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CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN

GENERAL A. C. WEDEMEYER

and

COLONEL ANTHONY S. DESKIS

CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA. 17013

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SECTION 1

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL A. C. WEDEMEYER

by

Colonel A. J. Deskis

THIS IS SIDE #1, TAPE #1, OF SESSION #1. MY NAME IS COLONEL ANTHONY J. DESKIS, A STUDENT AT THE ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA. I AM ABOUT TO INTERVIEW GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER, UNITED STATES ARMY RETIRED. WE ARE LOCATED AT GENERAL WEDEMEYER'S HOME, FRIENDS ADVICE FARM, BOYDS, MARYLAND. THE DATE IS 6 DECEMBER 1972 AND THE TIME IS 1015 HOURS. THIS INTERVIEW IS ONE OF A SERIES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMY IN OCTOBER 1970.

WEDEMEYER: I was born in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1897, July 9th. I was of German-Irish parentage. My father, Albert Anthony Wedemeyer, was German on both sides of his family, maternal and paternal. His father was born on a (Gut) farm near Hildesheim, Germany. His father migrated to the United States in 1848. He did so in order to avoid compulsory military service. His mother was a Huguenot, Josephine Becker, and did have some French background. She came to this country with her parents in the early 1840's. As I stated, I was born in 1897; however, the official records of the War Department would indicate that I was born in 1896. This occurred because in 1914 I enlisted in the National Guard hoping to see military service on the border when we were having difficulties with the Mexicans. My brother had already

become a lieutenant in the Nebraska National Guard, and I was a very great admirer of my older brother. Without parental knowledge or permission, I enlisted. I lied about my age, however my age was carried on that way. When I went to West Point, I thought that inasmuch as my military record showed 1896 as my birth year, I just carried on. I had one brother. He was five years older and he was very good to me. He had a great deal of influence upon my life, in the early years at least. My mother, Margaret Elizabeth Coady, also had considerable influence on me. Her father, Michael Coady, was born in Cashiel, Tipperary, Ireland. I think he left Ireland at the time of the deadly potato famine as did many Irish who immigrated at that time to the United States. Both of my grandfathers were in the military service in the Civil War--one on the Southern side, Grandfather Wedemeyer, and Grandfather Coady on the Northern side. Neither one of them was commissioned. I believe they were noncommissioned officers. My brother and I were the only children. There was a daughter born, however she died at a very young age. We resided in Omaha all during my youth. I attended grammar school. Two years I was in the public school, Central High School, of Omaha, and the last two years I went to a Jesuit preparatory school called Creighton Prep. I was born and raised a Catholic. My mother was a Catholic and my father a Lutheran. My brother remained a Catholic all through his life, whereas in my late teen-age years I was asking many questions concerning religion, particularly of the Jesuit priests with whom I was associated. I decided to wait before I joined any church. Although baptized a Catholic, I ended up a

confirmed Protestant and joined the Episcopal Church. In recalling my early life with my parents, I would say I experienced a typical middle class Christian home. My father was strict with both my brother and me. The supervision that he exercised over our lives, both at work and at play, was certainly appreciated in our later years. Father took a great deal of interest in our associates. He always knew with whom we were playing, even as youngsters. We had a tennis court; in fact, our father made provision for every type of recreation and sport at our home. We had a lovely home in Omaha in an attractive residential area. In the winter my father had the tennis court all banked up and flooded to provide ice, and the children in the neighborhood all enjoyed skating in our backyard. In this manner and without it being apparent our parents were always aware of the people with whom we were associated. It never occurred to me at that time, but it turned out that father wanted to know where I was and with whom at all times. My older brother did have, as I stated, considerable influence upon my life. The advice he gave me during those years, changing from boyhood to manhood, was invaluable. Parents rarely told their children much about sex in those days in the early years of my life. My brother did a great deal in that connection for me. I was already determined to be a doctor, specializing in surgery. There were many doctors in our family, and it was natural that I should take an interest in medicine. My early schooling was directed that way. I recall the subjects: physiology, zoology, anthropology, and chemistry, both qualitative and quantitative analysis, organic, inorganic chemistry. I

also was interested in history and biography. My choice of books at home and in the schools concerned the historical development of our country and of Europe. I was fairly conversant in European history at an early age. Omaha, Nebraska, when I was a young man, had a population of 102,000. The north side of Omaha in early 1900's was more or less the middle class residential area and the south side was predominantly the industrial or commercial area. Huge stockyards were located there, in fact meat-packing was a principal industry--a mecca for the cattle raised in the Midwest. Omaha was a railroad center and also boasted smelting works and a large production of dairy products. Paradoxically, I took more than ordinary interest in the economy of my hometown. I recall when I went to West Point, I continued to read in the papers all reports concerning the hog receipts and the bank clearances in Omaha. I remember how I was disappointed when my hometown was falling behind its neighbor, Kansas City, Missouri. Omaha initially excelled in every respect--in growth, in hog receipts, bank clearances, etc., but gradually Kansas City forged ahead. The people in Omaha were typical Midwestern Americans--wholesome, patriotic, energetic, and, at that time, predominantly white. We had a Negro cook, a very fine woman. Her husband drove my father's car. They lived over our garage. The city was somewhat restricted in cultural development. I recall a fine choir called the Mendelsohn Choir. My father was instrumental in the creation and support of that choir. It was made up of selected local musicians. A famous orchestra came from Chicago annually--the Thomas Orchestra. The choir and orchestra jointly

gave concerts in the city auditorium. That was a big event in Omaha. The legitimate theater was moderate in size and in presentations; we didn't have opera. There were two small art museums. I think Omaha typified an early twentieth century Midwest community--people minding their own business, not too interested in international developments. At the turn of the century, the people of Omaha were obviously enjoying the fruits of the industrial revolution that was sweeping our entire country during the 1880's. I was proudly aware that my mother and father were highly respected in the community. A few early precepts that my family carried through--we never purchased anything that we couldn't pay for; that is, we did not believe in buying on credit. My father imprinted that idea deeply in both my brother and me. I mentioned earlier that he was a stern disciplinarian, but I couldn't help but respect him because he would explain his purpose and suggest solutions to my problems. He did discipline me, however invariably I realized he was justified. I didn't feel as close to my father as I did to my mother. I think that is generally the case with younger children. I didn't fully appreciate my father until after I went away to school. Then I began to realize and appreciate that he was really a man of compassion and stature. My father's interest in history was probably one of the reasons that I took so much interest and followed through on history. My father died many, many years ago so I didn't have an opportunity to know or share his fine mind and philosophy of life. It was a great loss. My early education was in public school. I did well in the public school and in high school, generally an A student. While a pupil in grammar school I was

studying the violin. Because of an increasing interest in baseball and other sports, I gradually neglected the violin. I hated to practice, and the fact that violin playing would militate against baseball, I increasingly lost interest in it. I took lessons on the violin for seven years and played at my graduation from grammar school. By that time I was considered a fairly good violin player. Playing rather difficult music, I remember the encore for my presentation at school graduation was Humoresque by Dvorak which was a rather difficult piece to play on the violin. I played on the high school baseball team and football team. I was not very good. I did pitch for the team and received my letter. I didn't get a letter in football. I was very tall and skinny and had grown very fast. I was not particularly strong physically, but I was keenly interested in sports. Also I took boxing lessons at a local YMCA and broke my nose trying to be a boxer. At this time my ambitions had not changed and my aspirations had not changed from my earlier years. I'm referring now to high school years. I still felt that I wanted to study medicine. Medical students had to study Latin and German, so I had four years of Latin, two years of Greek, and two years of German. I stood fairly well in my classes--generally an A student. I didn't do too well in the languages, but did receive good grades in the sciences. I was ... I think aggressive or assertive. I was always ready and willing to accept responsibility, and was elected captain of the baseball team and was selected to be a captain of the high school cadets. At this early time in life--as a high school cadet I recall that I had an aversion to parades, public display, showing off, medals and things like that. One of several individuals

who had a tremendous impact upon me was a Catholic, Father Ignatius Riley, Jesuit priest, who was patiently training my mind. Many times after the formal classes he invited me to remain, and we would discuss religion and life's problems. He expressed disappointment that I was gradually inclining toward religious beliefs different from the orthodox Roman Catholic. However, he was never angry in his approach but simply expressed disappointment or disillusionment. My high school baseball coach had been a professional baseball player; he helped me to become a fair pitcher. Very quickly one feels that in calling strikes and balls the umpire may not like him. This coach taught me early to never question an umpire's decision. When I played college ball later and finally with service teams in the Army, the high school coach's advice paid me dividends. I never questioned an umpire's decision. In other words, when I thought the pitch I had thrown was a strike and he called a ball, I accepted it was a mistake, not an intentional call. So much for my high school athletic coach although I had a baseball coach later at West Point named Hans Lobert, a former big league player. I admired and respected him too. My favorite teacher in grammar school was a Miss Emily Robinson. There were many others whom I liked very much. I want to emphasize that I hadn't much mathematics in my early schooling, just a little arithmetic, but I hadn't had any algebra. This hurt me a great deal many years later when I went to West Point. The course there was predominantly engineering and I did very poorly. Before going to West Point I should have taken mathematics instead of only the subjects that I would need if I were to continue studies in medicine.

My teachers influenced me in this way. They explained that the subjects I was taking were going to help me in the future as all teachers do. But their instruction, finesse, and instructional methods were so outstanding that they aroused the interest of the student. It is often said that if you have something to sell, you should first sell yourself. Well, they did exactly that, and I found later in considering pedagogy at West Point or in military units with which I was associated, when I picked an instructor I tried to pick one who had a nice personality. It paid dividends. My favorite subjects in school were always history and the sciences. And I would say that if a subject were distasteful, it would be the Latin and the Greek. My extracurricular activities included tennis, swimming and baseball during the good weather; football during its season. I never cared much for basketball. I did play golf a little bit. My father taught me golf. I had a few responsibilities around the house, for example I was always made to feel that I had the responsibility of keeping my own room in good shape. And my brother, who was older, had the best room. There were only four bedrooms in the house. My parents had the master bedroom, of course, and I had one of the smaller bedrooms. I did work on the outside. I finally got a paper route and did so without my father's knowledge or permission. I would deliver papers after school. The pay, on today's standards, was just ridiculously low. I think it was $3.50 a week. But it was good experience. I had to go down to the main newspaper office and get about 100 papers and bring them out to the area, our neighborhood. Then I would deliver the papers to approximately 100 homes. I learned a

great deal about human nature in that job. People paying, for example. I was surprised. People living in lovely homes often were ready to pinch a penny on me and some made me wait a long time for money that they owed. This was quite an "eye opener." My father didn't want me to do this kind of work. I remember I had been carrying newspapers for only a few days when a heavy rainstorm caused me to get soaking wet. I arrived home drenching wet. Father wanted me right away to give up the job. If it hadn't been for the intercession of mother, who was more understanding, I would have had to relinquish that job. But my father relented, and I carried newspapers for the first two high school years. I am glad I did. In addition to that job (the first two years of high school I did that) the last two years I worked in a bank in the summer months as an assistant teller, and this was also good experience--my first exposure to business life. I was in a cage with a very fine man who had a great deal of influence upon me because of his personality--very pleasant and courteous to everyone. I had to count money, package it, take it to the express office, send it, and run errands--a menial job. But it was good experience. I recall when I went off to West Point how nice the other employees were. Every Christmas the employees of that bank would send me a box of candy. I was told that it arrived but that I couldn't have it because of the rules at the Academy at that time. Of course, my friends at the bank didn't realize that cadets could not receive packages. I mentioned my pastime endeavors--music. I belonged to an orchestra when I was playing the violin. The orchestra was formed by my music teacher whom I disliked.

And, of course, I did read books a great deal. I guess I read more than the average young boy--all of the books that were written of the Horatio Alger type. I did not hunt nor fish but I collected stamps and engaged in baseball, tennis and football. I played a lot of tennis, because we had a tennis court in our backyard. Also I skated a great deal, because again we had our own skating rink. Did any other people in my community achieve distinction? Well, the movie star, Fred Astaire's parents were friends of my parents, but I didn't know him very well. I think he was a little younger than I. He, however, has distinguished himself in the theatrical world of entertainment as a dancer. Everybody that knew him spoke very highly of him. I don't know of any boyhood chum of mine who achieved fame. The foregoing would indicate no interest, or little interest certainly, in the military. Of course, there has never been any period of history when there hasn't been costly wars. It fascinated me, reading about the history of battles. And as I mentioned, I was very interested in the development of the various political entities in Europe--empires, dukedoms, republics and so-called democracies. Starting way back in the Byzantine Empire, all of that was of interest. I noted that so much was achieved by force, military force, and that military force both destroyed and created, and that the lust for power was an actuality. This was a change from the religious wars and the chivalry of the Middle Ages. Many of the wars I noted were inspired by high ideals of knights and crusaders. The crusades in the Middle East and many of the struggles that the people had in central Europe were caused by religious quarrels. But by and large, I

think I was fascinated by, and adopted, the idea that military force was the most exciting experience that people had in those days, and I couldn't understand their willingness to fight each other. People fighting people when they hardly knew each other or why they killed made me do a great deal of pondering. I mention this only because I had such ideas far back when I was in high school, even when a high school cadet. We cadets held maneuvers and went on a camp trip every summer. I finally became a cadet captain of the high school regiment. In these maneuvers I thought how important it would be if we could persuade the other side to do our bidding by talk rather than having actual fighting. What would the maneuver umpire say? That far back I recall such thoughts, because I talked to an Army officer--a Regular Army officer, who was our instructor and acted as umpire during maneuvers. Later I knew him after I went to West Point. His name was Haskell. He was the PMS&T at the time. It was rather a new experiment for the Army putting into ROTC Regular Army officers who were West Point graduates, and, in this case, Haskell was a very high grade individual. I think that is why my initial interest in West Point started. One of my parents' friends had a son at West Point in the Class of 1917, four years ahead of me. His name was George Wooley. He came home on furlough and I was pitching for a brewery baseball team one Sunday. I was a good pitcher for a youngster, so was paid fifty dollars pitching on Sundays for this brewery in Omaha. Anyway, George Wooley played on the baseball team at West Point, and he suggested that I

should go to West Point to be a pitcher. It was more for athletics than anything else that he wanted me to go there. And Senator Norris, George W. Norris, of Omaha appointed me. He was a maverick, incidentally, in the United States Senate. Before he went to the United States Senate he was a state senator from Nebraska. Nebraska was the only state in the Union that had a unicameral legislature. It had a combined Senate and House of Representatives for economic reasons and also for efficiency, I am told. He was the father of that idea and in the U. S. Senate he turned out to be a Progressive. He was affiliated philosophically, very closely related, to Senator LaFollette of Wisconsin. Both of them would be considered today as sort of radicals. But George W. Norris was a friend of Grandfather Coady. He gave a competitive examination for his appointments to West Point. At the time when I went to West Point, most appointees were politically influenced. General Al Gruenther told me that Senator Hitchcock appointed him because Al Gruenther's father knew him. But Norris thought that a competitive examination was a fair method and insisted upon competition for his appointment. That is the custom today. Generally if you had a son who wanted to go, I think he could get permission to take the examination. Anyway, I took Senator Norris' competitive examination, won, and got into West Point. Wooley sent me a lot of material about West Point. And here I was at a road fork in life, all of my pre-academic work had been designed to help me become a doctor, to go to pre-med school and on to medical school. And now I'm shunted off into engineering. From an academic viewpoint, I certainly made a terrible mistake. I liked the discipline and, I

must say, I liked the Honor System when I got to West Point. Both appealed to me a great deal. I had been raised in a very sheltered, guarded atmosphere in the sense of honor, telling the truth; all of that training my dad and my mother gave to me and my brother very definitely. I liked the idea, as I say, very much. I didn't do well at all academically at the Point. I spent most of my time trying to dope out algebra. I didn't have algebra in high school, and at West Point they go rapidly through a book, assuming that you have had algebra up to the quadratics and beyond before entering the Academy. And then they had descriptive geometry, calculus, and higher mathematics, all of which were very difficult for me. I just skimmed along. I didn't stand well in the class. I never felt that I was going to do well in the military because, again, I wasn't very keen about parades. I enjoyed West Point for many reasons. I enjoyed the young cadets there very much. I had wonderful roommates. One of them had already graduated from an engineering school in Minnesota, the University of Minnesota., He wore stars on his collar, which indicated high class standing. He practically studied none at all and breezed along as a star man. He and I read books together. He would recommend a book, and I would go to the library and get it. These books often had nothing to do with West Point curriculum--usually we read history books and fiction. His name was Ivan Crawford Lawrence. He resigned from the Army and became vice-president of Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing and did awfully well in civilian life. My other roommate was named Herbert M. Jones. He became a major general in the Army. He, too, was one of the finest men

you'd ever know, or could possibly know--one of the most popular in the Army. He became Adjutant General of the Army before he retired. Also, his older brother was a famous football coach, Biff Jones. Biff also went to West Point well prepared because he had had a lot of prior schooling designed to help after entrance into the Academy. He did quite well academically. I had these two roommates who didn't have to study much, while I should have studied harder but didn't. I went over to the library and did enough to get by. If I had to do it over again, I would have studied harder. Of course, you say things like this when you get older. I think maybe it didn't matter too much after all. I was certainly broadening my knowledge through the history books that I read at the West Point library. I think that the most important gift that West Point game to me, and for which I am deeply grateful, was the Honor System. When posed with a question, I think that Honor System precluded sycophancy and the obfuscation between truth and a modified version of truth. And that was the big thing--I mentioned it earlier to you and it carried through all my service. It was one of the reasons ultimately that I got out of the service. It was one; many things would come up as we would go along that would indicate to you that I had this inner struggle, inner decision to make, but it was no struggle. I'll be honest with you. It was just maybe too black or white, not enough gray area for a modern approach to problems in life or for a modern approach to problems in the military service. You are associated with officers every day who have this decision to make. And it's a matter of faith, though, with whom you are

dealing. I happened to be dealing on the highest level. Because of this philosophical struggle that I was having, I fussed with men like Henry J. Luce, a powerful man in the information media--a falling out you might call it where I didn't speak to him anymore. Averell Harriman, President Truman, Omar Bradley, people like that. They were people way up on or near the top who could influence my future. But if one of them were sitting here and evaluating me, he might say that he liked me personally but my opinions were too fixed. And maybe they were. Maybe they were. I repeat that I accepted the fact that they might have had information that I didn't have that would have changed my precepts and my premises and concepts and so forth. But that's just part of one's nature and I think it ought to be a part of this, so that it can help someone else coming along.

DESKIS: That is very fine, sir.

WEDEMEYER: You ask if there was any military background in my family. I think the German side of my family and the Irish, too. I mentioned that both of my grandfathers were in the Civil War on opposite sides and as non-commissioned officers, I think. I do not know. They weren't proud nor were they ashamed. They thought it was their duty to fight, I guess. I didn't know them. I never knew my grandparents. They had all passed away. But my father was a captain in the Army in World War I, just temporarily, and again for the same patriotic reasons. My paternal grandfather left Germany to avoid compulsory military service. He was quite a person from what I have heard. He did drink too much. Both my grandfathers drank quite considerably,

and I am told that Grandfather Coady was a brilliant Irishman, a lawyer. I saw some of his enormous library. He was a well read man and of course a very devout Catholic. Later in his life he became a Mason--33rd-degree Mason, the highest he could get. He left the Catholic Church. I am not certain, however I was told that he was a cousin of "Buffalo Bill" Cody.

DESKIS: I didn't realize that.

WEDEMEYER: Yes. Well! There are two spellings to our name. There is CODY and COADY. "Buffalo Bill" often visited Grandfather Coady in Omaha. I don't know whether they were first or second cousins, but some members of the family spelled the name COADY, some CODY. I was baptized COADY because that is the way my grandfather spelled it. I think after he left Ireland he changed it.

DESKIS: I think that you have indicated that the code that . . .

WEDEMEYER: It was just a code adopted and, I repeat, I think two or three very strong things that were emphasized in my early life was the idea of not wanting something to such a degree that you would go in debt for it. If you couldn't afford something, just discipline yourself to not want it. I recall that when I graduated from West Point most of my classmates bought cars. They didn't have money to pay for the cars but they bought them on credit. I had to ride a bus while they were riding around in cars, taking girls out and so forth at Fort Benning, Georgia. I remember this. Are you in the Infantry?

DESKIS: I am in the Infantry. Yes, sir.

WEDEMEYER: Well, I went right from West Point to the Infantry, and there were other disadvantages. But I remember finally I bought a car that

didn't have any brakes, but I was a fairly good mechanic. I'd fool around the damn thing. I bought it and paid a few hundred dollars to an officer who was leaving. He needed the money quickly so he sold me his old Buick that was badly battered. This was in 1920. You can imagine. I was rather careful of my money, of the money that I did make and I saved. Finally I got enough together so that I could buy a new car. I turned in the old one on it and I still owed about $400. My mother and dad came down to visit me at Fort Benning. I met them at the railway station. They didn't fly in those days in commercial planes. Here I was with this lovely new car. Mother was sitting in the front with me and my father in the back. I was taking them to a hotel at Columbus, Georgia, Ralston Hotel.

DESKIS: Sir, it's still there!

WEDEMEYER: My father spoke up. He said, "Albert, is this your car?" I said, "Yes, sir." There was silence and he said, "I hope you own it." I said, "Well, I owe a few hundred dollars on it." Just the thing he asked me never to do. He was disappointed, I could tell. There was no more talk clear to the hotel. Anyway, my dad paid the $400.00 as a Christmas gift, and I had my car. I never again bought a car on credit. My family even today follows this policy. My father left me quite a little bit of money when he died, but I still follow his policy, and both of my boys do also. That's one lesson that I learned very early, paying cash--not wanting something that I didn't pay for. If we have much more inflation we are going to have a panic. We can't avoid it.

DESKIS: I agree with you, sir.

WEDEMEYER: Land is not a bad thing to own, actually to protect, to hedge against this inflation. The other lesson early in life was the question of honor. And I think that a few other, rather primary, and very valuable lessons that I learned early from father was exercise daily to insure proper circulation and elimination. Maintain a curiosity about everything--about your environment, your associates--about everything. Maintain a curiosity. I think that is very important. Studying some of my classmates today, I am astounded. I am 75 years old. Al Gruenther commented, as I did, that I'm bored with some of them now. Even Herbert Jones whom I loved as my roommate. We have very few common interests or touchstones anymore. After I spend a few minutes with him I am bored, because he is not keeping up with things that are going on. Unfortunately he has difficulty with his eyes--glaucoma, I believe it is called, so he doesn't read much and maybe that's it. This happens to so many contemporaries of mine who are letting the world go by without being interested. I think that they get old very quickly as a result.

DESKIS: Yes, sir. I think a person has a tendency to vegetate once they lose their curiosity.

WEDEMEYER: Yes. The mind is like a muscle, Tony. You exercise your muscles regularly. You keep them in good tone. I exercise every day moderately; nothing traumatic at my age. But I have a swimming pool. I canoe out on the lake. The other thing that I was going to emphasize was that my father was right about exercising and maintaining curiosity, reading and so forth,

discussing problems. Your mind is like a muscle. It will atrophy if you don't use it.

DESKIS: Yes, sir.

WEDEMEYER: And so those are things that cover, I think, the general habits of life that I formulated and built up and sustained all these long 75 years. Now, in going off to West Point--the first time I had ever been separated from a wonderful home and parents as well as very dear friends--I was really sad. I went to West Point by train. I met all these fine youngsters who were starting their military careers, too. My classmates reported in June 1916. I think we were 383, from all walks of life--and I mean from all types of homes and from all 48 states. I already have indicated how I attained an appointment to West Point. My parents, incidentally, were not too enthusiastic. They did not encourage me a great deal. They had very strong ambitions for me to be a doctor--a surgeon, which I, too, had wanted very much to do at one time. This interest in medicine has followed me through the service. I have watched many operations and I have experienced several operations myself. Oddly, I enjoyed every one of them. I had my appendix out; I had a double hernia operation; I had my gall bladder out; an operation removing my tonsils; and finally a sinus operation. I lived with a bachelor captain--a doctor at Fort Benning.

DESKIS: Have you maintained your interest in medicine through the years?

WEDEMEYER: Oh yes! For very definite reasons! As a layman, I'm perhaps as knowledgeable as anyone about cancer, because my oldest son has

lymphosarcoma. I've read a great deal on the subject. I visit NIH and talk to the doctors there. I also go to Walter Reed. Dr. Alton Ochsner is one of my closest friend--of the Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans. But although my parents weren't so pleased about my going to West Point, there was a certain sense of loyal support for what I wanted to do. They wanted me to make good. There is no doubt about that. Of course, I couldn't continue my violin studies and that was discouraging to dad. He always felt that I should continue my violin. I have a violin now and I play for my own amusement, but no one else hears me. My parents did encourage me when I got poor marks at West Point. My father was very much upset, because he didn't want me to be a failure. He was very much worried when I didn't do well. Fortunately he didn't die until I had finished the Staff School at Leavenworth where I stood number one, I was told. He found that out and was very pleased. He died very shortly after that. Now, what was your impression of the Army? Well, I thought it was a wonderful organization, Tony. I loved the people in the service. I had great respect for them. I could see the necessity for the discipline that I had known as a youngster.

WEDEMEYER: My parents were a wonderful team. They loved each other. They were intelligent and good. I might add that no family could have been happier than the four of us together. Mother played the piano. Father played the flute. I played the violin and my brother played the violin. We often played together. We did lots of things together. We took long walks together, as strange as that may seem, taking hikes, but there were no autos. We had

one of the early automobiles in the neighborhood. I remember driving in 1912, on July fourth, to Sioux City, Iowa, with my father. The roads were dusty. Eddie Rickenbacker was competing in the auto race up there. He was a young auto racer. He won. We are great friends now. I told him about it--watching him hurtle through the dusty roads on that dirt track. He confided, "Al, if I hadn't won that race, I would have been ridden out of town on a rail. I owed the boarding house lady. I owed my mechanic and the grease monkeys who were taking care of my car. I didn't have a cent of money. I had to win." His son, incidentally, is now a man about your age whom you would like very much--Bill Rickenbacker. And he was going to come down this week-end but bad weather precluded. He flies his own plane. He is heading up an investment service--one of the best in the country. Well, w e are getting off the track here.

DESKIS: Well, that's fine.

WEDEMEYER: Resuming my impressions at West Point, I immediately respected . . . I noted particularly the tactical officers at West Point and the orderliness of everything. It all appealed to me a great deal. It seems paradoxical because, I repeat, I wasn't keen about medals, parades, ceremonies, and things like that. I thought the training and discipline were excellent. I don't recall a great deal of hazing by cadets. There were a number of boys who resigned after being there only a short time, who couldn't take the discipline. It was just as well, for they probably would never have made good leaders. I think one knows that if you can't discipline yourself

you have no business trying to discipline others. We had a vigilance committee which had that responsibility of protecting and preserving the honor system. It had only cadets as members. I was elected to that committee, and a few people came up for consideration. All investigations and decisions were handled by the cadets themselves. A few cadets were asked to resign by the committee. There was not a lot of hulabaloo about it. There was no publicity, probably because in those days (World War I) we didn't have television and "eager beavers" of the press corps. We were isolated--perhaps too much. I don't know. We didn't have money. We didn't even have pockets in our uniforms. We carried our handkerchief up our sleeve. We weren't permitted to receive money from outside nor were we allowed to receive packages. We weren't allowed to go off the reservation. When we left our room in barracks, we had to sign a book indicating where we would be and what we were doing. One might think that such supervision was childish, but personally I thought it was fine. My class was not at West Point for the usual four years because the war came along. We were graduated early, and when the armistice was signed in November 1918 we were ordered to return to West Point. My classmates took a vote as to whether we would request resuming the four-year course. I voted to take the four-year course, but the great majority wanted to remain officers in the Army. Then I often wondered how my class would do in the service. Surprisingly they did remarkably well. I think we had around forty general officers.

DESKIS: In your class?

WEDEMEYER: In my West Point class. And about four of us got four stars. I don't know how you can account for that except that World War II came along and we were just at the age, and in positions, where we were known. There is a lot of luck, too, in connection with promotion. How old are you, now?

DESKIS: Forty-one, sir.

WEDEMEYER: At Fort Leavenworth as a student I was doing quite well and, further, had some knowledge of German on my record when I indicated that I had studied German two years in high school. The commandant at Leavenworth called me in one day toward the end of the course to tell me that I would be sent to the German War College. Our government had just started a reciprocal arrangement with the German government to exchange students. Later, after graduating from the German War College, I was on the General Staff in Washington. My promotion then was very rapid. I think it is just fate often that you happen to be working for someone as I was--General Marshall, the Chief of Staff--and he could promote me. I might have been working just as well or just as hard or just as devotedly for someone else who would be a selfish man, thinking only of himself, taking all the credit for what you might do for him. Or he may be a man who doesn't have the power to assist you. He would like to help you but he doesn't have the influence or the power. Or he may be a very difficult man and too damn dumb to recognize the contribution that you made toward his own success. That happens!

DESKIS: Yes sir.

WEDEMEYER: Those are the things that influence promotion, and those who get stars ought to realize that they are damn lucky. They owe a great deal to luck. Now, it isn't luck particularly after you get promoted and fulfill the responsibility. Then you are on your own and you have got to make good one way or the other.

DESKIS: Yes sir. I think what one needs is visibility, recognition and sponsorship of a responsible person.

WEDEMEYER: An unselfish person. Yes.

DESKIS. Yes. Well, it takes a great deal of confidence on the part of the individual.

WEDEMEYER: And while we are discussing some of the factors that do influence one's promotion, whether it be in civil life, in the military or government service, leaders do require a certain amount of histrionics and forensics--the ability to articulate their thinking in a convincing manner, the ability to write clearly and to explain something. I have been through the mill, Tony, and I have lived a long time. I've watched men go up one, two, three, four ranks. You take Norstad. I watched that young fellow advance in rank. In my opinion he was not particularly able. I knew a lot of officers in the Air Force who were better. But he could express himself. He impressed "Hap" Arnold and General Marshall by his explanations of things. And then he was a sycophant, too. He was careful never to cross anybody above him. It sounds mean. I'm not being mean. I'm just being analytical,

purely objective about it, because I like Norstad personally. We are good friends. I've simply seen men who had more ability than Norstad who never got higher than a second star. Now, question fourteen. I visualized the utilization of the Army in 1916 as protective, providing for the security of the American people and of all U. S. territories. I felt that would be accomplished by a balanced military force which would carry out the policies enunciated by responsible civilian authorities.

DESKIS: Yes sir.

WEDEMEYER: My part in it? I wanted to make myself as efficient as I could as a lieutenant. That was my ambition when I started my service in the Army. I never dreamed that I would be a general, never. I knew I didn't like certain aspects of it. When I didn't like something, instead of being tactful, I was outwardly honest about it in attitude as well as in my speech, if I were called upon. I didn't volunteer or go out of my way and say, "I don't like parades or anything like that." But it soon becomes apparent what interests or talents set you apart in the service. You are molded a certain way and your associates begin to know what you like to do and what you don't like to do. What you like to do, as a rule, is based on your talents, or your inclinations or your abilities. If you like to do something, you generally do it well. So my aspirations, I repeat, I wanted to be a good leader but I did realize that I'd never reach high rank. The promotion system was completely against it. I was in the junior rank--seventeen years a lieutenant. All of my

contemporaries were in similar circumstance. That is one of the reasons, Tony, that I accepted unusual jobs like aide-de-camp. I am so glad now that I did. I think lots of people have an aversion to doing that, to being an aide. I wanted to be around people who were thinking on a high level and were reading on a high level, you might say. I certainly didn't talk much to the generals, unless they spoke to me. They were older and had friends on their own level to whom they would rather talk. I was an aide to four different generals, I think, during my early career. I learned how not to do certain things as well as how to do certain things by closely observing. I discovered certain things that I didn't think were appropriate. I discovered other things that I thought were excellent and tried to adopt them myself. When you read biographies, you probably enjoy the experiences of some unusual character about whom you are reading; for example, Benjamin Franklin, Jefferson, George Washington, Lee and others. Today very few people, Tony, realize what a great man George Washington was in our country. The information media plays him down and plays up Lincoln. And why? Lincoln didn't have slaves. George Washington did! The press today is influenced strongly by the blacks. We have two in the house so I have to be careful. But they are alright. They have been with us twenty years, but nonetheless I never want to hurt their feelings. But (pause) I don't know whether there is anything else you want me to say on that, Tony.

DESKIS: No. I think that is fine, sir.

WEDEMEYER: I mentioned that I had no special preparation for the military. I'd read a great deal of history which was, invariably, predominantly military; when you read right from the beginning of man right on up to today. Anyone who tells you that we are going to do away with war is stupid--not until we change human nature.

DESKIS: Yes sir.

WEDEMEYER: I did drill as a high school cadet before I went to West Point.

DESKIS: Yes sir. You mentioned that.

WEDEMEYER: Gym school we called it. But I didn't have any special aptitude. I don't know why I was made a cadet captain. I was tall and I took awfully good care of my uniform. I did study hard to learn the manual of arms and every little thing that the cadet corps did. I definitely was favorably impressed by West Point. The environment, the curriculum--I could understand why engineering would be used a great deal because after you get delving into math, especially higher math, it enables you to improve your deductive powers. I accept that it was a mistake on my part earlier not to have had more mathematics. My sport enthusiasms at West Point were baseball--I played on the baseball team. I used to canoe a lot. Whenever I had any spare time I would get a horse at the stable and go horseback riding in the fall and winter, and when the weather was warm I would get a canoe and go canoing up the Hudson River. I played baseball of course as a sport, as an academy sport and made my letter. I pitched. I had a wonderful

coach there. His name was Hans Lobert. He was a professional. He played for Philadelphia and the New York Giants and different teams, and we all just loved him. The cadets just loved him. He was a great sport. He was playing for the love of the game instead of . . . of course he wanted money, but today I get the impression that the basketball player, the football player is interested in salary more than he is in the love of the sport. That's the way I feel about most of them.

DESKIS: Some materialistic objectives in life today as opposed to . . .

WEDEMEYER: You ask if I had any reservations. The only reservations that I had about West Point when I first went up there, I felt the restrictions concerning getting things from home was sort of silly. If you had a younger brother and you wanted to send him a box of candy, I don't see why he shouldn't be able to get it. But they didn't allow you to have it. It would come and the officer in charge of your company would send for you and he would say, "You got this package. You are not authorized to get it. I will enjoy the candy or cookies or whatever just myself." Then you would go away. That's exactly what happened. But that's silly. I didn't mind the restrictions to the reservation. You had plenty of latitude. Everybody was experiencing this together and did not agree that it was a narrowing influence circumscribing too much. The religious side was alright and I went; I taught Sunday School because I was an athlete and athletes generally were selected to teach the children on the post. I went to the dances but not a

great number. I would take young ladies from various girl schools once in a while to a dance. I thought the religious service was fine. They couldn't be objected to by a Jew or by a Moslem or by a Catholic, the Episcopal service. Of course, they had a Catholic service. But they did not have a Jewish service. So the Jews had to go with us. Now I think they have a Jewish service. I don't know. There were only 800 in the corps at the time and everybody knew everybody else. I repeat, the caliber of the people that were getting up there I think was very fine, and I don't think the caliber is "up to snuff" today. I am on the President's Board of Visitors that meets at the Academy every year. Are you familiar with that?

DESKIS: No. I'm not familiar with that, sir.

WEDEMEYER: Well, the President appoints three college presidents, four senators and six congressmen. Every April they spend a few days inspecting the curriculum, the pedagogy, training methods, appropriations, physical setup and so forth and make a report to him. You are on it for three years. I have one year to go. Instead of being a college president, he appointed me for some reason or other. Later on here if you want to ask some questions I can bring it out. But I didn't draw any natural comparisons. And it is not because I was there fifty years ago. I would say the caliber of the people that were appointed then was better. The attitude was better fifty years ago. There was more of a dedication, more of an appreciation, too. Today you are getting youngsters that are coming out of homes where the parents are

not paying a hell of a lot of attention to the upbringing of their children. We are getting children who are coming from an environment of at least drug toleration--heroin, LSD and marijuana. These were not problems at West Point years ago.

DESKIS: There seems to be a real distortion of values on the part of so many people, not only of the youth.

WEDEMEYER: You're right! You're absolutely right! As a matter of fact . . .

DESKIS: Parents as well.

WEDEMEYER: As a matter of fact, the things we see on this tube over here--this television of course, and some of the actions, the attitudes, and some of the things that are occurring in the plays that we see--all of the actors are adults. How would a child coming along in adolescence feel other than the crazy conduct of those adults must be the thing to do. And it is accepted. Perhaps you are right. I repeat, I was very favorably impressed by West Point as I launched into my plebe year. And I indicated some reservations, and my special enthusiasms were sports up there and the library. I did find my plebe year very difficult--not from the disciplinary side at all, not the military side but the academic side. Hazing was not allowed but I would say that hazing was, in a mild way, going on a little bit anyway. I do not approve of hazing--of physical torture on an individual. There is something sadistic about someone who would approve of it, I think. But I was at times subjected

to pretty severe crawling, we called it, bordering on hazing, where I was told to get my chin back and shoulders back, and I was doing the best I could yet I was told to do it more. And then I was brought into a room and told to sit as if there were a chair against the wall. We called it sitting on infinity. You would sit there until you just dropped. Now, I don't know what was accomplished by the man making me do that, the upperclassman. But you would never "squeal" on anybody or tell on anybody. I was in charge of cadets--the plebes when they came following me, and I never did anything like that. My plebes today, I see some of them. They still respect me. I think you never forgive a man if he does something very mean and personal. You always remember it. At least they did it to serve a purpose. I don't think it serves a constructive purpose, no. I am referring to hazing.

DESKIS: Yes sir.

WEDEMEYER: Did you develop a rapport with fellow plebes? Yes, you naturally do but mostly with the men in the company and with those of whom you are engaged in sports--the members of the baseball team, the boxing team. I liked to box, and of course my roommates and the men who lived in the barracks right close to me, we all became great friends, good friends. Most of them were wonderful young men, fine fellows. Well, I think that the greatest gift that West Point gave to me was the Honor System, the application of the Honor System, and in all facets of life. I'm grateful to that school for that.

DESKIS: I would think that in conjunction with the discipline and the code that your family established . . .

WEDEMEYER: Well, I arrived at West Point with a fairly good concept of discipline you see. So I would be grateful for that, too. My relationship with my instructors was not particularly favorable. I wasn't a good student. They didn't think of me as a good student. The tactical officer, however, yes! He recommended me for cadet corporal. That would indicate that he was impressed by me, and only a certain number in the company attained that position. I wasn't there long enough to be a cadet officer. But the upperclassmen--we made no effort to bootlick them. I didn't get a disproportionate amount of crawling, which is an indication of the attitude of the upperclassmen toward you. I didn't attract their attention. If one were slovenly or didn't comply or didn't do what one was told to do, one would attract their attention and they'd swarm around you like bees and give you perfect hell. Well, the distinguished graduates during my years at the academy: Lucius Clay, wonderful, stood out as a cadet. Pat Casey, a classmate of Clay's. They are the two men of that class that stood out. Lemnitzer, Gruenther . . .

DESKIS: Was General Lemnitzer ahead of you, sir?

WEDEMEYER: One year after me.

DESKIS: One year after you . . .

WEDEMEYER: These were men who were at the academy, however. Byers--Byers is a very fine exponent of West Point. He isn't too famous, never had command that would give him fame. But God! He is a fine exponent. All

the things that you would admire in a man--leadership, decency and nice personality, Byers. He is very ill with heart trouble. Let me see. There is Ridgway, Clark--Mark Clark, Willy Palmer of my class, Tony McAuliffe, "Nuts" McAuliffe.

DESKIS: Yes sir.

WEDEMEYER: I mentioned Gruenther?

DESKIS: Yes sir.

WEDEMEYER: Now, those are men who distinguished themselves newspaper-wise. One of my classmates, Colonel Boyd Bartlett, made an outstanding record. He was professor of natural and experimental philosophy at West Point. They have rededicated the laboratory to his memory up there. But I think that ought to be mentioned. I had another classmate by the name of Rash, Franklin Rash, who made a great contribution academically up there at the chemical laboratory--innovations. Another classmate named Loper. He didn't get high in rank but he was one of the brainiest men in the class. He distinguished himself in atomic energy. Leslie Groves was there when I was. I almost neglected him.

DESKIS: Manhattan Project.

WEDEMEYER: Right! And he is the only man in that class I think that distinguished himself. No. There was one other man, named Howard Peckham. He was first captain and deservedly so--a top-flight character. He just passed away a month or so ago. I loved him very much. I had great respect

for him. There were quite a few distinguished graduates during my years at the academy and I was very proud to be associated with them--honored to be. They are all good friends of mine, I feel. I mentioned Herb Jones. Herb was my own roommate, and I don't think he distinguished himself militarily, and he went off more into what we called in the old days the administrative side. Of course, he became Adjutant General of the Army. And when I first came in the Army--probably when you first came in the Army the Adjutant was always a big shot. He had a lot of power. He was sitting right next to the boss, you know, and could influence the boss. That was the theory, I guess. But General Marshall just abhorred adjutants. He changed that a great deal. He denuded, no that's not the word, he downgraded the importance of the authority of the whole adjutant general echelon when we reorganized the Army during the war.

DESKIS: He was concerned mostly about operations, wasn't he?

WEDEMEYER: Yes. Military operations.

DESKIS: And later gave emphasis to intelligence as well?

WEDEMEYER: Yes. That is right. I mentioned my roommates. One was Major General Herbert M. Jones, who became Adjutant General of the Army. My other roommate was Ivan Crawford Lawrence. He graduated about number two or three in the class. He had already graduated in engineering from the University of Minnesota when he went to West Point. So he was a little older than most of us. An outstanding man. He loved West Point. But he got

married a few years after he graduated and his wife didn't like the Army so he resigned and went into industry and he became Vice-President of the 3 M's. He passed away just recently a millionaire, if that is a criterion for success. But he was a very fine man. Up to the very end, his interest in the Army and in his Alma Mater maintained. He contributed liberally to various funds at West Point and to the Army. I think the environment at West Point could be considered spartan. But I did not find it difficult to make either a physical or mental adjustment. Mentally a little bit, but the physical adjustment not at all because I had experienced that at home. I mentioned that at home, as a youngster, I had to take care of my own bedroom, although we had a servant. There was an accepted sense of orderliness at our home. There wasn't any intruding upon your daily life. I mean if I saw a picture that was hanging askew I would probably straighten it. There wasn't anybody harping at anybody else. It was a very modest, fine home that I experienced. I am in a position to say it now in retrospect without any emotion. It was really a wonderful experience. I am very grateful for it. I think it is a sad one to see youngsters from split families and parents divorced, and stuff like that. My mother and father were very devoted to each other.

DESKIS: Yes. I think that's probably . . . (cut off)

WEDEMEYER: Both of them were well-read people, well-educated. It is very important.

DESKIS: I think such a wholesome environment has such an impact on a youngster.

WEDEMEYER: Yes. It does.

DESKIS: A very significant one.

WEDEMEYER: I think both of my boys will tell you the same thing here, except that I was away a lot. That wasn't too good. I did find the curriculum very challenging because I was ill-prepared for that type of work, academic work, very poorly prepared. One should not go to West Point in my judgment unless he has preliminarily majored in mathematics and history, those two subjects. History helped me. It probably kept me there. Well, I was . . . I must say, Tony, that I was determined not to be found. I worked hard enough to get through West Point, not to be kicked out. But my determination was to excel in my knowledge of what role the military plays in a country, and that was extenuated or developed more and more as I got different assignments in the Army. When I served abroad, I was always trying to determine something about the role of the military in those countries--what role it had played in their development; how it came into being, and how it influenced the government at the time that I lived there. I'm referring to Europe now and China and the Philippines.

DESKIS: I would think your interest in history had a great impact.

WEDEMEYER: Right!

DESKIS: You developed interest in these countries.

WEDEMEYER: The next question is what influenced your branch selection? My poor class standing. I didn't rank high enough to be in the engineers or to be in the artillery, the Field Artillery; too many of my own classmates were ahead of me on that. So I took the infantry, although I asked for cavalry and was given cavalry. I must tell you that I changed that and I will tell you why. Well, you have got a question here--where you satisfied with your achievements? I was not only not satisfied with my achievements at West Point but I was ashamed of them. I was ashamed of my class standing. I thought it would greatly influence my future, too, in the Army. Because people refer to it constantly. He was a goat at West Point! He was an engineer at West Point. And I thought it would set me apart and just categorize me firmly, and when I would report to a new organization, the commanding officer would probably look at my record and say, "Well, he is not going to contribute much." So I think people who rank in the middle of the class are in a better position. Not the top, not the bottom, but in the middle. I think they are the ones that are better balanced people. They didn't spend all their time with a nose in a book, and did do some of the extracurricular activities, the cadet life--some social and some recreational balance. But I didn't leave there with satisfaction at all. I do think, and it isn't said immodestly, if I had been there four years, my class standing would have come up even to the middle area. I never could have been up to the top because I was so damn low the first year. But I think I might have been able to graduate up in the middle class, in the middle area. I think I could have,

because subsequent experience did do that--that God gave me just that much capacity. Well, my graduation was an unusual one, as you know. It was an early graduation and I was enthused as were all of my classmates, and I think you are more or less--you all take on the herd spirit. All of us were enthusiastic about going over to Germany and lick that terrible Hun. That was the idea of it and we all absorbed the terrible things concerning the Boche (Germans) atrocities, e.g., cutting off the hands of children in Belgium and France. I believed all of it and thought how could the people from whom I came, the German people, be that cruel. And I didn't know until after World War I was over that those photographs were fake. I saw the pictures in the New York Times--the Rotogravure section. And then later on, a British Major admitted that he faked those photographs. Did you ever know that?

DESKIS: No sir.

WEDEMEYER: Oh yes! He wrote a book! The British were furious with him for exposing it. So it is awfully hard for us to understand now what's going on in Vietnam. It just really is. I don't know what's going on in Paris today. This German-American Dr. Kissinger seems to be determining our foreign policy. It is hard to know what is going on. You ask if I was pensive, relaxed, puzzled, assured at West Point? I was puzzled and didn't know what the future held in 1917, and by this time I had made many friends in my West Point class. I wasn't a class officer, but a cadet from my state of Nebraska--from my hometown, Omaha--was. It was interesting. He was older than I. In my West Point class there were three from my state--Allan, Gruenther and

Wedemeyer. Of the three of us, the man who was most predicted to succeed was Carlisle Allan. He was a good talker, well-liked, and, as stated, was our first class president. When he graduated, everybody thought he would be the first man to be made a general. No one ever dreamed that I would be, and I was. And I think Gruenther was the second. He stood quite well in the class but didn't distinguish himself in class politics or athletics. He kept his nose in the book.

DESKIS: I think that is an interesting point because you know youngsters are so concerned nowadays about class standing and grades, and there is such a great emphasis on grades that what you have accomplished proves that grades alone are not the final indicator of the capacity of the man.

WEDEMEYER: As long as . . . in the same breath, I emphasize that I still had a tremendous curiosity about everything. I was doing a lot of educating, self-educating. God knows, many people graduate at the top of their class and think well, "I'm it," you know? And it stops there. Whereas I did poorly and I knew I had a long way to go to make up for that. I went to Fort Benning and I did well there, in fact I was kept there as an instructor. I was told before I went to Leavenworth that I would never be a general officer, although at that time no one in my class thought he would be either because we went there as lieutenants--the first group of lieutenants to go there. In the past only majors and colonels had been assigned to take the course at Fort Leavenworth, the Command and General Staff School.

DESKIS: Yes sir.

WEDEMEYER: And they emphasized that our class standing would determine the future, that is, assignment to the General Staff or promotion to general officer. So I did work hard there. It didn't come easy but I wanted to do well and I did. No youngster should feel that he can just slack off and not do anything at all to improve his mind and body. Are you about to the end of the rope there?

DESKIS: Almost.

WEDEMEYER: What were your objectives--personally and professionally. My immediate objectives after I got into the service were to learn as much as I could about my duties as a junior officer in the Army. Fortunately, I was sent to the infantry school as a student. It was an excellent, well-conducted course. Most of our instruction was given by war-experienced combat officers. They had just come back from World War I where they had experienced trench warfare and lineal warfare. And very little use of armor . . . TAPE RUNS OUT

SIDE #2

DESKIS: I think we were talking about your immediate objectives. Both personally and professionally upon graduating from West Point.

WEDEMEYER: Well, I made up my mind to try to overcome my low class standing at West Point, the poor showing I made there--to concentrate on every assignment that I received. I was sent to the Infantry School, a branch school, where I received instructions by men who had combat experience--men who had just returned from being in World War I. Some of them were not particularly good instructors but one learned an awful lot anyway from

their accounts of combat experiences, and the course of instruction at Benning was awfully good. It was well laid out. We had a general named Paul B. Malone at that time who had been a brigadier general in combat in the 2nd Division. And he was a very brilliant man. Quite an orator--known as the silver-tongued orator of the Chattahoochee! He devised the curriculum of the Infantry School. He deserved a great deal of the credit for the tremendous contribution that he made at that training center. Incidentally, I got into difficulty down there. I never drank anything at home. My father was abstemious. An older officer, also a student at Benning, asked me to go down to the Elks Club. Of course, I had heard of the Elks Club but I wasn't an Elk. I did accompany him. He was a married man, however his wife wasn't at Fort Benning. Arriving at the Elks Club in Columbus, Georgia, we ate salted peanuts and drank corn whiskey. There was Prohibition and we weren't supposed to have whiskey. I drank too much and got in trouble and was court-martialed. That's another thing that happened early in my service. Everybody at Fort Benning was astounded when I got into this trouble. They knew me because I played on the Infantry School baseball team. I was also a Sunday school instructor at the Episcopal Church in Columbus. I was given six months restriction to the reservation and fined $50.00 a month of my pay for six months. I thought my career in the service was finished. I had not been a person who drank at all. But many people came to the trial, risking their own careers to testify that they had offered

me liquor and that I had refused it. One of the men who did that is a four-star general named Bolté.

DESKIS: Yes sir. His son is at the War College as an instructor.

WEDEMEYER: Charlie Bolté was great--imagine, doing that for me. I didn't know him awfully well. He was a captain then, served in World War I. Not a West Point man; he went to Van Rennselear, I think. But he heard about my trouble and came voluntarily around and suggested that he would testify that he had offered me liquor but that I never touched anything. It was quite an interesting experience. I wrote a letter to the Pacific Oriental Steamship Company and asked for a job. Also I tendered my resignation. I got an acceptance from the shipping company--a job on a boat transporting bananas from South American countries. Then I wrote to my parents and explained what had been done. I wanted them to hear about it from me first. Then I was called in by my colonel who told me I couldn't resign while I was serving pennance. After six months I could resign. But he said, "I don't think you are going to resign. We want you to stay." Then General Malone asked me to be his aide. These kinds of episodes seem so terrible to young inexperienced officers. As a student at the Infantry School I worked very hard and stood at the top of the class. I was kept as an instructor and assigned to the 24th Infantry--the school demonstration regiment. The 29th Infantry was at war strength and it gave one a good concept of the visual and practical applications of a war-strength combat unit. They would assign

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DESKIS: That is a very interesting comment of the humanistic aspect of it. I think that a lot of young officers today--I'm glad I have this on tape because it is an interesting point--many young officers today feel that if they do get into some kind of difficulty within the early parts of their career or any time in their career, they've for all intents and purposes lost any future as far as the Army is concerned.

WEDEMEYER: Yes. I'm not condoning or encouraging breaking the rules and regulations and being indiscreet or being intemperate--not at all. But when one is human, one does sometimes fall over and do something he shouldn't do. Unless, of course, it involves moral turpitude I don't think he should worry too much about it. I think he should just buckle down and work harder. It if involves moral turpitude--I'm talking about murder, rape, arson, treason, I believe in capital punishment.

DESKIS: Well, I think, sir, that would probably conclude our first session.

SECTION 2

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER

by

Colonel Anthony J. Deskis

This is side one, tape two of session two. My name is Colonel Anthony J. Deskis, a student at the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. I am about to interview General Albert C. Wedemeyer, United States Army Retired. We are located at General Wedemeyer's home, Friends Advice Farm, Boyds, Maryland. The date is 13 December 1972 and the time is 1015 hours. This interview is one of a series in conjunction with the Senior Officer Oral History Program, which was established by the Chief of Staff of the Army in October 1970.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Continuing on the subject of West Point, its effect upon my hopes for the future, not only my personal ambitions but also those relating to the future of our country. What role I might play? I should like to tell you that I was disappointed when the decision was made to graduate the members of my class so early. We had only been there about a year and a half. Of course, it is true when some indication had been given that they were going to abbreviate the course, they tried at once to emphasize essential subjects and claimed that they almost crammed three years of college into those two years that we were there. Another factor -- the Armistice was signed while we were preparing to go overseas and assume positions in the field. We were then ordered back to West Point. We were already commissioned as 2nd lieutenants, and the law would not permit them to demote us and make us cadets again. We returned and did continue academic work at West Point. We were neither fish nor fowl there. The officers, members of the faculty, and

(P)

administrative staff did not recognize us as officers, and yet we could not fraternize with the cadets. So we were in a rather embarrassing position. Often people said that we shouldn't be considered graduates of West Point and I was inclined to agree with all of this. Actually, I did talk to some of my friends in my class and suggested that we take a vote, and petition the War Department to continue us there for a four-year course. Of the 284 members of my class who graduated, only 15 of us elected or suggested that we continue the academic work. The war was over, and I couldn't see any purpose in sending us out into the field. The War Department did make a very important and constructive decision. They sent my class to Europe to conduct a tour of all the battlefields. It was well done. In the various theaters or areas of combat we were given a careful exposition by officers who actually commanded our forces in the war against the Germans. This included tours all along the front in France, and northern Italy. One effect, of a personal nature, of this exposure tour was that I had decided to go into the cavalry when I graduated because of my love of horses and my interest in equitation -- riding and so forth. But after I noted the type of fighting that was conducted, the techniques employed, and the improvement of automatic weapons -- weapons with a high cyclic rate, I realized that there was no place on the battlefield for horses. The mobility that the horse gave for reconnaissance and movement of firepower from one critical point to another in the battlefield would have to be provided by machine, something impervious or somewhat protected from the machine guns, which had been highly developed in World War I. So, I made up my mind that I was going

to go into another branch of service. And academically I was ranked so low in my class that I had no choice but to go into the infantry or coast artillery. So, I chose infantry. My class was broken up then when it returned to the United States from that summer tour, summer of 1919, into groups of assignments to the various service schools. The artillerymen went to Fort Knox, Kentucky; the infantrymen went to Fort Benning, Georgia; the coast artillerymen went to Fort Munroe, Virginia; the engineers went to Fort Belvoir, Virginia; and the cavalry went to Fort Riley, Kansas. And I think that completes it. I was assigned to the cavalry when I graduated, so I had to take the necessary action to transfer. I dropped into the State War Navy Building in Washington as a 2nd lieutenant in September, actually greatly impressed and frightened, but I did apply to a colonel there in the Adjutant General's Department. After some hazing on his part, asking me what I knew about the Army -- I had to confess that I knew nothing about it -- he effected it but thought it was odd that I was asking for a transfer from one branch to another. And I learned much later, many years later, that he was a former cavalryman. My statement that the cavalry had no place on the battlefield when I was very immature and inexperienced amused him. He was hazing me a little, and years later I met him and he told me about it. At the Infantry School I think I was beginning to mature a little -- fortunately -- and I worked awfully hard. I wanted to do better at the school than I did at West Point, so I studied hard the military history and tactics and techniques of the employment of various infantry weapons. I emphasized the subject that I liked most, which is history, military history.

We were very fortunate at the Infantry School to be taught by an instructor corps there composed essentially of men who had just returned from the combat of World War I. They were men of various ranks, full of enthusiasm; their experience and their exposure to combat were all very well presented. What they lacked in the rules of pedagogy they made up for in personal enthusiasm, and the fact that theirs was a real exposure -- they were not theoreticians. So I really got a great deal out of it as did, I think, all of my classmates. There were 77 infantry members of my class. After nine months at the Infantry School, I graduated, and I was told that I was number one. I don't believe they had class standing but it developed... they selected the top 11 to remain on as instructors. So, I did know that I did fairly well, which was gratifying to me because of my poor showing at West Point. I should not continually emphasize my poor academic standing there, because militarily I was one of the highest ranking corporals in the corps. And if I had stayed on I might have been a cadet officer and so forth. Discipline, in other words, and my attention to military duties was superior. I do know, however, that the class standing of the West Point officer follows him all throughout his career. If a goat at West Point, people may say that you can expect that he made some blooper. I stayed on at Fort Benning, and I should tell you that I was assigned to the demonstration regiment, the 29th Infantry which was at war strength. And we were constantly putting on demonstrations for the succeeding classes that came there. I was there 3½ years, and I also instructed in the 37-millimeter gun and the 3-inch mortar, trench mortar, Howitzer Company. I was assigned to that type company, the Howitzer

not paying a hell of a lot of attention to the upbringing of their children. We are getting children who are coming from an environment of at least drug toleration--heroin, LSD and marijuana. These were not problems at West Point years ago.

DESKIS: There seems to be a real distortion of values on the part of so many people, not only of the youth.

WEDEMEYER: You're right! You're absolutely right! As a matter of fact . . .

DESKIS: Parents as well.

WEDEMEYER: As a matter of fact, the things we see on this tube over here--this television of course, and some of the actions, the attitudes, and some of the things that are occurring in the plays that we see--all of the actors are adults. How would a child coming along in adolescence feel other than the crazy conduct of those adults must be the thing to do. And it is accepted. Perhaps you are right. I repeat, I was very favorably impressed by West Point as I launched into my plebe year. And I indicated some reservations, and my special enthusiasms were sports up there and the library. I did find my plebe year very difficult--not from the disciplinary side at all, not the military side but the academic side. Hazing was not allowed but I would say that hazing was, in a mild way, going on a little bit anyway. I do not approve of hazing--of physical torture on an individual. There is something sadistic about someone who would approve of it, I think. But I was at times subjected

DESKIS: I would think that in conjunction with the discipline and the code that your family established . . .

WEDEMEYER: Well, I arrived at West Point with a fairly good concept of discipline you see. So I would be grateful for that, too. My relationship with my instructors was not particularly favorable. I wasn't a good student. They didn't think of me as a good student. The tactical officer, however, yes! He recommended me for cadet corporal. That would indicate that he was impressed by me, and only a certain number in the company attained that position. I wasn't there long enough to be a cadet officer. But the upperclassmen--we made no effort to bootlick them. I didn't get a disproportionate amount of crawling, which is an indication of the attitude of the upperclassmen toward you. I didn't attract their attention. If one were slovenly or didn't comply or didn't do what one was told to do, one would attract their attention and they'd swarm around you like bees and give you perfect hell. Well, the distinguished graduates during my years at the academy: Lucius Clay, wonderful, stood out as a cadet. Pat Casey, a classmate of Clay's. They are the two men of that class that stood out. Lemnitzer, Gruenther . . .

DESKIS: Was General Lemnitzer ahead of you, sir?

WEDEMEYER: One year after me.

DESKIS: One year after you . . .

WEDEMEYER: These were men who were at the academy, however. Byers--Byers is a very fine exponent of West Point. He isn't too famous, never had command that would give him fame. But God! He is a fine exponent. All

the things that you would admire in a man--leadership, decency and nice personality, Byers. He is very ill with heart trouble. Let me see. There is Ridgway, Clark--Mark Clark, Willy Palmer of my class, Tony McAuliffe, "Nuts" McAuliffe.

DESKIS: Yes sir.

WEDEMEYER: I mentioned Gruenther?

DESKIS: Yes sir.

WEDEMEYER: Now, those are men who distinguished themselves newspaper-wise. One of my classmates, Colonel Boyd Bartlett, made an outstanding record. He was professor of natural and experimental philosophy at West Point. They have rededicated the laboratory to his memory up there. But I think that ought to be mentioned. I had another classmate by the name of Rash, Franklin Rash, who made a great contribution academically up there at the chemical laboratory--innovations. Another classmate named Loper. He didn't get high in rank but he was one of the brainiest men in the class. He distinguished himself in atomic energy. Leslie Groves was there when I was. I almost neglected him.

DESKIS: Manhattan Project.

WEDEMEYER: Right! And he is the only man in that class I think that distinguished himself. No. There was one other man, named Howard Peckham. He was first captain and deservedly so--a top-flight character. He just passed away a month or so ago. I loved him very much. I had great respect

for him. There were quite a few distinguished graduates during my years at the academy and I was very proud to be associated with them--honored to be. They are all good friends of mine, I feel. I mentioned Herb Jones. Herb was my own roommate, and I don't think he distinguished himself militarily, and he went off more into what we called in the old days the administrative side. Of course, he became Adjutant General of the Army. And when I first came in the Army--probably when you first came in the Army--the Adjutant was always a big shot. He had a lot of power. He was sitting right next to the boss, you know, and could influence the boss. That was the theory, I guess. But General Marshall just abhorred adjutants. He changed that a great deal. He denuded, no that's not the word, he downgraded the importance of the authority of the whole adjutant general echelon when we reorganized the Army during the war.

DESKIS: He was concerned mostly about operations, wasn't he?

WEDEMEYER: Yes. Military operations.

DESKIS: And later gave emphasis to intelligence as well?

WEDEMEYER: Yes. That is right. I mentioned my roommates. One was Major General Herbert M. Jones, who became Adjutant General of the Army. My other roommate was Ivan Crawford Lawrence. He graduated about number two or three in the class. He had already graduated in engineering from the University of Minnesota when he went to West Point. So he was a little older than most of us. An outstanding man. He loved West Point. But he got

married a few years after he graduated and his wife didn't like the Army so he resigned and went into industry and he became Vice-President of the 3 M's. He passed away just recently a millionaire, if that is a criterion for success. But he was a very fine man. Up to the very end, his interest in the Army and in his Alma Mater maintained. He contributed liberally to various funds at West Point and to the Army. I think the environment at West Point could be considered spartan. But I did not find it difficult to make either a physical or mental adjustment. Mentally a little bit, but the physical adjustment not at all because I had experienced that at home. I mentioned that at home, as a youngster, I had to take care of my own bedroom, although we had a servant. There was an accepted sense of orderliness at our home. There wasn't any intruding upon your daily life. I mean if I saw a picture that was hanging askew I would probably straighten it. There wasn't anybody harping at anybody else. It was a very modest, fine home that I experienced. I am in a position to say it now in retrospect without any emotion. It was really a wonderful experience. I am very grateful for it. I think it is a sad one to see youngsters from split families and parents divorced, and stuff like that. My mother and father were very devoted to each other.

DESKIS: Yes. I think that's probably . . . (cut off)

WEDEMEYER: Both of them were well-read people, well-educated. It is very important.

DESKIS: I think such a wholesome environment has such an impact on a youngster.

WEDEMEYER: Yes. It does.

DESKIS: A very significant one.

WEDEMEYER: I think both of my boys will tell you the same thing here, except that I was away a lot. That wasn't too good. I did find the curriculum very challenging because I was ill-prepared for that type of work, academic work, very poorly prepared. One should not go to West Point in my judgment unless he has preliminarily majored in mathematics and history, those two subjects. History helped me. It probably kept me there. Well, I was . . . I must say, Tony, that I was determined not to be found. I worked hard enough to get through West Point, not to be kicked out. But my determination was to excel in my knowledge of what role the military plays in a country, and that was extenuated or developed more and more as I got different assignments in the Army. When I served abroad, I was always trying to determine something about the role of the military in those countries--what role it had played in their development; how it came into being, and how it influenced the government at the time that I lived there. I'm referring to Europe now and China and the Philippines.

DESKIS: I would think your interest in history had a great impact.

WEDEMEYER: Right!

DESKIS: You developed interest in these countries.

WEDEMEYER: The next question is what influenced your branch selection? My poor class standing. I didn't rank high enough to be in the engineers or to be in the artillery, the Field Artillery; too many of my own classmates were ahead of me on that. So I took the infantry, although I asked for cavalry and was given cavalry. I must tell you that I changed that and I will tell you why. Well, you have got a question here--where you satisfied with your achievements? I was not only not satisfied with my achievements at West Point but I was ashamed of them. I was ashamed of my class standing. I thought it would greatly influence my future, too, in the Army. Because people refer to it constantly. He was a goat at West Point! He was an engineer at West Point. And I thought it would set me apart and just categorize me firmly, and when I would report to a new organization, the commanding officer would probably look at my record and say, "Well, he is not going to contribute much." So I think people who rank in the middle of the class are in a better position. Not the top, not the bottom, but in the middle. I think they are the ones that are better balanced people. They didn't spend all their time with a nose in a book, and did do some of the extracurricular activities, the cadet life--some social and some recreational balance. But I didn't leave there with satisfaction at all. I do think, and it isn't said immodestly, if I had been there four years, my class standing would have come up even to the middle area. I never could have been up to the top because I was so damn low the first year. But I think I might have been able to graduate up in the middle class, in the middle area. I think I could have,

because subsequent experience did do that--that God gave me just that much capacity. Well, my graduation was an unusual one, as you know. It was an early graduation and I was enthused as were all of my classmates, and I think you are more or less--you all take on the herd spirit. All of us were enthusiastic about going over to Germany and lick that terrible Hun. That was the idea of it and we all absorbed the terrible things concerning the Boche (Germans) atrocities, e.g., cutting off the hands of children in Belgium and France. I believed all of it and thought how could the people from whom I came, the German people, be that cruel. And I didn't know until after World War I was over that those photographs were fake. I saw the pictures in the New York Times--the Rotogravure section. And then later on, a British Major admitted that he faked those photographs. Did you ever know that?

DESKIS: No sir.

WEDEMEYER: Oh yes! He wrote a book! The British were furious with him for exposing it. So it is awfully hard for us to understand now what's going on in Vietnam. It just really is. I don't know what's going on in Paris today. This German-American Dr. Kissinger seems to be determining our foreign policy. It is hard to know what is going on. You ask if I was pensive, relaxed, puzzled, assured at West Point? I was puzzled and didn't know what the future held in 1917, and by this time I had made many friends in my West Point class. I wasn't a class officer, but a cadet from my state of Nebraska--from my hometown, Omaha--was. It was interesting. He was older than I. In my West Point class there were three from my state--Allan, Gruenther and

Wedemeyer. Of the three of us, the man who was most predicted to succeed was Carlisle Allan. He was a good talker, well-liked, and, as stated, was our first class president. When he graduated, everybody thought he would be the first man to be made a general. No one ever dreamed that I would be, and I was. And I think Gruenther was the second. He stood quite well in the class but didn't distinguish himself in class politics or athletics. He kept his nose in the book.

DESKIS: I think that is an interesting point because you know youngsters are so concerned nowadays about class standing and grades, and there is such a great emphasis on grades that what you have accomplished proves that grades alone are not the final indicator of the capacity of the man.

WEDEMEYER: As long as . . . in the same breath, I emphasize that I still had a tremendous curiosity about everything. I was doing a lot of educating, self-educating. God knows, many people graduate at the top of their class and think well, "I'm it," you know? And it stops there. Whereas I did poorly and I knew I had a long way to go to make up for that. I went to Fort Benning and I did well there, in fact I was kept there as an instructor. I was told before I went to Leavenworth that I would never be a general officer, although at that time no one in my class thought he would be either because we went there as lieutenants--the first group of lieutenants to go there. In the past only majors and colonels had been assigned to take the course at Fort Leavenworth, the Command and General Staff School.

DESKIS: Yes sir.

WEDEMEYER: And they emphasized that our class standing would determine the future, that is, assignment to the General Staff or promotion to general officer. So I did work hard there. It didn't come easy but I wanted to do well and I did. No youngster should feel that he can just slack off and not do anything at all to improve his mind and body. Are you about to the end of the rope there?

DESKIS: Almost.

WEDEMEYER: What were your objectives--personally and professionally. My immediate objectives after I got into the service were to learn as much as I could about my duties as a junior officer in the Army. Fortunately, I was sent to the infantry school as a student. It was an excellent, well-conducted course. Most of our instruction was given by war-experienced combat officers. They had just come back from World War I where they had experienced trench warfare and lineal warfare. And very little use of armor . . . TAPE RUNS OUT

SIDE #2

DESKIS: I think we were talking about your immediate objectives. Both personally and professionally upon graduating from West Point.

WEDEMEYER: Well, I made up my mind to try to overcome my low class standing at West Point, the poor showing I made there--to concentrate on every assignment that I received. I was sent to the Infantry School, a branch school, where I received instructions by men who had combat experience--men who had just returned from being in World War I. Some of them were not particularly good instructors but one learned an awful lot anyway from

their accounts of combat experiences, and the course of instruction at Benning was awfully good. It was well laid out. We had a general named Paul B. Malone at that time who had been a brigadier general in combat in the 2nd Division. And he was a very brilliant man. Quite an orator--known as the silver-tongued orator of the Chattahoochee! He devised the curriculum of the Infantry School. He deserved a great deal of the credit for the tremendous contribution that he made at that training center. Incidentally, I got into difficulty down there. I never drank anything at home. My father was abstemious. An older officer, also a student at Benning, asked me to go down to the Elks Club. Of course, I had heard of the Elks Club but I wasn't an Elk. I did accompany him. He was a married man, however his wife wasn't at Fort Benning. Arriving at the Elks Club in Columbus, Georgia, we ate salted peanuts and drank corn whiskey. There was Prohibition and we weren't supposed to have whiskey. I drank too much and got in trouble and was court-martialed. That's another thing that happened early in my service. Everybody at Fort Benning was astounded when I got into this trouble. They knew me because I played on the Infantry School baseball team. I was also a Sunday school instructor at the Episcopal Church in Columbus. I was given six months restriction to the reservation and fined $50.00 a month of my pay for six months. I thought my career in the service was finished. I had not been a person who drank at all. But many people came to the trial, risking their own careers to testify that they had offered

me liquor and that I had refused it. One of the men who did that is a four-star general named Bolté.

DESKIS: Yes sir. His son is at the War College as an instructor.

WEDEMEYER: Charlie Bolté was great--imagine, doing that for me. I didn't know him awfully well. He was a captain then, served in World War I. Not a West Point man; he went to Van Rennselear, I think. But he heard about my trouble and came voluntarily around and suggested that he would testify that he had offered me liquor but that I never touched anything. It was quite an interesting experience. I wrote a letter to the Pacific-Oriental Steamship Company and asked for a job. Also I tendered my resignation. I got an acceptance from the shipping company--a job on a boat transporting bananas from South American countries. Then I wrote to my parents and explained what had been done. I wanted them to hear about it from me first. Then I was called in by my colonel who told me I couldn't resign while I was serving pennance. After six months I could resign. But he said, "I don't think you are going to resign. We want you to stay." Then General Malone asked me to be his aide. These kinds of episodes seem so terrible to young inexperienced officers. As a student at the Infantry School I worked very hard and stood at the top of the class. I was kept as an instructor and assigned to the 24th Infantry--the school demonstration regiment. The 29th Infantry was at war strength and it gave one a good concept of the visual and practical applications of a war-strength combat unit. They would assign

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DESKIS: That is a very interesting comment of the humanistic aspect of it. I think that a lot of young officers today--I'm glad I have this on tape because it is an interesting point--many young officers today feel that if they do get into some kind of difficulty within the early parts of their career or any time in their career, they've for all intents and purposes lost any future as far as the Army is concerned.

WEDEMEYER: Yes. I'm not condoning or encouraging breaking the rules and regulations and being indiscreet or being intemperate--not at all. But when one is human, one does sometimes fall over and do something he shouldn't do. Unless, of course, it involves moral turpitude I don't think he should worry too much about it. I think he should just buckle down and work harder. It if involves moral turpitude--I'm talking about murder, rape, arson, treason, I believe in capital punishment.

DESKIS: Well, I think, sir, that would probably conclude our first session.

SECTION 2

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by

Colonel Anthony J. Deskis

This is side one, tape two of session two. My name is Colonel Anthony J. Deskis, a student at the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. I am about to interview General Albert C. Wedemeyer, United States Army Retired. We are located at General Wedemeyer's home, Friends Advice Farm, Boyds, Maryland. The date is 13 December 1972 and the time is 1015 hours. This interview is one of a series in conjunction with the Senior Officer Oral History Program, which was established by the Chief of Staff of the Army in October 1970.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Continuing on the subject of West Point, its effect upon my hopes for the future, not only my personal ambitions but also those relating to the future of our country. What role I might play? I should like to tell you that I was disappointed when the decision was made to graduate the members of my class so early. We had only been there about a year and a half. Of course, it is true when some indication had been given that they were going to abbreviate the course, they tried at once to emphasize essential subjects and claimed that they almost crammed three years of college into those two years that we were there. Another factor -- the Armistice was signed while we were preparing to go overseas and assume positions in the field. We were then ordered back to West Point. We were already commissioned as 2nd lieutenants, and the law would not permit them to demote us and make us cadets again. We returned and did continue academic work at West Point. We were either fish nor fowl there. The officers, members of the faculty, and

administrative staff did not recognize us as officers, and yet we could not fraternize with the cadets. So we were in a rather embarrassing position. Often people said that we shouldn't be considered graduates of West Point and I was inclined to agree with all of this. Actually, I did talk to some of my friends in my class and suggested that we take a vote, and petition the War Department to continue us there for a four-year course. Of the 284 members of my class who graduated, only 15 of us elected or suggested that we continue the academic work. The war was over, and I couldn't see any purpose in sending us out into the field. The War Department did make a very important and constructive decision. They sent my class to Europe to conduct a tour of all the battlefields. It was well done. In the various theaters or areas of combat we were given a careful exposition by officers who actually commanded our forces in the war against the Germans. This included tours all along the front in France, and northern Italy. One effect, of a personal nature, of this exposure tour was that I had decided to go into the cavalry when I graduated because of my love of horses and my interest in equitation -- riding and so forth. But after I noted the type of fighting that was conducted, the techniques employed, and the improvement of automatic weapons -- weapons with a high cyclic rate, I realized that there was no place on the battlefield for horses. The mobility that the horse gave for reconnaissance and movement of firepower from one critical point to another in the battlefield would have to be provided by machine, something impervious or somewhat protected from the machine guns, which had been highly developed in World War I. So, I made up my mind that I was going

to go into another branch of service. And academically I was ranked so low i. ny class that I had no choice but to go into the infantry or coast artillery. So, I chose infantry. My class was broken up then when it returned to the United States from that summer tour, summer of 1919, into groups of assignments to the various service schools. The artillerymen went to Fort Knox, Kentucky; the infantrymen went to Fort Benning, Georgia; the coast artillerymen went to Fort Munroe, Virginia; the engineers went to Fort Belvoir, Virginia; and the cavalry went to Fort Riley, Kansas. And I think that completes it. I was assigned to the cavalry when I graduated, so I had to take the necessary action to transfer. I dropped into the State War Navy Building in Washington as a 2nd lieutenant in September, actually greatly impressed and frightened, h + I did apply to a colonel there in the Adjutant General's Department. After some hazing on his part, asking me what I knew about the Army -- I had to confess that I knew nothing about it -- he effected it but thought it was odd that I was asking for a transfer from one branch to another. And I learned much later, many years later, that he was a former cavalryman. My statement that the cavalry had no place on the battlefield when I was very immature and inexperienced amused him. He was hazing me a little, and years later I met him and he told me about it. At the Infantry School I think I was beginning to mature a little -- fortunately -- and I worked awfully hard. I wanted to do better at the school than I did at West Point, so I studied hard the military history and tactics and techniques of the employment of various infantry weapons. mphasized the subject that I liked most, which is history, military history.

We were very fortunate at the Infantry School to be taught by an instructor corps there composed essentially of men who had just returned from the combat of World War I. They were men of various ranks, full of enthusiasm; their experience and their exposure to combat were all very well presented. What they lacked in the rules of pedagogy they made up for in personal enthusiasm, and the fact that theirs was a real exposure -- they were not theoreticians. So I really got a great deal out of it as did, I think, all of my classmates. There were 77 infantry members of my class. After nine months at the Infantry School, I graduated, and I was told that I was number one. I don't believe they had class standing but it developed... they selected the top 11 to remain on as instructors. So, I did know that I did fairly well, which was gratifying to me because of my poor showing at West Point. I should not continually emphasize my poor academic standing there, because militarily I was one of the highest ranking corporals in the corps. And if I had stayed on I might have been a cadet officer and so forth. Discipline, in other words, and my attention to military duties was superior. I do know, however, that the class standing of the West Point officer follows him all throughout his career. If a goat at West Point, people may say that you can expect that he made some blooper. I stayed on at Fort Benning, and I should tell you that I was assigned to the demonstration regiment, the 29th Infantry which was at war strength. And we were constantly putting on demonstrations for the succeeding classes that came there. I was there 3½ years, and I also instructed in the 37-millimeter gun and the 3-inch mortar, trench mortar, Howitzer Company. I was assigned to that type company, the Howitzer

Company, in the 29th Infantry and also I was an instructor in the school. The last year there I was made an aide to the Commanding General of the school, Paul B. Malone. At that time, I was put in charge of arranging the curriculum, and very tactfully, but definitely, was able to introduce considerably more military history into the course than there had been. By talking to the general and explaining to him how much it meant to the future of the youngsters, more hours were included. From the Infantry School, my general was sent to the Field Artillery School for orientation. He was a brigadier, and the War Department was, at that time, sending senior colonels and brigadier generals to the Field Service School for a 6-months refresher course. They were taught the tactical use, you might say, of a field artillery brigade with the idea of subsequently assigning them to command a field artillery brigade in the army, and that's exactly what happened to my general. While there, I received permission to be attached to the battery officer's course. That was a great opportunity as far as I was concerned; I learned a considerable amount about artillery support, the capabilities of our artillery, and the organization and tactical employment of a field artillery battalion, regiment, and brigade. You mentioned extracurricular activities, well, I should tell you that Fort Benning was just being organized. It comprised 110,000 acres in Georgia; the largest town was Columbus, and I think the population at that time was around 20,000. Of course, married officers had to live in the city; there were no barracks or quarters available at Fort Benning. Actually, there were no roads built, and there were no sidewalks. It was a sandy loam soil and one could get about. The accommodations were

very primitive. I lived in a pyramidal tent for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years and had to walk about a block in order to shave and bathe and things like that. Toilet facilities were a block away from my tent. But all of the other officers had the same experience, and this was quite an introduction to me. I come from a nice home and it was certainly a come down. But, I repeat, for all of us it was good esprit de corps, and the work that we were doing was interesting and challenging; I didn't hear very much complaining. As is often the case, one learns a great deal by osmosis in associating with fellow officers -- not in a formal classroom -- and through the exposure socially with those other officers who had just returned from overseas with combat experience behind them. Some of them were severely wounded and some of them had excelled in the handling of troops in combat. I recall one such man was Colonel Troy Middleton. General Pershing had said of him, that he could handle a regiment in combat as well as most people could handle a squad. He was one of my friends and instructors there, and he told me a great deal that in later life proved to be very valuable. To be more specific, in connection with my assignment to the faculty and the 29th Infantry in June 1920, I should tell you that I was not too anxious to be assigned there. I had preferred to move up to the north someplace where I could be closer to my parents. However, I had no connections whatsoever with the military and knew no one to whom I could apply and express my wishes, and no one asked me. I mentioned earlier that I lived in a tent for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, a pyramidal tent, and it used to be quite cold there in the winter. We just had a small Coleman stove -- they called it -- a little conical shaped stove with the pipe

going out the top of the tent, and twice my tent caught fire and burned. One time all of my personal effects were lost. So I would have been ready to move, and I did move with this general after $3\frac{1}{2}$ years and went to the Field Artillery School, where I had quarters. I was a bachelor and it didn't matter a great deal. The school was innovative; I mentioned that the instructors lacked polish or, better stated, pedagogy. They didn't know all of the little nuances and tricks of the trade in imparting knowledge, but they were so demonstrative and so enthusiastic that the student did get more out of them perhaps than he would have in a very formalized curriculum and pedagogy. The school funds were restricted as is always the case after a war. The politicians clamped right down on expenditures; my fellow students, however, didn't complain. Most of us recognized how fortunate we were to get the advantage of the fine experience that these combat officers were passing on to us. I would say that the majority of those instructors were not West Point men; they were men who came in from universities and from civil life, some from the ranks, enlisted men. And, by and large, I would say 90 percent of them were outstanding men in character as well as in the profession to which they had just been newly exposed. There were some who were rotters, and it took the army a long time to get rid of them. They were just characters. They may have been excellent combat officers, but they -- and I am not being snobbish in making this observation -- they were not men of honor. I remember, I had a company commander who had been in the Alabama National Guard -- the fellow is dead now -- but nevertheless, he didn't think anything of cheating out on the rifle

range in a competition to make sure his company won a higher score than any other company -- things like that. There were a few such men -- that was quite an eye opener to me. But, by and large, they were excellent men and many of them obtained a very high rank later on in the service. Charlie Bolte is one example: He got four-star rank, and he's always been highly thought of. He was a graduate of Rensselaer University before he came into the Army. Most of them had gone to training camp. They called them 90-day wonders I believe -- 3 months training. At this time in my life, and I was probably around the early 20's now, I really didn't think as broadly as I should have perhaps; other officers, too, were not very concerned. It was sort of a day-by-day acceptance of our environment and of our instructions and our duties with some social life. The people in the local town, Columbus, Georgia, 12 miles away, were very friendly to the military. The only thing that they did that I felt was unfortunate -- they exploited the young married people. They charged them a higher rate of rent -- as much as they could for accommodations. Fort Benning was woefully lacking in housing facilities for the command, so many rented places in Columbus. Relative to my assignment to General Malone, I should recount here an experience I had. I had come from a rather sheltered home and never had drunk anything alcoholic. An older, a much older, officer, explaining that he was lonesome (his wife hadn't moved to Fort Benning), asked me to accompany him to the Elks Club downtown. He was from the Alabama National Guard. We ate salted peanuts and drank some corn liquor. Prohibition existed at that time and citizens were not supposed to have liquor at any

time. I became intoxicated. I was court-martialed and was given 6 months restriction to the limits of the reservation and fined $50 a month for a like period. It was at that time that General Malone asked me to be his aide. This was a great relief, because I considered very seriously resigning from the Army. I wrote a letter to the Pacific Fruit Company and was accepted in my request for employment. I would have worked on a boat running between fruit ports in South America and New Orleans. My colonel told me that I couldn't resign while I was serving punishment. He explained that at the end of 6 months, if I still felt that way, I could submit my resignation. But he didn't think that I would, and I shouldn't, or words to that effect. I thought my career in the Army would be ruined. I was grateful to General Malone, because he would take me places off the reservation in my official capacity as aide; and I believe he felt sorry and did it intentionally. He was also a nondrinker; I was a nondrinker. I taught Sunday School in the local city, Columbus, at the Episcopal Church. I know how the people at that church felt; they just couldn't understand the predicament and sent the superintendent of the Sunday School to testify at my trial in my behalf. I felt embarrassed about that. I didn't want to be a sissy, you know, among my fellow officers. I played on the baseball team. I pitched, and at that time I was considered the number one pitcher. Fort Benning was scheduled to play against the University of Georgia at Athens. Since they wouldn't permit me to go, there developed quite a fuss around the post. The next time the baseball team was scheduled to play an off-the-post game -- with Georgia Tech in Atlanta, the colonel relented and permitted me

to go. So I wasn't restricted very much, but I felt disgraced. I thought when an officer was under charges that fellow officers would look down on him. It was a new experience for me. But as it worked out it didn't seem to harm my future service. It's a part of my record but, I repeat, it didn't militate against future assignments in the Army. It was a good lesson to learn early in my career that I couldn't handle liquor. I never have been able to drink much. This experience, of course, I remembered all of my service. It made me also a little more understanding perhaps toward people with whom I came in contact during my service. The War Department had promoted my class to be 1st lieutenants in 1921. Then they demoted them, for there were far too many. They did not decrease the pay. We became 2nd lieutenants again but tained a 1st lieutenant's pay. I knew very little about the higher echelons of the Army. There weren't many general officers, in fact. I rarely saw a general. I don't recall seeing a two-star general but once in my early career. I saw a few brigadier generals when I was at Fort Sill with General Malone who was taking a refresher course at the Field Artillery School. I must be honest, though, I was not too favorably impressed with some of the senior officers of the Army as to their cultural development, their overall in-depth education, or intellectual attainments. And this was true right on up to the period immediately before the outbreak of World War II. I'll come to it later, I guess, but even in the War Plans Division of the General Staff to which I was assigned, I was disappointed in the studies or war plans that I saw. I was a major at that time 940). It was unusual to assign an officer of the rank of major in the War Plans

Division. It was considered important to have older officers with considerable rank and experience preparing our nation's war plans. The pay was adequate; the dollar would go a long way in those days. I remember my pay was $141.67 at Fort Benning (1921-23). The officers' mess was very expensive following World War I. One of the reasons was that bachelor officers' messes were devoid of silverware, flat silver, silver service, china, and so forth. They added additional amounts to our mess bill every month to build up funds to pay for the silverware. It seemed unfair, but in retrospect I can understand that it was necessary. So our mess bills were $55 and $60 a month, which left a lieutenant very little for other purposes. I didn't care much about social affairs. I had the idea that I was going to marry a certain girl from my home and I wasn't interested in local girls. I did take some to dances at Fort Benning occasionally. There were so few girls available in Fort Benning area that it was almost impossible to get a date with a girl unless you asked two or three weeks in advance. It didn't mean that much to me. Sometimes I would go to the dances alone or with other bachelors and we would cut in on others. Incidentally, the only entertainment that we had was a hop at the officers club once a week. The same was true at Fort Sill although there were permanent quarters and facilities at this army post. At least, the officers and enlisted men were quartered in permanent buildings while at Fort Benning they lived in tents or temporary wartime barracks. I rode a great deal at Fort Sill with a famous World War I General named Harold B. Fiske. He had acquired an outstanding record as a leader in combat. General Malone didn't ride horseback very much,

so I felt privileged to ride with General Fiske. He related so much about his experiences in the European War, and gave me thumbnail sketches of many of the leaders with whom he had been associated. He was a scholarly type of individual --not disagreeably critical of others, but he was disappointed in the conduct of some of his fellow officers and told me so . . . He referred, for example, to some leaders who were publicity minded and who, through the press, had acquired fame -- big names that one hears about and reads about often in stories of the war. During my service I have had exposure to such so-called famous men, both socially as well as professionally. I learned that an aura is created by the press reports around such individuals, when actually they are quite mediocre. Too often accurate recognition commensurate with the man's ability is neglected. Several of my old West Point classmates, close friends, were outstanding men, characterwise and professionally. Nobody ever heard of them; they got nowhere in rank -- it just surprises me.

I have a marvelous library here. You've seen but just a little smattering. I have the next two floors full of books. As to the former, it makes me rather dubious about the authenticity of most of the biographies that I read. It must make you that way, too, when I sit here and tell you this in an objective way. It isn't that it's a disagreeable way at all. But it worries me, because there are some people who are following the philosophy of aggression over in Europe and Asia, and we better get busy because they are working awfully hard to improve their minds -- not objectively, it's true, but nevertheless we ought to be working hard on our philosophy of life and develop it to preserve our heritage, in my judgment.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. I think that up until World War II there was little emphasis on formal education, I mean academic, civilian academic community exposure.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Right. As I remember, I never thought that I would go to Leavenworth when I was an aide out in the Philippines -- aide to General Kilbourne on Corregidor. I never dreamed that I'd ever; I was still a lieutenant and didn't dream that I would ever be sent to Leavenworth. So I wrote and took communication courses. I took the correspondence course from Leavenworth before I went there. So, you are right. I got other lieutenants, some of my friends out there, to do the same thing.

COL DESKIS: There is a great deal of emphasis now, as you know, on the academic attainments of the officer corps. For example, most officers now are required to not only have a bachelors degree, but also a masters degree, as do many of us, and Ph.D's.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well now, I don't worry too much about the degree business. It's very much like the medal business, Tony, if I may say so. I don't downgrade you for doing it; I think it's great. But I know of Ph.D's and masters degrees where all they got was a piece of paper. But what I am talking about is a philosophy of life, a purpose, or goal in every facet of life, and a curiosity about life. Then they ranked high at West Point, but when they got out into the service, they stopped thinking, or reading, or meditating, or contemplating, or what have you. I think it is so important for you, and I emphasize this to

that we send up to the Chief of Staff are the best product, the synthesis of the best thinking in this group. And I think our war plans reflected this philosophy. If our plans had been executed, as written, we would have had that cross-channel operation. But we'll get to that.

COL DESKIS: We'll get to that in great detail.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I do think that as I mentioned earlier, Tony, the political leaders do deemphasize and penalize too, you might say, the military because the military has been getting in an unrestricted manner lots of money. During the war, because of the supply situation, they wanted to give the military everything they needed to win that victory, and after that's over then, as you know, it's, "Well, thank you and good-bye" as in Mr. Kipling's poem. You know that after war is over, the civilian attitude toward the men still in uniform turns sour. It is so much so that in my personal experience when I'd go to the local country club to a dance, I always wore civilian tuxedo rather than my uniform. When people would go downtown, they would wear their civilian clothes rather than uniform.

COL DESKIS: Of course as you know, that's the same kind of environment that exists today.

GEN WEDEMEYER: You say whether it affected the army's morale or not. In 1929 we had a terrible depression, and then the military, their income being steady, were enjoying a rather preferred position vis-a-vis the civilians who were in bread lines. They then were very jealous of us. And I remember down

my two sons, that you should maintain a curiosity. It's important even for me 75. That keeps you young -- it does, it really does.

COL DESKIS: Well, that's fine. I think these points are well to be developed.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Now you asked in my early career what my attitudes were toward promotion and pay. I told you that promotion was slow -- my West Point class was in the lieutenant grade 17 years, and we were in the captain's grade about 5. So, that made us company grade for a long period of time. That is the reason, Tony, that I accepted different type assignments -- joined the War College, aide de camp, and so forth -- so that I would have different exposures. I was asked to stay in China to follow up the language course for 4 years. I was up there 2 years and di well in the language, because all of us had to pass a certain test in the Chinese language -- just enough to talk when we were out in the field and came in contact with Chinese. But I didn't do that; that would be a specialization I'd get into, and I felt it was wrong to do it. Now Max Taylor did do it. He went to the Japanese language school and it didn't hurt him. But, in general, I think it's better not to do that kind of specialization; try to keep a broad feeling. I had a chance to go on the rifle team, 'cause I was a fairly good shot -- best in my regiment in the Philippines. So they asked me to get on the regimental rifle team, and I didn't do it, 'cause I didn't want to be going to Dayton and that kind of business. I wanted to keep broad and I did it. I was able to do it, I think, without hurting my record with people, making people angry; I just didn't do it.

COL DESKIS: I think this is a very important point because . . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: I do, too, and that's why I say I am not interested in a Ph. D. guy per se. I do know some Ph. D's. Maybe I could arrange for you sometime to meet the type of man that I am talking about. His name is Huntington Cairns and he's brilliant; he's been offered college presidencies. The guy is one of the most brilliant men I know, and yet he is just like you. You'd enjoy talking to and knowing him because he is completely humble and has great genuine humility. He is natural and has a great mind -- that's the type of man I mean.

COL DESKIS: I think the point that you are emphasizing, which is worthwhile for young officers who may listen to this, is the fact that there's a difference between formal education and the self-development educational process that an individual must continue . . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: I think the most constructive statement that I made during this discussion, Tony, is: maintain a curiosity, and don't get discouraged but continue to work and work. We are all creatures of habit, and the finest habit that you can cultivate early in your career is to have this curiosity and then determine what you are going to know about things, what makes people do certain things, and why they do them. And also, do it always with a certain amount of tolerance. Don't be too pragmatic, pedantic, and things like that.

COL DESKIS: If we may explore one other point, sir, the point on specialization and retaining a generalist attitude while in the military. There is a great

deal of emphasis right now in today's army about the tendency toward specialization and the increased acceleration toward insuring that an officer is not only well developed across the spectrum but also specializes in some particular area. In fact, we are in the process now of a program called OPMS, Officer Personnel Management System, which states that an officer conceivably could go command or in a specialist area and be equally competitive as far as capabilities and promotions are concerned. It's creating quite a dissension at the present time, in the military. And I think that your point is that an individual ought not specialize too pervasively but ought to maintain and retain the generalist approach so that he gets a feel of the entire spectrum.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, the time will come, of course, in his career, Tony, where his talents, his interests seem to be more emphasized in one speciality, we might call it, than others. But that's O. K. He hasn't neglected the development in other areas of intelligence or knowledge. Our society today -- philosophically, economically -- is highly integrated, and you might be an expert in a certain area, but my experience and knowledge may reinforce yours and insure the success of your program; that you get some information from me that builds up and proliferates but definitely contributes to the success of your program. But what happens sometimes, and I think I am right, is that some people just follow . . . they remain in a compartment, intellectual compartment, impervious to any other suggestions and ideas. And that comes around to a thought that I will leave with you about convictions. I've been exposed over the years

to men and to women, some of them so-called intellectuals, who have expressed opinions. "It's my opinion . . ." I rarely find people who express convictions -- convictions that are based upon knowledge, based upon experience, exposures. I admire people who do express convictions and defend them. But they do so without arrogance, they listen to other viewpoints and they stand ready to modify or to change entirely perhaps a premise. But more of that is needed; I have been in many conferences, over the years with officers, and I find a lack of willingness to stick their necks out and it builds up sycophancy. It builds up the timidity, a false relationship with your chief. When I had the War Plans Division, Tony, I insisted that all the young men speak right up and differ with me and that they would be doing me a disservice if they didn't speak up and tell me, "I don't agree with you, General, I think this. . ." Give me the benefit of their knowledge and their experience. You see what I mean?

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: And in the military this business is so often noted perhaps more than in civilian life because of our rank between officers and the senior officers; it casts sort of a restraint over a group, don't you know, because of military discipline. And that's all right in the battlefield where sometimes seconds might mean the life of a comrade, but in the intellectual field there should be a free wheeling exchange of ideas. So I used to tell these youngsters in my War Plans Division to speak up and differ with anybody; you had no rank in this group at all. We must give to each other and make sure that the plans

at Fort Leavenworth -- I read about it, I wasn't there -- there were fox hunts and so forth; they were riding around on horses and the people in the countryside protested violently, stating that the army was riding around in their red coats and so forth and they were starving. They were jealous then of the military but they had forgotten about the fact that prior to the depression, they were enjoying all the benefits. They were getting two or three times the pay that I was getting in the military all those years after graduating from high school, as you know.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: So it did not affect the nation or the military, though I would say there were sufficient numbers of level heads in the Congress to keep up appropriations. They were low and they didn't permit expansion and development of new weapons; research and development was almost unheard of, with only a limited amount of it in our ordnance proving grounds. And, of course, civilian manufacturers were emphasizing consumer products so that the military, during the period between World War I and World War II, the period with which I am most familiar, was sort of relegated to a depressed position. It was like the place of churches; we need them for certain reasons at certain times, but when we don't, we ignore them.

In 1923 I left General Malone and his field artillery brigade down in Fort Sam Houston and went to the Philippines. I reported to San Francisco to board a June boat for the Philippines. There was a colonel at the Presidio

who had been very nice to me at Fort Benning; in fact, his wife often would call me and ask me to take some young lady to a hop for her and things like that. In those days military protocol required calling on senior people, at least leaving your card, and I did that. They weren't home when I called and I left a card and he sent for me. He knew me because he liked baseball and, as I told you, I pitched on the team at Fort Benning and that was the start of our friendship. But again, he was a colonel and I was a 2nd lieutenant--really a big gap. Even though he was very nice to me, and the wife, too, nevertheless one is always a little bit self-conscious around senior officers. He asked if I wanted to go to the Philippines, and I said that I was delighted at the prospect of going over there -- serving over there. And he said that he could postpone my going until September. Inasmuch as I was a graduate of Fort Benning, I was needed to teach at a summer training camp. He said he could send me down to Monterey where they were having an ROTC student training group. If I went there, I would meet a lot of movie stars; or I could go up to Fort Lewis, Washington. I wasn't interested in movie stars at that time, and I went to Fort Lewis where I spent the summer. I then returned to San Francisco in September and took the USAT "Thomas" to the Philippines. We went first to Hawaii. I saw some of my West Point classmates; for example, my roommate at West Point was stationed there. He met the boat and it was a very wonderful experience. Aboard ship I was appointed police officer (responsible for the policing of the boat). Lots of people were sick. Down below deck a great number were ill;

so much so that I was busy on the boat the whole time. I didn't have a berth or stateroom assigned to me since I was low ranking, but all those things were part of the training and experience that makes one appreciate the good things in life when they finally do come along. My roommate, who met the boat in Honolulu, told me that he was going to resign from the army. He joined a fine business firm, the 3M's Corporation. I just hated to have him get out of the service; the army, I thought, needed men like him. In Hawaii we picked up a Major General Neville of the Marine Corps. He was the commandant of the Marine Corps. When we reached Guam, he sent for me and I didn't know what was going to happen. I was scared to death. But he said he wanted me to serve as his aide; he was going to get off and make an inspection. He asked me if I would act as his aide, and I did. He had a daughter on the boat who was on her way to China to buy her trousseau. She was planning to marry a young marine lieutenant. Our boat remained at Guam just two days, then on to Manila. I was met by some friends at the pier and was told that I was assigned to the 31st Infantry with station in Manila. While I liked baseball, nevertheless I didn't join the army to be a baseball player. However, I naturally did carry out orders and I devoted all of my time to baseball. Our team won the Philippine championship. Then we went to Japan and China where we played the Marines in Shanghai and Washida University in Kyoto, Japan. I was the only officer on the team but my enlisted men were wonderful. I had no disciplinary problems with them although there was considerable temptation. I was assigned to the 31st Infantry, as I stated earlier, and I lived with Colonel Francis Endicott, commander of the

regiment. I don't know whether I should relate personal experiences. Did you want me to do so?

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir, that's fine.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, my colonel was a former enlisted man who had been given a commission after the Spanish-American War. He was a highly respected, nice fellow, a diamond in the rough. He was at Fort Benning, a rifle instructor in the small weapons section. He had married a lovely woman who apparently had a lot of money. One evening when they were returning home from a dance at the Columbus, Georgia, country club in their big heavy Cadillac car (incidentally, I was about 100 yards behind them in my little second-hand car with my date), they ran off the road and hit a tree. He had been drinking at the dance. His wife was killed instantly and he was battered up pretty much. When he recovered from his injuries, a short time later he was ordered to the Philippines. When I arrived there about a year later, he was commanding the 31st Infantry. He was a bachelor and, having known me at Fort Benning, he asked me to live with him. It was quite an experience, Tony. The colonel lived in a beautiful house -- Spanish design located only a block from Manila Bay. The buffet in the dining room looked like a section of the bar at the Army-Navy Club. There were many varieties of liquor. He entertained lavishly. It really was a hell of an environment to be introduced into. Some rather wild episodes. I failed to mention earlier that I met the future Mrs. Wedemeyer on the boat going to the Philippines. Her father was a colonel of the artillery going to Corregidor for duty. Our romance began on that boat trip and culminated a year and a half later in

marriage on Corregidor.

COL DESKIS: That was later General Embick?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, Embick. He was a colonel on the boat and awfully nice. He was a reader, a scholar. That is his picture (painting). He loaned me books to read and I enjoyed him. The boat trip was not all romantic pleasure, however. I had been assigned as police officer and had to inspect the entire vessel from top to bottom every day. When we arrived in Manila, Miss Embick and her parents invited me to visit them on Corregidor. Later I received a written invitation to come because I doubt seriously that I would have gone over otherwise (at that time - a 2nd lieutenant and stupidly bashful). I avoided senior officers even though they had attractive daughters. Returning to the period when I arrived in Manila, I lived with the colonel of my regiment and discovered that he was most kind - fatherly, but almost an alcoholic. He was good to me and, in fact, was very popular in the regiment. One evening when I returned to our lovely quarters, I heard an unusual noise in the colonel's bedroom, which was directly across the hall from mine. I knew that there was a lot of pilfering by the Filipinos. I had my golf clubs in the corner of my room and took one from the bag and tiptoed across the hall to the door of the colonel's room. Then I heard a woman laugh and also some conversation. My good colonel had a woman friend. I had almost rushed in there swinging my golf club, but when I heard the woman, I quickly and quietly retreated. When the colonel went away on vacation to Baguio, a resort up in the mountains, I went to army headquarters and asked for a transfer to the 57th Infantry at Fort

McKinley. I stated that the reason for my request was to obtain experience with the Filipino soldiers. The 31st Infantry was an all white regiment. I hardly did any soldiering -- just played baseball in that regiment. The adjutant phoned me one day and said an officer had died. He said, "Would you be willing to take charge of the military funeral?" Apologetically he said he couldn't locate any officer. It was a weekend and he had to have an officer to command the funeral escort. I remember this well -- here was an adjutant of a regiment almost begging a 2nd lieutenant to perform a military duty. Of course I agreed to do it and took charge of the funeral arrangements. I made up my mind right then that I was going to make a change and applied for transfer to the 57th Infantry at Fort McKinley. My transfer was approved with the understanding that I wouldn't play baseball on the Fort McKinley baseball team. The distribution of players in the league was kept rather even. The officer in charge tried to allocate players to different regimental baseball teams so that one team could not dominate the playing season. I agreed that that was fine -- that I wouldn't play any more baseball. And I served with the 57th Infantry Philippine Scouts. I had interesting experiences there too, but they were military - not in athletics. I was appointed Judge Advocate of the General Court and tried some very serious cases -- two murders. One, a West Point officer had murdered a girl with whom he was in love. At that time (1924) in the Philippines, Tony, we were dependent upon our own available talent for entertainment. There were amateur plays and entertainment by the officers, enlisted men, and their families. The lieutenant, who had just graduated from West Point, met this girl on the boat en

route to the Philippines. Her father was a captain in the Medical and Administrative Corps. She was only sixteen, and while the parents didn't object to the boy, they wanted the young couple to wait a little before getting married. An amateur show was scheduled at the Army-Navy Club in Manila, and she agreed to do an Hawaiian dance that she had learned as a little tot. The hula dance involved wearing a scant grass skirt. He told her that he didn't want her to publicly expose her body in that manner. He was the son of a minister in New Jersey. He was a fine looking young man, his name Thompson. The night of the entertainment he went to the Army-Navy Club and took her away in a car and killed her. He tried to kill himself but apparently was too nervous. One shot went up through the top of the car. With the body of the girl in the car, ordered the Filipino taxi driver to drive to Fort McKinley where he turned himself in. General MacArthur was president of the court. I was judge advocate. Thompson was found guilty and sentenced to die by hanging. I was required to witness the hanging, which was executed in a warehouse at Fort McKinley. Later an enlisted man, a private in the 31st Infantry regiment, had some difficulty with a sergeant of his regiment. They were on the rifle range at Fort McKinley. When they returned to their barracks in Manila, the private shot and killed the sergeant. I had to try him and he was hanged also. I served as judge advocate in many trials. A major who was fooling around another man's wife was charged with conduct unbecoming an officer. General MacArthur, as president of the court, wrote a very severe reprimand. This was my first contact with his ability to use words and phrases in a most expressive way. I

greatly admired him; he was a BG then, in '24, however he got his second star later in that year -- permanent major general. We also experienced a mutiny in the 57th Infantry (Philippine Scout Regiment).

The Filipinos received as pay in pesos what the Americans got in dollars. The Filipinos were excellent garrison soldiers. The military service was very popular. We had no trouble in getting recruits for the Philippine Scout Regiments. Many of the officers were former white enlisted men who had served in the Philippines during the insurrection. They didn't have much education, but they knew how to handle men. They were commissioned lieutenants, captains, and majors in the Philippine Scout organization. The colonel of the regiment was a regular army colonel named George Byrode. He was the senior officer aboard that boat on which I went to the Philippines. The Filipinos refused to drill one morning. Many of them were court-martialed. They had a good point, poor devils, for they certainly were excellent soldiers. They were stirred up by radicals who persuaded them to refuse to obey orders. They really out-shot and out-soldiered the white enlisted men, at least those in the 31st Infantry in Manila. In Manila the American soldiers often had Filipino women as squaws, and there was considerable drinking and lots of venereal disease. We never should locate a regiment of men in a city, especially a foreign city, where there is so much temptation. As a matter of fact, I am opposed to occupational military forces in general. Years ago I recommended, when I was in the Pentagon as Deputy Chief of Staff in charge of combat operations and strategy, that the U.S. withdraw all of our troops from Europe. I suggested a program of withdrawals --

first notifying all of our allies in Europe that we would bring our military men back in increments, and further by a certain date that we would have all our men out of Europe. It would have to be done incrementally because Europe's economy was adjusted more or less to our presence, and our dollars were important to the economy. Furthermore, they would be required to generate military forces to replace those we would withdraw. I don't believe that we should leave any of our military forces in foreign lands in the Orient, in Europe, anyplace -- history will bear out the fact that extended occupation of foreign areas invariably proves unsatisfactory.

I was married in the Philippines in February of 1925 at Corregidor. In September I was ordered back to the U. S. -- to Fort Washington, Maryland. the Philippines at the time I was assigned there, there was one white American regiment located in Manila, the 31st Infantry. It was at peacetime strength so it had probably around 1800 men. The commander, as I indicated, was Colonel Endicott; the troops were fairly well trained and equipped. The mission, of course, was to maintain order in the Philippines. My duties consisted of playing baseball -- pitching for the team. Troop morale was good. The men were lazy and their discipline wasn't the best. The service was really a sinecure for soldiers -- it was a very easy assignment for them. The people indigenous to the area were friendly and rather subservient at that time. I have noted more recently a considerable increase of arrogance and an unfriendly attitude toward the white man. This was noted post-World War II in the Philippines. The ilipino men were eager to get into the army. Many of them had never worn

shoes, of course, and limited clothing. They made excellent garrison soldiers. I learned later that they made excellent soldiers in combat. They were very courageous and fought well. The Filipino people were poverty ridden and endured a very low standard of living, but they were adequately fed. One could stick a match stick in the lush soil and something would grow, according to the legends. There was abundant papaya, rich in nutrition, in fact plenty of food -- rice, fish and sugar cane, so noone starved. The senior U.S. representative in the country at that time was Governor General Leonard Wood. Going out to the Philippines on the boat with me was General Wood's niece. She was a lovely person, Miss Frances Judson was her name. I went to the Governor General's home, Malacayan Palace, to visit her. I met General Wood; incidentally he asked me to be on his staff. I didn't do it because I was being transferred to the 57th Infantry at Fort McKinley. Also I had served as an aide quite enough already. Furthermore, I think there was a suggestion of romance, and I wanted to be able to visit Corregidor. Governor General Wood was a wonderful man level-headed. He was a doctor, medical doctor. He had considerable military experience and hoped to be assigned to an infantry division. It was reported that because he wasn't a Regular Army Officer or because he wasn't a West Point graduate, he was not given command in France. He was considered efficient and a capable leader with broader education than most of the West Pointers who were reported jealous of him. General Wood's chief executive officer was Brigadier General Frank McCoy, who later became a major general in the Army. General McCoy was used a great deal on diplomatic work for the military,

for the State Department down in Tacna-Arica -- a tense situation involving a dispute about the boundary between Colombia and Peru. General McCoy fell in love with General Wood's niece and they were married in Manila. My duties in the 57th Infantry were those of a lieutenant in command of a platoon of infantry, Philippine Scouts; I had a captain who had graduated from Texas A&M. He was fairly efficient.

COL DESKIS: Did you find that among the Officer Corps most were regular army officers and . . . ?

GEN WEDEMEYER: They were all regular army then.

COL DESKIS: And most of them came from which source of commission?

GEN WEDEMEYER: The West Point officers were very much in the minority. Most officers were graduated from colleges in the U. S. or Europe. My brother-in-law, Captain Frank Hastings, married General Embick's other daughter, Margaret. Captain Hastings was a graduate of the University of Indiana. He was a fine gentleman, a wonderful officer in the coast artillery. Oh, yes, by far most of the officers were not West Pointers. . . . and there was sort of a clannish feeling, too, among the West Pointers, which gave rise to criticism by non-West Pointers. This was unfortunate, but understandable. If a group of officers were from Harvard, they would feel a bond with each other and would do things together when off duty. The old school tie would cause them to get together. And then there were a few West Pointers who gave the impression of snobbishness. The West Point officer should have been highly efficient as a result of the wonderful training that he received at the Military Academy.

Some people who graduate Phi Beta or do outstandingly well in school, when they get out, they think that they have it made--that they know everything. They've reached the pinnacle and seem to know it all. Actually they really should continue to study -- strive to increase their knowledge. But I repeat, your government spends a hell of a lot of money in getting those fellows ready for leadership in the military and they ought to be outstanding, but they're not . . . the main reason some aren't is because, as I told you, they may have that attitude, a superior attitude -- maybe stand a little straighter and maybe they know a little bit more about military courtesy, but those things are not the most important.

Now I did have very little free time while I was in the Philippines. I played bridge a little bit during the rainy season, in fact, I was so lucky that I paid my mess bill each month with bridge earnings. Also I was mess officer at the Officer's Club, when I was a bachelor at Fort McKinley. My navy friends were awfully good to me. I met a lot of navy lieutenants and they invited me on submarines and destroyers in the South Sea Islands. I visited Hong Kong and, of course, China, and I went to Japan with my baseball team. In those days in the military, people as a rule didn't work in the afternoon. That time was for recreation -- tennis, baseball, golf and what have you. We worked hard in the morning, got up early too, reveille was generally at six and we'd start drilling at seven-thirty or eight. However, in the Philippines we had a rainy season which precluded work outdoors. Often the officers played bridge. However, I worked awfully hard with my company of Filipinos and tried to give them

as much help as I could in becoming expert riflemen. They were given five pesos extra each month if they qualified expert and they received three pesos for sharpshooter and one peso for marksman. To these Filipinos the extra pay meant a lot to them. They worked awfully hard and did very well. I told you earlier they really did soldier better than the white men in the Philippines, not because they were smarter or better; the white men weren't applying themselves like the Filipino. The Filipino noncommissioned officers were excellent; they were loyal and hard working. Some difficulty was caused, of course, by the difference in languages. There was difficulty at times conveying instructions, but the noncoms were good instructors and spoke different dialects. I was told that they also stood out during the war. There were a few Filipino officers; several were West Point graduates. I might mention that the foreign graduates of the U. S. Military Academy with whom I came in contact, both in the Philippines and in China, weren't particularly outstanding when they returned to their homelands. In China this was particularly true. Upon returning to their country, they went right into civilian life and exploited the cheap labor available and became rich. They didn't follow through in the military profession, as I believe they should.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. We'll cover that area later.

GEN WEDEMEYER: All right. When I returned to this country in October of '25, I was assigned to the 12th Infantry, again a lieutenant commanding a company, and mess officer.

COL DESKIS: You brought your bride . . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: To Fort Washington.

COL DESKIS: With you?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. The commander was one of the finest men I had the privilege of serving under. His name was Major William H. Simpson. Later he became a four-star general, commander of the Eighth Army in World War II -- William Hood Simpson. He was married to a wealthy woman. They had no children. He was the last man scholastically in his class at West Point, yet he was generally recognized as one of the finest officers in the army. All of the officers and enlisted men at Fort Washington loved him and respected him. You would never believe that he had such a low class standing. Our regiment was sent in 1926 to the sesquicentennial in Philadelphia. We were all given new special uniforms, the officers and enlisted men. I had a silent drill that I had to exhibit every afternoon and every evening in the huge stadium. My platoon would drill for twenty minutes without command.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Then the sesquicentennial closed in the fall, and the 12th Infantry returned to Fort Washington. I was asked to be an aide to General H. O. Williams in Washington, D. C. The officers at Fort Washington seemed to be average in efficiency. I don't recall one of them, except Simpson, as outstanding. My company commander was killed later in World War II. He was a colonel commanding an infantry combat team in France. But I don't recall any of the Fort Washington officers doing anything unusual or distinguishing themselves. I did mention that Major Simpson was an exception. I reported

as the aide to General Williams in December 1926. I did pinch-hit in performing some duties at the White House and also arranged funerals at Arlington. If a member of an army family passed away, I was notified -- sometimes by phone, sometimes by telegram. I'd arrange for the burial at Arlington National Cemetery, including a Catholic chaplain or a Protestant chaplain and an escort, if desired. The army furnished required personnel, according to the rank of the deceased. I notified Fort Myer and Arlington Cemetery, requesting a bugler, chaplain, and the body bearers. The honorary pallbearers would be arranged by the family. If it was a big funeral, I would arrange that, too. We didn't have a very large headquarters. It was located in the munitions building. My general also commanded Fort Howard, Fort Washington, Fort Hustis in Virginia, and then the District of Washington. When the President laid a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, I would make the appropriate arrangements, of course in the name of my general. When Secretary of War Goode died, I arranged the funeral. The general performed the function, of course; I did take a share of the work for him.

COL DESKIS: Was the Old Guard located at Fort Myer at this time?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes . . .

COL DESKIS: Did you use those troop contingents for these arrangements?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes.

I was ordered to West Point as instructor in June of 1929. I had a friend, Captain Gayle, who was a captain while I was still a lieutenant. He was a post

exchange officer over at the War College. They were ordered to China, and Gayle asked me, "Would you like to go to China?" I had been ordered to West Point as an instructor. He said, "Well, you could go to West Point sometime in the future." Gayle urged me to go to China. I talked to Mrs. Wedemeyer and she was enthusiastic about going to China. Anyway, Captain Gayle arranged everything, changing my orders from West Point to China. The Commandant of West Point was furious. His name was Colonel Richardson, known as "Nellie" Richardson. I didn't know him, but he had asked for me and then I turned him down. West Point was supposed to be a challenging assignment, but I was stupid and didn't know. Years later I met General "Nellie" Richardson who explained that it was a mistake for me to change my orders. I served two years in Tientsin, China. Then I received a telegram from General Kilbourne to come down to Corregidor and serve on his staff. I reported to the general in the fall of 1931 and remained three years at Corregidor, so I served five years in the Far East, completely away from the U. S. depression and its terrible effects.

COL DESKIS: It was good fortune, wasn't it?

GEN WEDEMEYER: We went to China in 1929 and I was assigned to the 15th Infantry. The regimental commanding officer was Colonel James Taylor. There were two battalions of the 15th Infantry stationed there. My battalion commander was a major named Walton Walker, who later (as a lieutenant general) was killed in Korea during the war there.

COL DESKIS: He was a major at that time?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, Walker was a major and I was a lieutenant. Colonel James Taylor was an unusual man. I was not able to judge his professional ability, but I do know that he was working awfully hard to be made a general. We called it bootlicking. I guess you still do in the service. He was a man who would bootlick any high-ranking people who visited China. It was so obvious to all of us. We had great difficulties in discipline because of the high venereal rate. There were many girls . . . our soldiers even bought women and lived with them.

When I reported at Corregidor, my mission was to install a beach defense. I selected machine gun positions all around the periphery of Corregidor and on the other fortified islands. We installed concrete pillboxes for machine guns -- 50-caliber machine guns. I almost was court-martialed because I sank in concrete the tripods of these weapons to provide a firm base ready to receive the gun in an emergency. I learned a great deal at Corregidor and had considerable pleasure; also a lot of challenges. I was the only infantryman on the post, and also I was appointed judge advocate of the general court. I tried a few officers for being drunk and disorderly -- a few lesser offenses, as well as some enlisted men. The general had another aide, a bachelor officer, and I didn't have to get involved in the general's social life, which really was wonderful. The general, Charles E. Kilbourne, had won the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal; few at that time had all those high decorations. He was a coast artilleryman,

professionally, and had graduated from VMI. Many years later he became Superintendent of VMI after he retired from the Regular Army. I frequently went to Manila with him and, on one occasion, I met the Filipino Secretary of Commerce. He was a graduate of Cornell, his name was Victor Buencamino. He had scheduled an inspection of all Luzon and the Visayan Islands, with special reference to agricultural developments. He invited me and for about a month we covered the whole area. It was really a wonderful experience and an opportunity to learn something about the production potential of that country.

COL DESKIS: Sir, before you went back to Corregidor, you were exposed to the Chinese for several years. What were your impressions at that time of China, the Chinese people, our policy toward China?

GEN WEDEMEYER: I felt that there were two definite types. There was a veneer in China of the so-called cultured class -- the privileged class, rich people, or at least highly educated, cultured people. I think the total population of China was estimated at 420,000,000 people at that time. The area of China is about 4,000,000 square miles. A goodly portion is mountainous or arid. Consequently, most of the people were concentrated compactly in river valleys, and along the coast. It was very crowded with poor families. There was complete disregard for human life; the poor laborer was exploited by the rich people. If you had a Chinese as a friend, I think you had a very valuable possession; they were loyal, hard working and honest. The stories that one hears concerning the squeeze or the dishonest exploitation is the result of their experience with people from abroad. It is especially true in the seaports, a bad element was developed

there -- it is true. Of course, the opium industry was developed at the time of President Roosevelt's grandfather. The Americans and other occidental races came out there and bought opium and cultivated the trade for that purpose. The Chinese, per se, are a lovable, hard working, honest people, woefully ignorant, no opportunity to improve their lot. That was the case at the time I was there. I met very few of their leaders. Wellington Ku was, at one time, ambassador to the United States; he lived a block from where I lived in Tientsin and he was the typical type of highly cultured, very rich Chinese that I met at that time. I didn't meet, as I said, many of the leaders. I did travel quite a bit in China. I saw communists beheaded; they had about fifty that were going to be beheaded, and I watched seventeen. I just couldn't watch it, it was too disgusting. They told me afterwards they were just killing these men that they'd captured; it was near Nanking, China, south of Nanking on a trip that I took with the navy. A navy gun boat went down to Shanghai for dry dock, and while it was being scraped and hulled, I went to Shanghai and to Nanking, and traveled up the river, the Yangtze River, a little bit. I never dreamed that I would ever be out there again in any capacity. I loved the Chinese people; I did then, but I pitied them, too. I felt that they were a people who did not have very much of a future, and I based that somewhat upon my observation, the lack of resources. I knew that there was no heavy industry; there was a lot of light industry, you know, silk, cloth, fabrication of things on a lighter scale. But they didn't have the industry twins present -- coal and iron. Incidentally, I am wrong about coal; they had coal in great quantities. The largest open pit coal mine in the world

is located just north of Harbin, and they had anthracite coal along the northern stretch there near the Great Wall, the Shanhaikwan area; the Keiling Mining Company was in there -- that's a British mining company -- and they exploited the cheap labor and that coal. But the resources, coal and iron, iron ore, that are necessary for industry . . .

SECTION 3

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL A. C. WEDEMEYER

by

Colonel A. J. Deskis

This is side #1, tape #3, of session #3. My name is Colonel Anthony J. Deskis, a student at the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. I am about to interview General Albert C. Wedemeyer, United States Army, Retired. We are located at General Wedemeyer's home, Friends Advice Farm, Boyds, Maryland. The date is 24 January 1973, and the time is 1000 hours. This interview is one of a series in conjunction with the Senior Officer Oral History Program, which was established by the Chief of Staff of the Army in October 1970.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Obviously, my two years in North China, Tientsin, China, 1929 to 1931, did influence my approach to problems when I returned during World War II. Of course, I was just a lieutenant in 1929 and did not have a great deal of responsibility, military or otherwise. I took advantage of my residence, however, to meet as many Chinese as I possibly could and I did study the mandarin language on my own, not as a primary responsibility I hired two Chinese teachers; one who could only speak Chinese and the other who could only speak English. And I had the one who couldn't speak any English come first. When he tried to explain something to me that wasn't clear, I could talk to the man who spoke English and he clarified things for me. Also, I studied or read a great deal about the Chinese government and Chinese history. This generated a very great respect, a deep respect for Chinese culture. I was interested in art, consequently I was aware of and appreciated very much the progress they had made in various artistic endeavors. I met many prominent Chinese including the man who was my neighbor, Wellington Ku, who was later quite prominent in Chinese diplomacy, and there were other Chinese leaders whom I met. I remember meeting Henry Pu Yi who was the last potential emperor of China. He was in protective custody of the Japanese at the time, in Tientsin. We played golf together a few times. He was a weak looking person physically, and he was also obviously lacking in force. He was very gentlemanly and had been very carefully groomed and well

educated. He spoke English fluently. He, as I stated, was in protective custody or was more or less restricted in what he could do by the Japanese. This was, of course, at the time that Chang Tso Lin, the Chinese War Lord, was blown up on the train proceeding south from Mukden in Manchuria. Chang Tso Lin's son was a little young to be active in a very high position militarily, but he was already being groomed for the position his father had held. And there were many other War Lords whom I met, but very casually again. My rank was so low that I didn't have much opportunity to know them. I did take a trip from Tientsin on a Navy boat to Shanghai in 1930. While the Navy boat was in dry dock getting the bottom scraped, I went up to Nanking, a little farther on up the Yangtze because I'd heard that they had captured a number of communist troops and were going to behead them. I witnessed the beheading of seventeen, as I recall, and they had about twenty more. I think they had fifty all together. I couldn't stand that. Seventeen was more than I should have watched probably, but I had heard that they had been doing that and it was impressive. I never forgot that incident, of course. Their legs would be bound so that they could just take the steps to the block, their hands were tied behind them and they were required to kneel and lean over. They were beheaded with these big, very razor sharp blades.

The Sun Yat Sen tomb had been completed, and it was located in Nanking. It was a very inspirational memorial. Chiang Kai-shek, of course, was considered the leader. I don't think, however, that he was in absolute control of the government. The different war lords had to be played against the other as I understood it. Mr. Wellington Ku, incidentally, would talk to me about the situation. His loyalty, however, to Chiang Kai-shek was unquestioned. Wellington Ku agreed with, and was doing all in his power to further the interest of Chiang

Kai-shek in achieving the Sun Yat Sen concept of unifying China.

While I was stationed in China at the end of my second year, I was asked by the military attache' in Peking to consider coming to Peking and becoming a language student. I immediately wrote back to older friends in Washington, whose judgment I valued, and asked them for advice. My father-in-law, who at that time was a colonel in the Army, advised me not to become a language student, but to try to retain a broader approach to my professional training. So I thanked Colonel Drysdale who was the Military Attache' in Peking, and explained to him that I thought I'd better go back to troop duty in the States. But instead of that, a telegram came from General Charles E. Kilburn in Corregidor asking me to come down there and be his aide. I was to have some responsibility in beach defense -- putting in gun emplacements, 50 caliber guns, and also a warning service around the fortified islands. I went down there in 1931, and was his aide for two years. I made the trip from Ching Wen Tao, China, to Manila on the Henderson, a Navy transport. As quickly as I could, I surveyed all of the fortified islands. At that time I liked to hike and General Kilbourne, fortunately, liked to hike. We, together, went all around Corregidor, the perimeter, and then I went to visit all the other islands. Many of the 50 caliber gun emplacements I had located were there. I was very careful to place some of the guns right on the same level as the water, and then I put some up, maybe at 100 feet elevation. There my objective was to give plunging fire because there was a tremendous wave, sort of a long axis wave, and half the time small boats would be concealed as they approached the island if an assault were being made. By placing the guns higher, I got good coverage. The one thing I did though -- I almost got court-martialed for doing it -- was to put the tripods

of the 50 caliber guns in cement so that all the gun crews had to do was bring the gun and put it in the cradle, in the yoke, and the gun was in place and ready to fire. The ordnance officer preferred charges against me. But I talked to the officers who commanded the beach defense there. Then I had a small fleet of boats that the General turned over to me so that I could simulate attacks against the island to test out my warning service. The Coast Artillery had these big lights, search lights, I don't know what the equipment is now, that was 40 years ago, but I told you about locating the guns. I established a skeletonized warning service and we had tests. I took the mine planter and three or four other smaller boats and I'd go out and hide. Maybe I'd go out and we would rendezvous up Bataan Peninsula and stay there for maybe a few hours, then at two o'clock in the morning, we'd assault Corregidor. We'd make an approach and test the actual warning service as well as the simulated defense, if we got into the gun trajectory and things like that. We had a pretty good defense of the island against small amphibious operations. They were pretty well organized when I was there, that was 1931, '32, '33. I was ordered home, of course, with General Kilbourne. When General Embick arrived, they urged me to stay another year and I did. It was a very pleasant experience. I might tell you a very interesting story. I went to a banker here in Washington and told him I had a little money that was invested. It was 1929, and I told him I was going to China and he said, "Well, maybe you'd better sell it and buy bonds and put it in a security box and forget about it," and we did. And he asked me how long I'd be gone and I said, "At least two years in China then I'd probably come home." I was gone five years, all during the depression, and when I came home everything was on the floor in the market. They had had this terrible

depression here and I was very fortunate to get that wonderful advice. The only reason I tell that story is that most officer's don't have much exposure to finance and to business, and when you don't know about something go to someone who does and get advice from them. This is just a simple story, but I think it's something that young officers should know about and not to be ashamed when you don't know all the answers. When you get very high ranking in the military even, you don't always know all the limitations and capabilities of all the weapons. No one is omniscient, and so I think it's important that you admit it very frankly and go to someone who does know, in whom you have confidence, and get all of the information you can from an expert who has no special axe to grind. If it's in finance. I went to a bank president and got that good advice.

COL DESKIS: That was good advice.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Wasn't it wonderful? Very few people you know have had that experience.

COL DESKIS: I guess most of them had the other experience.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I had relatives in New York, quite well-to-do people, and they told me about men jumping out of windows and committing suicide, losing all their money. So the two officers to whom I was Aide-de-Camp did affect me. They did influence my outlook on life a great deal. Both of them were fine characters. General Kilbourne was a graduate of VMI and General Embick, my father-in-law, was a graduate of West Point. They were devoted friends, both Coast Artillery officers. General Kilbourne was the first officer to have received the Congressional Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross and Distinguished Service Medal; all three of them. He won the Congressional Medal

of Honor in the Philippines during the Insurrection there, and the DSC in World War I for bravery in action, heroism, and he got the DSM when he was head of War Plans Division, I think, on the General Staff. He was a fine gentleman and not at all ostentatious. I would say the same thing about my father-in-law. He never had any combat service. General Embick was a scholarly man, perhaps one of the best scholars in the Army. General Bliss, Tasker H. Bliss, had him come over and participate in the formulation of the treaty terms for the Versailles Treaty. I think he was very highly thought of as a scholar but also was a very fine individual. He was an outstanding man, modest in his attitude and very understanding, very democratic, compassionate, very outstanding, really. So it was a good experience. Being an Aide-de-Camp for a younger officer is good experience, especially when an officer like myself had been a lieutenant for so many years. One certainly knew the duties of a lieutenant after so many years of service. So I took these extra curricular activities as jobs when they were offered to me. It gave me an opportunity to see how others operated in responsible positions. You learn sometimes not only how to do things better, but also you learn how to guard against doing certain things. I noticed very early that people, both men and women, would try to ingratiate themselves with the General and they'd resort to flattery, expecially the women. And it's just something for a man to hold on to his balance and keep things in perspective. That was good experience. And then handling nasty situations. Sometimes those kinds of things develop, particularly in the fortified islands. Men were on a little island, perhaps manning some batteries, isolated from women and sometimes quite a lot of sodomy occurred things like that, and how human, compassionate, understanding and sensibly General Embick and General Kilbourne settled those

problems.

COL DESKIS: When did General Embick retire, sir?

GEN WEDEMEYER: 1940, '41, yes.

COL DESKIS: Just prior to the war. When did he pass away, sir?

GEN WEDEMEYER: '58. No, I think our government was concerned about the aggressive philosophy of the Japanese during the '30's. If this were not so, we would not have greatly increased the defensive situation in Guam as well as in the fortified islands of Manila. The Kellogg Peace treaty visualized a ratio of 5-5-3 for the navies. It also stipulated that there would be no improvement of fortifications and no great increases of a belligerent nature in the Pacific area. I don't know who authorized the improved defensive works of Corregidor, but the Malinta Hill tunnel was started by General Kilbourne while I was there, and that was a violation of the Kellogg Treaty. General Embick continued it when he came. What I was doing in those crow boxes and so forth was a violation of a strict interpretation of the Kellogg Treaty. Guam was greatly increased in defensive strength. There was a small island off Guam called Rota. It was in the Marianna's Group, but was occupied by Japanese. The Japanese owned it and they would not permit any visits there. We had fly-overs. In those days air reconnaissance wasn't as good, but it was conjectured that the Japanese were also fortifying Rota. I mentioned this because it's an indication that they were violating the Kellogg Treaty also. In addition to that, and in connection with the responsibilities that I had, occasionally we would pick up Japanese fishermen who were coming in closer to the fortified islands than they were permitted to come. They would pose as fishermen and sometimes I'd go out and get them. I'd send a patrol boat out or I'd go out and get them and bring them in. Some of them proved to be Naval officers, military men posing as fishermen,

and they would have photographic material with them. They had pictures of the fortified islands and so forth. That was back in 1932, '33, '34, right along in there. So both sides were violating the treaty just like today, and I say it reluctantly. Our country as well as all the other countries who sign it and participate in international organizations are always violating them. We criticize very much and emphasize the lack of trust that we have concerning the Soviet treaties. We've pointed out that only when it's in their own advantage do they ever honor an agreement. My first experience of the negation or the violation of an agreement which I thought we had a moral obligation to fulfill, started with our violating the Kellogg Treaty back in 1934. That treaty occurred right after World War I if you'll recall, 1922 actually. But then that aroused my interest and I have found we've violated many of our so-called agreements, or we have not followed the charter and the stipulations inherent in the charters of SEATO, NATO, CENTO, OES and things like that. So it makes it rather difficult for you and me to beat our chests and say that "We're all right, we honor our commitments," when we know that we don't. We can't criticize others when we don't. You cannot, perhaps, be as idealistic as you would be in the intangibles and imponderables one is confronted within the international arena. There is just too much chauvinism, too much personal aggrandizement and personal interest. Sometimes it's the in sovereign rights that people claim causes them to violate the treaty. But I think that's interesting. When younger officers come along and are required to negotiate with foreigners, I think they should be aware of our own record in diplomacy, diplomatic persuasion and the use of international organizations to maintain peace.

COL DESKIS: Sir, in our current environment, do you see the Japanese reinstituting

themselves as a military power, internationally? First, they have become an economic power, as you know.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Oh yes, I think that will come. But when I was out there in the 1930's, the Japanese government and policy reflected right into the lower echelons of the military. I think they had a terrible inferiority complex, and that's the thing that made them seem to have a chip on their shoulder all the time. But at that time, it was the orient for orientals, that was the Draumitish concept of the Japanese policy and attitude toward foreigners. They were very rude to foreigners. I think I have painted a picture for you concerning the situation with reference to relations between the US and Japan essentiality from the military viewpoint. If you want me to develop that a little I could. The China Sea was just full of Japanese fishermen. In fact the Philippines and all the islands were just teeming with Japanese fishermen. Many of them were there without any military implications, but in general, those that were close to the fortified islands had a mission. It was publicized very well and they all knew that they were in violation. They weren't allowed within three miles of the fortified islands. So I did pick up a lot of them, as I told you, and brought them in and turned them over with a warning, to the Japanese Consul in Manila.

You asked, "Was the Army developing a counter strategy?" You used the term strategy and I think I told you how I feel about that word. Whether the Army initiated them or were merely carrying out instructions from civilian leaders back in the States, I don't know, but they were definitely taking steps to increase the preparedness and the effectiveness of the defense in the fortified islands and Manila at this time. In the Philippines, we had a regiment of Americans, the 31st Infantry in Manila. The regiment was at peak strength,

I would say approximately 1,500, and the men were quartered right in the city of Manila. They were not very well disciplined, they had been there many years. Some of the soldiers there had squaws. There was a great deal of venereal disease and drunkeness. It was difficult for the officers to maintain a proper degree of discipline since there was so much temptation. There was a battalion of the 15th Infantry in Fort McKinley. The other two battalions in the 15th Infantry were in Tientsen, China. That battalion of the 15th Infantry at Fort McKinley was given the responsibility for providing anti-aircraft. This protection was quite unusual. They were equipped with 50 caliber and three inch anti-aircraft guns. Then we had two Philippine Scout regiments in Fort McKinley, each had all Filipino scouts. The enlisted men and the officers were mostly white. There were a few Philippine Scout officers. Some of them graduated from the Military Academy and other schools in the states here. On Corregidor we had a heavy Coast Artillery regiment. I'm sorry I don't remember the number there were two regiments and they were all white. One manned the heavy guns. They had 16 inch guns there and placements, fixed mounts and some disappearing mounts, and they had quite a number of mortars on the island. And then they had an anti-aircraft regiment. The 60th again with 3 inch anti-aircraft guns, 50 caliber guns and a search light battery. They also had a mine planter and had the capability of mining the North Channel completely so that no one could come in and out. It controlled the South Channel by mine fields echeloned so that the people would have to know the path to come in to avoid them. Some of them were land controlled and some of them were contact mines. There were a series of islands across the neck of Manila Bay; Corregidor was the largest one. Then there was one next to it called Caballo. Fort Hughes, then the

concrete battleship, they called it out in the South Channel, El Fraile, the Bishop; and then Carabao island. All of these islands were fortified with big guns and I think that over at Fort Nichols we had reconnaissance airplanes. We had no bombers when I was there in the '30's, just reconnaissance. This was the principle function of the airplanes at Fort Nichols, Camp Nichols I think it was called, right near Manila. The shape of Corregidor was like a polliwog, and the main island was around about three miles in diameter with a tail extended out. Actually Corregidor and Fort Hughes were the rim of a submerged volcano crater. But they did have the 92nd Coast Artillery down at the tail of that island and it was all Filipino except the officers there, and it was regular Army. At that time you know, the Philippines were part of the United States.

COL DESKIS: . . . until '46.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Now I'll go up to Fort Stotsenberg. They had cavalry and field artillery regiments up there. At Camp John Hay, there was a rest area, just a detachment operating way up north in the mountains. I might say to you the Filipino soldiers mutined over there in 1924. I think I mentioned that to you before. But at this second time, I was out in the Philippines with General Kilbourne and I had an opportunity to get around a great deal and see all these regiments, and the morale and the discipline was much better. I would modify that for the 31st Infantry in Manila. The morale was better and the discipline was a little bit better, but it still wasn't what you would like it to be. In the other areas, Corregidor and Stotsenberg, the discipline was excellent and the morale was good. When I was Corregidor, I had a few assignments that were interesting in connection with preparation of a defense. I went over to Bataan Peninsula, did some mapping and picked out some gun and search light sites and

things like that. I spent two weeks, and had a medical officer and two Coast Artillery officers with me and some enlisted men. We stayed two weeks over there and traveled all around Bataan Peninsula. As a Dough Boy, I picked out tentative lines of resistance if they retreated down from Fort Statsenberg, assuming that they had come down that way. I'm told later on, that one of the lines that I had picked as a line of resistance was one of the places that put up the strongest resistance. It was interesting to me when I read the history and an officer who was in command there told me about it. Incidentally, he told me about it in Tientsin, China after World War II when he came down there after having been a prisoner. He told me he knew that I had drawn that line years earlier, it was on some records that he had seen. He told me that's where they put up a very violent defense. It was a short line that had fine fields of fire and good supply, covered supply routes so that you could bring ammunition up without the enemy seeing you and stuff like that. It was gratifying, you know, to see that. That was twenty years almost after I had had that experience. The mission of the Army in the Philippines was to defend the Philippines and specifically, of course, to hold the Manila Bay communication. That was the center of government.

COL DESKIS: Was there any antagonism exhibited by the local population against the United States and its presence there?

GEN WEDEMEYER: At that time, the Filipinos were amenable, cooperative and wonderful. The only exceptions would be a few of the politicians who were very ambitious. Quezon was President, I met him. Aguinaldo was still living, I met him. He was the old Philippine insurrector, and General Kilbourne knew him personally and fought against him. I took a trip about two or three weeks long

with the Secretary of Commerce, a Filipino who had graduated from Cornell. He is still living. I saw him on the last visit I made to the Philippines. He was absolutely wonderful to me. He's quite wealthy. That's an example of how the old Filipinos feel toward the American. I know it doesn't exist today. But I was with my wife at the hotel there in Manila a few years ago, and a car and driver reported to me a big car, and I thought it came from the embassy, but I learned just about the time that I was about to leave -- I had been there a week -- that Boyn Camino had arranged that. And I still hear from him. In fact, do you smoke cigars?

COL DESKIS: No sir, I don't smoke.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, I'll show you what he sent me for Christmas, it's upstairs. I don't know what to do with my cigars, I don't smoke either. I guess I keep them for guests. But anyway, he sent cigars. My name on each cigar to General Wedemeyer. That was the feeling Tony, in those days. The feeling was good. The servants you had were wonderful; gee, we had good servants. And then the contact that we had with the Filipinos in general was very good. I must tell you though, that no Filipino could join the Army-Navy club as there were in this country racial or class distinctions in which the delineation was very definite. Maybe that is what we are paying for now, their attitude. They are arrogant and disagreeable to Americans now. They resent you absolutely.....

COL DESKIS: Yes sir, I was there about a year ago and I found that to be very evident.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I noticed it. Now I want to go back to the mission. I said that the defense of the Philippines was the mission of the Army. The plan visualized holding on in the fortified islands and declaring Manila an open city if the Japanese attacked. The supposition was that you could hold out on

the fortified islands long enough to permit reinforcements to come out and recover the mainland. The idea was that Japan could very easily come down and overrun the islands. Rather than subject them to hardships, destruction and so forth, just declare them open, and hold the fortified islands. They had six months supplies in refrigeration cut in the mountain over there in Corregidor, all underground, beautiful refrigeration. They fixed the Malinta tunnel with transversals, ammunition, storage and hospitals in there and so forth. These were subsequently used.

I must say this, which is critical of General MacArthur, none of us are perfect, we make mistakes, and this in my judgment is a mistake in a man I greatly admire. I think he's terrific, one of our greatest leaders. When they attacked at Pearl Harbor, he had been training the Philippine Army. He had been made Marshal of the Philippine Army, and he'd been training all Filipino officers and so forth. He had been working on a plan that envisaged fighting on the island of Luzon, resisting the enemy instead quickly moving over to Bataan, and taking up defensive positions just north of Marivales, the volcano, and fortifying the island and evacuating all non-combatants from the fortified islands and from those areas. That was awfully important, that evacuation that I mentioned to you. There were ten thousand Filipinos living on Corregidor. Now he decided to make a defense, a linear defense we call it, and he was going to stop them up at Lingayen Gulf, and he was going to stop them down at the San Bernardino Straits, and he was going to stop them over in Quezon National Forest over on the east coast. And those are the areas that they came in, and they started to converge on the troops that he was training and his troops faded right away, melted away. Now, he had taken a lot of supplies and created ammunition dumps and other kinds of supplies behind these defensive positions. We lost a lot that

way and, of course, the Japs advanced so rapidly that all those people who were supposed to be evacuated were not evacuated at all, and they became a tremendous liability for medicine and medical supplies as well as for food, you see what I mean, and they were just in the way. At last, and desperately, they did go back to the original war plan. But the General didn't adopt another plan. He put a great deal of confidence in these troops that he had. The 31st Infantry was supposed to come over to the island and take up the beach defense that I had been working on years earlier. But it wasn't brought over. It had to go to Bataan as quickly as possible to stop the Japs from pouring down the Bataan Peninsula, otherwise they would have been over there and gotten into a very strong position. We might have been able to hold out longer. At the time the war plan was drawn up, in fairness to MacArthur and everybody else, the effectiveness of the bombardment of the air was not evaluated properly.

When I came into the Army. . . well, I did go to the Billy Mitchell Trials here in Washington in 1928. I was an aide to a general named Williams, I think that's already come out, he permitted me to do that. And Billy Mitchell was the type of man who was a great enthusiast, and he made extravagant claims for air power at that time Douhet, the famous Italian aviator's similarly claimed that air power was the most decisive weapon and would destroy everything. But even I, as a young officer, at that time felt that Billy Mitchell was exaggerating the capabilities of the air weapon at that time. And, of course, he was admonished and officially reprimanded.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. I remember that incident.

GEN WEDEMEYER: General MacArthur was President of that Court. But I tell you that because General Embick whose judgment I thought would be good, when he was

in War Plans Division, made a decision or a recommendation for the Chief of Staff and for the President that money would be spent on putting big guns on the mouth of San Francisco Bay when it really should have been given to the development of the B-17. Way back, and he would be the first to tell you that his judgment was wrong there. In the military at that time, there was resistance by the establishment, just as today there is resistance in the so-called established medical profession when some young surgeon or some biologist or some biochemist comes along with a new development. . . Linus Pauling tells us all to take Vitamin C. Well, the established medical people tell you you can take it, it won't hurt you , but it doesn't do any good. It doesn't do what he says it will do and things like that. It's the same thing that happened back then with air power. Billy Mitchell did have an abrasive manner in the presentations, but the older General Staff officers -- they have been very severely criticized for it, of course -- did resist, and particularly the Navy, and they did have a demonstration, you know, where they bombed some of the old battleships. Billy Mitchell conducted that demonstration off the coast here. I just mention that to you.

So MacArthur did, at the last minute, go back to the original war plan that had been carefully studied and war planned and CPXed and went to this linear, perpherial distribution of his troops and then came on back hard pulled in. That's not generally known incidentally.

COL DESKIS: Well, I had never read it.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, you probably never will. Well, I have had so much to do with planning that I can just see things like that and I was familiar with that plan because I had to write the annex pertaining to beach defense. And as I told

you earlier, I had been sent up to Bataan Peninsula with these officers and made some surveys up there, gun sites and stuff.. We had just had some CP gun positions put up there, they put them over there during the war.

Now for my return. I came back to the United States in 1934, and was sent to the Command and General Staff School. At that time, the course was two years. I was impressed with the course. The tactical handling of up to an Army at that time was in the curriculum, but greatest emphasis, of course, was planned on an infantry division and we had to know the organization, tactics and techniques concerning that division, and we had many problems involving different types of tactical maneuvers, delaying actions, withdrawals, turning movements, envelopments, penetrations, night fighting. We had a very little on employment of tanks, and what they taught on the employment of tanks was very interesting and this may amuse you. I don't know whether I've already told you the story, but the tank was developed, as you know, during World War I. The idea was to provide mobility to fire power so that you could move your fire power around and give close support to the infantry. That was the major idea. They didn't have that famous rocket system and the tread that was developed later between World War I and World War II, so they didn't have the mobility on the battlefield with their big tanks. They were like behemoths coming along behind the Infantry, and perhaps at the time because of the limitations or capability of that equipment, that was the way it should have been used tactically. But when I was a student at Leavonworth, I got U's, unsatisfactory, for my solutions whenever we used tanks, because I couldn't in all honesty, and I told the instructor this, I think the tanks should not be restricted by the mobility of a soldier marching along." There may be some special conditions where you could

use them and then restrict them to the cadence of an advanced schedule of the Infantry, but I know we should develop their mobility and draw the Infantry up to the places that the tanks are able to neutralize for you."

COL DESKIS: Of course, that's what happened.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, that's what happened later on. And incidentally, that's what I was taught at the German War College late on.

COL DESKIS: They taught that technique?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Sure, sure.

COL DESKIS: And obviously they used it.

GEN WEDEMEYER: And I got U's. I stood number one in the class there, but I did get a few U's I know. Everybody gets a U at Leavonworth. I guess you've been there.

COL DESKIS: Yes sir, I have.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well I used to ride with a fellow named Sherman in equitation, we used to ride on our map problems. I always rode with Johnny Sherman. He was the grandson of the Civil War general who marched to the sea. He was a couple of years ahead of me at the Academy, and I didn't know him very well there but I got to know him at Leavenworth. And you know, at the end of the second year we were riding along and he said, "Well, Al, did you get any U's?" I said, "Yes, I got a few U's, Johnny." And he said, "I hear you're doing pretty well in class standing," they didn't publish it but you sort of knew because of the assignment that you got in the big CPX at the end of school year.

COL DESKIS: Yes sir, they still do that.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, I was the commander of the Blues, and a fellow named Ed Hull was commander of the Reds. At that he was a classmate of mine. So, it

was assumed that he was number one and I was number two and vice versa, but I never did know for sure, but later on I learned that I was. But anyways, the important thing is that this guy said, "Well, I haven't got a U yet, not a U." And I said, "Gosh darn it, Johnny, that's awfully good. How did you play your tanks?" "Well," he said, "I agree with you. I've heard you get up and talk to the instructor about your view." But he said, "I think our class standing is important here because they told us when we came in that you had to do well or you wouldn't get to the next echelon schools." And I said, "Well, that's right." So at graduation, the General got up and he said, "There isn't a man in the class who didn't get at least two U's." Johnny was sitting right near me, not next to me but I leaned over so I could see him and he looked straight ahead. Anyways, you asked what subject areas were stressed. Military History was awfully good under a man named Willougby who just died here the other day, Charles Willoughby. His name is German. When World War I began he came to this country, enlisted in our Army, and became an American citizen. He was decorated for heroism and became a lieutenant, got a DCS in World War I fighting for us. He changed his name to Willoughby which was his mother's name. He rose, and was G-2 for MacArthur during World War II. He was an eccentric man, but a brilliant man and never, never given the credit for his contribution, ever. He was a good instructor and made the subject very lively and interesting. He pointed up the lessons of military history. I thought he was perhaps one of the best instructors we had. I mentioned that to you because when I graduated from there, the commandant sent for about ten of us in the class and asked us what recommendations we had to make, and what our viewpoints were, just as you're doing here. I said, "I thought the Pedagogy, instruction, was very poor," and I

said, "there were only a few instructors who were qualified to be instructors." He said, "Why do you say that?" I said, "Well, I think it's true, Colonel. You asked me and some of my best friends are excellent officers, but they don't know anything about teaching and they don't have the ability to convey to the class the information they have or give them the benefit of their experience and knowledge." He said, "Well, how do you account for that?" I said, "Well, I think when you're an instructor here, you're called in and asked to recommend somebody whom you think would be a good instructor. You generally get somebody who plays a good game of golf whom you like, with whom you enjoy a drink, and that camaraderie is carried on, but I don't think that should be the criterion. The best instructor in my judgment is Major Davidson, an Engineer, and he really does put his work over because he knows how to do it. He's imaginative and I said, "also Major Willoughby." I said, "One of the instructors that I might mention to you the poorest instructor probably is one of the best leaders that we would have in combat." He got the message. I think it was true. Now, at the Military Academy how do they select instructors coming up there to help these kids? I was offered the job up there, to go up and be an instructor. . . I don't know whether I'd have been a good instructor or not. I think officers that are going to be instructors in our schools should be given training and we should test them to determine their presence on the platform and their ability to convey and things like their ability to express themselves. One of the best writers in the country today, John Chamberlain, you must have read some of his columns, one of the most brilliant minds you ever saw, but if he were here, you wouldn't think that at all. He's a great writer and well known columnist all over the world. John Chamberlain was asked to make speeches and I told his wife I

wish he wouldn't accept invitations because he just doesn't know how to make a talk. He's shy, and that's just an example of what I'm telling you. Do you have good instructors where you are now, do you think? Some of the ideas that I'm expressing have application. . .

COL DESKIS: Yes sir, very much so and I think that. . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, I don't say it in derogation to the military as a whole. We all have certain talents and interest. . .

COL DESKIS: They are intellectually capable.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Sure, sure, no reflection on their intellectuality or their will, desire, patriotism or their dedication, not at all. It's just that you have to have some histrionic ability. Those are the two things that I noticed in MacArthur and in Patton, both of them were actors, you know. Well, my main interest at that school was Military History. I love history anyway, always have, but I did try to do well in the problems and I thought that the tactics and the techniques, from my little knowledge at that time, 1934, '36, about tactics and techniques of military units of that size, I thought it was very well done. I thought the problems were very good, and one thing that I wondered about at the time was that we would be given about two hours to write a field order for a division, a written field order. Well, I'm glad I had that experience because when I went to the German War College, we weren't given anything like that at all. You gave it orally in about 15 minutes, and you had to know all of the units to whom you had to issue the order. You get your officers in there and just bark that order out to them. You might make a few little notes, they made notes, but the idea was that the war would be over according to the German War College, the way we did it there at Leavenworth. I brought that out in my

report.

COL DESKIS: Yes, I think we stress paperwork so much in schools, and yet in the actual situation you almost have to do it the way you learned at the German War College.

GEN WEDEMEYER: The faculty was efficient. I am not downgrading the faculty. As a whole, the dedication was there, but I do emphasize that many of the men were not qualified to be instructors, that's the only point I want to make here. The curriculum was well balanced, well thought out. We had plenty of military history, historical examples of tactical movements which I thought were excellent, and I attributed a great deal to the imagination, creative ability and interest of this fellow Willoughby who, I repeat, did not get very much credit for his work. Their is a degree of jealousy there. He was a foreigner and he had a little bit in his speech that indicated he was German. He was a linguist, too. He spoke Spanish, French and German. A very brilliant man. Did you ever meet him or see him?

COL DESKIS: No sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: He wasn't very well liked in the service, because he wasn't understood. There was a chasm between the military and civilian communities at that time and it was apparent to me because I rode a great deal, but I did not ride in the units as a lot of military men did. In 1934-36, the country was still suffering from a terrible depression, and the people in the countryside would see a lot of military men out riding with red jackets on and the hounds and that's the only way that I came in contact with them, when we'd meet civilians down in the city. They were very critical of the Army. You see, they were having a hard time. There were bread lines, the Depression was still

apparent in almost every facet, every level of American social-economic life. I lived right on the post in what is known as a beehive, an apartment house.

COL DESKIS: Sir, they still have it and they still use it as quarters.

GEN WEDEMEYER: There was not mutual ostracization. I don't think that there ever is between the military and the civilian. I think it's just sometimes envy on the part of the military when they see the civilians getting more pay and so forth, but at this particular time the military was getting more pay. You see, our pay wasn't reduced. But the city of Leavenworth -- it was an old Army city and had lots of daughters who had married into the Army, so I don't think that there was too much feeling. I mentioned the hunting because that was the only criticism I heard when I went downtown to a social party or something. The officer corps our service, in general -- can only speak of course on a very low level were very fine people as far as character was concerned. There was sort of a laissez-faire. I don't think there was the energy evidenced that I would personally like to have seen. I'd like to have felt that there was greater probing, a greater investigation of ways to improve our service, and I just didn't find it among my friends. Alcohol is often associated with the military, but I don't think there was anymore drinking, or not much more, I'll put it that way, maybe. Alcohol seemed to be quite important to the social life of the military then, but the officers were very fine people and fairly well educated. I would take this opportunity though, Tony, to say that the opportunities to broaden ones knowledge was not present, and I blame the military for it. There's a tendency on the part of the people in the military to remain remote or be clannish, and to remain out of the social

lite of a community if they can. They don't want to go through the trouble of making new friends in civilian life, and they don't have common interests, either. They should have, but they don't. This is at this time, but I think that has all been alleviated many times over by World War II when so many civilians were brought into the service, and they know the problems, and shortcomings of the military, and they're more sympathetic, I think. The military made many friends during World War II and post World War II. Today, I don't believe you have that problem at all, do you?

COL DESKIS: Well, there is a tendency on the part of some officers I think to.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, if you get to be high ranking, Tony, you'd have a position where you can do this, do what I did. Here, if you'll pardon my suggesting this, when I had armies after the war, I would ask famous leaders in, maybe the oil industry, but anyway different facets of life, American life and in doing this I aroused the interest of my officers and senior noncommissioned officers. I've had them come to the auditorium once a week and I'd get Mr. Herbert Hoover, former President, or Henry J. Taylor, a great broadcaster, who put on "Your Hand and Mine," for General Motors for many years. I don't know where he is now. I think he writes a column now. But I had good speakers. I had the Chairman of the Board of Standard Oil of California when I had the Sixth Army, I remember that very well. And I had the Governor of the State of Maryland here. Once a week an outstanding speaker, and do you know my objective? I told the men when I did this, before the people came, that I was doing it to give them an opportunity to learn about other people's problems. But after all, it would help them. At first some of my staff officers didn't like it. I didn't hear it, but even my Chief of Staff whose name was Gar Davidson. . . I don't know if you've ever heard of him, he used to be superintendent at West Point, but it came back to me.

Gar Davidson married the sister of Al Gruenther and Al Gruenther is one of my closet friends and classmates, he told me that Gar Davidson said, "When Wedemeyer came out there and took command of the Sixth Army," -- he was Chief of Staff with Mark Clark and I took Mark Clark's place -- he said, "Wedemeyer started this," and he said, "Well, our officers were working so hard and so busy, I just didn't want to do it." And he said, "But I did it because he wanted me to do it, and I got the officers together and explained why he was doing it." But Gar said after, "Why," he said, "the women on the post wanted to come and hear the lectures and the non-commissioned officers' wives wanted to come and General Wedemeyer let them come but they had to sit in the back." They weren't allowed to ask questions, but the men were up in the front and we had a question and answer period. You remember that? Gee, it caused a lot of ancillary reading and discussion about oil. This man from Standard Oil of California knew the oil situation in the Middle East and he brought charts. He went to no end of trouble for us and gave us a wonderful presentation. And Mr. Hoover made a wonderful talk for us on the government, as President you know. And he had a nice sense of humor and the men liked him. You remember that. And I also brought the Navy in and the Air Force and senior officers would come in and tell them their problems, things that were bothering them.

Now where are we? "What was the selection rate to the college?" To what college?

COL DESKIS: Command and General Staff College.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, I went there. I was quite discouraged, Tony. I didn't think I would ever get to Leavenworth because I was a lieutenant so many years. I took the correspondence course at Corregidor when I was an aide over there -- two years -- and that at least gave me the vernacular of the school when I got there. It may have helped me do better when I got there. There was a feeling in

the service and maybe correctly, that a general officer aide never received anything but a superior efficiency report and there was some criticism along that line, adjutants and aide-de-camps, and that's human.

COL DESKIS: Otherwise he would not have been selected if he were not a superior officer, and he would have stayed on if he were not.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, right. "Who were my compatriots there?" Well, of course Mark Clark was a year ahead of me there. My class was the last two-year class there, Tony, then they began taking one year classes because they wanted to turn more officers out. It used to be always a two-year course, you know, years ago, and it was wonderful. The first year was essentially the nomenclature of operations, tactics and techniques pertaining to an infantry division, and the next year you got corps and army. And Corps and Army problems were very interesting, but they were primarily logistics, getting your supplies up and locating Army dumps and things like that, and then deciding from your ability the necessary tonnage and different types of ammunition, food, and so forth, which would determine the day you could launch your attack. That seemed to be the critical thing in the Army. There was no strategy at all to it, nothing about that. I might tell you that there was a strong influence from the Ecole de Guerre, the French school. A lot of our officers were sent over there as students, you know. You knew that. And there were a lot of graduates who would be brought to Leavenworth to instruct. And the influence of the French tactics and techniques was apparent, and they were for a very carefully determined advanced -- if you were advancing -- thorough air and surface and things like that. I might tell you that when I got to the German War College, it was the antithesis of our tactical instruction at Leavenworth. Namely, you were taught in an unclarified,

unresolved condition or situation to attack.

COL DESKIS: Blitzkrieg.

GEN WEDEMEYER: You get your nose bloody sometimes the instructor said, but you get the initiative, you seize the initiative, you maintain the initiative and you have all the advantages of the initiative, where, when, how to attack. Are what you going to do? Now once in a while you get your nose bloody and get the hell beaten out of you but, of course, that was just the opposite of the French method of advancing slowly.

COL DESKIS: Plodding along.

GEN WEDEMEYER: And incidentally Patton, when I came back from the German War College, came to see me. He read my report in which I emphasized these concepts, so you can see how these ideas get around.

COL DESKIS: He certainly employed them, didn't he?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, I watched him, in combat. "What was the school's influence on your own philosophy?" Well, I told the instructor what the commandant asked me, and I told him that I learned a great deal at the school and was very deeply grateful for being sent there, and that my being critical of the pedagogy was just because I was asked what I specifically thought of the instruction. I said I'd answer honestly, and he was grateful. I think he saw it right away. I think it was corrected too, to a degree. You can't change things like that over night.

We're on #90, no, it's #35. "Were you pleased to be promoted or disappointed that promotions were so slow?" Natuarlly I was pleased. And my classmates were all disappointed because there are different categories of people with regard to responsibility, and you come in contact with them in civilian life as well as in

the military, and when you're a lieutenant so many years, you have no responsibility. If you have no mental and physical challenge, you'll atrophy, you will get hit. And I repeat, that's the reason I took these fancy jobs. I never went out and asked for a detail, but I was tempted to take that language detail up at Peking that time. I thought I'd like to do it. I had studied the Chinese language for a couple of years and thought I'd like to learn how to read and write it and so forth, learn more about it. And I enjoyed the Chinese people. I admired the Chinese people and respected them. I'm not talking about the war lords, I'm talking about the general run of the people. But all of us, of course, were not pleased with the promotion system at that time. I had a Ph.D. from Harvard here the other night talking to me about the Army. A very brilliant, young man, and he was critical of the military and I, of course, defended it. "There isn't sufficient competition to make it sharp" he said, "and in business it's different, there are several companies that manufacture breakfast foods and there are several companies that are making steel." And he's right in that way, and it's awfully hard for us to simulate combat without killing people. Sometimes you do kill people accidentally, but we had quite a go of it here. I don't know whether I won or not. Some of his criticisms were understandable, you and I would have to admit. You asked what the selection rate was to the college. I might tell you that the classes were not very large there. As I recall, there were around 70 something in my class and so to be selected, you were very fortunate, and I was told you had to have a straight superior record as a lieutenant and that's when the aide-de-camp business and the adjutant came into play. A lot of very fine young officers with troops weren't asked to be aides and did not get as high a rating as the aides did because generals probably

thought that, out of vanity, they wouldn't select a guy that wasn't outstanding, you might say. But I know many of my classmates who never went to Leavenworth were better than a lot of the men in my class. And you know this happens.

COL DESKIS: It happens today.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. Now, what were my duties at G-2 in the War Department in 1936? There were a lot of officers who were younger than us who were majors. As a matter of fact, my children were always wondering why their daddy was a captain, you know, and they went and played with children whose daddies were majors and they knew that maybe the majors were younger than I. That happened after World War I and they brought a lot of officers in, I would say, Tony, that some of them were alsolute tops, wonderful men, and they had combat experience and my classmates didn't. And they were given credit. Some of them got out then and came back in when they had an opportunity to come into the Regular Army. So we had more actual service, but they were given credit for service while they were out and that put them ahead on the promotion list. There was a single promotion list in those days. By attrition was generally the way you got promoted and it was discouraging for us and a lot of officers resigned at that time in my class.

COL DESKIS: You have to be really dedicated to the institution, don't you, in order to maintain yourself. . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, the original idea of going to West Point for me still remained at that time, and I wasn't going to get out after I got that schooling, and the government expense, and the opportunities to train. I also loved the people with whom I was associated. Our hopes for eventual rank attainment had

been determined for us. We would have just been getting into the lieutenant colonel rank at retirement and it was compulsory retirement when you were 64 in those days. We did not feel adequately challenged, and if we had any talent or special professional abilities, they were denied by this slow pormotion. And I might say, Tony, that some of the officers who came in after World War I were not good men, personally and otherwise -- character and professional ability -- and yet it's awfully hard to get a man out of the service. We had a Class B they call it. It's awfully hard to get people out especially when the man has children and a wife and no one wants to testify against him. It'll cause him to be asked to get out. This was a sort of permissive society at that time. You and I don't want to hurt anyone, but I do know some instances where I certainly should have. It wasn't fair to the United States government to have them in the service, they were so poor, weren't getting anything back at all.

Now about G-2. I don't recall ever serving in the General Staff, G-2. I was assigned to G-2 just before I went to the German War College for one month just to learn how to make reports, and that's all.

COL DESKIS: That was just a holding position.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. I don't even remember the name of the Chief. I didn't know him.

COL DESKIS: That's fine, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: "Who was your superior and what was your office? Where did you reside?" I just resided with my in-laws while I was waiting. . . No, I stayed out here. Yes, I stayed out here. We were here a month after Leavenworth, and I went over to Germany early and lived with a German family to get the facility of speaking German before the German War College began. I can't emphasize too

strongly how much that did for me, that assignment. I traveled all over Europe whenever we had any time and, of course, I had already read a review of the history of the countries there and I took a great deal of interest in economic development in all these countries because at that time, as I told you the other day, economics always loomed up in my mind as an important factor in our relations with other countries. The German military capabilities I was terrifically impressed with. The discipline was just terrific, and the officer corps were, I thought, very high grade people. They were poor. Their pay was very low, the emoluments, privileges, everything. You had to live, rent houses in the city of Berlin and, like myself, travel on the street cars. I didn't take my car with me. I turned it in and I didn't take it with me, Tony, because I heard that the German officers were poor and I wanted to live like they did. I felt that they'd accept me more quickly, and I knew I had to be liked by them if I were going to get the maximum out of that course. My German was lousy, it wasn't very good. I was studying to be a doctor when I started studying German and that vernacular and the military are entirely different. So it was very difficult for me, and I was so discouraged after the first three or four months. As a matter of fact in Christmas of 1936, I talked it over with this lovely lady upstairs. I said, "Do you know I think I'm misrepresenting myself over here? It's not fair to the government. I'm going to write a letter and asked to be relieved, indicating my inability to do it." And she was smart. I was working. God, the course was tough anyway and they work you long hours and she said, "We have ten days vacation. Let's go down to Vienna and hear the opera. Forget all about German," so it was the best thing psychologically that I could have done. Some psychologist would have told me to do it, you pay for that kind of therapy,

but that's what we did. I came back and my confidence was better, and I just went sailing from there on very, very easily. Not easily, it was a hard course. But their training techniques and their pedagogy was excellent. The instructors there had been carefully selected. As a matter of fact, I think they were there for several months on trial, and observed a great deal by senior members of the faculty. This they didn't have at Leavenworth. We were talking about the attributes of leadership but not of scholarship, and of conveying information.

COL DESKIS: How long has this school been in existence?

GEN WEDEMEYER: I don't know. This was not the Potsdam school, that's sort of like our Infantry School. No, this was a higher level school. There was secret instruction once in a while, for the foreign officers would be invited to leave the study group. I don't know. The buildings were awfully old where we went. There was a very disagreeable part of the city -- northern part, ~~Norabit~~ Moabit they call it -- and we had to go up through very industrialized areas. I went up on the street car. I did not take a car over there because the German officers didn't have cars, and some of the other officers didn't do that. There were four Argentine officers in my class; they weren't in my little group though. I didn't get to know them very well, but they had big shiny American cars and they were showing off a great deal. And there was a Turkish officer in my class and there was a Bulgarian Officer. There were two Japanese, there were four Chinese, Nationalist Chinese. Of course there were no Communists, it was just all Nationalist Chinese at that time.

COL DESKIS: You don't remember who those were or what their positions ultimately became?

GEN WEDEMEYER: The Bulgarian officer was a division commander, Poppof was his name. He was very nice. There was an Italian in my group and this Italian and

I became great friends. He was right in my group. His name was Rudolfo Fasano. Obviously his ancestors were Goths or Visa Goths. He had blue eyes and the rosiest cheeks and was a nice friendly fellow. A rather wavy haired, good looking fellow. He came from Lombardy, northern part of Italy, and he got to be a Colonel on the General Staff and he's dead now. I inquired about him every time I went to Italy after the war until I found out he was dead. Let me see, The Argentine officers. One of them became Chief of Staff of the Argentine Army, his name was Munoz, M-U-N-O-Z, and that was right after World War II. I think it was. The Bulgarian, Poppof had a division, I got a letter from him once. The Chinese I might tell you, I'll probably come to it later when I'm in China with you, but the first thing I did was I asked Generalissimo for a list of all the officers in China who had been to Occidental Schools and any foreign schools for military training. And when I got that list and I found only one man Sun, hi-jen is his name, and he went to VMI. He was the only one that was in high position in the Chinese Army. The rest of them, graduates of West Point, they'd go back and they would exploit cheap labor and go into commercial ventures. Yes, take advantage of that training and exploit their own cheap labor and make a lot of money. I was disappointed to see that, and I wanted them because I thought they would speak my language and would help me a lot. I didn't use many of them. I used one man that I knew was at Leavenworth with me. His name was Ho Shih-li, General Ho, and he was a major down in Kunming when I got over there. And when I found out about him, I made him a lieutenant general right away. I could trust him, he was a wonderful person. And I didn't realize how wonderful he was. Now I hear from him all the time. He's in Hong Kong, and he's got lots of money and he's doing very well. He was the Chinese Nationalist government senior military representative up at the United Nations at one time, General Ho.

My instructor, Major Jodl, was the brother to the famous Jodl. He was a Bavarian, and a very fine gentleman and a very brilliant man. He was my first principle instructor and he had a great deal of influence on my thinking. Simplicity, he emphasized simplicity in a plan, simplicity and carrying it out with conviction, having confidence in your own plan and it would just permeate the whole command. When you give an order, he taught, you just give it clip and clar (idiomatic expression) they say, that means with clarity and with punctuation, you might say. Clip and clar. Now he emphasized that in our orders. We'd go in, in the morning and start out. There were only fifteen men in a group, and they had the same fifteen in your group for two years. You got to know everybody and all of them were bright, one Italian and one American, seventeen all together, and he would make assignments. "Wedemeyer, you'll be the leading commander today and Sistic, you'll be the Chief of Staff" and go right around and give us all assignments, and for the rest of that day that would be the job I held, so I was boss and, of course, you would fulfill all the responsibilities of your job just as if you were in combat. Then he'd give us the situation that confronted us, and then we had a quick meeting and I'd organize and get going. It was wonderful, Tony, because everyday almost one of us gave an order. Now that day I would give an order for a division, but the next day I might just be the chemical officer. That was a high secret. I might be just the medical officer of that division or I might be the transportation officer or have the reconnassiance battalion, see what I mean? Aufclaren was the title as they called it. And I had to give an order to my lower units though. It was wonderful. You had to give an order; you had to make a decision. You had to evaluate the enemy, his capabilities and so forth. Then they'd throw tin cans at you, as I recall they'd

throw some situations and it would just upset the hell out of things, you know. To find that you hadn't estimated it right, to see how you would react, you and how your staff would act. It was wonderful.

COL DESKIS: So it was all practical application which gave you an opportunity to expand.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, and then we had one for military history again. Military history was wonderful. They emphasized it and they'd take us to the ground, Tony, most of the big battles of the Napoleon Campaign, they even took us over to East Prussia and going through Poland at that time they locked all the coaches that we were in, motored coaches, and we drove all the way over to Allenstein and went through the Masurian Lakes there. It was wonderful. Yes, so much different from the instruction I had had over here at Leavenworth.

COL DESKIS: Which was sort of impractical.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, I've given you an indication of how the instruction there differed from our own, and I mentioned the aggressive tactics they emphasized in the training, didn't I? I mentioned that already, attack in an unclarified situation. I would say that their tactics in general were very aggressive. They put a great deal of emphasis on the disposition of your troops and employment so that you could change the strong point if it's going to be a penetration or an envelopment. They emphasized flexibility. But once you're committed to a plan, they strongly urged you to try to create the conditions of the enemy through deceit. For example, you might concentrate your fire over on the left flank a little bit in order to give the enemy the idea that you're trying to neutralize any fire power that might be over there, when you're going to make an envelopment on the right, and things like that. They did teach that. They did emphasize that, and simplicity in a completed plan. In night fighting they emphasized that when

the crucial moment came to launch our attack, secrecy was the major thing and getting the advantage of the cover of darkness. But if the enemy knows you're coming, the darkness is just as much a handicap to your troops as it is to the enemy.

COL DESKIS: Yes sir, that's right.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well that never had occurred to me before at Leavenworth, nobody ever mentioned it to me. I think that's about all unless you ask specific questions on that. I mentioned how their tactics and techniques differed.

"How did this exposure influence your future tactical strategic thinking?" Well, I think this was a great opportunity which I'm very grateful to the government, and hope I gave a great deal of it back in my service during the war. There is no question about the interpretation of Sir Halford, I think that must be MacKinder. . .

COL DESKIS: It must be sir. In my research, at least the piece of paper that I looked at, that's all they had was Sir Halford.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well MacKinder, M-A-C-K-I-N-D-E-R, was a great strategist, a Scotchman, and he wrote a great deal about the Heartland Theory. It was simply this: that the nation or leader who commanded the Balkan area, controlled the Balkan area, would be working on interior lines against any attacker, and therefore, he would control Europe. That was the Heartland. The Balkan area would be the center of it but it extended, of course through a vast area, and Haushofer, who was a famous German Geo-politician, he picked this up. Actually I don't know who initiated the idea. Von Der Goltz also mentioned something in his writings that I have read. I never read anything like this in Clausewitz, but Von Der Goltz did, both those men are Germans, of course. But MacKinder is given credit

by the British as being the originator of the Heartland Theory, but the Germans will tell you that Haushofer did. Now Haushofer made some lectures to us there at the German War College, and I was privileged to hear two. Some of them I wasn't allowed to stay in. Fasano and I would be invited out very politely and we'd, of course, go out in the hall until the damned thing was over, go someplace to a reading room, but we would try to conjure up in our minds what we were excluded from. We decided it was poison gas and some strategic planning that they had in mind. You say is it still applicable, the Heartland Theory? In the light of air power, the use of air power, manned or missile type, I don't think the Heartland Theory has the application any more than I think that Admiral Mahan's theory of controlling focal points of sea communications las. It's a matter of degree now, Tony, and I don't want to give you the impression that I think that air power is going to be the decisive weapon under all conditions. I don't. I think sea power is still important, but it's a matter of degree. I do think that air power, either manned or missile, combined with nuclear boats and submarines, is going to be a very dominating factor in any future warfare. And I think that would be the idea upon which I would predicate the composition and employment of military resources if I were present when something like that happens. And you say, it is still applicable? It's a matter of degree. It's important, I think, to operate militarily on interior lines if you can. But the air power today can not neutralize your communications. Well, look at what happened in Vietnam, the trucks were still coming through. Bridges were blown up, but they were replaced. And I had the same problem during World War II in China when Claire Chennault and I would pick his employment. He was an expert, and I was just a person who would approve his plan. But we would take out bridge after bridge and the Japs would

repair them if they'd get natives and they just would help them. I mean the Chinese would help, you know. It's a peculiar thing, there was no chauvinism or patriotism among the Chinese, they just wanted a bowl of rice. And in the Boxer Rebellion, if you've read about that, if it had not been for the coolies who carried the ammunition and the supplies for our people when we went to Peking to storm the royal city. The Forbidden City, we would never have been successful. If you read about that, it's amusing. Chinese coolies were carrying big wads of ammunition up there for our people to use. Right? Well, you asked about troops? I was sent to the Panzer-Abwehr Battalion and that's an anti-tank battalion and I was just so glad to get that because the maneuvers that we were on were so interesting, completely in the field, and I was in command of a company of -- compania, -- they call it -- of this Panzer-Abwehr battalion. Stohlbrok was my commander, a German, and we had these manuevers. We didn't have anything at that time like that 37 milimeter antitank gun back here at the time. We slept under the trucks on the ground. It was raining like hell at that time, too. I never shall forget the way the officer shared the hardships of the men. They were tough. Really, we'd just have a raincoat on, that's all. And we would curl up underneath a truck and we just slept there at night. And boy, they sure in hell did work, too. They worked awfully hard and I was put up with the family. I was billeted with a German family which was quite an experience. They were lovely people. Kuebarts had four boys. Three were killed in World War II. K-U-E-B-A-R-T, Kuebart. They were in Huberton Barnan. Do you know where that is, in Deusburg?

COL DESKIS: No sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, it's in northwest. . . it's in Kornober area.

COL DESKIS: Mrs. Wedemyer was with you, was she not?

GEN WEDEMEYER: She was down in Berlin.

COL DESKIS: Well, how long were you out on these kinds of exercises.

GEN WEDEMEYER: That was a month, and then I went on the Great Maneuver, Grosse Maneuver, and then I was a G-3, Assistant General Staff Officer to the G-3, and that was two weeks more, so all together, six weeks. And then we were given some time, and that's when Truman Smith, the Military attache over there who was outstanding, incidentally, loaned me an embassy car and we motored -- Mrs. Wedemeyer and I did -- all over. Our children were in school in Switzerland. We went over to see them. They went to school there for four years, both my boys, little boys. They have a fine school system there. Then we'd go back to school the 1st of October. For the second year everybody had already become acquainted and you were already familiar with all the tactical vernacular, you might call it, of the school and the methods of the school, so that the instruction seemed to be much more applicable and more efficient the second year than the first. The first, you're groping, at least I was as a foreigner. Maybe before the Germans were not having that difficulty, but I had difficulty adjusting and learning the symbols and reading their maps even. Their maps are better than ours. They were very nice to me, too, Tony, I should tell you the people were nice to me. I wasn't trying to be intimate with them. We tried to have them to the house occasionally and they would invite me to their homes. The entertainment was very, very modest and simple -- cheese and beer and wine, things like that -- not much to eat and not a lot of fanfare and very natural. The women were very nice women, my wife like them.

COL DESKIS: It appears they were warm. Were they warm and outgoing?

GEN WEDEMEYER: No, they're not warm. No, I wouldn't say that.

COL DESKIS: They are friendly in sort of a courteous way.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well the first year they were very stiff to me, I would say. My country was giving them hell, perfect hell at that time. Hitler was catching it, you know. And I wasn't conscious of the situation in Germany nor was I conscious of the role that the Jews were playing in my own country at that time, and I didn't pay any attention to that. It didn't matter to me whether a person was a Jew, I didn't know LaGuardia's mother was Jewish, for example, and he was married in New York. Of course, they'd emphasize that in their propaganda over there. Morgenthau was a Jew and he was our treasurer, I think. Secretary Treasurer or something. Those kinds of things I didn't know. I never felt that there was an effort, a concerted effort on the part of the Jewish people to take over our country. They've never been suspect. So the constant pounding in the radio and newspapers which I was subjected to for two years would make me more conscious of it when I'd get back, you know. And I had to kick myself because a lot of it was just exaggeration and had a very definite sinister purpose.

COL DESKIS: Propaganda.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Sure. My German contemporaries were polite to me, very polite. The second year they were very, very nice to me. They liked us. It was obvious. When we left, they gave me a present. To them it meant an awful lot. It was a wine. . . something like one of those bottles up there, but it was silver. And it had "From your Komeraden in the Kreigsacademe. Best Wishes. It was awfully nice. Their attitudes about drinking with me and asking me to drink, all those kinds of things, it was obvious that we had a nice time. Now one thing that I was very careful never to do was to ask them questions that might border on secret things or critical of the regime and anything like that.

COL DESKIS: Anything political, in other words.

GEN WEDEMEYER: No sir, I didn't. Jodl went with me -- he was my instructor -- to the biggest department store in Berlin and helped me buy my ski outfit. That was my first indication of friendliness on his part. And then when he found that I had never skied but I was determined to ski, it pleased him, and I really was getting quite good at skiing because I'd been an athlete, you know. And the Italian on the other hand, Jodl took him and he got skies, and he hadn't skied. Most Italians do, you know, but this was years ago. We got up on the ridge and we started skiing and then they showed us, helped us put them on and so forth, but he fell down a few times and he said, "The hell with it" and he stopped doing it.

COL DESKIS: He just gave it up.

GEN WEDEMEYER: And I remember Jodl saying to me quietly, laughing, he said, "Keine Magen." Magen was the stomach, no stomach. No guts, that's what you and I would say, but he said this in sort of a smiling way, and that was true. Fasano didn't work nearly as hard as I did. I think his German was better than mine, too, incidentally. They liked him though, he was a lovable Italian, fun loving and not as serious as I was. I was awfully serious about it because I wanted to make good and I didn't have a grasp for the language that Fasano did. And I had just come from Leavenworth where I had done well. I wanted to do well again. And that's why I was super conscientious about it and thought of resigning in December. The 1st of December, after three months of it. I thought I couldn't do it only because of the language. I wasn't bothered by the tactical instruction at all. I was all for it. I liked the land and the progressive or aggressive theories that they had.

COL DESKIS: How did you view these in relationship to the United States tactics and techniques.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, you see, I had no influence. When I came back after that two and a half years over there, I was ordered to Leavonworth to be an instructor and the man who preceeded me, General Harkess, was already at Leavenworth. He wrote to me and said they all knew I was coming and he was welcoming me because, he said, they all think I'm pro-German here. And you have to be careful. Now I have been very frank with you, Tony, and told you favorable things about the Germans, but I'm not pro-German. I didn't agree with the Germans political philosophy at all. But when I'm sitting here talking to a fellow comrade in the military profession, I'm telling facts as I saw them, as I experienced them, and I would be of no value to you or to your presentation if I didn't do that. But Harkess had told me that he had had difficulty with other members of the faculty there at Leavenworth. Because see, he came there and was quite revolutionary and he was a very nice person in his approach, too. He was very quiet, he wasn't the blustery type, so I didn't understand that. But that wasn't the reason I did what I did do. I went to the Chief of the Infantry and told him that I would like to postpone going to Leavenworth one year.

END OF TAPE

SECTION 4

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER

COL DESKIS: This is side #1, tape #4 of session #4. My name is Colonel Anthony J. Deskis, a student at the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. I am about to interview General Albert C. Wedemeyer, United States Army, Retired. We are located at General Wedemeyer's home, Friends Advice Farm, Boyds, Maryland. The date is 7 February 1973, and the time is 1000 hours. This interview is one of a series in conjunction with the Senior Officer Oral History Program which was established by the Chief of Staff of the Army in October 1970.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Hitler's Germany was the epitome of regimentation in its most unscrupulous and restrictive form. The economy of the country, the social life of the people, and the political operations of the Nazi party were all focused on one objective: a police state yielding to the will and plans of an egomaniac leader, Adolf Hitler. Of course, everyone is familiar with the manner in which he came to power. The Germans found it necessary over centuries of experience in Europe to combine -- to "regiment" in order to expel invaders and to protect their homeland. Often historians who are not fully objective about the attitude of the Germans failed to note that they have had to fight for existence in Europe with armies transgressing their homeland. When one studies history carefully, it is revealed that the French and the British brought about either directly or indirectly many of these transgressions in Western Europe. The Germans themselves did not initiate wars as frequently as did the British and the French. One thing that must be said, however, with

respect to Germany, they really had not formed as a political entity as early, of course, as did the British and the French. England and France - yes, Spain and Holland - were homogeneous and had programs of colonization. Accordingly, they had seized lands in far off places which provided access to raw materials and to markets for their processed goods; whereas Germany did not adopt a colonization program until much later. Understandably the Germans were resented by the French and the British when they sought land for sources of raw materials and markets. Hitler adopted an expansion program, pointing out to the German people how necessary it was to drive toward the East in order to gain access to the rich productive areas of the Ukraine. Drang nach Osten was Hitler's declared policy, which also included pressing on eastward to the oil resources near the Caspian. Germany, at least when I was there (1936-39) was a police state. Hitler's plan, of course, definitely was an aggressive one. He was determined to get land for colonization and also to have access to highly productive areas like the Ukraine and the Carpathian-Caspian oil. Of course, they obtained excellent iron ore from the Luena in Sweden, and they had sufficient coking coal in Germany. The British and French, reinforced by Jewish sources, denounced the Nazi policies as ruthless aggression. I am not at all defending Nazi methods but simply pointing out that Germany adopted colonization later than her neighbors. If the Germans had participating during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, they, too, might have colonized successfully in the Far East and Africa as well as South America. One other point I think is interesting and which was brought out while I was a student at the German War College,

namely, that trying to build up a heavy industrial complex, they had to have a source of energy, like coal or oil plus iron ore. And then they had to create a maritime force. Finally, a concomitant of a maritime force would naturally be a naval force to afford protection. These commercial developments in Germany created an unacceptable situation in the minds of the leaders in England. Great Britain's maritime power -- her naval power and world trade -- were seriously threatened by Germany. The Germans often claimed that this was really what precipitated World War I as well as World War II. There was a considerable amount of British investment in German industry in the Ruhr. During World War II, some of my aviator friends tell me, there was a reluctance on the part of the British to bomb certain areas. British commercial interests insisted that they be avoided.

Returning to the sociological or psychological situation in Germany when I was a resident there -- no doubt about it, the Jewish people were severely and cruelly persecuted. I didn't note as much physical as psychological persecution. It was terrible. We met many fine German people, including German Jews. We were their friends and they were our friends. The Jews' property was confiscated. They were denied opportunities for employment, and were restricted in many ways. In the parks the Nazis had painted benches of bright orange and plainly marked them nur fur Juden (only for Jews). The benches were located in the most undesirable places. Persecutions, restrictions, humiliations were magnified naturally in the minds of the Jews. The Jewish stores had conspicuous signs painted on the sidewalk in front, Judens

(Jews). Then there would be Black Shirts or Brown Shirts, Nazis who would stand out in front and intimidate customers who attempted to enter. The Nazis explained that before these anti-Jewish measures were enforced, German boys, that is, Aryans in Germany who were graduates of medical school couldn't get a position in a hospital as intern because the Jews had complete control. They said that in the banking industry, again the Jews controlled it and Aryans had difficulty in getting jobs. The Nazi leaders pointed out that the German people were denied opportunities while the Jews held control and gave preference to Jews. I do know that the best dentists and doctors just before World War II in Germany were Jewish. Almost immediately prior to the war everything was attuned to the creation of a strong military force. I had opportunities certainly to see every facet of military training. Their schools and equipment were outstanding. Everything military was better than any I had ever experienced before. At the school (Die Kriegsakademie) which I attended the pedagogy and curriculum were top notch. The instructors were carefully selected. The students had been officers who were highly qualified before they were accepted there. Everybody seemed dedicated to the accomplishment of the aims that were repeatedly outlined in the propaganda of the Nazis. There was no objection to the terrible sacrifices -- personal, social and otherwise, that they made in order to attain those objectives. Most of the Germans had been made to feel that they had been treated terribly by the reparations after World War I. They were informed that the British had precipitated World War I because of German economic competition. The Nazi propaganda built up a case

which was accepted, by and large, by most Germans. I never did discuss political matters with my classmates in the German War College or with the instructors. I did talk a little about international developments and comparative strengths of various countries, economic, military, etc., with the Chief of Staff, Ludwig Beck, who paid me the honor of having me to dinner many evenings. I found him to be a very high type -- a fine individual. You may recall that he resigned when Hitler marched into Czechoslovakia. He openly opposed the aggressive program of the Nazis. Hitler never accepted his resignation, but General Beck stopped going to his office anyway and finally General Halder was appointed Chief of Staff.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: You have asked a question: "Were the people subdued or enthusiastic?" Considerable enthusiasm for the Nazi movement came from the lower echelons of society, especially among the laborers. They were regimented, too, you know. They had frequent parades, well-organized rallies and patriotic ceremonies, at least once a week. I don't believe that is an exaggeration. The Nazi flags were displayed freely by all except the Jews. We had two German servants. One of them asked for permission to display a Nazi flag on our small balcony on those days that flags were ordered to be flown. My German cook didn't want people to think that they were anti-Nazi or that we were Jewish. I gave her permission to display the Nazi flag. Personally I never did see any brutal, physical persecution of Jews. I did mention psychological persecution, which is even worse than physical, especially if people are intelligent.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I attended one Nazi party gathering as guest of Gerhard Rossbach. Lots of prominent Nazis were there. They impressed me as being men who were dedicated -- some fanatically so. I think Goebbels was probably the most intellectual of those I met. This impression was not so much from my experience with him -- talking to him briefly -- but mostly from what I had read about him. Along with my very brief visit with him, I more or less knew what to expect when I met him. He was brilliant -- no doubt about it. Also he seemed like a cold scheming man -- sharp, incisive. Hess impressed me favorably. He told me that he was the son, I think, of a German diplomat and I think he, Rudolf Hess, was born and raised in Egypt. I never did meet Hitler, but of all the high German officials, military or civilian, that I met, Hess made the most favorable impression. I think he was sincere, for example, when he flew across the English Channel seeking an opportunity to stop the war. He greatly admired the British people and said so. He admired the Americans, too. I think his admiration was sincere -- I mean deeply rooted. One can usually tell when a man is just buttering you up. I liked Hess. Goering was very much like our own General Hap Arnold. In my book I think I referred to the contribution that General Arnold made in the combined staff meetings during World War II. I never felt that he was an intellectual but he was good-natured, as his nickname would indicate. A jolly fellow who had the power of knitting together a team and getting loyal support. Further, he had the faculty of picking good men for key jobs. He surrounded himself with able men --

doers, creative minds, and aggressive. He knew how to use them. They all loved Hap. I think Goering was the same way. Hail fellow well met. Eddie Rickenbacker told me a story about Goering in World War I. Goering was in a dog fight with one of the American aviators and the American's gun jammed. He was at the mercy of Goering who could have shot him down. Instead of doing so, he flew right over close, saluted, and went away. Goering was a hero to the German people. He knew the people liked showmanship -- a certain earthiness not often found in German officers. He was a great talker and jovial. Like General Patton, he wore lots of decorations and unusual uniforms.

COL DESKIS: That is an interesting point. Since you tell the American people, at least, I was led to believe that he was rather stupid, rotund individual who was inept.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Stupid, no. But our air general, Hap Arnold, wasn't a brilliant man either. But he wasn't dumb or stupid. Obviously when a man reaches the level of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, one would think that he was an intellectual. Not Hap Arnold. However, he had a good understanding of human beings and the usesof air power. I don't believe Hap Arnold was a reader, but I don't think General Marshall was much of a reader. He was a great administrator. General Max Taylor I think of as a good scholar and a good combat leader too. I mentioned that just to draw comparisons. At the Nazi party I attended I wouldn't say that I noted particularly fanaticism. It was a hugh extravaganza. Everything was staged, and when "der Fuhrer"

came, there was a blaring of trumpets. It was very much like the Nuremberg rally. Even at the opera when Hitler arrived, everybody would rise. He did enjoy the opera, incidentally, and built a new opera house in Berlin. Hitler liked Wagnerian music. When he attended, at his arrival somebody would shout, "Heil Hitler!" The band would play the Horst Wessell song and Deutschland uber Alles. Then they would proceed with the opera. I heard him make several speeches. He was highly emotional. His German grammar wasn't the best. He wasn't a well educated man but he could appeal to the masses. You mentioned chauvinism. Of course, there was considerable chauvinism in the Nazi leaders. There is a certain amount of it too in the German people and in the German officers. They were proud, and their pride was increasing prior to World War II. In my two and one-half years in Germany I could see that the people were increasingly proud. Hitler had enjoyed many successes in his diplomatic exchanges with allies. In Munich and before that the German troops marched into the Rhineland, which had been denied to them after World War I. And then the military success he enjoyed initially in Poland -- victories, both diplomatic and military. Spectacular turning movements in combining armor with the Stuka air attacks were achieved and attributed to Hitler. Everybody looked up to him. So one can better understand the chauvinism, the national patriotic zeal, the fervor that I noted. Before the war I saw many parades. Sometimes I was just a few feet away from Hitler with members of my Kriegsakademie class. There was no question about their or the German people's loyalty to him. Among the German officers with whom I had contact

there were a few who had done considerable and broader reading. At every opportunity, in their contacts with me, they would discuss the United States or England or other countries. But they did it always without ever drawing onerous comparisons, without any criticism of their own political leaders. They didn't hesitate in a jocular way to tease me about the Jews running America. I think I told you before that I didn't know, for example, that Mayor La Guardia of New York, had a Jewish mother. They didn't do it in a mean way. They were awfully nice to me, really they were. When I departed from Berlin, I felt that my German friends, and especially my classmates, respected and liked me. But there was no doubt about their loyalty to the German government. Whether they criticized among themselves when I wasn't in earshot, I don't know. We did drink a little bit more than normally -- wine and beer. My ears were always wide open listening, but I was careful not to get too inquisitive. I never heard anything, even when officers were a little under the influence of liquor, that was the least bit critical of Nazism and the National Socialist movement. In the newspaper, in the morning headlines, there would be comments about the Jewish mayor La Guardia of New York, or about Secretary Morgenthau, or some item criticizing Jews. I would ride in the street car in the mornings to the War College. When I would get there, I would find a newspaper on my desk, "Hey, Wedemeyer, look at this." They would tease me but it was all in good fun. Hauptmann von Stauffenberg though, I think I mentioned to you that he talked a great deal to me. He was a well-educated, well-read man. Again, however, he was guarded

in his references to Nazi officials. I don't think I would have respected him as much as I did if he had been critical to me, a foreigner. I had great respect for him -- for Beck and for Freitag von Loringhoffen. They were broad gauged in their thinking. As a matter of fact, Stauffenberg I would say could very easily have been taken for an Englishman. He really could, based upon his philosophy of life and his manner. Of course, he had lived in England. He went to school over there for some time. I don't recall whether Wessel Freitag von Loringhoffen attended school in England. He was a Baron from the Baltic states. His wife was a German Countess. They were a lovely couple. They really were. Both of them were worldly in their outlook. And General Ludwig Beck, I mentioned many times, was well read and you would have thought that he was an English gentleman. There was none of the arrogance that is so often attributed to German leaders, especially to the military men.

COL DESKIS: There seemed to be or at least in what reading I have done, there seemed to be a difference between the professional German military corps, the hard core, and sort of this rag-tag element that came up under Hitler.

GEN WEDEMEYER: That is right. The officer corps that was created to command the units of the Arbeits (workers) battalions were honeycombed with these kinds of people that you mentioned. They were the Brown Shirts. Also there were the Black Shirts, and they were officers who were violent, overzealous, and exaggerated military power. The Black Shirts were the

worst of all. They were really very difficult. During the war I am told that those that fought against them found them to be brave and fanatic fighters. Those officers were not as a rule from the educated or cultured class. I am not being snobbish in that analysis. After World War I when I first came into the American Army, I came in contact with a number of American officers who had been enlisted men. They had done very well in combat and had won battlefield promotion as commissioned officers. When I reported for duty at Fort Benning in 1919, many of those officers were there as instructors. Because of their combat experience, most of them proved to be wonderful instructors. But some certainly lacked an awful lot in a cultural way -- in education and social amenities. Their wives were particularly noticeable, too. I think that the officers in the Brown Shirts and the Black Shirts in Germany were similar to many of our wartime officers. In Germany the Black Shirts were Hitler's corps d'elite. It was they who were intolerant, fanatically persecuting Jews. The regular army had a very fine officer corps. Discipline and esprit were like our army. The women were definitely ladies and the men were gentlemen good family men and real professionals. So you are right, there was a marked delineation between the officers of the German military and the Black or Brown Shirt organization.

COL DESKIS: Did your experience in Germany influence your thoughts on unconditional surrender?

GEN WEDEMEYER: I am glad to discuss again unconditional surrender for you. I have just read a book written by an historian named Pogue concerning

the life of General Marshall. I want to make this a matter of careful record. My firm recollection differs from Pogue's. The following is my story and it is factual. The American chiefs of staff were all invited to dinner at President Roosevelt's villa in Casablanca during that conference. I was in my hotel room in the Anfa Hotel, Casablanca, where the chiefs of staff and their staffs were staying. I was reading the agenda for the next morning's U. S. Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting. At about 10 p.m. General Marshall came into my room. He sat on the edge of the bed and said, "Wedemeyer, the subject of unconditional surrender was discussed at the dinner tonight." He asked, "Have you heard anything about that back in the States?" I said, "Yes, sir, I have." The younger officers considered it sort of latrine gossip and no one gave it serious thought. He said, "So what do you think about it?" I replied, "Just off the cuff I think we would be playing right into the hands of Goebbels' propaganda. We would compel the Germans to fight on and on---increasing the loss of life on both sides." He said, "Well, then you don't favor it?" I said, "No, sir. I don't think I would approve but I would like to give it more thought." He said, "Well, tomorrow morning at our Joint Chiefs meeting I want you to express your views. You had recent contacts in Germany and you have had an opportunity to put into perspective how the Germans might react. At the JCS meeting the following morning I did tell the other members of the Joint Chiefs (Ernest King and Hap Arnold) my views about unconditional surrender. Admiral Leahy had not joined us yet. He was still serving in Vichy, France, as ambassador. The Joint Chiefs elaborated a little bit on

my expressed feeling that it would be a mistake to impose unconditional surrender. They did emphasize that we should make it clear to the Germans that they were defeated and also make sure that the surrender was signed on German soil. All of the Germans must realize that they lost the war. They recalled that in World War I there were no American troops on German soil. And I always got my ideas in about the economic blockade being effective. I mentioned that our economic warfare (blockade) had compelled the Germans to stop fighting. While their military men were still fighting effectively at the front because they were well fed, nevertheless people back behind the front were starving. Letters were sent up to the front line soldiers -- the fighting forces -- from mothers and sweethearts about hunger and terrible conditions at home. That, of course, got the morale of the fighting men. The Kaiser was compelled to ask for an armistice.

COL DESKIS: I knew the German soldiers had been sending letters.

GEN WEDEMEYER: This information I am telling you is from Germans whom I knew. You wouldn't read it in books. One sidelight because it is a nice story concerning Marshall. I criticized him somewhat in my book concerning his Far Eastern policy, but I did admire him a great deal. I think he was a great administrator and a fine world war chief of staff. I do definitely. He was self-effacing, never a strutter. After that JCS meeting at Casablanca, we were all invited to lunch with the President. I was invited with Admiral Cooke, my Navy opposite, along with the three chiefs of staff and Brig. General Russell Deane, who was the JCS secretary. It was the General Deane who went to Moscow with Harriman after the Quebec Conference. I walked with General

Marshall en route to the President's villa. I said to him, "I'm sorry that I talked so vociferously, General Marshall, at the meeting this morning about unconditional surrender. I wanted to make certain that Admiral King, at least, got the picture." General Marshall stopped and looked at me. He said, "Wedemeyer (he never called me by my nickname - King and Arnold both called me Al), don't you ever fail to give me the benefit of your thinking and of your experience. You would be doing me a disservice if you did otherwise." If he had asked me to jump into Niagara Falls after that I would have done so for him. I felt here was a man -- a great man -- giving me that latitude and being so fair about it. And that incidentally . . . well I almost idolized him, but I was going to say that when he came over to China four years later and I advised him that he couldn't do what he said he was going to do, thinking I had the . . .

COL DESKIS: Same latitude?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, the same latitude -- the same relationship with him. It was just like a knife when he turned around angrily and said, "Wedemeyer, I am going to do it and you are going to help me. I am going to carry out my directive." This required him to amalgamate all of the forces in China. The forces were poles apart -- the Communists and the Nationalists, of course.

COL DESKIS: What was the reaction of the JCS to your comments on unconditional surrender?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, I must say, Tony, that they were always nice to me and I know that King respected me in my views. When we would go to

these JCS and CCS meetings, I accompanied King. I think I told you before. And my Navy opposite, Admiral Cooke, rode in the plane with Marshall. If a plane went down, then there would be available an Army and a Navy man knowledgeable about the planning, the agenda, and the government's position for continued meetings with the British.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. Sort of continuity.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. So I flew with Admiral King. I admired him. I thought he was the strongest man on our JCS. He was rather cold -- not an attractive man. He wanted to be liked. He was impersonal and really shy, not an easy man to know. They say in the Navy he kept a tight ship and didn't have many real good friends in the Navy although he was highly respected. I would say that he protected America's interest more than any other member of the JCS. People say that he made the remark, "What's good for the American Navy is good for the United States." He was always thinking in terms of conserving U. S. men and materials, and he resisted the British, who were trying, always, to get everything they possibly could from us. The Russians were, too. Roosevelt, Hopkins, Harriman and some of our top military men would give the British and the Russians whatever they asked for, regardless of the effect upon our own expanding forces in the Army and Navy.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Admiral King wanted to keep American forces under American commanders, as did Pershing in World War I. Returning to "unconditional surrender," questions would indicate that the American Chiefs agreed

with what I said. But they didn't seem to feel strongly about it. It was a political decision. Churchill maintained that he had never heard of it until Roosevelt brought it up at a press meeting at Casablanca. I've read conficting reports. The story I related to you is what I remember clearly about Marshall returning from dinner with the American and British top leaders at Casablanca. Secretary Deane doesn't remember my version according to Historian Pogue. Pogue claims that he wrote to Deane and asked him about "unconditional surrender," and he doesn't remember my version of discussing the subject at a JCS meeting. He was supposed to record everything and it isn't in the notes. But maybe someone didn't want them in the notes. I don't know.

COL DESKIS: After completing the work at the German War College you were assigned to troop duty in Georgia?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, I tried to apply lessons learned in Germany to my duties at Fort Benning. I was given command of a war strength company in the 29th Infantry which was the demonstration regiment of the Army. My training at the Military Academy, at the Infantry School, and at Leavenworth was good preparation for my job as company commander.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: My experience at the German War College did not have an awful lot of influence on me. I did have a very high-powered radio so that even at Fort Benning, Georgia, I could hear the reports of everything going on in Europe and follow the campaign in 1939 of the Germans against the Poles.

COL DESKIS: Of course, that was a very important period in Germany.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Listening to the German reports over my short-wave radio caused my neighbors to think that I was pro-Nazi. And I had a German name. The other half of my family was Irish, but gossip began that Wedemeyer was pro-German. It just was so stupid. That was the atmosphere at Fort Benning at this time. Everybody there was interested in the war, but British, French and Jewish propaganda convinced nearly all Americans that the Germans were to blame for the war. It was exactly like the years before World War I. People asked me to make talks at women's clubs but I didn't do it. Mrs. Wedemeyer made a little talk to a PTA group once. Then we both stopped talking about our experiences in Germany. I received a letter, Tony, from the American officer who preceded me at the German War College named Major General Harlan Hartness. He and I were the only two Americans who finished the course at the German War College. He was at Fort Leavenworth after he returned from Germany, and he, too, was enthusiastic about his experience there. Soon he learned that he was considered by fellow officers and some of their wives as pro-Nazi -- the same experience we had when we came back to Fort Benning. Hartness wrote to me when I was still in Germany and said, "When you return to the U.S., don't talk to people about Germany or don't say anything good about Germany. Everybody here thinks I am pro-Nazi." Hartness was English, both mother and father. His father was a minister. So it shows you how, as you say, everybody was emotional. At Fort Leavenworth where Hartness was assigned, the people were fairly senior and older.

One would think that they would begin to put things in proper perspective. At Benning I was careful not to be too enthusiastic about what I experienced in Germany. I was enthusiastic in my own heart and mind about the German people and the German Army. I really was.

COL DESKIS: Really this reflects, definitively, the effect of propaganda, doesn't it?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. Both Germany and Japan were viewed as potential adversaries. And training in the U. S. was stepping up. The people were taking greater interest in things military. I wouldn't call it an air of anticipation, exactly; but I do know that those in the military service were taking an increased interest in their responsibilities. They wanted to know more about the capabilities of the Germans and of the Italians, our potential enemies. In the military history course of the Infantry School, Germany and Italy were emphasized. I was asked to give a lecture to the students, but I didn't do it because, I repeat, because of the warning I received from Hartness. I was determined not to get up on a platform and say things I didn't believe. So I just didn't do it. I explained why to the commanding general. He was about to retire and wasn't much interested in such matters. He was more interested in how his command looked than how it could fight. He made all officers buy blue uniforms.

COL DESKIS: The dress blues.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. I didn't have a blue uniform and felt that my OD uniforms were good enough for my official duties. I never was much on

decorations and display. But now I had to rush to obtain a blue uniform. I went to the P.X. tailor and said I had a week's time in which to get a complete blue uniform. He fixed me up though. All officers had to present themselves in blue uniform to theigeneral. His aide stood beside him with a list and checked off our names. I was a captain then. When the general looked me over and finally said, "Alright," my name was checked. I never wore that uniform again. I was ordered a short time later to the General Staff in Washington. I took my blue uniform to the Post Exchange at Fort Myer where it was sold for about half of what I paid for it. I have never had a blue uniform since.

COL DESKIS: We were required to buy one down there when I went. I never had one and that is where I got my first blue uniform.

GEN WEDEMEYER: What year was that?

COL DESKIS: That was in '57.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Gosh! Now let me see. The size and the quality of the Army as well as the equipment were all adequate for the requirements of the Army when I was commissioned in 1919. But at this time (1938) the Army was gradually being increased. Vacancies in units were being filled at peacetime strength. The 29th Infantry was the only regiment in the Army that was at war strength. The battalion of artillery at Benning was also maintained at war strength. We therefore had a war strength combat team down at Benning. There was a tank company there, too, at war strength. Everything at Benning was provided for the students. The equipment was the best that had been

developed for the Army. It was the most modern, and I think ample funds were made available to the school. I think Congress was very liberal when making provision for our service schools at Fort Benning and Fort Sill. This was not so at the Cavalry School at Fort Riley. I think I told you how I started out in the cavalry. I told you about meeting that old man again in the elevator at the Army-Navy Club. Well, what were your thoughts just prior to World War II? Tony, I was anxious to get with troops and stay with troops then, because I wanted really to go with an armored division. I had learned in Germany their tactics and techniques in the employment of armor. I didn't want an antitank battalion, although I was assigned to one at Fort Benning finally. They took me away from the 29th Infantry and put me in the first antitank battalion that we had ever had in the American Army.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I was executive officer and I had a wonderful commander named Major Lev Allen, who later became a major general. He is, of course, now retired. During World War II he was Chief of Staff for General Omar Bradley. And really I believe that he was a much better officer than Bradley. It is just the way luck goes, however I could have been wrong, too. But I know Bradley very well. After World War II he was Chief of Staff of the Army and I was Director of Plans and Operations. "Ike" (General Eisenhower) brought me back to Washington. He retired and became President of Columbia University. Bradley became Chief of Staff. I attended all of the JCS meetings with Bradley. I would participate in discussions only when the Chief asked me

to. But I could size him up and evaluate him. Then I saw something of Bradley in combat in Sicily. He was then in command of a corps. Leven C. Allen wasn't a West Pointer. He was one of the finest officers with whom I came in contact. But the business of getting promoted -- of being recognized as highly efficient -- is largely luck. If one happens to know an individual through golf, fishing or hunting trips and is asked to recommend an officer for a particular job, it is only natural to recommend the one known personally. For example, Bradley went hunting with General Marshall, who became Chief of Staff, Lev Allen didn't and was not as well known to Marshall. When war came, promotions were rapid and the Chief of Staff had considerable power.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. That finishes up.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Immediately before World War II, I was ordered to Washington to write a training manual for antitank battalions. I will tell you something very interesting that happened. While I was writing that pamphlet The Tactics and Techniques of a Tank Battalion in the Chief of Infantry's office, I received a phone call from General Marshall, then Chief of Staff. He said, "Wedemeyer, I have a serious problem. Maybe you can help me solve it." I didn't know General Marshall very well. When I returned from the German War College, I think I told you that he took an interest in my final report.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: General Marshall asked me many intelligent questions about my experience in Germany. He impressed me very favorably. Now, two years later, he said, "I would like to talk to you about an organizational problem." He said, "I have a Chief of Cavalry, General Herr, who is

threatening to resign if I assign the tanks to the infantry." The Chief of Infantry, General Lynch, is furious. He is cussing the General Staff because it recommended that tanks should be assigned to the cavalry. The tactics and techniques of using tanks should be developed by the cavalry as an organic part of the cavalry. What would you do?" I replied, "I would organize a separate armor corps. When our troops go into combat, assign tank units to infantry or to cavalry as required. But I would not sacrifice the mobility and firepower that tanks would give to the infantry as a close support weapon. And I wouldn't give them permanently to the cavalry because in some situations our troops would have to hold a position and the close support of tanks would be necessary." General Marshall agreed, and he created a separate armor corps. Very few officers know this story. I will tell you the sequel. I returned to the job of writing the antitank manual, not knowing whether General Marshall would carry out my recommendation. However, at the German War College I was taught to use armor that way. A few days later General Lynch, the Chief of Infantry, sent for me. I didn't like him. He was a great big blustery fellow with bristling mustache. Taller than I and a great big man, the Chief of Infantry was a major general. God! I was a major. I reported to him. "Sit down, Wedemeyer." I sat down. He paced back and forth in his office. Almost exploding, he said, "What do you think that g. d. General Staff is doing? They are assigning the tanks to the cavalry. What do you think about that?" Fortunately, before I had a chance to say anything, he kept right on talking and pacing back and forth. I stood up because he didn't sit down. He said, "I said sit down," so I sat down and listened to his tirade. I never did have the opportunity

to comment. This was fortunate because I would have told him the truth. There I was, an infantryman, and partly responsible for the General's fury. The separate Armor Corps was organized and put under a general named Chaffee, Brigadier General Chaffee. He died about a month later. Then General Jakey Devers took command. That is the way the Armor Corps came into being, the armored force.

COL DESKIS: Tell me about your assignment to the Army War Plans Division.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, when I first reported to that division of the General Staff, I was told to acquaint myself with all the various plans that had been prepared. The Yellow Plan, the White Plan, the Orange Plan -- all for different situations -- riot duty, revolutionary activities in our country, fighting foreign countries. The Yellow Plan, of course, involved a possibility of war with the yellow people -- the Japs. And then there were other plans that were to take care of situations in Latin America. So the first few weeks that I was in the War Plans Division I was just required to do that. Then I was told to write a strategic study on the Mariana Islands. I will tell you an amusing story about General Marshall and that plan. I took it to General Bedell Smith, who was Marshall's Secretary. I sent it up through my own chief, General Gerow, whom I respected. He was a VMI man. My initials were on the plan "A. C. W." General Marshall glanced at this study and he said to Bedell Smith, "This is terrible. You take it back to General Gerow." And he said, "Get that fellow, that tall, skinny fellow down there -- Weedymeyer (mispronounced) or Wedemeyer." He said, "Get him to do it." So it was brought down to me

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personally by Bedell Smith, who was a friend of mine. He told me what the Chief had said. "Well, I will look it over, Bedell. I can't change my views." He said, "Well, do something." I inserted a lot of unusual polysyllabic words, like "mercurial," and changed the wording -- changed it all around. But I didn't change the conclusions concerning the role of the Mariana group to us strategically. Bedell told me later that the Chief looked over the new version and said, "See. This is the way it should be done." I told General Marshall this story years later. He was only slightly amused, understandably. Then I was given the Victory Program, you know. That was tossed into my lap. Secretary of War Stimson told Marshall, who told Gerow, and Gerow told Bundy, and Bundy told me to prepare a Victory Program. I was given a secretary, which was a great compliment, for at that time I was only a major and officers of that rank usually had to share a secretary with some other major, even maybe with two other officers. So I managed to locate two desks in a small office. I started to compile information and to write. General Handy, Colonel Kibbler, and Colonel Lev' Allen, who had been my commander before, comprised the "Murder Committee." I would write and these officers would criticize my efforts or make suggestions. Thus the Victory Program gradually evolved. I was given tremendous support by my immediate boss, General Gerow, and also by General Marshall. I had difficulty in determining what the country's policies were and what we should do to protect and carry out our objectives with wars already raging in Europe and the Far East.

COL DESKIS: It was pretty indistinct at that time.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, one didn't have much information, Tony, to cling to. The Monroe Doctrine was definitive. But from there on out I needed to know what kind of conditions did our country want to create and/or maintain at home and abroad, but particularly in those areas already experiencing the killing and destruction of war. I read everything available concerning foreign policy -- international relations and past wars. I asked Secretary Stimson, who was awfully nice, to discuss U. S. policy. I asked General Marshall for his ideas. Finally I realized that it would be better to write what I decided to be U. S. policy and what our objectives or aims should be if and when we were drawn into the war.

COL DESKIS: That isn't very much guidance, is it?

GEN WEDEMEYER: No. I got the Air Force involved, too, of course. I asked them to write their role and I came in contact with a brilliant young air officer, Major Hansell, who recently wrote an excellent book on war planning, particularly the role of air power.

COL DESKIS: Hansell?

GEN WEDEMEYER: He is a major general, Air Force, Retired now. I am sure that he has sent copies of his new book to the Army War College.

COL DESKIS: It has just recently been published. Do you know the title of it, sir? But it is on planning?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. It is wonderful. I worked on the Victory Program for several months, Tony. I don't recall, and it is not important, the exact dates that I finally turned in the global plan for the employment of the Army

and Air Force and their combined requirements in terms of equipment, personnel and training. General Marshall accepted my basic ideas that we might have to fight a two front war and that we weren't fighting a war of aggrandizement. We weren't fighting to get territory but were determined to eliminate dictatorships or aggressor nations.

COL DESKIS: Balanced power.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Some unknown person got hold of a copy of the Victory Program, which was Top Secret, and gave it to Senator Burton Wheeler of Montana. He was an American Firster and he wanted to prevent us from getting into the war. It was published in the Chicago Tribune and in the Washington Times-Herald on December 4, 1941, just three days before Pearl Harbor. I was investigated thoroughly by the FBI. Their agents found in my safe my working copy of the Program that I had underlined from time to time. Here is what happened. I arrived at my office about eight o'clock in the morning of December 4th. My secretary was excited because the FBI had already been asking questions and investigating the office. They conducted a preliminary investigation in the morning. I got Jerry, my secretary, off to the side and I read the part that was in the newspaper. It was in the Times-Herald here on December 4th, I think it was. It is in my book. You have read my book?

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, I won't go into details. But that was a terrible experience. It is awful to feel that you are suspected of disloyalty to your country. This experience later made me broader minded in handling four

men in the Far East who turned out to be men who were quite left-wingish or liberal in their viewpoints.

COL DESKIS: Service and that group.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, Jack Service, John Davies, John Emmerson and Raymond Ludden. They just had a big reception here for the four of them.

COL DESKIS: So they sort of have been reinstated?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. They are coming out of the woodwork and they are being heroized. I think it is terrible. Either they were guilty of treasonable acts or they were not. If they were falsely accused, they ought to be put back on active duty and decorated, etc.

The first War Department Joint Planning Group was established and consisted of four officers from the Army and four from the Navy. We were provided offices in the Navy Munitions Building and operated under Admiral Turner. There were two Army colonels, Colonel Ray Maddocks of the Cavalry and Colonel Jesse Balmer of the Field Artillery, then myself, Lieutenant Colonel Wedemeyer of the Infantry and Major Hansell of the Army Air Force. Then there were four Naval officers, our opposite numbers: a captain named Cole, a captain Bert Rodgers, a Marine major named Litzenberger, and a lieutenant commander Forrest Sherman. Sherman later became Chief of Naval Operations. I worked with Sherman in a little cubicle in the Navy building. I was well acquainted in the Army G-2 because when writing the Victory Program I visited G-2 often. I talked to Colonel Truman Smith a lot and explained how I had examined the map of Europe and started

at the Scandinavian Cap, down through the low countries and around the Iberian Peninsula, then eastward to the Bosporus seeking the most propitious, most advantageous place for the Allied Forces to breach or to invade Festung Europa. I said, "Truman, I believe the British Isles offer the best assembly area for a crossing into Europe." He said, "I have been giving this a lot of study." Truman Smith was a highly respected intelligence officer. He was military attache in Berlin for many years and spoke German fluently. The concept of a cross-Channel operation, which ultimately became OVERLORD, gave birth then and there in Army G-2. I went back and talked to Hansell. He said, "That is right down our alley. The Air Force planners would agree with that. It would give us a fine air base." That was the beginning of OVERLORD. If you read Pogue's History of Marshall, he says it was Marshall's idea or concept. That is what happens. Hansell would tell you that is what happened, too. The man who is over you will get credit for what you do a lot of the times. It doesn't matter. You are all on the same team and doing a job for the country. I had a similar experience in 1948-49. A friend named General Lucius Clay took credit for the Berlin Airlift, yet that was my idea. I was Chief of War Plans in Washington. The Russians blockaded our entrance into Berlin. They were blockading our bridges. They claimed the bridges were out of order and had to be repaired. In the meantime, we couldn't ingress or egress Berlin. Clay recommended the use of force. I knew we couldn't fight. We had demobilized the greater part of our army after World War II. We had several thousand Americans in West Germany who would

emd up in salt mines if we did start fighting. The Russians would just haul them eastward, men and children, all civilians. The people in Berlin, including our Army personnel, outnumbered, would have been gobbled up quickly. So I was against that -- attempting to fight. I had another solution which I recommended to Secretary Stimson. I had had experience with the Hump in China, so I recommended that we establish an airlift to Berlin. Draper, who was Assistant Secretary of the Army at the time, strongly supported the idea, and I was sent to England to ascertain what the British would contribute. Sir Charles Portal was Air Chief Marshallon the British Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was in air industry, BOAC, and he endorsed the idea, offering British support. We knew our capabilities -- what we could haul in freight, coal and food. I returned to Washington, and our government established the airlift. General Clay is credited with doing it.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: He was the commander there. That happens. There are a lot of things that you will get credit for that somebody down the line -- on your staff or in your command -- probably initiated or did the job. I will give you an example. I had a civilian colonel on my staff in China. He recommended to me that we drop paratroopers into the prison camps up in Manchuria. We had many reports that the Japs, before they surrendered, would kill all American prisoners. They were fanatic fighters, as you know. We had reports that were confirmed from good sources. The G-5 of my staff in China, General George Olmsted, organized groups of men who would fly in. He had

a doctor and two or three officers in each group or plane with supplies of medicine and newspaper print and so forth. About a week before the surrender actually occurred -- before the Japs capitulated, they parachuted into Jap prison camps. Some of them had some very touch and go situations. I got credit for doing that, also George Olmsted. The officer whose idea was adopted was a colonel, a military government officer. He was an engineer in Lincoln, Nebraska, and a temporary colonel in the Army.

Returning to the Victory Program and the strategy of World War II, the first Joint Planning Group discussed and argued because the Navy really wanted to fight the Japs in the Far East. That is where we suffered our terrible initial upset. Almost 4000 Americans were killed. Our Navy never let the Army know for a long time exactly what their losses in ships were. They were so humiliated. The planners worked hard and finally evolved a plan that later became OVERLORD. We visualized crossing the English Channel in 1943. General Marshall, Harry Hopkins and I flew to London in April 1942 to explain our strategy to the British. We discussed the strategy of the war. It had already been decided by political leaders that the strategic offensive would have primary attention and we would defeat the Nazis and the Fascists in Italy first. Concurrently we would carry on strategic defensive operations in the Pacific. That didn't preclude local peripheral or limited offensive operations but it meant that the over-all picture in the Far East would be defensive. And this plan would be the basis for the distribution of our resources -- I am talking about arms and equipment, and personnel. We

went over to London on Easter, 1942 -- Marshall, Hopkins and myself. I presented our plan to the British planners. Then I presented it to the British Joint Chiefs of Staff and Planners. I presented it a third time to the British Cabinet, British Joint Chiefs of Staff and British Planners. In that presentation, Marshall was present, of course, when the Chiefs of Staff were present and when the Cabinet was present. Marshall and Hopkins would answer questions. Some of the time I did, but General Marshall was very pleased when we were flying back. He said, however, "I think they accepted our plan with their tongues in their cheeks." He could tell by the questions they were asking, because he thought they wanted to invade Europe through the so-called "soft underbelly" in the Mediterranean. I started accompanying the Chief of Staff to all strategy conferences. My job as chief planner in the Joint Planning Staff was to prepare papers for the Chiefs' support in discussing them with Congress or with the British.

In 1942 the War Department reorganized its headquarters in Washington. It combined the operational functions of G-3 to a great extent as well as the planning functions of War Plans Division, and also coordinated all other administrative and logistic matters for the Chief of Staff. This headquarters was called the Operations Division of the General Staff. It did not eliminate entirely the G-3 staff section but greatly reduced the responsibility of that division. Likewise, the G-4 continued in a minor role, and the principal responsibilities were the service of supplies. All logistical matters, including transportation, were placed under a division called the Service of Supplies. Returning to the

organization and functioning of the Operations Division itself, two groups were created: one, the Operations Group, which was headed up by General Ed Hull; the other was the Strategy and Policy Group to which I was assigned as chief. General Leonard Gerow, a major general, was in command of the Operations Division, and later General Handy. General Hull and I were brigadier generals in our positions. The functions of the Operations Division were generally as follows: My group, the Strategy and Policy, would evolve the broad scheme of maneuver that would be in consonance with our nation's strategic objectives or aims. Then that plan would be referred to the Operations Group, which would determine specifically what units would be assigned to carry out the broad scheme of maneuver, assuming that it was approved by General Gerow and the Chief of Staff. For example, the OVERLORD operation (cross-Channel) which was conducted in 1944, was drawn up by my group, indicating the number and type of divisions estimated as necessary, the airborne support and reconnaissance. This would then be referred to General Hull's group, with specific infantry, armor, airborne units, and attack or bomb air units and shipping required, including landing craft assigned. With combat being conducted in far-flung places in the world, many changes of a localized nature would be required, and the Operations Division under Hull would take care of same. For example, MacArthur out in the Far East would require another antiaircraft unit or Eisenhower in England would ask for additional airborne units. Any refinement of that nature was a responsibility of the Operations Group, but, of course, the Chief of Operations, General Gerow,

would approve such changes or refinements. In addition to being chief of the Strategy and Policy Group, I accompanied General Marshall, the Chief of Staff, to all Joint Chiefs of Staff meetings as well as to all Combined Chiefs of Staff meetings. Accordingly, it was my responsibility to prepare a careful analysis of all operations extant and projected so that I could readily inform or advise General Marshall when holding discussions with the U. S. Navy in joint staff meetings or when holding conferences with the British Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I was in that challenging and intensely demanding position when I was moved suddenly to be the American Chief of Staff of the Southeast Asia Command. This latter command was created at the first Quebec Conference. I was informed by General Marshall and even by President Roosevelt that my principal job in India would be to bring about better coordination and cooperation on the part of American forces under Stilwell and the British forces under Mountbatten. Lord Henry Pownall was the British Chief of Staff, and I considered him an outstanding person, both professionally and in every other respect. An American officer for whom I had great admiration and respect (then Major General) Raymond Wheeler, formerly in the U. S. Engineers, was assigned to the Southeast Asia Command in charge of logistics. Not long thereafter (1943) he was promoted to lieutenant general rank, and after the war was over became Chief of Engineers.

COL DESKIS: I think you have covered everything, sir, probably down to question 6.

GEN WEDEMEYER: My relationship with Mountbatten during the period the summer of 1943 to the summer of 1944 was most satisfactory. I greatly admired Admiral Mountbatten and discovered that he was not only a capable military leader but also that he had many other attributes of leadership, especially the ability to resolve problems in an amicable way.

COL DESKIS: Before we leave your responsibilities in the General Staff in Washington, could you relate somewhat your experience with the FBI.

GEN. WEDEMEYER: Yes. This occurred in the first part of my service with what was then War Plans Division of the General Staff. General Gerow had assigned me the task of writing a plan which was to be highly secret -- a plan that had been requested by the President. He, the President, stated that an over-all concept of operations on a scheme of maneuver designed to defeat potential enemies in Europe or in the Far East with estimates in manpower and materiel, including air, ground and sea forces, was highly desirable as a basis for mobilization. This was a task that authorized me to contact all agencies of the government and was fraught with many trying situations because there were no clearly defined policies and yet we were all operating in an atmosphere of inevitable participation in the war, which was being bitterly contested in Europe between France and England on the one hand and Germany and Russia on the other. Also, in the Far East, Japan was oppressing the Chinese Nationalist Government, gradually controlling more and more territory in eastern China. I set about preparing this plan, which was known in the War Department as the Victory Program and, again, I mentioned that it was Top Secret. On

December 4, 1941, when I reported to my office in the morning, my secretary told me that two FBI representatives were in my office -- that someone had taken a copy of my plan and that it was in the morning newspaper, both the Washington Times-Herald and the Chicago Tribune in Chicago. I rushed into my office and there I was confronted by FBI Agents Tamm and Genau. You do not want all of the specific details, Colonel Deskis, so I will merely state that I had taken every precaution to provide for the security of all papers, including carbons, of the Victory Program, and I knew in clear conscience that I had not violated any regulation. The FBI men were courteous and efficient, recounting a few bits of circumstantial evidence that they had turned up before I arrived, to wit, German ancestry, a student at the German War College, and a deposit of a fairly large sum of money in a local bank. A few questions pertaining to these three subjects quickly resolved suspicions that I imagine were present. Later, when I learned to know Edgar Hoover and Agents Tamm and Genau, I realized that they never did suspect that I was guilty of any crime. To this day I do not know exactly how the information reached the newspapers, but if it had not been for the sneak attack by the Japanese three days later at Pearl Harbor, this case involving the Victory Program would have been the cause of a far-reaching investigation. But we were now involved in a two-front war and the heat was off, with only occasional visits by FBI agents to clarify some point in the investigation. I should mention that this was an experience that helped me later when I was in command of the China Theater. I had on my staff four Foreign Service Officers, and it would not have been difficult at

all to question their loyalty because of the pro-Communist or at least sympathic-to-Communism reports they rendered while they were with me. Later officials back in Washington, including the FBI, did take action against these men, however I always assumed the position that it was not my job really to ferret out information concerning loyalty, and I really did trust those four men. When incriminating evidence was turned up by other branches of the government, I made certain that it was understood that I had no definite evidence of their disloyalty while they were in my command. I think the care that I exercised in connection with their case was attributable to my own experience a few years earlier in connection with the Victory Program. I knew that I had not done anything criminal in nature and I felt terrible when anyone pointed the accusing finger at me even by innuendo. I must repeat, Tony, the support that my chief, General Gerow, gave me during the Victory Program investigation was wonderful.

COL DESKIS: Before we leave the Strategy and Policy Group, would you relate your preparation in general for your estimate of the forces needed.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I studied the historical records pertaining to various armies of the world, going back at least 200 or 300 years. I discovered that generally, and especially in modern times, approximately 10% of the population of a country could be brought into the uniformed military service without disrupting the economy and social life of a nation. I carefully analyzed the strengths and composition of our potential enemies and allies: Germans, Italians and Japanese; British, French, Russians and Chinese. At this time

(1941) the population of the U.S. was approximately 140 million; 10% of that would be 14 million, and I had to consider the allocation of that total manpower for the Army and Army Air Force as well as for the Navy. My estimate for the Army and Army Air Force totaled approximately 8,500,000, which left approximately 4,000,000 for the Navy. It is interesting to note at the end of the war that my estimate had been about correct. We ended up with 8,070,000 in the Army and Army Air Force. The Navy, as I recall, required about $3\frac{1}{2}$ million. This use of manpower, of course, was based upon using women in some of the lighter industries and the retention of adequate restraining forces for police and administrative or utilities operations. Because the areas of possible military operations were remote from our home base, we had to make estimates of the shipping required to transport vast numbers of men and supplies to Europe and/or to the Far East.

COL DESKIS: What was the British attitude toward the OVERLORD operation and how did it manifest itself?

GEN WEDEMEYER: The British were excellent planners and had considerably more experience in negotiating with representatives of other nations. Their experience plus the fact that Britishers at all times seem to know the objectives or aims of their government -- of their people -- gave them a distinct advantage. Unfortunately definitive policies of our government were lacking and at times the Navy would, in front of the British, differ with the Army points of view. This was embarrassing, and wisely the American Chiefs finally learned that they must, regardless of their service loyalties or differing

points of view, present a united front when negotiating with representatives of other nations.

With reference to the attitude toward OVERLORD, the first time we Americans presented our concept of the maneuver, the British seemed to approve, but General Marshall opined that it was with tongue in cheek. He was proven right, for we had a continuous struggle during the planning days (1942-1943), in fact almost up to the day OVERLORD was initiated in 1944. The British wanted to conduct the major thrust into Europe from the Mediterranean area. Their maneuver was often alluded to as an invasion through the soft underbelly. I personally was disappointed that the American concept of OVERLORD was not undertaken in 1943, for I had in mind, and often emphasized this to General Marshall, that we should insure at war's end that American forces would be occupying and in complete control of western Europe, at least as far as the Weichsel River in Poland.

COL DESKIS: Could you relate briefly your experience with General Marshall in connection with war plans.

GEN WEDEMEYER: General Marshall approved of our plans and, I must say, supported me personally in all of my contacts with the American Navy and, again, with the British planners. This was very helpful not only to me as an individual but also to my strategic planners -- a group of wonderful young officers of whom I was very proud. They worked long hours and evolved many plans which were carefully weighed and discussed before forwarding them to higher echelons for consideration and approval.

General Marshall often called upon me to accompany him to the White House, so I soon became well acquainted with Harry Hopkins, General "Pa" Watson, the military aide, and with the President himself. It was a very pleasant relationship that I experienced with all of these men. On one occasion General Marshall phoned me at my quarters at Fort Myer at 9:30 in the evening. I was propped up in bed reading over some papers that my group had prepared for my consideration. General Marshall ordered me to get an official car and to pick up Hap Arnold, stating that we were going to the White House for a conference with the President and the Prime Minister, who was visiting there. I did as directed, and we all reported at the President's office where he, Harry Hopkins, Averell Harriman, Admiral King, Admiral Leahy, Admiral Cooke (the Navy planner), and General Knudsen were assembled; also present were Prime Minister Churchill, British Admiral Ramsey, Admiral Mountbatten and Sir John Dill. President Roosevelt indicated that they had been discussing allied strategy and that the Prime Minister wanted to include those of us who had arrived and obtain our comments. An easel was provided, and on it a map of Europe. The Prime Minister, with a pointer, began his explanation of the advantages of a soft underbelly approach to Europe in lieu of crossing the Channel where, as he emphasized, undoubtedly the Germans expected the attack. He talked in a dramatic and convincing manner, and all were a study of rapt attention. When he concluded, the President turned to General Marshall and stated, "George, I would like to hear your comments about the Prime Minister's plan." I was sitting far back in the office against

the wall with Admiral Cooke, my Navy opposite. General Marshall turned around in both directions, finally spotted me, and replied to the President, "General Wedemeyer, my chief planner, is here and he will explain the American viewpoint as he did earlier this year in London. I might add, Mr. President, that it was our impression that the British military accepted our plan at that first presentation in London." I walked over to the easel and took the pointer in hand, arranging the maps and as many other things as I could in order to collect my senses, for this call came as a shock and surprise. But fortunately I had presented our plan at least twenty times to a critical group of people -- first the American planners and their assistants, with the U. S. Navy always tending toward major operations in the Far East while helping our Allies in the European area with whatever resources we could spare. Then I had to present the plan to the American Joint Chiefs of Staff, with King leading the attack for the Navy viewpoint of major operations in the Pacific. Next I had to present it to the American President and his Cabinet, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff present also. Next I was taken by Marshall and Hopkins to present it to the British planners in London; then the British Joint Chiefs of Staff, the British Cabinet with the British Joint Chiefs of Staff and British joint planners. So my excellent group in the strategy and policy part of the General Staff had well schooled me so that I could anticipate every criticism of the plan. Furthermore, they had enabled me to ask questions concerning the so-called soft underbelly plan which simply destroyed, from a military viewpoint, the premises that the Prime Minister had earlier established. By the

time I got around to the reasons that we did not approve of an attempted invasion from the Mediterranean, I was no longer inhibited by my high-ranking audience, and I didn't hesitate to ask the Prime Minister questions which he was wholly unable to answer. I recount this incident because you asked about the support I received from General Marshall, and here it was again in evidence, for both King and Marshall supported me on that particular night. Also, I might add, President Roosevelt, who seemed to be wavering, again returned to support the American concept of strategy.

This all sounds as if sound military strategy would determine our scheme of maneuver, but the wily Prime Minister of England was not to be denied. He emphasized later, and successfully, in discussions with President Roosevelt that he could not justify with his people the maintaining of approximately a million men under arms at such great expense while they were doing nothing against the enemy. Of course, the OVERLORD operation contemplated only sorties or probing operations while building up the forces necessary in the British Isles for the decisive blow in 1943. President Roosevelt, no amateur politician, sympathized with the Prime Minister, and the result was a strike against the northwest coast of Africa from Casablanca around to Algiers. It was to be a combat operation of British and American forces.

COL DESKIS: How do you think General Marshall compared with General MacArthur?

GEN WEDEMEYER: They were both very capable men and excellent leaders. I would say, however, that General MacArthur was not only a great combat

leader but also he was superior in statecraft. I think General MacArthur was more broadly read and, in fact, had considerable knowledge in all fields of human endeavor. General Marshall had been a successful staff officer with Pershing in World War I, whereas General MacArthur commanded a brigade with brilliance in combat, in fact he led patrols behind the German lines and was wounded. General Marshall proved to be an outstanding administrator and I think was an ideal man as Chief of Staff during World War II. He was a cold, impersonal individual but did generate unequivocal loyalty on the part of subordinates. In connection with General MacArthur's brilliant combat record, I do think in World War II the outstanding combat leader on the American side was General George Patton. One hears less about General Hodges, General Simpson and General Truscott, but they, too, were wonderful tacticians and very successful combat leaders.

COL DESKIS: Most of the successful leaders were highly qualified technically as well as people oriented.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, that is true. I think, furthermore, that one must be somewhat of an actor as was George Patton. Today you will find that people proudly refer to the fact that "I was with Patton," but never does one hear that people brag about being with Marshall.

SECTION 5

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER

by

COLONEL ANTHONY J. DESKIS

This is side #1, tape #5 of session #5. My name is Colonel Anthony J. Deskis, a student at the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. I am about to interview General Albert C. Wedemeyer, United States Army Retired. We are located at General Wedemeyer's home, Friends Advice Farm, Boyds, Maryland. The date is 21 February, 1973, and the time is 1000 hours. This interview is one of a series in conjunction with the Senior Officer Oral History Program which was established by the Chief of Staff of the Army in October, 1970.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Those officers who were in the lower echelon of planning like myself were aware of the fact that Prime Minister Churchill exercised considerable influence over our President with reference particularly to our strategy. Often our chief, General Marshall, would make it known when he returned from conferences with the President that the Chief Executive approved a particular scheme or maneuver of strategy that had been evolved in our planning echelons. And then later, after a visit by the Prime Minister to the White House or even through letters and telephone conversations with the Prime Minister, the President demurred or weakened his position and sometimes changed it. This made it rather difficult to plan intelligently and certainly with conviction because we were always wondering what the Prime Minister would come up with. Gradually it developed that at least some of us recognized that the Prime Minister had in mind the maintaining of lines of communications to the far flung British Empire, and that he was opposed to the concept of mass concentration in the British Isles and the Cross-Channel Operation with the objective, the Ruhr.

He was more interested in the lodgment on the south coast of Festung Europa. Perhaps in the neighborhood of the Ljubljana Gap, the north end in the mountains there in northern Italy, northeastern Italy, Italian Alps. His purpose was to recover control of the Balkans and get in the rear of the Nazis. Most American planners were in opposition to that idea. Invariably strong disputes occurred at the combined Chiefs of Staff meetings on both the planners level and the Chiefs of Staff level. The continued operations in the Mediterranean postponed Operation OVERLORD, the Cross-Channel Operation, so many times that many resources, human and material, were being diverted into the Mediterranean area. Many American planners and even a few members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (I have in mind Admiral King) decided that we really were never going to execute the Cross-Channel Operation, and King was several times advocating that we divert stronger resources to the Pacific area. He just maintained that the British were insincere about their approval. In other words, he stated that they had accepted the OVERLORD concept with their tongues in their cheeks. The diversions into the Mediterranean area would never have been possible had it not been for the so-called charisma of the Prime Minister. I would refer to it more as his persuasive powers, his articulation of plans, and his dramatic description of the advantages that would accrue by conducting operations in the Mediterranean area, and all of this our President was favorably impressed with, and that influenced the strategy of the war. My contacts with President Roosevelt in the early days of the war were fairly frequent. I would accompany General Marshall to the White House. I never did talk to the President alone until later

on in the war when I was in command of the China Theater and returned home to conduct conferences, to participate in Congress concerning our future policy in the Far East. But in the early days, he was always very friendly and he was soon calling me by my nickname, and to have the President do that, of course, was quite unusual, but he did that with everyone. It was so unlike my chief, General Marshall, who never unbended and was always very impersonal and almost cold to those around him. He indicated very little warmth in our contacts, official or otherwise. The President was jovial and amiable and would listen intently and insert jocular remarks. I recall one experience that I had that involved President Roosevelt and other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and one Navy planner, Admiral Cooke. One evening I was in my quarters at Fort Myer and the phone rang. It was General Marshall. At that time Mr. Churchill was visiting in the White House. He was a guest in the White House and I knew that. Well, anyway General Marshall said that he wanted me to get a car and join him and pick up General Arnold. We were going down to the White House for a conference, that the President wanted to discuss strategy. It was about 9:30 in the evening. I carried out my instructions. We went down to the White House. In the Oval Room they had set up an easel with the map of Europe on it. The President and the Prime Minister, a major general named "Pa" Watson who was the President's military aide, Harry Hopkins, and a few British staff members who had accompanied Churchill were all there, and Admiral King was there with Admiral Cooke. We all sat around behind the President. I did particularly behind the war leaders. President Roosevelt announced that Mr. Churchill would

explain his concept of the European strategy to us. Thereupon Mr. Churchill, with a pointer in hand, stood next to the map. The idea of concentrating allied means in through the Mediterranean with our main thrust up through the Adriatic and on through the Alps behind the Nazi war effort developed. He pointedly criticized the concept of concentrating on the British Isles. He did inject the thought of deception by making the Germans feel that we were going that way by concentrating some forces there, and, of course, he wanted sufficient strength to protect his homeland, too. He took pains, really, to point out the necessity of maintaining this as a constant threat and gave us greater flexibility, said he, by preparing really for the main threat on the southern peripheral of Europe. There were many areas that he proposed, but he seemed always to come back to the Ljubljana Pass. I think I pronounced that correctly. The Prime Minister was thorough, and I must say that he made it look very plausible . . . The map did not indicate elevations, of course, but perfectly flat. The configuration of the terrain was not evident, but one could readily see the disadvantages of doing it from the allied viewpoint, at least from the American viewpoint, namely, the main line of communications would be going through a defile, the Strait of Gibralter, and then we would have to organize, establish bases from which to operate in close proximity to the area of invasion. That would mean some bases not less than -- not more than eighty miles from the landing area chosen. I believe I explained that in previous discussions here, Tony. After the Prime Minister finished his presentation, which I repeat was dramatic and convincing, the President turned to General Marshall and said, "George, I would like to hear

your comments about this now." And General Marshall looked around the room looking for me. He said, "Mr. President, I have brought my planner along and he will express my views concerning that concept." So knowing when I went over there what was up (I was thoroughly familiar with that concept, which originated, I think, in my own mind with the help of G-2, Colonel Truman Smith), I was ready and willing to discuss it, but I was at first rather embarrassed. Everyone seemed to be so impressed with the PM's great presentation, including myself. But I did get up my courage and started by asking the Prime Minister some questions, including the difficulties inherent in his plan from the logistic viewpoint, maintaining a line of communications against enemy submarines. I pointed out the defile and the miles and miles of water that we would have to go through, then the gradient of the beaches and so forth. Of course, I pointed to the terrain, warning that our attack would be channelized or cannalized after we got ashore so that the numerically inferior German and Italian forces certainly could hold us up for a disproportionate length of time. In fact, we might bog down there; whereas if we would go across the Channel, we would make wide sweeps through the historic battle areas of France used for many hundreds of years. Here the area permitted maneuver which, of course, did develop as you know. The Third Army, under Patton, made wide envelopments, not flanking movements, but deep and wide envelopments which caused the Germans to withdraw rapidly and in disorder. But the point is that the President was pleased with my own reply to the PM. Later on he said, "That was a very fine job, Al," or something like that. He was that type. He usually was very

personable, very warm. Now, years went by. You say, what is operational philosophy? He wanted to defeat the Germans and punish them this time. That had been driven home to him by many of his close cronies like Frankfurter, Morgenthau, and Judge Rosenman -- all Jews who actually felt bitter against the Germans. No question about it, they convinced the President that this time the peace terms must be signed on German soil. The Germans must feel the direct result of the killing and destruction of war. And, of course, that was driven home, and they didn't hesitate to approve the massive bombing raids on Dresden, Hamburg, and other German cities. The marshaling yards around Frankfurt, rail centers, were just obliterated. The President, I must emphasize, President Roosevelt did not have the knowledge, the military knowledge, the strategic knowledge that Prime Minister Churchill did. He wasn't in close proximity with the leaders of our Army and Navy. Churchill worked with his JCS and planners down in his offices and map rooms. He frequently kept them up all hours of the night, discussing these matters. He was very close to the military situation. He supported his chiefs in their negotiations. I am sure it wasn't a question of supporting General Marshall and the U. S. Joint Chiefs with Roosevelt. He really didn't know enough about it and didn't pretend to. He did seem to favor the Navy though. Admiral King was able to have some influence concerning the sending of additional resources out to the Far East and also the allocation of resources to the Pacific. President Roosevelt did favor the Navy. He was in the Navy at one time, Secretary of the Navy, I think, in the Cabinet. I repeat, I can't emphasize too strongly that Mr. Churchill was

thoroughly familiar with history and with military tactics, techniques, and strategy, and in very close contact, psychologically and professionally, with his military leaders. In World War II, allied leaders gradually evolved as aims or objectives severe punishment for the Nazis and Italians. If Roosevelt's and Churchill's ideas epitomized all of the allied objectives, they were determined to destroy Nazism as a concept of government and to punish the people for rallying around Hitler and his henchmen. So sometimes the strategy seemed to be uncertain, but the thread of revenge and vindictiveness, and determination to destroy and kill, was ever present in all of the planning and all of the contacts and negotiations that I observed.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. Unconditional surrender?

GEN WEDEMEYER: We have talked about that before, Tony. I do think that the announcement that the Allies agreed upon unconditional surrender with reference to the Germans was a propaganda device to show that the allied effort was cohesive and all were united in the common objective of destroying the Nazi Party.

COL DESKIS: I guess it ties in closely with what you just said a few moments ago about the vindictiveness, revengefulness, that permeated the allied philosophy and thought relative to the Germans and Italians.

GEN WEDEMEYER: In connection with the unconditional surrender, I might make a few observations that are only personal. I might be criticized by my colleagues in the US military as well as my friends in the British military, but it is my considered opinion that the military objectives of destroying the enemy's

ability to conduct war was not so much his will to fight us but his ability to conduct war. There is a fine delineation between the two, one will note, but associated with his will to fight. I would place political objectives after the military. Again and again I mentioned the importance of political objectives to General Marshall in the early days when discussing the Cross-Channel Operation. I wanted to insure that he had strong arguments in favor of an early Cross-Channel Operation when discussing the plan with Admiral King or with the British leaders, military and political. And also I wanted to make certain that he would be prepared to discuss every advantage, and also disadvantages, that might be brought up in his discussions with the President, Harry Hopkins, and people around the President. In other words, we wanted to converge and unite around that particular decisive thrust into Europe by crossing the Channel and then sweeping eastward across Europe. Of course, the capture or the control of the industrial dynamo of the war, namely the Ruhr area, was a vital target for our planned invasion. We hoped to capture western Europe before the Russians could. After June 22, 1941, of course, the Soviets gradually were recognized as an ally. It was difficult to recognize the Communists as friends and allies. Their severe criticism against so-called U.S. imperialism prior to June 22nd was changed right around, and the Nazis bore the brunt of Soviet propaganda. Gradually it dawned upon the American people that there had been a switch and the Russians were our ally. There was not to be anymore criticism of the Communists. All was forgiven and now we must realize that this great ally added trememdous strength to our effort against Nazism.

Communism was no longer discussed; nor were the dangers of Communism, including the dreadful possibility of Communists filling the vacua which inevitable would be created in the war. The vacua would be created in central Europe--Western Europe, particularly Germany. That thought wasn't as important as ruthlessly killing and destroying in that area.-- to render them absolutely impotent. Political objectives, in other words, were rarely discussed or considered important during the fighting. Everybody paid lip service only to the concept. Finally I wrote a memorandum to General Marshall embodying those ideas, Tony, but I never received a reply or any reaction. You might understandably think that that was a little bit disloyal or self-serving. I didn't write my memo to Marshall with that thought in mind. I developed the idea carefully and I retained a copy of the memorandum. I initialed it A.C.W. and sent it up to him eyes-only. He never did discuss it with me. He did tell me the last time I talked about it orally (hence the written memorandum) that he didn't want me to bring the matter up anymore. He rightfully remarked that we had to fight as a team. The ramifications and repercussions of unconditional surrender were not so evident in this country as one can conjecture they were in Germany. The German people, I learned post war, now felt compelled to rally around their leaders, as much as they disliked the idea. I held conferences with General Halder at great length and with members of his staff concerning their views and problems of the war. They were then working on the history of World War II. They reported the Allied terms of "unconditional surrender" were widely disseminated by Goebbels, and this served to strengthen

the Nazi determination to continue to fight. They regretted it very much. Many of the German leaders were never wholeheartedly behind Hitler.

Mr. Harry Hopkins exercised considerable influence in our relations with allies. The Russians invariably were not pleased with the flow of supplies they received or with the reaction of American officials when they asked for certain types and quantities of equipment. I went several times to the Russian Embassy at General Marshall's direction. I was almost always accompanied by a Mr. Loy Henderson of the State Department. He was a so-called expert concerning Russia and the Near East. You may have heard of him because after World War II he was Undersecretary of State. I think this was during the Eisenhower Administration. Anyway, in our conferences with the Russians we usually talked to Gromyko. He is today the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, and at that time an underling in the Russian Embassy. I never did talk to him alone. He was always accompanied by another person. They were interested in expediting war munitions to their country, using the line of sea communications up through the north to Mermansk and also via the Persian Gulf route through Iran.

COL DESKIS: Persian Gulf?

GEN WEDEMEYER: That is it. I experienced some difficulty in a friendly way with Gromyko because I would insist upon being told when and where the material they requested would be used against the enemy. At that time we were in short supply of many items of equipment. Our rapidly expending army needed it for training purposes. We were training with wooden guns in certain

areas. We released large quantities of rifles to the British to insure the protection of the British Isles. The British were always concerned lest the Germans decided to come across the Channel. In fact, they had confirmed information that they were planning to do it. Harry Hopkins invariably sided in with our Allies when we were negotiating with them. I think I mentioned earlier that in early '42 I accompanied Harry Hopkins and General Marshall to London to discuss the American plans for the Cross-Channel Operation. Mr. Hopkins asked me to accompany him when he made a talk before the members of the British Parliament. I was really embarrassed. Mr. Hopkins promised them everything and was cheered to the echo. They beat on the desks with their fists and shouted, "Hear, Hear!" As an American I was embarrassed. His presentation wasn't too good, but I was really concerned about his extravagant promises, the vast amount -- no limit to our assistance. The members of the British Parliament just loved him, of course. There is a huge monument to Franklin Roosevelt located at Barkley Square. It is a great tribute to our President and to the American help given during World War II. Hopkins had a retentive memory. I mentioned in one of our previous meetings that we (Marshall, Hopkins and I) flew back from that 1942 conference in London. We discussed various observations and experiences that we had while in London. Hopkins brought up one suggestion that surprised me. He thought that someone should be informing the former President, Mr. Hoover, concerningour strategy. Did I mention this to you before?

COL DESKIS: No, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, it is interesting because Hopkins, of course, was a Democrat and had severely criticized Mr. Hoover. During the political campaign in 1932 Herbert Hoover was severely criticized by the Roosevelt crowd--those supporting him, so Hopkins' suggestion surprised me. He said, "Someone ought to visit Mr. Hoover once a week or so and keep him posted on what is going on." General Marshall said, "I think Wedemeyer should do this." Upon our return to Washington, General Marshall assigned me to do it. In that way I really became acquainted with President Hoover. I had known him earlier when he was President because I served as an aide at the White House. At that time I didn't like him at all. He was cold and impersonal. He, a teetotaler, and his wife in particular were intolerant of drinking and so forth. I recall that I met him at the Union Station a few times in a White House car. He would arrive at the Presidential entrance and I, then a lieutenant in the Army, would direct him to the car. He treated me like a footman. He didn't speak to me. So I didn't know what to expect when I first went to see him. He had a suite in the Waldorf Towers in New York. We had lunch and discussed the war. Invariably he would have a martini beforehand. I found him to be a most likeable individual. His wife had died prior to World War II and he lived alone. I found him to be a most lovable man, brilliant and interested in the conduct of the war. I would relate to him our plans, the decisions that were reached, and our difficulties with Allies. I continued these visits with Mr. Hoover about every ten days until the Quebec Conference in 1943 when I was ordered to India for duty on Mountbatten's staff. When I was reporting to Mr. Hoover, I was also told by

General Marshall to brief Harry Hopkins who had an office on the Treasury side of the White House -- to keep him informed at the same time. I went to his office on several occasions. I had been given strict instructions by Marshall that I would give information only to Mr. Hopkins. Accordingly, about every ten days I would give him a resume of our own situation and of the enemy situation, in the Far East and in the European area. On one occasion there was a fellow sitting in the corner of Hopkins' office when I entered. Harry Hopkins said, "You know Judge Rosenman, of course?" I said, "No, sir, I have never met the Judge." And I went over and shook hands with him. Then I sat down next to Harry's desk. He said, "Well, what is the status of the war, Al?" I waited a minute. Rosenman was still sitting there. Finally I said, "Sorry, Harry, but my orders are to make my report to you personally and alone. He asked Judge Rosenman to leave the office. I was never asked to come back again.

COL DESKIS: Harry Hopkins obviously was a very political . . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: Oh, yes! Political animal. But let me tell you about the man. He was intensely loyal to Roosevelt. He really had a most retentive memory. He would obtain information from General Marshall or from me and from others, then he would go in and talk to the President. Naturally the President thought Hopkins was a great strategist, a most knowledgeable individual.

COL DESKIS: That is amazing.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. A lot of things happened like that. I knew Whittaker Chambers personally, in fact he had been here at my house. He told me that

it wasn't Mr. Nixon, Congressman Nixon, who pressed the case against Alger Hiss but it was one of the civilian assistants on Mr. Nixon's staff. This often happens, you know. Whittaker Chambers knew and told me about it. It is very much, Tony, like an experience I had in East Prussia before World War II when I was a student at the German War College. The students went to Königsberg in East Prussia to study the battles of World War I. The Germans had erected a beautiful monument commemorating their great victory. It was called the hero's circle. In the circle there were pedestals, and on each pedestal a marble bust of each of the principal commanders. Next to Hindenburg a pedestal was empty and I asked the German history teacher who accompanied the students why the bust was missing -- probably a stupid question. I should have known. It was Ludendorff. After the war it seems that Ludendorff was furious because most of the credit for the great Tannenberg victory was given Field Marshall Hindenburg. Actually Ludendorff claimed that it was his plan of operation that made the victory possible. Ludendorff refused to have his bust next to Hindenburg's. For years after, Ludendorff, an arrogant and conceited old man continued to denigrate Hindenburg. Finally Hindenburg publicly asked the question, "If the Tannenberg maneuver had been a failure, I wonder who would have been the person who would have claimed to be responsible for the plan?"

COL DESKIS: Would have gotten the recognition for it.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes.

COL DESKIS: I guess that was the old saying that . . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: The same thing here. Harry Hopkins, too. He got a lot of credit for knowledge that came from others. But isn't that often the case for all of us? I repeat, Hopkins loyalty to the President was outstanding, and often he really served as the mouthpiece of the President. The President could not have spoken to Parliament the way Harry did, and yet he gave the impression that it was the policy of all Americans to support the British through to the very end. It turned out that is exactly what we did. Secretary of War Stimson was likewise loyal to President Roosevelt and to President Truman. Stimson was a great admirer of General Marshall and supported him at every turn. Stimson, in my opinion, was an abler man than Secretary of the Navy Knox. Secretary Knox, I think, was a former newspaper man and was more superficial in his thinking. The President had a great deal of confidence in Stimson, it was obvious. With Harry Hopkins, I don't know. You ask here what Stimson's relationship with Harry Hopkins might have been. I don't know. Secretary Stimson did serve as a good representative of the military from a civilian standpoint. He /Stimson/ wrote a book on the war that you should read. It is very good. I admired his continued support of Marshall at every turn. And it must be said that General Marshall kept him informed very closely and so did I, at General Marshall's request. Stimson admired General Stilwell, which is something I couldn't understand personally from my own experience with General Stilwell. But maybe he never knew, or maybe it was partly because Marshall had confidence in Stilwell. Marshall picked Stilwell for that responsible position in China.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Which indicated his friendship and his trust. But I don't think Stilwell was loyal to Marshall. I never felt that he was loyal even to our country, trying to dictate policies when he had a clear-cut directive from responsible authorities back in Washington -- a directive requiring him to support the Nationalist Government. We Americans weren't over there to determine the political setup and to criticize, but to do all that we could to keep the Nationalist Government fighting effectively against the common enemy, the Japs. That is the way I interpreted my job, and anything that would influence or interfere with that, either from my diplomatic advisors or anyone else, I simply would disregard. Well, I do know that Secretary of War Stimson greatly admired General Stilwell and that had some influence back here with the President in employing General Stilwell to be the commander of all ground forces if we had implemented the plan to invade Japan -- Hokkaido. When I was serving in Washington during the war years, I lived in an apartment on Connecticut Avenue, and Senator Truman was in the same apartment. We became acquainted, and I thought he was a lovable, fine individual. We had an apartment on the same floor. We had two boys and, of course, they had a daughter, Margaret. One of my boys, Albert, was very tall for his age, and he and Margaret had quite a little romance going. But Margaret didn't know that she was a year or two older than my son. Then General Marshall had me moved over to quarters at Fort Myer just before the war began. I lived near his quarters at Fort Myer until I was ordered to India to join Admiral Mountbatten's staff in 1943. However,

we lived at Fort Myer three years. When I was ordered to India, Mrs. Wedemeyer lived in an apartment in Washington. I never returned until after the war. My boys went away to school. One boy went off to West Point, my older boy, and the younger boy went to Staunton Military School. There were programs -- austerity programs in Washington in the early war years that began to ration meats, gasoline, and many items like that. I must say that everyone seemed to be united behind the war. At no time did I see or hear anti-war sentiment on the scale that we have experienced here the past decade. There was an America First Organization, and many members of that were friends of mine. Senator Bob Taft's wife, Martha Taft. Colonel Charles Lindbergh, whom I met when I was in Germany at the War College. I acted as his interpreter then and we became friends. Senator Burt Wheeler of Montana, a Democrat. There were many prominent people in that organization. I felt personally that we were intervening in a war that we should not get into. I didn't think that we should send our boys over to Europe again. I'd studied World War I -- its causes and results. I felt that we were propagandized into that war. Now again we were being made to feel that we must destroy Nazism or Nazism would destroy us. I couldn't share that feeling. I had been in Germany and I admired the German people. I don't apologize for that today and never did. I think they are wonderful people and I don't think they are any more warlike or belligerent than other people in Europe. Having a good knowledge of European history, I know that their country was a battleground and armies were transgressing back and forth. They had to be belligerent. I mean they learned how to fight and defend their

areas. So I mentioned this in my book that I wrote, and I really am objective about it. But it is hard for a Jewish person to understand. I have had Jewish friends tell me that they didn't like that in me. I am going to be honest about it. While I was in Germany at the German War College, I certainly didn't permit them to criticize my country. They didn't do it either among my comrades. The newspapers made me furious, and I'm not anti-Semitic, but I do think that the Jewish people were determined to really crush the Germans. But before when I was over there, I had German friends who were anti-Hitler telling me that a German boy couldn't get into the banking business. He couldn't get into a hospital if he was a good doctor because they were all controlled by the Jewish people, and the Jewish people are smarter than the German people. They say that. They are smarter. They are brilliant. But this is Germany, and that is why Hitler could so easily sell his concept of the superiority of the Germanic race. Now they bought it, but today we have a similar situation developing in our country -- the Black people, and it is a very serious problem. I personally don't think it is going to be resolved in the manner that they are trying to do it because it is being forced at an unacceptable speed. It is something when you start to tinker with a person's philosophy of life -- the social life and so forth. It has got to be something that he accepts within a reasoned manner, not compelled to an end. So I hope that the Negro leaders will slow down a little bit in their demands and realize that most Americans, most white Americans, want them to have opportunities. We want them to have the same choice that we enjoy. But it hasn't been that way traditionally, and so don't

make us accept it all at once.

COL DESKIS: I think the big problem now is that the Blacks feel that the progression is much too slow.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Exactly!

COL DESKIS: It has to be slow rated, and if it isn't accelerated, you know, they are threatening violence on a national scale, I guess.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, they are. They are very militant now, and it is dangerous. They are multiplying very rapidly, and the Deskises, Wedemeyers, Joneses, Smiths, and lots of others -- all white people are subsidizing their lives and so many hundreds or thousands of illegitimate children. They are intentionally breeding so that they increase their proportion of our population. Now we have voluntary military service and, in my judgment, the preponderance of the military forces of this country ten years from now will be Black -- Negroes. The officers will be privy to all the war planning, all the organization plans, all the secrets of our government.

In being advanced from major in 1940 to brigadier general in 1942, of course, was due entirely to war promotion. I can recall earlier in my service where members in my class who were experiencing the same slow advancement figured out that we could not in my class ever get any higher than lieutenant colonel in the Regular Army through the then operating promotion system. But, of course, this promotion thing came very rapidly. General Marshall felt that I had to have some rank in my dealings with the man opposite me. He was a two-star admiral. His name was Cooke. He was a rear admiral and I was a colonel.

I was made colonel but was only a colonel for a month. When General Marshall found out that I was representing the Army and the Air Force both, whereas the Navy was represented by this two-star admiral, he promoted me. Then he tried to promote me on my birthday. I think it was in 1942. But anyway, when I was going to go to the Far East, General Marshall said the President was anxious that I go over on the staff of Mountbatten to bring about better cooperation between the British and American forces there, and that I would get promoted. I said, "Well, that doesn't interest me at all. I am more interested in what I am doing unless I can be given a division -- an armored unit. I would like to go into the field with an armored division." But I made it clear to him that the promotion wasn't so important to me then. It never has been. In 1944-45, I was having a modicum of success that was recognized both here in Washington and there in my operations with the Chinese. Mr. Hurley, the ambassador, said he was going to recommend me to be a four-star general. I told Pat Hurley in no uncertain terms that I had just been made a lieutenant general and I thought that it would look as if I was influencing him. He said, "I will make it clear that you are not." I said, "Well, I know that General Marshall doesn't like anyone to do that and I wish you wouldn't do it." And it wasn't done. And another time, about promotions, after the war was over and I was assistant to Bradley, Eisenhower had left us and gone to Columbia University. I was on the General Staff, Director of Plans and Operations -- Combat Operations I think it was called at that time. We were walking back from a Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting and I recommended to Bradley that we decrease the number of general officers that

we have. I said, "You start out with me and make me a major general or anything you wantto, brigadier if you want. The promotion lists would indicate that we have a top-heavy army now, all these generals." Bradley's reply to me was, "Al, that is good of you to suggest that and I think you mean it. But the Navy wouldn't do it and then in all the committees around here the Navy would be the senior one and they would exercise strong influence on all policy and so forth." I said, "Brad, I don't agree with you. I don't care about my rank on the committee. I speak up and make my point clear whether the man is senior to me or not and I always have done it that way." One other thought about promotion. I had a very wealthy cousin in New York named O'Hara, a very rich man, many times a millionaire, and his lawyer was a man named Johnson, who later became Secretary of Defense. He didn't know that I was any relation to Mr. O'Hara. But after General Collins was made Chief of Staff, Mr. O'Hara and Mr. Johnson happened to be together and Johnson had become well known then. O'Hara told him that I was his cousin. He said, "Why didn't you tell me that? He was being considered for Chief of Staff and I would have had him made Chief of Staff for you, Tom." Tom said, "I've mentioned this to my cousin and he said it wasn't done that way in the Army -- that General Collins was always senior to him -- four years ahead of him at West Point and so forth, and he wouldn't permit me to tell you." That is the truth. You brought it up. I didn't bring it up. So about promotions I don't think one should think too much about that. I really don't think so.

COL DESKIS: That is what I wanted to elicit from . . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: And my thoughts for the future were not measured by that. Maybe if I had stayed in . . . Secretary Pace came out to see me at the Sixth Army and spoke very highly of me when he learned that I was going to resign -- retire voluntarily, and they couldn't turn me down under the law. So he called me and said that he would like to speak to me -- Secretary of the Army Frank Pace. I knew that there was a boat coming back from Korea with the first people who returned from the war. My son was going to be on that boat, my older son. He volunteered to go over early and had been over there. Well, so Mayor Devon of Seattle was giving a big reception for me, and I told the Secretary of the Army when he called me on the phone that I thought it would be good for him to come out there as Secretary of the Army and meet the men returning. And they /politicians/ are always glad for an opportunity like that, so he came out. He came down from Seattle. I flew down with him in his plane to the Presidio where my headquarters were. Mrs. Wedemeyer and I gave a reception in his honor that night. But anyway, going down he told me that there was no question about my going on up. I was so senior and so junior in age, but if I'd reconsider . . . He didn't want me to resign or retire early. I am just telling you this story, not in a bragging way because I did have a good record, but I also had a conscience and I had ideas about my country. These ideas were not in consonance with those in power at the time. Very much like we have been talking here today, Tony, about some of your problems that are presented to Mr. Nixon whom I have supported. I know him personally and yet I am very much disappointed in some of the things he is doing.

COL DESKIS: Is that in the international scene?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, and in the domestic field, too. During World War II many of us in positions of responsibility, especially on the war planning side, were disappointed by the continued yielding on the part of our top people, our politicians, to British demands for equipment, and also in the field of strategy -- in the field of tactics and techniques, too. You would find that our Air Force had problems with the British. They felt that they had more experience in the tactical handling of air bombing -- night bombing, daylight bombing, and things like that. And target selection was subject to controversy between the British and American pilots. Well, I had quite a few contacts with Mr. Churchill. I mentioned one earlier today. Well, I had many others. I was sent over to London to discuss a certain matter with the Prime Minister by President Roosevelt. I left, I recall, on a Thursday morning and I was back Sunday night. He took me out to Chequers. We had dinner, just the four of us -- a lieutenant general from the British Army named Ismay, "Pug Ismay, who was sort of the chief of staff to the Prime Minister and accompanied the Prime Minister most everyplace, Lady Churchill and myself -- four of us. Then we went from there into a great room with a fireplace and sat and talked. I told him what I had been told to discuss with him. In the meantime, he was serving whiskey. He would pour out quite a lot of whiskey and practically no water and the whiskey was not cold -- room temperature you might say, and we sat there and we drank it. Of course, I was restrained and inhibited during all this, but as the whiskey began to have effect, and I don't drink very much, I became less inhibited. He began

to talk about the Civil War. He knew a great deal about the Civil War. Fortunately, I did, too. So it was "nip and tuck" there. He was showing off a little. He was a show-off, and "Pug" Ismay would tell you that -- would be the first to tell you, but a lovable show-off, though, because he was brilliant, no question about it, and amusing. And then he recited poetry, American poetry, and he knew quite a lot of it. When I was a youngster and naughty and bad, my father made me memorize British poetry, English poetry, and I knew a lot of Tennyson. My father loved Tennyson and I probably knew most of Tennyson's poems and could reel them off. But I hadn't been doing it in years. However, the whiskey helped a lot and as he began to show off, I showed off a little bit. Very cautiously at first, but I was reeling it off to him. He was astounded. I think, Tony, as I sit here, it was fortuitous that I, an American junior like that, sat there and at least could give that man a fairly good concept of the "barbarians" over here that they think we are. I know he was astounded because this is what happened some months later up at Quebec. I was in the Frontinac, the big hotel there, and they were all over at a certain place where the Prime Minister and the President were staying. I was sent for by General Marshall, and I rushed over with the information and had to walk across the room where they were. General Marshall told me that he heard the Prime Minister say, "Franklin, you see that tall fellow there? Wedemeyer? Weedymeyer, some such name." The President said, "Yes." He said, "Well, he knows more English poetry than most Britishers that I know." General Marshall didn't know about it until that. He liked that very much. But then the next time I saw him, Tony, I was

in London with a group just before we went across the Channel. I gave a cocktail party for Eisenhower and the Prime Minister, my group did, at Claridges Hotel. They came to the party. I didn't know he was going to come. He came as Mr. Somebody, different from Churchill. But everybody was just thrilled, my little group. Then the next time I saw him was at Number 10 Downing. I think that Mountbatten had something to do with this. I got an invitation to come to dinner at Number 10 Downing and I had an aide named McAfee who I think I have mentioned to you before. His sister used to be President of Vassar and he was a Scotch Presbyterian boy and not a Regular Army officer but a wonderful guy. He is now in the State Department. McAfee told me the invitation was for eight o'clock and I said, "Well, Mac, I was told as a boy if you get an invitation to dinner you ought to be ten or fifteen minutes late so if the hostess isn't quite ready, why everything is all right. If it is a cocktail party, you can be as much as an hour late. It doesn't much matter. But for luncheon or dinner, be a little late." And so he said, "Well, General, I think you better be on time." Well, I got a taxicab and we went over to Number 10 Downing Street and the police were all around the place, bobbies, you know, with their helmets on. They knew I was coming. Everybody was told. They were very efficient that way, the British. Apparently they had my picture because he looked in at me and said, "All right. Come in, General." So I got out. Of course Mac went away then. Got in there, and about fifteen minutes later along came the King and Count Laselles, his equerry, and that was it for dinner. The American Ambassador was there, John Winant, and then myself, the only

Americans. And then there were the King and his equerry, Tom Laselles. I think they were related, cousins. And there was a British Admiral there. That was the evening, and I tell you I enjoyed it immensely. That was after we got across the Channel, because after dinner I sat next to the King. . . Incidentally, three sat on one side and three on the other, and the thing, Tony, that amused me was, the Prime Minister called the King "Sire" always, and he was very respectful to the King. He sat opposite the King, you see, the King sat here, and I sat to one side of him, the left side of him, and John Winant sat on the other side of him. Then Laselles sat next to the Prime Minister, and that Admiral, I forget his name, I can't think of it, a British Admiral. But they brought in some champagne, I think at the end of the dinner, and the champagne bottle was about this big, and they stuck it in between me and the King. And I poured because I had never seen a bottle that big before, and the King got a "kick" out of that. He thought that was awfully amusing. He said, "Did you ever see . . . ?" I think it is called a magnum or something, and the Prime Minister then volunteered the fact that the French government had sent him six of those. Well, anyway we went into the study and I remember that the Prime Minister went right after me then about the Cross-Channel Operation, recalling the experience we had together at the White House Oval Room, and he told the King that I had a fetish for going across the Channel a year earlier. I said, "That is right, your Majesty, I did. I still think we should have." He just shook his head, smiling. Then he laughed, and the King said, "Sit down. Tell me about it." So I did. I did tell him how we always

paid lip service, all military men, to the thought of establishing a political objective. We don't just go into a war to kill and destroy, but we have some condition in mind that we want to create in the areas that we are fighting, or among the people we are fighting. He agreed. He said it made sense to him. He was the one that stuttered a little bit, the brother, you know.

COL DESKIS: Edward?

GEN WEDEMEYER: No. George. George the Sixth or Seventh, wasn't it? George the Sixth. The father of the present Queen. That was the last time I saw the Prime Minister. There is no question about him having clearly defined aims. I often felt what a wonderful thing it would be if we had an American political leader who had the same clarity in the objectives of the war and particularly in the interest of our own country. In other words, I never found a political leader who put our interests first in World War II.

COL DESKIS: We appeared to be rather naive in international affairs.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Right! The Casablanca Conference was more or less the first combined formal chiefs of staff meeting. There had been a meeting in Washington, and there had been meetings in London which we attended always -- not all the planners but those who accompanied the chiefs. But the Casablanca Conference was the first formal conference and very careful preparations were made on both sides. But the British brought a much larger team of planners and advisors; you might say, informants who reinforced this strong staff. I was the only one that Marshall had, and Hap Arnold didn't have any air men with him at all, and I was supposed to answer questions for both

of them. The Navy had one man, Admiral Cooke. We had a secretary, Johnny Dean, who was making notes, but we were overwhelmed by the British. They had so many arguments. This was all pre-arranged obviously, and the strategy was prejudged and they presented a united front concerning continued operations in the Mediterranean area, which I opposed, but only through Marshall. I felt that we were dissipating our resources. I felt that that was just opening the door for what happened, as it had for TORCH, the first operation against the northwest coast of Africa. And it did happen. After getting the African littoral, then the British maintained you had to have Sicily because the enemy could occupy that and could jeopardize our lines of communications to the Middle East. Well, I would say . . . I don't care what happens in the Middle East. Rommel could run rampant in Alexandria or Cairo or whatnot. What I wanted to do was to get quickly into the Ruhr and cut off the source of supplies for Rommel. He would die on a limb as I saw it. And everytime you fight a war you create vacua anyway which have to be filled. And you can't let your troops down. They kept pouring supplies into Sicily and then up the boot, as you know and made remote the successful Cross-Channel Operation. Of course, the Germans had taken a terrible beating and they were pretty much out of it. The Quebec Conference was a repetition of Casablanca, of course, The decisions concerning Europe were just strongly confirmed, and continued operations up the boot were decided definitely and really again confirmed, because Prime Minister Churchill went down to talk to Eisenhower in the Mediterranean to make sure that there was no hitch in going up the Italian

boot. Also, some decisions about China were discussed there. The problems that Stilwell was giving and consequently the formation of the Southeast Asia Command, and that is when I left. I was at the Cairo Conference. Increased operations were going to be undertaken in the Burma area. Mountbatten was going to be given some landing craft and so forth to do some scallops, and then they took them away from him, and that was one of the things that made Chiang Kai-shek very angry and he was disappointed, thinking that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had not kept their promise to him. Because at Cairo (he attended the Cairo Conference) he was told that they would be given additional resources for such operations. Tehran, of course the reason they went to Tehran right after Cairo was because Stalin refused to meet with the Generalissimo. Did you know that?

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. I knew that.

GEN WEDEMEYER: All right. So all of our people went to Tehran. I did not go. Mountbatten and I flew back to New Delhi. And Tehran though was quite a decisive business because at that conference Stalin was laying it on the line there. He began to assert himself very strongly concerning leadership, responsibility, and the Cross-Channel Operation. He kept threatening all the time that he would surrender. He would give up if we didn't create a second front. Should we have devoted greater efforts and resources in the Far East? No. I think the Navy was surreptitiously sending more out there than was contemplated. They were always in doubt about the sincerity of the British going across the Channel, and they began to send landing craft out there.

And I think that statement is proven, that conjecture is proven, that we sent out more than we contemplated or probably should have. We almost ended the war out there as early as we had the war in Europe, and it wasn't ever dreamed that we would . . . maybe another whole year of transferring resources out there before we overwhelmed the Japanese. The contradictions and inconsistencies, I think, came out on the strategic level -- not on the technical level so much. The bombing raids that we conducted were always morally justified by the British and the Americans because of the bombing raids conducted by the Germans against historic sites and population centers. And it is like what comes first, the chicken or the egg? Both blamed the other for starting it. I don't know as I sit here who did start it, that indiscriminate bombing. That's what you might call it. Those are inconsistencies or contradictions of war. Of course, in a lower level of our government, I think we had a fairly clear concept of what we wanted to do in Western Europe. We wanted to destroy Nazism. But we did not fight militarily to accomplish that. Our military plans were not designed to make this possible. Contrarywise, our maneuvers were executed in such manner as to permit another type of totalitarianism just as dangerous to mankind and the peace of the world as Nazism really. I am referring, of course, to Communism. The Russians filled the vacua created by the fighting in Germany. They rushed in with their troops and the commissars and took over -- all through Central Europe, the Balkans, and so forth, and they did it under the guise of establishing a barrier around the periphery to prevent anybody from attacking. But who in the hell

had the power to attack them but ourselves, the United States? We had no plans, and they knew it. But that was just a cover-up. Yes, I think every individual is selfishly motivated in varying degrees to answer that -- in varying degrees. Now, armed conflicts, of course, if you are talking about confrontations on a philosophical level, they are precipitated, I think, by the competitive operations conducted to get living space, to get food, to get raw materials, and to get markets. And you are going to have areas of friction all through those elements. But I don't call it a basic human weakness. It is almost a question of survival, a question of propagating and progress. But I don't think that armed conflicts are precipitated by basic human weakness, and they were not evident in my contacts with people.

COL DESKIS: When I was referring to a basic human weakness, I was implying that people are selfish and they are motivated by greed.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Absolutely! That is right. It is a good point. I agree with that 100 percent.

COL DESKIS: Even though a nation may have an adequate supply to sustain itself, it still pursues objectives that would make their political and economic viability even stronger.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I agree 100 percent!

COL DESKIS: Much to the detriment of other nations contiguous.

GEN WEDEMEYER: You expressed it well and I agree with you 100 percent. Now, the caliber of our fighting force and leadership. I think gradually the American fighting forces became superior in their tactics and in their

techniques. It was also a great surprise to me, the leadership -- the quality of the leadership. We did have some who failed us in the rank as high as major general. I think two or three major generals had to be relieved of command for either lack of aggressiveness or inefficiency. But we had some outstanding generals. One that is not very often thought of in major general rank was a fellow named Truscott, Lucian Truscott. He had command of the 3rd Division. It was one of the finest fighting units that I observed. Of course, I didn't see all of them, but I read about all of them, and I would say that the 3rd Division of the American Army in 1943 was the equal, if not superior to the finest fighting division of the Germans at that time. But the German divisions were gradually deteriorating in their fighting efficiency. They were good, Tony, and we must not forget it. They were good though all the echelons from the lower ranks on up and their weapons were good. Their tactical and technical handling. Where the Germans failed was their arrogant or stupid handling on the diplomatic side. They knew they were good and they were very arrogant about it. That certainly doesn't make for success on a government scale, national scale. I was only with Patton for about six weeks and served there as observer, and I witnessed the practice landing of the combat-loaded 45th Division on the African littoral there with General Patton. I went around with him a great deal on his inspections. I think he was very thorough -- a very impulsive, a very emotional man, and a very dedicated man. He was self-disciplined in a sense, but his emotions sometimes, I think, got the better of him, and he conducted himself in a very childish manner at times. I could give you an

example but I'm concerned about the time now. We were walking along the beach. It was daybreak, early in the morning. He had a pistol on either hip, three stars up here and three on either collar. At that time, I was a brigadier general and we were walking alone together on the beach. Men were coming in from the small boats and landing craft and their rifles up in the air waving at him waist deep. They were rushing on up to the high ground as they should. But we came to one man who had stopped. Apparently he had been sick coming over on the boat, seasick maybe, and he was just pooped, no doubt about it. He was lying there, and he had dug a little place in the sand and was lying in it. His rifle was right along side of him and he was sound asleep. We had been walking along the shore so he had time. He probably had been in ten or fifteen minutes, but just fell dead to the world. His helmet was off. Patton picked up his gun and he stuck it into his ribs and woke him up and said, "You SOB." His face was livid he was so angered. He said, "You get out of there. You should be running up there with your comrades. This could cost you your life or your comrades' lives when you do this, this is just a trial run." But he just cussed him out terribly. Now, I wouldn't have done it that way. I would have leaned over and talked to him. You probably would have done that. I didn't like that at all, that exhibition. I didn't say anything to the general.

COL DESKIS: Those kinds of actions turn me off. I guess it is just the way you are brought up in your basic character.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I don't know. I would have leaned over and wakened him and told him quietly, but definitely, "This could cost your own life and it could also cost others!" . . and I would ask him his name and say, "Now, you surely must do well." Talk to him along that line.

COL DESKIS: You probably would have made a friend instead of an enemy.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, we were winning the war. I think the turning point in the war in the Far East, of course, was after the Battle of Midway and our Navy was beginning to take over the initiative in the Pacific. When you ask me about the least costly way, everybody that I knew, even some of my Navy friends, say we overmaterieled in the Pacific. The artillery preparations prior to a landing were just something hard to conjure with. They just plastered the areas. That was what I was told by the Navy, and the Army overmaterieled for that. I think that if we had gone across the Channel earlier, I maintain that we would have saved a lot of lives on both sides. This is, of course, after the fact. I think it was unfair maybe for me to say that because of my conferences with high German officers after the war was over. Uniformly, they told me that if we had gone across we would have been successful, and many of them were hoping that we would. They did not want the Russians to come back and occupy Central Europe as they ultimately did, and they did it because our people were constrained or restrained. They were not permitted to advance rapidly to the east, as you know. In summarizing the success I personally experienced, of insuring the continued support of the President and Marshall of the Cross-Channel Operation, a lot of times I felt that maybe we

would relinquish the plan altogether in consonance or in keeping with the pressures that were exerted by the British, especially Churchill. I think we should have gone across the Channel earlier, and I believe we would have been successful, but my plan to do that was contingent upon no operations in the Mediterranean and a concentration of force in the British Isles. My British counterparts today will tell you that we didn't have the landing craft. They made a great evacuation of Dunkirk without the landing craft, particularly craft that would permit it. We could have if we had had the spirit and the will, and if the Navy had not begun to take surreptitiously some of our landing craft out to the Far East if they were convinced they were going across earlier. I know it could have been done, and if it had been done, in my judgment Anglo-American forces would have been occupying Central Europe and Western Europe and we would not have had the problems we have today about boundaries and areas of interest and so forth. I must say always that General Marshall was courteous to me and, I think,very loyal to me. I sensed, but I wasn't sure, that he was very fond of me and had confidence in me. When I left and went out in the Far East, he told me to always let him know anything that I thought would be of interest to him and to keep him informed. I did write to him. I did recommend that Stilwell be made a four-star general because he was junior to all the Britishers. I recommended Stilwell to get a decoration because of a little mentioned localized success that we had, and he did both. Stilwell never knew, of course, that I did, and Barbara Tuchman wrote the most disagreeable things about me in her book. They were so unfounded.

It makes me peeved, but you can't do anything about things like that. I think the fact that I was sent to the Far East instead of getting a combat command -- I don't know whether I was qualified to -- I might put it on that basis because the last experience I had with troops was down at Fort Benning where I commanded a war strength heavy weapons company just as a captain. So I never had high command, but neither did Eisenhower, neither did Mark Clark, any of these officers, and that is what I believe is a very serious fault in connection with preparation for war in our army -- at that time it was. When I was Deputy Chief of Staff here in the Pentagon, I recommended highly that the last two weeks of the National War College be conducted in an exercise involving war plans, but it was turned down by the commandant at the National War College. I think it was Lemnitzer at the time, and the Chief of Staff at the time I think was Collins. No, I wasn't pleased with my assignment to SEAC. I didn't want to do that. I would have preferred to remain as a planner rather than do that because it denied me the opportunity to get a combat division. However, and also I was not sure about my boss. I felt that he got his rank and provisional responsibility due to the fact that he was related to the King. Therefore I didn't think he would be a capable officer. I was wrong. He was a very capable leader and a very fine leader, and I admired and respected him. That is it.

SECTION 6

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER

by

Colonel Anthony J. Deskis

This is side #1, tape #6 of session #6. My name is Colonel Anthony J. Deskis, a student at the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. I am about to interview General Albert C. Wedemeyer, United States Army, Retired. We are located at General Wedemeyer's home, Friends Advice Farm, Boyds, Maryland. The date is 28 February, 1973, and the time is 1000 hours. This interview is one of a series in conjunction with the Senior Officer Oral History Program which was established by the Chief of Staff of the Army in October, 1970.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I was not happy to be assigned to Admiral Mountbatten's staff in India in 1943. I'd always hoped that I would be given a command in Europe. Also, I did not have a great deal of confidence in the military knowledge or experience of Admiral Mountbatten. Naturally, I thought that he had attained his high rank in the British Service because of his connection with the Royal family, the King being his first cousin. Prior to reporting to India, I gathered together a small staff of Americans: an Aide-de-Camp, a Lieutenant William McAfee; Colonel John Blizzard; Colonel Claire Hutchin, and Colonel J. Hart Caughey to serve as the American nucleus of the planning group of the Southeast Asia Command Staff. Also, I made inquiries concerning Mountbatten concerning his eccentricities and capabilities. Reports that I received were generally favorable. Invariably he was said to be physically courageous. He was highly thought of as a commander of destroyers, operating with boldness and sound tactical skill. He commanded two destroyers which were sunk in

the North Sea. Also, he was considered a communications expert. So he was not so much a playboy as I thought he would be. He was very popular. He met people easily. He sincerely liked Americans. This information I collected prior to reporting for duty in New Delhi. We had one difference of opinion very early. After the Quebec Conference, Admiral Mountbatten accompanied me to Washington. I assume he did that because he wanted to get acquainted with me -- to evaluate my interests and abilities and to determine how I would fit into his official family in New Delhi. He explained that he had a British Chief of Staff named General Pownall. I might record here that Pownall was a man of great character and strength. He was much older than either Mountbatten or myself. Mountbatten was two years younger than I. He was by far the youngest theater commander in World War II. The difference that developed immediately between us in connection with the formation of our headquarters involved uniformed women. I did not feel that we should have WACs on our staff. In fact, I didn't think that the WACs had a place in the forward areas either of the combat or the communication zone. There were too many risks involved, not only from the enemy but from tenptations that would obviously develop. Mountbatten disagreed strongly and indicated that there would be about fifty WAVEs from the British Navy. He convinced General Marshall, the U. S. Chieff of Staff, that we should assign at least fifty American WACs. I was disappointed that General Marshall made that decision but, of course, I made up my mind to operate with women, British and

American, on the staff. Mrs. Oveta Hobby was a Colonel, the head of the Women's Army Corps (it was abbreviated WAC). She expressed disappointment that I felt so strongly that women could not have a place in the armed forces. I explained tactfully, but firmly, that I felt they did have an important role to play, not only in positions in industry but also in administrative duties in the higher echelons of military headquarters far from the combat areas. She said, "General Wedemeyer, I am giving you the best WAC that I have in my organization to serve as your confidential secretary and to command the WAC unit which will be sent to India. I thanked her. It so developed that she did give me a WAC officer (Captain) who was outstanding in every respect, characterwise and in the leadership that she exercised over the other American members of the WAC unit. She was an outstanding young woman. Her name was Elizabeth Lutze and she hailed from Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Her rank as Captain created a little difficulty because my Aide was a Lieutenant. I had to make an adjustment by promoting the Aide, which I did as soon as I could.

My personal family? Members of my family, of course, had to be adjusted to my departure. Mrs. Wedemeyer moved from Fort Myer to a cheerful apartment building next to the Wardman Park Hotel. She had to do that because there was a rationing of gasoline and she couldn't live in our place in the country. It worked out very comfortably for her, however. Both of my boys were at school, the older son at a private school in Chattanooga,

Tennessee, in his last high school year. The younger son was a cadet at Staunton Military School in Staunton, Virginia. My family's reaction was normal. They were sorry that I was leaving, but Mrs. Wedemeyer, as the daughter of an Army officer, understood that from time to time I would be called upon to be absent on duty. Psychologically everyone adjusted easily to the situation.

My trip to New Delhi was eventful. The Army placed a beautiful C-54 plane at my disposal. Accompanying me were four of the WACs who were assigned to my organization -- two officers, one of whom, Captain Lutze, was to be my secretary. Also a warrant officer and two enlisted WACs were in this initial group. Five officers of my staff and one noncommissioned officer were also aboard. We flew to South America first, Brazil. Then we crossed over to Accra on the west coast of Africa. From there we flew north to Marrakech and Casablanca, where we stopped for one night. I felt our party members should have every opportunity to see as much of the world as they could en route to New Delhi. I was informed that the British members of the staff would be reporting slowly in New Delhi. Continuing our journey from Casablanca, we flew southeast and east across the heart of Africa. We refueled in the middle of the desert at a remote place called Maiduguri. We went on to Khartoum and at that point I gave them some information concerning the British operations there and the role of Lord Kitchener. We continued north up the Nile Valley to Cairo. Again, I arranged a stopover so that my group could visit the pyramids and also the Valley of the Kings near Thebes.

In other words, I was trying to make their trip not only comfortable but also educational and recreational. Next we flew to Baghdad where we stopped briefly for sightseeing. Then down to Bandar Shahpur and on to Karachi, India, thence to New Delhi. I don't think the trip was considered boring by any member of the group. As a matter of fact, they enjoyed it so much, an article was written by one member, Colonel Hutchin, describing their observations and experiences. The title of the article was "We Were Twelve." He described the various places we visited and he did it very well. It could have been published, I'm sure. Each member of the party, however, was given a copy. The lesson to learn from that is obvious. I recall when I was a young officer returning from service in the Philippines, I went through the Panama Canal by boat. Before going through, I had read all I could about it. I wanted to visit the canal and have someone explain the operation. On another occasion, years later, I flew over it, but didn't learn too much -- just had a fine view. Army authorities didn't realize that they could have arranged a sightseeing trip for all the people on the boat. At least ... make it voluntary, but nevertheless provide an opportunity to learn about the operation of the canal, an important lane for commerce. I decided that if I ever had the opportunity, if and when I became a senior officer, I would always insure that people under me would be given opportunities to broaden their knowledge under such circumstances. We did that at my last command. I arranged weekly lectures by outstanding Americans, leaders in industry, the arts, the sciences, the professions, and so forth. Once a week such a lecture was held at the headquarters.

I required attendance by all officers of the staff along with senior noncommissioned officers. It was so popular. In other words, the thirst for knowledge is there, if it is only encouraged a little bit by the senior commander. He must set the tone and make the opportunities. The others will take advantage of them.

My duties as Deputy Chief of Staff on Mountbatten's staff were essentially the planning of operations in the Southeast Asia area. It was my responsibility to insure that we had plans for operations against the Japanese and other contingencies, including possible uprising on the part of the people in India. Plans involved the employment of British, American and Indian Army, Navy and Air Force against the common enemy, the Japanese. Plans were also made for the employment of the Chinese forces in Burma under General Stilwell. I had British and Americans on my staff. The British members were able, and I had great respect for them. My Americans, I had selected myself, so we can assume that I at least knew their capabilities. They proved to be tops and worked very effectively with the British. The headquarters was well organized. In fact, it was, in my judgment, as well organized as practically any headquarters that I have ever seen. Cohesive effort was my responsibility, i.e., to bring about good relations between the British and the Americans. The attitudes were not friendly between Wavell and Stilwell. Auchinleck, who had just been replaced in Africa by Monty (1943), was in India too. He had been relieved of his command of British forces in Africa and sent to command all of the Indian forces in India. It was a big setback for a very able man. I

consider Auchinleck's relief in Africa as a black mark on the escutcheon of one Winston Churchill. I believe Auchinleck was a man of great stature and ability. He accepted his situation like a man. He never failed to continue to work hard and make his enthusiastic contribution to the job in India. There was a definite conflict of personalities between the British senior officials and the American General Stilwell. Stilwell continually made snide remarks concerning the British, criticising their inability or unwillingness to fight. He made fun of Admiral Mountbatten, alluding to playboy and handsome Louie. These little jibes were not restricted to Mountbatten. I was occasionally the butt of his ill-conceived humor. I hardly knew the man, but I continued to plug away, and I think I had a modicum of success. The British felt that I was anti-British and the Americans thought that I was pro-British. This might indicate that I was striking a happy medium. It was difficult, however, because I had just come from Washington where the British were sometimes unscrupulous in getting things done in their way. Their efforts were seldom in the common interest -- invariably selfishly motivated. Therefore, it would have been very easy for me to be anti-British in India as the result of my experience or observation of them in Washington. I think Mountbatten admonished them to be cooperative and to carry out my instructions. Mountbatten knew that I had instructions from General Marshall to bring about cooperation between Stilwell's forces and the British. Mountbatten supported me 100 per cent. There was some feeling, however, on the part of the three senior British commanders. They were all four-star men. Their names

are not material to this oral history. The senior commander of all the British ground forces was a very fine gentleman, a four-star general of the British Army. He had served a great deal in Africa and had commanded the African Corps. He was thoroughly familiar with the African soldiers, their capabilities and limitations. Then there was a British admiral. He, too, was a capable man -- however extremely sensitive of his rank and position. Finally there was a British air marshal. He, too, was jealous of the South-east Asia Commander in Chief, Lord Louis Mountbatten because the latter was so much younger and of royal connection. They were all older and, in varying degrees, they were jealous of him. This presented a problem and I gladly helped him by continually praising him /Mountbatten/ to them. I did it in clear conscience because I could see that the man was striving to do a good job and had the capabilities to do it. I repeatedly said that we all ought to get behind him and support him. I personally had an interesting problem created by two British officers on my staff. One was a British Naval Commodore. He was related to the famous Langley, the aviator who invented some early flying machines. The other was an Air Vice Marshal. They hated each other. I had terrible times at staff meetings because these two men would just take insulting jibes at each other. I mention this because what I did to alleviate the situation was Machiavellian. However it worked! I invited Commodore Langley to dinner one evening. We drank a little more wine than we probably should have while discussing subjects of mutual interest. Without him recog-nizing my ploy, I insinuated the name of his nemesis, Air Vice Marshal

Whitworth Jones into the discussion. I said, "Whitworth Jones and I had lunch the other day and, my, he admires you. He told me that you had one of the finest minds in the British Navy. He added that we were fortunate to have you on the staff because you would come up with ideas that showed imagination and creativity and yet you were practical." Well, Commander Langley almost broke a button. Then later on, about a week or so later, I invited Whitworth Jones, the Air Vice Marshal, for dinner. I repeated the operation, and he, too, was completely susceptible. I said, "Langley spoke so highly of you. He told me two or three times that we must listen to what you recommend -- that your employment of air was so sound and you didn't suggest the fanatic and extravagant claims of some young aviators. You had good, reasoned ideas for the employment of air power, and he mentioned how much he liked you personally." It paid dividends. I just mention this ploy.

COL DESKIS: That is a very interest . . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: But I did it carefully. It wasn't done as gauche as I described to you. It had to be done very carefully because both men were intelligent. They would have seen through it. But it worked beautifully. I had no more problems there. But there was a happy sequel. Years later, Mrs. Wedemeyer and I were in London. I was already retired from the Army -- just in Europe on a joy ride. Air Vice Marshal Whitworth Jones saw an item in the London newspaper that General and Mrs. Wedemeyer were at Claridges Hotel. He phoned me and said, "General Wedemeyer, this is Whit -- Whitworth Jones." I said, "Oh! It is good to hear your voice." He continued, "Could

you and Mrs. Wedemeyer have dinner with Mrs. Whitworth Jones and me? She wants to meet you. She has heard so much about you." I said, "Oh yes, we would love to meet your wife, and I want to see you." And who do you think was there? None other than Commodore Langley. I learned later that they had become bosom friends. Commodore Langley never married, and he was a frequent visitor at their house. It is a lovely story. I wouldn't tell it too freely because it would, of course, embarrass people involved.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: And you would think they were naive but it was done very subtly, believe me. Some members of my staff knew about it, the close members of my staff. Captain Lutze, my confidential secretary, knew about it and loved the manner in which it worked out.

COL DESKIS: That is an interesting approach. I think one that we should take heed of and apply.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I think that is the reason I should inject it. But the thing is that . . . another thing, at 75 I can tell you . . . at 75 years of age, most people, at least of our cultural level -- both men and women -- if you give them an opportunity to do so, they will measure up. They really will. Some individuals will disappoint you, particularly if their ego or their overpowering lust for power gets out of hand, and then they sacrifice friendship, principle, and anything else to attain an objective. But, in general, I think and I have confidence that I am right, Tony, that most people are decent if you give them the opportunity. And it is the leader's responsibility to

stimulate or generate loyalty and enthusiastic response on the part of his subordinates.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: The strategic and tactical deployments in the Southeast Asia Command, of course, were based a great deal upon the dispositions and the capabilities of the Japanese. However, we had another element, another facet to deal with and that was the Chinese under General Stilwell. Stilwell was recalcitrant, and we in SEAC Headquarters never knew when he would comply with or coordinate even with the British Commander's orders and plans. He had the idea of redeeming himself, and it is understandable, for his vanity had been crushed when the Japs whipped him in Burma early in the war. It was then that he made his famous march by foot with several staff members, refusing evacuation by air. He made this long trek back through the jungles and announced dramatically, "We took a hell of a licking." The correspondents grabbed this newsworthy gem and it swept all around the world. But I think he wanted to emulate MacArthur, who was chased out of the Philippines and announced, "I shall return." Of course, General MacArthur did return to Leyte, and exclaimed as he trudged ashore, "We are here, back again." Obviously Stilwell had the same intention of returning in Burma and he never gave up the thought that he must whip the Japs in the jungles. Prior to my leaving Washington for duty in India, I was opposed as a war planner to fighting in the jungles of Burma where our technological advantage over the Japs would be nullified. Therefore, when I joined Mountbatten's staff, I

continued to oppose operations by his forces as well as Stilwell's that might involve jungle fighting, where we would be fighting the Japs on terms favorable to them. They were known as good jungle fighters whereas our people were not. Furthermore, we had air superiority over the entire area and we could not use that effectively if we became bogged down in the jungle. Mountbatten's staff of planners under my direction recommended landing along the coast, hopping from one point to another in order to intercept lines of communications through which the enemy was being supplied. Mountbatten's planners pointed out to Stilwell's staff members that if we could cut the Jap line of communications through Rangoon, it would be like cutting the trunk of a tree and the Japs would die out on its limb, for there would be no ammunition to replenish that they were using in the jungle fighting. This was one of the difficulties we had in the earlier days of World War II with the British. We explained that if we could get the Ruhr, which was the dynamo of the entire enemy war effort, then Rommel, operating on the north coast of Africa and the Germans fighting on the west as well as the east fronts, would no longer get sufficient supplies to fight effectively. But the British insisted upon operations in the Mediterranean, thus delaying a decisive effort against the Ruhr.

The Japanese organization and equipment were very simple. The soldiers carried very light weapons and they required only dried fish and rice as rations. For that reason they were individually mobile, even in the jungle. They were not as dependent upon a variety of food and fancy equipment as our own boys had been accustomed to.

During the discussion with the staff members of SEAC and those of Stilwell, with both Mountbatten and Stilwell present, it became evident that we were poles apart in our thinking -- Stilwell being determined to fight in the Burma jungles whereas Mountbatten supported his staff members in the operation along the Arakan coast and then a hook that would involve an amphibious operation against Rangoon. Stilwell was very insulting in his opposition, in fact so much so that I was embarrassed and stopped discussing the matter with him in front of the British officers. He at that time wore three stars on his shoulders and I had only two, but that would not have mattered if he had only maintained a calm attitude, but he was very emotional. After that meeting, Mountbatten decided to send a team of his planners, headed by myself, to London and to Washington in order to obtain a decision from the Combined Chiefs of Staff as to whether we would fight in Burma or undertake operations against important lines of communications along the coast. The Americans back in Washington, when I returned and presented the plan to them, turned it down and supported Stilwell, so we did continue operations in the jungles of Burma.

Stilwell sent two or three of his staff officers to Washington to undermine the SEAC plan. He was successful. They arrived before my group from SEAC. One was a John Davies of the State Department; the other was General Merrill of the so-called Merrill's Marauders. They talked to the War Plans group -- my old policy-planning group -- and convinced them that the SEAC plan would fall flat. Davies went over to the State Department and generated opposition

there, and between the two, they convinced the U. S. officials that the British had influenced me to support their views concerning plans for Burma and India and that I was completely in their pocket. Further, they maintained that the tactics that General Stilwell recommended would insure a surface supply line into China and thus increase tonnage in to China and keep China fighting in the war. The major advantage of the Stilwell plan that drew the attention of the Americans here was that we would get a pipeline -- two pipelines, in fact a six-inch and a four-inch -- to bring fuel into the China Theater right across that northern part of Burma. And then the other promised Stilwell objective was to open a road, the road to China. Stilwell visualized sending truckloads of supplies into China by overland road. There was on SEAC staff a wonderful engineer. He was senior to me -- a Major General named Wheeler. But I had his confidence. He was a graduate of West Point about 1910. He is still living. He became Chief of Engineers after the war. A man of great character, Wheeler said, "The road will never accomplish what General Stilwell contemplates because the maintenance of the road will use up most of the personnel and most of the equipment operating and keeping the road open." It was through extremely difficult terrain, with frequent slides inevitable through the mountains. Wheeler predicted that we could get the pipelines through and they would be meaningful. However, the maintenance of the pipelines would present only minor problems. But the road, no because maintenance would be prohibitive in cost and equipment. Wheeler was proven right. However, members of the General Staff thought that General Stilwell's concept was right, and the American Chiefs of Staff approved.

The War Department invariably supported Stilwell; General Marshall did, and also Secretary Stimson. When I urged the U. S. staff to turn down Stilwell's plan and adopt the British ideas, my former chief, General Handy, said, "Why Al, you can't believe that that is the proper thing to do, go around the coast and so forth?" I said, "Tom, I certainly do believe that and I am surprised that you don't agree with me. I have always had such respect for your tactical ability." But he said, "Well, you do accept that we have to get supplies into China?" And I said, "Yes sir. The road isn't the way to do it." And everything, as Wheeler predicted, turned out that way -- the pipelines were useful but the road never. The U. S. sent an officer to Burma -- Colonel (or maybe General) Pick to build the road to China through Burma. He was publicity minded. He got a lot of publicity. It was completed and heralded as a wonderful engineering feat, but proved useless. They had a couple of convoys go through to China -- only two convoys. They brought in a trickle of supplies to the China Theater. Really! We were getting a tremendous amount of supplies by air, as you know. That gives you some idea of the problems concerning tactical deployments and operations in that theater. My relationships with Mountbatten were always very satisfactory. I liked him very much. He was articulate in expressing what he wanted us to do and he had a fine personality, kind of breezy, flamboyant. But I think a little bit Machiavellian; for example, I told him when I reported at the very first meeting I had with him, "Admiral Mountbatten, you must recognize, I am first an American officer and then an allied officer. But I will be loyal to you and to your plans. I will do everything I can. I will be

honest when I don't agree and I expect you to be the same way." And I said, "If I get any communications from my government of interest or of importance to you, you will know about it. I expect you to do the same when you receive messages from your government." Well, it turned out that I had one of my WACs in his communications center. Her name was Lieutenant Florence Bullitt. She and Captain Lutze were the two officers that accompanied me to India. Lt. Bullitt, in fact both WACs were loyal and efficient. Miss Bullitt saw all the communications arriving in SEAC. She told Betty Lutze and Betty Lutze told me that sometimes there would be a message from the PM, Eyes-alone for Mountbatten, and that I should have been told about it, but I wasn't. I couldn't tell Mountbatten that I knew about this because it would reveal my source, Florence Bullitt. So it showed that Mountbatten was a little secretive, but not very often. Only a few times did that happen. He was not completely in control of his own command situation. He did not have the complete support of the older British Commanders -- the Navy Admiral or the Air Marshal. He did have the complete support of the army man who, too, was quite old and senior but was a fine, decent guy. He was the oldest one of all but very fine, deeply religious, and a dedicated guy, and he did support Mountbatten. The other two, not wholeheartedly, and, of course, then Mountbatten had the third leader who wasn't supporting him completely and that was Stilwell. I think Mountbatten handled it very well. I think when the chips were down, after it was all over. . . At least we didn't have a revolt. At times, he was worried and would take me into his confidence. He would say that he was really worried

about the attitude of his older British leaders, especially the Navy admiral. My contacts with Stilwell were few and far between. Only when he would have a staff meeting. Stilwell was made a four-star general, at my recommendation, incidentally. I mentioned this. I think I told you that I recommended that he be promoted to put him on a plateau with the other British senior officers with whom he was dealing. When Mountbatten had occasion to leave the theater, Stilwell was in command. He would come down to SEAC headquarters and I would see him every day then. I talked to him a little about what we were doing. I wasn't drawn to him, and yet I wanted so much to help him. He was an American and Marshall thought so highly of him. I thought it was my fault that I didn't appreciate his abilities. One thing that happened though, he said something very derogatory about Lintayne, a British major general. He alleged that Lintayne was unwilling to fight, that he was cowardly. Since this was a serious reflection upon his courage, Mountbatten sent me to see Stilwell about it. It was absolutely uncalled for and would hurt General Lintayne's future. I told Mountbatten, "You should send a British officer to talk to Stilwell." But he said, "No, you can talk to him. I have watched you with him. He is not so sure when he is talking to you but he gives the British the dickens. But he is respectful to you because he knows that you are close to Marshall." I said, "Maybe you are right." I flew up to Stilwell's command post in northern Burma in a small plane and landed on a satellite field. I went directly to his headquarters. He affected a simple, primitive headquarters -- probably in the role of a General Custer.

COL DESKIS: Yes sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: He had guards around the periphery of his headquarters there. I went in and talked to him about Lintayne. He was fairly responsive but did not retract. One thing that happened as I was leaving was terrible. The satellite field on which I landed was primarily used by fighter planes -- P-51s. Just as I arrived and landed in my C-47, which was promptly pushed into the jungle under cover, the air alarm sounded. The Jap planes were coming, so our fighters took off and up they went. There were two flights of P-51s, six of them. They came back just at the time that I was through with Stilwell. I was walking back to my plane when two fighters came in, one behind the other, and I don't know if you remember the configuration of a P-51. It was slanted like that /General Wedemeyer gestures/ and the long engine stuck out in front so the pilot couldn't see very far straight ahead. He could see out alright in a sideways direction. Now the plane that was behind the other catapulted on top of the first one, and both planes stopped and caught fire. The crews of the other planes grabbed fire extinguishers and got the fire out. The man in the plane underneath could not get out of the cockpit for his doors and windows were jammed because of the tremendous weight of the other plane on top, piggyback. A number of men got behind and started to pull the plane on top back off so they could get the pilot out of the plane underneath. The friction must have set the fire again. This time both planes really caught fire. We watched the pilot in the plane underneath waving to us and yelling to help him. He burned to death and the fire burned for a couple of hours. It was a terrible experience. The pilot in the plane on top did get out of his plane

alright. The pilot underneath was a very young 22-year old boy. All that was left of his body was the trunk or spinal column and the skull.

COL DESKIS: That is a terrible combat experience. It must have been a terrible thought for the fighter pilot in the second plane.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. In fact, later in the war I had to prefer charges against a captain of the Air Force who went to a plane which had crashed and the pilot could not be removed -- fire was raging. The captain put his .45 to the head of the pilot. He killed him because he was burning to death and he couldn't get him out.

The relationship between Mountbatten and Stilwell improved gradually. One just couldn't dislike Mountbatten. He was too decent a guy. Further, he did play up to "Uncle Joe" as he called him. I forget the rather derisive title that he gave Mountbatten. He called him something that wasn't very respectable. You ask if I subscribe to the Stilwell strategy. I didn't because I felt that it was better to let the Japs mull around in the jungle. Contain them as best we could so that they couldn't get in to India and do harm there. But the thing I wanted to do was to concentrate on operations in scallops along the coast. Triphibious, you might call them. Airdrop and landing, amphibious landings and naval gunfire support. The British Navy, a big part of it was down in the area to do that and the only thing we didn't have was landing craft. We were promised landing craft two or three times. SEAC did capture Calcutta that way and surprised the Japs. I think that was the proper operation for that area. The British did, too, and that placed me right on their side in discussions with Stilwell. I was

in charge of SEAC planning, and Stilwell felt that the British had taken me into camp. I can assure you, Tony, if I thought that Stilwell's tactics would bear better results, I would certainly have been glad. I didn't give a damn about the British -- I wanted to beat the Japs. If I didn't feel that the operations that SEAC recommended would do that, I certainly wouldn't have recommended them. I did want to keep the Chinese fighting. I did want a pipeline to go across Burma into China. Of course, when I was back home, the Americans would say, "But Al, you want that line of communications open. You want access to munitions and oil." I would reply, "Yes I do, but the air cargo planes are bringing increasing tonnages. We are getting more transport planes for the Hump run. I think we can keep plenty of supplies moving into China. I doubt that we can keep the Chinese in the war if we commit the bulk of our resources in the jungles of Burma. The Japs were advancing almost at will in China. The Southeast Asia Command was ordered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to insure the flow of supplies into China. Supplies arriving from the U. S. by ships were off-loaded in Calcutta which was operating under the British. Next the supplies were transported by rail, then water barge up the river to air strips where they were loaded in planes and transported to China from bases in Northwest Assam. I mentioned that the tonnage was moving beautifully, in spite of these loadings and off-loadings from ship to rail to barge - to rail, and finally to air cargo planes. Those handlings took time and manpower.

COL DESKIS: What kind of losses were experienced in flying the Hump?

GEN WEDEMEYER: We lost an average of a pilot a day for a while. Our air defense people were awfully good. After we established satellite fighter strips in northern Burma, we had undisputed air control of the northern part of Burma by the winter of 1943-'44, undisputed control of the air. The slower transport planes, the 47's and the 46's, and the B-24's (some of the bombers were converted for cargo) were slower than the Jap fighters and were not as maneuverable, so the Japs intercepted and shot them down easily. The losses were not prohibitive, however, compared to our air losses in Europe.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. I think you probably answered the rest of that.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I think so. Yes.

COL DESKIS: The next question. What were Stilwell's relations with the Chinese leader?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Everything that I know about that was hearsay. I was never present with Stilwell and Chiang Kai-shek, except at the Cairo Conference. There I didn't notice any antagonistic feeling on the part of either one. There was a file in my China headquarters accomplished by Ambassador Hurley, giving a history of his observations concerning the relationship between Stilwell and Chiang Kai-shek. It was called the "Oklahoma file." After I assumed command of the theater, a press conference was scheduled. One of the questions that the reporters repeatedly asked, "What do you know about General Stilwell's relief? What do you know about his difficulties with Chiang Kai-shek?" I could, and did, say honestly, "Gentlemen, I know nothing about it. I have intentionally not read the reports about it." I acknowledged that Hurley had

furnished a copy of the report of Stilwell's relief. I did not read it until after D-Day, therefore I could in all honesty tell any member of my staff and any newspaper reporter I had no official knowledge about Stilwell's relief. I made up my mind to get along with the Generalissimo if I could possibly do so. Actually my government directed me to facilitate plans in the China Theater that would insure continued pressure against the Japanese in the general area, mainland China.

In retrospect, I think General Stilwell must have been a self-centered man with extreme likes and dislikes and very quick to anger. Officers who knew and served with him stated that he was an above average tactician. He had been an instructor at the Infantry School, Fort Benning, and enjoyed a good reputation as a trainer of infantry units. I was stationed for three and one-half years as a Lieutenant at the Infantry School and I speak knowingly about the opportunities afforded an officer to learn a considerable amount about the organization, equipment, training and employment of infantry weapons and units up to and including a regiment. This experience at Fort Benning was not all theoretical, for there was present a war-strength infantry regiment known as the School Regiment which conducted demonstrations for the students on how to carry on successful combat operations. Rehearsal after rehearsal and the use of live ammunition insured that the officers serving in this demonstration regiment received practical experience, and the students, of course, derived an excellent concept of infantry in combat. I do not make the following observation in a disagreeable way, but concerning all that I now know about General Stilwell, it is my

considered opinion that his capabilities qualified him to be an infantry division commander but no larger unit. There is so much evidence that he had little or no tact, no concept of diplomacy, and was self-centered. Of course, the collaboration or cooperation in the China Theater was strongly affected by General Stilwell's characteristics, and ultimately led to his removal. He had received the same instructions or directive that I did when I assumed command in China, namely, support the Nationalist Government and keep them fighting against the common enemy, the Japanese. It was not up to me or to him to adjudicate -- to become involved in relations with the Communists, but simply to apply all of the pressure available in the area against the Japs. There was corruption and there was incompetence in the Chinese military effort, but I found that with patience, persistence, and tact, gradually these defects could be minimized or eliminated.

General Stilwell did not get along with the British in the China-Burma-India area, in fact it was the lack of cooperation between him and them that caused the creation of the new theater of operations, the Southeast Asia Command.

Mountbatten was very careful as the Commander of this new theater to establish good relations with Chiang Kai-shek, and he played it very cool -- not sympathizing with General Stilwell, but epitomizing all the time the feeling of the Chinese that Chiang Kai-shek was not without blame. The Chinese Nationalists always had difficulty with the British, even on the highest levels. For example, Churchill never agreed or felt that Nationalist China should be one of the major powers -- one of the five great powers -- after the war or during the war. He

didn't want them to be included in the Combined Chiefs of Staff meeting, for example. They did invite Chiang Kai-shek to Cairo, and he and Madame did attend that meeting. They didn't participate, I can assure you, in the Combined Chiefs of Staff meetings. They were permitted to send a representative into the meeting and express their desires or make their recommendations about the strategy in China. So Mountbatten was always correct in his attitude toward Stilwell or toward the Generalissimo. He did go up twice and visit the Generalissimo, and I didn't accompany him either time because I can assure you, Tony, that the British are always number one looking out for their own interests. I admire them for it. I often wished when I was a member of the General Staff that we had a leader of the talent and the dedication of Winston Churchill. We never did. You are maybe surprised when you hear that statement, but I don't know of anybody in America who supported or protected or attempted to protect America's interest and held his own with the British. King came closest to it on our General Staff, on our combined Chief of Staff level, even more than Marshall, I felt. Marshall, perhaps, felt that his loyalty was so strong to the President that he couldn't differ with him, and King didn't feel that way. King felt he had some ideas of what was good for our country, too.

COL DESKIS: Yes, I think in the reading you get the feeling that we capitulated so many times.

GEN WEDEMEYER: We did! That was our . . . that was the reason Eisenhower reached the top. He went right on up, and if the British didn't like a person, they could easily say that this man is a fine man but . . .

COL DESKIS: Innuendoes.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. Chiang's brother-in-law, T. V. Soong, was a very able man. Educated, of course in America -- here in the United States. And he was shrewd. He knew and Mountbatten knew that there were two men there that respected each other. They were prepared to give a little and ask for more, and things like that; that was just a byplay that I was aware of. But I had the same experience with T. V. when I was up in China. I never trusted him. I may have done him a grave injustice, I don't know. I wasn't sure of him -- his loyalty, so I never confided in him. When I reported to take over in China, I didn't really have any idea of what my plans would be. I just made up my mind though, Tony, that I would not condone any disrespect on the part of the Generalissimo or his people. I was going to be respectful to them, and I would insist upon it back from them. I made that clear to all of them, too, very early. I studied my directive carefully -- my recognition of my responsibilities and also the limitations on my authority. I was not put in command. That is what Stilwell wanted all the time. He wanted to be in command of the Chinese forces. I was finally offered the command by the Chinese, which was quite something. Later on, when Chiang Kai-shek got confidence in me, he offered me command and, I might add, on another occasion when Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai were staying at my house, they offered me command of all the Communist forces.

COL DESKIS: I wasn't aware of that.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes! And, of course, the idea was if I were in command of it, they would get ample supplies. That was the objective and I saw through that. Furthermore, I wouldn't accept that because they were antagonistic, too, and were not cooperating with the Nationalist forces, and the Nationalist forces were the ones that I was directed to support, and any of my supplies coming over that tenuous line of communication would be going into Nationalist units that I had selected for training and equipping and so forth, and employment.

COL DESKIS: What was the relationship? I know there was a rift between the Nationalist and the Mao Tse-tung Communist forces, but as far as supplies, presumably the Communist forces were integrated into the Chinese Army and they were supposed to be defending against a common enemy, the Japanese.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Your presumption is incorrect, Tony. They were not supposed to be integrated because . . . I must be clear about it and you must be clear about it. The Chinese Communists refused to be integrated in any way with the Nationalists when I was there. They would make incursions against the Japanese outposts, and seize maybe twenty or thirty men and get the arms and equipment that was there. They got arms and equipment surreptitiously, covertly from the Soviet Union, but we did not give them anything, any equipment at all. We didn't recognize them as an integrated part of the Nationalist Army. Now, as a result of the offer to command the forces, I told the Generalissimo about it and, of course, he wanted to know right away what I said. I told him what I said, just like I told you. But I told him that I thought it opened the door for me to get them to participate in our planned operation for the capture of

Hong Kong in the Canton area, Kowloon, and then I thought if I could get the Communist forces to exert pressure up in the north, that that would pin down possibly some Japanese -- prevent them from moving forces from the north down to the south and opposing my forces. And I was making a fake against Shanghai, but the major effort was to be Hong Kong, Canton area. I wanted a seaport, Tony, as soon as I could get one, to bring in supplies. Of course, if shiploads came in, then the Hump wouldn't be important at all. Well, I . . . the Generalissimo authorized me to approach the Communists. Now I didn't tell them about the time we were going to attack exactly, and I didn't tell them too much about the over-all scheme of maneuver, but I gave them sufficient information. General Chu Teh was his name, commanding all the Communist forces, ground forces, and that is all they had, of course. I suggested that they start activating their forces on the north flank -- that it would help me a great deal in preventing Japanese intrusion in the south. And, by golly, they never did a thing. They didn't help at all. They didn't contribute a bit. So it never was a good relationship, Tony. When Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai visited Chungking, the wartime capital, they stayed with me; that was two or three times. Among other things, in connection with the objectives that were established -- of course within the purview, within the framework of my directive from the Joint Chiefs of Staff -- I began to think, plan for the coordinated employment of the resources that I had against the Japs. How could I most effectively employ the Chinese divisions, and the American Air Force, and the Chinese-American composite Air Force, and the American Navy which

was operating along the coast and upon whom I could request strikes, and then the Air Force that was operating directly under the control of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Arnold? He never did relinquish strategic control or operational control of what he called strategic air units. The 20th Bomber Command at that time, composed of the B-29. That was our flying fortress of that period. It succeeded the B-17, as you know. It had greater capabilities and capacity, better protective armament and a greater operational range. And they were located in my theater, Chentu; they were under me for administrative and court-martial and logistic support or control, but I couldn't determine targets for that outfit. When I found out this to be true, I knew that I was going to call upon them sometime or another and I wrote a personal letter to General Hap Arnold, and indicative of his earlier cooperation and friendly gestures toward me, he came right back and told me if I ever wanted to use him, just let him know. And I didn't combine all of my air power at one time, Tony, about two months after I got there, against Hankow, a focal point of communications for the enemy. They had a lot of godowns, or warehouses, they call them there, and they were employing a lot of Chinese as laborers, so before striking that area, I got on the radio and I broadcast both in Chinese and in English that we were going to destroy that area so that the Chinese would get away. I didn't want to kill Chinese unnecessarily, but I did make up my mind to destroy all the facilities along the Yangtze River there at Hankow, all the railyards. And so I was talking to my opposite number, the Japanese theater commander, after the war about it, and he said that he couldn't get

y Chinese to work for him, you know, to employ as coolies. They just scattered when that report came out. It was very interesting to me.

COL DESKIS: That is interesting.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes.

COL DESKIS: But they never did go back either.

GEN WEDEMEYER: No. They wouldn't go back either. I gave them several days, and he said that he just thought we had done that to make it difficult. They didn't actually think we were going to hit them. They moved in several Japanese infantry battalions to off-load some of the shipping there that hadn't been destroyed. He said that when we did hit it, we caught some of those battalions in there. Yes. It was interesting. Now, I asked the Chief of Staff of the Chinese theater, his name was Major General Thomas Hearn, to tell me about the plans that General Stilwell had worked up for the employment of the resources available, and he said that the old man did not have any formal plans, that he carried some plans in his hip pocket. And I felt that General Hearn was just making a joke and I told him so. He said, "No. Not at all. We don't have, he doesn't tell us our plans, his plans." Then I, of course, visited the G-3 section and I found there that they hadn't accomplished much either, and some of them were well-meaning individuals, but they lacked direction. They lacked direction by their commander and by the Chief of Staff. No one was apparently giving them instructions or directions. They had a very silly . . . that is an unfair statement. They had a very limited attack envisaged, but it wasn't a highly coordinated, proper maneuver for a theater, certainly.

COL DESKIS: I guess General Stilwell sort of visualized himself as a combat commander and visualized himself as sort of a commander who led a regiment or a battalion rather than one who had responsibility for a theater.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I think he could have commanded a division in an excellent way. I think he had that capability, assuming that he had a good staff. I think that General Stilwell's relief was mandatory, strongly justified, and I don't say that with any animosity, Tony. I do think it was reprehensible on his part not to meet me when I arrived there, to explain to me those American officers and those Chinese officers whom he had in key positions. What instructions he had given them. What I could expect of them. How much direction this individual needed. How carefully that man would do his job, and things like that would be important to me. But no, before I arrived, he left the theater. I believe that we passed flying over the Hump. I think I was going in when he was coming out. I heard that, but I am not sure that is true. It was . . . you asked was this political capitulation, his relief? It was. Of course, there were political overtones to what was going on there, strong political overtones. Usurpation of Chiang Kai-shek's authority, really, as the head of the state, and disrespect, too, to Chiang Kai-shek and his senior officers, creating a feeling of mistrust. I believe I mentioned it earlier in a discussion here with you, Tony, that I quickly created a joint staff. Now when I mentioned that to Hearn, which I did right after he said, "They don't have a plan," I said, "Well, we are going to have a plan. It is going to be done right away, and I want you to get your staff together and prepare them for it because I am going to come up and work

with them for a while -- G-2 and G-3, too, particularly, and the logistics man to sit in on it." We did do that, and I fortunately had some men with me that I could use. I sent for Paul Caraway and he was an excellent planner. General Maddocks was another one, and they began to make their weight felt. They really were good. They had a lot of experience under me here in planning at the General Staff level, then down in New Delhi. My interpretation of the mission of the Americans in China was to insure that China did not capitulate to the Japanese, and that the Nationalist forces maintained pressure against the Japanese. We recognized that they didn't have the capability of expelling the invader, but enough pressure to contain them and to prevent sending large numbers of Japanese to the Philippines and Okinawa and other places where Americans were fighting.

COL DESKIS: Yes sir. This was an opportunity I guess to tie down about a million and one half Japanese.

GEN WEDEMEYER: We tied down . . . I mean, the China theater effort contained 1,200,000 men in uniform, Japanese, in the entire area. The Generalissimo had offers incidentally -- very favorable peace terms -- from Japan which would have released those Japanese to other theaters, and he refused them.

COL DESKIS: It has been contended that he had in many incidences when he was dissatisfied, I guess it was more during the time of Stilwell's pressure, but he would give up the effort if the Americans did not support him with supplies and so forth.

GEN WEDEMEYER: He may have resorted to such leverage, I don't know. I never felt that he did against me or with me, not that I know of. I wasn't aware of it. You see, Tony, his representatives here in Washington might have been doing that without my knowledge. They could have suggested it, insinuated it into some of their discussions -- "If you don't do so and so, we won't be able to do so and so," on that basis, because they are very polite people. They are very clever, too, very clever, intelligent people. But directly and obviously to me, no, I don't know of any time that the Generalissimo was anything but strictly honest with me and strictly cooperative and courteous. Now, having indicated clearly how I interpreted my mission in China, I started to organize a planning group over there and above my G-3. My G-3, I assumed as operational, and I assigned the task to them, and I differentiated or delineated this way on the theater level. I felt that I had to have a planning group. You are more in a strategic area when you are in a theater than you are in a tactical area, although you have got to take into consideration the tactical employment of the resources available to you. That is what I consider tactics, the operational use of means available. I consider the strategic as the use of political, economic, psychological and military resources against the enemy in a coordinated, integrated manner, and sometimes the time or the conditions would be propitious for more emphasis on political than on military, and other times the emphasis would be stronger on economic. Maybe I could deny an enemy some supplies, blockade, boycott, things like that -- preclusive buying of strategic materials. So we started planning in that way, and I held the G-3

responsible for the training and for coordination with other members of the staff concerning logistical supplies, equipment, and ordered him to participate in a maneuver. After the strategic planning group had evolved a plan, they would take it down to OP G-3 and then OP G-3 would put it into an operational plan, and the help that they would get from political resources or from economical resources would not be so much of their concern. You would be surprised how important they were on the top level. In one province -- I recall the capital of the province was Lanchow and I forget the name of the province but it was contiguous to a province whose capital was Chengtu. I can't think of it but anyway it is terrible. In the first province that I mentioned, unless they got rain they were going to have starvation there in large numbers. Contiguous to it, in that other province, they had bountiful crops. Now the question on the strategic level, I couldn't march troops through an area where people were starving very well, because most of the time they were living off or buying food from the countryside. So it presented a problem to a theater commander. How to provide them? No roads, they were very limited. There was a paucity of any kind of transportation, air and surface. Those kinds of things had to be taken care of. But I will tell you that I was getting marvelous cooperation from governors and mayors. They were afraid of the Generalissimo, and they knew that he liked me by this time, and they certainly did play the game. I say it that way, maybe they wanted to, anyway. They put it a decent way to express it. Maybe that was unfair the way I expressed it. But it is sort of the way people do feel toward a dictator or toward a one man rule. Everybody is afraid of him, like down here

today. Our President has got things under control. He is boss and everybody knows it.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: They tried to, some of the Kennedy men who are still in the organization tried to buck him. They are gradually fading out of the picture. That call I just got a minute ago from a man, there is a group in the State Department that is trying to get rid of the woman who is in charge of the Passport Division. The reason they are trying to get rid of her is she will not give passports to people who are "pinko" or who have got a record. She thinks as we do and they are trying to get rid of her. They have ways, you know, of hurting people. "He's a good, efficient person, but . . ."

COL DESKIS: Aspersions.

GEN WEDEMEYER: My relations with Chiang, I have mentioned many times, were very pleasant and they were daily. I had a meeting with him every morning for an hour or two, and obviously his objectives, his military objectives, were to contain the Japs. I made it perfectly clear to him that we did not have the resources to expel them. His forces were not as efficient in fighting and they required a lot of training, but principally they were noncommissioned officers. I would have to have a year with their junion officers and I just didn't . . . The best I could do would be to contain the Japs. He accepted that. Well, I never had him refuse to do anything I suggested. Now, General Stilwell and his people stated again and again in testimony before Congressional committees and through press that the Generalissimo would not permit the removal of any forces

that encircled the Communists up in North China in Yenan. You may have heard it often.

COL DESKIS: Yes sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Those people were there to stop the Communists -- Chinese Communists.

COL DESKIS: It has been suggested that he put his best divisions up there.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I had no trouble at all, Tony, in removing them from anywhere in the theater. And he didn't have a hell of a lot around the Communists, and those he had were not outstanding divisions either. The best divisions, of course, were those that had been trained earlier under Stilwell and they continued that training. American-trained and American-equipped, they were excellent -- good fighting divisions. They were as good as any Jap division. The Japs, though, I would say to you, Tony, could go anyplace almost anytime when I first got over there. They had that flexibility, employment, and that capability because of their superior tactical skill and better organization and their fanaticism, and those combined to make them much more effective in actual combat. Gradually, we were getting better, but we weren't their equal yet and we outnumbered them. Chiang's political objectives? I don't know too much about them other than I am sure that he was trying to retain a coalition, the loosely federated or loosely connected political entity there. It wasn't a democratic, political organization such as you and I know about, but I think he was trying to improve conditions for his people in general, I really . I think he was intensely loyal to people who helped him on the way up.

Some of those people were exploiting that, and they were unscrupulous and he knew it. But he still wouldn't relieve them anymore than people today over in Europe, for example, who are retained because of the things they did in the past. They keep them on. Other leaders do that. I had in mind some of . . . Madame Chiang had a very strong influence. She is a brilliant woman and knowledgeable and took an interest in all facets of China's life and China's government and China's social and artistic life. She is very artistic herself a brilliant woman. She was not there when I got there, Tony. She had been away from the country for several months and she did not come back to China until the war was over. Then she came back and she sent for me. She wanted to talk to me, and I had a good talk with her. I think she just wanted to size me . She met me at Cairo but just "How do you do." She was never there at any other of the visits I had to China. But I knew a great deal about her, about her family. Naturally I had read a great deal about her. I knew that she was a very forceful individual and I had to watch my step. I heard some stories that were not too pleasant about her. I decided that I would do just as I did with her husband, just be straightforward with her and firm. I had two run-ins with her, you might say. On two occasions we had a difference of opinion, and I think I resolved them in the way you would have. I was not very courteous the first time, I was so angry. When the war was over, I had an area there around four million square miles -- comparable to an area of our own country, the United States -- we are a little less than four million square miles, and with Manchuria, I think mainland China is about four million square miles, so I had

that area. I admonished the Generalissimo not to appoint military men as governors of provinces or as district heads. Shen leaders, they call them. I told him to appoint civilians. He didn't take my advice. He appointed military men. He probably had greater confidence in them, and he just ignored my advice on that and didn't discuss it with me. But he did tell them when they were appointed . . . Take the man he appointed governor of Formosa. He was a Fukienese. I remember him very well, a general.

COL DESKIS: Was that not Chen Yi?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. And he came and he said, "You go over and get instructions from my Chief of Staff, General Wedemeyer." So this man came over just out of the blue. I had only a week or so earlier told the Generalissimo, admonished him not to do that, you see. So I said, "You sit down there, sir, and I will tell you what I think you should do when you get over there." He was married to a Japanese. He came from the Fukien province. I told him just off the cuff, I had to pick up something very quickly, you know, because I didn't know why he was there and I certainly didn't want him to go, and I was proven right, you know. You knew that. I don't know whether he lost his head but I know that he was . . .

COL DESKIS: He did.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Did he?

COL DESKIS: Yes sir. He was killed.

GEN WEDEMEYER: He was dishonest.

COL DESKIS: Yes sir. He perpetrated some atrocities against the Chinese Taiwanese. He came in as a conqueror rather than as a liberator.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Exactly! The opposite of what I told him. I told him not to allow any large gatherings at night, to be scrupulously fair and honest with the people. Then later on . . . I beg your pardon.

COL DESKIS: It was just the opposite.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Later on I wrote a memorandum to him because I wanted it in writing and sent a copy to the Generalissimo. It was a very fine memorandum if I do say so, on how I would have conducted myself over there as a ruler. The Generalissimo complimented me on it -- he said it was excellent and just what he wanted. But the fellow didn't pay any attention to it. I think I may have a copy of that in my files. Anyway, I 'll go back to this vast area of which I had some moderate control. I really had a hell of a lot of control because of the Generalissimo. Right after the war he appointed me Supreme Economic Advisor, and the Economic Council could not take any action that I didn't approve of. And if I didn't approve of it, then I would take it up with the Generalissimo. That is the power I had.

COL DESKIS: Amazing.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Tremendous power.

COL DESKIS: Extreme confidence in you.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes! He did. Yes! He did. Oh! He asked me to come back as an advisor in a civilian capacity. He offered me a fabulous sum of

money, $500,000. He would put $250,000 in escrow in any bank in the world that I wanted; the other $250,000, he would pay me $50,000 a year for a five-year contract. He would give me a house, servants, and so forth. He did, he really wanted me back there. Then I explained that my mother was getting on, and that was true. Furthermore, I didn't think it was the thing for me to do. Also, Tony, I knew that I did not have the power that he thought I did back here in this country. He thought that . . . of course, he knew that General Marshall at one time thought highly of me, everybody knew that in the country. But gradually, you see, it was different with Marshall, and I had to be honest about it. I explained to him, too, that I didn't, I couldn't go in and see the President. There were so many people in the State Department whose views were not in consonance with mine. "I couldn't help you. I wasn't worth that much to you." I told him that. But anyway, to come back to my large area, I want to get this over. There are two things that I had a little difficulty with the Madame about. When the war was over, wisely Mr. Truman's administration decided that instead of trying to get back to the United States all of the equipment, military equipment, that was scattered to hell all around, some of which was obsolete and some of it as good as new, but scattered in wide areas -- and it would have been a tremendous effort, costly in time and money, the theater commanders were ordered (I suppose other theater commanders got these instructions) to sell it for the best price we could get, maybe ten cents on the dollar or something like that. I sat down and visited with several Chinese after the war -- T. V. Soong and Madame Chiang were there. I told them the

price that I figured up. Walter Robertson of the embassy helped me. Our local man over there was a Jew, Tony, and not a loyal American. I forget his name. He was in the Treasury Department, but he was representing someone over there in Treasury and he is now in Peking working with the Communists. He left us right after '49.

End of side #1.

A conference was set up to include key members of the Generalissimo's staff and also his wife asked permission to attend and his brother-in-law, T. V. Soong, and H. H. Kung, who was Minister of Finance. We were going to discuss the sale of thousands of tons of military property that was located in various parts of China. Accompanying me, two or three members of my staff and a secretary, of course, and Mr. Walter Robertson and a representative of the Treasury Department from the embassy. Mr. Walter Robertson was minister at that time. After I had determined the over-all amount, I gave each Chinese representative there a copy and they read it over. Madame Chiang spoke up and said that she thought this was too much. She said, "I think the American people would agree with me that you are asking these poor people over here to pay too much." I said to her, "Madame Chiang, I think I am better capable of determining what the American people will think in this instance than you are."

COL DESKIS: I can see where she would have taken an exception to that because I think she prided herself in reading the American people, their attitudes and emotions during the war.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, that started me off, and from there on I didn't feel so close to her. She didn't feel so close to me. However, I was told later that our theater had gotten the best arrangement than any other theater did although we didn't get any more money. I mean per dollar, the amount of dollar. But it worked out better. There was no reneging on it in other words, and the Generalissimo never did discuss the matter with me. T. V. Soong did later, and I told him I thought it was fair, and he said, "I did too. I was sorry that Meiling took that viewpoint." That was his sister. Maybe she was trying me out. Later on, I was ordered home to confer with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the future things we should do there in the theater. It was September, and the war was over in August. Madame Chiang, as I mentioned, as soon as the war was over had returned and I had had a few contacts with her. I mentioned one of them concerning the property. She asked me to tea and I went to tea with her and the Generalissimo. She said, "When are you leaving?" and I said, "Tomorrow, for the States." The Generalissimo wanted to know why I was leaving. What was the reason they asked me to come back? I said, "I have no idea." But I think they wanted to discuss the future, the participation over here. What we should do and so forth, our policy. She said, "Well, General Wedemeyer, do you know my nieces, the Kung sisters?" I said, "Yes, I do. Not well, but I have met them." She said, "Well, I would like for you to take them with you on your plane tomorrow." I said, "Well, Madame Chiang, I think my plane is filled up." She said, "What kind of a plane are you taking?" I said, "I am going take the Big Dade." I named the two planes I had; one was Big Dade and one

was Little Dade. Big Dade was a C-54 that Hap Arnold had fixed up for me very nicely. Little Dade was a C-47 that I just used intra-theater. The Big Dade could cross the Pacific. It had extra fuel tanks and so forth. I said, "I always fill up my plane with men who have been fighting over here for your country, and wounded or sick men." I said, "As far as I know, the Kung sisters haven't done a thing to help us out in this war." I did. Boy! She took a dim view of all that, I guess. But very nice, friendly, in a calm way. So I went off and that left the theater in command of a guy named Stratemeyer, Air Force lieutenant general. He was my air man. Awfully nice, very loyal to me. A damn fine man. I was gone about a week and I came back. I flew up to Mukden, I wanted to see what had transpired. What the Commies were doing. They were already beginning to activate some units and get busy. Then from Mukden I went over to Peking, and there Stratemeyer met me. He turned out the American Air Force, in force, as an escort from Peking to Chungking; he had hundreds of planes all around my plane all the way down the country.

COL DESKIS: That was some tribute.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Oh! It was. All the American fly boys, and he said, "They wanted to do it." Why, anyway, we got into Shanghai. Of course, there was a lot of flamboyance . . . I was sent for by the Generalissimo, and she was there. We had a little talk, all alone, the Generalissimo and I. Then I went out to the rest of their guests. There were some navy boys there and so forth. Admiral Kinkaid was there. I know he was commander of our Seventh Fleet. He was brought up there and by direction of the President. He was under my command

although he was a four-star admiral and I was just a three-star general at that time. But he was awfully nice. There were other admirals around there: gold and medals and so forth. Madame said to me, "You know, General Wedemeyer," at this tea, "I like the American Navy." I said, "I do too, Madame Chiang. I think they are wonderful and I think they have been cooperative out here." She said, "You know Admiral Barbey?" I said, "Yes." He was the number two admiral there. "He has agreed to send my two nieces to America on a Navy transport." I said, "He has? That is very interesting." So as soon as I got back to my office and from that tea, I called Admiral Barbey and told him to get the hell over to my office, I wanted to see him. While I was waiting for him to come, I sat down and I wrote a message to Admiral King asking for his immediate relief, that he had refused to carry out the policies of my theater and he was given an opportunity to make retribution but refused, and I wanted him removed, relieved. I signed it "General A. C. Wedemeyer." He came. I had that message on my desk face down. He sat down and he said, "Yes." He had done that. I said, "Well, didn't you know that if you had any spaces on your planes, the theater instructions are that those planes are operating under a need and" . . . to finish the story concerning Madame Chiang, the Admiral very quickly countermanded the order to let those two girls fly in the Navy transport plane, so I didn't send the message. In fact, he didn't know about the message, Admiral Barbey. I wasn't mean about it, Tony, but it is true, those girls hadn't done anything toward the war effort. They were ultra

modern Chinese women, short cut hair and smoking and things like that -- the smart set, that didn't interest me at all. So those are the two experiences I had with Madame Chiang that were unpleasant. One, about the sale of property there and the other was about these girls riding on our transportation. I think Barbey, in the way I presented it to him, understood the fairness of my policy and he did tell me, however, that he didn't understand Stratemeyer; Stratemeyer warned him. Stratemeyer told me that I hadn't been out of the theater more than a few hours flying back to the States when the Madame sent for him, knowing that he was next in command. She asked him to put her two nieces on an Army transport plane going back to the States. He said, "Well, that is against theater orders. General Wedemeyer gave me instructions not to permit any." He said, "Well, I know, but he is not in the theater now. He is not the theater commander." He said, "I know, but he is coming back." He told me about it.

COL DESKIS: That is strange.

GEN WEDEMEYER: She was a very . . . I tell you that story because it shows her persistence, her determination to have her way, and she is not accustomed to having people cross her up, that was obvious, and neither was the Generalissimo. But they did have me cross them up and I know I crossed him up. I differed with him.

COL DESKIS: But in a diplomatic and . . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: Definitely. What did it do? It served to make him respect me and, I repeat, I certainly had a tremendous amount of power when I left there

if I wanted to be unscrupulous and exercise it. Of course, in the final analysis, I had no power. I mean it was there. It was sort of intrinsic. . . Now, Madame Chiang had influence, too. She had a following all over the world, no doubt about it. She is a great person and I like her. She has visited here at my home. She loves Mrs. Wedemeyer very much and I admire her. I think she is a great woman. One of the great women of our era. General Chennault's contribution was absolutely remarkable and good. I think he was loyal to me. He was an intrepid Air Force commander. He never asked his men to do anything that he wouldn't do. He often flew combat flights with them. He really had a great deal to do with China's remaining in the war. His concept of air power differed with mine in this way. I think he felt that a disproportionate amount. . . that an increased amount of supplies coming into the theater should be given to the Air Force. On the other hand, I felt that I had to take more of it in order just to maintain the combat efficiency of units that were protecting his Air Force -- protecting that base, Kunming. If we lost that, we would never make any kind of a contribution toward the war effort. Then the satellite fields that the ground forces were protecting, if I had given him a disproportionate amount of the resources that were coming over that line of communications, why of course, my ground forces would not have been as well equipped and, therefore, not as efficient as they were. The Japanese took several fields away from us. I recall I hadn't been there more than a week when at about two o'clock in the morning I was awakened and a colonel who was down at a remote airfield asked for authority to blow up the field because the Japanese were almost there --

Ling Ling, I think, down south of Kweian, southeast of Kweian, and I had to authorize that. The loss of a lot of gas, you know . . . had to be blown up and we had to destroy a lot of supplies, and the planes all took off, of course, went to another field. But that wasn't a major difference. It wasn't a disagreeable difference at all. I feel that he made a wonderful contribution to the war effort and, I repeat, I think the effort by his forces there and his own strength of character encouraged the Chinese to continue to fight. They were in pretty bad shape there for a while, especially when Stilwell was giving them the dickens, you know, and putting most of his time and effort into the Chinese units that were over in Burma. In the meantime, the Japs were taking more and more territory over there. Taking away fields. Chennault, unfortunately, made extravagant claims as many young air officers did in those days.

COL DESKIS: As they do today.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Maybe they still do. We cannot win a war by air. Airplanes have to come down sometime. Things over the earth either burn out or come down sometime. So recognizing that you have to have a base, well then you have to have protection for the base. You have to have some ground forces, logistical forces to protect and to supply the base. Furthermore, the Air Force can't hold ground. They can destroy a bridge, but the damn bridge is built very quickly or a ford is utilized to go across a stream and things like that. I think it is true that they have made extravagant claims, and I am interested to hear you say they still do for the power the air can exercise. Now, if you include the atomic or nuclear weapons under the employment of the air, they are becoming the decisive weapon

available to mankind, because, although I do not know definitely, I think we will not destroy mankind. I feel that. We are resilient. Man is resilient. But I do think we can render him pretty impotent by the use of a considerable amount of nuclear weapons, and they are delivered by air. Now, are they delivered by man operated planes or by missiles?

COL DESKIS: Preponderantly missiles now. That is why they are looking toward the demise, to some degree, of the Air Force as a delivery platform system.

GEN WEDEMEYER: So I have given you his concept and mine, and it was a matter of judgment there. I think he was very decent about it. He wasn't angry with me. Of course, his extravagant claims just were abrasive to Stilwell and his staff, and they exaggerated poor old Chennault's contentions to hurt him with the people back home, and with me, too. But they didn't hurt him with me, because I like a man to fight for his own weapon and get along alright. General Hurley's role was awfully important over there. I think he was an unfortunate choice, however, for it, Tony. He was a darling man. He looked exactly like my father; until he opened his mouth, I would have thought it was my dad. My dad was quiet, and he was very talkative, a garrulous man. He was a show off. He was awfully good looking and vain about it. He was articulate. He could make a speech, talk about any subject, and he had a great deal of confidence in himself -- debonaire, ebullient -- I think a fine American. A great patriot, true patriot. I think we are going to shove off here and get something to eat.

The end of Tape #6.

SECTION 7

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER

BY

COLONEL ANTHONY J. DESKIS

THIS IS SIDE #1 OF TAPE #7 OF SESSION #7. MY NAME IS ANTHONY J. DESKIS, A STUDENT AT THE ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA. I AM ABOUT TO INTERVIEW GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER, UNITED STATES ARMY RETIRED. WE ARE LOCATED AT GENERAL WEDEMEYER'S HOME, FRIENDS ADVICE FARM, BOYDS, MARYLAND. THE DATE IS 14 MARCH, 1973, AND THE TIME IS 1000 HOURS. THIS INTERVIEW IS ONE OF A SERIES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY IN OCTOBER, 1970.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I was referring back to the fact that Ambassador Patrick Hurley was striving to carry out his instructions from the President. Namely, he tried to bring about a rapprochement between the Nationalists and the Communists in China. I must state that Ambassador Hurley did his utmost to accomplish that purpose. However, it is my considered opinion that Mr. Hurley did not realize the chicanery and the dishonesty of the Communists in Yenan. They would resort to any maneuver. They would make any statement and agree to any modus operandi to get along with the Nationalists but one soon discovered that they were absolutely insincere about carrying out these promises and they were determined to overthrow the Nationalist government; initially, undermining confidence in Chiang Kai-shek and his associates. Now, on question seventeen. Mao Tse-tung was surreptitiously organizing and activating cells or nuclei all over China. Predominantly, of course, in the north but even down in the southern provinces, he had representatives there who were all keyed-up and prepared to hold meetings and activate people. These were not necessarily Communists at this time, that is towards the end of the war and at

the end of the war. But there were people who were fed up with the fighting, destruction and dislocation incident to war. They welcomed any form of government or any leadership that promised peace, law and order. It was among those kinds of people, the recalcitrant and the intellectual, that the Communist agents were working, representatives of Mao. Of course, Mao had the overt and covert support of Moscow and that was translated into propaganda, radio broadcasts downgrading Chiang Kai-shek and his government, and trying to destroy confidence and create cleavages in the country. Chiang Kai-shek had been dealing with the Communists since 1925 and had first-hand knowledge of their double talk and their determination to ultimately seize power. Accordingly, he asked me to move his divisions, his Chinese divisions, which had been fighting the Japanese in Southern and Eastern China quickly to Manchuria and along the Great Wall. I did this with American transports, planes that had been used for the Hump run bringing supplies into China during the war from India. I moved several divisions to Manchuria. In addition to that, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington sent me a corps of Marines and I posted them along the railroad, more or less, the line of communications between Peking and the sea. The instructions that I gave the corps were simply to maintain communications open along the railroad and to facilitate the operation of the large coal mines located in Kailung which is near the Gulf of Pechihli just east of Tientsin. The importance of having that coal was pointed out in Shanghai where we were resuming light industries. We began shipping, immediately, coal from that area down to Shanghai and Canton. There was no heavy industry operating anywhere in China. Essentially light industries; cotton, cloth, shoes, and sandles, and things like that. There

were ramifications incident to moving Nationalist troops to Manchuria. The Reds out there in that area and also even some of the left wing people back here were very critical of Chiang Kai-shek. They protested the movement by American planes to Manchuria. I must state that the Joint Chiefs of Staff supported my decision to do that. I pointed out that my objective, of having these Nationalist troops throughout that area, was to preclude any difficulty that I might experience with the Japanese. Actually, after Japan surrendered, I had no difficulty with those soldiers, the Japanese. They were very meek and surrendered their arms quickly. Unfortunately, many of the arms that they surrendered were surrendered to the Chinese Communists in the upper provinces, up around Peking and so forth. The reason for that, of course, was that there were not enough Nationalist forces distributed in that area. I did, as rapidly as I could, send Chinese Nationalist forces into Manchuria. Again there was some delay occasioned by the procurement of winter uniforms. Manchuria was very cold and as the winter approached I had to insure that they had adequate heavy uniforms and equipment. We had to give them shots against colds and prepare them for that type of climate. I did have many opportunities to meet Mao, Chou, Chu Teh, Lin Piao, and all of the principle leaders of the Communist movement. There was no question about their dedication and at that time, I didn't sense any jealousy or any differences or degrees of opinions concerning their goal. It developed that later, of course, Lin Piao was never wholeheartedly in support of the type of Communism that Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai were supporting. Mao Tse-tung was a very quiet, philosophical type. He spoke no English but obviously at

that time he was looked up to as the head of the Communist movement and he assumed his position as the father of the country. Chou En-lai was intelligent but not a deep individual. Not an intellectual type. He spoke English quite well. Not fluently as was recently reported when our President visited Peking in February of 1972. But he could express his ideas alright. Chu Teh knew no English and was a very garrulous type of individual. I don't know about his military capability. The only type of military operations conducted that I have knowledge of were incursions against Japanese outposts located up near Yenan; and in the two years that I was there those were the only kind of operations that he conducted, the guerrilla-type, where they would ambush or surprise an outpost and take the Japanese prisoners. They essentially wanted their equipment. Lin Piao impressed me as being a bright man. It was true. He was not as loquacious as Chou En-lai. But he did seem to be closer to Mao Tse-tung at that time. I'm speaking of just immediately after World War II. He seemed to receive more important assignments from Mao Tse-tung than Chou En-lai. Chou En-lai seemed to be more the public relations or front man. The Chiang-Mao confrontation went back over a period of twenty years. There was no doubt about the acceptance of Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism by Mao Tse-tung. He epitomized that type of Communism. I talked a little tiny bit through an interpreter with Lin Piao and I don't think that he had the same philosophical approach to Communism as his leader. However, there is no doubt about his being a Communist. He just had a different concept of it. Possibly one that he felt had a better, more practical, application to the Chinese people and certainly, he didn't

visualize corrupting or changing the family as a unit in the traditional Chinese concept. He would not have, in my judgment, undertaken a separation of husbands and wives in communes, and arbitrarily broken up many of the time honored Chinese traditions. A factor that influenced the seemingly good success of Chiang Kai-shek after Sun Yat-sen passed away were the advisors given to Sun Yat-sen by Moscow and who remained with Sun Yat-sen successor, Chiang Kai-shek, . . . those advisors from Moscow were undermining the concept that Sun Yat-sen had adopted for his people, the concept of government and social life and so forth. So Chiang Kai-shek required them to return to Moscow. But by that time they had already indoctrinated many of the Chinese, including Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao and other Chinese Communist leaders. And so the struggle was on, between Chinese who were operating under Mao Tse-tung and his leaders against the existing Sun Yat-sen forces under Chiang Kai-shek. Most of the graduates of the Whampoa Military Academy remained loyal to the Nationalists and this caused a lack of good officers and noncommissioned officers in the Chinese Communist Army, the Route Army, it withdrew from the Canton-Kowloon area on north to Shanghai and then west up the Yangtze Valley. It finally ended up in Yenan. That group of people were driven back gradually by the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership. At times, there were temporary halts to this advance by Chiang Kai-shek and efforts were made to negotiate. Chiang was persuaded, on many instances, to negotiate with them because the people didn't want the death and destruction and this civil war. They wanted peace. The Chinese, per se, are peace loving people. But nevertheless, Chiang did continue pressure right to the end. The Communists were more

more or less confined to an area, Yenan, where they decided to wait and prepare for, as the Germans would say, Der Tag. That is, when they could gain enough strength by enlisting recruits all over this vast area, all of China, and with the surreptitious and covert aid of Moscow or the Soviet Communists, they were able to create, as I indicated earlier, nuclei or cells and it was arranged that when the time was propitious they would start a nationwide revolution and that is exactly what happened in 1945, '46. It gained momentum primarily because the Chinese people had been subjected to the dislocations and disruptions of war and deprivations on the part of a ruthless invader, the Japanese. They wanted peace. Their traditional time honored friend, the United States, gave clear indications to them of their break - that they were no longer going to continue giving them aid unless the Nationalists accepted and integrated with the Communists and that was tantamount to becoming Communistic, of course. But apparently the officials in Washington didn't recognize that fact. Even today the peace terms in Vietnam indicated a lack of appreciation of the unfortunate implications of the peace terms that were made with Hanoi. They are leaving 130,000 troops there in South Vietnam prepared to move. I doubt seriously the ability of South Vietnam to cope with that problem, either militarily or psychologically. So a Communist form of government in my judgment will result. It may take a few years but that seems to be the outcome as it was in Red China. And as it will be in Korea. The North and South Koreans, I am happy to note, are beginning to talk about working together and trading and so forth. I am glad to see it but I fear for the South Koreans because the Communists have such attractive offers to the

people, to the masses. Offers which soon melt away, and strict deprivation and enslavement virtually supplant these offers, but nevertheless, that is the situation. Ironically, the American foreign service officers and most of the reporters and the newsmen, the correspondants, and authors who were in China at the time that I was, 1944 to 1946, seemed to be opposed to Chiang Kai-shek, his government and urged a policy of appeasement or accommodation with the Chinese Communists. I don't think that is an unfair evaluation across the board. There were varying degrees - it is true. Arch Steele of the New York Tribune was far to the right of center and he did not think that the Chinese Communists would be a solution to the problems. And there were problems, as I indicated earlier. The problems were the outgrowth of eight years of war against a ruthless invader. But Communism didn't have the answer. There were several other correspondants. Hershey, I think, was a little to the left of center. And without naming names, I would say that the majority of the information media representatives in the China Theater, when I was there, were well to the left of center and very critical of any moves that I might make to help the Nationalist government. I mentioned earlier that there was opposition to my using American transport planes, of which I had large quantities after the war; they had been operating, you know, across the Hump. Now, I could get communications by sea and I no longer needed the Hump for supplies. So I used those planes, large numbers of them, to transport the Chinese to the north in order to take over and help repatriate the prisoners, the Japanese prisoners, and also, too, without mentioning it, also to maintain order and preclude the undisputed movement of Chinese military guerrilla forces. The foreign

service officers that I had inherited from General Stilwell's regime, I inherited his entire staff, and, militarily, the officers who were there, many of them were not particularly effective. I did not have time to investigate the reasons for their ineffectiveness. The chief of staff was older than I. Most of the senior officers were colonels. All of them were older than I. Some of them had been my instructors at service schools many years earlier. That made it difficult. No one gave me any information as to how my predecessor visualized the use of the combined military forces available in the theater. When I asked the chief of staff to tell me about the plans and so forth, his answer was that no one knew exactly. He said the old man carried them around in his hip pocket. I thought that he was joking but apparently General Stilwell was not very often in Chungking. He stayed in Burma a lot and New Delhi where he had great responsibilities, no doubt. Then I talked to the G-3 section about operations. I was told about the plans that they visualized but everyone seemed to be impressed with the indifference and apathy of the Nationalist troops. As a matter of fact, the chief of staff, Major General Hearn told me that every week General Stilwell and he visited the Chinese Supreme Headquarters and there they were supposed to receive a briefing by the senior Chinese officers under the supervision of the Minister of War, Ho Yin-ching. The commanding officer of all the Chinese forces at that time was Chen Chen. He was later vice president. Of course, I continued that meeting and it is true that the Chinese high command did not reveal much and there was a very cool exchange. But I would ask questions. The replies were prompt and polite but not very comprehensive. I couldn't

really derive any information that was useful to me. I made up my mind to create a joint staff. Returning from one of those meetings, I told General Hearn that I was going to create a joint staff. He said, "They never would do it. The Generalissmo wouldn't even do it." He said, "All they are doing is that they want the Americans to maximize their effort against the enemy. And then after the war they wanted to take all the equipment and so forth and surround the Communists in the North." That seemed to be the concept of the officers in my command there, the senior American officers. And I noted, too, the hours they were keeping in the offices. The chief of staff himself was going home at three o'clock in the afternoon and I was working until seven. And I was not making work for myself, there was that much to do. I communicated my predicament, without being too critical about the personnel I had. But I asked for some officers who I knew would get busy and help me evolve a plan for the coordinated use of the forces and also stir up a little interest in our job there. The Joint Chiefs of Staff essentially, of course, General Marshall and General Handy were very cooperative. They sent me good officers, the ones I asked for by name. And things began to pick up. You ask if I made a valid evaluation concerning the suggested popular support of the Communists? I know from having lived in China, way back in 1929 to 1931, two years there traveling all over. I know that there was corruption and there was incompetence among the officialdom in China. And I know that there were lots of people starving. I know that the economy of the country was not particularly good - that there were rich people, very rich influential people, who were exploiting the

poor people. There were certainly a lot of poor people to exploit. I would say that when I was there in 1929 to '31, there was just a veneer of people who could read and write the language. It was an agricultural-essential industry and the veneer, the people who had taken the advantages of occidental exposure both educational-wise and in training, came back to their country and exploited the poor people, the poor laborer, the poorly paid laborer, and just got richer. In other words, the rich got richer and the poor got poorer and it was a regretable and unacceptable situation to any American. That was my analysis when I was a young lieutenant back in 1929. However, when I returned in 1943, right after the Casablanca Conference I could see a great deal of improvement and I had meetings with many of the men around Chiang Kai-shek and I found that some of them were very intelligent and dedicated men. I had an experience with a Chinese major at the Command and General Staff School at Leavenworth. He told me a great deal about his country and how it was improving and so forth. His name was Ho, Shih-li. Years later he was the senior military advisor to the United Nations from his country and he was also the military attache in the embassy in Washington. So things were looking up, as I saw it, under Chiang Kai-shek and everyone with whom I talked about Chiang Kai-shek, as a person, were complimentary. That really gave me an opportunity to know the man. But there were plenty of people who were critical of him and of his family. Critical of the neoptism that was practiced in the Soong family. Of course, neoptism is a Chinese tradition and it has its genesis in the concept of taking care of the family. They really revere the elder members of the

family and everything is done for their well being and comfort and so forth by the junior members of the family. So it was not difficult to understand why Chiang Kai-shek, as the leader, was loyal to members of his family and trusted them, maybe in some cases too much. Maybe they did take advantage of him. As a matter of fact, I don't have direct evidence but I think that it is true that some of them did take advantage of him and that hurt him with the members of the press and with these American foreign service officers whom I had on my staff. I was with Chiang Kai-shek, though, perhaps as much as any occidental, any non-oriental during that period, 1944 to 1946. Every morning I went over to his office and we talked for an hour to two hours. I got to know him under duress, under all kinds of conditions and after that period of time I think one begins to understand the philosophy of life, the capabilities, the weaknesses, the strengths of that individual, his dedication. I left China admiring and respecting Chiang Kai-shek as a person. I did not have too much confidence in his military judgment. He had been successful as a military leader against the Communists but he was fighting certainly rather primitive ways of warfare in a primitive manner. But it was adaptable to the type of enemy he was fighting but not against the Japanese who were, of course, well-trained and organized and fanatically dedicated to their mission - forces that stood off and really could defeat, at times, a good American division or a good British division. In that case he was quite naive, I would say. And he kept urging me to obtain tanks for his forces and he wanted me to bring more modern equipment over that he had heard about. He had never been out of China. He is a graduate of the Japanese War College. But he had never been to the United States

military schools and from British schools, German schools, he learned about modern equipment and about modern warfare. And then he wanted me to conduct that kind of warfare and use that kind of equipment. But the situation in China, the rice paddies and the terrain that I knew about wasn't particularly adaptable to the use of tanks. There might have been specific instances where I could use tanks and I certainly could have used anti-tank guns to good advantage against the Japanese air before Chennault's force had successfully driven them off, and we had undisputed control of the air over China--that gradually developed. But I couldn't get heavy equipment across the Hump and maintain it. I couldn't maintain heavy equipment, so I did the best I could with the type of light equipment and the only artillery, of course, that I had was the Pack "75" and the Japanese had two heavier artillery pieces. One was the 105 and the other the 155, and they, of course, outranged my 75's. It gave them a marked advantage. There is no doubt about it and, of course, they had sea communications and they could maintain that heavy equipment. The US-recommended political reforms of the Nationalist government would have been rather difficult to implement quickly at least; gradually it might have been accomplished. But included in the political reforms was the admission or the integration of the Communist forces right down the spectrum of political beliefs and ideas of government. So that would have been very difficult for Chiang Kai-shek, assuming that he was honorable and trying to permit, for example, criticism, of what he was doing, which he did while I was there. Whereas the Communists of course could criticize and tell lies and distortions and the government would

always be defending itself. But one would never know what was being done by the Soviet people, the Soviet Communists to assist the Chinese Communists. Chiang Kai-shek was confronted with a situation that just could be simplified in this statement. After the war, he had this big question of rehabilitating his land, restoring law and order and moving millions of people back toward the seacoast to areas which had been occupied by an enemy. He had that problem and in the same time a cancerous growth up in the north of people who were dedicated to a new cause that would repudiate Chinese tradition and it would overthrow the Nationalist government and that group was supported, I repeat, at first covertly and ultimately overtly. Outwardly they just made Japanese arms available and did everything they could to help propaganda-wise and material-wise, to help the Communists. They not only spread propaganda there in that area, throughout the Far East to undermine the Nationalist government, but they did everything they could back in the United States among people who were traditionally American friends and essentially in the State Department, we had agents of Communism who were undermining the confidence of the President, of our President and his advisors. So he really, Chiang Kai-shek really had an almost impossible task. It did prove to be impossible. He wasn't able to do it. If we had given him moral support and material support, not personnel. I did not, at any time, feel that we should send people over there to fight and to die, to sacrifice, when they had millions of people themselves. And if they weren't dedicated to the cause of defeating the Communists, no matter how many Americans we sent over there, it would never result in the type of

victory that we would want and I give as an example, there, what has happened in Vietnam. I am sure the people there were not as committed, not as dedicated as the North Vietnamese people to victory. In the Chiang-Mao confrontation I don't think it would have helped to inject a third force between the two. I presume it is meant by that question the intellectuals who were more or less organized too and very critical of the Nationalist government. Not Communists, but they call themselves the intellectuals, and they were highly critical of Nationalist government. I was acquainted with many of those intellectuals and frankly they were theoretical. They were not practical as is often the case in our own situation here where we have intellectuals guiding our policies and they lack practicality. I think Kissinger is in that category. I think he is highly theoretical and I am worried about the path he is leading our President down at the moment. I am afraid that years from now, very much like interest on the public debt, we are going to be paying, our grandchildren are going to be paying for this unfortunate era of Kissinger policy, in my judgment. I hope I am wrong. It is true that the Chinese generals, graduates of Whampoa Academy, did receive favor from the Nationalist hierarchy. The Generalissmo must have approved of it, and Ho, Yin-ching was behind that. I might tell you here that I recognized quickly that Ho, Yin-ching was really very lacking in military leadership and knowledge. A very fine man, a nice man, I think sincere, and very loyal to the Generalissmo, which was essential. But I recognized, too, that I had in Chen Chen, that little man who was overall commander of the ground forces in China -- a different type. A man who understood things better. So

I recommended to the Generalissmo that Ho, Yin-ching be made supreme commander of all the ground forces. One has to do that. You have to, "so call", kick people upstairs to get rid of them, especially in China. I gave him a big title and they gave him a military major general major general of the American Army -- named McClure as his advisor and some Americans, a little group of Americans to advise his staff and they set him up down at Kunming. I wanted to get him out of my hair. Then I asked the Generalissmo to make Chen Chen, Minister of War, and he did. It isn't generally known, but it is the truth. We did it tactfully and Ho, Yin-ching bought it; he felt good; his ego was massaged by the new title of great importance and lots of publicity in the vernacular papers. Little Chen, Chen didn't like that kind of stuff, anyway. He was not a publicity seeker. He was very quiet, but he was delighted with the opportunity to serve with me and it was through his intercession that I was able to get this Joint Chiefs of Staff working very effectively and we organized and had, right up to the end of the war, an excellent combined chiefs of staff. Their G-1 opposite my G-1. Their G-2 opposite my G-2 and so forth. At first the Chinese didn't contribute much. They never made a criticism. They accepted everything. We had a war room and we had maps all around and began to introduce lots of graphical instruction or graphical representations of what I was trying to put over verbally, orally. Gradually the relationship and the confidence in each other reached a point where they would criticize us, which I invited and encouraged. It was excellent toward the end. It was an excellent idea. It is too bad it wasn't done earlier because that cooperation and that

mutual confidence began to permeate the whole setup there, politically and economically. They began to have confidence in the Americans again -- because things that they knew, they sensed. They are very intuitive, the Chinese, even the men are. Like our women. They very quickly see through people. They know what you are thinking almost and they saw that we were really sincere in our effort to help them. There was no criticism going on secretly and all that. About the preponderance of the US military equipment? I heard that that was the case, too - that the Whampoa generals got the most of the military equipment. But gradually I began to take control. Stilwell would probably have done what I did, if he had stayed there. I was there all the time. I didn't have any responsibilities in Burma and India. But I was right there on the job and I did my utmost to insure that the equipment, coming over the Hump, into the China theater would be allocated to the units that I and my staff had selected to receive training, maintenance and so forth, instruction in that equipment. I had Americans in every little echelon of supply watching how the allocation went; before, when it came over, Chinese were doing that. You couldn't get away with that anymore. I think I told you earlier, a few sessions earlier, that one of the earliest things that I did was change the whole rations system. When I got over there the men were inadequately supplied with food. So I was told that money was given to the army commanders and they would allocate a certain amount to the . . . they don't have a corps echelon -- down to the division and then the divisions would allocate; the division commanders to the regimental commanders -- money -- and by the time they got down to the soldier he got practically nothing. In

some cases, nothing. He had to forage on the land and that made the farmers -- from whom the soldiers were stealing -- that made the farmers hate the military. And it made the soldiers hate the farmers because the soldier took the attitude, and rightly, that I am fighting to protect your farms and our country. So that was no great credit to me or to my staff. But that was a terrible condition that easily developed. All I did was organize, you might say, a US commissary all over the place. We would buy the supplies and an American would be present when the purchase was made. They would buy the supplies and then they would make the issue. They would issue rice and dried fish or what have you that was purchased and the soldiers got food that way. I also got, from the United States, vitamins that were issued to my soldiers and things like that that quickly improved the physical situation. The Whampoa officers, there were a lot of senior generals. I organized a war college. Did I tell you previously about that? I established it down in Kunming and then I asked the Generalissmo permission to select the generals I wanted to go to it. He gave me that permission and, incidently, when I was recommending this organization to him, he asked me how long it would last - how long the course of instruction would last. Now, this was a short time after I got over there. A couple of months after I got over there. But you gradually make changes. He said, "How long do you plan to have this strategic war college and your course last?" I said, "At least until the end of the war." And he looked at me and then a smile came over his face. He got the message. He saw that I was eliminating the Whampoa generals or any favorite generals. So, at least they couldn't interfere with our war

effort. He was awfully nice about it. I went down a few times, Tony, and got on the platform and talked very slowly and kept my cool and just talked a little bit about strategy that I had learned at the German War College. I didn't tell them where I learned it but I mean just to arouse their interest and show how we had to bring in all these forces, political, economic, psychosocial, and so forth to end the war, in conjunction with the military and that would strengthen the military and things like that. Just for about a half hour and then let them ask questions. I remember one general, Tony, who later became governor of Formosa. I remember him so well. He came up to me after a lecture and he said, "General Wedemeyer, I just want you to know how much I enjoyed this" and so forth. "All of us are enjoying the course." And he said, "How long is the course going to last?" I said, "Oh! I couldn't tell you that. That is a responsibility of the Generalissmo." And, of course, the Generalissmo's name was God to them. That is the way I did it. I kept that damn school going until the Japs were ready to . . . I had different officers go and make lectures to them. Henry Alrang went there a couple of times. He laughed like hell when I told him the truth about it. He saw it. But it was in confidence. Nobody knew it in general. My Chief of Staff, Ray Maddox, made talks, and General McClure made a talk to them about morale and things like that. It is true. The Communists, although poorly equipped, fought well. Fighting is a matter of spirit, Tony. You have been in combat and you know it is true. No matter how good your equipment is. I maintain that the Nationalist forces in 1949 could have defended the Yangtze Valley with broomsticks. It is an exaggeration, of course, but

at that time the Communist morale was high. They had ample munitions, ample weapons, and so forth. And they had the support of the people in the countryside. People were buying what they said, promising to, break up these huge estates. Each person was going to get a parcel of land and that is what happened. That happened in all these countries that the Communists took over in Central Europe, Tony, if you read the history of the takeover in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia and these various areas. I've done it very carefully. Then time passes and these people do not, they have to turn their stuff in no matter how hard they work; they don't get a bit more. Then they get discouraged. The competitive angle of our free enterprise system, our competitive society, that is removed in Communism and then they get discouraged. They don't produce anything at all and then the five year plan falls down, flat on its face. That is just what has happened here in the Soviet Union right now. They get wheat from us. But the incentive system, as long as there is some competition, is productive. It makes a man work harder and give his best. But that is one of the basic weaknesses in Communism. No doubt about it. These people, of course don't recognize that at first because the promises are so outwardly sincere and so hopeful. I mean if you say you are going to get a parcel of your own land, but the produce from that land is going to be given to the common field, to help everyone else developing, buy farm equipment and so forth. But they gradually took the land away and they all became just workers and competition again was removed. Just like a production line in General Motors where you are always going to have trouble where a man's skill is not particularly developed and you

just tighten certain little bolts and that is it. I want to bring out one thing about the Whampoa generals. They did not fight well in the Sino-Jap War and I think I have explained it to you in the foregoing.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Now, the civil war between the Communists. I think that is what you are calling it now. I don't because there was too much outside aid given, and influence and it made it too onesided. I don't see how the Nationalists really could have won. It was a war really between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the United States withdrew, if you put it that way. I more or less accepted that. But I don't think it was just a civil war confined to the borders of China.

COL DESKIS: I think the general impression that we in the United States have, who have studied this, feel that . . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: I agree. It was a civil war.

COL DESKIS: . . . That this was a civil war and that the Chinese Communists were poorly equipped, were not assisted very much by the Soviet Union, that Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists on the other hand had the preponderance of equipment and assistance.

GEN WEDEMEYER: They did have the preponderance of equipment but they didn't have ammunition for it.

COL DESKIS: There is another contention, however,

GEN WEDEMEYER: General Barr who was over there would say the opposite. He said that they had ample ammunition. But the spiritual factor I mentioned earlier, too, where they might have defended the Yangtze if their morale had been as high as the Communists.

COL DESKIS: We have always, or at least the majority of the people in the United States, have blamed the Nationalists. They said that the Nationalists lost because of their ineptness, their lack of generalship, the corruption that existed. However, there is a feeling on the other side of the coin that the Nationalists lost because of many factors. One, the fact that you mentioned, very lucidly, the fact that they had been disrupted by the Communists, then the Japanese, and then the Second World War which certainly caused great devastation and destruction of organizational structure within the country. Then we had attempted to reconcile the two factions, the Communists and the Nationalists. And by doing that, as you mentioned, the Nationalists had gone north, had been winning victories against the Communists. At that time, about that time, the Marshall mission was sent to China to try to reconcile the two factions, and this attempted reconciliation interrupted the action of the Nationalists against the Communists which then gave the Communists an opportunity to sort of rehabilitate themselves.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Gave them the initiative. Yes.

COL DESKIS: It also gave them an opportunity to regain their strength, resupply, rearm.

GEN WEDEMEYER: And occupy areas that had been denied to them.

COL DESKIS: Occupy other areas and that coupled with the fact that we had cut off our aid and materiel support to them.

GEN WEDEMEYER: And moral support!

COL DESKIS: And moral support -- exacerbated the situation.

GEN WEDEMEYER: No doubt about it.

COL DESKIS: I think your contention would be that we really assisted in the defeat of the Nationalists by virtue of our withdrawal of support.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. There is no doubt about that in my mind. We really assisted the Communists. Of course, not intentionally.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: But in a negative way. We just didn't contribute moral support which I think was a very important factor and the material support, too. I would say that somewhere in between is the real story. There was corruption. Incompetence on the part of the Nationalist government and the military hierarchy too. Definitely! There is no doubt about it in my judgement after the war was over. People were anxious to exploit the situation and the Generalissmo was trying to reestablish law and order and improve the economy of his country which was in deplorable condition. There was no income for the government and they needed income to rehabilitate and they needed the friendship and the help of other countries. This movement known as the Chinese Communist Movement received help, considerable help. I can tell you, Tony, personally; I was in Manchuria. There was a lot of bales being stored in a big warehouse, maybe a thousand of them. I opened a few of them. They were American rifles that we had been shipping to the USSR, apparently. Then the Soviet Union shipped them down there. American rifles that the Communists were using. Ammunition, too, that was in 1947 when I was there.

COL DESKIS: That is an interesting point and the reason I wanted to approach that sort of perspective because there are so many that feel that we had no responsibility, whatsoever.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I am not trying to state categorically that it was the United States' failure to support the Nationalists. But I do think that it contributed to their defeat. Strongly contributed.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir, I thought it might be a significant factor.

GEN WEDEMEYER: And it is a matter of degree and I am never a person to just know and make statements that there was no possibility of anything being wrong within the Nationalist regime. I don't make statements like that. Barr, our American general over there who was in there when the final days of the debacle occurred, Barr said he went up to the front. He told me personally that the Chinese did not fight well, the Chinese Nationalists. I said, "Did they have plenty of arms and ammunition?" He said, "Yes, the units along the Yangtze did - under a man named Don Win Po", whom I knew very well. He wasn't a particularly good general. I didn't have a very high regard for the generals. My little advisory groups. I don't think that Lucas who was head of the advisory group for a long time there carried on the same plan that I had, namely, that I had with each Chinese unit for example, a two star Chinese general with his staff commanding a division. I had, if I could get a good colonel, an American colonel with two or three people with plenty of tact and military knowledge assigned to that colonel. Now, if that general didn't use the advice given, if he disregarded the advice given by his military advisor, that military advisor--the American, would let my headquarters know. He had separate communications with me. And that is the way we did it throughout the Army and I knew what was going on all the time. The Chinese generals resented my setup. But it began to make

things click. I am not patting myself on the back. Anyone will tell you that it is just common sense. I found out that I was at their mercy at first, of the Chinese in the highest command telling me where their units were located. I damn near got captured one time out on the front. I went down the road. I think I told you about it. I don't know. Well, I did. I went in a jeep down the road about a mile or so after talking to this Army commander, a Chinese, who told me that the Japanese lines were here, and so forth. So then I started in the jeep with an aide and a guard. I had a sergeant who was always with me and an aide. We went down there and preceeding me was an artillery colonel named Culbertson, I think. He and two or three men, a surveyor, were going to get an OP established down there. He too had been in on the conference that I had had with that Army commander. So he thought it was perfectly alright to go out. He was captured. I saw him get captured. So it shows you the lack, and it destroyed my confidence in the information that I got. Now, that could happen occasionally even with the Americans, because the Japs could have advanced very rapidly to that point. But I found that that was their front line. That was where I was and it was so stupid. So it is not black or white with me. It was a gray area and I admit that I would have had, if I stayed on there, a hell of a problem. That I would have borne down and I would have made a lot of enemies. I made enemies anyway among the Nationalist generals because of that supervision and now with reference to the supply, the rations system that we inaugurated. There was a lieutenant general who lost his head because it was reported to me by an American officer that he was stealing some of the money. He was down in

Kunming. See, you had to have someone who received money in order to buy from the farmers in the region. By golly, I reported to the Generalissmo and I was told he lost his head before sunset. That got all over the Chinese. They were scared to death of me then and I didn't want it that way. I would rather have had him court-martialed and had a hearing.

COL DESKIS: But you were very effective because you had the confidence of the Generalissmo.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. They were afraid of me. They got afraid of me very quickly. Wei, Li-wang. I think I told you my experience with him, didn't I?

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: He wasn't going to jump off you know at a certain time that I asked him. I ordered him to go in the name of the Generalissmo. In a nice way I didn't go around, Tony, like I am told Stilwell went around. I went around like you would go around and as a friend. I arrived as a friend. But I was firm. I didn't kow-tow; I think I told you that Dorn, when we had that conference with Wei, Li-wang, I shook hands with him. He had already told me he wasn't going to do it. He couldn't do it. He couldn't do it. I said, "You are going to do it or you are going to lose the American advisors and the American equipment. I am going to give it to some Chinese general who will carry out my orders in the name of the Generalissmo." He smiled and I smiled and we shook hands. I walked on out and General Dorn, a brigadier general in the American Army was kow-towing. He had his hands together and he was bowing. Now, he had been a Chinese language student and he had been with Stilwell there a very long time. But I got an order out right away that the Americans would be

courteous. They would be honest. All of this in the American tradition, tactful, and I sent a confidential letter to every officer in that command of mine, all over the damn theater, because I couldn't take that. You are assuming about Chiang's failure toward the end of the business with the Communists.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I would say it was attributable to the lack of appropriate types of supply. You could take a truck and demobilize it just because of the loss of some few small parts, maintenance parts. That is the situation. They had, when I was there, 17,000 four-by-fours and I am told that they had less than a hundred of them that were operable. That is just ridiculous, due to poor maintenance, poor generalship; poor supply did contribute. But I would put number one as poor spirit, poor morale of the people in general that was reflected through the ranks of the Army. I think it was disastrous -- the effect that General Marshall's embargo on supply had on the Chiang effort. I don't think, in other words, with Chiang, with General Lucas and his military advisory group, there would have been widespread abuse of the flow of supplies. I think it would have been allocated to forces that were opposing Communism. I got that impression also talking later to Barr who relieved Lucas. The Communists probably did capture huge supply depots intact. But the supplies that they got from the Soviet Communists coming through Manchuria and down from Vladisvostok were, initially, a very important factor and I personally saw tons of that type, those rifles and ammunition, too.

COL DESKIS: That's a good point of clarification.

GEN WEDEMEYER: In Moscow. Then, also I saw the NRA, was it. . . Do you know UNRRA was?

COL DESKIS: United Nations Relief Fund Rehabilitation.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. I saw tons of UNRRA supplies from the United States and the USA was painted out, and the USSR painted on them. They wanted them to think that they were supplying the equipment. Think of that? I saw that along the seaboard and I reported that to the American Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is just like I reported other things about these men being dedicated, avowed Communists. Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, as a result of their visiting me and knowing, talking to me -- but nothing ever came of it. People back home were continually told that they were agrarian reformers. My wife was sending me newspaper clippings -- and friends. But it was very frustrating to be over there at that time.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. I am sure it was.

GEN WEDEMEYER: But other commanders had similar problems that were frustrating, too, I am sure. Ike did with the British. I know they pulled his tail all the time and particularly, Montgomery. He had trouble with him. He was very difficult. MacArthur had his trouble. I think he had the least troubles with his commands; I think his troubles were back here where you had officers who were jealous of him.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I have already indicated to you that my thought is that primarily not only the military lacked spirit but the people did. They were discouraged and downhearted. I can understand it. They are very sensitive people. They are very fine people and they are capable

of deep loyalty to a friend or to a principle, Tony. Believe me, they are. We foreigners come in contact frequently with the least attractive Chinese because along the port areas you find so many people who have been exploiting poor labor there, cheap labor. Their own people. Let me tell you quickly. The Generalissmo told me one time that after the war I am going to send a lot of young people over to the United States and to Europe for training, then bring them back here, and he felt that would raise the plateau of education in this country. I said, "Don't do it. You get the people to come from those countries and instruct here. Establish schools here, and establish a lot of normal schools quickly among the Chinese. It has been my experience, I have been here one week -- only one week, Generalissmo, when I asked you to give me the names of all of the officers who were in high command or any important position in the Army, Chinese Army, who speak English and who have been to a school in the United States, Germany, and France, and so forth, military schools." Then I asked him to give me the names of people who had an education abroad, especially America. And I got these lists from him. But you know, not one from the United States Military Academy was in the Army at that time. Not one. What was he doing? He was making a hell of a lot of money, exploiting his own poor people who were illiterate and poor and would work for the smell of an oil rag and that was it. So what happens when people leave China and go to foreign schools? They get a different concept that has no application at the time in China, in their homeland. But they come back from the United States and they exploit that poor labor, if they come at all; sometimes they don't even come back.

COL DESKIS: That is why many of them stay. The opportunities are greater.

GEN WEDEMEYER: The Generalissmo got the message. I could see that is the reason he wanted me to stay. I was so honest with him. He asked me again and again to stay, you know. He offered me a tremendous proposition. Any American would have had the same experience and you just would be fair with him. You see, he had a difficult time, obviously, in getting the truth told to him. I had had that experience way out in the field there. I mentioned that, Culbertson was the name of the man. Now, I remember, he was a colonel then in the field artillery. That man was captured and two or three enlisted men with him, going out forward to get an OP for their artillery. And he was an advisor, you see, under our Army Commander's staff. By Golly! He escaped and he came back about a month later. He came all the way up to Chungking to see me because where I was down there, way down in Kweiah, southeast China. He was in a bamboo prison every night, all the time. But every night at about two or three o'clock in the morning he said he told the guard that he had diarrhea. He would go to the toilet and finally he just escaped and kept going and got away. But before he left they had been torturing him, the Japs, and his fingernails were all off. They had taken a little bamboo and they would pound a little bamboo under his fingernails, you know. He showed me his nails. Incidentally, I was on the board years later of an insurance company. In fact, I was Chairman of the Board of an insurance company in Denver and was getting a plane to get back to a board meeting and over the loudspeaker, "General Wedemeyer. Please report to United Airlines

counter," and I did and there was Culbertson, a major general, with an aide. He heard, somewhere, that I had been there and was going to go through there -- or something. He was a very fine type. It was nice to see him. No need to elaborate. Was Chiang destined to fall? I think I have covered that, already.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. I think so.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I can't tell you strongly enough. I think the man was sincere and I think purposeful. I think he had the best interests of his people at heart. He had problems that either you or I would have been unable to cope with too unless we surrounded ourselves with abler people. You can't do it all when you are in charge of an area that is as great as the United States. It is about four million square miles over there. The problems introduced by outside powers like the United States and the USSR and the Japs and so forth. And with the traditions of the Chinese, which were quite different from the occidental but quite applicable to their civilization.

COL DESKIS: I think in our previous discussions about what conceivably precipitated the final outcome, the confrontation between the Maoists and Chiang. There seem to be many factors. Inflation being one of the major ones. But I would suspect that many people support the proposition that even had we not stopped supplies, had we given greater support, that conceivably it would have only postponed the final demise of the Nationalists.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I am glad you brought that up. Things began to develop back here among some people whereby when I came back from that 1947 meeting, my report wasn't published. A number of members of Congress and some very

prominent civilians were talking to me. They said that it was possible that we might have gotten the problem into the United Nations -- the recommendation that I made to the Generalissmo in '45, that I repeated again in my report to the President in '47, namely, that Manchuria be designated as a guardianship of the five powers: the US, the USSR, Great Britain, France and Nationalist China and that they not be bothered; their interests, their soverign rights would be protected in Manchuria by that guardianship. It would be maintained until the Generalissmo had restored law and order south of the Great Wall and he had the resources to do that -- relieved of the responsibility of recovering and maintaining control out there in Manchuria. Concurrently, create a trusteeship over all of Korea by the same five powers which would have denied unilateral action by the Soviet inspired Communists, Soviet-supported Communists. That was beginning to get hold and I had quite a few fine Americans interested in this. Then in 1949 it occurred.

COL DESKIS: So it was conceivably that had we not, then this would have led to a bolstering of . . .

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, my point is, in answer to your question, Tony, was that it might have delayed the debacle and the conditions would have not been such as to preclude that action. Actually it would have been necessary too, for the Generalissmo to initiate the request because his sovereign rights over Manchuria had already been recognized by the UN and here he was asking them to establish a guardianship over it. And I use the term guardianship because it had the connotation of being temporary, whereas trusteeship lasts some time, until the people grew up. Who was the first president of Korea?

COL DESKIS: Syngman Rhee!

GEN WEDEMEYER: I don't think Syngman Rhee would have objected to that. I think he would have liked it, because here you had the Communist - inspired, Communist-supported North Koreans dividing his country and he was a wonderful fellow, a very able man. Toward the end he got irascible, as he got older I know, and difficult. And in many ways it militated against the fine record that he had made earlier in uniting his people. You say the hostilities exploded between Mao and Chiang at the conclusion of World War II, and that is true. I have already covered it.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. I think you did.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Chiang's objective, of course, was to preclude the control of Manchuria by the Communists and he poured a lot of his forces up there, against my recommendation. He wrote to me and I wrote back. I was back here then on duty. But I told him not to put people in there; that they could pinch it off. See, it was a regular finger that he occupied right up to Mykden, I think all the way up there, that railroad, that he was controlling. And I knew that the Communists could pinch it off down at Shanhaikuan and Chinhuangtao down at the Gulf of Chihli. Then all would be lost. Donald Nelson came to see me at that time. Mister Marshall, Secretary of State, told him to come and talk to me about it. Don Nelson was handling, sending supplies over there. I forget what the organization was then -- it wasn't UNERA there -- some other thing. I advised him against putting any equipment in there to help that area and do you know, he did it anyway. And who got all the equipment? Millions of dollars worth of American equipment? The Communists got it when they pinched it

off, just as I said they would. I thought it was reprehensible of him to do that. Of course, I was just an Army officer, a general in the General Staff there, and I didn't have any power. I could have gone over him if I wanted to be that type and tell General Marshall. But I thought, maybe, he had decided against me, too. I don't know. Maybe he did. I was very optimistic about the Marshall mission. I had so much confidence in his ability. I think he was a tired man. I don't know whether I am right. This is another angle that one might introduce. After so many accolades and so much tension he was human and maybe he became quite egotistical about his powers and so forth. I don't know. I don't know very many men in history who have been given kudos and accolades and praise and so forth. Christ is one. Ignatius, Loyola and a few men in history. I think George Washington was a man of great humility. But most people's armor is penetrated by flattery and as I say praise and so forth. They think it is their due, finally. Then if a fellow like Colonel Deskis comes along and differs with them they say, "Well, what has happened to him? What has happened to Deskis there?" You know. Anybody that differs with them because of the grade I am. They have had so much success and recognition. I don't know. I don't want to think that. I said to myself when he came over there that he was tired. He was tired out and he deserved a rest. He had been under great responsibility and had handled himself well as an administrator, as a chief of staff back home here and I admired him. I had a feeling of affection for him, really. At the Casablanca Conference where unconditional surrender was considered he asked me to speak up before the members of the JCS and I did. I think I related that to

you before. When I said to him, "I apologize for talking so much," he said, "Don't you ever fail to let me know what you are thinking. You do me a disservice if you don't." I took him seriously. I worshipped him. If he had said, "Jump over Niagara Falls," I would have done it. I did think well of the mission and I told the Generalissmo what a wonderful man he was and he could trust him so. I just went on because the Generalissmo was wondering about him, you know. He knew that he was a good friend of Stilwell's and he was worried and I told him. Walter Robertson, my cousin, who was minister there, he wanted to know about Marshall. He never met him and he didn't know what he was going to be up against. I told him such fine things about him and yet Marshall told him later, confidentially, he didn't know that Walter and I were close, "Wedemeyer is getting too big for his britches." That was about a week after I told General Marshall, "You never can amalgamate these two people." When he arrived you know, he showed me his directive. I said, "You can never do this, sir." And he turned on me angrily and said, "Wedemeyer, I am going to do it and you are going to help me." That is the way he said it. Then he turned back to his suitcase and started to unpack. It just hurt me deeply and that is why I said that I felt that he was tired. He had flown across the Pacific and didn't know what changes had taken place. I hadn't seen him in about a year. One time I was very close to him. I think it could have accomplished a great deal. I think that in a situation such as the one I described to you of dislocation, disruption, eight years of war, tired of war and so forth. Time heals and I think if his mission had been successful in increasing, raising the morale, and in-

creasing the military capabilities of China, that it would have postponed and maybe the debacle never would have happened. Maybe, gradually, the forces of Chiang Kai-shek would have been able to consolidate and preclude a takeover. You see.

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: The economy of the country I mentioned was just in terrible shape. So you call it a irreconcilable environment. It certainly was a terrible environment and the situation. Why had you not been designated US Ambassador to China? Well, when Marshall was there, a few months, I went up to see him about once a week to talk to him to find out if there was anything I could do to help him. It was still a theater but it was going to be demobilized and a lieutenant general was being sent over there to take my place. An awfully nice man, right after the war.

COL DESKIS: I don't remember who that was.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Oh! He was tops. He was just a darling fellow, a little runt, a little short fellow, and I knew him very well, anyway. I was glad he was sent. He demobilized the theater and I came home ostensibly to get ready to come back as ambassador. I went up to see General Marshall. I had given him two of my best staff officers, General Caraway who was then a brigadier general and Colonel Hart Coy. We were all sitting around watching the movie and after the movie General Marshall spoke up. These men heard this conversation. He said, "Wedemeyer, I have been over here now a couple of months and I have observed the feeling of the Chinese for you, and even the Communists respect you. I think you ought to serve as ambassador." You see. There was no ambassador there. Pat Hurley had

resigned. I said, "General Marshall, I don't think I could be a good ambassador. I am not trained for that kind of work." He said, "I know, but it would help me." He did. I said, "Well, sir, I will do it then. But I would like to stay for just a year." He said, "Well, I don't know whether". . . this was a remark that I remembered clearly because later he became Secretary of State, you know. Anyway he said, "Of course if I were Secretary of State, I could say that you stay only for a year." I don't know how it worked out. I said, "Well, sir, I will do it." I then, in May, went home and bought a lot of expensive clothing. I had an operation on my nose. I had a growth removed. I used to box a lot and think cartiledge was growing along the side so I couldn't breathe through one side at all. They cut it all out. I was all set to go. The appointment was on the President's desk, appointing me ambassador to China. Then I was sent for by Dean Acheson who was Under Secretary of State, Marshall was Secretary of State. No. Marshall wasn't Secretary of State. Dean Acheson was acting as Under Secretary of State. Jimmy Byrnes was Secretary of State. Marshall was still in China and he showed me his telegram from Acheson. Did I tell you this story before?

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Dean said, "Al, I am sorry about this." I said, "Well, Dean, you know I didn't want to be ambassador. You people knew in the State Department that I didn't feel qualified to do that kind of work." He said, "Well, I think you would have done a fine job." He was very nice about it. I said, "Well, the only thing I don't like about it is

as stated here, the message said the news concerning the appointment of General Wedemeyer to be ambassador to China has leaked." That was done by this man who was taking my place, by a Chinese on the staff who wanted him to be ambassador, Leighton Stuart, I found out later. It leaked to the Communists and they were raising hell about it. They didn't want me as ambassador. "Please appoint Doctor Leighton Stuart immediately. Tell General Wedemeyer he will be appointed later." That's right. I said that there are two things that I don't like about this deal. One, concerned uniforms -- I paid $800.00 for it -- stuff I probably wouldn't wear to a masquerade ball. I bought morning clothes -- you know we don't have anything like that. We were Army officers. I didn't even have a good blue uniform myself. I wasn't much on dress and so they are stored up on the third floor here, Tony, they're in mothballs. But he said, "You send me the bill and I'll take care of it." He did. And I sent him the clothes, too. He sent them back. But the other thing I told him was that I didn't like the idea of the Communists determining appointments to key positions in our diplomatic corps. He agreed. He was very understanding. That's why I was not designated US Ambassador to China. But you heard how it came up and how it ended. So then, Eisenhower was Chief of Staff at the time. I went over and saw him and he said, "I have two armies. You can have either one of them." The Second Army or the Sixth; the Sixth Army was commanded by Stilwell who had been my predecessor in China, you know. The Second Army was commanded by Simpson who had been in command of the Eighth Army, I think, on the Eastern Front. Right?

COL DESKIS: Yes, sir. I believe that is correct.

GEN WEDEMEYER: A wonderful man. Oh, God! He was a fine officer. I served under him as a lieutenant when he was a major. A fine man! I learned a lot from him. I admired him. He was about Class of 1909. Much older than I. Ike said, "He is retiring in another week and you can get that Army right away." Stilwell wouldn't retire for some time, yet -- in about three or four months. "In the meantime, you can stay around here." Well, what they were using me for was awful. I was President of Court of Inquiry on a Major General named Silvester who had been relieved in combat in Europe by Johnny Walker. This Major General Silvester had an armor division, 4th Armor Division, and he was busted and sent home. Ike approved it. So did Patton. He was sent home. So I was the president of this damn court and all the officers on this court were junior to me in age but I was senior in rank. That kind of stuff was awful. I didn't like that. Silvester came down to Fort Benning when I was right out of West Point down there as a student and Silvester had a DSC, Purple Heart, and all kinds of medals. You know, I was impressed with anybody who had a Distinguished Service Cross, and I am yet. But, I mean we had wonderful instructors at Fort Benning at that time. They came in 1919. They just came out of combat and they were instructors. They were wonderful instructors. Some of them had a little difficulty imparting their knowledge. Most of them were good and I never will feel that I got better instruction than in that nine months at Fort Benning. Then I was kept there as an instructor myself. I was a theorist entirely. I had never been close to combat. Anyway, that is the story. In 1947, I was designated with Ambassadorial rank to be a special envoy. I was

given some people arbitrarily by Secretary of State Marshall. He told me to write my own directive. So that directive that I had was my own writing. I went over to report to him and he said, "You sit down at my desk. I am going over to appear before a Congressional Committee. You write your directive." So I wrote it. Then he sent it to John Carter Vincent in the State Department, Southeast Division, Southeast Asia Division, and he made a few changes. I refused to accept them and Marshall backed me up with the same old fine spirit. He wanted me to take over as ambassador. I might tell you; he was unhappy with what Leighton Stuart was doing. He said, "He was weak." And he said, "The President wants to relieve him." I said, "General, I offered to do it once, sir. I hope you understand. I don't want to do it." But General Marshall said, "Will you go over there for a few months?" He was very nice about it. I said, "Yes, sir. I will make a survey." And I did. And my objectives were spelled out in the directive - namely, that I would make a survey, political, economic, psychosocial, and military of China and of Korea. I was to make recommendations concerning the future of US policy in those areas. At that time, I think, Tony, I think that if those recommendation had been carried out, mainly the creation of that guardianship and trusteeship and the introduction of this great organization that gave so much promise at the time that it started, the UN. Get them into this thing and preclude unilateral action on the part of any nation, develop conditions there that would preclude the establishment of a totalitarian government or a government that was incompatible with the objectives of the UN. I will put it that way.

In 1947, prior to my departure from China on a special mission for President Truman, I did address the cabinet and key members, military and civilian of Chiang Kai-shek's government, at his urgent request. When he asked me to do this he wanted me to give a resume of the conditions that I found in his country. Always I had been very frank with him and with those leaders - the ones with whom I had contact and many of whom I didn't. They all knew that I was sincere and that I was honest with them, always. Sometimes a little critical possibly and sometimes for their finer sensibilities, maybe a little harsh. But, nevertheless, that was the way the situation arose. I kept telling the Generalissmo I didn't think I should do it. I didn't think I should do it - that I was there representing the President. But he said, "As a friend?" Finally I said, "No. I just don't feel I should do it." Now, who started operating on me to do it? Ambassador Leighton Stuart. He urged me to do it. He kept urging and urging me to do it. He said, "The Generalissmo just feels awful that you won't do it." He kept on doing it. I said, "Alright, I will do it, very confidentially. Just a group, a very selective group." I went over and did it. And I did tell the truth; that I did find corruption. I did find incompetence, and a lack of spirit and things like that. It was a good talk right off the cuff, from the shoulder and in a nice way, constructively. Then I rode back from the Generalissmo's auditorium back to my house where I was staying with the Ambassador -- Stuart -- at his house. Going back he said, "It was magnificent. It was just what they needed and I know it will do a lot of good." He said, "It will strengthen my hand here

and our country's hand and most people really respect you and they will get things underway. Nobody else could do it. No one else could have done that. No other foreigner." I took all this in. I was pleased that I had done it. When I got home I saw these reports that this man sent back. How terrible they were, and critical of me. He said it was almost tactless on my part and gauche. It just broke my heart. It makes you wonder about man's sincerity.

COL DESKIS: Reprehensible.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Well, that is it. My presentation was a clear, honest, presentation. I didn't put in everything I found. For example, the governor of Formosa was cheating over there and I knew it but I didn't tell that. I just found evidence of corruption and incompetence in certain areas and how we had to buckle down now. We had a big problem to contend with. I use the pronoun "we" because I loved those people and I worked with them for two years before that.

COL DESKIS: Was there any indication of Chiang's reaction?

GEN WEDEMEYER: No. Not right away. The only thing that happened after that was that I sat down there with him for a few minutes and the Madame was there. She said to me, "The Generalissmo says that you have some information about people who have a lot of money, about rich Chinese having a lot of money." I said, "Yes, I do." She said, "Well, the Generalissmo thinks that you should tell him that, if you are a real friend of China you will tell him that." I said, "No. I won't tell him that." It was being all interpreted to him. I won't do that because the information I got came from the most confidential sources and people who were inter-

ested in supporting the Generalissmo and supporting what I was trying to do over there. It happened after the war when I was trying to help the Generalissmo with a program of rehabilitation. And I needed money. I needed funds. I wanted to know how I could raise funds among the rich Chinese both in China and the overseas Chinese and I also had a consideration, of course, with the World Bank and loans from other powers. But I needed money to do the program of education and rehabilitation that I visualized. I was going to lots of schools to get American and English or any kind of teachers over there to teach in those schools, the program that I told you about.

COL DESKIE: Yes, sir.

GEN WEDEMEYER: He was angry a little bit. That was the first time in all my experiences with him that he showed a little anger. I bid him goodbye there and went to the airport and left. I went back to the quarters and got my bags. I went to the airport and left that day. I had the list of about twenty names of Chinese families. The estimate of money that was given to me by people very high in the Chinese hierarchy, very close to the Generalissmo. You know I wouldn't tell on them. I never have to this day told anybody. I still got the list in a file some place. But it would have raised for me about two billion dollars, US dollars, the estimates. They were very wealthy, some of them. Some of them were members of his family. Madame probably knew that. She had been here since then, of course, visiting us. I have seen quite a lot of them. I have been out there several times.

COL DESKIS: When was your last visit out there, sir?

GEN WEDEMEYER: About three years ago. We went around the world about three years ago and we stopped there for about a week. General Marshall, Secretary of State Marshall, suppressed my 1947 report to the President. But he did so because he was worried about the recommendation of the establishment of a guardianship. He felt that this might offend Chiang Kai-shek. I think this is the reason he did it. We didn't discuss it very much. I think he also felt that I would, more or less, confirm his "plague on both your houses" when he came out of China. I don't know. When he came back to be Secretary of State, he came back critical of both sides, very critical and did not recommend anything. So that his disappointment, perhaps in my failure to confirm his policy or his recommendations, you see, might have had something to do with these. But I did tell him, however, that I had already recommended that to the Generalissmo back in 1945 and I felt that we could, confidentially, send a message to him, communicate with him and tell him that we strongly recommend he consider applying to the United Nations.

COL DESKIS: But Chiang had already been exposed to it and conceivably was prepared at least tacitly to consider such a proposal.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes, I think he would have. You see, he didn't do it in '45 because he was flushed with success. He thought it would make him lose face to indicate that he wasn't strong enough to recover Manchuria, that huge rich province -- rich in grain, the largest open pit coal mine in the world, just north of Mukden and things like that. So I understood why he didn't go along with the recommendations. I was sorry he didn't, because the time was propitious then to do it before the Communists con-

solidated their gains and increased and expanded their movement. My reaction was disbelief. Yes. I was astounded because there was nothing momentous in that report. It just recommended moral support and material aid to them. Of course, the MAAG was nothing. They wouldn't be involved in any of the combat areas at all. They would give instructions on the use and maintenance of equipment that we would make available to them. But I thought they were entitled to that. I knew the other side was getting the same from Moscow--equipment--large quantities of equipment and people helping them and showing them how to use it. I had opportunities then to tell people, just like when MacArthur sent that message to Martin. I could have created a very embarrassing situation for the administration in Congress, and I didn't do it. I kept my mouth shut because I was told to by Marshall. Then in '49, it was published in a White Paper, but not completely. Certain parts were cut out. They asked me. They would have published it if I would have agreed to delete certain parts but I wouldn't agree to do it. The State Department, a man named Butterworth, a professional foreign service officer, came to me. I guess Marshall sent him. Marshall said he understood if I didn't want to delete anything. I signed it. Then we didn't change it.

COL DESKIS: Did you find transition to civilian life traumatic?

GEN WEDEMEYER: No, I didn't, Tony. It was very simple because I had a wonderful job in industry. I was made an executive vice president with a huge corporation -- twenty-two plants. I was given a lot of responsibility for which I was not prepared. I was not trained and it was good that I wasn't trained, because I recognized my lack of knowledge and I knew so little about the financial side, too. I made up

my mind, though that I was going to know something about it. When one does that and applies oneself and has a strong diversion, you can live with the traumatic, with the changes that were dramatic, not traumatic, because I really did feel I had responsibility. I went around to all these plants and talked to people. I learned their organization and it was really a wonderful thing. I enjoyed it. They paid me a great deal -- $80,000 a year in salary starting off. The only thing I did was stipulate, when I took the job, that I would not have anything to do with the military. And I didn't. Of course I had to move to New York. My legal residence was New York because I spent half of my time in New York -- more than half of my time in New York. I had an apartment there. We came down to the farm on weekends -- we would fly down. In the summertime, Mrs. Wedemeyer spent a great deal of time down here. The one thing that I learned though in industry -- I met all the top people in finance and in industry in New York. I had lunch with them, and they were very nice to me...but I learned that they did not have the high regard for the military that I felt the military was entitled to. And I tried to correct that, tactfully, when they asked me to lunch to discuss things with them, not by posing as an example of the higher echelon in the Army but giving them the information straight from the shoulder. I found a very different concept of integrity in my contacts with people in commercial life. The dollar, not the country, was their goal. And I said, "I can assure you that the military men are dedicated. They put the interests of their country first. Of course, there are exceptions. But most of them do." You take at West Point today. When I went up there, Tony, so help me

God, the idea, then, was to be worthy of West Point. Today, it has changed just completely around. I don't know when it was started, but now the attitude is "What can I get away with at West Point". Now, the Honor System is based on man's dedication to compliance, discipline and so forth, carrying out and achieving. I don't see how the Honor System would work when every chance I get I am going to do something, if I can get away with it, and violate something. Do you see what I mean? I am told that is the difference. Well, that is going to turn out an entirely different type of officer. And this is the type of people I found, in general, in the plants. I would ask the plant manager a question about the conduct of his operations. He had big responsibilities. Some of them had 2,000 men under them. And he lied to me. I would find him lying. Of course, that was quite a shock to me. But I let these people up there know, the heads of big corporations, of this experience. I found that even they had a different idea. For example, they would bribe union leaders -- men like Meany, for example. They would make their plans available to him from A to Z and nothing said about it. But the plane came. I had some experience with the unions. It was entirely new to me. We owned the New York Ship Building and we had five ships on the waves. Three aircraft platforms and two oilers for Sun Oil. They had a slow-down strike. They had a Naval Academy type captain of the yard down there. He was a prince of a fellow. I was awfully confident that I knew how to handle men. I didn't give a damn whether they were laboring men or who they were. I felt I could go down there and get the situation. I went down. A slow down strike,

they called it. Not a sit down, just slowing down. And we had a schedule as you may well imagine there in Camden of getting these ships out at a certain time and we were not going to make the scheduled completion dates. So I walked all around there and talked to the different people working. Workers you know. The first guy didn't say much. He just listened and asked questions, of course. And then the next day -- I spent four days down there -- I laid in bed at night and thought what the hell I could do to improve the movement of these great big armor plates from the rail, the standard rail, to a reduced rail. What do they call it? Sixty centimeters, to get them to the sides of the ships. Well, they had a hell of a time moving these slabs from the rail so I recommended that we put rails in all along there. God! I just put all kinds of rails in there and moved them right to the side of the ship where the cranes could lift them right up off the flatcars and to the side of the ship -- these kinds of recommendations. Toilets for the men. Put them in. Have a mobile coffee thing come in for them when it was cold, so you could get a hot cup of coffee. Different things like that. The fifth day the union leader down there at Camden asked me to have dinner with him, and one of his assistants was with him. I asked him if I could ask the captain of the yard. He said, "No. I would like to talk to you privately." Confidentially, he didn't have much confidence in him. I said, "Well, I don't like to talk over his head. Can we record then at the meeting?" He said, "Yes." He didn't mind that. So we had lunch and there were three of us. You know he buttered me up. He told me how he had read about me and all this stuff. Then he said, "But you know, I understand that you

have been making some recommendations?" I said, "Yes, I have. They exposed large groups of men and knew of things that contributed to their comforts and also their interest in their job." I was going to put in a loud speaker system so that there wouldn't be shouting and men trying to yell at people to do this and that. They had no loud speaker system. I was going to put in small railroads right down each one of the ways so that we could move our armor plate right up to the side and all this heavy equipment. Then he said, "Well, it is alright, but you have got to tell the men that these are my ideas, that I recommended them." I said, "No. I am not going to tell your men anything of the kind. They are slowing down their work now. They think that their management isn't interested in them. And that is not the case. You have been around here for a long time and you had an opportunity to make these recommendations. They are my recommendations. They are recommendations of management from New York." He said, "Well, they won't be put into effect, if you don't do it, General." I said, "Well, goddamn you. I'm telling you that they would be done and you won't stop me. That's the way the recommendations are going to New York." I did. So this was all recorded. I got a copy of the tape and I played it to the board of directors in New York; they were astounded. I think they were worried, too, because that isn't the way you do business with the union when you are in top echelon in industry in America.

COL DESKIS: I guess their whole attitude is to placate, to mollify, and to try to maintain their face with their unions.

GEN WEDEMEYER: I did get some of these ideas put into effect down there right away, very promptly. And the men did work better and we did turn

out almost on schedule. But I went to another strike out at American Kitchens. They had 1,800 men in that plant at Connersville, Indiana and they had been on strike eleven months. We had a Navy contract for a fuse. What do they call these fuses? There is a fuse which as it approaches a target it explodes. Hell, I forget. Proximity; anyway it doesn't matter. I went out there and I contacted the union leader -- young and nice and got to be personal friend of his and I was just getting things smoothed out. In fact, I had dinner with him and his wife and children at his home, and took him, his wife and kids to dinner and things like that. A very good relationship. I had been there about two or three weeks working on it and I tell you, Tony, it was working out fine. One of the members of the corporation counsel came out there from New York, a young lawyer. I knew him. He was then from AVCO's legal group there and he didn't tell me what he came out for but the next morning I had a date with the union leader and he didn't show up. So I called the house and his wife said, "He won't see you, General Wedemeyer." "Why not?" She said, "Well, you know." I said, "No. I don't know. I don't understand." And that fellow brought $5,000, I was told, in currency and gave it to that young boy. The strike was called off. They went back to work and they did get some of the fringe benefits that I had arranged. That is the reason I resigned from AVCO after almost ten years.

COL DESKIS: It is amazing. But that is right. Profit is the ultimate god within industry. Whatever you have to do to accomplish that, I guess, is condoned.

GEN WEDEMEYER: Yes. And Academy Life Insurance -- my experience there,

for the benefit of anyone hearing this, the first time, I learned you could sell too much of your product. We had a nice group of people on our executive mangement level. Honest people. But I found that we were selling too much life insurance and you had to maintain a certain reserve, properly, or the state insurance commissioner will breathe right down your neck and rightly, and so I was worried. My name had attracted, I am told, a lot of stockholders who were buying stock from Academy Life and quite a few people made some money in it. But I wasn't going to take an interest in people buying for speculation. I was trying to establish a good life insurance with policies that were attractive to people in the service. So I insisted that we amalgamate -- either we buy another company or merge with another company that led some capital -- or that we sell out. We sold to Security Life & Trust or something like that, a big billion dollar company -- plenty of capital. But that made some of my friends angry with me. I think that at least they had to respect me. They lost a little money on it, too, because insurance policy shares went down and they were speculating. I was sorry but that was the way it was. Another thing about the life insurance company and my experience there was that when I was asked to join it there was a West Point classmate who organized the company. He called it Academy Life with headquarters in Colorado Springs, and he had several men on it. One of them was a former lieutenant commander of the Navy and another was a former Air Force officer and he himself had been a civilian. He got out of the Army shortly after he graduated from West Point; he didn't stay out very long. Then he came back during World War II and he was a colonel and then he stayed in for a

while and he finally retired as a colonel from the Army. But that was the type of person he was. And when he called me and asked me to go on the board, I asked him for a thumbnail sketch of all the people who were in key positions on the management level. When I found out that none of them had actuary or insurance experience -- none of them had ever been involved in insurance, I wrote back to him and told him that I felt that we ought to have somebody immediately put on the board and in management who had actuary or insurance experience. He was redheaded and he called me and said, "Who do you think you are? Your name meant something to us but we can get along without you." I said, "Alright. I am going to withdraw, my resignation will be on the way. It will be mailed tomorrow." But the next morning he called me up and wept, cried over the phone. He said that he had acted hastily and that I was right and that he was going to get somebody. I said, "That is alright, Red." He was a redheaded guy. "It is alright, Red. You get some guy." He got a man who was chairman of the board of Security Life in Denver. A highly reputable man, fine reputation in the industry, and he was brought in as consultant to the board. So then they made me Chairman of the Board of that outfit and I served as Chairman of the Board for several years -- three or four years. I was doing fine, too, doing too well. We didn't have enough capital and then we teamed up with Security Life and Accident. That is what it is called, Security Life & Accident. The Townsend Investment Company was a mistake for me to get into. Mr. Townsend in my judgment wasn't my kind of person. He was a most disarming individual, charming, nice looking, and they wanted my name and they exploited my name. I re-

gretted very much that I affiliated with them. However, I asked people to check on him for me up in New York concerning his reliability and so forth. They gave him a clean bill of health. So that should indicate to officers getting out of the Army to be very cautious about affiliating with corporations which offer pay and some attractive opportunities. But I did resign from that organization, finally. And that man was investigated ultimately by the SEC and denied authority to deal in investments. He died of cancer a short time later. I felt sorry for him. That is the end, Tony.

COL DESKIS: Sir, I wonder if you would make a comment -- I know that you have views on what portends for the Army and the future considering the permissiveness that's pervaded the Army, and also the fact that we are now going to an all Volunteer Army. Would you make a comment in that particular area?

GEN WEDEMEYER: Of course. Many years ago when I joined the Army it was a volunteer army. And there was never any question concerning the support of civilian authority in-so-far as discipline and the employment of military force was concerned. All of us who were commissioned officers understood that our President was Commander-in-Chief; we wanted it that way and that he and his cabinet would determine the necessity for and issue of orders to us when we would be employed -- whether it was in civil disturbances or in actual operations against another foreign enemy. That was reassuring to have that knowledge for the commissioned officers. I repeat, there was no question about the legal, the moral and the spiritual support that we would receive from civilian authority. Gradually inroads

had been made increasingly after World War II, but in the period between World War I and World War II one noted, somewhat, the effect of World War I. The civilians, the thousands of men and woman who were in the Army or in the military service during World War I had returned to civilian pursuits and many of them resented the discipline that they had experienced and as time wore on, however, that softened somewhat. But I can remember, Tony, right after World War I, that I would never wear my uniform when I went to a civilian country club for a social affair, because at that time there was resentment. We epitomized discipline and we epitomized what they deemed perhaps unnecessary restraints on their freedoms. They would take it out on us by some degree of ostricism. I repeat, we were never ashamed of our uniform but we were conscious of the feeling of hostility, not too marked, but, nevertheless, it was there. Now, after World War II, however, it seemed to me that same feeling returned and one must realize that we had a great deal more people under arms in the Second War in the uniformed services and allied organizations. We had almost ten percent of our population connected with the military. The discipline was good and the propaganda that had been promulgated by minority groups, the Jewish people, for example, seemed to define clearly a reason for our participation in that war -- the related experiences of their people with the Nazi government. It was depicted in all information media in such a way to give the average American the impression that it was necessary to make the sacrifice, to destroy any form of Nazism and of course Fascism, too, down in Italy. Therefore, again it was not difficult for our officer corps to maintain the discipline

that had been traditional in the American Army. But after the war, increasingly, the feeling against the military was noticeable and those of us in higher positions of responsibility were making analyses. In fact, there was a board called, I think General Doolittle was the head of it and General Hull was on it and some civilians were on it, to democratize the American Army. And I tell you, Hull was a good friend of mine but I thought that the reports made were reprehensible. I didn't expect much from the others, from Jimmy Doolittle who was also a friend, but his judgment in that field wasn't very much. He was a temporary officer who came into the Air Force, you know. He did awfully well, a great hero. But Hull should have known better in my judgment. They were going to make the uniforms of the enlisted men look like uniforms of the officers. They were going to extreme. They were not going to delineate at all between the commissioned officer and the enlisted man. The idea was to democratize the Army. That was an initial jump off, springboard, you might say, for continued downgrading of the military. Then articles appeared by clever writers, we found often with Communists connections, that wanted to destroy the ideas and ideals of our country, and undermine the respect people had for the flag and what it symbolized. The history of the American Army and the wonderful record that the military had accomplished for the country, in the country. This image of the military man was denigrated, criticized and he was placed on the defensive. There were none, or, at least few defenders of the military who were in a position to place matters in the proper perspective and to rationalize the situation. None of them, only a few came forward and they were voices

in the wilderness. Even Congress, because it was a popular theme, picked it up so that the military was criticized severely and they talked about it. Senator Fulbright criticized the military mind and there were others. The American Civil Liberties Union began to attack the military judicial system and they would furnish lawyers when a man was court-martialed. This began to infringe upon the system, the disciplinary system. The legal system. I often said, Tony, when I was a young officer, if I got into trouble I would rather be tried by a court-martial of my peers than any civilian court that I'd known about, because I knew it was fair. I knew I would be punished. I was punished once earlier in my career. We had an article of war, 104th Article of War, which permitted the commanding officer to exercise disciplinary action against an officer or an enlisted man. Instead of being tried by a general court, I was tried by the 104th Article of War. I was drunk and disorderly and I admitted it. I should have gotten the punishment that I got which was a fine of $50 a month for six months and restriction to the station for that period. It is on my record. I don't say that with pride, but I do think that at that time the court-martial system was excellent. The enlisted men would say so, too, I am sure. When an enlisted man violated a law he was punished, commensurate with the offense. It was working very well until these smart lawyers got into the rackets, civilian lawyers and began to defend cases. They downgraded the whole military legal system. Then to carry on, the lack of discipline in the military which drew its numbers from college campuses or villages and farms and so forth, represented a cross section of a deterioration of respect for law, a deterioration of

respect for authority, a deterioration for the love of country and pride in country. All of those were reflected in the attitude of the soldier toward the officer, toward his responsibilities in the Army. Then, of course, we had units in colleges where this new idea of freedom, which spread across college campus, freedom to determine more about their operation, the administration of a college, to use drugs, to repudiate the restraints and the restrictions, the regulations of the college and to determine them, themselves -- tell the college president how to administer affairs of the college, demanding increased representation or control among the students. This again was spreading right on down to other schools -- high schools -- this attitude. But these developments, nationwide, did militate against an efficient and well-disciplined army. The military profession was at one time considered a noble profession. I hardly have to tell you why except that the concept and use of force at times in early history was brutal. It was uncivilized by our current standards. But maybe it was necessary under the conditions that prevailed at the time. Today the use of military force is tempered by reasoned approaches, through diplomatic persuasion and economic or other pressures. But there always will be, Tony, as long as human beings have unmistakable and high regard for the rights of others and consideration for their rights, there is always going to be, there always will be situations created by certain kinds of individuals who will require the use of force. They will not listen to reason and it is true in communities, it is true in the civilian communities where we have policemen. Now, a policeman is admonished not to use a club or not to use his gun

unless it is necessary. He is to use reason and the same should be true between countries and nations. We should be able to use diplomatic persuasion, I repeat, and through favorable trade treaties -- helping other nations through establishing a high standard of living, to provide for their security, economic and military. Why, we wouldn't have wars and that would be fine because wars are always so destructive and they only perpetuate hate. I think, incipient in every treaty or armistice that stops the fighting, there are certain seeds of dissent that are just going to create another situation. I can't foresee any situation in our country or in our relations with other countries that would preclude or render unnecessary the employment of military force -- the type of military force that we have today, as I understand it, I am not too familiar with it. It's not a good army. It is not an Army that we can rely upon. Increasingly I am told that is true. I repeat I am not in close contact with the soldiers. I am not privy to the reports that come in to the Pentagon. I do think, however, I am not saying that Communism is the major force that is inspiring or supporting or creating this situation in our country. I do think it is an important influence. If I were a Communist I would do all I could to support a program that insured the supply of heroin and LSD and so forth to the American people and I would do all I could to bring about corruption among public officials. For example, Congressman Dowde from Texas, now. He was convicted of bribery, and I would try to bribe officials. It is interesting the number of people now who are susceptible to bribery. And then there is an increase in sex deviation, and the breakdown of family life. So all of these developments contri-

bute to a situation that renders an army very important for internal as well as external security purposes but also it is the bulwark against the failure of the American body politic to maintain discipline. Without self-discipline, this country, like many others that history would record or does record, many other countries have gone down the drain when discipline broke down and the disrespect for law and order, and immoral, pornographic literature and the use of drugs and all of these various factors that contribute to the moral breakdown and loss of sense of values. Now, that is a rather pessimistic resume. But it is right from my heart. I am sorry. I believe it to be accurate.

COL DESKIS: Thank you, sir. I think that is very fine. I appreciate your cooperation.

END OF TAPE #7