had had some

comment on it. Most of the time was spent with Bradley and with the division. Incidentally, Pink Bull was with me on this--

BURG: Oh, was he with you on that trip?

HANDY: Yes. Well, down there in Africa. All were doing an excellent job and I remember how impressed I was with the way Bradley handled his division commanders. It would be hard to find two people as different as [Maj. Gen.] Terry [de la Mesa] Allen and Doc Riley, for example, and naturally Bradley handled them in different ways, and most effectively, I would say. One of the difficult problems--and it was always difficult--that I discussed with General Eisenhower was the manner of replacements and how they were being handled in the theater.

BURG: That was always a problem.

HANDY: Now, I said that the answer could be expanded a lot on the replacements.

BURG: What particular problems came up? Were replacements



coming into the line outfits in dribs and drabs? A few men assigned here and there to squads and platoons?

HANDY: Well, there were--I don't know whether we ought to start to go into it; it's a long, long story. And anyhow, we didn't do a good job, and neither did the theaters, on the replacement thing. There's no question about it. During some of the worst time there in Italy, you know, when they had twenty-five, thirty men in companies up on the line, there were replacements who'd been in the theater for as long as five months awaiting assignment. I mean it was things like that.

BURG: Oh, ho! So they were in the theater, but they weren't getting up on to the line, ay?

HANDY: Well, not necessarily. The fault was all the way through. Partially in the War Department--General Marshall told General McNair, one time, he was sick and tired of passing from one crisis to another one on replacements. But that's what we were doing. Now one big trouble over there--it didn't have to



do with replacements--that I told Ike about when I was there. You see, they had a bunch of replacements and a bunch of people and they'd need a unit, so they'd just activate one. They had more--they'd need a truck company, and they had the trucks, and they had the men, you see. Well, his G-1--I think it was [Colonel] Ben [M.] Sawbridge--I told him that just wouldn't do at all, because the minute you set up a new organization, it can't be done from anywhere but from highest level. Because there's nothing provided for those people: replacements, anything else; equipment or anything else; unless they're in the prescribed organization, don't you see. And in a little while they're all out of luck, and then they're screaming because they haven't got this and they haven't got that and they haven't got the other thing.



BURG: I think I do see. They just sort of put together an ad hoc outfit, and--

HANDY: Well, you know. They say, "Let the fellow in the field who's got these resources use them," but there are limits and

that was a typical example. They had quite a few--some surplus personnel and trucks, for instance, and they made a bunch of truck companies. And I told Ike, "I don't know how many unauthorized units have been set up in the theater," and there was nothing to back them up. You see, these units got to be backed up all the way back to the factory if you're going to have an outfit that can continue to function. It's easy enough to set them up, but it's keeping them going that's difficult.

BURG: So there's no backlog of spareparts for that truck company, no spare vehicles; no replacement system for that outfit.

HANDY: That's right. And no provision, really, for taking care of them, hospitalization and all that, because that outfit's set up on the authorized organization of the command of the theater, you see. Bring in a lot of extra units. Well, anyhow, the replacement thing was just a continual headache, and all I'm going to say about this is it was very poorly handled all the way through, I think. It's the one thing, I think, we fell down



on during the war.

BURG: General, to your knowledge has anyone ever written a study about that? Taken that one issue and--

HANDY: I think there've been any number of studies--

BURG: Have there?

HANDY: --but the trouble is, now--I'll take long enough to tell you; maybe I've told you this before. I've told it to a lot of people. I asked practically every major commander--we'd had most of them during the war--after the war--I'm talking about the Army educational system; they'd been through the system, you see, most of them. They'd been through the schools and a great bulk of them had been to the War College. I said, "Did you get anything out of your schooling," you see, "that was any real help or benefit in handling personnel problems during the war?" Replacements was just one example; there were many others. Well practically every one of them said, "No." They said, "I didn't." And they said personnel problems are at least seventy-fi



percent of your problems, and if you get them solved, well, the others fall into place. It wasn't operations, or intelligence, or anything else that caused them trouble. Now I think our system did a good job on intelligence, after we got going. We messed it up in the beginning, you see. And certainly we did on logistics, on supplies, you see. And I was involved in the operational business myself. I thought we did a fair job on operations. And they all got something that did them some good in those things, but on the other general subject of personnel, they all said they didn't. Now I knew I hadn't. Oh, they had you make out a few G-1 reports and things like that. But as far as digging into getting into the real personnel problems and training for it, I think that's one place I would say where our education system fell down.

BURG: So this would include the various branch schools and the command and general staff school--

HANDY: Oh, yes.

BURG: --the War College. It was something that got overlooked.

HANDY: Well I don't know about overlooked--



BURG: Or underplayed.

HANDY: I guess they thought they were teaching us something. Now I'm telling you what these commanders told me, and that was what I believed to be true, because I felt the same way about it. But the replacement thing was awful. And at times it was awfully bad, you see.

BURG: Yes, nowadays, if we think about the replacement situation, we tend to think of that period right after the Bulge. The period in December, '44, January, '45, where there were lots of problems with the European Theater asking for replacements and being told there was no big backlog of replacements. I suppose part of the problem, too, was that in our army the tail is so big for every man on the line. The comparison with the Russian army, and I suppose the German army as well, but certainly with the Russian army, is remarkable.

HANDY: Well I don't think we did a good job on the personnel business--

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: --during the war, and I think it's one place where it fell down. And as I say, it wasn't anybody's fault particularly and it was common from the War Department down through the theaters. They made a mess, too, in the theaters handling it. Just as big a mess as we made back there. And I told you about this thing down in Italy. When they got really checking up on it, they found out these fellows--of course, these were doughboy companies up in the front line that were so far down in strength. Now they didn't have infantry replacements, no, but they had people that'd been trained as armored replacements. And certainly they made doughboys out of them very easily, and when they were in that shape up on the front, they actually found they had replacements that'd been in the theater four or five months awaiting assignment.

BURG: So in the front-line companies there would be tremendous morale problems as they saw their strength weakening and no one coming in to replace them. The only feeling you could have is that sooner or later you were going to get yours.

HANDY: Of course.



BURG: Because you kept seeing it around you all the time.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Well that's an interesting thing to know and something that some one will want to check into, I think, and study pretty thoroughly. Our next question--I will not, by the way, follow you the rest of that trip as you went out to the Orient. Now the next question is from the period May 28-June 3, 1943 and it refers to an unexpected call that Mr. Churchill and General [Field Marshal Sir Alan] Brooke and General [Sir Hastings] Ismay and you made on Eisenhower in Algiers. You came from the TRIDENT Conference, which had looked at the Sicily and post-Sicily operations. We wondered what you could tell us of this meeting in Algiers from your own viewpoint.

HANDY: Okay. I've got some notes on it here.

BURG: Okay.

HANDY: I said, I was away on a trip referred to above during the TRIDENT Conference and have no personal observations on it.



HANDY: That took place back in Washington. Somewhere on the return trip, I received a message from General Marshall to join him in Algiers. I didn't know why at all. I think we were down in [Ozmera?] somewhere. I was a little surprised that most of the big shots, the British, were assembling in Algiers just after they had presumably settled everything at the Washington conference. Our impression, then and later, was that the PM hadn't been able to get what he wanted in Washington and that he was coming, to use one of Ike's later expressions, "To turn the sun lamp on Ike." [Laughter] Ike said, "He was in the process of turning the sunlamp on you," or something. We thought, and I believe it was correct, that our chiefs of staff had sent General Marshall with him to prevent just that. See, General Marshall accompanied the Prime Minister over there. Here it was, just after they'd had a big conference and everything settled, presumably, see.

BURG: And we might note for the record, too, that as you say, the British "bigshots" were there: Montgomery was there;



Alexander was there; Tedder--

HANDY: Oh, yes, they were all called up. The PM never lost sight of his own objective, regardless of what had presumably been decided. If there ever was a guy that understood the principles of the objective, the Prime Minister--you thought you had him headed off in one direction and you'd find--. The immediate question was post-Sicily operations but the basic question was, as it had been and continued to be in our view, whether we would ever have an invasion from the UK, or whether we would be drawn into a scatteration of "soft under belly, Balkans, and Ljubljana Gap" series of undertakings that, while still paying lip service to our main effort, would, in effect, and from the practical viewpoint make it unfeasible. That was the difficulty we had with the British all the time, you see, right straight through.

BURG: That fear that they were going to spend the resources--



HANDY: Well, if you scatter all of your stuff all over, and there are always good reasons for doing it, you never can get enough together to really count. And if this invasion was going to be successful, it had to be a major effort and everybody had to get that in their minds and get their shoulders to the wheels and push it. You didn't start all these other things that were scattered all over the map.

BURG: And you were afraid at that point in time that it wasn't just going to be Sicily; it was going to be Italy, it was going to be Yugoslavia--

HANDY: It was post-Sicily. Sicily had been decided on, don't you see?

BURG: Yes, HUSKY been set up.

HANDY: They were talking about the Ljubljana Gap and the Balkans and everything else.

BURG: Yes, yes.

HANDY: I think you undoubtedly have plenty of comment, and much better than mine, on the leaders listed. I would say that they all ran more or less true to form at the Algiers meeting I attended. I don't think--

BURG: The sort of thing that we could pretty much expect from then-- Montgomery and Alexander and Tedder--from what we know about them, and what's been written about them.

HANDY: That's right.

BURG: You saw nothing out of the ordinary.

HANDY: Oh, yes. Of course, the Prime Minister always worked on the



chiefs of staff, as you know very well.

BURG: I guess he did! [Laughter] All right, then we move to the next question. The period covered is August of 1943, and this is the question: In summarizing his views on performances by Patton, Bradley, and Mark Clark, Eisenhower spoke to General Marshall of a personal trait of Clark's, discussed in January '43 by Marshall and Eisenhower which had now been suppressed. We were interested--could you tell us what that particular trait might have been, General Handy?

HANDY: The answer is, "No."

BURG: Ah, ha! [Laughter]

HANDY: I'm not going to--it might have been, but I don't know. I mean--

BURG: Yes, I wonder if I perhaps don't, too.

HANDY: Oh, yeah. [Laughter]

BURG: But we'll pass on because I think our researchers will be able to find out, too. August of '43, AFHQ, Office of the Chief of Staff, was where this question came from. The Commandant at Leavenworth, [Lt. Col.] Karl Truesdell [Jr.], wrote to General Hull asking that



three or four of his top faculty be allowed to go to North Africa to see staff planning first hand. Truesdell wanted Eisenhower to decide the matter. Hull told Bedell Smith he thought it was a good idea if it wasn't too much bother. Can you remember whether they actually did send any of the Leavenworth faculty over there?

HANDY: I don't think so. My answer is it may have been but I don't think so. Ed Hull was sitting on the lid at OPD at the time.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Can you cut that thing off a minute?

BURG: Sure.

[Interruption]

BURG: Now we have a question from the September period. This was a letter from Eisenhower to Wedemeyer and it referred back to Wedemeyer's report on HUSKY. Wedemeyer included his personal reactions to character and personality, the personal attributes, of various commanders, including Eisenhower. He seemed to feel that Eisenhower was pro-British, and we wanted to ask you what you thought of Wedemeyer's view about Eisenhower.

HANDY: Well, I answered to that, I would think that Wedemeyer's report



expressed his views--

BURG: He usually did, didn't he?

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: He was a man who laid it on the line.

HANDY: Well--cut that thing off again a minute and I'll tell you something about this report of Al's that he wrote.

BURG: Is it something that we can leave on and you can look over later and decide whether you want to keep it in?

HANDY: No, you better shut it off.

BURG: Okay.

[Interruption]

BURG: Okay. Our next question comes out of that period, the autumn, September of '43, and I believe the question comes from that part of General Eisenhower's files that refer to you, General Handy. It was a letter that you wrote to Eisenhower, talking about the Quebec conference, and we asked you, from your own viewpoint, about the mechanics of preparing for this



particular meeting, the major points our people wanted to put across, and then whatever you might be able to tell us about physical arrangements at the conference, or any of the personalities involved. I think we summarized our question by saying, in short, we need the informed observations of a participant, especially if he can tell us who may have seemed to turn the tide of discussion regarding any particular decision.

HANDY: Well, I'll tell you, here's the answer I've written. The Quebec Conference is a big subject and I'm sure the records will give a more realistic appraisal than one from my memory. I do have some personal recollections, particularly on being sent to Washington. It was a hurry-up thing. Chiefs of staff went up there ahead of time [Laughter] to see that the President was informed before his arrival and before the Prime Minister got hold of him. They had quite a battle in the chiefs of staff, the British and us, you see, and that was one thing we were always up against was that the President--not that our people thought they could or should control the President, but they did feel that he should have their views before major decisions were made. And you see, he was, you know, a shoot-from-the-hip guy, and the Prime Minister'd get hold of him and would get a commitment out of him! At least we were afraid he would, you see.



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: So this dispute--they fired me down to Washington to be sure the President got the dope before he came up. And I came up on the train with him to Quebec.

BURG: So you went down and saw him personally at the White House?

HANDY: Well I saw him on the train the next day. I saw Harry Hopkins at the White House and gave him the dope.

BURG: Was Mr. Hopkins also afraid that the Prime Minister'd brainwash the President, if somebody didn't get in there and give him the facts first? [Laughter]

HANDY: Well, I don't know whether he was or not, but he was a pretty smart guy. He was a big asset to us in the war, there's no question about it. I didn't think much of some of his social ideas, but he was a hell of a big asset and he was all for winning the war, you know.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: I think he's one man who hasn't ever gotten the credit he was due from that standpoint.

BURG: He was someone that you could count on to listen to you carefully and--

HANDY: Oh, yes. And he was the guy who could get things to the President immediately. You see? General Marshall called him up



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and I got the word I was to come on down there and come right to the White House. I caught hell from my family, because they were in Washington; during this whole thing, they didn't even know I'd been back down there. Well, Hopkins--I had all the papers and had some notes on these things that had gone on, and he listened to me. Well he said, "You be down at eleven o'clock tonight," or sometime, "down there at the 14th Street"--where the President's train took off, --"and get on that train and I'll see that you see the President. And I'll also see that he gets the gist of these papers before you do see him." So I did, and the next day he sent word back during the middle of the day and said, "Come up," you know, "and have lunch with him." And he discussed these things, the President did.

BURG: And when you talked with the President at lunch, did he give evidence he had read those papers and he did understand.

HANDY: Yes, he had a good idea of what the situation was.

BURG: Right. Had you know the President, dealt with him prior to that?

HANDY: No.

BURG: How did he strike you, General?

HANDY: Well, I tell you, Mr. Roosevelt was--we were fortunate in having a man as strong as he was, see, to head the war effort, in



my opinion. Now he would do things sometimes that didn't look too good, and all that, but he was a very strong man and a big asset. I heard General Marshall say, for instance, one time--I think this expresses--when they were asking about writing things, and he said he wasn't going to write anything because he felt that if he did, he'd have to tell the whole story, don't you see. And when you told the whole story, people picked up parts of it and got the thing entirely out of perspective, you see, and didn't get the true picture at all. And that's the reason he wasn't going to do it. Now he cited the case of the President and he said--and I knew it--that he had disagreed very strongly with the President on some things, don't you see, that--well, if he wrote all that down, that's the part that would be played up. But on the other hand, that he was an admirer of the President and he felt the President had done a very remarkable job, and we were fortunate to have a man of his strength of character and so on, in there as head of the country during the war effort. But Mr. Roosevelt was quite a guy, as you know.

BURG: Well, of course, that's right. At Quebec--

HANDY: Well, we're talking too long, but--cut that thing off again and I'll tell you another story.

BURG: Let me ask you this point about Quebec and get your reaction. It looks to me as though--

HANDY: Wait a minute. Let me finish this answer.



BURG: Oh, sure.

HANDY: As to your last query, in this conference, as in all I attended, there was no question as to who was the dominant person on the military side, both British and American. It was General Marshall. No question, whatsoever.



BURG: One hears about the fact that for a while there, the British seemed to show up at these conferences having prepared for the conference to the last degree. That they showed up with staff, they showed up with resource materials and research stuff, and that, at first, you men were kind of taken aback and were not prepared at that level. Is that true?

HANDY: Yes, it's true. I'll tell you when it came up first. See, I didn't go to Casablanca, that first one we had over there in Africa. Al Wedemeyer and [Charles M.] Savvy Cooke went. They almost worked them to death, see, the British had a paper prepared on everything. And they didn't have any backup or anything else. Well Al came home and told me about it and I said, "We got to do something about it." So we prepared to--got ready and got some people and started training them just for that. We had these various teams, and we had a plan for almost anything that could come up, and maybe a paper indicating our stand on it. Now when you go in a conference, you're at a hell of an advantage if you can start the discussion on your paper and your views, don't you see,

instead of just reaching out for something. Well we got--if I do say so myself--we just got as good as the British. They didn't have anything on us. In the beginning, we were always ahead of them on execution because they never--all the time--ever, in their own minds, accepted the idea of command. You know, real command. So I think on executive action, we were always better than the British, but on planning we were babes in the wood! When I was down there in Algiers, [Brigadier General Howard A.] Pinky Craig was working for Ike--air force Craig--and Pinky told me, he said, "We got to have planners." He said, "The British just have them on--", and they were good, they were damned good! Matter of fact, Bedell Smith told me one time the best intelligence source he had, really, or one of the best, was the planners. Because they could tell you; they were good enough, not only to plan yours, but plan the Germans. They could tell you, "They can attack with so many divisions in so many days," and they were right! Don't you see?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Because they knew how to plan, and they could plan for both sides. They were awfully good at it. But we got organized and got so we could kind of hold a candle to them.

BURG: Yes, yes. It was a question that interested us because we were quite sure--



HANDY: But in the beginning, you're absolutely right. Hell, Al Wedemeyer came back there and he told me, and old Savvy Cooke, too; and they were mad. They were just absolutely snowed under, don't you see?

BURG: Yes, I'll bet they were.

HANDY: They were! But after that--now when we went to Teheran, you see, that was the opposite of that. We pulled out a paper up there on them, and that's the time we put all that southern France operation--

BURG: And surprised them!

HANDY: Yes, sir. See, when we went to Teheran from Cairo-- you don't want all this.

BURG: Yes, I do.

HANDY: Well, we'd been fighting over this southern France operation and we felt it was a sound thing, you see. And Ike did, too, incidentally. But they were dead set against it. What do they call it? ANVIL.

BURG: ANVIL, yes.

HANDY: ANVIL. And [Colonel George Arthur] Abe Lincoln wrote a paper afterwards, "The Castigation of ANVIL," the dirtiest thing you ever read [Laughter], because it just quoted there what they'd



said about it, after the thing had gone much better than we ever hoped for. Well, they thought that the Russians would be opposed to any--would want something way over near their front, don't you see?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Mind you, this is long before the invasion, you see, ever occurred. So they had a big discussion of it down in Cairo; it was kind of "no decision" on it there and the general idea was that we'd have to be guided by what the Russians--Stalin's attitude--don't you see?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Since we were supposed to give them a hand and all that. You know.

BURG: Of course.

HANDY: Well, so we went up to Teheran, see. And we got up there. There were only three or four of us; they couldn't take any planners or anything with them. I went up with General Marshall, and Cooke was there, and Hap Arnold had Rosie O'Donnell, and Bill Somervell was along. Well they had a meeting down there, you see, with the big shots. And General Marshall came back up there--we were at [Donnelly's] camp outside of Teheran--and got ahold of me and said, "Look," he said, "They discussed this thing down there and



they're going to take it up again in the morning..."

[Interruption]



HANDY: ...we got together. And Savvy Cooke took the shipping side of it, and Rosie O'Donnell took the air, and Bill Somervell took the supply, and I took the main operation, the army, you see. We got together and discussed these things, and I said we had an outline plan. And, boy, we wrote a paper and got it mimeographed. We were working all night. And presented it to General Marshall and them the next morning. They went down there with a plan, you see; and it wasn't a fly-by-night thing; we'd done quite a bit of work on it before, you see.

BURG: Did you even have it down to the point where you could state the number of landing ships and everything else you needed?

HANDY: Yes, divisions and all that. There was an outline plan of all the needs. As a matter of fact, they did it months later, and they followed pretty well our outline plan, actually, in the ANVIL operation. That's how good it was. But those guys were tops, you know, Somervell and Savvy Cooke. And Rosie O'Donnell was awfully good, too, you see. Well we put that damned thing together and got it mimeographed--copies. Worked the staff there--the joint chiefs' of staff was a very small one--all night but the--and they went down with it the next morning. Well the British always swore we'd brought it up there with us. They couldn't believe. But it

showed you what advance preparation can do, and that's where we won the fight, because when we got up there, you see, old man Stalin agreed with us. They accused us of--a kind of inference--double-crossing them with the Russians, because a lot of the arguments we'd been giving them for weeks or months, hell, he gave, too! This is what you want. This kind of an operation. He was all for it. You see, he didn't want something way over near his front.

BURG: You bet he didn't! His armies, by that time were moving pretty well. And he was just--

HANDY: Well, nobody knew how they were going to move. Now this was all before the invasion, and things weren't going as fast as they went later.

BURG: But he would want you coming into Europe as far west as possible.

HANDY: You'd think so, but anyhow he back us up. And we were able to take advantage of it. That's where we won this fight on ANVIL. They couldn't say anything because they'd agreed we'd be guided by him. But they figured we'd done a little guidance on the side.

BURG: Ah, that's funny.

HANDY: But, it was quite a thing, I thought. But we turned out an outline plan overnight for the ANVIL operation.

BURG: Now it's good to have the names of the people who did that.



Who did that overnight job and set that up.

HANDY: Well, it was Savvy Cooke of the navy, and Bill Somervell and Rosie O'Donnell, and myself, that's all. Of course, we got the clerical help--[Captain Forrest] Royal was the secretary. He was a navy captain; secretary of the joint chiefs of staff. He had the typing and the mimeographing done for us, but we outlined this thing. Everybody, you know, got down their part of it, and then we got together and kind of put it together as to how it might work.

BURG: Right. Yes, that's terrific.

HANDY: But we won the battle right up there. But it shows you that we were a little better prepared than we were in the beginning. But you're absolutely right. In the beginning, my God, those fellows just snowed us!

BURG: Yes, that's what I'd always heard.

HANDY: Yes, okay, now--

BURG: Now, in November of '43, Colonel Gailey wrote a letter and I think sent it to--I'm not sure who that letter went to. It may have gone to General Eisenhower--but he said that you had left for overseas on 11 November of 1943 and that General Eisenhower would soon see you. He then went on to express the belief that Eisenhower and you are, and I quote- "two peas out of the same pod..."



nearly alike," close quote. Can you yourself point to any similarities of temperament or ability that maybe you shared with General Eisenhower? [Laughter]

HANDY: My answer to that--Charley Gailey was overenthusiastic I'm sure. [Laughter] I certainly had no place in the triumvirate including General Marshall and General Eisenhower.

BURG: Yes, that last remark is in reference to the fact that Colonel Gailey went on to say that it was Eisenhower, Marshall, and Handy who were the triumvirate to which the winning of the war could be traced. And your reactions is, no; you're not going to take any share of that, huh? [Laughter]

HANDY: It's out of my class.

BURG: Well, clearly, Gailey had a very high regard for you. The remarks here...

HANDY: Well Ike had a high regard for Charley Gailey, too. Charley was executive in there in OPD when Ike had the outfit, before he went to Europe, you know.

BURG: Now Gailey remained with it, didn't he, throughout the war?

HANDY: Yes. Oh, yes. Oh, he was a hell of a big asset. I let him go to go out to Lucius Clay in Berlin; he did a hell of a fine job for Lucius.



BURG: Yes. He comes across as a very fine kind of officer. Now we would like to ask you about this period in December of '43 when Eisenhower came back to the United States from North Africa, prior to taking up his new duties and getting set for Overlord. Not too much is really known about his routing while he was here in the United States. So we thought we would ask you what kinds of meetings might have been held with him and who might have attended; and what some of the major concerns might have been during that brief period of time.

HANDY: Well, see, to get the thing straight, it'd already been decided--it was decided in Cairo, you know--

BURG: Yes, that he would command, sure.

HANDY: --he was it. Well, I don't--this is my answer to that--I don't see how Ike stood it. Everybody and his brother wanted to see him and too many succeeded. His routine was hectic, to say the least, and I'm sure he was relieved to get back into the comparative quiet of his own headquarters in England. [Laughter] It wasn't a question of the major concerns that needed to be studied, but of everyone who had a major concern trying to put it up to Ike. See Ike was very approachable.

BURG: Yes, and he's the man who'd been in the field and had the experience of--

HANDY: That's right, and he was going to be the big shot, you know, for the invasion. All of them knew that. They all wanted to see



him, you see, and talk to him. But what I say is true. I don't see how Ike stood it the way they piled it on him there.

BURG: Yes. There was nothing much that you could do, General Handy. The rest of you couldn't really shield him?

HANDY: Well Ike, you know, was a very approachable fellow, and all of these people, he'd know, and all that. He didn't want to turn them down, I don't think. Furthermore, when a fellow gets in that position--Ike was in a position where, you know, you don't wet nurse a guy like that. He sets his own pace himself. He probably wanted to see a lot of these people, don't you see, but my frank reaction--I didn't see how he stood it. He did very well.

[Laughter]

BURG: Yes, yes, okay. Then the next one as we move into 1944, January of '44, one of the questions that our staff came up with--could you enlighten us on the episode where the Joint Planners bypassed the British to get certain data and the British expressed their displeasure to Eisenhower. Evidently the British had refused to consider some American questions at the combined planning level, so the Americans had sought answers from Eisenhower. And we wondered if the British were being intransigent on this point, or was the whole affair just a minor thing? We picked it up from the wartime correspondence.

HANDY: Well, here's my answer to that. I don't recall this particular incident but I have no doubt that it and others similar



to it occurred. [Laughter] Incidentally, the British planners were not at all sacrosanct and didn't hesitate to short circuit usual channels when it was to their advantage to do so. They'd talk to anybody! [Laughter] There wasn't any reason why we couldn't talk to Ike anyhow--various headquarters--we did it all the time. Actually, the War Department was the executive agent--the army was-- for that theatre, you see, and all the instructions and everything else went through us, you know. The whole office was under the joint and under the combined chiefs of staff, but don't think for a minute that these guys didn't--hellfire! When Pink Bull and I were down there in Africa--what they'd call it? Not "Mystic," but they had a--the Prime Minister had a private radio system down to commanders in the field. I think they called it "Phantom" or something like that, and one of the first headquarters we went to, I asked Bull, I said, "What in the hell is that?" And he said, "That's the "Phantom" outfit. And the Prime Minister was communicating, not just with the commanders, [Laughter] but people all down the line. They're the last ones in the world to be getting up on the air about anything like that!

BURG: You make it almost sound as though, in the foxhole, the little walkie-talkie would suddenly come to life and it would be the Prime Minister--[Laughter]

HANDY: You're damned right!

BURG: --talking to the corporal. [Laughter]



HANDY: Yes, don't think for a minute the Prime Minister didn't communicate with them. Yes, sir.

BURG: Yes, I see. Okay. Well I think that incident probably was a minor one and, as you suggested, wasn't unusual, either.

HANDY: Yes, the British, my God! [Laughter]

BURG: Now this next one interested us very much. We found a letter in the George Marshall file, in the Eisenhower collections in our Library, written in February of '44, in which he set forth his very definite views about using airborne troops in the OVERLORD operation. And we wondered if you happen to know about the beginnings of Marshall's interest and support for such an operation. We added to the question by asking, "Was it touched off by a particular person or an event?" We went on to ask, "What were General Marshall's views about airborne operations--for example, the future VARSITY operation--after the Arnhem landings?" Airborne ops and Marshall's opinions on them interested us very much.

HANDY: Okay. Now here's what I've written. He had very definite views. I heard him discuss them a great many times. General Marshall's view on airborne operations was far more comprehensive, broader, and more extensive than those current at the time. He invented the use of divisions independent of, and well beyond, current ground operations--see, they were always tied to the ground operations--and not just a brigade to assist the ground operations.



Bedell, I think, told me one time, "The biggest thing we could see was a regiment or maybe a brigade," don't you see. But General Marshall had entirely different views. He would have put whole divisions by air well in the rear and supported them from the air. I feel sure that he felt that hardly anyone had the vision he had, and I'm also sure that if he had been in command of the European campaign there would have been a radically different use of airborne troops. And an indication of his thought was in the establishment of an airborne army with Louie Brereton in command. Incidentally, I doubt that this army came up to what he had hoped for it. I believe you will find some indication of his thought on this matter in Pogue's book, volume three. Yes sir, he had--it wasn't just helping to run up the coast or something like that. He pictured big things.

BURG: Yes, it would take some courage to think like that, because--

HANDY: Oh, boy. Well that's the way he thought about that.

BURG: --the Germans in Crete--

HANDY: He felt that they never had gotten the conception--or a comprehensive, far-reaching enough conception--of these airborne operations.

BURG: That seems to come through clearly. You know, the Crete



operations that the German carried out had gone sour, and the operations that we carried out at Sicily were not as good as we had hoped.

HANDY: Oh, boy, that was God-awful. When the navy shot down all our parachuters coming down.

BURG: Yes, the MARKET-GARDEN. That was a bad scene, too. And in fact, in OVERLORD the drops were badly scattered there. But General Marshall seems to have been way in advance and much more daring in his thinking--

HANDY: He was. He was.

BURG: --than the subordinate commanders. Well, I wonder, did people like Gavin and McAuliffe also think big terms--

HANDY: I don't know.

BURG: --do you happen to know?

HANDY: I don't know what they thought.

BURG: I just wondered if those more junior officers saw airborne operations in as courageous a way as Marshall did.

HANDY: Well, I don't know. And I think what I said here is true. I've always thought, if he'd been in command of the operation over there, we'd have seen an entirely different pattern. Now he might have messed things up; I don't know, but that was his idea, I know that.



BURG: That's the way he thought. Well, that one really interested us. In March--the next question, and this, too, from the Marshall file in our Library--General Marshall remarked that he had to relieve two corps commanders. One was [Major General John Porter] Lucas, who was deemed to be tired and, therefore, not sufficiently aggressive. We wondered who the second corps commander was, and for what cause he was relieved.

HANDY: I believe the other corps commander was [Major General Ernest Joseph] Mike Dawley in connection with the Anzio landing, I think.

BURG: Oh, what--that last name again? Mike--

HANDY: Dawley, D-a-w-l-e-y.

BURG: Yes, all right then I think we can chance that down. Our question always went on--

HANDY: About Terry Allen?

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: A lot of people were not enthusiastic about Terry Allen [Laughter] nor his tactics. I don't know General McNair's particular objection. I might add that General Marshall always supported Terry. To him, he was a fighter, which he was always looking for. He always looked for the fighters, you see. Terry was a fighter. And Terry had a lot of good ideas. I wasn't one of the people



who was always against him and got on--

BURG: He, too, tended to be a very outspoken man, didn't he?

HANDY: Oh, yes.

BURG: And very demanding on the part of his division. Well, he demanded much from his division, but he also demanded much for it, I think.

HANDY: Oh, yes. Well, Terry was crazy in a way, knowing his attitude, see--but the old man always--. You know, they tell a story down here that Terry was down here in some camp or station and the fellow in command was about to try Terry or something-- he had a crook in his elbow too much at times, and all that--but, he was about to try Terry. And just about the time he was getting out the orders, this order came down from Washington promoting Terry to a BG [Laughter], which automatically put him over this fellow who--now I don't know whether that's true, but that's the story they tell. But I wouldn't doubt it, because really--oh, I tell you--Terry was a character.

BURG: He evidently was.

HANDY: And he had a lot of good, sound ideas. Now I'll tell you, when the old man said he was a fighter, somebody told me--you know, they had quite a time after that initial landing down there in Africa, you know. And Terry came up to one of those places--I don't know just where it was. It was his outfit; he had the 1st



Division, you know. And Terry says, "You people been monkeying around here all day trying to take this hill," or town, whatever it was, "with a whole regiment." He said, "By God, I'm going to show you how to take it with a battalion." And he did!

BURG: He led it himself?

HANDY: He did.

BURG: Was Teddy Roosevelt his assistant division commander at that time?

HANDY: Yes. Yes. Cut this off for--because Teddy--

[Interruption]

HANDY: I've sounded off at length about Terry Allen.

BURG: Very, very interesting type. I had friends who served with Allen.

HANDY: I thought a lot of Terry Allen. I could tell you stories about him all night.

BURG: Quite a flamboyant, flashy guy.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Well March 8, '44, in a letter to General Marshall, Eisenhower expressed some unhappiness over the difficulty of obtaining sufficient quantities of bombs of the requisite types,



and he was estimating monthly expenditures at about a hundred thousand tons. General Handy indicated that they would rob other theaters and continue production and get the needed one hundred thousand tons per month to Eisenhower. General Handy's recollection of this issues, and of the steps taken to resolve it, would be appreciated.

HANDY: No distinct recollection of this, but I would say that it was not an unusual operation. You have to do things like that right along.

BURG: Eisenhower, I presume, was anticipating the pre-invasion bomb drop that they were going to have to have--

HANDY: Probably so. As a matter of fact, you know, sitting back there in the War Department--where we were in operations in the War Department--you were in the business, I always said, of dividing the deficits.

BURG: Yes, I suppose so.

HANDY: Well, there's never enough. You see, they say, "Give the man what he thinks he needs and let him do the job." Well, hell, you can't do it. There isn't enough. And if you've only got one man, one theater, like we had in World War I, it's fairly simple; you just shove everything you got to him. But we had from all over. And you were in the position of dividing up deficits, because there's never enough for every guy to have everything he thinks



he needs. It just ins't done that way; it just doesn't exist. Now, I don't know anything about this particular thing, but it's not unusual.

BURG: It was pretty common in your experience.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Okay. In March, again, 1944, we found this in The War Years. When Bedell Smith sought additional battleship support for OVERLORD, he found that all U.S. battleships were assigned to the Mediterranean, except one. Did you have to contact the navy to get this data? And we wondered, if you did, who you would contact in the navy; and we also wondered, as a final part of this question, was the navy completely cooperative in the matter and other matters connected with OVERLORD?

HANDY: One thing I recall was that when Bedell came back, not too long before the invasion, he said they didn't know and hadn't been able to find out what U.S. naval support they would have. [Laughter] When this was brought to Admiral King's attention, Bedell soon found out. Old Ernie was an actor. Incidentally, there were, I believe, several battleships which participated in the invasion.

BURG: That's right, ultimately we did have several there.

HANDY: You're damned right. Old Savvy Cooke now--the man I would have appraoched; my opposite number, in the navy, was Cooke. He



was operations man for Admiral King, you see. Of course, he was old Navy, a submariner. But he had to--Savvy told me afterwards, he was the guy that pushed this. He said, "For God's sake," he told his navy friend, he said, "The battleship's on its way out. Anybody that can see things realizes that and this is last time--a hell of a lot of them have never fired a hostile shot--and we've got a chance to use them." He said, "For God's sake, let's use them." And when we were going to the invasion, you see, on the Ancon with [Rear] Admiral [John L.] Hall, Cooke was with me, you know, going through the Channel. I never will forget. And, of course, the damned place was full of boats and everything else, and a lot of it was supposed to be heavily mined on the other side, and we were supposed to have a bunch of mine sweepers out ahead of us, you know. Here was this convoy--and the one that's going to make the Omaha landing, incidentally, you see--and we were out there on deck, of course. And I don't know, sometime late night or early morning, old Savvy said, "My God," he said, "That's never happened before." I said, "What?"

[Laughter] He said, "Using a battleship for a mine sweeper."

[Laughter] And they'd got mixed up a little bit and loomed up ahead of us. I think it was the Texas; one of those battleships, you see. Maybe the New York, but I believe it was the TEXAS. And it wasn't supposed to be, but that's what it was acting as far as we were concerned. Savvy said, "That's never been done before." But I never will forget Bedell saying--but he found out damned



soon--Bedell said they couldn't even find out what naval support they were going to have.

BURG: But when that was taken to King, King reacted fast.

HANDY: Oh, King was an actor! Oh, boy. And as far as Admiral King and Cooke, they were...I'm a great admirer of Admiral King. He's a very strong man, but not the most likeable in the world, you see. They said he's mean as hell, and he could be, too. No question about it. But, boy, he was a hell of a good guy to have on your side when it got--when he'd gone into a thing, really agreed. And you see he was a great supporter of Ike and he was all for OVERLORD, don't you see, and so I would say that they were very cooperative. I never will forget--maybe this ought not to go on the record--

BURG: Well we can put it on and take it off later.



HANDY: Yeah, well--. You know, we were having, in the early days, we were having an awful time with the Philippines.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: See, Ike was running the thing then, [lost this phrase] War Department. And it was very evident that the Philippines was a hopeless thing, don't you see, by that time. But, when you get your people involved, you do all you can for them. And we were struggling, trying to find some way to do something, don't you see.

General Marshall sent [Brigadier General Patrick Jay] Pat Hurley out there with a million dollars in gold to see if he couldn't get some ships to take things in. You know, those kinds of things.

BURG: Yes, desperate measures.



HANDY: And we were trying to let them--although they didn't know anything about it--to fly off some planes, you know, from some of our ships. Then we several times--they were about to run out of ammunition, Corregidor, even anti-aircraft ammunition--to send in some ammunition by sub, you see. Of course the Japs were all around there, you know. Well, old Admiral Stark was a hell of a nice person, you see, but the message--they'd agree!--and then the message would go out, but it always had a weasel in it, you know, about the ship and the danger and all that. Well Ike and I went over there. King had a kind of a holy of holies, as you know, but we could go in. And I think Ike put this thing up to him, shortly after King came down there, you see, and relieved Admiral Stark. And boy, boy, I want to tell you, we came out of there heaving a sigh of relief. Old Ernie said, "Yes, they'll take it in." And boy, he sent a signal to the navy, because the message got there, and there wasn't any if, and, or but, or anything else about it; "By God, take the ammunition in there," period. And they not only took it in then; they took it in two or three times after and never lost any subs. They were always losing their subs. So he was a decisive guy, but he could be meaner than hell. That's another story.

BURG: I've heard that he could; that an awful lot of people were frightened stiff of him.

HANDY: Well, I think his biggest failure, if you want to know, was there were very few people who'd give him the real score. This fellow Cooke was as mean as--my opposite number--[Laughter] as Ernie. He would give it to him. But most of the time he didn't get it, because his people were so afraid of him.

BURG: I see. Yes. The man's whole demeanor was such that he was actually cutting himself off from information.

HANDY: Oh, my God! Well, here I'm running over here. But the first time I ever knew him, I was stationed in the Panama. This was back in '29, '30, and the navy was down there on maneuvers and [Colonel then?] Francis [Webster] Honeycutt and I went out as guests on--he had the--what the hell's the names of the two carriers? Anyhow, he had one--

BURG: Lexington and--

HANDY: Lexington! He had the Lexington. You see. And he was very nice. He was the skipper of the Lexington then. And he told us to be perfectly free. We were very much interested, because we'd never seen any carrier in operation, you know. And they had this--"flying bridge," they call it--you know, CP, up there and all that. And he said go anywhere we wanted to and see what we



wanted to see. So we did, but mind you, we were absolute strangers and army officers. Well, we hadn't cleared the Canal more than twenty-four hours, you see, till old Ernie called some fellow in. And he wasn't any ensign; he was a commander, I think, and we were there, you see, up in this CP. Boy, you talk about eating his tail out. I never heard a fellow get such immortal hell.

BURG: That King gave to--

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: --one of his own subordinates.

HANDY: Oh, yes. We were--it was embarrassing for us. But on the other hand--now, I'll tell you--during this same time, not this maneuver but over on the Pacific side, they came damn near losing a whole squadron of planes. Something went wrong with the communications, and during those days the planes were very short-legged. They went out from the Lexington and had a rendezvous point, or at least they thought they had, and when they got there the ship wasn't there. Boy, boy, I never [I was up in Quarry Heights then]--and they cut off everything. Turned on every search light in the navy and started to broadcasting, you know, to pick up this squadron. They got them in, eventually, but old King took the blame for that! See, he was skipper. So those guys--he could eat them out, but they knew they had a real guy in command, you see.



He was quite a man, Ernie King was. Quite a man.

BURG: So anything that involved us, as far as the navy and as far as OVERLORD was concerned, it sounds as though the army had a very strong friend in Ernie King.

HANDY: Oh, yes. And when we were going through all that weeks and months of battle over the landing craft, that big critical thing.

BURG: Sure.

HANDY: I was talking to Bedell every day on that damned squawk telephone [Laughter] and Bedell sent me a message and says, "For God's sake, remember about half my staff are British" and they were sitting in on this thing and I was talking about the "damned British"-- [Laughter]

BURG: Oh, you were? [Laughter]

HANDY: Yes, I didn't realize. [Laughter]--but, anyhow, they raked up those damned things from way back up the Ohio River and everywhere else. In other words, they were damned good people to have on your side, once they'd agreed to an operation, to go ahead with. But they were stubborn as hell, and hardheaded as hell, and we had a lot of trouble with them--

BURG: The navy.



HANDY: --out in the Pacific. Yes. Yes. Just plenty of it, as you know.

BURG: But the crucial thing with them was to get their agreement on what they were to do and how.

HANDY: Well as far as King and Cooke, yes. And old Ernie--now that's one big strength that Ike had that people don't realize. Our joint chiefs of staff gave him just about a hundred percent backing and they were all for him. Arnold was and so was Ernie King. So was General Marshall.

BURG: Yes, excellent to know. We may have time to take one more question. Yes, I think that's what we'll have. March of '44-- you were talking about the trans-continental phone conversations [Laughter]--we noted at least one trans-Atlantic phone conversation between you and Bedell Smith concerning the landing craft situation and its effects on OVERLORD and ANVIL. Were there other--[Laughter] and you've already answered--were there other calls on this subject? Evidently there were a lot of them--

HANDY: Yes. [Laughter]

BURG: --and what was the OPD view of this situation? Were your explanations usually calmly received?

HANDY: [Laughter] Well you asked "several". At one time, I would say approaching daily, almost, conversations. We all knew that



landing craft were critical and daily developments affected the possible supply. Incidentally, the navy was a big help on this. They started to uncover these craft, up the Ohio and other rivers, we didn't know were under way.

[End of Interview]

The joint efforts of the Army and Navy in the...
...and they were all for our own...
...General MacArthur.

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This interview is being taped with General Thomas Handy in San Antonio, Texas on March 29th, 1979. Present for the interview are Dr. Burg and General Handy.

GENERAL HANDY: As I said before, we always tried to keep in as close touch with the theaters as possible. In fact, I told the various theater groups that they were to consider themselves as "rear echelons" of the field command. We kept a string of officers going to theaters. I believed that it helped them to know we were concerned and wanted to do something about that problem. I'm sure that it had a good effect on the morale of our OPD people. Many were young, ambitious, regular officers who felt out of the fighting and believed their future would be handicapped. Some of these officers returned to OPD; others got an assignment in the theater, and still others never returned. They were killed while on a mission.

BURG: All right. We wondered if they did come back, and some of them did.

HANDY: Oh yes. Most of them did, as a matter of fact.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: But, we had a couple of them killed out there, early in the war in the Southwest Pacific. And later, we had some others killed.



BURG: Yes. And we hadn't been aware of that.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: In June of '44, we know that you made a trip to England at the time of the Normandy landings. We assume that you went over with General [George C.] Marshall and [Henry H.] Arnold and Admiral [Ernest Joseph] King.

HANDY: Well, this is my remark on that. "Savvy" [C.M.] Cooke, Admiral Cooke, [Major General Laurence S.] Larry Kuter, Air Force, and I went over ahead of the chiefs of staff. Cooke and I participated in the Omaha Beach landing, and I believe Kuter was in the bombing operations.

BURG: You participated in the Omaha landing. Were you in the command ship?

HANDY: Yes--

BURG: Off-shore?

HANDY: --Admiral [John L.] Hall's flag ship--what was it? The--I've forgotten the name of it now--but, we had [Major General Leonard T.] Gerow and [Major General Clarence R.] Huebner, and a whole gang of them on that flag ship, you see.

BURG: Yes, I remember the ship. I can fill in the name for you.



HANDY: Yes. It wasn't the Ancon, was it?

BURG: Yes. it was the Ancon.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Right. That's right.

HANDY: Yes. Old Jim Hall. He was quite a character. He was the fellow commanding the invading force.

BURG: Yes. I think we've got a couple funny stories about him somewhere.

HANDY: You might have.

BURG: So you were there? You watched that whole day?

HANDY: From my more-or-less worm's-eye view, I felt that Omaha was a lot tougher operation than it usually is taken to have been. We hung on to that beach almost literally by our eyelashes for hours, and no one there was at all certain we were going to make it in. It wasn't any certainty. And I repeat, it was really tough going.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: It was! Oh, boy. That was a tough one. I remember old Savvy Cooke, he had never seen anything like it. He



said, "This is carnage", when we got on the beach. And the Germans were right up on the heights above, you see, and then our doughboys tried to advance and, hell, they just got knocked down.

The beach itself was a terrible mess, and we had all those obstacles there and mines and everything else. And, I don't know. That was a personal experience. Savvy Cooke and I went in to the beach on a LST, you know, one of those small boats, and then we were there for quite awhile and saw [Brigadier] General [William M.] Hoge. That's the only general officer I saw on Omaha Beach.

Well, we finally came back out after dark. You see, it was a long, long day, that time of year and that latitude. And Gerow was getting ready to go ashore. In the meantime, Huebner had gone ashore. He had the 1st Division, you know, and Gerow had the corps. And "Gee" asked me, "How bout it?"

"Well," I said, "It's awful tough going."

"Well," he said, "What can we do?"

I said, "The only thing I know that you can do, regardless of losses, is push in there with your doughboys far enough to get that damn beach out from under small arms and, if possible, mortar fire." Because it was godawful along that beach.

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: And he said, well, he'd figured it the same way. And that's what they did. But we took some pretty heavy losses, and it was quite a mess.

BURG: So the main thing to do was drive them back from those heights overlooking the--

HANDY: Oh. Well, you had to get--. You see, they even had that beach under machine-gun and small arms fire. And mortar fire was just pouring on there, and it was just awful. The only time you ever, I think, defeat one of those things--a landing--in spite of all they say, is either before or when they're landing. In other words, if they can ever bring--the lander (the attacker)--if he can bring his strength to bear--presumably he's got superior strength or he wouldn't be trying to land, don't you see.

BURG: He's superior at that point.

HANDY: Well, you've got to defeat him before he can bring that superior strength. And the way you do it is at the beach, or if possible, before he gets to the beach.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: But that was, I thought, nip and tuck. I don't think all the accounts and everything, although the one in the history that the War Department got out---the historical section, I think--is a very good account of an operation. Almost a



model of a military operation.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: But it wasn't easy. And I tell you there, for quite awhile you wondered whether we could make it or not. It wasn't any certain or easy affair. We'd been over there, Cooke and Kuter and I, for several days and talked to all of these people. And we expected more trouble, over on the other--

BURG: Utah.

HANDY: --Utah, because they had there a fairly narrow beach. I mean in depth--and beyond that was this swampy country--with these damn--

BURG: Causeways.

HANDY: --causeways, through it. And it looked like you could take one gun and just knock the tanks off of that. Now, as a matter of fact, we went over to Utah the next day, after D-Day, and I saw Joe Collins and a good many other people. And [Major General Raymond O.] "Tubby" Barton. He had the 4th Division, who made the landing. And they hadn't had a hard time at all, don't you see.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Nothing like they did on Omaha. Omaha, in my view, was



a nip and tuck affair.

BURG: Yes. The 101st Airborne and the 82nd Airborne got the landward end of those causeways, several of the causeways--

HANDY: Yes, I know.

BURG: --and that helped a great deal.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: When did you go in in that LST? Was it in the afternoon of the 6th?

HANDY: I don't know. You kind of lost track of the time.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: We got on a destroyer first, off the flagship. See, Cooke was a Navy fellow, and we ran up and down the beach, and he was shooting one of the guns at church steeples, and so on, and having a big time. Then we got in an LST. I imagine it was around the middle of the day, maybe--I don't know--and went ashore. And believe me, that beach was a mess.

BURG: So you were under pretty heavy fire until dark, when you came back off the beach.

HANDY: Well, everybody there was under fire. There wasn't



any question about it.

BURG: Let me ask you something, General. You had one of the very high positions in the War Department. Did George C. Marshall know that you were going to go on that beach?

HANDY: No.

BURG: Would George C. Marshall have given you permission [Laughter] if he'd been there?

HANDY: Well, I don't think he would have interfered with it. You see, the old man always felt like that you had to get to see things. Now, he--this thing I mentioned before, about sending these people out to these various theaters. Of course, we hated to lose them--

BURG: Of course.

HANDY: --some of those young fellows, but I think General Marshall felt that, overall, it was a good thing. We had to get out and see what was going on and keep in touch with the people in the theaters. And I believe what I said in there; that they really felt like they had representatives back there. And I always encouraged these theater chiefs--and they were pretty good--to work like hell, you know, for their own theaters.



BURG: Oh yes, sure.

HANDY: Now, the old man, General Marshall, used to say-- and there's a lot of truth in this--that "you can always check 'em but you can't spur 'em," if you want a fellow to do a real big job, don't you see. Well, I could check these fellows but I couldn't spur them. And they were--take Bill Richie and Lee Todd, they had Southwest Pacific. God almighty, they picked up the 1st Cavalry Division, and the first thing you know, had them on the way out there, you see, to give McArthur a hand, and so on.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: I think that we had a pretty good relationship with the theaters.

BURG: Sounds like it. On that beach then, since you only saw one general officer--you didn't see Dutch [Major General Norman D. Cota] Cota, for example--

HANDY: No.

BURG: --you were seeing probably a mixture of--

HANDY: I was seeing the 1st Division.



BURG: Company commanders, battalion commanders.

HANDY: Well, yes. And the 1st Division was in there and the-- what was this "Blue and Gray" division in there?

BURG: 28th?

HANDY: No, it wasn't the 28th Division. It was the one from Maryland and Virginia--"Blue and Gray" Division.

BURG: Yes. Almost like the Korean symbol.

HANDY: 116th Infantry, or something like that. And the 16th along there now. What the devil was the number of that division? [Major General Charles H.] Charlie Gerhardt's division. They were the ones that made the landing, you see; a brigade of that division and a brigade of the 1st Division made the Omaha landing, the first landing.

BURG: Yes, it bothers me that I can't remember that division. I thought 28th or 29th. [Ed. Note: the division in question was the 29th Division]

HANDY: No. The 28th was the Pennsylvania division.

BURG: Yes. But you were with the 1st, there on the beach.

HANDY: Yes. And we had, as I say, Gerow and Huebner on that ship, and this fellow who was--first time I ever met him--



was a hell of a fine man. Died, too, recently; he had A and M here in Texas. Oh, you know, he had the Ranger outfit in that operation.

BURG: Yes. And 'it wasn't Darby, though, was it?

HANDY: Oh no, Darby wasn't there. I had Darby, later on, in OPD. Sent him over there when he got killed, you know.

BURG: The only Ranger I can think of that was there was [Lt. Col. James E.] Rudder.

HANDY: Rudder! That's the fella!

BURG: Rudder.

HANDY: I knew him quite a bit after war. He was head of A and M down here in Texas.

BURG: I see. I didn't know that.

HANDY: Oh yes, and did a remarkable job with it. He was quite a guy, that fellow was.

BURG: Yes. He was the one who made the assault on Pointe du Hoc.

HANDY: That's right.

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: Actually, when we got that Pointe du Hoc, we thought it was going to be the crux--

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --because they had some--we felt--pretty good-sized guns up there. Actually, when we got in to it, they had a few guns but they didn't do anything. But we were--

BURG: They'd dismantled them. The five guns were stored not too far away.

HANDY: That's right. That's right. Yes. But they went up that cliff and did a pretty good job up there.

BURG: I've stood on top of that--and I know you have, too--and looked down and figured just how tough that was to come up that thing.

HANDY: Yes. Well, I tell you, that was a tough operation.

BURG: Yes. Indeed it was. Indeed it was. Well, I'm glad to have that story, because I hadn't realized that you had gone on that beach--

HANDY: Oh yes.

BURG: --and I like that. I like the fact that you three men



went in on that thing to see for yourselves. That speaks very well of the kind of training that was present in the War Department at that time. That's a gutsy thing to do, General.

HANDY: Well, you see, the chiefs came over a little bit later, and then they went on the beach.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And I don't know whether all of this ought to go in the records or not.

BURG: That's perfect--I think it's good that it goes on because it--

HANDY: Well, I know how General Marshall felt, you see. Now, of course, they wanted to see the thing too, but, I think he felt that if it came to a decision of having to pull off the beach, which it could have--that they shouldn't put that on Ike.

BURG: --who had already accepted the responsibility with that note of his.

HANDY: Oh yes. But it went up higher than Ike. And if you had to make a decision of that kind I think the General felt the chiefs of staff ought to be there on the ground to make it.



See, the British were in it too.

BURG: Your impression, General Handy, is that had that decision been necessary that Marshall and the others would probably have gently taken it out of Eisenhower hands and said, "No, no, that's--

HANDY: Well, they wouldn't have left the burden on Ike altogether, don't you see.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: No, of course, Ike would have had a big say about it, but the chiefs of staff were there, American and British, right there in England and they could have made the decision.

BURG: Yes. Okay. Now, the next one that I have is for August of 1944. [Brig. Gen. Charles K.] Gailey remarked that Hall was on a trip and had left you with an even heavier load than usual. But in this note that I ran into he suggested that you just thrived under pressure. That you seemed to grow calmer when other people's nerves were getting frayed.

I wanted to ask you, is that your recollection of how you reacted to pressure at that time or were you all nervous and hiding it?

HANDY: Well, I don't know but I think when you're giving



your own reactions that they're not very good. Ike thought a lot of him, Charlie Gailey.

BURG: Yes. I got that impression.

HANDY: Yes. And he was always very loyal and very supportive. Naturally I was like practically everyone else, anxious to get out of the War Department. I had seen the heartaches after World War I on the part of those who never got to the war including, of course, Eisenhower and Bradley.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: In that war I was lucky enough to have been in it during practically all of our participation. As I've indicated above I had most of our people on my neck all the time wanting to get out, and it didn't make my job any easier. I told the old man, General Marshall, that I wanted to get out. But after that I didn't feel like it was fair to him to keep harping on it. After all, he was also stuck in Washington and, incidentally, continued to be.

BURG: Yes, yes. You would like to have gone out then as an army or a corps commander, but it got to the point where you figured it wasn't likely it was going to happen.

HANDY: Well, that's right. I had these people, and I could



sympathize with them, on my neck, as I say, all the time--

BURG: Yes, sure.

HANDY: --they wanted to get out of there and they figured-- and it was terrible for young regular officers, if you had a war and they didn't get in it.

BURG: You bet.

HANDY: We had an awful lot of them, including Ike and Bradley, for instance, who didn't get to the first war--

BURG: Yes. Yes. First World War.

HANDY: --and it was a penalty. But the old man had his problems. And I told him I wanted to get out, but after that I didn't keep harping on him, as I say here. I figured, hell, you're told to do a job, go on and do it and don't bellyache too much about it.

BURG: And it didn't work out badly for you.

HANDY: Well, I don't know--

BURG: The service that you did then. You got opportunities to serve at very high levels after that so in your case it seems to me, you probably, playing it the way you did and staying calm about it didn't hurt you, I don't think.



HANDY: Well, I think the crux on this thing, what you looked for in a fellow, is whether to him, I mean this is particularly true in war-time, the job is more important than himself, you see--

BURG: Yes, yes.

HANDY: --and I had quite a job, I thought, and--

BURG: You bet.

HANDY: --I figured it was more important than one individual.

BURG: Yes. That's right. You were in a pretty key position. Now I asked you and I don't know whether you had an answer for that. In regard to the Quebec Conference I noted that Ike wrote to General Marshall, and this is September, '44, that he supposed that; "as is usual there was a lot under the surface that was not reported." And what we wondered, we thought we'd ask you, we didn't know whether you knew, was there anything under the surface at the Quebec Conference that you can tell us about?



HANDY: Well, my answer to that was I doubt if I can add much to the record.

BURG: Okay.

HANDY: Of course, there's always a lot under the surface at these conferences.

BURG: You bet.

HANDY: And they had a knock-down, drag-out fight up' there about the invasion between the British and our chiefs of staff before the President and the Prime Minister got there.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And I was fired back down here to Washington to be sure the President--see our people never felt that they bossed the President; you see, that they were running things. But, they wanted him to have their views before he came to a decision--all, and this is September, 1951,

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --which I think was right. And that was the object in this thing. And as Ike used to say, the Prime Minister could be very persuasive. Ike said when he turned the sun lamp on you it was really something.

BURG: Yes. [Laughter]



HANDY: And the President was in an entirely different position from the Prime Minister as far as the chiefs of staff for the military was concerned. After all, the Prime Minister was not only Prime Minister, but he was Minister of Defense. He saw his people every day and sometimes in the early morning hours, you know, he had them in there--

BURG: Whenever he wanted to get them in and sweat them.

HANDY: Absolutely. Well, you don't approach the President of the United States like that.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And, furthermore, the President of the United States has a lot of jobs the Prime Minister doesn't have. For instance, those ministers or whatever they call them over there have a lot more power than the Cabinet members do in our government.

BURG: Oh, exactly. You bet.

HANDY: They run the show a great deal more. But, actually, by the time the President and Prime Minister got there, why, I think the chiefs of staff had kind of settled things.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: But at least had smoothed it over. There were always



things underneath in these conferences, yes.

BURG: I'll bet there were.

HANDY: There bound to have been.

BURG: In September of '44, again this is September, from the War Papers we got interested in Ike's efforts to determine, evidently through an intermediary, whether his son, John, was going to object to being assigned to a division in a theater commanded by his father. And we wondered if you could tell us how the arrangements were handled or did you just handle John Eisenhower's assignment to the ETO as you would any other officer?

HANDY: Well, my answer to that was, I wasn't the intermediary, and as far as I know John's assignment was as normal as to be expected. After all, he was Ike's son and nothing was going to change that.

BURG: Yes, right. So it was going to have to be figured on. There was no way it could be avoided.

HANDY: As I say, as far as I know it was done in the normal way.

BURG: Yes. Yes.



HANDY: Any other officer in John's position he might have been held.

BURG: Because he went into a combat assignment, as I recall, with a reconnaissance outfit.

HANDY: I don't recall--

BURG: Seems to me they were equipped with armored cars--

HANDY: Yes. John's a hell of a fine person, I always thought.



BURG: Yes. Yes, I've always liked him too. Now, on October, '44, we found letters that showed that General Marshall, James F. Byrnes, Major General Howard A. Craig and General Handy were coming to France in early October. Do you remember what the purpose of that trip was, General?

HANDY: Well, here is my answer to that. That was a rather interesting trip. General Marshall wanted to see the situation himself and, incidentally, we visited every U.S. division on the front and the French Corps on the south. Byrnes was, at that time, the number one guy to the President on the civilian and particularly the industrial side because, you know Jimmy Byrnes.

BURG: Jimmy Brynes, sure.

HANDY: We were subject to all kinds of pressures on our use of manpower and resources. And at the same time the theaters were yelling for more, especially ammunition and POL.

BURG: What was that last?

HANDY: Ammunition and POL, gas, petroleum, oil and lubricant.

BURG: I see. Yes.

HANDY: General Marshall's idea was that it would be a good thing for Jimmy Byrnes to get the other side of the picture, since he was having the civilian side put up to him so strongly and continuously, you see. They were bringing all kinds of pressure on him. In other words, our main purpose was to educate Byrnes. I must say it was done very effectively, mainly by having Byrnes spend several days with George Patton. No one had to sell him on the need for ammunition after that.

[Laughter]

BURG: How did Byrnes react to that.

HANDY: Oh, boy! You know, I thought an awful lot of Jimmy Byrnes. He was a hell of a smart, able fellow. And he wasn't "agin us"--



BURG: Right.

HANDY: --we felt all the way through on a bunch of these people they had on the industrial side and the manpower side that--. We knew the other side had to be considered, but we thought we ought to be given the priority. After all, we had to fight the war.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

HANDY: And many times there were disagreements, and they blamed us for taking too many people and, you know, this, that and the other. And there were pressures on the other side. Now, I don't think Jimmy Byrnes was ever, in any way, prejudiced against us, but, I tell you, you didn't have to sell him. The old man sent him up there with George Patton for a few days. Believe me. That's when we were going up and down the front.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: We never had any trouble with Jimmy Byrnes after that.

BURG: What it would do for Byrnes, it would give him the viewpoint of one of the most aggressive combat leaders we had--

HANDY: Yes. And he could see that--

BURG: --to use his ammunition against the civilians.



HANDY: That's right. He could see the actual situation and what it meant not to have enough ammunition.

BURG: I'd love to know how George Patton expressed it to Byrnes. The language must have been really something.

HANDY: Well, anyhow, it was a pretty good educational course. But Jimmy Byrnes had a very high opinion of General Marshall.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: He told me one time--

BURG: Byrnes did?

HANDY: Yes. He told me one time, he said, "You know, this fellow, your boss, he's the darnedest man I ever saw." He said, "Now, I saw him first on the Hill with a bunch of politicians. He dominated that outfit." You know, when the old man was deputy chief of staff going down there and defending the budget and all that thing. Dominated that outfit. And he said, "I've seen him with his own people, the military people. You'd expect him there to dominate the thing. He dominated that group every time I saw him in it." And he said, "He dominated a bunch of preachers." The old man had



read the service over there in the cathedral so Sir John Dill--and I think Jimmy Byrnes was in there, don't you see--

BURG: Yes, Dill was the British military representative in Washington.

HANDY: That's right. And he said, "He dominated the bunch of preachers. Now you and I" he said to me, "Got to get him sometime in a bunch of read rowdy drunks to see him dominate that." [Laughter] He said, "So far, he's dominated every group I've seen him in." And he went through that.

BURG: That's an interesting thing. An interesting story.

HANDY: Well, that's beside the point of any historical stuff.

BURG: Ah, but it sheds light on Marshall, and how he was viewed by diverse people including Byrnes.

HANDY: Oh yes.

BURG: And I'm delighted to have that story.

HANDY: Yes. Of course, as I said here, I've said it before, no use to go through it again, the old man wanted to see the situation. That was in October. And we ended up all up and down the front.

BURG: That's about two months before the Bulge.



HANDY: Oh yes. As a matter of fact--what the hell was the name of the place in 'the Bulge, I'll think of it in a minute. We were there. There was a corps headquarters in there. What was the name of that place?

BURG: Sanveth?

HANDY: No, no.

BURG: Bastogne?

HANDY: No. Yes, Bastogne.

BURG: Bastogne.

HANDY: We were in Bastogne.

BURG: Couple months before it happened?

HANDY: Yes. It would have been--The Bulge happened--I told the General, he'd forgotten about it, I said, "You know we were in Bastogne here a short time ago."

BURG: You knew that place.

[Interruption]

BURG: On October, '44, we'd just kind of like to ask you: You became Deputy Chief of Staff. At this late date, can you remember what your feelings were when you got that promotion?



HANDY: I was made deputy to relieve McNarney to go to command in Italy during the war.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: I believe General Arnold recommended me, but the decision, of course, was General Marshall's. Personally, I was not pleased. I was told it would mean a promotion. That was fine, but I'd already probably had more than I deserved, and furthermore, I was sure that heading operations was a more interesting and important job than being deputy chief of staff. [Laughter]

BURG: Son-of-a-gun. Did you tell Marshall that?

HANDY: Oh yes.

BURG: What did he say to you?

HANDY: Well, he didn't oftentimes say anything. You know, the old man would listen, you see, and you never knew what action he was going to take a lot of times. He didn't tell you. Sometimes he'd discuss things with you, but most of the time he'd listen to what you had to say and size it up.

BURG: Yes. And then act on it later on without maybe telling you much about it.



HANDY: Oh yes. That's right.

BURG: Who did they put in to replace you?

HANDY: Ed [Lt. Gen. John E.] Hull.

BURG: That's when Hull got it.

HANDY: Yes. Incidentally, have you seen his book?

BURG: No.

HANDY: He's written a book.

BURG: Really? No, I haven't seen it.

HANDY: Well, he's dead now, you know.

BURG: Oh yes. Sure, I know. Yes, I saw him in Washington.

[Interruption]

BURG: Now this next one, that's a long question but let me just put it on the tape. October '44, we got it out of the War Papers, and I noted and questioned you, Alexander asked Ike for 3,000 infantry replacements in mid-October and ultimately, these 3,000 were sent. [Gen. Joseph T.] McNarney then sent three thousand replacements to Ike in January of '45.



And, evidently, the first War Department reaction to Alexander's request was that Ike need not send these troops to Italy because the War Department was speeding up troop shipments. But Bedell Smith felt Alexander's need was great and only Ike's forces could meet the Italian Theater needs at that time. And then we asked you whether you could provide us with a view of how this situation looked at War Department. And we asked, "Did the absence of these three thousand men have any direct influence upon our ability to react to the German offensive in the Ardennes in December?" And we went on to say we're very much interested in your observations regarding the personnel situation, which you once described to DDE as: "one of the worst headaches we have".

And, as I said a long series of questions, we asked you whether you felt that a ninety division army in 1944-45 was a gamble or did you tend to agree with DDE who said in 1966 that the gamble was only with respect to the difficulty in maintaining a ninety division force? And close that long series of questions with, could you discuss the basic trends of your conference or conferences with General Ray Barker and others in December. We think it was December of '44.

HANDY: Well, here's what I have written in.

BURG: Okay.

HANDY: This covers a lot. I can't remember too much of the



three thousand replacement switch or how it looked to the War Department. I doubt that three thousand men had any direct or certainly not decisive affect on our ability to react to the Ardennes offensive. After all, we handled it successfully. With some trouble, I'll admit.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: However, I believe that in the long run the Ardennes offensive did the Germans more harm than good.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

HANDY: As to the personnel situation, it was always a headache. Particularly as to replacement. General Marshall once said that he was sick and tired of going from one crisis to another about infantry replacement. I've always felt that overall we didn't do a good job on personnel. And I mean by that the whole army, the War Department, Theaters and so forth, all the way through. On the other major functional areas, intelligence, logistics, and operations, I think we did a good job. But not on personnel. The ninety division army worked and therefore can be said to have been a justifiable gamble. See, we got them all in.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: As you well know our estimates were originally for



far more than ninety divisions. I believe the number was arrived at based on more of the ability to equip, train, transport and maintain than anything else. I agree with General Eisenhower as to the real difficulty of maintaining ninety divisions. I don't right now recall the thrust of the conferences with Ray Barker in December of '44.

BURG: Okay.

HANDY: You see, people don't realize how difficult it is-- talking about these forces and you can have a big spread of them--but it's also difficult to keep them going, to maintain them. And we were able to maintain our divisions reasonably well. Now the Prime Minister was always talking in big numbers of divisions of British, as far as they were concerned fifteen to twenty. General Marshall used to say all the time, much better to have ten divisions that you can keep as divisions then to have twenty that your losses are going to pot in a little while. And it was very difficult. Ike was absolutely right. The real difficulty was maintaining the ones we had. There were a good many people--[John J.] McCloy talked to me once about this ninety division. Mr. [Henry Lewis] Stimson had surmised maybe we didn't have enough. Don't you see?

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: But General Marshall always--it was his number. Actually we got eighty-nine of those divisions, as I recall it, into combat.

BURG: Yes. I think you're correct with the eighty-nine.

HANDY: And we maintained the divisions as operable.

BURG: Yes. Maintained in the sense of supply and logistics got to them, personnel got to them to make up for attrition.

HANDY: Yes. And the main trouble there was with the "doughs," you know, the infantry.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: That was the difficulty we had. We were in a continual mess and, as I said, this personnel business. I asked practically everyone of our major commanders after the war if they'd had any real difficulties with personnel. And every one of them, practically, said, "That was your main problem; since your operational problems would solve themselves, if you can solve the personnel problem."

And I asked them this: I said, "Now we all went through this whole school system in the Army. Did they teach you anything at Leavenworth or in the War College that really gave you a grip on, or ability to handle, the real problems,



personnel problems, that occur?"

And they all said, no, they didn't. And that was my experience. Now they taught you something about operations. And taught you about logistics. They taught you something about intelligence that was worthwhile. But, oh, we made out some G-1 reports and so on but as far as coming to grips with a real personnel problem I don't think we did. And I think our school system fell down on that. That is the one major thing they did. And boy, oh, boy--well, I think it's not only true in the Army, but everywhere else your biggest problem is the personnel problem.



BURG: Now when it came right down to it, the country's faced with a decision to allocate human beings, and you've got to allocate a certain amount of them to the war industries and a certain amount of them to the transportation and supply services. And then another percentage of them can be allocated as infantry replacements. The tough thing is, then, making the decisions how much of each.

HANDY: Well, yes, and, of course, I'm a little prejudice on that because, after all, you know, if you're fighting a war it doesn't do you any good to have the most terrific industrial base and everything else in the world, if you lose the damn war and the battles.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

HANDY: That's got to be the prime consideration, I think.

BURG: Did you ever feel that our tail, in the sense of the number of men we had to use to get the stuff up to the front, that we had more personnel in that than we needed or did you figure that that allocation was pretty much correct?

HANDY: Well, Bill [Lt. Gen. Brehon B.] Somervell used to come down and cuss me out about once a week, you know. Bill-- I had a very high opinion and still have of Bill Somervell. But because he'd want to do all these things, you know, building up the service forces. And we had the most terrific problem because we were fighting all over the world and we had these impossible things like, you know, CBI, China, Burma, India and all those things.

BURG: Right. Thousands of miles away. Yes.

HANDY: We had these global lines of communication and everything else. But I told Bill one time. We had a great scheme for getting more people into support. And I said, "Bill, there's only one thing wrong with your whole approach to this problem." And we disagreed on much of it all the time and this was the basis--I said, "The trouble is there



isn't any question if we did what you said we'd have the best supported army in history." I said, "As a matter of fact, we have now. We haven't yet had a major operation we've had to cut out or that failed on account of lack of proper support. We've got the best supported army that's ever been in our history and so far as I know in any other history. There isn't any question about it. But if we do what you say, there'd be only one trouble with it."

And Bill said, "What is that?"

And I said, "By God, you won't have any army to support." It's just as simple as that. And if you don't look out, this tail--talk about wagging the dog, it'll become the whole dog, you see.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

HANDY: And they've got good reasons for all these things, too. And Somervell was a very convincing fellow, but we were battling all the time on that very thing.

BURG: If he'd had his way it looked to you like the stuff would come up to front lines, and it would be left there all in neat piles and there wouldn't be anybody there to use it. [Laughter] Well, I told him. I said that we'd have the most wonderfully supported army in the world, but the only trouble'd



be we wouldn't have any army to support. So that is always true, I think. And probably more true now than it used to be. But it is a very important thing.

BURG: Let me ask you, then, one more thing in connection with that. Do you think that after the war--you spoke of speaking to some of these senior commanders--as a result of your talking with them, are we now doing a better job of training our young officers to think in terms of the personnel problems they're probably going to have to face? We hope they won't have to, but--

HANDY: Well, I don't know--I can't answer that. I don't know because I don't know what goes on in the army. I hope so.

BURG: But you made a fuss about it after the war. You and others, I would imagine, called attention to the fact that out of the various areas that you had been trained for in the school system, that was one that had been lacking.

HANDY: Yes. That is, they had courses in personnel and all that, don't you see.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: But as far as coming to grips with the real problems like, for instance, this dough boy replacement thing. That's



the kind of thing I'm talking about. It was extremely difficult. And the education we got I don't think put people in shape to come to grips with the real personnel problem.

BURG: Yes. And on the tremendous scale that you had to come to grips with it. Alright, my next question is November of '44 and we got this out of the Marshall file. There was a letter to Eisenhower from General Marshall that made reference to relieving General [Lindsay] Sylvester from command of the 7th Armored Division because he was not sufficiently aggressive, although Eisenhower praised him in other respects. We were interested in knowing if there were some specific instances where Sylvester's lack of aggression was noted. And we wanted, also, to know if you now think that most of the leaders who fell short of expectation were weeded out or were there others who never were relieved? Is it your opinion that our expectations with regard to our combat commanders performances was a reasonable one or were we too high in our expectations?

HANDY: Well, my answer to that was I had no personal knowledge of the circumstances surrounding Sylvester's relief at the time. I had some knowledge of it later.

BURG: I see. Yes.



HANDY: It's hard to say that no mistakes were made in the relief or failure to relieve. Overall I would say that the results were about as good as can be expected in this most difficult matter. That's one of the hardest things of all.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: In reference to the last question I would say that one of the most remarkable things about this war was the outstanding command performance of our leaders. In spite of the fact that we really hadn't had any army, you know, between wars.

BURG: Yes, yes.

HANDY: Mr. Churchill said the same thing, in effect, after the war. He came down there to the War Department--this was after the war--and talked to a bunch of us there. And he said that he'd never had any doubts about America industrially. He knew they would produce the stuff. It'd take 'em a little time to do it and all that. And said one thing he couldn't understand about the army in particular--see we'd had a navy--was the very high degree of command performance that we got during the war. Now if you look at our record and compare it to World War I--see there was an awful lot of relief there. Much more so than in this. We had overall,



as Mr. Churchill said, a most remarkable performance. How we ever did it, not having any army to work with in peacetime and so on, he would never be able to understand that. That was the most remarkable thing to him about the performance of the American Army. Of course, I think that the man who really, more than anybody else, made the army was Lesley [J.] McNair, General McNair.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And a lot of the "dead wood" business was gotten rid of before they were ever sent to the theaters. You see there was considerable relieving back here all the way through. But that is the most difficult, I think, and trying thing of all. Now it's got to be done but on the other hand, oftentimes, a fellow is relieved--well, I saw oftentimes, but it has happened--because he was such a hell of a good man. Now what I mean by that is really a good man. I won't call his name, but I can think of one fellow who was a hell of a good friend of mine and of General Marshall's too, who was relieved. He was in this state which a man can't be to command a division in combat. He'd lost a man, it was almost like losing his own son. And he didn't get over it, you see.

BURG: I see. I see. Yes.

HANDY: It was because he was such a hell of a fine person--



BURG: Right.

HANDY: --really, but it's a very distressing thing and it isn't because a fellow isn't working. He is putting out. He's put his whole damn heart in it but sometimes if he doesn't produce you got to--

BURG: Yes. The price to himself was too great.

HANDY: That's right.

BURG: And he couldn't stand that. Yes. I think a lot of people can sympathize with that.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: That's a good point. What about this, General? I was asked this by a couple of people only about a month ago. When it came to relieving people, including some of them who may have been his classmates, did Eisenhower do it himself, face to face?

HANDY: Well, I don't know because I wasn't over there. I imagine he did because I know he sweat blood over the [Maj. Gen. Lloyd R.] Fredendall relief in North Africa.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

HANDY: And that was the first time I think he was really up



against it from a major standpoint. But I don't know that.

BURG: I didn't really know either. And I didn't know whether it was to be expected that a man later on who's supreme commander--

HANDY: Well, I think that with those kind of reliefs, like Fredendall, I expect on that he did, personally, face to face as you say. Now I don't know, later on I saw one case over there, and, the old man, General Marshall, regardless, he didn't change his opinion of people.

BURG: Yes, I know.

HANDY: And there was a fellow over there in command of a division. And Ike told me this later, that he went out--this was after the Normandy invasion was on, and he went down to see this fellow. He said he was down in a hole in the ground, and he had a map there and had his colonels in there, you know, his combat team commanders. And he was telling Ike, "Now we're supposed to do this, that and the other. Take this area and this hill." And he said, "They havn't got a Chinaman's chance" or words to that effect. And Ike said he couldn't believe here was this commander telling his subordinates a thing like that. And he said he got out of that place and was looking for the corps and the army commanders. And he



found out they were both looking for him, Collins, and Bradley, to get this fellow relieved.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: I mean, that was--and that probably wasn't a difficult one to make. But that same fellow had done pretty well up in Alaska. But General Marshall never did have any confidence in him. When this happened he said, "I told you."

[Laughter]

BURG: "Once more my judgment has been proven correct."

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Yes, that's a funny thing about Marshall.

HANDY: But I don't know an answer directly to your question.

Whether Ike did it personally, I don't know.

BURG: Yeah. That's something we'd like to check into, I think, sometime.

HANDY: You saw this TV thing on, when [Gen. Francis] De Guingand described the Montgomery relief business, didn't you, on TV?

BURG: Yes, I did see it. I did see it as a matter of fact.

HANDY: De Guingand was quite a guy.



BURG: That's the impression I get.

HANDY: Well, our people thought an awful lot of him. And I think he's the fellow that was responsible for Ike working with Monty as well as it did.

BURG: I think so too, and I've had a number of British officers tell me the same thing.

HANDY: Oh, yes.

BURG: That without him in Monty's headquarters, it would have come to a grinding halt--

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: --just pretty darn early. Now, in December '44--and I got this out of Stephen Ambrose's book--he pointed out that several division and corp commanders were sent home on sixty days detached service so they could rest and recuperate, and Ike asked you to check on their fitness before they were allowed to come back. And we asked you how you checked on those men and if you ever held any of them in the United States a little longer because you doubted they were ready to go back?

HANDY: I don't recall holding any of the men General Eisenhower sent, but I may have. I do recall one, however, but that was on specific request of General Patton not General Eisenhower.



BURG: Patton asked that the man not come back? Permanently not come back or not come back for awhile?

HANDY: Well, he said, "Whatever you do, take good care of him but for God's sake don't let the son of a bitch come back here." [Laughter]

BURG: Alright. Our next question is from the period December of '44 and January of '45. We'd just like to have you kind of give us your impressions about Field Marshall, then, Alan Brooke, later Lord Alan Brooke, or anything you can tell us about the Eisenhower-Brooke relationship or the Marshall-Brooke relationship.

HANDY: Well, in our low level working group I believe, we, or most of us, considered Brooke to be the dumbest of the British chiefs of staff.

BURG: Whooooosh!

HANDY: That's right! We found the smartest one of them was Peter Portal [Sir Charles F. Portal, Air Chief Marshal] I think, the airman. He was an awful capable guy, but we didn't think much of Brooke. I know nothing of the Brooke-Ike relationship. I do know that we never could understand, in fact, it was completely beyond us how anyone could possibly compare Brooke and General Marshall. They weren't even in the same ball park.



BURG: Oh, that is really something, General. I've never heard that opinion expressed. That's terrific!

HANDY: Well, I'm giving you the working level group.

BURG: And I'll tell you, Rosemary Portal, Peter Portal's daughter, is going to be very delighted that your opinion of her father was a high opinion.

HANDY: Oh boy. I think--well, at first they had that old admiral who didn't speak in the meetings, die. And then they got [Sir Andrew Browne] Cunningham in there and he was a humdinger. And Portal was, we thought, the smartest and ablest one of them.

BURG: That's a fascinating thing. Have you seen the new biography on Portal?

HANDY: No, I haven't.

BURG: It's brand new. It's just out. And I think--

HANDY: There's a fellow here named Jim Calvert, he belongs to the monthly luncheon club, who was in the RAF and lived in this country for years and years. But Portal was his group commander, flying commander, at one time, back in World War I.

BURG: Really.



HANDY: Yes. But Portal was, we thought, the smartest one of them.

BURG: Well, that's a fascinating thing. And I'm glad to have that.

HANDY: But we didn't think Brooke was, well, what I said. And we wouldn't put him in the same ball park as General Marshall. For him to be expressing opinions about General Marshall with his strategy seemed to me it was kind of sacrilegious or something.

BURG: I see. Interesting. Because, as you know, Alan Brooke in his diaries, I think even he, himself, later on regretted some of the opinions he had expressed--

HANDY: Yes. Oh, yes.

BURG: --in that diary that Bryant published. Alright, our next question is from March of 1945 and this came out of the Marshall file. We asked if you remember the instances when Marshall grew testy because he felt the 3rd Infantry Division's exploits had not received the publicity they would have been given had they been a U.S. Marine Corps unit. And we'd like to have your impressions of General Marshall's reactions to matters of this sort. Did Marshall always seek to publicize



what the army'd accomplished or was the 3rd Division case just an instance when his temper flared a little bit?

HANDY: Well, I think General Marshall always felt that we, the army, often missed the boat on publicity of the right kind. One instance may illustrate this. After the army band was sent to Africa with considerable hope on his, General Marshall's, part for favorable publicity, nothing was heard of them for some time. General Marshall sent a message to "Beetle" Smith. See, Beetle had been secretary of the General's staff and he knew Beetle well. And he'd give Beetle hell; you know, send him a message. As I said before, he really liked Beetle. He liked to needle Beetle, though. He liked to needle him. Giving him hell about the band and publicity and telling him, as I recall, that he was tempted to put a marine lieutenant in charge and let him show Beetle how to get publicity. Beetle sent me a message back that says, "For God sake, get the old man off my neck" or words to that effect. "He's giving me hell about this band."
[Laughter] Well, I think I've covered it pretty well.

BURG: Yes. Yes. I kind of thought that would be the response. I think we all felt at that time that if a marine corps corporal managed to salute with one hand and not injure his eye that it got in the newspapers. But if the army took



four towns and twenty divisions and captured them, it didn't get in the newspapers.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Okay, our next question has to do with enlisted men.

And we knew that--and this has happened in the past too-- that enlisted men complained that they had been discriminated against while officers received preferential treatment.

Now, do you remember whether at the time you felt there was a real cause for those complaints? How serious the problem might have been. Did the complaints decline when remedial measures were taken? And in the same kind of vein, were there any complaints from black soldiers bearing upon their treatment in the army?

HANDY: Well, my answer to that is, I don't believe there was any real cause for complaints. If so, I'm sure they were soon taken care of. Senator [Harold H.] Burton [R-Ohio] was influential on the Military Affairs Committee and was generally sound and very friendly to us. We liked Senator Burton very much.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: In his letter he raised things that deserved attention. There wasn't any question about it. I presume we had the usual



complaints from some black soldiers. I believe that General Eisenhower made a special effort to see that the negroes got a fair shake and they did.

BURG: Yes. Yes. Given the situation at the time, which I think people tend to forget now, there were limits on what could be done.

HANDY: Oh, absolutely.

BURG: And it was not too long after that that the efforts were made to change that.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: In that period 1941-'45, it was a little tough.

[Interruption]

BURG: In May of 1945, General, and I think this comes, perhaps, from your own papers, Handy and Eisenhower both speak of criticism they'd been getting. Handy says the War Department also had an increased barrage, I think "barrage" was your expression, of public and congressional criticism. So much so that: "it is going to be one hell of a job to keep the war in any priority". That's from one of your letters. What kinds of criticism came up? Did it follow any regular pattern? And can you give us some examples of these



problems and the solutions you attempted to find?

HANDY: Well, I would say criticism was normal and to be expected. However, at this time, May of '45, I think a lot of people figured we had the war won and became more insistent on their wants and more critical of our requirements. I haven't got specific things, but we had plenty of criticism, plenty of it.

BURG: Well, I notice that Eisenhower, his letters at that time frequently reflect the reaction of "for crying in the sink, everyone at home seems to think it's all over except the shouting and here we are, we don't feel confident about it at all". In the--

HANDY: I know. Well, that's what I said there. I think they figured, "Well, the war is won" and that made them more insistent on the things they wanted and their priorities, you see.

BURG: Yes. Yes. So you start getting arguments about priorities and allocations of things when you still had that focus single-minded focus on "Let's get this thing finished."

HANDY: Yes. Of course, we had great difficulty after the war was over in Europe. See, the biggest part of the war was over. We'd said that's a number one priority and we'd won it. Trying to build up for the other side of the world.



We had an awful time. Awful time. That was a very difficult time. Now, our idea was on the Far East to not just be superior but to bring all the force to bear that we possibly could utilize out in that area. Air, naval, ground, everything else. And you've seen the invasion plans for the islands of Japan.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: It was a terrific undertaking.

BURG: Exactly.

HANDY: That was really more difficult than this period just before the end of the war in Europe, you see.

BURG: In a way I'm not sure that any military historian or scholar has ever really analyzed that period of time. The war coming to a conclusion in Europe and getting set for the effort against Japan, in terms of what were the civilians talking about, the government and non-government.

HANDY: Right. Well, most of them felt like "Well, hell, the biggest part of the war is over, and you guys are yelling for more instead of less".

BURG: Yes. So it might well be worth while somebody taking a look at those months and really studying--



HANDY: Well, that was a difficult time. For us there in the War Department it certainly was a difficult time.

BURG: That kind of a natural let-down. We got the one that we figured was the most dangerous out of the way and now we can do the other with one hand tied behind our back.

HANDY: Yes. What they were saying was, "You guys, we've had two wars going on. And one of them was the biggest one of all. We've won it and now you say it takes more to do the little one than it did to do both of them." You know, it was that kind of thinking and argument.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: That was a difficult time.

BURG: Okay. I'm glad to have that on the record. In August of 1945--we got this from the Marshall file--Eisenhower wrote to General Marshall after Eisenhower had made the trip to Moscow and he told Marshall how Stalin had taken [Marshal Georgi K.] Zhukov and him, Eisenhower, aside and told them that he regretted sending a rude telegram to Marshall when the latter had tried in February of '44 to warn him, Stalin, of German intentions. The information had been proven to be wrong. Can General Handy remember this occurrence and does he recollect General Marshall's reaction to the Stalin telegram? Does General Handy know what prevented Zhukov's projected



trip to the United States after the war?

HANDY: I don't remember General Marshall's reaction, but I expect it was about the same as the rude telegram--disregard it. I do not know what prevented Zhukov's trip. Things like that message, I don't think General Marshall ever gave it great weight. Now I don't say disregarded it altogether and that he was pleased by it. He wasn't at all. But I don't think it was a critical thing to him.

BURG: Yes. The sort of thing he could and did shrug off then.

HANDY: Well, yes. And he had really tried, you know, to give the Russians some dope. Well, it turned out that the dope we had wasn't the right dope. And old Stalin reacted like he would.

BURG: We had given him the correct dope on several other occasions and he disregarded that so.

HANDY: Absolutely. Yes.

BURG: All right. In August of '45, again from the Marshall file, what can you tell us of the period at the end of the war when General Marshall wanted to be relieved as chief of staff and proposed Eisenhower as his successor?

HANDY: Well, General Marshall did ask for relief as chief of staff. Probably because he was tired and felt he'd done his job. And General Eisenhower was his logical successor, of course.

BURG: Yes. Yes. And in that same month, we went on to



ask you, when Eisenhower discussed a possible successor to himself, you were the second name proposed. Were you ever approached with regard to that appointment to succeed Eisenhower over there in Europe?

HANDY: No.

BURG: Nobody ever came around and asked you about that?

HANDY: No.

BURG: Okay. In September of '4--I can't go on without asking would you have enjoyed going over to do that?

HANDY: Well, I don't know. It's an awful job--and you know as well as I do--but it's an awful job to tear a thing down. It's a much more difficult job than to build it up. It's awful when you have to reduce a thing and tear it down.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: When you're on the up and up and going and expanding and everything, that is fine. But when you're given the job of tearing it down that's another story. It's a far more difficult thing in many ways than building it up.

BURG: And perhaps the man who's going to tear it down doesn't need as much talent as the man who's going to build it up.



HANDY: Well, I don't know about that.

BURG: You might have been wasted in that job.

HANDY: I don't know. I wouldn't say I'd been wasted there.

BURG: You're a modest man though. In September of '45, from the Marshall file, a letter from General Marshall to Eisenhower said that he, Marshall, is on the horns of a dilemma with respect to a plan for a post-war army which he had enclosed for Eisenhower's inspection. Marshall said that he had promised Generals' Handy and [John E.] Hull he would not take action which they felt would commit the War Department to an unwise basis for the future. And he also is reluctant to commit the man he presumes will be his successor. Can you clarify the differences which seem to have separated you and Hull, for example, on one hand from Marshall in this particular instance?

HANDY: Well, my answer to that is I'm afraid I can't add much.

BURG: Okay.

HANDY: The General had this universal service thing, you know, and he wrote in his final report.

BURG: UMT. Okay. All right. We'll let that drop. And in



that same month we note Eisenhower writing to Marshall with respect to Army and War Department personnel matters. In the letter he expresses the feeling that it would be a shame if proven leaders--and I think he specified [Brig. Gen. Alfred] Gruenther, [Willard S.] Paul, [Lt. Gen. Lucian] Truscott, [Maj. Gen. Anthony C.] McAuliffe and [Maj. Gen.

B.] Ridgway, they were the ones he named--were put to serve under: "some of the regular army seniors such as [Jay L.] Benedict, [Russell P.] Hartle, [Frederick] Gilbreath, [Jack W.] Heard and Fredendall". We're wanting to know what you could tell us about this latter group of men? Did that former group have to serve under the older commanders I've just named? How did that problem get resolved?

HANDY: Well, most of the latter group named had not exactly set the world on fire during the war. I have no knowledge that the problem, to quote you, ever became an acute one. I don't think so.

BURG: It just got calmly taken care of, I assume. People were shunted off a bit. Some of these men who had not, as you said, set the world on fire, their careers are turned and they go in a particular direction while the Ridgeway's and McAuliffe's--.

HANDY: Well, a lot of them retired, don't you see.



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: A lot of them didn't get the jobs they wanted. And it was strange reaction and one to be expected. And we had problems. Take the people that came out of the Philippines, had been a prisoner of war for four years. And it was--

BURG: "Skinny" [Jonathan M.] Wainwright and some of the others.

HANDY: Yes. Well, one fellow there who I had known before and served with in the 2nd Army Division had gone to the Philippines. He came back in there to see me one time. I was deputy then. And he said he didn't like the assignment he got. "Well," I said, "Jim, what would you like to have?"

"Well," he said, "what they ought to do is make me head of the infantry school."

I said, "Now you can't be serious about that. Look, God knows everybody sympathizes with you, and it's not your fault at all, but you've missed a whole big war, actually."

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: "You see, it's not through any fault of your own. And to talk about you with no experience, except a little bit right in the beginning out there in the Philippines, to head the infantry school is just ridiculous." But those were the



kind of things you were up against.

BURG: Yes. How did that man take your response, General Handy?

HANDY: Oh, not very well. You see, I came down here and relieved "Skinny" Wainwright, you know, when "Skinny" retired with the 4th Army here in San Antonio. And the whole group of them were around here. And believe me, they were a problem. Now some of them were damn good. There wasn't any question about it. But others, they felt the fact that they'd had that terrible experience and so on, they'd coast on that the rest of the service.

BURG: Yes, yes.

HANDY: --and you couldn't do it. They were a problem. Damn. I had it down here, too.

BURG: Yes. I can see that it would be. In the instance that you quoted to me did that man settle down and go on to the jobs that you and your successors put him into?

HANDY: Well, I don't know about that.

BURG: You don't remember what he did do.

HANDY: No. He probably retired. Probably in a short time. A lot of those people did.



BURG: Yes. That really was a personal tragedy for them of a great dimension, wasn't it.

HANDY: Oh, god, it was just god-awful. God-awful. And I don't know anybody more pitiful than those people who were damn good, and probably would have been outstanding in the war. But fate was against them.

BURG: Yes.. They simply were passed right by by technology--

HANDY: Oh, there was a great big war that had been going on for three or four years and they'd missed every bit of it.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Practically.



BURG: So oftentimes, broken in health when they got out and by-passed by their own profession.

HANDY: Some of them weren't broken in health. And some of them were damn good. I had [Brig. Gen. Lewis C.] Beebe down here and had him over in Europe later. He was chief of staff with "Skinny" down here and a hell of a good man. I had several of them who were awfully good, you see.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: But a lot of them weren't. And they felt that they

had this thing, their horrible experience, should carry them through the rest of their career in the army and they should have everything.

BURG: Yes. That's a very, very sad story.

HANDY: Oh, it's--God-almighty, it's a tragedy and a lot of these things are tragedies. That's what war brings, you know.

BURG: Indeed. Yes. That's a touching story, General. And somebody's going to pick up on that, too, because there's more to that story. Now, we had a question that dated to October of '45. It's a letter from Ike to you in which he says that he, Ike, is reluctant to go in for an operation until General Marshall's position is clarified by Freeman. Do you happen to know if Ike expected to be named chief of staff? And we went on, then, to discuss the Patch Board Reorganization Plan which was also a subject mentioned in that letter from Ike to you. And he spoke of the board's plan to combine Operations and Training with Plans. In a letter of, I think it was 1, November '45, you told him that you favored combining Plans and Operations sections. You said, "I would leave Training and Organization in a separate section". You felt that the lack of such an arrangement, and I quote again from your letter; "was one of the major factors behind



our troubles at the beginning of this war." Can you, then, tell us how the earlier plan had led to trouble and can you describe some of these problems or tell us how your plan would improve the situation? So a couple of questions there. One related to whether you know whether Ike wanted to be--

HANDY: Well, I presume General Eisenhower expected to be chief of staff. Is this date, October '45, correct? I forget the timing.

BURG: Yes, I believe it is, General.

HANDY: The Patch Board and reorganization, this raises matters affecting higher War Department organization and function that are far beyond the nature of simple question and answer.

BURG: It's really a tough problem, eh?

HANDY: Oh, yes. I had quite a correspondence with Van [Vannevar] Bush on it, and he thought he knew everything about everything, Vannevar Bush. That's the trouble--.

BURG: Oh, the scientist, Vannevar Bush.

HANDY: Well, unfortunately I got into correspondence with him about it. And I finally told him. I said, "Dr. Bush,



you're a hot-shot. And if you would say something about nuclear physics or anything else I would accept it without a question because all your training and experience has been on that." "But," I said, "on military organization now you don't take a damn thing I say and that's been all my experience."

BURG: Did Bush just suddenly start writing to you?

HANDY: Oh well, he was there, you know. He was a big shot on this scientific thing.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Yes. But we talked a lot and then we wrote letters.

BURG: I see.

[Interruption]

BURG: General Handy just remarked to me that one of the problems that you run into sometimes or so it seemed to him was that some of the scientists take the position that they know everything about everything. [Laughter] And they're happy to give you the benefit of their experience.

HANDY: And I've told some of them that is about the most unscientific approach you could possibly have.



BURG: Yes. Yes. Well, what I'm going to recommend, then, to those who read this interview, probably is to look at your correspondence from the period, that they're going to find the Patch reorganization pretty thoroughly discussed there and that you feel that really--

HANDY: Well, maybe so, yes.

BURG: Yes. It's too complicated for here.

HANDY: We went through several reorganization things--

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: --and, of course, I always felt that you had to tie Plans and Operation together very closely or the plans got so they meant nothing. In other words--

BURG: Get too far from reality.

HANDY: --one of the advantages we had, we had a Plans outfit, Al [Albert C.] Wedemeyer and Operations over there with Ed Hull. But they were tied awfully closely together. And the planning isn't any good unless the guy who has to do it, operational side, is right in, a definite part of it.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Your plans get to be theoretical.



BURG: Right. Right. And in wartime that relationship just, in the nature of things, was a close relationship-- .

HANDY: Well, and we had it all there in Operations. We were very fortunate that we--.

BURG: Yes. Yes. Well, we had a question to put to you. Now we are jumping ahead. During this period, the summer into the early fall of 1951, the letters in this period show that General and Mrs. Eisenhower stayed with you and your wife several times. And we'd be grateful if you can tell us anything about these visits; how they were arranged, who came? What the usual procedures were, what the two families did. And we also noted that Eisenhower talked at a critique following maneuvers in '51, I guess, in September or October. And we wondered if you remembered the nature of his remarks on that occasion. So the two areas that we're interested in is those visits that they made and the critique at those maneuvers.

HANDY: General Eisenhower was generally inspecting troops and activities, including our own, that were NATO committed. Their visits to our house were of a relaxing nature, I would say. I believe Mrs. Eisenhower liked to get away from France and all the "Yankees go home" and so forth. She never did want to come. She felt easier and more with her own people



when she came to our zone in Germany.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: They never wanted a big to-do and, in fact, the few people we had in to dinner were generally selected by them from old friends. There were no elaborate arrangements, procedures and so forth. I think everyone, the Eisenhowers and us, liked it that way. They knew we would always enjoy having them and be glad that they felt like getting away from some other thing.

BURG: Yes. Okay. So it was pleasant and no strain on you and your wife--

HANDY: That's right. No strain.

BURG: --you felt at home with them, and they seemed to have felt at home with you.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Let me ask because it's been a long time since I asked or talked with you about this, but how far back did you and your wife go with the Eisenhowers?

HANDY: Well, I met Ike, he came back from the Philippines once when I was there in War Plans, you see. And he and



Gerow were great friends. Joe was the executive of War Plans then. And I'd met him and talked to him a little bit. But my first experience with him, really, was, the first time I ever met Mrs. Eisenhower was when they came up from down here to Washington after Pearl Harbor.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: He came there in the War Department.

BURG: Yes. So that was the first point of contact?

HANDY: Yes. Yes.

BURG: Had your wife seen much of Mrs. Eisenhower during the war?

HANDY: Well, not a great deal. They didn't see much of each other. I used to go over there when she was living at the Wardman Park about once a week or every couple of weeks to check up on her and talk to her. And sometimes she'd want something sent to Ike.

BURG: Yes, right.

HANDY: But Mrs. Handy didn't. I think the first time she ever knew her well was up after the war when we were in Europe.



BURG: I see. Okay.

HANDY: Or when Ike was chief of staff. I was still deputy there for awhile after that.

BURG: Yes. Right. Did you remember anything about that maneuver critique?

HANDY: No, I don't recall that.

BURG: Of course, if his remarks were off the record--and that was something I couldn't determine right then, I couldn't tell whether it was off the record--he may have spoken from notes which we have tucked away in our collections. We had a question for you that actually is from August of '51 and it was a letter that Eisenhower wrote to J. Lawton Collins. And he told Collins that he was being considered for command of the army group holding the southern half of the SHAPE front, but that he might be retired early in '52. Collins appears to have straightened things out. Do you remember what the circumstances were?



HANDY: Yes. I think what you mean is Handy and not Collins--

BURG: Really.

HANDY: --where you mention the Southern Army Group. The circumstances were about as follows: Joe Collins was Chief

of Staff of the Army and he wrote me and told me I was to be retired in '52.

BURG: Ah, then it's you. I see. Okay.

HANDY: Yeah, at the age of sixty. I mentioned it to Ike since the command of the army group had come up before and this would block it. Ike said, "We never intended for three and four star generals to be retired at sixty when we set up the system", when he was chief of staff and I was deputy. And we didn't. It had been switched around. This was true. But in going through the mill, the legislation and it's interpretation came out backwards. Ike then asked me if Marshall [Alphonse Pierre] Juin had spoken to me about the army group command. I told him he had. Ike then said he was going to do something about it. I had the impression he was going to communicate with the Secretary of the Army who was [Frank Pace, Jr.] Pace at that time, I believe.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: That's all I know except that I was authorized two more years service and retired in 1954. I am sure that this two years was solely due to General Eisenhower's actions. So I think the name there is Handy not Collins.

BURG: Yes. I think what's happened is that the typist, as



she made this up the last name she got there was DDE to J. Lawton Collins so she then cites Collins and that was not right.

HANDY: But that's what happened about that thing.

BURG: Okay.

HANDY: Because Ike hit the ceiling. He said, " ---- , we didn't intend that." And we didn't! No. We set it up, but when the legislation went through it got twisted around, and I just got this letter that said, "You're going to be retired," from Joe Collins.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

HANDY: And they didn't like it back there at all, I'm sure. I don't think they did. But Ike said, "I'm going to do something about this." And he did. See all he wanted to be sure of was that Marshall Juin wanted me to command that army group, and he had already asked me about it. And I told Ike if I'm going to be retired right away then that can't go through.

BURG: I see. So he did square it away.

HANDY: Oh yes. He got on the job and as I ended up here, I'm sure that this two year extension was solely due to



General Eisenhower.

BURG: Somehow, I don't know why we did it that way, unless I may have found a, I'll bet I found a different source and had to drop back in time because the next question relates to December of '46. This must have been added on. But we noted that you wrote a long letter to DDE on the 13th of December of '46, covered a lot of important issues. A command paper was accepted by the chiefs of staff with General MacArthur's divergent views noted. Do you remember, General, what that paper of MacArthur's expressed? What kind of particular views? I notice that in that letter bases in Panama and the Philippines are mentioned. We wondered if you could recollect what was at stake in that matter. And in your letter--and as my recollection, the letter was a long and good one--you spoke of Matthew Ridgway and the Military Staff Committee's uneasiness with U.S. delegation to the United Nations. They doubted the delegation would consult with them, even on matters concerning the military. In the event, was this a correct assessment? Can General Handy discuss this matter in greater detail? You also spoke of Guard and Reserve policies in that letter, and unification and universal military training. Any of your comments on those policies or issues would be useful to us. And, finally, again a question generated from that letter of yours. Can General Handy recollect the circumstances prevailing at the time



General [Geoffrey] Keyes was to replace General Clark. It appears that General [Joseph T.] McNarney and [Lucius] Clay were also involved and that Clay would not act unless McNarney agreed to the arrangement. Again, sorry, there is a lot there but--.

HANDY: I know. Well, my answer to that was, and still is the same, too much for my poor recollection.

BURG: Okay.

HANDY: You can get better dope, I'm sure, from the record.

BURG: Okay.

HANDY: And I do not recollect the circumstances when Keyes replaced Clark.

BURG: Okay. Good enough.

HANDY: Sorry.

BURG: We will check or have scholars check those records. In January of '47 in a letter to Ike on the 2nd of that month you referred to a conversation you had had with Colonel Stack, James Stack, about talks Stack had had with DDE on a story connecting DDE with a possible candidacy for the president. You said that Ike handled this in an excellent way. Can you now recollect that conversation you had with Jim Stack?



HANDY: I do not recollect the substance of talks with Stack.

BURG: Okay. And I'm not sure whether I had a chance to talk with Colonel Stack about that before he died. We did do two interviews together. I'm not sure whether that came up. Okay. The final question: January '48, this concerns a letter you got from Eisenhower, then getting ready to go to Columbia to serve as president of Columbia University, in which he spoke of discussions concerning appointing Handy to replace Clay. We found a letter from you to Eisenhower in August, '49, indicating that you were preparing to take the job. Can you fill us in on the circumstances leading to that appointment and why was there a delay of approximately eighteen months?



HANDY: I don't know why the delay. I relieved Clay about 1 September '49. Also I left the War Department and came down here to San Antonio and took the 4th Army in 1947 about the 1st of September, I believe. In other words, I was down here in Texas some of the time you're talking about.

BURG: Yes. I see. Okay. Let me ask you this now, in the years after you retired, Eisenhower goes on, he becomes President of the United States, did you continue to see him from time to time, hear from him?

HANDY: Well, not intimately. Mamie called up Mrs. Handy

several times, and they asked us to the White House and Mrs. Handy wasn't in very good shape, as you know. Ike asked me down there once when they had Churchill over, one of the times. I think it was the old man's last trip, and he was not in good shape at all.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And it's the first time we went down there and met Nixon. What happened was Ike was giving two dinners for Churchill. Well, the second one was the big shots off the Hill and so on. Nixon would have been in that but Nixon had an engagement. So he picked up a lot of the old timers; Bedell Smith, he had Gerow up there and I think Wayne Clark was there. You know, Ike got all these people who met Winston Churchill or had been associated with him during the war. And that was the group. That was, I guess, about the last time I saw Ike. I don't remember. But we went down there to dinner. And actually what we had to do, one of us would talk to Mr. Churchill for a while because he wasn't, you know, he'd reached the stage where he wasn't really fully normal, if you want to call it that.

BURG: I see.

HANDY: Getting along, there was no question about it.

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: But Ike was very gracious, as he always was. But I didn't figure that I had any business trying to buddy up to Ike. He had plenty of troubles without me. So we weren't very intimate. As I say, Mamie would call up my wife every now and then. She was wonderful, you know. She never forgot her old friends.

BURG: That's nice to know. It's the impression that you get when you meet her and talk with her.

HANDY: Oh, yes.

BURG: That she didn't forget.

HANDY: How is she, by the way?

BURG: Well, except for that broken wrist, as far as we know her health is pretty good.

HANDY: Yes.

[Interruption]

HANDY: --to Germany for the NATO thing, you see?

BURG: I see. You were telling me that none of you were sure how the Germans were going to react to that.

HANDY: Well, that's right. You see, this was his first trip back there. First time after the war. Well, these guys had



all these overhead passageways and everything guarded and--

BURG: Over the autobahn, yes.

HANDY: Yes. While we were going down there and, -----, we were in a wooded area. I was in the car with Ike and everything stops like that. I tried my best to keep Ike in the car, but he got out and wanted to see what it was all about.

Old [Brig. Gen.] Francis [Webster] Honeycutt used to say there's one thing there's no cure for and that's a lack of brains. The worst thing you could do would be to stop. Well, what happened, they failed to get communication from one of these posts over the autobahn, and this messed up the whole damn convoy right in this wooded area. Now if somebody's going to take a pot shot at Ike it'd been a wonderful opportunity to do it. Certainly moving was the best thing you could have. We finally got it straightened out. But they can be a pain in the neck.



BURG: Yes. This was a security man who was supposed to be watching an overpass and for some reason he just doesn't check in.

HANDY: Well, or something went wrong with communications--

BURG: Exactly.

HANDY: --or something else, don't you see.

HANDY: But this guy running the thing, he stops the whole damn convoy. But Ike says, "What the hell is this all about?" He climbed out of the car and was going right up to see.

BURG: That's great, isn't it! And there you are, I suppose you were the one who had the responsibility for him.

HANDY: Oh, absolutely. And there's where those guys have it on you, because everybody knows these things can happen and do happen.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And these guys will tell you, now you're holding me responsible for the security of this individual. And this is what I saw has to be done. It puts you on the spot. Well, as a matter of fact, Ike used to say some of that business where they'd handled him this time. They did a lot of things that were messed up, like beating up a bunch of people there at Orly when he came into Paris.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Which didn't do Ike or NATO or the United States or anybody else any good. And they had gendarmes about every ten yards all the way into Paris from Orly. And Ike said-- now they published his detailed schedule, where he would be



every minute, how he would go to this and that and the other. Nothing in the world could be finer if somebody wanted to take and pick out a place to take a--he knew where he was going to be every minute of the day.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

HANDY: And Ike said if somebody will put his own life on the line you can shoot anybody. Well, it is the truth..

BURG: Oh, indeed it is.

HANDY: But, these guys can be a pain in the neck, you see.

BURG: Oh, I know.

HANDY: There was no question about it. And the British used to make a lot of fun--at the time of the Quebec Conference I came down here to see that the President got the dope before he went up, you see. And went up on the train, and his train--Harry Hopkins arranged for me to see him. But, God, we landed up there and got up into Canada--and I'd been up there before, you know, preliminary, and met some of these people. Well, you can't find a much more secure place than that citadel and the Chateau Frontenac. We had the whole thing. This guy was the number two man of the Mounties. They had the security up there.

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: And I'd met him. Well, he came down about the border and joined us, you see. And I was talking to him there on the President's train, and he said, "My God, they already had four or five carloads of these guys that were behind us." He said, "God, we're a friendly country. We're going to look after the President." [Laughter] Well, the old P.M. came up there with a doctor and that guy carried the umbrella and it was quite a contrast.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And here they had to get a special hotel to put all the secret service men and everything in. Of course, part of that was due to the fact--which people didn't realize--and one of the reasons that force grew up so around the White House was the extreme difficulty of handling Mr. Roosevelt--

BURG: Yes, of course. That's right.

HANDY: --practically, with as little embarrassment to him and to everybody else as possible. It was a problem.

BURG: Yes. And there'd been that nasty thing, remember, in which the man took a shot evidently at Mr. Roosevelt--

HANDY: Yes. Shot the mayor of--. Yes.

BURG: --and killed the mayor of Chicago. Yes.



HANDY: All that had happened, don't you see, and it could happen anywhere.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: But that's what your up against. But the President, when we went up to plan, -----that was before he had that, later on "sacred cow" that McDonald-Douglas put an elevator in. And, hell, they had to build a long way to get the President down. But anywhere he went--he came to [Fort] Benning when I was down there in the 2nd Armored. They had to build a platform and ramps to get him up to take the review.

BURG: Right.

HANDY: And it was a hell of a problem. So that outfit grew up there, and a lot of it was young, strong-armed boys that they needed to actually physically get the President around. And it was a very difficult problem.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

HANDY: You know what they told about Truman when he got in there.

BURG: No.



HANDY: He said he was going to cut down the White House Secret Service force. And they said, "How you going to do it?" He said, "Go down the list til you come to the first fellow that has Missouri after his name and fire all of them above. [Laughter] Which is about as good a way as any.

BURG: Probably.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: Let me ask you something, General, that it'd have to be your personal opinion, maybe. I don't know whether you and I have discussed this before, but you mentioned Mr. Truman. Not too long ago a man--and I'll tell you personally, I will not say, I don't want to prejudice you--a man did a series of interviews with Mr. Truman when Mr. Truman was getting on in years. A man by the name of Merle Miller. And in his interviews he claimed later, ten years later when he published his book, that Mr. Truman had told him that Eisenhower had written to General Marshall at the end of the war in Europe and told Marshall that he wanted to divorce Mamie. And that Marshall was very, very angry about that and Mr. Miller says that Truman told him that he, Truman, had destroyed that letter. He didn't want to have Eisenhower's career ruined and so on and so on. You have heard the story?



HANDY: Yes.

BURG: What do you think about it?

HANDY: Well, I'll tell you--you know, several years ago they had a course up there at the War College--I'm getting recollections--they sent all these people out, boy, a couple nice young fellows came down here several times to interview me and they interviewed a lot of people. Well, off the record I'll give--. He asked me about this, this was a live question then.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: And here's what I told him. I said, "Now, I won't say that I saw all the correspondence between General Marshall and General Eisenhower. The messages, I saw, I think most of them. And I'd get letters from Ike, and I'd show them to the old man, and oftentimes he'd show me a letter or quote from one he'd get from Ike." I said, "If there'd been anything like that, I think I would have had some hint of it, at least." And I never had any hint of anything of that kind. And I said, "It's out of line with General Marshall's opinion of Ike." He told him at the end, you know, if he had a son he couldn't have a better one than Ike.

BURG: Yes.



HANDY: And he supported Ike all the way through. Now if that'd been going on and--of course, somebody sent Kay Summersby's book down there. And I've told people--they've asked me about it--and I said, "There isn't any question that Kay Summersby was a hell of an attractive girl. We all liked her, very much, including Ike. And John was there in his headquarters, you know, about the time of the invasion and afterwards at Versailles. And she was in there all the time." I said, "She was a hell of an attractive woman but as far as Ike ditching Mamie, I don't think for a minute that there was anything to that." I never have thought so. And I was surprised when this thing came out about Truman because I had a very high opinion of Mr. Truman. I saw a lot of the things he did, and I tell you, he was quite a man. And it was a hell of a lot different during him than Franklin D. because you got an answer out of him. He'd make a decision and stick to it, very quickly. Too quickly we felt. Too long getting them out of old FDR, don't you see.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: Although I have a very high opinion of FDR too. What you need in that job, I think, you need a lot of things in it, but above all you need strength, recognize it. And Mr. Roosevelt was a strong man. Well, so was Nixon. I never had



any use for Nixon, but he was a strong man. Ike was a strong man. Kennedy was a strong man. We've had strong men in there.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

HANDY: That is, I think, a prime characteristic. You may disagree with what the guy does, but above all you've got to have some strength in that place. And Truman certainly had it.

But, all that thing was, I thought, one hell of a damn mess. Now if that'd been true, you know, all this letter thing and all that, I think I would have felt--hell, I saw the old man every day. We went down and briefed him. And he talked about things with that theater over there, with Ike, all the time, don't you see.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: We discussed them. I think if there'd been anything like that, now I would have had some hint of it. And I didn't have. That's what I told this boy.

BURG: I thought you'd have had word of it, too. I didn't see how it could go past you and you not know about it.

HANDY: Well, I would have had some indication of it and I never had it. And I'll tell you frankly, and that's what I



told that boy.

BURG: Well, as you saw in the papers, the man who's at Johns Hopkins, Louis Galombos; Galombos just recently, within the past couple months or so, said he thinks that he has seen the letter that maybe Mr. Truman vaguely remembered. And it was the letter--now you may remember it too--evidently Eisenhower did write to Marshall and say, "The war is over, everything's winding down. I'd like to bring Mamie over."

HANDY: He did. Yes.

BURG: And Marshall said, "Well, I'm sorry but I can't do that because if I do that for you then I'm open to having everyone ask."

HANDY: I know it. Well, it was a problem. And it was a hell of a problem. One of the most difficult ones we had was about sending Mrs. Patton over there. And we finally grabbed the bull by the horns and sent her when Georgie had that accident and it was very evident to us, the dope we had, that he probably was going to pass away. George Patton. And we sent her over there. Now that was a hell of a thing because, God-Almighty, there were a hell of a lot of other people who had people killed over there or died or got sick, and they couldn't send them all. That was the thing we were up against.



BURG: Yes.

HANDY: But, I know about that letter where Ike said he wanted Mamie to come over there and General Marshall told him, "No." Yes.

BURG: Well, we knew about that, too. In fact, the newspapers treat it as quite a revelation. But we knew about it.

HANDY: Yes.

BURG: And I was sure you and others knew about it. There was no secret about that.

HANDY: Oh, no. None whatsoever.

BURG: No. But what we don't know, you see, since Mr. Miller, in the first place he's interviewing a former president who is now aging and ill and from what Miller tells us there was a fair amount of bourbon and branch water in these sessions.

HANDY: Always was with Mr. Truman.

BURG: Yes. And then he doesn't publish anything, you see, for about ten years, ten to twelve years. Mr. Truman is dead, General Marshall is dead, Eisenhower is dead. Virtually everyone who might argue about this has passed from the scene.



Then he brings it out. And it makes us wonder whether anyone could place any reliance whatsoever on Mr. Miller.

HANDY: Yes. Of course, Truman and Ike, you know--Truman got so he didn't like Ike at all. And Ike never was nuts about Truman, you see. And they had a parting of the ways on political things. I think Truman was prepared to back Ike for the president if he'd run on the Democratic ticket and all that. I'm sure he was.

BURG: That's the impression I get, too.

HANDY: Yes. But that relationship got on a different basis, as you know very well.

BURG: Yes. Yes.

HANDY: And I thought that was an awful thing, that whole business. And I'm telling you frankly just what I told that boy.

BURG: Yes.

HANDY: I said--and anybody's who's asked me about it that I've known, that had any right to ask about it, I told them the same thing, that I believe from the position I was in there that if anything like that had happened, I, at least,



would have had, maybe not all the dope, but some indication of it. And I never saw it.

BURG: No.

HANDY: And General Marshall's attitude towards Ike was always--sometimes he would disagree a little with Ike's ideas, but, generally it was backing him fully.

BURG: Well, the other thing that I found it difficult to believe, General, was that according to Mr. Miller, Truman had said that Marshall, given the news of the "I want a divorce" that Marshall's attitude was one of "I'll wreck Eisenhower's career." Well, what one would want to know is, there were other general officers who divorced their wives after the war.

HANDY: Oh, many of them, yes.

BURG: Yet, did Marshall ruin their careers? I don't know of any instance where he did anything of the kind. I mean, my feeling is he took that in stride. He felt, "Well, that's too bad but now those things happen."

HANDY: Yes.

[End of Interview]

