

INTERVIEW WITH

Brig. Gen. William L. Lee

by

Alan Thompson, Supervisory Archivist
Maclyn Burg, Oral Historian
and
William Jones, Museum Curator

on

December 9, 1970

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



Interview with Brig. Gen. William L. Lee. Eisenhower Library.
12-9-70. Interviewers: Alan Thompson, Maclyn Burg and William
Jones.

MR. THOMPSON: Now this is the farewell parade.

GEN. LEE: That's right.

MR. THOMPSON: All right, now were those the cadets?

GEN. LEE: Those were officers and these are cadets on that side.

MR. THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

GEN. LEE: There's Ike over there.

MR. THOMPSON: He's standing right next to you.

GEN. LEE: Yeah, and that's Mrs. Lee, she's the only lady that was
on there.

MR. THOMPSON: Uh-huh, now who is the other man--

GEN. LEE: Paulino Santos on Ike's right--

MR. THOMPSON: O.K.

GEN. LEE:--he was Chief of Staff, there's Dick Sutherland, there
in that white coat.



MR. THOMPSON: O.K., now who's on the left of that picture?

GEN. LEE: That was Dick Sutherland. These are the Filipino troops at Camp Murphy, they had the whole regiment for the review.

MR. BURG: This is taking place at your flying field?

GEN. LEE: That's right, right out in front of the old hangar. They were marching by and we had to stand right in front of the hangar door. They were coming from north to south.

MR. THOMPSON: This is you standing out taking the review.

GEN. LEE: No, I'm standing right there with--

MR. THOMPSON: You're in the group.

GEN. LEE: I'm up there on the stands.

MR. JONES: More Filipino?

GEN. LEE: Oh, these are all Filipinos. Now these are the officers and men out of the Air Force there; that's flying officers. There's old Captain Reyes right there--



THOMPSON: Back to us; there he is.

LEE: Capt. Reyes he was one student officer...now these are flying cadets; see, they've got their arm bands on. Flying cadets wore arm bands to distinguish them from the enlisted men in the Air Force. All wore the same kind of uniform, except for the arm bands. When I was a flying cadet at Brooks Field in San Antonio in 1928, flying cadets wore the arm bands.

THOMPSON: Ah.

BURG: That's what that is.

LEE: Black arm bands, with a propeller insignia on them. That's old T. J. Davis--

THOMPSON: That's T. J. Davis shaking your hand there; now, who is that?

LEE: That's old Francisco, that's General Francisco, the guy that I-- He was commander of Camp Murphy where our flying field was located and told Ike I had been disrespectful toward him.

THOMPSON: That you were having trouble with.



LEE: I was about to cry.

THOMPSON: Yes, we saw that.

BURG: We saw that.

THOMPSON: We gathered it was a tearful scene as this was your farewell.

MRS. LEE: He had a lot of hair then.

BURG: It looks like it might have changed color a bit too.

LEE: That's old Lieutenant Oscar Sales congratulating me, there with his back to me. He got killed in the war and he was from Cebu.

BURG: Oscar Sales?

LEE: Sales.

BURG: Sales.

LEE: That's right, Sales, S-a-l-e-s. That's T. J. Davis talking to Ike.

JONES: Who is this gentlemen right here with his back to us and



the hat on; to the right, that's looking with the smile?

LEE: Oh, that's old T. J.; but that little short guy?

THOMPSON: Yes.

LEE: That's Major Harrison.

MRS. LEE: He meant the Filipino on the right.

THOMPSON: The Filipino.

LEE: Oh, that was Fidel Segundo there; that's Colonel Fidel Segundo.

MRS. LEE: No, but the other one was General Francisco.

JONES: The man with the pith helmet is--

LEE: Is Fidel Segundo. That's Paulino Santos and that's Dick Sutherland with him.

THOMPSON: That's what we thought. O.K. All right. Fine.

We knew Jim Ord was dead and it couldn't be him, but this is Sutherland; all right.

LEE: That was (our son) Bill, fingering that medal.



THOMPSON: Uh-huh, yes, we get another scene of him in just a second; yeah, here we are.

LEE: He's got on one of the boys helmets and goggles. He was quite a boy. Now, that was "Jew" Lewis, Captain Mark K. Lewis, and that was a boy--and there's Ike--but that other boy, the tall boy, was named Charles H. "Chuck" Anderson. He took one of the places...Lefty Parker's place when I left. Jew Lewis took over my job. There was Sales that was with me, Oscar Sales. He was from Cebu. Look at Bert behind me.

THOMPSON: Very good of you.

LEE: Yeah.

JONES: Was it an extremely hot day? Looks like it must have been very hot?

LEE: Oh, yes, it was May.

THOMPSON: Was this mid afternoon?

LEE: It was in the afternoon, or I believe it was--

MRS. LEE: No, I think this was morning--



LEE: Morning, morning.

MRS. LEE:--because we went from there--

LEE: It was morning, yeah, because--there's Oscar Sales again--
he was one of my favorite Filipino boys.

JONES: What was his position, what did he do?

LEE: He went through the flying school. He was an officer in the
Philippine Constabulary and went there and got his wings. There
we are at the officers club, Camp Murphy.

THOMPSON: This is a Filipino club, that is?

LEE: Yeah, a Filipino officers club at Camp Murphy. That was
Paulino Santos, and there's my wife--

THOMPSON: Ike's head is behind this.

LEE: Yes.

THOMPSON: Right.

BURG: Does Santos have his wings now, General? I mean he's he's--

LEE: No, Santos was killed by the Japs; he never did fly. He was



Chief of Staff for the Philippine Army. He--

THOMPSON: He was captured and killed in the Philippines very early in the war.

LEE: That's right. There's, oh, what's the guy with the black glasses on. He was a U.S. Army officer and he retired as a Colonel and they made him a General in the Philippine; he was a Philippine scout officer.

THOMPSON: Oh, yes, we can catch up with his name; he was head of the Constabulary.

LEE: No.

MRS. LEE: Capinpin (Mateo M. Capinpin)

LEE: Capinpin (they called him Mattie)

MRS. LEE: Mattie Capinpin.

LEE: I had a letter from Mattie that he wrote and I received it after he died several years ago. I still get cards from his widow who lives in Biran, Laguna, Philippines. Now, that picture



right there was taken down at Jolo, down below Zamboanga. Now we went down there on an inspection trip. I took General Valdez down there and I've got a small metal cigarette case he gave me after we got back to Manila. Now this is taken in Manila. Those are the cadets.

THOMPSON: But they are West Point, whatever--

LEE: Whatever it was, up at Baguio Philippine Military Academy.

BURG: So we've got two separate shots here: two different locations.

LEE: Two different locations. Now these are the cadets--now, wait a minute, I'm not sure of that either, but this was in Manila right here at that--it wasn't a lunetta--what did they call that, mom?

MRS. LEE: Yes, it was.

LEE: Was it called a lunetta? I thought the lunetta was that part between the Army-Navy club and the Manila Hotel. This was out there. Anyhow, it was a review--I think it was held for Pat Murphy when he was leaving.



BURG: All the troops we're seeing here, General, are Philippine?

LEE: Yes, sir, all of them are Filipino troops.

THOMPSON: Now that would be their regimental flight, or Philippine Army flight, I suppose, the teams involved there?

LEE: There go some Moros, see them?

BURG: Yes.

LEE: See they got on their fezzes.

THOMPSON: Now these would largely come out of Jolo and Mindanao?

LEE: Well, the officers came from all around. You see, they were graduated from the Philippine Army Academy in Baguio so they permitted them to wear the fezzes instead of the cap because of their religion, Mohammedan religion. And they also authorized them to carry a Kris in addition to their 45 pistol that the officers carried.

MRS. LEE: That was the reviewing stand or something--

THOMPSON: Yeah.



LEE: Now there's Mrs. Valdez in the middle; now, I don't know who these other two ladies were, but that's Mrs. Valdez. That was General Valdez's wife.

THOMPSON: Now who is this in black?

LEE: That's Mrs. Valdez.

MRS. LEE: That's Mrs. Valdez in the black.

THOMPSON: She's in black. Now who is that behind her? It may be an American. I think the lady was Mrs. Garfinkle. Col. Garfinkle was an aide to Frank Murphy, who was High Commissioner.

LEE: Oh, I don't know who that was. That's Frank Murphy, there, getting out of the car.

THOMPSON: Now this is right at the stadium?

LEE: That's right, that's right.

THOMPSON: And the field where you had the parade was right across from the stadium?



LEE: That's right.

THOMPSON: All right. Now, is this Frank Murphy, the balding--

MRS. LEE: Yes.

THOMPSON:--a little bit of fringe of hair around the back of his head.

MRS. LEE: On this side, on this side.

LEE: That's Frank Murphy; that's him.

THOMPSON: Right, all right.

BURG: The officer--

LEE: That's old Garfinkle, he was the aide to the High Commissioner.

BURG: I see, and the next civilian then.

LEE: I--

THOMPSON: We'll have to come back to it.

LEE: There's the front and center for the officers.



THOMPSON: Right.

LEE: See.

THOMPSON: Now would this be the Philippine Army Division?

LEE: That's right.

THOMPSON: All right.

LEE: There's Frank Murphy right there; they gave him a plaque.

THOMPSON: Ah.

BURG: That's what it is.

LEE: That's Frank Murphy. They gave him a plaque, and I can't remember what it was, it was a Philippine--

THOMPSON: Do we see Quezon in this scene anywhere?

LEE: No.

THOMPSON: Was he there would you say?

LEE: Now, this is Valdez right there on his left with a campaign



hat on, and there's General Francisco, there. He was commander of troops that day.

JONES: The man with the sword?

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: All right.

BURG: And you were taking these shots?

LEE: I was taking these shots myself, I took these with my camera. Those that were taken of my review were taken by Col. Potenciano. He was a Captain then. He retired and lives in the Philippines. He was a doctor, flight surgeon.

THOMPSON: All right. Now again these are all Philippine--

LEE: Yeah. They're all--

THOMPSON:--division.

LEE: This is all of the same review. Now I think I took-- I don't know--maybe two reels of this, because that's when Frank



Murphy was leaving the Philippines. This was all at the same place. I was mistaken, that wasn't Jolo. See, there's none of this right here is Jolo.

THOMPSON: All of this is near the stadium at the lunetta.

LEE: That's right.

MRS. LEE: Wasn't that the Manila Hotel in the background over there?

LEE: I don't know, mom, I didn't see it.

THOMPSON: Someone else with a camera.

LEE: But they were good, they were good troops, these Filipino boys. They were pretty good fighters; tough as all get out. That was the Air Force boys, see the wings on the guidons--

BURG: Oh, yes.

LEE:--these were Air Force troops here.

THOMPSON: They keep pretty good step.



LEE: Yeah, for the Air Force.

THOMPSON: Yes. Now this, interestingly, as if it was done originally by Lowell Thomas.

LEE: Well now, that, the Boeing people--let's see, how did I get this?--I didn't take these. I think the Boeing Aircraft, I mean the Stearman people down here at Wichita. See, we got our planes--now, Earl Shaefer, did you ever--

THOMPSON: Yes, we've met with Earl.

LEE: He took, or had these pictures taken, in the Philippines, some of them, for the Stearman people and these are all around; we was teaching them how to fly formation there, see.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

LEE: And--

JONES: Is one of those planes yours, the one with the 6 maybe, or--

LEE: I don't remember. I flew nearly all of them, matter of fact,



I flew the first one of every plane I test flew every one of them off of that little old strip there, see; boy, that thing--

THOMPSON: This is the strip.

LEE: That's it.

THOMPSON: What did you have, two, three, or four acres there, or--

LEE: Well, what we did--

THOMPSON:--or more than that?

LEE:--that was just jungle-like out there and they cleared it off and used prisoners from Bilibid prison to work on it.

BURG: I see. We'll see them later on.

LEE: Yeah, and in my diary I have a lot of entries in there about going to the department, Philippine Department we called it, to chisel tractors--

THOMPSON: Really hard.

LEE: There's some barracks.



THOMPSON: Building.

LEE: That's some barracks that the soldiers lived in, right near the field, and old Oscar Sales one time took off and ground looped and hit one of those barracks with a wing of his airplane and tore it up pretty bad. Personally, he didn't get hurt.

THOMPSON: Now these are all Searman trainers.

LEE: That's right, and now you see that diamond insignia on there, I designed that. I called it the blue-white diamond.

THOMPSON: Oh, good.

LEE: And I submitted that to Gen. Paulino Santos for approval for Air Force insignia and it still is.

BURG: Now was it also placed on both sides, top wing, both sides and bottom?

LEE: Underneath and bottom and on the tail. I think it was on the tail, I've forgotten.



THOMPSON: Yes, it was on the tail, and the usual places.

LEE: We called it a blue-white diamond.

THOMPSON: O.K.

LEE: And I think later, though, we enlarged on it a little bit and put a red--

BURG: I think they did too, sir.

LEE:--around the white.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh. Now, this is--we're going to make still photos of that, because we see your name on there a couple of times and some other peoples' names.

LEE: I see, "Lee"; that was the flight schedule. There's some of the Filipinos boys; that boy standing next there, Cruz, with his back just turned around, he was the one that was flying the airplane that Jimmy Ord was killed in. He later became Chief of the Philippine Air Force and retired as a Major General.

BURG: Oh, he was.



LEE: Paha Cruz, (Pelagio A. Cruz) he's still living, he's retired. He was Chief of the Philippine Air Force here a few years ago. We called him Paha.

BURG: Now coming up is this the Reliant?

LEE: That's the Reliant.

BURG: I see.

LEE: That's the one that we flew around, and that's the one that I was lost in that time when I had Paulino Santos and Fidel Segundo with me.

THOMPSON: Now this is the only--

LEE: Hangar.

THOMPSON:--hangar, we've seen, there's only the one, is that correct?

LEE: That's the only one and we bought that from the U.S.. It was out close to Nichols Field, on the beach, and we just bought the steel, as that was all that was left of the old hangar, negotiated and bought it. We had all that hangar frame put up



and then contracted--to have it covered and finished up with concrete floor. Had an upstairs floor put in where the Air Force enlisted men lived on the second floor in the back. We built it so they could have barracks in there, see.

THOMPSON: Right inside the hangar?

LEE: Right inside in the rear part of the hangar.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: See, we only had, at first, three PT-1s. Primary Trainers. Later, we got three more PTs. Then we got three BT-6s. that's some of the new ones coming in to be assembled.

BURG: I see, they're being erected.

LEE: Yes, that's the one that had the 350 horse power engine in it. Now that's where the boys ate in the hangar; that was the mess, see, at the mess tables in the hangar in the back part of it.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.



LEE: And, I don't know whether it will show a picture of some of them dancing later around in there or not. They have a party once in a while.

BURG: Yes.

THOMPSON: I'm not sure whether we kept it or cut it out now.

LEE: Every time a bunch of them soloed we'd have a beer party.

BURG: I see.

LEE: Get two or three kegs of San Miguel beer--

JONES: What's this building, this a sort of parts shop?

LEE: Yes.

JONES: There's a guard on it, I see.

LEE: Yeah, it's kind of a wagon now there's some of those things that we borrowed from the U.S. Army; old, what did they call them?

MRS. LEE: Caissons?



LEE: No, they were escort wagons, I think, for the artillery.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: That tractor we got from the U. S. Army.

THOMPSON: Now this is construction of the strip or surfacing?

LEE: No, that's the strip. We took rock and the prisoners broke them up in small pieces and put them out there, and then we had a steam roller to roll over them to break them up.

THOMPSON: Are they breaking rock, is that what they're doing in the background?

LEE: No, they are hauling rock there.

THOMPSON: Hauling rocks, O.K.

LEE: See all those other guys in the background are the prisoners from Bilibid.

THOMPSON: Now there's your--

LEE: Now, that's a hangar--



THOMPSON: A hangar.

LEE:--from out of the distance.

THOMPSON: The one and only hangar.

LEE: One and only hangar.

THOMPSON: All right.

LEE: And that's the strip there; you can see it. We just had one strip.

THOMPSON: You didn't have to worry about wind direction then?

LEE: Well, yeah, we did worry, but we didn't--

THOMPSON: Didn't do anything about it?

LEE:--didn't do anything about it. And this boy here, the tall boy, his name was Alandy, he was in the Air Force, I--

THOMPSON: Now that's the end of it, that's all we've got.

LEE: He, Alandy, was washed out, and then he later died with a ruptured appendix.



THOMPSON: Will you rewind and let's run it again, please? Well, there's some amazingly good footage in there. Some of it, as you know, we've lost a little bit of the fidelity, but we can work with this so much easier, and we can--

LEE: Yeah. You see, I was surprised, as old as it was and as less care as I've taken of it, that it'd be--

THOMPSON: Usable at all.

LEE: Yeah, that's right. I ran it through my old projector-- I was surprised because I used to keep it in those cases with old pieces of blotter paper with some kind of a solution that I got from a photo shop one time to try to preserve it: to keep it from getting brittle.

BURG: Right.

LEE: And I haven't seen those in years.

THOMPSON: They certainly came out well.

LEE: Got a whole case of stuff.

BURG: Well, while he's rewinding let me ask you this: what we're



seeing here are basically Primary Training aircraft--

LEE: Oh, yes.

BURG: Now did your cadets then go on to advanced--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG:--training with you, or did they come back to Kelly and Randolph?

LEE: No. Well, now, we did send some boys to Randolph and Kelly, but we checked them out there first, to be sure. See, Lefty Parker worked with them and we finally got Lefty assigned to help me train them. He and I used to do flying training at Randolph, you see.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: We went there when they opened the base in '31. We were sure that the guys could fly and get through Randolph before we sent them, because they only authorized us--I think at that time, we had a total of 14 spaces for flying training only. Two every quarter, or something like that, and we were real careful



and tried to be sure they could fly. Now, what we did later, we got three of what we called BT-1, Basic Training-1s. They corresponded to what we had in the States as a B, Basic Combat-1. They had a 350 horse power Pratt-Whitney engine in them. Now those three we used as a Basic Trainer, and we also ordered an A-3 bomb rack which carried 5-25 pound bombs. We had mounted in each lower wing a 30-caliber machine gun. Now, those were the airplanes, those three, were the ones that we went down to Mindanao that time, or down at Camp Keithley the time I got lost and I couldn't get back, in December of 1937, ah, 7. We were lost four days. We weren't lost; we knew where we were, but the people in the world didn't know where we were. Me and Paulino Santos and Fidel Segundo sat around and waited to be found. Those planes--we could use them to drop bombs--matter of fact, we carried some bombs down there to drop on the Moros and, but we didn't drop them, because they had things pretty well under control down there. But after we trained the boys-- and Ike, Ike soloed in one of those BT-6s, and one time when he soloed he went around and couldn't land, I'll tell you that



story later. He couldn't land and I found out why later.

THOMPSON: Now, let's repeat. We're here at your air strip at the edge of Murphy, Camp Murphy.

LEE: Camp Murphy.

It was on Camp Murphy.

THOMPSON: All right. And this is approximately when; 1938--?

LEE: It was in May 1938, about, gee whiz, about the first or second week of May.

THOMPSON: All right.

LEE: Now there's me, and Mrs. Lee, Paulino Santos, Gen. Ike, Fidel Segundo, I don't know who that other is on the other side of Segundo.

BURG: In the white, the white civilian over here?

LEE: He is Dick Sutherland.

THOMPSON: On the left. Now, who on the right there though? On the other side of--

LEE: On the other side of Ike?

THOMPSON: Yeah, right there now.

LEE: Now that was probably Lucius Clay or Pat Casey; maybe both of them. See, they were over there as Captains at the time; they were engineers that Gen. MacArthur brought with him when Ike and all of them came.

THOMPSON: All right.

BURG: We may see them later on then, and if you do would you let us know?

LEE: Yeah. Pat Casey and Lucius Clay--

THOMPSON: They were the G-4 types.

LEE: They were engineers.

THOMPSON: Engineers, right.

LEE: Yeah, that's right. Harrison this little short fellow that had the straw hat on he was the 4 type; supply.

THOMPSON: Now these units that are coming by are the Philippine



Army in training, or in organized units, rather, let me say--

LEE: They're in organized units--

THOMPSON:--at--

LEE:--at Camp Murphy.

THOMPSON: Murphy, right.

LEE: They lived there.

THOMPSON: Right. And they were part of the parade.

LEE: There's old Lucius Clay on the right down there, the right guide down there; he was standing up there. Now, let's--I'm still getting the Christmas party.

JONES: Is he down by the man with the hat on?

LEE: Huh?

JONES: The man with the straw hat, is Lucius Clay down by him?

LEE: No, he didn't have a hat on; the straw hat is Harrison.



THOMPSON: Now, that's T. J. Davidson just shook your hand there.

LEE: That's old Francisco standing there behind me.

THOMPSON: All right, Gen. Francisco who was--

LEE: He was the Commander at Camp Murphy. He was the one that give me a little static.

THOMPSON: O.K.

LEE: Didn't to me; he went to Ike with it and Ike.--There's old Harrison there with that hat on, straw hat. There's Oscar Sales.

THOMPSON: Shaking your hand.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: Your back. Tell me if you want me to stop any of this now.

LEE: All right. There's guys coming by, some of them are officers, there's Ike, there's Ike.



THOMPSON: This is--

LEE: There's Ike, that's Jew Lewis, that's--

THOMPSON: There's T. J. Uh-huh.

LEE: Francisco, that was Sutherland right off to the left there.

THOMPSON: Can you back up about 10 or 15 frames? Can you back up about, yeah, a few frames. We want to see if we can find that man across from him. This machine does have the capability of doing that but it takes just a few seconds.

LEE: Yeah. That's Jew Lewis.

THOMPSON: That was Jew Lewis, all right.

LEE: No, that wasn't Sutherland. Who was that? No, that wasn't Sutherland.

THOMPSON: Willoughby wasn't out there yet.

LEE: No.

THOMPSON: All right, go ahead.



MRS. LEE: That wouldn't have been Casey, would it?

LEE: Could have been Casey. By golly, I think--

MRS LEE: I think that's who it was.

THOMPSON: Do you think that's Casey?

MRS. LEE: No, the other one that didn't have a hat on.

THOMPSON: Oh, on the left.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: All right.

LEE: Casey and Lucius Clay both--

MRS. LEE: And Lucius Clay were both there.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: And the pith helmet is worn by--

LEE: That's old Fidel Segundo.

THOMPSON: All right.



LEE: He was a full Colonel, he was the G-4 type. That's Paulino with his cigar, and that's Dick Sutherland.

THOMPSON: Dick Sutherland, the man with the tie, striped tie.

LEE: Yeah, that's right.

THOMPSON: All right, with a cigarette.

LEE: With a cigarette.

JONES: The man with the cigar is?

LEE: Paulino Santos. He was the Chief of Staff of the Philippine Armed Forces.

THOMPSON: All right, now that is the Philippine--

LEE: Distinguished Service Star.

THOMPSON:--Distinguished Service Star, which Gen. Eisenhower also received when he left the Philippines.

LEE: Yes, right. There's Jew Lewis. That other boy is Anderson.

THOMPSON: That's very good of Ike.



LEE: That's a good picture of Ike. Sales is mopping his brow.

BURG: Yes.

THOMPSON: It was--

LEE: It was hot.

THOMPSON: Would you say it was 95 or so?

LEE: Well, it was pretty humid.

THOMPSON: Humid was the real problem.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: All right.

LEE: It's pretty humid there all the time.

THOMPSON: Now who is that on the other side of you?

JONES: Stop.

THOMPSON: Come back about 20 frames.

BONNIE M.: How far?



THOMPSON: About 20 frames. We want to get those people on the other side of Mrs. Lee there.

JONES: Whoa!

THOMPSON: Whoa! Right there! Hold it! Now, who's the man on--

LEE: That's Sid Huff.

THOMPSON: Sid Huff, who's he?

LEE: Sid Huff was the "Navyphile", that General MacArthur brought over there with him. He was the only "Navyphile" they had. And Sid Huff wound up the whole war with General MacArthur. The last time I saw General MacArthur was when he came to Houston and I was Commander of Ellington Field down there, and Sid was still with him.

THOPSON: He was naval aide then to General MacArthur.

LEE: Kind of, at that time, but when he came over there, you see, they brought Sid as a "Navyphile" and they didn't have any Air Force officer. That's how come me to get--



THOMPSON: Assigned.

LEE:--assigned. I was already there working with the Filipinos to train an air unit for their constabulary, so when they arrived they didn't have an air officer and I was already working, so they just kind of took me in.

THOMPSON: I see. Now Huff, then, was to work out the business of the patrol boats--

LEE: That's right.

THOMPSON: The torpedo boats.

LEE: That's right, that's right.

THOMPSON: And did he then command them, or was he simply--

LEE: He was just with the Military Advisor's office.

THOMPSON: In preparing this--

LEE: Yes.

THOMPSON: They did get a couple of boats finally--



LEE: Yes.

THOMPSON:--and they did do some training. Now would Huff have been involved in all that?

LEE: He could have been. After I left there, they got these, see--now Joe Francisco, the boy that we trained who was Air Force, and who was a graduate of the Naval Academy, wound up as the Commander of the Navy unit that they had after I left there in '38, and was when the Japs--

THOMPSON: The Japanese invaded.

LEE:--hit the place and then, later, when the war was over he continued. So Joe's still living in Manila, and he retired of course. But Joe Francisco was a Naval Academy graduate and we put him through the flying school; he was one of our good students.

THOMPSON: All right, shall we go on a minute?

LEE: Yeah.

JONES: Who is this gentleman there?

LEE: That's Dick Sutherland, standing there.



THOMPSON: Next to Huff in that case.

LEE: Capt. Potenciano--he's now a Colonel, retired--took these pictures with his little 8mm camera and gave me this roll of film. He was taking these pictures here you see for--

THOMPSON: Gee,he might have made film of Eisenhower's--

LEE: He might have.

THOMPSON:--farewell, we might--

LEE: I can write him.

THOMPSON: That would be absolutely marvelous.

LEE: I can write him, because we exchange Christmas cards every year and--

THOMPSON: That's marvelous. Now this is the Philippine Officers'--

LEE: Army Officers--

THOMPSON:--Club at--

MRS. LEE: Camp Murphy.



LEE: Camp Murphy.

THOMPSON: Camp Murphy, all right.

LEE: You see, we didn't have a club ourselves, the Air Force. The field was right on Camp Murphy.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: And old Capinpin, in there, he was an American citizen. You know, he was a Colonel there, he retired as Colonel from the U.S. Army, Philippine Scouts, and then when he did, why they appointed him a Brigadier-General in the Philippine Army.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh. Now, here we shifted scene and we're down at the Lunetta?

LEE: Well, uh, I don't think we called it the Lunetta; it's, they called that stadium there where we got out of, we saw the cars a while ago, Rizal Stadium. Rizal was the George Washington of the Philippines and many public places are named for him.

THOMPSON: Rizal Stadium, right.



LEE: All right then, this is the parade ground right at Rizal Stadium.

THOMPSON: All right, fine, that's a good enough identification for place.

MRS. LEE: There's the Manila Hotel.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: Now this would have to be--that's the Manila Hotel to the left there in the background?

MRS. LEE: I'm sure.

THOMPSON: The taller building.

LEE: I don't think so, mom.

MRS. LEE: You don't think so.

LEE: No, huh-uh.

MRS. LEE: Well--

LEE: These are the cadets from the Filipino Military Academy.



THOMPSON: From Baguio.

LEE: Baguio Academy.

MRS. LEE: You could go back in your diary probably and find what it is.

LEE: Yeah, the Manila Hotel was a larger structure than that, mom. This is out there right--you remember where the Rizal Stadium was, going down the Dewey Boulevard, going down towards the Army-Navy Club, and the Bayview Hotel was on the right, and the Elks Club on the left, and you went around. Well, that space in there, that big space, was called a Lunetta.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: And that's where they had a lot of their functions, like we'd say when the Pope came to town, we'd have a stadium out there and all the people would gather. Now this is that parade ground out at the Rizal Stadium.

THOMPSON: Do you recognize that flag, sir, that's given us a little trouble?



LEE: That, that's a unit flag, it was Filipino.

THOMPSON: All right, Philippine--

LEE: Philippine--

THOMPSON:--Division flag--

LEE:--Division flag.

THOMPSON: Army Division flag.

LEE: Now there's the Air Force; no, that wasn't the Air Force.

MRS. LEE: Now this Lunetta is what they called that. I maybe wrong about this place, but anyway a Lunetta was somewhere in there.

THOMPSON: How would you spell it--Lu--

LEE: Lu--

THOMPSON:--nette?

LEE: Luneta, Lu-net-ta.

THOMPSON: One t.



MRS. LEE: Dewey Boulevard was over on the waterfront.

LEE: Well, that's right.

THOMPSON: Now--

MRS. LEE: I don't know who that lady in the middle is.

LEE: I don't either.

THOMPSON: Mrs. Quezon, perhaps--

MRS. LEE: No.

THOMPSON:--except she's a slighter woman.

MRS. LEE: No.

LEE: Now there's Mrs. Valdez.

MRS. LEE: That's Mrs. Valdez, now the other one could have been--

THOMPSON: That's Mrs. Valdez in the black dress, long dress.

MRS. LEE: Mrs. Francisco and some of the other officers' wives.

THOMPSON: Now--



LEE: Now that's Rizal Stadium. If you'll see up there you can't see the top of it, but that's Rizal Stadium, named after Jose Rizal, you know, one of the patriots. He was the George Washington of the Philippines.

THOMPSON: Now, this is Governor-General and first--

LEE: Frank Murphy.

THOMPSON:--of what, you know he had a particular title.

MRS. LEE: High Commissioner.

THOMPSON: High Commissioner--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--and he's coming to this ceremony which is a review parade, farewell parade--

LEE: For him.

THOMPSON:--as he leaves in 1937.

LEE: Yeah, that's right. And this is the "officers front and



center" with General Francisco in command, and now they are walking up to the reviewing stand to report.

THOMPSON: Now this would have been on a Division level?

LEE: That's right.

THOMPSON: All right.

BURG: You said the Philippine Division?

LEE: That's right, Philippine troops. That's Frank Murphy with the plaque they presented him. It was a beautiful thing.

THOMPSON: Now this is you right now, no--

MRS. LEE: That's General Valdez.

LEE: General Valdez.

THOMPSON:--Valdez, next to him, all right. You're taking the photos--

LEE: I'm taking the picture.

THOMPSON:--the motion picture of this, all right. And he makes



a statement, he reads an address to the troops--

LEE: That's right.

THOMPSON:--in Spanish or in English?

LEE: In English.

THOMPSON: In English, all right.

LEE: Official language there at that time was English and Spanish. You know, most all the troops were taught English from the beginning in the schools.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: This is a repeat of the same--

THOMPSON: Right.

LEE:--I took it--

THOMPSON: You took it as they were coming on the field--

LEE: Yeah.



THOMPSON:--and then, after he's assembled and on the stand, you catch them as they parade.

LEE: That's right.

THOMPSON: All right.

LEE: That's the Filipino Division flag there; of course, that's a Filipino flag, next--

THOMPSON: That's a Commonwealth flag.

LEE: Yes, next to the U.S.

THOMPSON: Yes, next to the U.S. flag, that's right.

LEE: Yes.

MRS. LEE: That building right there--

LEE: That's not the Manila Hotel, mom.

MRS. LEE:--well, would that be the Army-Navy Club?

THOMPSON: That could be.



LEE: Could be or the Elks Club down there.

MRS. LEE: Well, I think that's the Army-Navy Club because, see, there's the Dewey Boulevard over where those trees are, isn't it?

LEE: I think so, maybe. There were a--

THOMPSON: Now here's your Air Force unit coming by--

LEE: There's the Air Force--

THOMPSON:--the wings on the guidons.

LEE:--that's right and that's all the troops we had, this little unit right there.

BURG: But they're not flying cadets?

LEE: No, no, they're just soldiers; you know, enlisted personnel.

THOMPSON: Assigned to the aviation unit.

LEE: The Air Force. That's right and to maintain the airplanes and everything.

THOMPSON: Now we've shifted here back to Murphy--



LEE: Murphy and--

THOMPSON:--and the Stearman trainers and the cadets.

LEE: That's right. These are cadets lined up, and these airplanes turning over. Now you see, there's more than three airplanes--

THOMPSON: There's about eight there I would say.

LEE: Yeah, well you see, that was after we finally got the first three PT's, we got four more and three BT's, the Basic Trainers, I told you a while ago, that had the 350 horsepower engine. These had a little, light, engine, 220 horsepower engine in them.

BURG: Were your BT's, monoplanes, low wing monoplanes--

LEE: No, they was the same as these.

BURG:--or were they also biplanes?

THOMPSON: They looked just like these?

LEE: Just exactly like these, except they had a bigger engine.

BURG: All right.



LEE: And we had a turret in the back cockpit that you could mount a gun in. That's the kind of airplane that Jimmy Ord got killed in. He had that gunner's belt, which was a real wide belt, about six inches wide, it snapped on each side of the longerons back there, and when they crashed into these pine trees, they spun in--stalled and spun in--this belt busted his liver.

THOMPSON: Oh.

BURG: Was he standing up, sir?

LEE: Yeah he was--

BURG: Right.

LEE:--he was--Gee, I got the note in my diary that he dropped to these people by the name of Fairchild.

BURG: Uh-huh.

LEE: The irony of the whole thing was that they knew he was coming, but Jimmy Ord was kind of a spectacular type of individual. He liked to drop these messages, even these long yellow streamers,



you know. We used to have those messages droppers.

BURG: Yes.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: And we used an observation plane, because he liked that, he liked to fly low and drop these. What happened on that crash--there's one of the officers riding up and down on a motorcycle out there on that old--well, that's the way the field looked before we cut it down to make the strip.

THOMPSON: Very rough.

BURG: Shaggy.

LEE: Oh, Christ, it was just an old--

THOMPSON: And this is just dirt blowing up here.

LEE:--pasture. Yeah, that's right.

THOMPSON: You don't have a surface yet at this point.

LEE: No, no.



THOMPSON: This is early before you had surfaced the field at all. All right.

LEE: Well--

THOMPSON: Now this is touch and go again, is that what you are doing?

LEE: Yeah, yeah. Touch and go landings, see. There are two of us in there. Now I don't know whether I happened to have been there or who was. This is a flight schedule for the day.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: And I think we'll see Paha Cruz here in a minute. Yes, that's him next to--on the right--

THOMPSON: Next to the blackboard?

LEE:--Turning around, just turned around. Just turned around--

THOMPSON: All right.

LEE:--he was the one that was flying Jimmy Ord's plane when he



got killed.

THOMPSON: Yeah.

LEE: These are flying cadets there.

THOMPSON: Just cadets. All right.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: Now three--

LEE: Two--

THOMPSON: Four--

LEE: Four--

THOMPSON: Five--

LEE: Five--

THOMPSON: Six--

LEE: Six--

THOMPSON: Seven--



LEE: Seven--

THOMPSON: Eight--

LEE: Eight--

THOMPSON: Nine--

LEE: Nine--

THOMPSON: And one of the--

LEE: One a Stinson Reliant.

THOMPSON: Reliant. All right.

LEE: That's the one I used to fly up around Uloti(?), I got some more--

JONES: The Reliant is essentially a civilian plane, wasn't it?

LEE: That's right. We could fly two in the front. We had a wheel we could throw over, see.

JONES: Oh, yes.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: Then you could ride three little people in the back, or two big ones, and had a little place you could carry packages. Now there is the old gasoline job.

BURG: Big humps over each of the rocker arms and cowl.

LEE: Yeah, yeah.

BURG: Right.

THOMPSON: Now of these planes that we saw that are alike--

LEE: Uh-huh.

THOMPSON:--how many of them would be the large engine the 350 as against the 220--

LEE: I think those first three right there, I believe--

BURG: From the Reliant to the left, the first three.

LEE: Now, if you'll notice these others down here--

JONES: They do look a little--



LEE: little smaller. You see the BT-1 had a more larger cowlng around it because--

BURG:Right.

LEE: They had a larger engine, see.

THOMPSON: But the body structure is identical.

LEE: Pretty nearly identical. Now this was where the boys ate there in the hangar, see, and cooked right outside the back, and they lived there. We built a kind of a mezanine(?) floor back there for them, where they slept on their bunks.

JONES: What is this, some instruction going on, or--

LEE: No, probably assembling--

JONES: Assembling.

LEE:--a new airplane there; that's probably what that is. I imagine it is, because we got some later, see, and this was a kind of supply room right there. And, of course, there they are pulling adobe rock out there on the field to crack it up. They dug it out of places around the Camp Murphy there, and



hauled it out there and threw it out and then the prisoners would get sledge hammers and break it up in smaller pieces, and then we ran it over with that, that--

MRS. LEE: Steam roller.

LEE:--steam roller.

THOMPSON: It's obviously a steam machine.

LEE: Yeah. There they are working digging out the--

THOMPSON: Digging out the rock.

LEE:--adobe rock. See that's right adjacent to the runway.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: I mean the strip, and as you took off down to the south, to the left, you took off over a bunch of bamboo in a deep valley down there.

BURG: Uh-huh, well that's something we couldn't tell very well--



LEE: Yeah.

BURG: From the film.

LEE: And going up this way we took off right by the Camp
Murphy headquarters--

JONES: Took off toward the way the wind is blowing the flag?

LEE: Yes.

THOMPSON: All right, now here we are digging dirt and that's
the end of the scene. O.K. That's it for this morning. How'd
we do? Still winding.

BURG: This ends our morning's session. Those present at the
morning taping session were Will Jones, Alan Thompson, Brig.
Gen. William L. Lee and Mrs. Lee and Maclyn Burg.

LEE: Ah, on the--

THOMPSON: Do you want to do an introduction to your thing?

BURG: Well, we'll just simply say that we are now in our



afternoon session. I've already indicated who is present at the session and we'd like now to hear from Gen. Lee something about his own background--

LEE: Well, I was, preceding going to the Philippines, I was stationed at Randolph Field for, well, when they opened it up the first of October 1931, but before I came to Randolph Field, I was at Ft. Crockett, Galveston, Texas, with the 3rd Attack Group. I had volunteered for assignment for the Philippines. I had asked to go to the Philippines. In those days we only had people in Panama and the Philippines and Hawaii, I believe.

THOMPSON: Overseas assignments.

LEE: Overseas assignments. And if you volunteered for an assignment your chances of getting the assignment you volunteered for were fairly good, and for some reason or other I had yea to want to go to the Philippines, knowing it was a long way away, and so forth. So, by the time I got to Randolph Field, and I was there three years and four months, I finally got orders for the Philippines. That's how I came to go to the Philippines. But after I got to the Philippines, I went as the normal assignment of foreign service, which was in those days two years, when



you had your family with you.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And when I got there, I was assigned to Nichols Field, which was out of Manila a few miles to the south, as assistant adjutant of the base. We called it a field then; instead of Air Force Base, we called it Nichols Field. One day on the bulletin board, I saw a notice for a volunteer for work with the Philippine Government as advisor for the air unit of the constabulary. I might backtrack a little bit. The day we arrived in the Philippines, in March 1935, the man, the officer who had that job, Lt. Proctor, died in Sternberg hospital from peritonitis. He headed the job, and he had started, just basically, work on the job as advisor for the air unit of the Philippines. So when--

THOMPSON: This is Harvey W. Prosser?

LEE: No.

THOMPSON: No, this is someone else.

LEE: Ivan Proctor, P-r-o-c-t-o-r; he died, he was a 1st Lt.



Harvey Prosser was there also, and he later went to work with the Bureau of Aeronautics, they called it.

THOMPSON: With the Philippine Commonwealth Government.

LEE: Yeah, that's right, that was Harvey Prosser.

BURG: Did Proctor have aircraft, General, to work with, or was he simply organizing in preparation--

LEE: He was just getting started.

BURG: I see.

LEE: He didn't have anything. As a matter of fact, he just was beginning to work on regulations for the Philippine Air unit of the constabulary--

BURG: I see.

LEE: They had decided on, I think, putting that field out at Camp Murphy to fly. He'd been out and walked over that thing, that place where we put the flying field out there. Matter of



fact, I think he had that appendicitis attack while he was out at Camp Murphy looking for this place to put a landing strip. Anyhow he had the appendectomy and Sternberg--not Sternberg, was it Sternberg?--general hospital in the Philippines and he died from peritonitis, so that left this vacancy and they had put a notice on our bulletin board asking for volunteers for the job; well, I volunteered.

BURG: Why, sir?

LEE: Because I thought it would be something, you know, I was kind of an adventurous type. I thought it would be something interesting to do.

THOMPSON: Now what about Parker, did he volunteer simultaneously--

LEE: No--

THOMPSON:--were they looking for two officers or just one?

LEE:--no, it was different, it was a long time after that that I got Lefty with me; after we got the airplanes. Matter of



fact, there's entries in these diaries about that. But when I went down there Russell Maughan, was his name, a Captain Russell Maughan and he was then the advisor to the Philippine Government for Bureau of Aeronautics and he was the senior Air Force officer loaned to the Philippine government. So I had to go down and confer with him about the job and it sounded interesting. He handed me a manila folder with a bunch of stuff in it about regulations and stuff. I went home and looked it over, and then I decided I didn't want that job--it didn't look good to me. I thought I was getting involved in a lot of stuff that probably was over my head, so I went to Major Tom Hasty, who was commander of Nichols Field at the time. He had been stationed at Randolph Field and I had worked for him as Assistant Adjutant there. And I went to Tom Hasty and I said, "Listen, I--I don't believe I want that job." He said, "Well, you better call up Colonel Snead". Lt. Col. Al Snead was the air officer for the Philippine Department, that was the U. S. Department. They called it the Philippine Department like they had a Hawaii Department, see. I said, "I don't know him, you call him up." So I was in Tom's office and I heard him call up Colonel Snead--



he was a Lieutenant Colonel then; it was pretty high ranking to be a Lieutenant Colonel then--and Tom, he wasn't doing much talking. He said, he told him what he wanted and then he said, "Yes, sir! yes, sir! I'll tell him! yes, sir!" And when he hung up the phone he said, "Old Al Snead is madder than hell! He said you asked for that job, and you're going to keep it. And if you don't like it in a couple months you can resign."

BURG: How old a man were you then, General?

LEE: Let's see, that was in 1935. I was 32. I was born in 1903. I was about 32 because my birthday is in July.

BURG: And just a little uncertain about the responsibilities of this job.

LEE: Well, it looked to me like it was kind of a mixed-up mess. Nothing had been done, and all Russell Maughan handed me was a manila envelope that had a lot of just loose papers in there--what Ivan Proctor was probably trying to put together to get started. And he said that I was going to have to write regulations and all this for the Philippine Constabulary air



unit. Well I've never been much of a writer, except I do write a lot of letters, personal letters. That's been a hobby of mine for years. I write lots of letters. I used to average three a day. I do pretty well to average one now a day, because I'm so involved with everything else. So, when Al Snead told Major Hasty I was going to have to keep the job, then I decided I was going to have to do something about it, and I went to work on it. Because all I could do was the beginning. It was to go out there and see if we could get these--oh, I had several Philippine officers assigned to me. One of them was Fernando, Captain Fernando, and the other one was Reyes, Captain Reyes, who was in there on the picture, you know. He was retired as a Colonel. So they helped me, see, and we'd go out there and we'd ride out there in my old Ford and look at the place and finally got something started and we got a Mr. Lambert, a civilian employee who worked at the Nichols Field depot, from the U. S. Air Force, "Air Corps" at that time. He was a civilian employee that worked in what we called a depot at Nichols Field. They handled the supplies, you know, the parts for those old B-4, old type airplanes that we had



to fly over there, the O-19s and the old B-4s. So he had been working with the Air Force quite some time. He was a fellow about my age, however, and we hired him to work for us for the Philippine government, to help us set up the field and the hangar and everything, you see, for the Philippine Air Force. Curtis Lambert was his name. He died before we left there on the last tour; died in his sleep, I guess a heart attack. But, anyhow, Curtis was a real fine worker and he was in charge when we got our first airplanes and saw that they were properly assembled, and he just was kind of a jack of all trades--

BURG: So he actually was a fitter and rigger?

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: As well as everything else.

LEE: Yeah, and of course he wasn't a pilot; he didn't know anything about flying himself.

BURG: Then were your two Filipino assistants, were they pilots?

LEE: No.



BURG: Neither man?

LEE: No, however, I think back in the days after World War I, they had tried to start a little flying school out there, kind of a flying boat situation out there on the beach. Now that's where we got the hangar. It was an old U. S. World War I hangar frame, sitting out there on the beach, out at Paranaque right--

BURG: I see.

LEE:--close to Nichols Field. And it was just a frame there, no cover, no metal on it, no sheetmetal or anything. We arranged with the U. S. Government and we bought that. The Philippine government I think paid about \$1,400, as well as I remember, for this frame. So we got a contractor, the Philippine government--I said, "we". I'm talking about the Philippine government employing now, more or less--to contract or take that steel down--the steel frame--and move it out to Camp Murphy and set it up and cover it, you see. Put the sheetmetal and everything on it, you know; just have that where



we got the hangar. Well, anyhow, that's the way I got the job. And of course from the time we got there, that must have been eight or ten months before we ever got any airplanes.

BURG: Then really your first job is organizing a unit, not training flyers.

LEE: That's right. We had to organize the unit to handle the airplanes, to oversee the building of the field and the prisoners out there. We had to have men to help around the building putting the hangar together. We just had about 30, 40 enlisted--Philippine Constabulary men--assigned to us, you see. Now we didn't get into the Philippine Army until after General MacArthur and Eisenhower and all, you know, came there. See, they came there, then your Philippine Constabulary kind of mushroomed in the Philippine Army overall picture. Later, in the next year or two after they came, we put cadres all over the island. It was kind of a civilian training deal, six month training, see.

BURG: Now when your aircraft arrived for the Philippine Constabulary what kind of aircraft were sent out there?

LEE: Well, we bought them, we bought them from Stearman down

in Wichita, we bought three. That was quite a--

THOMPSON: Now you bought these sight unseen from your previous knowledge of their capabilities as trainers at Randolph.

LEE: At Randolph Field, yes.

BURG: Ah, you were not then attempting to buy observation aircraft for the constabulary--

LEE: No--

BURG:--or attack aircraft?

LEE:--no, we bought them to train people with.

BURG: I see, I see.

LEE: I forget just when they arrived but it was--

THOMPSON: I have you arriving March 19, 1935.

LEE: That's right. That's when I, here it is in my diary.

THOMPSON: And Eisenhower, MacArthur, Ford, Davis--



LEE: October 26th.

THOMPSON: All arrived October 26th of '35.

LEE: That's right. "General Douglas MacArthur arrived on the boat also"; let's see, now wait a minute. Let's see, "this was a bamboo... worked downtown, down at the office a while this morning then came home and dressed up in my Shrine patrol uniform and picked up Captain Coty, who was also a Shriner, and drove to the Manila Hotel. The Shrine patrol met there and marched to pier #7 where we met the visiting Nobles from the Islam Temple", and I'll bet that's in Washington, in Seattle or somewhere, "who arrived on the President Hoover. We had a bamboo band which is the first one I ever saw", I don't know whether you ever heard of bamboo bands--

BURG: Yes, we have.

LEE:--it's an unusual contraption. "They had about 40 or 50 members and every instrument was made out of bamboo except the drums. General Douglas MacArthur arrived on the boat also. He was coming to the Philippines to act as military adviser to



President Manuel Quezon. He has his mother with him who is 84 years old".

THOMPSON: Now this is your entry for Saturday, October 26th, 1935.

LEE: That's when they arrived.

THOMPSON: You've read this to us. Now you hadn't yet met MacArthur; this is the first time you had seen him?

LEE: Yes.

THOMPSON: This is the first time you ever saw Lt. Col. Ord, Lt. Col. Eisenhower--

LEE: They were Majors then.

THOMPSON: T. J. Davis.

LEE: I know--

THOMPSON: Excuse me, Majors, that's right.

LEE: I hadn't seen them at all--



THOMPSON: You never met any of this group then before.

LEE: Never met any of them. Ah actually I had, wait a minute here, there's something in here, bound to be, here on December 14th; now this is the first time I ever talked to them. On December 14th, 1935, "I worked downtown all in the morning; went by the military advisor's office and talked to Major Ord and Major Eisenhower for some time." Now, that's when they decided they were going to bring me into their staff, you see. Now that is two months, that's a little over two and a half let's see, October, November--

THOMPSON: Yeah, it's about six weeks, seven weeks after--

LEE:--six weeks after they got there, before they decided they were going to take me in, because you see my status up till this time was that I was loaned to the Philippine government to develop an air unit for their constabulary. The constabulary was a peace-keeping, national peace-keeping organization over the whole Philippines. They had little units in isolated places that you couldn't even land. We landed in Gulf of Jolo one time to go to one of them to make an investigation, in an amphibian airplane, you see.



BURG: Yes.

LEE: Well, that was the constabulary; that's all the military they had until General MacArthur and his staff, Eisenhower and Ord and Casey and those people came to start developing the national army, more or less. It didn't include, actually, the constabulary; it was kind of a separate entity for the national defense of the Philippines. They had to continue the constabulary for peace-keeping, internal peace-keeping see; they were peace officers--

BURG: Like the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

LEE: Yeah, that's right.

BURG: And the Canadian Army.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: Uh-huh.

LEE: You see. Well, my job was working with them, but this apparently is the first time--this is the only entry I have, the first entry I have about meeting Major Ord and Major



Eisenhower on December 14th, 1935. And that's when--I remember vaguely--was why I went to see them, because they were interested in me becoming one of the members of, they said, advisor's staff.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: See, I was given a per diem from the Philippine government and a car allowance of sixty pesos a month, which at that time would have amounted to \$30.00 regular U. S., because a peso was just half the value of the dollar. Mom, do you remember how much per diem I got a day for Philippine...8½ pesos per diem, I think, extra by working. That was a point of interest, too, when this notice was on the board was about this per diem that the Philippine government paid me, the U. S. government didn't pay me but ah--

BURG: So it's a financial step up for you; not a very large financial step--

LEE: No, but it was some--

BURG:--but it was better.



LEE:--assistance, you know. As a 1st Lt. in those days we didn't get much pay, and I owed a lot of money to my dad's estate. He had died and, of course, like all kids, I used to spend money like a drunken sailor sometimes, I guess, and played golf, and everything, and supported a wife and had a kid, and so I owed the estate quite a lot of money when I went over there. So I was interested in some financial returns, paying back what I owed, because I was paying my dad's estate--dad died in '34 before I went to the Philippines in August--and I was paying them 7 per cent interest on all the money I owed them. Matter of fact, you can see in this diary on some of the pages at the beginning of the month where I had made--well, right here is one I noticed here on the first of November, "\$380.00 extended", that means that I had a note of \$380.00 and I extended it. I don't know why I put it at the top of the page but that's where it is, because I know what that was for. Well, anyhow, that's the first entry about--

THOMPSON: Now, to what point had you brought your base at Camp Murphy to this point?

LEE: As well--



THOMPSON: Did you have a runway yet, did you have your hangar up yet?

LEE:--No, no, see, a lot of this is during the rainy season and a lot of times we couldn't work on that muddy field. But I was looking here--of course this doesn't pertain to Eisenhower, but there are interesting things all through here; it says, this October 10th, "worked downtown all day"--that was at our headquarters, the constabulary headquarters, actually--"went over and had a talk with Lt. Col. Snead"--he was the guy that told me I had to keep that job--"about sending some 8 or 10 of the constabulary air corps soldiers to Nichols Field to work as helpers, so that they will be able to learn something about airplanes." You see, now all through here, we'll say "went out to Camp Murphy to check on the field and how the progress was going". It's all through here, in various places. For instance, "General Basilio J. Valdez and his staff, including myself, called on the newly elected President of the Philippine Islands at his home this morning, then we went to the Legislature building," let's see, "they are Manuel Quezon for President, and Segundo Osmena for Vice-President. Worked downtown the rest of the day. Major Olympia, flight surgeon, and I, drove out to Nichols Field



with a couple of men to look over the Ford ambulance to get an idea about how to build one for the constabulary use." You see, that was in September. So we--

THOMPSON: Had they cleared the jungle at this point?

LEE: Oh, yeah, yeah--

THOMPSON: You had staked out where you wanted it to be; there wasn't any question on that.

LEE: Oh, yeah, there wasn't any question of that. And they were making pretty good progress, but you know though, that was by hand, those prisoners. And breaking up those rocks, and then that old broken-down roller we had to roll them; I don't know where they got that roller but they got it from the Department of Public Works of the Philippines--

BURG: Yes.

LEE:--and it was worn out before we got it. They'd used to build roads in the Philippines; it belonged to the Philippine government. Of course those wagons, we called them escort wagons, actually; they were old U. S. Army, and we borrowed quite a lot



of stuff from them. I got entries all through here where I'd been down to see Col. H. R. Kutz (He graduated from West Point in 1911 and was a good friend of Ike's) down at the Department Ordnance about borrowing a tractor from them, or what not.

BURG: Well, were you recruited then, in effect, for training of Philippine Air Cadets? Did the military mission people, did Eisenhower and Ord, did they sort of recruit you into that duty, or were you given a chance to volunteer for that, or how did you come to accept that duty?

LEE: Well, actually, that was, that was the understanding from the beginning that we were going to develop an air unit for the constabulary and have about 10 airplanes. And in the development of it, we were to train people to fly these airplanes. Just like I mentioned, a while ago, the Moro uprising down in Zamboanga around Camp Keithley (This post was named after a Corporal in the U. S. Army); well, now, that was what we were going to use these airplanes for. When they had some kind of a deal where they needed air support, we'd have these little old airplanes, those little old BT-13s we called them. They were actually a 76 L-1, I think it was, because they had the 350 horsepower engine. Well, we had that A--5 bomb rack, which



was a little old rack that fastened on there and would only hold five little 25 pound bombs that you released from a little old lever up in the cockpit.

BURG: Like the Cooper bomb?

LEE: Yeah, and then you had two forward fixed guns in the lower wing; I mean, there were mounts in there--we took the guns out when we used them for training because we didn't need them in there. But that's what I was to do, to develop a Philippine constabulary air unit.

BURG: Uh-huh.

LEE: But then when General MacArthur and his staff got over there and I got involved with them, or on their staff so to speak, this thing began to mushroom. I don't have record of it, but I remember that I was pushing the air a lot and I was fussing about General MacArthur's people trying to develop some kind of a sea patrol--boats, to try to guard the coast line of the Philippines; there was over 8,000 miles of coast line in those islands.



BURG: Now, sir, who did you have to push it with, was it the Filipinos who were--

LEE: No.

BURG:--slow about it,--

LEE: No.

BURG:--or our own people?

LEE: No, I was fighting with, actually I had Ike pretty well on my side, but we were fighting MacArthur, more or less--

BURG: I see.

LEE:--we weren't fighting. He wasn't an air-minded individual, and I maintained that a squadron of airplanes could patrol the coast line of the Philippines a hell of a lot quicker and better and more efficiently and further away than a bunch of darned boats at much less cost, you see. In other words, if we'd have had to--now I mean this is from memory. I don't have any entries in there, except once in a while I might mention that Ike and I didn't agree on certain things, and I don't remember ex-



actly what that was, but I remember Ike telling me one time that the "old man" took exception to a 1st Lt. trying to tell him how to run their business, in talking about MacArthur, see.

BURG: And no doubt about who the 1st Lt. was.

LEE: That was me. But Ike and I were talking and Ike told me that MacArthur took exception to the fact that I'd put in this memorandum, or whatever it was now, about the air force in relation to--well, we called it air corps then--in relation to the navy, because he had brought Sid Huff over there to develop a navy unit, let's call it, and was going to have some patrol boats. Well, hell, I don't know how many Stearman aircraft or those 76 L-1s that we could buy for what one little navy patrol boat would cost, you see.

BURG: So Sid Huff was not a flyer, himself.

LEE: No, no, oh, no, he was just strictly Navy.

BURG: Right.

LEE: And I don't know how MacArthur ever picked him up, but



he brought him when he came out there from Washington.

THOMPSON: That's interesting, he's not listed in any of the sources we've ever seen.

BURG: No.

LEE: No?

BURG: I think he's--

THOMPSON: We don't have his name.

LEE: Well, gosh, he came out there. I tell you, MacArthur's side was old T. J. Davis, you see. But Sid Huff was a navy fellow; I don't know whether I mentioned--

THOMPSON: The only naval person I have is the High Commissioner had a naval side--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--who was Lt. Hunter Wood, but I've never run across Huff's name at all.



BURG: Well, we'll check it--

THOMPSON: But let's go on--

BURG:--no, we'll check that--

THOMPSON:--we can worry about that later.

BURG:--in the Philippine Directory, maybe we can pin it down.

LEE: Now in these diaries somewhere Sid Huff's name is mentioned a time or two where I took him somewhere with me. But he stayed with MacArthur all during the war; as a matter of fact, he came to Houston that time with General MacArthur after he was fired in Japan and we met him down there. MacArthur got off the airplane and he said, "By God," he says, "I've often wondered what happened to you." You know when I met him I was on the welcome committee at Houston, because I was Commander of the Base down there and they knew that I knew General MacArthur and had worked for him with General Ike, so I met him. But Sid Huff was with him then. He'd stayed with him all during the war.

BURG: But despite your opposition, or let's say, your championing



of the cause of air power, Mac Arthur still let you stay on; he still had you training Philippine flyers?

LEE: Yeah, well you see I was already with them. I was working already then when I was trying to promote air power over what they were trying to do with the Navy. I maintained that the Philippine government, which was supposed to have bought all this stuff, and did, at that time, they paid for all the airplanes. I'd have to go to the Department of Finance and what-not and fuss and argue with them about buying airplanes, because those guys, a lot of them wanted some cumshaw; you know what cumshaw is--?

BURG: Yes.

LEE: --a little--

BURG: A little graft.

LEE:--a little amount of it there. And I even went to President Quezon with General Valdez, because he got word that because I was buying these airplanes from Stearman I was going to get a little cut on it, you see. And that made me madder than two



hells cause I was buying because I knew the airplane; we'd flown them at Randolph Field.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: And it was a good training airplane and that was what we needed. So me and Valdez went over to see Quezon and, as I remember it, he was a sick man then, you know; he finally died of TB, but I remember going into his bedroom and he was resting on a *beduca* bed. And you know what a *beduca* bed is? It's the one that doesn't have any mattress or any spring on it; it's got like a bamboo seat in a chair.

BURG: Like a--

LEE: What it is--

BURG:--rattan.

LEE: Yeah, yeah, that's what a *beduca* bed is and those people, all of them, slept on those beds with a sheet over them, and boy, they got some of the fanciest bedsteads you ever saw, with mosquito bars and everything. Well, anyhow, we went to see President Quezon about it and he gave us the OK to go ahead and buy



these first three training planes.

THOMPSON: Now approximately when would this have been?

LEE: When we went to buy, when we ordered them?

THOMPSON: Yeah, when did--would this have been before the October arrival of MacArthur?

LEE: Oh, I think so.

THOMPSON: One of the first things you did then after your assignment was to--

LEE: Well, the first thing I did was--

THOMPSON:--place the order.

LEE:--to determine the kind of plane we wanted and to work out some regulations for the Philippines, and to determine the height and weight and the age of them to get in. I copied them nearly out of the U. S. Air Force regulations, except I lowered the height; the Filipino people were--



THOMPSON: So short.

LEE: Smaller, see. And I had to waiver one, this Jesus Villamor, who was the boy that shot down two Zeros when the Japs came in there, and he was two inches too short, and I waived the height limit on him to get him to go to Randolph Field; he was a good one.

BURG: General, was he the man who was flying the P-26?

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: When he got--

LEE: Jesus, Jesus Villamor.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: I don't remember just exactly when--

THOMPSON: Well, that's all right.

LEE: It's in the diary though--

THOMPSON: That was the point, though--



LEE: It's in the diary.

THOMPSON:--that the contract had been let for the aircraft--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--before you were taken into the Philippine--

LEE: Before I was--

THOMPSON:--Air Service mission.

LEE: Yes.

THOMPSON: All right.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: Now growing from your remark here, you wrote the physical standards, taking them from the American--

LEE: That's right.

BURG:--standards and modifying. At that time, do you remember ever thinking to yourself, "I wonder if the Philippine student pilot will be like the American student pilot, or will there be



any problems associated with training them for flying"?

LEE: Oh, I anticipated problems. I didn't think, basically, the Filipino, from my observation and association with them, that their mentality or their ability to fly would be as good as our boys. Matter of fact, I anticipated that our washouts-- and we were going to use the same standards in training (that was my idea of training and requirements) that we did for our boys at Randolph Field--and I anticipated that we would lose a higher percentage of them on washouts. I mean, "washout" means lacking flying ability--

BURG: Yes.

LEE:--and in this diary I will say, at periods in there; "I flew with Cadet So and So this morning, and I've got to recommend him to meet the flying evaluation board, because he has fifteen hours and he's not going to make it". Now, our students at Randolph Field, if they got 10 hours and had not soloed, we'd wash them out. Now here's a boy that I've given 15 hours because I was trying to get them through, but I wanted to get them through with some safety factor; in other words, I didn't



want to pass a fellow who was on the borderline of being able to fly and let him go out and kill himself, or kill somebody else.

THOMPSON: With him, too.

BURG: Now what seemed to be the major kinds of things, as you think back on it, that at the end of 15 hours of flight training just prevented one of those men from making it--what did they lack?

LEE: Well, it was a lack of coordination, mainly. Now, in flying those planes, and I guess in flying all these now, except those that are flown by instruments, nearly all of our big planes are flown by gyros and so forth, but you had to coordinate your feet in the stick movements. In other words, when you went into a turn, you had to push left rudder and also bank. Now if you overbanked, you skidded; beyond the bank, you slipped and, basically, there was a lack of coordination. I think it was a little lack of some of them understanding, even though they were fairly well educated; they had to have two years college before they could start their training, see. Same requirements that



we had at Randolph Field at the time.

BURG: I'm glad you mentioned that, I forgot to ask about it.

THOMPSON: Yeah, we wouldn't have thought that.

LEE: See, our Air Force required two years of college because a lot of our boys, me and others, that went in to the flying cadets were college graduates already but the requirement, the basic requirement, was two years. And these boys all had two years of college--

BURG: So not lacking in intellect at all--

LEE:--it wasn't a lack of, we'll say, brains--

THOMPSON: I.Q. wasn't the problem at all.

LEE:--it was the lack of being able to coordinate the controls, mainly.

BURG: So you do find then a higher washout rate--

LEE: There was a higher washout rate in the Filipinos, and that's the reason. Well, after I got Lefty Parker--now, I



didn't get Lefty Parker until after we got the airplanes; matter of fact Ike helped me get him assigned. Lefty having been an old flying instructor down at Randolph Field--and, incidentally, helped train Ike too, as well as I did, but I'm the guy that was responsible and I'm the guy that soloed him, because Lefty told me the morning I soloed him while riding out, we rode out together, he said, "The old man is ready to solo, but", he said, "but damned if I'm going to do it." So I said, "Well, let me ride with him if he can solo, by God, I'll solo him." And that's the morning I soloed him, see. But you see, we didn't have any authority to do this; MacArthur didn't know about it; Mamie didn't know about it; and the Philippine government, I guess some of the officers knew that I was flying with Ike, but they just thought I was giving him a ride; you know, like I'd give them a ride when they come out.

BURG: Did you solo him in a Stearman?

LEE: Yeah, I soloed him in a PT-1 on May 19, 1937.

THOMPSON: Well, why don't we get through the diaries and get to



that point. The last entry we talked about was December 15; you're having this meeting--or December 14--you're having the meeting with--

LEE: With Ike.

THOMPSON:--with Ord and Eisenhower in the mission office--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--and at that point they say they want you to come over to the mission and to continue the training for the Philippine Air Force then coming into existence.

LEE: All right. Then December 24, "I worked downtown all day. Went by to see Major Eisenhower about a proposed bill in the national assembly to create a flying school." That pertains to getting authority to, I guess, to start a flying school. I don't remember the details, but Jimmy Ord was the politician. He spoke Spanish fluently and he was a good mixer with the Filipinos and he'd take this bill, well say, and he'd go to the national assembly and he'd lobby, or what have you, and get



something done about it. O.K., here's another entry on December 28, "Mr. Lambert and I drove out to Camp Murphy this morning. Major Ord and Major Eisenhower came out with General Valdez to look the place over. They seemed to be very well satisfied with things". Now we're still working on that field, see.

THOMPSON: Right, but at this time it had been converted to not just a constabulary training field but a field now for the embryo Philippine Air Force.

LEE: Training the Filipino pilots, period, yes.

THOMPSON: All right. Fine.

BURG: With only you as instructor, at that point?

LEE: That's the only one--Well, see, we didn't have any airplanes yet; I hadn't instructed anybody. I was just the student, so to speak, of getting it organized, see.

BURG: Uh-huh.

THOMPSON: You had no cadets yet, you had nothing to operate.



LEE: No cadets, no; well, we had a few enlisted men to help around the office and do a little typing, and two or three officers to--

THOMPSON: And working with Lambert, too, out at the field?

LEE: Lambert was out there, yeah, he was, I see Mr. Lambert, it says, "Mr. Lambert and I drove out to Camp Murphy this morning" and then over here, "I worked downtown all day. Mr. Lambert and I went out to Camp Murphy this afternoon and looked over things there. I went by the Military Advisor's office at noon today and talked to Major Ord and Major Eisenhower". That was December 31, of 1935. Now that's the last entry I had in there about them and so I don't know what I talked to them about but, apparently, it was something about the progress of the field.

THOMPSON: Fine. Well, let's proceed to 1936 then, here it gets more exciting.

LEE: Fact it gets bigger as we get in there, see. Put that rubber back here so I may want to--

THOMPSON: Saves those places marked.



LEE: I'll leave them marked, Ed,--

THOMPSON: Good, thank you.

LEE:--because you may want to refer them later. All right, here is another entry. It says, "I worked downtown all day. Mr. Lambert and I drove out to Camp Murphy, looked things over this afternoon. We decided that we'd need an extra strip of land for our flying field there and we'll figure on it tomorrow. I went over to see Major Ord and Major Eisenhower this morning about getting permission to buy a truck and a station wagon for our Air Corps. Went by the Bureau of Audits to get permission from Mr. Rojas to acquire for our use at Camp Murphy some confiscated dynamite at 10% of its commercial value. Our hangar that was constructed by Mr. De la Paz was accepted by the Bureau of Public Works this morning." Well that's the hangar we moved out there. You see, that was in January '36, so you can see how long it took us to get that old hangar frame torn down and moved from out there at Paranaque Beach over to--



THOMPSON: And of course you had to clear the land out there where you were going, too, and this took time.

LEE: Yeah, we put that hangar kind of on the hill, the high part there you see. If you will notice the windows, some are broken out.

THOMPSON: Yeah, you can see up to that hangar.

LEE: O.K., I'll leave that there. Then here, on January 15, 1936, "I worked downtown all day. I went by the Ordnance Department to see about getting some spare parts for the tractors being used at Camp Murphy". We borrowed those old Caterpillar tractors from the U. S. Ordnance to use out there. "Stopped by to see Major Ord and Major Eisenhower for a few minutes this morning"; I don't remember what it was, but I have an idea it was talking about getting some of this equipment see. "Put in a request for 60 additional prisoners for Camp Murphy to start next Monday. Also requested permission to buy an additional 10 hectares of land at Camp Murphy".

THOMPSON: This was presumably that extension--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--that you needed in order to put a proper field in.



LEE: Yeah. And I don't remember whether we got it or not but 10 hectares is a little over an acre, 2.471 acres per hectare, I guess, nearly 25 acres total. I forgot just how much it is; about 2.471 acres, isn't it? Hectare, something.

BURG: I don't know, you were extending--

LEE: Well, it's larger than an acre--

BURG:--this would extend your runway.

LEE: Well, no. Our runway was limited.

BURG: By that ravine?

LEE: Yeah, that was as far as we could go, but we needed additional land in there behind the hangar and we eventually built the barracks for the Air Corps back there, see.

BURG: I see.

LEE: They put up a wooden barracks later on, behind the hangar, and at the time we put that hangar up there, our property line just ran right down behind the hangar. But the length of the runway, or the strip, the landing strip, was limited because up on the north end there was Camp Murphy and the barracks. On the



south end was this jump off down there. O.K. It says here, "Carried Bill with me this afternoon to Camp Murphy and Mr. Lambert went along also. It rained pretty good shower while we were out there but Major Ord and Major Eisenhower were around the office this morning. I had to go over to the Ordnance Depot and get 3 sections of a radiator, some gaskets, cotter pins, spark plugs and a wrench and 20 grousers for the trucks." Well, I got them from the U. S. Ordnance, see; I'd chisel everything I could.

THOMPSON: Now when you were talking of your office, your office was down in--

LEE: In the Philippine constabulary Headquarters--

THOMPSON:--headquarters.

LEE:--When General MacArthur got there and they created the Philippine Armed Forces I guess you'd call it, General Paulino Santos was made Chief of Staff. Now Paulino Santos had been in the constabulary but at the time General MacArthur came over there, he was the Director of Bureau of Prisons, down in Bilobid, and that's where he had his office. My wife and I went to a



Chinese dinner down there one night and they had about 26 courses, if you ever had a Chinese dinner you know what they are. And how Paulino Santos got selected to be made the Chief of Staff, who was the number one man, I don't know, because General Valdez, who was the Chief of Constabulary when I went in the air unit on loan there, he was a Brig. Gen. and the senior man in the Constabulary. And Paulino Santos had retired or, I guess retired, from the constabulary and went with the Bureau of Prisons. Anyhow, he was a fine gent. There was nothing wrong with him, but I was a little bit surprised when he was selected to be the Chief of Staff and General Valdez, who was also made a two-star general, was made Deputy Chief of Staff. O.K., that's that day. Then we get over here and here's an entry about Harvey Prosser--

BURG: Are we still in January of the--

LEE: January, Tuesday, January 28th.

THOMPSON: Harvey Prosser and his loan; since he so far ranked you, what was his position vis-a-vis you and later, Parker, during the period?



LEE: He had no connection with us at all. When I first went to work, he was advisor. Of course, Russell Maughan was the first advisor; he preceded Prosser. He'd had the job for several years and he got ordered back to the States. I remember there're a lot of entries in here about Russell Maughan when he left, and the letters I received from him. But at that time, there was a Bureau of Aeronautics and that's what the job was that they had--the Bureau of Aeronautics, which handled commercial flying in the Philippines. They had the Philippine Aero-Taxi and one other that they flew up to Baguio. That came under their jurisdiction, kind of like the Federal Aviation Administration--

BURG: Right.

LEE:--in our country.

BURG: Uh-huh.

LEE: And at that time I and, I guess, Ivan Proctor, before his death, was under the Bureau of Aviation, see. But then, when General MacArthur came over there, Harvey Prosser didn't have a damned thing to do with us; not one thing.



THOMPSON: You were separated, detached from the constabulary--

LEE: We were--

THOMPSON:--and this connection with the aviation administration bureau.

LEE: We were with the Philippine Army and General MacArthur and his staff. They didn't have anything to do with us. Let's see, it says, "Flew about an hour and 30 minutes this morning pulling sleeve target for Capt. H. R. Wells and H. W. Prosser", now that was out of Nichols. I was flying an O-19; that was before we got--let's see, I was trying to see here, "Major Olympia and Mr. Lambert and I drove out to Camp Murphy this afternoon and everything is getting along in fine shape. They hauled 165 loads of dirt today and all tractors were working"; which was strange. I guess over here is where it's about Eisenhower; It says, "got a haircut this morning. Worked downtown all morning. I drove over to see Major Ord and Major Eisenhower for awhile this morning. Major Ord rode back to the constabulary headquarters with me. Lt. Col. Aguilar[he was Lt. Col. and watched after the finances of the Philippine Army] and I had a discussion



about the increased pay for Air Corps troops this morning and he didn't want to pay the amount provided in the national defense bill and I did." See, I was trying to get extra pay for my Air Corps people, and we got it. Col. Ord got that in the bill, see, got it provided for in the national defense bill. "Mr. Lambert and I drove out to Camp Murphy this afternoon and things are getting along fine. They moved 166 wagonloads of dirt today."

THOMPSON: Now that was for Wednesday, the 29th, was that entry.

LEE: Yeah, January 29th, 1936. Now, let's see, here's something over here, "Mr. Lambert and I drove out to Camp Murphy this morning, Major A. B. Pitts [Maj. A. B. Pitts was U.S. Air Corps] and Mr. Ball followed along in A. B.'s car. They went out to look the hangar over. General Valdez was out also, Majors Ord and Eisenhower came out also. Col. Santos, Col. Aguilar and Col. Luna and Major Olympia were out. Everyone seemed to be pleased with the way things were going." That's that; that was February 1st, 1936; you see, we still hadn't got any airplanes. Here's an article for something, oh, that's about a durned party, "Lt. and Mrs. William L. Lee were hosts last night at a despidido buffet supper held at the Army-Navy Club." That's no particular interest here except that--



JONES: Concerning this type of thing, socially; did the Philippine military people and the American military people meet socially quite a bit during this period?

LEE: Quite a lot. For instance, here on our guest list says, "Held in honor of Major and Mrs. Charles E. Brenn and other officers and ladies of the Air Corps who will sail on the next transport. Among those who attended the despedido was General Basilio Valdez, Col. Albert L. Snead, Col. Harry R. Andreas, Capt. & Mrs. Frank Bonner". I don't see any more Filipinos there. God, we had a list here! Gee whiz, that must have cost a lot of money.

JONES: As far as the ladies were concerned, were Philippine officers' ladies also included in this type of thing?



LEE: Oh--

MRS. LEE: They were included more with the downtown military people--

LEE:--you take--

MRS. LEE:--we had, where Humphreys was the head--I mean General Humphreys [Commander at Ft. Stotsenburg]--what did they call that downtown?

THOMPSON: That would be--

MRS. LEE: Infantry, whatever it was, you know where--

LEE: Philippine Department Headquarters.

MRS. LEE: Yes.

LEE: Yeah. Well, I tell you now, socially, Filipinos and Americans didn't mix too much. I mean I, me, myself, I mixed with them, just like I was one of them, and that's the reason I got along so well with them I'm known as the 'father of the Philippine Air Force' over there, and it was reputed that, next to General MacArthur, I was probably the most popular military man that had been over there. Simply because I tried to--I didn't have any qualms about mixing with them or eating with them; the only thing that I refused to eat with them was the darned balouts, and that's a boiled--

MRS. LEE: Chicken egg.

LEE: Chicken egg or a duck egg just about ready to hatch and I couldn't go this. Those little old fine feathers and feet



sticking out the corners of your mouth, and stuff like that, and they stunk too, but they boiled them, and President Quezon and all of them--I remember we went down to Palawan Island one time we brought back a bunch of balouts for President Quezon that the Governor down there sent him. They all ate them, but not me. Well, anyhow, I was trying to say that socially they didn't mix too much, and even when we were in the Philippines the last tour from '52 to '56, we'd have Filipinos at some of the parties and invariably you'd see a group of Filipino women sitting over here talking, and a group of American women over here talking, and that always bugged me. I'd get up and raise hell if it was a party of mine. I'd say, "Get over there and mix with those people", I said, "Stop this damned being so exclusive". The Filipino people were good, they were nice people, and if they liked you, they'd give you the shirt off their back, you see. And it wasn't--I don't think it was because our people, our American people, were snooty. There was kind of a language barrier I'll admit; all of those people studied English in school, but they'd go home and they'd speak their dialect. You know, they have around 80 some dialects in the Philippines. And then, of course, they had different customs and things and wore dif-



ferent dresses, and so forth. They wore those mestizo dresses which some of them--God, they were pretty and expensive, but they didn't mix too good socially. Here's another entry, it says, "Major Lambert" this is the 8th of February 19--(tape ran out)

BURG: 3:30 this side of the note.

LEE: Yeah, O.K. it says, "Major Olympia and Mr. Lambert and I drove out to Camp Murphy this morning expecting Major Ord and Major Eisenhower to come out for an inspection but they didn't show up so we went back to the office where I worked the rest of the morning." That's the only entry there. We'll get over here in some more important things, I guess, later. Oh, yeah, "Mr. Lambert and I drove out to Camp Murphy this morning, President Quezon and General Douglas MacArthur came out to look things over." Now--

THOMPSON: This is February 25--

LEE: -5, 1936, and--

THOMPSON: Would that have been probably the first trip of General MacArthur out to look at the field?



LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: As it was developing?

LEE: That's right, that's right.

THOMPSON: And how about for President Quezon--

LEE: President Quezon, too.

THOMPSON:--probably his first too.

LEE: First trip also.

THOMPSON: All right.

LEE: I don't see anything on this side. That paper there, incidentally, is a bill we got from the exchange out at McKinley for some silver we ordered; I don't know why I kept it, but it's there. I don't know why, "worked downtown--(lost)--right here, oh, yeah,--

THOMPSON: March 3.

LEE:--"worked downtown all morning. Mr. Lambert and I drove:



over and talked to Major Eisenhower about a commercial aviation company coming into the Philippine Islands to operate". It seems that--I don't remember the details of that--but there was some company that wanted to come into the Philippines to set up an operation for commercial flying, see, from--

THOMPSON: Inter-island or--

LEE: Inter-island, yes, interisland. We already had the Philippine Aero-Taxi and another outfit that was flying, and I think this fellow had gone to the military advisor's office to talk to General MacArthur and probably to Major Eisenhower, who was the Chief of Staff, and Ike probably wanted to get our views on it because that was the reason we went over there; I remember that.

THOMPSON: Now what kind of recommendation would you have made in a case like this?

LEE: Well, in that particular case I would have--as well as I remember--our objection was that we already had two people operating and that they should be given an opportunity to develop larger without other people--



THOMPSON: Competition.

LEE:--other people coming in, you see. Actually, they didn't have too much commercial aviation at that time; the Filipinos rode inter-island boats, and then, the Filipinos were never in a hurry. I used to try to rush them over to the Malacayan Palace--[the home and office of the High Commissioner and later the President of the Philippines] at the Governor-General's office when I'd go over there. And I never will forget old man, Elly was his name, [Mr. Elly was a civilian employee for the U. S. Government], he'd been there a long time, he was an American, and he told me, he said, "You can't rush the East, can't rush the East". Well, the Philippine aviation had not developed too rapidly with what they had, but they had started, and they should be given an opportunity to develop. And I think that was our proposition; anyhow, this other outfit didn't come in. Ah, let's see, "Mr. Lambert, Major Olympia and I drove out to Camp Murphy this morning work is progressing satisfactorily, Major Ord and Eisenhower"--he's still a Major back there in April '36--"and Lt. Huff came out", now, that was where Lt. Huff "came out to Camp Murphy and made an inspection". That was April 4, 19--,



Saturday, April 4, 1936. He was a Lt. in the Navy, I think a senior Lt., which corresponded to a Capt. in the Air Force, the same grade that Lucius Clay and Pat Casey were. They were both Captains, at that time, so--

BURG: Now, while all the construction work is going on, are you also trying to pick your cadets and give them their physical exams or carry out ground school training?

LEE: No, no ground school training, because they wouldn't get any ground school training till they'd been accepted as cadets. Now Major Olympia, this man that's mentioned here, he was a kind of a, he was a flight surgeon. He'd been through the Flight Surgeon School in the States; the Philippine government had sent him over. Capt. Potenciano was a flight surgeon, too; he'd been through the Flight Surgeon School. And he and I hob-knobbed. He [Major Olympia] was a ruthless guy! Hell, he'd step on a Moro that had been shot and cut his ear off, if he thought he needed it, or something. I mean, Olympia was. The Japs murdered him right off, and also murdered Paulino Santos. But, anyhow, we were lining up and accepting applications, and we didn't have too many apply.



BURG: You didn't?

LEE: No, and too many that applied didn't meet the qualifications.

THOMPSON: Physical qualifications, you mean--

LEE: Well the mental qual--

THOMPSON:--and the mental too.

LEE:--too, see, they had to have two years of college--

THOMPSON: Right.

LEE:--and of course, physically, old Major Olympia, he was rough and he wouldn't take them if they were fraction of an eighth too short. You see, that's when I had to waiver on old Jesus Villamor, because he was too short, and I just said, "By God, he's a good one, he's got--". He had some background training, commercially, that he'd paid for himself and so we waived the height on him.

BURG: Was that what you liked about him? You must have had something to go on in picking that man--



LEE: Who? Jesus?

BURG: Yes.

LEE: Well, he was a nice looking young fellow and came of a pretty nice family, and as far as I knew in the Philippines, he had some Spanish blood in him, and he had spent his own money and time in taking flying training out at what we call Grace park. The Philippine Aero-Taxi had two, three little old airplanes out there. Like most towns where you can pay to get flying training, see. Of course that was back in those days when they were just crates, but they got some training on them. And Jesus, I think, had gotten 20 some odd hours; he'd already soloed, you see.

BURG: Was he a rarity, General? Was he about the only one of that sort of exemption that you made?

LEE: Well, now, I made an exemption on him because--exemption on his height--and I made it because I was certain he had the ability to fly and he had the ability to, we'll say, think. He was a pretty level-headed boy. Now another fellow that I had I



mentioned, I think, in the Navy part, was Joe Francisco. Now Joe had graduated from our U. S. Naval Academy and he was an outstanding, intelligent fellow. And he had taken some flying, too, on his own; of course, we checked them all through our place before we ever sent them back to Randolph, because we couldn't afford to miss a single one because they only authorized us fourteen slots. And then we got some authority to send some technical men, enlisted men, to Chanute Field for training in airplane engine mechanics and airframe, and one or two out here to Lowry Field at Denver for communications and photographic work. Matter of fact, we sent Joe Francisco there after he got through Kelly Field, to study photography, aerial photography, he was--



BURG: Now let me clarify something that we may later want to know about but which I think we should know now. When you sent a man to Kelly or Randolph--

LEE: Uh-huh.

BURG:--had they already passed through your training?

LEE: You betcha, you bet!

BURG: Never did you ever send someone there who'd not already--

LEE: No.

BURG:--passed through your training.

LEE: No, sir.

BURG: Good, that's what we needed to know.

LEE: We couldn't afford to.

BURG: Right.

LEE: Because we had to be sure that they would get through Randolph Field and we didn't grease a way for them down there. While we had friends, Lefty and I having both been instructors down at Randolph, we knew what the requirements were.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: And we sent one guy down there, Lt. Soliman [He is now Ex-Secretary of the American Chamber of Commerce in Manila] who washed out, but he didn't wash out from flying; he washed out from cracking up his automobile. There's an entry here about



that, too, and they sent him home because his back was in bad shape. They sent him back to the Philippines. Of course we got a replacement for his slot.

BURG: So even as the field is being built, you are already beginning to run them through the application process and the medical.

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: Uh-huh.

LEE: Now, we must have got the airplane somewhere in here, because here on June the 19th, 1936, "flew with two students this morning, I gave Major Ord a fifteen minute ride and Lefty Parker gave Major Eisenhower a short ride". That's on the 19th of June, 1936.

THOMPSON: And that's the first record you have--

LEE: That was--

THOMPSON:--of their flying in the Philippines.



LEE: Yeah, of course, I would have, back in here, a record of when the airplane--

THOMPSON: Actually arrived.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: But this would be the first--

LEE: Now wait a minute--

THOMPSON:--time.

LEE: Let's see, "I flew with Major Olympia an hour and 20 minutes this morning". Now I've got those airplanes in here somewhere, ah--

THOMPSON: Now when they came in though, they came in crates--

LEE: That's right.

THOMPSON:--you had to assemble.

LEE: We had to haul them out--

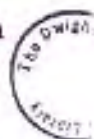


THOMPSON: And put the wings up.

LEE:--and take them off the boat and haul them out--

THOMPSON: Run out the engines and so on.

LEE: All right, here, "Lt. H. A. Parker, 'Lefty', got his orders today assigning him to duty with the Philippine Army Air Corps and will report for duty in the morning"; that's Friday May 15th. Now you see, I didn't arrange to get him, or get General Ike to get him for me, until the airplanes got there, see, and I had to have somebody to help me train those guys. Says, "Flew with Cadet Villamor", this is on May the 11th, "for 30 minutes and then let him solo for 20 minutes". That's on May the 11th, now where'd we get these airplanes, back here? "I flew with Villamor 15 minutes." See, I was always checking these guys even though he already had the time. "I started flying students for the Philippine Army Air Corps this morning". That was May 4. "Flew with Cadet Reyes and Cadet Villamor each for 40 minutes, both boys have had time before and should turn out all right. Col. Paulino Santos was made a Major-General and Chief of Staff of the Philippine Army today. Brig. Gen. Valdez was made Major-



General and Deputy Chief of Staff. Brig. Gen. DeLos Reyes was made Major-General and Provost Marshal General. Col. Francisco was made Brig. Gen." So that was on May the 4th. Now here, May 2nd, I think here's the first airplane. "I flew the Philippine Army Air Corps first airplane this morning", that was May the 2nd, "Mr. C. L. Lambert was my first passenger and then Major Olympia, Lt. Fernando, Gen. Valdez, Major Castaneda, and Lt. Reyes. I put in one and one-half hours and six landings today."

THOMPSON: Now that's--

LEE: May 2nd, 1936, that's the first time I flew the Philippine airplane, but I had already been over there and landed on that strip in an O-19 from Nichols Field before the Philippine airplanes ever got going because I remember that.

THOMPSON: This was to check the field to see-

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--if it was going to take this.

LEE:--to see if I could get in there.



BURG: Well, the O-19 was a much hotter ship, wasn't it?

LEE: Yeah, it was a faster deal and I figured if I could get in there I could get, I could get those PTs---

THOMPSON: Get the PT-1s in there.

LEE:--yeah. But anyhow, I flew an O-19 over there one morning and landed before we got our airplanes, but I remember reading it back here somewhere. This is not important that we flew the first Philippine airplane on May 2nd, 1936. O.K. Now we get over here. Let's see if we can find something about General Eisenhower; oh, yeah, "Flew General Valdez for 25 minutes, Lt. Fernando for 25 minutes, and Major Olympia for 30 minutes in PT this morning and then flew Major Olympia, Capt. Potenciano, and a Sgt. for 40 minutes and General Francisco, Major Ord and Major Eisenhower for 20 minutes in the Stinson Reliant". So I guess we got that sometime ago there.

THOMPSON: That was an entry for July--

LEE: 7th 1936.



THOMPSON:--7th, 1936.

LEE: Let's see, said, "I had a talk with Major Eisenhower at the military advisor's office this morning" but I didn't say what the hell we was talking about.

THOMPSON: July 23, 1936.

LEE: Yeah, probably we was talking about some problems of the Air Force. O.K., I'll leave these places marked, we can go back some time later if we ever want to. Ah, "Lefty Parker and I drove down to St. Paul's Hospital to see John Moore". Let's see; he'd been released. Wait a minute there must have been something about Ike here, I wonder why I marked that? "I didn't fly today. Worked in the office". Wonder why I marked that? "Lefty Parker and I drove down and he had been released, so we went to the Army-Navy Club and ran into Tommy Lynch there and stayed until about 11:00 P. M. We went around to call on", that's it, "call on Col. Eisenhower at the Manila Hotel, but he wasn't in". That was August 2nd, 1936.

BURG: But you're now calling him Colonel.



LEE: Yeah, yeah, he got promoted sometime and I didn't make an entry but, I guess because I didn't think it was important. I didn't know, actually, when he did get promoted.

THOMPSON: Now, Mrs. Eisenhower still was not there?

LEE: Wasn't there apparently, because I called on him.

THOMPSON: Him, right.

BURG: And you called on him fairly late in the evening?

LEE: Yeah, well you see--

THOMPSON: After 11:00 P. M.

LEE: Yeah.

MRS. LEE: By the time they got through drinking at the Army-Navy Club no telling what they would do.

BURG: That was my suspicion; that there may have been a couple of happy gentlemen that called on Colonel Eisenhower.

LEE: Yeah, well, I got in some ruckuses all right, after the parties, and at the Sojourners, and so forth. We would go around,



and sometimes I wouldn't get home till daylight. Change clothes, get out of a tux or civilian clothes, and put on a uniform and go to work without ever going to bed. Now those made long days.

BURG: I wonder if your cadets knew, since they flew in the same ship with you?

LEE: I don't know. Sometimes, I wouldn't fly. I'd just show up and turn it to Lefty Parker to fly, or something, and go back to the office. Says, "Flew Capt. Potenciano 30 minutes and Major Olympia for 50 minutes in PT-1 this morning. Col. Ord and Eisenhower were out to see the field this morning". That was August 28th 1936. Says, "Lt. Parker and I played 18 holes of golf with Col. Eisenhower and Capt. Davis at Caloocan this afternoon. Parker and Eisenhower played Davis and I and the match was tied."

THOMPSON: August 28, 1936.

LEE: Yeah, we played golf. Ike liked to play golf and we played golf with him.

THOMPSON: And T. J. Davis was a pretty good golfer, too.

LEE: Yeah, yeah. "Col. Eisenhower and Capt. Davis at Caloocan this morning. Parker and Eisenhower played Davis and I". Me and T. J.

THOMPSON: Good match-up there--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--all the way around.

LEE: "And we wound up even, the match was tied". There's one place in here where we went out to play--here it said, "I worked in the office the rest of the morning. Wrote Mr. J. E. Schaefer, President of Stearman Aircraft Company, a letter this morning and also sent him a telegram that the requisition for 6 new airplanes had been approved". That was 6 new Stearman's, you see.

THOMPSON: In addition to the 6 that you--

LEE: No.

THOMPSON:--already arrived, in addition to the 3--



LEE: Just--we had--

THOMPSON:--that had so far arrived.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: Plus the Reliant so there--

LEE: Plus the Reliant.

THOMPSON:--three plus one Reliant.

LEE: Yeah, yeah.

THOMPSON: Up to that point, all right.

LEE: One time we went out there to play golf at Caloocan and one of Ike's friends, who was a civilian downtown, had a heart attack on the golf course and died, and Ike was really upset about it when we got out there. Here's an entry, "Lt. Col. Eisenhower was out this morning and Lt. Parker took him for a short ride". Let's see, "I got a letter from Joe Francisco and one from the folks at home". Joe was then back to the States taking training at Randolph Field, that's the only entry I see there about Ike.



THOMPSON: That's September 17th--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--1936.

LEE: Yeah. And this one here; let's see, must be something here, this is September 25th, "Worked in office. Bert and I went to Spanish class". Guess we looked at those darned pictures--Oh, yeah. Here we are, September 25th, "I went to the Sojourners this evening. I went by and picked up Wick Steele", who was Capt. Steele, or a Lt., up to this, "after the Sojourners, Steele and I went down to the Manila Hotel and visited with Col. Eisenhower for a while, and then went to Tom's Dixie Kitchen [was a restaurant and a favorite place for military people] and had something to eat. [Tom was a Negro man who was in the U. S. Army at one time. He was a large black man.] We didn't get home till 5:30 or about daylight." That's usually where we wound up on Friday or Saturday, at the Sojourner's party. We'd wind up drinking beer or something, whiskey, some other place. All right, "Bert and I and the Parker's went down to dinner at the Manila Hotel, given to us by Lt. Col. D. D. Eisenhower. A Mrs. Johnson was there also. It was a very nice party and I enjoyed it very



much". That was on--

MRS. LEE: Lt. Col. Eisenhower?

BURG: Must have been Lt. Col.

LEE: Lt. Col.

MRS. LEE: Oh.

LEE: Lt. Col. D. D. Eisenhower--

MRS. LEE: I didn't hear the Colonel part.

LEE: Well, I may have dropped it, but anyhow, you know he wasn't any Lt.

THOMPSON: October 10, 1936.

LEE: 1936.

THOMPSON: That was a Saturday, and this would be the kind of thing you would do on a week-end.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: There would be parties to go to?



LEE: Yeah, and it probably would--being right close to Ike's birthday on the 14th--be his birthday, see--

THOMPSON: Birthday party.

LEE:--and Bert's birthday is on the 16th, so we used to have joint celebrations after we got to know each other pretty good. Here's October 14th; maybe it's over here, "I didn't fly any this morning. Parker flew with his students and gave Col. Eisenhower a ride this morning. I worked in the office all morning." Let's see, "Col. and Mrs. C. E. Livingston and Col. Stevens, both from the Philippine Army and old constabulary officers, had dinner with Bert and I tonight". See, we had a few old Americans in the Constabulary. They had stayed over in the Philippines after World War I, or sometime. They had arrived over there and just stayed on and got a position with the Philippine constabulary.

THOMPSON: Now that was General Eisenhower's 46th birthday--

LEE: Yes.

THOMPSON: And he's flying and--



LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--and yet hasn't soloed--

LEE: No.

THOMPSON:--we're not up to that yet.

LEE: No, he didn't. He didn't solo till the next year. Ah, I was trying to find the sequence--

THOMPSON: Now when you're telling of his flying, is he going strictly as a passenger, or is he already beginning to handle the controls?

LEE: Probably, he's already beginning to handle the controls because you see this wasn't a routine thing, like we were teaching students to fly. When he came out there--which he did nearly every day, or every chance he could get out there--he'd always come early in the morning, because then he'd go back to the office, say 10:00 o'clock or 9:00 o'clock. By this time we were probably beginning to let him handle the controls. See, he wasn't like a routine student, because we flew students every day that we could fly. Sometimes we



couldn't because of the weather. But Ike gradually picked up enough to where he was good enough to where we let him fly. The incident I was going to tell you about a while ago--I don't remember having an entry in here--but, when he was flying that BT-1, instead of riding in the back seat like you did in the PT-1 when you soloed, you rode in the front seat of the BT-1^s. And we put a sand bag in the back seat and tied it to the seat to take care of the--

THOMPSON: The weight--

LEE:--weight--

THOMPSON:--that you wanted there.

LEE:--to balance, for more balance. Well, Ike came in this time, and he's solo in this ship, and he didn't land. He came down like he was going to land but he gave it the gun and went on around, and I wondered "what's the matter here?", because his approach looked good. So I think he made maybe one more and didn't land, but anyhow, either one or two more, but he got down. And he come taxiing up to the line and he was disturbed. He said he couldn't get the stick back, so we looked back there and the darned sand bag had slipped forward and the stick



wouldn't come all the way back. He couldn't pull it back all the way--

THOMPSON: Dropped the tail to--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--to, to drop in, uh-huh.

LEE: So he made it down all right, but he was disturbed and I don't blame him, because he wasn't an experienced pilot and I'd have been disturbed if I couldn't have got the stick back, see. But that was what was the matter. Says here, "I had a party at the Manila Hotel tonight for Bert's birthday" That's the 16th, that's her birthday. "Lt. Col. and Mrs. James B. Ord, Lt. Col. Eisenhower and Mrs. Johnson, Lt. and Mrs. H. A. Parker were our guests. Col. Ord and Col. Eisenhower gave Bert a nice little silver nut dish". That was October 16th, 1936; that's when you were 33 years old. O.K. that's that. Nothing else on there. Let's see--

BURG: Should we perhaps get them some coffee to--



THOMPSON: Ah, we'll have to go downstairs if we do.

LEE: No, we don't need any coffee.

MRS. LEE: No.

THOMPSON: All right.

BURG: O. K., fine.

LEE: Do without that stuff. O.K. "I flew to Nichols Field and flew an hour and 40 minutes of ground gunnery this morning. Lt. Parker flew Lt. Col. Eisenhower to Clark Field this morning. I worked in the office." I don't know what he flew him up there for, but that's where Fort Stotsenburg was, see.

THOMPSON: Now how long a flight would that have been?

LEE: Oh, in a PT, it probably would have been 25-30 minutes; 65 miles, probably.

THOMPSON: To Stotsenburg up from--

LEE: Yeah, up from Manila, and Clark Field was just a little old cow pasture adjacent to and part of Stotsenburg.



BURG: Now would that have been a fairly regular thing, might that have happened that Eisenhower was flown up to Clark once a month or so?

LEE: Well, it wouldn't have been a regular occurrence. It probably would have been, periodically, he might have gone up to see General Humphreys. Now Sep Humphreys was a classmate of his at, I believe he was a classmate of Ike's at the Academy? They called him Sep--no, he wasn't a classmate--we called him Sep. He was one of those short classes at West Point at the beginning of World War I. But he knew General Humphreys pretty well. He was commander at Stotsenberg at the time.

THOMPSON: Full name, Evan H. Humphrey, H-u-m-p-h-r-e-y.

LEE: Yeah, yeah.

THOMPSON: Right.

BURG: Would Lt. Parker have let Eisenhower take the controls, perhaps on one of those--

LEE: Oh, yeah,--



BURG:--flights?

LEE:--You know when we were on trips in that Stinson, we just had one wheel, and Ike would always ride up there with me. We'd get going down to Cebu, Iloilo or somewhere, and I just flipped it over and let Ike fly. And the amazing thing about it, he flew pretty good, but when I was flying, he was the most relaxed person that I ever saw. He'd set there and fold his arms--course he was sitting up straight, more straight, in that airplane--and sleep right there, be asleep. I never will forget one time we had ole Paulino Santos with us and he was riding in the back seat of the Stinson Reliant, and ole Paulino smoked about 8 or 10 cigars a day and he had a durned cigar in his mouth nearly all the time. And old Ike was sitting there sleeping, like this, and Paulino lit up a cigar. Of course Ike smoked cigarettes, but these stinking cigars--I smoked cigars, too, but these Filipinos some of them were rancid. And old Ike kinda opened his eyes and looked around at old Paulino Santos. Ike said, "God dang you, I ought to throw you out of here". But he could relax and that was one attribute or thing that he had, and



I think it's an attribute to anybody who can relax. Now she [Mrs. Lee] can sit right there and go to sleep; I'm surprised she's not asleep now because of all this gabbing I'm doing, but she can get in a car and we'll start out and she'll work crossword puzzles and the next thing you know she's sitting over there asleep. Well, Ike could do that, and I think a person who can do that is the person who's ready to go most any time for any kind of a chore or any kind of duty. See, just like a dog sleeps until you say 'Let's go' and they're ready. And I liked that about Ike, I thought it was a great thing he could do, he could relax, you see.

THOMPSON: Was he, when he was flying or learning how to fly even, was he an up-tight flyer, or was he fairly relaxed at the controls?

LEE: He was relaxed. We pounded that into his head, because he was a golf player and he knew that in playing golf you've got to be relaxed--in anything you do; in driving an automobile, if a person sits there and gripped that wheel for dear life they'd have a wreck as sure as hell, or something would happen to them. They'd go nuts.



BURG: So he wasn't ham-fisted on--

LEE: Oh, no--

BURG:--those controls? He was light.

LEE:--no, he was light and relaxed; he had good coordination, you see.

BURG: Because he makes fun of his own flying ability.



LEE: Well, sure, he makes fun of it for the fact that what he flew in comparison to what the Columbine, or whatever his ship was when he was President, it's fantastic, all the things that they have in those airplanes, and he said one time, I believe he said he "flew a bit", or something, one time--"did a little jack-leg flying", or something. Well, after I left the Philippines, he flew quite a lot. He got enough time to get a private--

THOMPSON: Private pilot license.

LEE:--pilot license, yeah.

THOMPSON: That's right, yes.

BURG: Now was that a Philippine private pilot license?

LEE: Yes, but they had the same standards that we had.

BURG: I see.

THOMPSON: So it was transferable.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: But he never did fly--

LEE: No.

THOMPSON:--again.

LEE: No. We had the Bureau of Aeronautics over there, they pretty nearly copied exactly what our requirements were in the states for their requirements over there, just like I did for the flying cadets. Must have been something here--I don't see anything there about Ike. No. Oh, yeah, it was over here. It says "Parker flew his students first and then flew Col. Eisenhower for about 20 minutes." Well, you see, Ike was out there quite frequently, as often as he could get out there, so he was really



interested in learning to fly, as well as in aviation in general. Says "I flew Major Olympia 35 minutes and Col. Eisenhower for 10 minutes this morning. Parker flew with the students and flew Col. Eisenhower's son for a short ride." That was John.

BURG: Uh-huh.

LEE: Let's see, John was born in 1922 so he was about 14 years old then. See, this is along in here--

THOMPSON: So Mamie and John are here by this time--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--this is November of '36, so they came--

LEE: November 2--

THOMPSON:--in in time for that school year, didn't they?

LEE: Yes. That's where John started going to Brent, up at Baguio--

THOMPSON:--Bishop Brent School, Baguio, Manila, Luzon Island.

LEE: That's when I nearly cracked up one time up there; it'll



be in here too. "Parker and I played 18 holes of golf with Lt. Col. Eisenhower at Caloocan golf course this afternoon."

THOMPSON: How do you spell that name of that--

LEE: Caloocan, C-a-l-o-o-c-a-n, Caloocan. It's a kind of a suburb of Manila on the north side.

THOMPSON: This of course would be a private golf--

LEE: It was--

THOMPSON:--course.

LEE:--it was more or less a private golf course out there, and Wakwak Country Club was a private one, too. Ike played out here at Caloocan quite a lot because some of his Manila, Filipino friends belonged to the club and he did, too. We didn't belong, we--

THOMPSON: You went as guests.

LEE:--guests of Ike, yeah. I don't see anything here about Ike. That's where--Philippine Army Air Corps boys, who are working in



the radio department up at the field, came to the house and took the radio out of my car--while I got some free work on that, I guess. I've got some interesting remarks in here about the progress and developments in Europe, about the war, but I didn't mark them, I just remember reading them, about my thinking about what was going to happen in Europe at that time.

THOMPSON: Well, apropos to that, was the events in Europe developing the thinking that you all were giving to how you could defend, what would be the kind of warfare one might become engaged in in the--

LEE: Not at this time--

THOMPSON:--new age.

LEE:--I hadn't gotten in to that at all. However, before I did leave the Philippines, General MacArthur and Eisenhower had worked up a new defense plan for the Philippines that critiqued at Batangos and so forth, as I understand it. Of course, that was after, that was developed more after I left because it was reasonably certain, before I left the Philippines in '38,



we'd eventually have a war with the Japs. Here's another thing, "Lefty Parker and I played 18 holes of golf at the Manila golf course with Lt. Col. Eisenhower this afternoon. I shot a terrible game of golf."

THOMPSON: This is November 12 of '36.

LEE: November 12, Ah, where the hell that is, "Services Were Held for Prominent Texan", oh, that was the brother of my sister's husband [Thomas Otis Moorhead] that died while I was over in the Philippines in 1936. Ah, here we are, "Parker and I drove out to Camp Murphy this morning he"--that was on Sunday--"he led a three-ship formation with Col. Eisenhower as a passenger and with Lt. Orobias and Cadet Cruz flying the two other ships. I flew the Stinson with Mr. Lambert, Lt. Sales and Sgt. Vergara as passengers. We flew for the parade for the first anniversary of the Commonwealth of the Philippines.

THOMPSON: November 15--

LEE: 15--

THOMPSON:--1936, that's right.



LEE: 1936. "After we finished flying we went by Capt. Potenciano's house and drank some beer."

BURG: So this in effect was fly-by--

LEE: Yeah--

BURG:--that you--

LEE:--it was kind of a fly-over for the celebration of the first anniversary of the Commonwealth, you see, that--

THOMPSON: The inauguration--

LEE: Yes.

THOMPSON:--November 15, 1936.

BURG: So you're flying over downtown Manila--

LEE: Yeah, right.

BURG:--over the government buildings.

LEE: Around, probably, where over the place where you saw that parade a while ago.



BURG: Right.

LEE: "Today was declared a holiday by the President of the Commonwealth to celebrate the first anniversary of the Commonwealth because yesterday was Sunday."

THOMPSON: So, they gave you a work holiday--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON:--on the sixteenth.

LEE: That's right, on Monday, and "I played 18 holes of golf with Lt. Col. Eisenhower and Lt. Parker at the Manila golf club this afternoon." So we did play golf once in a while; Ike liked to golf quite a lot. Matter of fact, he played too much in later years, according to Mamie; too much for his heart. Said, "Flew with three students this morning and then flew to Nichols Field and flew one hour gunnery mission. Flew back to Nichols Field and drove into town to the office and then drove back to Camp Murphy. Lt. Parker took Col. Eisenhower and I took Col. Ord in PTs and flew them to San Miguel Tarlac and flew back to Camp Murphy, solo. Col. Eisenhower and Col. Ord



drove on to Baguio." That was November 24, 1936. Now I don't know what I was doing dropping them at San Miguel Tarlac for, but that was a sugar central, what we called a sugar central, where, you know what it is--

THOMPSON: Refinery?

LEE:--a sugar plant where all the farmers in the area bring the cane in to be processed, and San Miguel Tarlac and most of those sugar centrals were owned by Spanish people. And Col. Ord, he knew a lot of them. He got acquainted fast and Col. Eisenhower knew a lot of them, too.



MRS. LEE: Well, let me ask you something. Did they have a flying strip at Baguio at that time?

LEE: Oh, yes.

MRS. LEE: Did they?

LEE: Uh-huh.

THOMPSON: And at the sugar refinery--

LEE: Yes.

THOMPSON: --they had a strip--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: --or at least you could put down.

LEE: Yeah, they had a strip at most all of them.

BURG: So this could have been a social trip for--

LEE: Yes,--

BURG: --Ord and Eisenhower?

LEE: --both of them went.

THOMPSON: He could be going up to see John at Baguio too,--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: --at Brent School.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: Here's a note about Tommy Powers, "Tom and May Powers came



over and visited with us for a while tonight." See Tommy Powers died the other day out at Palm Springs, California; he was a classmate of mine in flying school.

BURG: I see.

THOMPSON: And Tommy Powers later was--

LEE: Commander of SAC--

THOMPSON: --Commander of SAC.

LEE: --for several years, seven or eight years, I think. There's something here about Eisenhower, "I took off from Camp Murphy at 8:15 with Lt. Col. D. D. Eisenhower, Secretary Quirino and Secretary Vargas as passengers for Tuguegarao, and landed at 10:25. Had lunch there and left at 2:10. Crossed over the mountains, and came down by Vigan and the West Coast. Landed at Camp Murphy 4:55. Had a very good trip all the way with the exception of having to fly high to clear the mountains and the clouds. Col. Eisenhower did most of the flying and I read. . ."
That was in that Stinson Reliant.



BURG: You were a pretty relaxed man yourself!

THOMPSON: He still hadn't soloed and you were letting him--

LEE: Oh, yeah.

THOMPSON:--fly over the mountains.

LEE: He hadn't soloed, but he was flying that old Stinson, see, and I was sitting up there by him, of course. Of course, he had a hold of the wheel, but he could have tossed it to me right quickly if he had any trouble.

BURG: Could we ask you at this point, is the Stinson, is it a larger engine? Is he, in other words, flying a simpler PT and then going to the Reliant, and back and forth between two--

LEE: Well, it wasn't exactly a larger engine. Matter of fact, it was only a 280 horsepower. It was a little larger than the PT, but not as large as the BT engine.

BURG: I see.

LEE: But it had control prop on it--



THOMPSON: Variable pitch.

LEE:--variable pitch props, and vacuum flaps. Those were the things that nearly got me in trouble. The vacuum flap was, just like any vacuum, like any vent on a car, it opens all the way and that's it; or closes all the way. Well, the flaps are all the way down or all the way up. You couldn't stop them like the electrical operated flaps, you see.

BURG: Were they automatic, General?

LEE: Well, you had to pull on a little lever.

BURG: Well, when you did, it was all or nothing.

LEE: All down or all up.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And that's what got me in trouble at Baguio. I liked to cracked up with him that time. But I used them. We'd get on some of those short fields in the Philippines, where we could get in pretty good, we could come right over and land right short and brake her, you see, and then sometimes though, you



couldn't get out; you'd be in some obstruction down there. Well, I'd get her rolling good and I'd turn that lever and the flaps would go down, and that would give me more lift and I'd balloon up; I'd get over it. Well, that didn't work too good up there at Baguio that time, because we was at too high altitude, see, it was 5,000 feet up there. But the Stinson Reliant was an easy handling airplane, and of course we had the wheel, where it worked--where did I put that rubber?

THOMPSON: It's in the back, I think it's the last entry or almost last entry, yeah.

LEE: Yeah.--And it handled good and had the wheel, and it was a pretty easy airplane to fly. It wasn't any easier, perhaps, than the other one.

BURG: Maybe we should ask you, too, General, why did you have it? You had the PTs and later the BTs. Was that Stinson for a particular reason?

LEE: Yeah. We got that, I talked them into getting that, by golly, for us to get around over the Philippines.



BURG: I see.

LEE: Because, you see, they had developed cadres in a lot of these places, like at Tacloban and down at Cebu, and at Iloilo, and these places I mention here, Tagbilaran and those places. They built barracks and they had these young Filipinos in the area to come in for training.

BURG: Right.

LEE: And we had to get around, where we could, to make inspections. I never will forget one time we was up there at Tuguegarao, that was up there north of Manila--and the Japanese used that place for prison camp, too, after they'd took the islands; this same place. And I took Ike in there one time to make an inspection of the barracks, and he wasn't at all happy with them. Some of them young folk, you know, I guess it was a 1st Lt., was smoking a cigarette. Well Ike smoked, too, but at the proper place and time; but this kid was smoking--had it in his mouth--and trying to talk to Ike. Gosh, damn, I wanted to crawl out of there because he took that kid over the coals. He made



him throw it out the window. See, they had these bamboo, not bamboo, but sliding windows, and they used shell, you know--

THOMPSON: Conch shell.

LEE: Conch shell for, it wasn't glass but it did a lot--

THOMPSON: Translucent, maybe.

LEE: --of illuminizing, yeah. O.K., here's something about--

MRS. LEE: We're about out of time on this thing.

THOMPSON: Yeah, you're about run out there.

BURG: Well, she's still turning.

THOMPSON: O.K., go.

LEE: Ah--

BURG: We don't have much more though.

LEE: Well, let's get this in here. "Flew Col. Ord to Calamba, Sugar Central, then to San Miguel Tarlac to make inspection of training sites," see. "Lt. Fernando and Cpl. Lawes went along.



Lt. Fernando did most of the flying." Let's see, if there's anything here about Ike on that page, I don't see it. Maybe it's over here. Oh, yeah, here it is, "I didn't fly any this morning. Parker flew with the students. Sgt. Vegara gave me a box of cigars, Col. Ord gave me a box of cigars, Alfred Keller gave me a box of cigars, and Lt. Paredes gave me a box of cigars, and Col. Eisenhower gave me three boxes of cigars, all Christmas presents!" That was--

THOMPSON: December 24.

LEE: --December 24, yeah. Says, "Bert and I went to a dinner party at the Manila Hotel given by Col. and Mrs. Eisenhower"; that was December 24, 1936, "The Parkers and Huffs were there." See, Sid Huffs, you see.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: "Mrs. Alice Johnson and another gentleman was there. Had a very enjoyable time. We came home a little after 1:00 o'clock. Mary & Heard Roberts" [Commander, U.S.N.] she was a first cousin of mine, "went out to a dinner party." That ends 1936.



THOMPSON: 1936, O.K., we'll have to break at this point, too, and get our cassette reset, I expect.

BURG: Yeah, I think we're very close to the end. It's still running, but my watch says we're almost at--

THOMPSON: We should be running out--

BURG:--the end, do you want me to change?

THOMPSON:--so why don't we go ahead and stop, right.

This is interview #1, Tape 2, with Gen. William L. Lee, done on December 9, 1970, by Alan Thompson, Madyn Burg and William K. Jones.

LEE: 1937. "Took off for Camp Murphy at 8:15 and landed at Baguio at 9:05. Had Col. D. D. Eisenhower and his son, John," now this is where I liked to cracked up, "as a passenger in the Stinson Reliant. We left John there, who was going to school at Brent, we stayed on the ground for about 50 minutes because the clouds were hanging around in the mountains. When we took off we had to take off uphill into the wind and barely got over the ridge at the end of the field. We left Baguio at



10:10 and landed at Camp Murphy at 11:25. We drove by the Army-Navy Club and had a beer. Col. Eisenhower bought a bottle of Black Label Johnny Walker scotch and gave it to me. I appreciated the gift but I didn't like the idea because he shouldn't do it". I never will forget this, I could--

THOMPSON: All right now, this is Sunday, January 3, so John Eisenhower was on his way back to school after Christmas--

LEE: Yeah, and we took him up there, and--

THOMPSON:--New Year's vacation and you were delivering him.

LEE:--when we got up there we landed all right. We landed uphill, into the wind. See, the field was built in a slope. It's 5,000 feet or above there, and so we landed all right, but when I had to take off, we could either take off downwind, down hill, and off over the ravine; or we could take off uphill and into the wind, and have to clear that hump up there, which they later cut off. So we debated, and it says in there we sat on the ground 50 minutes. We sat around in the airplane and talked and smoked, and I smoked a pipe all the time--I had the pipe in



my mouth when we took off--and I finally told Ike, I said, "Those Bellancas that the Philippine Aero-Taxis fly, they go off up that way, and they go off with a load." They had a big engine, 400 horsepower engine in those Bellancas, and I said, "We, just me and you, and we're over an hour of gasoline gone, and," I said, "I think we can make it." And he said, "Well, you're the doctor. And if you think we can, let's go." So we cranked it up and got around and squared away and took off and the progress was slow going up that hill. I wasn't picking up much speed and definitely wasn't getting off the ground. Like a darned fool and not thinking, I reached over and turned the flap lever, and of course, as I said, those blasted flaps they went all the way down--you couldn't stop them halfway like you can sometimes use the flaps on those fighters and all the airplanes now, so they went all the way down and when they did, I kind of ballooned off the ground but I didn't pick up any forward speed. Matter of fact, I kind of slowed my speed as it ballooned me off the ground. I did get a little altitude, but I wasn't picking up much speed to get over to pull it over that hump and I was just, to tell you frankly,



I thought that was it. And I had the pipe in my mouth and old Ike was sitting over there like this, see, I had the only wheel--

BURG: Arms across his chest.

LEE: Yeah, he rode like that a lot. He didn't have any place else to put his hands; it wasn't because there was any particular reason except that. And I turned to him and I said, "We ain't agoin' to make it." Just like that. And he just looked straight ahead. Well, when I got up there I just I had nothing to do but try, so when I got up pretty close to the hill, I pulled back on the wheel and we went over it. And of course on the other side was a 3,000 foot dropoff.

BURG: I see.

LEE: So when I went over, I just pushed that wheel forward as quick as I could, and I had picked up the speed, and that's all I needed, flying speed, but I was afraid I'd stall if I didn't. Well I would have, but as soon as I got some speed, I let the flaps up and we went on back. So, that's why Ike said we didn't miss it but few inches--and I think we missed it a



couple of feet--and that's why he went to the Army-Navy Club and bought that bottle of scotch whiskey for me. We went by there in my old car and stopped--he wanted to go by and have a beer--and we went by and had a beer, and then he bought this bottle of scotch, I thought he was going to take it home to the Manila Hotel. We went out and got in the car to drive him over to the hotel; he got out and said, "Here, you deserve this!"

BURG: Uh-huh.

LEE: He was still thinking about that, and I've often told people, I said, "If we hadn't of made it over that hump, we wouldn't have had Ike for President and wouldn't have had me around either, arguing about things." But that was it; says, "When we took off;" let's see, the school of Brent, "we stayed on the ground for about 50 minutes", waiting for the wind to change, that's what we was hoping, it would change so we could take off downhill. O.K., now here, on January 12, 1937, "I was supposed to fly Col. Ord, James B. Ord, Lt. Col. to Paracale this morning, but he wasn't feeling too well last night. Sent me a note he couldn't go." Let's see, I thought there was something about Ike in here I guess it's on the other side of



the page; oh, yeah, "I rode with Col. Eisenhower, Lt. Col. Eisenhower, for 50 minutes this morning while he flew a PT-1. His flying was fairly good, but not as smooth as it could be. Col. Eisenhower told me this morning that Col. James B. Ord was pretty sick at Sternberg Hospital. I worked in the office the rest of the morning."

THOMPSON: All right, that was an entry for January 13,--

LEE: January 13, 1937. Let's see, Major Howard Hunter, you know, was General MacArthur's doc.

THOMPSON: MacArthur's, uh-huh, physician.

LEE: Yeah. Ah, said "I didn't fly this morning. Parker flew with his students. I worked in the office all the morning. I went to the Quartermaster office for a while, then went by Col. Eisenhower's office for a while" but I didn't say why; probably went by there to get him to argue with me to help me get something. Always having a fuss with somebody and I couldn't get any--I just was a 1st Lt., so I'd go to Ike and get him stirred up, and get Jim Ord on the job, and we would--



THOMPSON: Then you could get it done.

LEE:--pretty well come out with it, yeah. Here it says, "I made a written report to Col. Eisenhower about our trip to Laoag, Vigan, Naguilian, and Iba yesterday". So I must have flown somebody up there. I think I flew Secretary of--somebody-- Interior up there. "Took off from Camp Murphy at 7:20 in the Stinson Reliant with Major Olympia, Capt. Potenciano, and Cpl. somebody [Carandangas] as passengers and landed at Laoag. Inspected training barracks." Oh, yeah. That's what I made the report to him about. Made the inspection of these barracks for him and made a report to him about the barracks condition.

THOMPSON: Now you were doing this, you were inspecting barracks?

LEE: Well, yeah, if they wanted me to, I'd inspect these Filipino cadre places for sanitation, and how they kept the place clean and everything, you see, Ike--

THOMPSON: Not their training or training--

LEE: Oh, no, no--



THOMPSON:--just simply the sanitation and other such matters.

LEE:--more or less that, because you see, all the cadres had trained officers or former constabulary officers with them as a head man for training--and that's one thing; they had that reserve officers training course up at Baguio. They trained some officers up there, too; kind of like our officers candidate school, I guess you would call it.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

BURG: But you not only then were training Philippine flyers but you were serving in the capacity of sort of a air liaison and transport service--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG:--for the military mission.

LEE: Yeah, I was--

THOMPSON: And I.G.

LEE: Yeah, I was working--



BURG: I believe so, yes.

LEE:--I was kind of involved in a lot of things with them, because we worked pretty close together with all of our work; of course I didn't get in on any of the high classified or high decision-making, see. I was just kind of a peon who had my job and kind of worked in odd things that they wanted me to do. "Col. Eisenhower was out for a while this morning and took a ride with Lt. Parker. He rode into town with me and I went over to his office for a conference. Went to my office afterwards, where I worked the rest of the morning." I don't know what the hell the conference was about; didn't say.

BURG: What was the relationship--well let's put it this way: you're flying frequently with a Lt. Col. and you are a 1st Lt. in the Air Corps--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG:--And Ord is a Lt. Col., so between the three of you, what kind of relationship is there? Are you being called by your first name, and--



LEE: Yeah, of course I called them "Colonel", you know, what not, but they called me "Bill", Ike for some reason or other dubbed me Bill--

MRS. LEE: Well, your name was William.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: But everyone else called you "Jerry" and always have.

LEE: All of my classmates at A & M and the flying school named me Jerry because my dad's name was--I was dubbed Jerry when I was a kid. So when I went to A & M there was a friend of mine from home, my classmate at A & M--Texas A & M--called me Jerry, and then when I went to flying school a classmate of mine at A & M was a classmate of mine at the flying school, so he called me Jerry. Ike without knowing that, he called me Bill, and still does; even Mamie, up to this time, calls me Bill. When I write her a note I sign it Bill. And she wrote us a note the other day and said "Dear Bert and Bill", see. And old General MacArthur called me "Commodore", and I don't know what the hell induced him to do that. Because every time I would go in to see



him, which was very rare, I never went in to see him because Ike could nearly always get the deal straightened out but, if we had to go in there to see him together, he'd say, "Come in, Ike", and "Come in, Commodore". Now I was just a damned 1st Lt., Commodore is a one star man--

THOMPSON: Navy.

LEE:--in the navy and--

BURG: He must have known of some Lee in the navy--

LEE: Something--

BURG:--in the past.

LEE:--somewhere or other but he was a great guy.

THOMPSON: Or being called a "field marshal", why, maybe he wanted an "air commodore"?

LEE: Maybe so, something or other.

BURG: Could be, could be.



LEE: Well, that, that was the conference and I don't know what it was about. January 25th."I flew with Lt. Batista and Cadet Acuna for 45 minutes each this morning, and then flew General Valdez, Lt. Col. Eisenhower, and Lt. Torres to Canlubang. Col. Eisenhower and I flew on down to Batangas, made an inspection, and came back to Canlubang and had lunch at the Calamba Sugar Estate Club house, and then on back to Manila arriving at 12:40. We flew an hour and five minutes. Left Camp Murphy at 9:15." That was on the 26th of January we flew down there; that's a little south of Manila. They had quite a lot of sugar cane in that area and that was sugar central.

BURG: I notice there was a Lt.; a Filipino Lt. in that flight--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: Was he by now a student who passed through his flying training? Have any of your students, by January of '37, completed flying training?

LEE: No, I don't know why that boy was along. Maybe we had the room--when we had room, and somebody wanted to go, we took them



just for them to get the experience of flying. Before I retired, if I had a vacancy in my airplane in the Philippine and, for instance, I'd go to Tokyo, or somewhere, I'd always load it up with nurses and docs. They never got to go anywhere, and I'd tell my aide to call the hospital and tell them we was going to Tokyo, or Hong Kong, and anybody wanted to go, I'd take them. That's what happened there. I don't know this Lt. Torres. He could have been, however, an aide [yes, he was the aide] to General Valdez; I don't know. But anyhow, he was along in the Stinson Reliant.



BURG: Would it have been some time in 1937 that your first aviation cadets get their wings?

LEE: Yeah, I got the dope over here on that stuff. I got lots of that dope over here--

BURG: Well, let me ask you this--

LEE: --when they graduated.

BURG: --as a historian I'm very much interested: when they completed their training, what aircraft would they then be assigned



to fly as part of the Philippine Air Corps? Was--do they have--

LEE: Well, the only thing we had was these.

BURG: Still just these?



LEE: And after they finished training, some of these boys and I'll find it in here later on but, for instance, Lt. Sales or Lt. Paha Cruz that cracked up with Jimmy Ord--now that wasn't all Cruz' fault. That was Jimmy Ord's fault as much as it was Cruz'. And I'll tell you why--you see those BT-1s had a windshield that just had the plastic over here and you could reach through and touch the pilot. It was not a closed canopy, but that windshield deflected the wind, some way or other, and there was a gunner's back seat that had the gunner's belt--big wide belt--was snapped on each side of the longerons. But Jimmy Ord was trying to get Cruz to fly right over this particular backyard of the Fairchild's. At that altitude, with an engine with only 350 horsepower, you had to be careful with your turns; you couldn't make a steep turn without spinning out, and Cruz didn't have enough experience to know that, I don't imagine, or it could have happened to me. It might have happened to me, or Lefty Parker,

or somebody who had been flying a number of years. But Jimmy Ord was tapping Cruz on the left shoulder to get him to--trying to point down where he wanted to drop this note exactly where he wanted to drop it. And Cruz said the first thing he knew he was flying into--his ship was going into the pine trees on the side of the mountain, and that's what they did. They hit in a kind of a spinout, see; stall out, see.

BURG: He'd steepened the bank too far--

LEE: Yeah, trying to turn and he stalled out.

BURG:--paying too much attention to Ord--

LEE: To what Jimmy Ord was trying to do, get him to do. Cruz was a good boy. A good, pretty good pilot. We wouldn't have sent him up there because when Jim, Jimmy Ord, told me he wanted to go up, I told him I'd take him or get Parker to take him, and he said, "No, send me up there with one of your--" he'd ridden with some of the Filipino boys before, and Ike had, too, just locally around and all, up to Stotsenberg and back. So, it was on a Sunday--I think it was the reason that he wanted me



to send a Filipino; he didn't want to bother us--so, that's what happened. He was the first man killed in an airplane. Said, "I also rode with Col. Eisenhower for 50 minutes," says, "I flew 45 minutes each with Lt. Batista and Cadet Acuna. Cadet Acuna's work has dropped off considerable the last couple of days." So I rode with Ike that day, January 28th. Let's see, must have rode with him in here somewhere, probably on this side. "I went to the military advisors's office for a little while to talk to Lt. Col. Eisenhower"; don't know what I talked to him about. "I flew with Cadet de Leon and Lt. Prudenciado for 35 minutes each this morning. I took off from Camp Murphy at 8:20 with Col. Eisenhower and Lt. Huff as passengers and landed at Naguilian at 9:30. Col. Ord was there, made an inspection of the barracks, and left Naguilian at 10:30 with Col. Ord as my additional passenger and landed at Cabanatuan at 11:30. Made an inspection of the place and left there 12:15 and landed at Camp Murphy at 12:20." That was in the Stinson Reliant. Don't see anything there about Ike. Let's see, oh, "had Col. and Mrs. Eisenhower, Lt. and Mrs. Hal Mace, Lt. and Mrs. Thomas Powers, Lt. and Mrs. P. K. Moore, Lt. and Mrs. Parker, the Roberts, and myself." What were we having? Oh, "we had a little



party at the house tonight. Most everyone went home fairly early, except Tommy and P. K., and we stayed up till 2:30".

THOMPSON: That was February 15--

LEE: Yeah--

THOMPSON:--of 37, no special occasion, just a party.

LEE:--February 13. Just a party, I guess. We probably figured we owed somebody a party.

THOMPSON: Saturday--

LEE: February 13, 1937, yeah.

THOMPSON:--13th.

LEE: Well, anyhow, we drank some whiskey and ate some food; had a pretty good time, I guess. Here's something about Major Prosser, says, "Lt. Col. Eisenhower called me about noon to tell me that Major Harvey Prosser was being relieved from the Bureau of Aeronautics for disciplinary action for talking to Gen. Holbrook in an ungentlemanly manner."



THOMPSON: Holbrook, of course, was department commander.

LEE: Yeah--

THOMPSON: That was no man to take up wrong.

LEE: That's right, see now, that was on February 15, 1937.

BURG: As you came in to that year did you, or did any of your superiors, begin to discuss the aircraft that were going to be used by the Filipinos in defense of the Philippines? That is, at that time, are you beginning to think of what comes ahead now?



LEE: Yeah, as a matter of fact, I don't know whether it was this early or not, and I don't know whether I still have it or not, but me and Lambert, or Lefty Parker, or maybe Jew Lewis, I don't know, I think it was sometime not too long before I left, we had worked out a budget and plan for the airplanes to be purchased for the next three years for the Philippines, for the Philippine Air Force.

BURG: Uh-huh.

LEE: That I submitted to the military advisor, but I don't know what ever happened to it because the cost was running up around a million pesos, which was quite a lot of money for the Filipinos, of course their military establishment was costing quite a lot, too. I may have that somewhere in my junk at home, because I remember, I kept carbon copies of that.

THOMPSON: That would be a very interesting document, indeed.

BURG: I think it would be an excellent document to have.



THOMPSON: Yeah.

LEE: If I can check through and find it, I believe it's probably in one of that extra desk of mine in there. I'm not sure, I'll look and see if I can find it.

MRS. LEE: Well, how about a lot of that stuff you had in those suitcases--could be in some of them.

LEE: It could be in there, too. I've got all the speeches I ever made in old suitcases there.

THOMPSON: Well, anything you got for this period we certainly would be interested in.

BURG: Indeed.

LEE: Well, I know I don't have any particular thing; I wasn't making speeches then, I was just a peon.

BURG: Well, my thought was that whatever your recommendation was in '37 or '38, it's later changed when the Air Corps, when the United States, is going to take over more of the Philippine defense, but what you had in mind would be very, very interesting, I think.

LEE: Well, what I had in mind, what we had in mind--I say I; I was just head man--of course, I had Jew Lewis and an old boy that was working with me, Lefty Parker, until he left--I lost my place. We were trying to develop enough air force for the Philippines, at that time, to be able to patrol--

MRS. LEE: Somewhere around the 15th in there.

THOMPSON: Of February.

BURG: Yes.



LEE:--patrol the coast and at the same time, if we caught an enemy sea-going craft approaching, that we could bomb it from the air, see, with some kind of a bomb. Of course, we didn't have much bombs then or bombers; when I got back the old B-17 was just coming in, you know. But that was what we had in mind; trying to protect and patrol and keep surveillance on the coast line of the Philippines.

BURG: So the procurement paper that you were writing up would not have included much in the way of fighter aircraft?



LEE: No.

BURG: It was more of--

LEE: More of--

BURG:--a medium bomber type--

LEE:--a surveillance type, we'll say. If we caught a sub approaching, or something, drop a bomb on it, you see. Small bomb type craft.

THOMPSON: But you weren't thinking of heavy bombers--

LEE: No.

THOMPSON:--even of the level that they already had in the American service.

LEE: No, no, no. Them B-17s, we didn't think anything, maybe--

THOMPSON: You must have known about it as--

LEE: Oh, yeah.

THOMPSON:--it was coming.

LEE: We knew that it was coming, we knew but--

THOMPSON: But you also knew you couldn't afford it.

LEE: Yeah. Well, that was what we was trying to do.

BURG: Well, General, did any of the navy present--Huff is a surface officer--but were there any naval air officers around who would put up a fight over your plan?

LEE: No.



BURG: Was it that there were none to put a fight, or that no fight was put up at all?

LEE: No.

THOMPSON: There was no naval aviation in--

LEE: No.

THOMPSON:--Manila at all.

LEE: No.

BURG: Because it seems to me that you'd have a problem back in the states at that time if you--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG:--offered to go out, you know, to protect our country by flying out to sea.

LEE: Yeah, we didn't have any naval aviation in the Philippines at all. We had some submariners--

BURG: Uh-huh.



LEE:--submariners over there. I had a first cousin--man who married a first cousin of mine was a submarine officer. And Sid Huff was a surface officer and--but that's where my thinking about the protection, we'll say, of the Philippines by air was where MacArthur made the remark, so Ike told me, that "that damned 1st Lt. wasn't going to run their business", or something or other, and I wasn't trying to run their business, I just--

THOMPSON: Well, he was going to defend the beaches and your--

LEE: Oh, yeah, well that--

THOMPSON:--approach was quite different.

LEE: Yeah, I would, I was trying to--

THOMPSON: Avoid the beaches.

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: Pardon me for a minute, Alan.

THOMPSON: Get another cassette.

LEE: I don't know--



THOMPSON: Why don't we go ahead then, sir, on this.

LEE: I don't know where I got here.

THOMPSON: That's about right, around the 13th.

LEE: Well, now here's where we had that party at the house, so I guess I got over here. That's where Prosser was relieved, "went by the military advisor's office for a while this morning and then to my office", didn't say what I did, but I imagine I talked to Ike, or Jimmy Ord, probably Ike. Ike was in the office most of the time; Jimmy Ord was out politicking, trying to sell the Filipinos on various things that the military advisor wanted. Says, "I gave a lecture to the Philippine Army Reserve Officers School at Camp Henry T. Allen", that was up in Baguio, "from 11:00 to 12:00. Mrs. Eisenhower drove up from Manila today. Somewhere near San Fernando Pampanga, her driver hit a Filipino child but didn't hurt it seriously". That was on February 19, 1937.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: "I gave three lectures to the Philippine Army Reserve Officer

School from 8:00 to 11:00 on 'Bombardment Aviation', 'The Occupation of Aviation', and 'An Air Force Against the Philippines'. Bought two five gallon cans of gasoline", let's see, where is that?

THOMPSON: Possibly the entry on the other side is the only thing.

LEE: "Col. Eisenhower drove in from Manila this afternoon. Had he and wife in our room for some drinks before dinner."

THOMPSON: This is a Saturday on February 20--

LEE: 20th, 1937.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: Ah, see anything about Ike on this side? Oh, yeah, here, "Heard that Mrs. Eisenhower had been seriously ill in Baguio with some kind of internal hemorrhage but understand today that she is some better." That's all I got there.

THOMPSON: This is February 24.

LEE: February 24. I see here, "flew with Col. Eisenhower for



40 minutes this morning and then Lefty Parker and I flew to Nichols Field", let's see, "I flew Col. Eisenhower to Baguio this afternoon in an O-19-B. Left Nichols Field at 2:30 and landed at Baguio at 3:50. Left Baguio at 3:55 and landed in Nichols at 5:05." Didn't say what we went up there for, but we went anyway.

THOMPSON: But it's a Friday, March 12; he may have gone up to spend the weekend with John--

LEE: Yeah.



THOMPSON:--and, perhaps, Mamie is still in the hospital up there, too.

LEE: Yeah, maybe Mrs. Eisenhower was up there in the hospital cause you see we didn't stay long.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: Let's see, "went by the military advisor's office and talked with Col. Ord and Eisenhower a while". Didn't say what we talked about, "I flew Col. Eisenhower to Baguio this afternoon

in an O-19-C. I flew an hour under the hood. Took me an hour and 15 minutes to go up and an hour and 25 minutes to come back." So I guess Ike was riding as safety pilot. I had the hood; I was getting instrument practice flying. Let's see, don't see anything on that side, "Flew Col. James B. Ord to Baguio in an O-19-C leaving Nichols at 7:35 and landing at Baguio at 8:50, then went to the Camp John Hay Hospital to see Col. and Mrs. Eisenhower who are sick. Both are getting along fine."
March 24, 1937.



THOMPSON: Now what kind of sickness would this be?

LEE: Oh, probably a virus of some sort, but they probably both were in the hospital at--

MRS. LEE: Probably from eating the wrong kind of food.'

LEE: Camp John Hay--

THOMPSON: Commonly happens.

MRS. LEE: Yes, that's right.

LEE: --probably diarrhea or dysentery of some sort, yeah. That

was on the 24th of--let's see--"had a radio from Stearman Aircraft Company advising that our seven new airplanes left Wichita, Kansas, on March 20th". Seven, see. We ordered four more PTs and three BTs---

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: So they were going to leave on March 20th. "They should arrive the first week in May". O.K., "I left Nichols Field at 6:05 A.M. in an O-19-C and landed at Baguio at 7:15 A.M. Picked up Col. Eisenhower and left at 7:20 and landed at Nichols Field at 8:40 and drove Col. Eisenhower by his office and stopped in for a short conference, then drove to my office where I worked the rest of the morning." That was on the 30th of March 1937, I guess this is when he got out of the hospital; I went up there to get him.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: O.K. here, this is the one that's good. Said, "I worked in the office the rest", let's see, first I said, "I flew two hours and five minutes with the following students: Lt. Luzon,



Lt. Garcia, and Lt. Galvez. Lt. Galvez doesn't do so well and unless he improves he will not last long. I worked in the office the rest of the morning. Went by to see Col. Eisenhower for a while. Gen. Francisco, the old S.O.B., is growling again about the way he's being ignored and insulted by the air corps officers at Camp Murphy. I've had more trouble and less consideration from him than any Philippine Army officer." See, he'd go to Ike and Ike'd come to me, or ask me about it, see. Well, you see, he was commander of the base--Commander of Camp Murphy--and hell, he come down there, and of course we were courteous to him, but we didn't--



THOMPSON: Give him extra time of day.

LEE: No, we didn't stand around and swap lies with him, so to speak, and I guess he felt he was being insulted. That wasn't the point, we were working. We were busy. He wasn't bothering us; I wasn't bothering him, but he thought he wasn't getting proper treatment, I guess.

BURG: Then would Eisenhower soothe him down and--

LEE: Oh, yeah.

BURG: --and get his feathers smooth?

LEE: Yeah, he'd straighten him out. All right, here it says, "Col. Eisenhower was out this morning and got things straightened up with General Francisco", that was the next day, April 1st. So he got things straightened out. He went by to see old Gen. Francisco up at his office, see, on Camp Murphy. That's when the China Clipper first got over here, I guess. "Mailed a letter to the folks at home by Clipper this afternoon." Let's see, "Left Nichols Field at 6:05 in an O-19 with Lt. Col. Eisenhower as passenger and landed at Baguio at 7:20. Left Baguio solo", wonder what's the matter I left Ike up there? "And landed at Nichols Field at 8:40. Lt. Parker flew over from Camp Murphy to pick me up in a Philippine Army plane." I landed at Nichols so somebody had to come and get me. I guess I took Ike back up there--

THOMPSON: For Saturday, for the weekend.

LEE: --on a Saturday, for the weekend, yeah. Sunday, I probably



went back up there and got him on Monday; something here about it, says, "Lt. Parker flew to Baguio and picked up Col. Eisenhower in an O-19 this morning." So Lefty went up there and got him on Monday.

THOMPSON: What would it have been to have driven up to Baguio from Manila?

LEE: Well, it's kind of a hell of a sort of a road, you see. You run into carabao carts and chickens and kids and goats and pigs, all in those highways, and it was about 140 miles from Manila to drive up there. I would say three hours would have been good time. You see, Mrs. Eisenhower said--you know I read back there where her car hit--

THOMPSON: Hit a child.

LEE:--child.

THOMPSON: Uh-huh.

LEE: Well, those little old barrios that you went through, you know, little old narrow streets, and people living in nipa huts,



and pigs and things running loose around there, you know, and then the caraboa pulling carts. It was just a chore to drive. And they drove on the left hand side, too, then, you see. They drive on the right side now. It was left hand traffic. And, heck, even when we were in the Philippines the last trip, we flew to Manila two or three times a week for social affairs. We had staff cars down there that would meet us at Nichols Field, out where we landed there at the Manila airport. And it was only about a 35 minute flight. But gosh, driving down there at night and back, it would have been something. And it wasn't safe when we first went over there. We couldn't get off the base there at Clark Field after dark, or we couldn't start for Manila unless we could get there before dark by car, or vice-versa coming from Manila back to Clark, because of the Huk situation, the Communists. And when we first got over there, we went to a party down San Fernando--some of the military area commander of the Philippine Army was held in--we went down there with armed guard; half-track leading and a half-track following the car. That was in August of '52. See, the Huks or Communists, were still shooting people; they still are. See, that was quite



a stronghold around Clark Field, and in that area, for the Huks. The Huks were the Communists. Here's something "I flew Lt. Luzon, Lt. Magluyan, and Lt. Garcia this morning. Worked in the office the rest of the morning. Col. Eisenhower, Cadet Zosa and Sgt. Santiago and I left Camp Murphy in the Stinson Reliant at 1:00 P.M., and landed at Tacloban at 4:15. Col. Eisenhower and I inspected the training cadre there. Cadet Zosa and I went to see his folks. Col. Eisenhower and I spent the night with Zosa's folks. We slept on Bejuca beds", which is the first time Ike ever slept on one--second time I ever slept on one. I slept on one before; I knew what they were like. "I slept pretty well, but Col. Eisenhower decided he was softer than he thought he was, after having slept on one." And that's the night I was telling you about. They had these adjoining rooms, and Dr. Zosa had a nice home, but in the Philippines you build a nice house and right next door--of course, you'd have a rock wall around your house maybe six or seven feet high--but right over the wall would be a nipa shack. There was no zoning business like we have in the cities this day. So when we went to bed, we had adjoining rooms, just a door between, of course we had



fancy bedsteads of carved wood and fancy mosquito bars but Bejuca beds. And I'd slept on one down at this Davao penal colony and I knew what it was like. Because it's just nearly like sleeping on a board floor, but there is a little give in that net, Bejuca, and they have a nice sheet, and then they have a dutch, what they call dutch widows.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: You know, one to take to bed with you--

BURG: A pad to absorb perspiration.

LEE: Yeah, and to put the sheets over you so you can get some air circulation. And I told Ike, I said, "I bet you're not going to sleep good on that bed." And he said, "Oh, hell, Bill", he said, "I'm pretty tough and I'm tired so--" I didn't sleep very well myself, particularly with that child's squalling, crying next door in that shack. I didn't say anything during the night, I didn't dare to, but I was reasonably certain that Ike couldn't be asleep; the noise, and the bed. And this child starts crying and then they'd start this gramophone--of



course I never saw it, but you know what I'm talking about-- and the child would stop. That placated or pacified it. Things would be quiet for maybe 30 minutes and then that child would start crying again. I imagine it was ill or sick, or something. Anyhow, the next morning, I got up and I looked in there and Ike was already up, running around in his underwear or something, barefooted, and well, I said, "How did you sleep?" He said, "By God, Bill, I ain't as tough as I thought I was." Well, that's just the way he was, you know; he was just a whole soul type of fellow. And--where did it get there? Where'd we get this?

THOMPSON: This was somewhere--

LEE: Right here on--

THOMPSON: That was April 6.

LEE: April 6, 1937. Now this Cadet Zosa see he was one of our good students and we sent him to Randolph Field and he graduated and then we sent him over to Barksdale Field to get in some tactical training with the old 3rd Attack Group over



there and while he was over there he, there's a lot of entries in here about him about his girl, his sweetheart came to me in Manila and finally they got married in Shreveport and when we came back to the Philippines you remember we went by Barksdale Field and had lunch with them. "Col. Eisenhower, Gen. Santos, Sgt. Santiago and I took off in the Stinson Reliant"-- that was my crew chief--"from Tacloban at 7:15" now what in the hell were we doing up there? When did we get there? Oh, that's where we went to Tacloban, see I didn't--

THOMPSON: You were up there over night; that's where you were staying over night.

LEE: Yeah, but we didn't have General Santos with us when we went down there. "Col. Eisenhower, Cadet Zosa and Santiago" Gen. Santos must have been down there on the boat or something. Anyhow, "Col. Eisenhower, Gen. Santos, Sgt. Santiago and I took off in the Stinson Reliant from Tacloban at 7:15 for Cagayan, Misamis, but had to turn and go to Cebu on account of rain. Landed at Cebu at 9:05, took on some gasoline, and left Cebu at 11:05 for Camp Keithley and landed at Keithley at 12:45; had



lunch and talked with Col. Nicdao" it looks like "about the Moro campaign now going on in Lanao. Left Camp Keithley at 2:45 and landed at Cagayan at 3:45, took on gasoline, and made an inspection and left at 4:10. Landed at Malaybalay at 4:40 and took off at 4:50 with the intention of getting to Davao but had to return on account of rain and clouds. Landed at 5:50. Spent the night with Capt. Dumlao in Malaybalay." And that was rough going down there, brother; I'm telling you that's when you was just topping the trees and big, old, high mountains around down there, and you didn't know exactly where you were, and you didn't dare get on instruments. We had no navigation aids like radar or radio and stuff at that time. So when we ran into this stuff, I always maintained a 180 degree turn is the best maneuver in flying. You turn around when you get in the stuff and go back, and that's what we did. We went back to Malaybalay, and that was up on the side of the hill down in Mindanao, right out of a pineapple plantation, Del Monte, down there. "We had to stay around Malaybalay until 9:55 and we finally got off after the clouds cleared and it lifted enough. We started for Davao but



couldn't get there because of clouds and rain so came back to Cotabato. Gen. Santos, Col. Eisenhower inspected training cadres while Sgt. Santiago and I put gasoline in the ship. Went into town and ate and then took off from Cotabato at 1:30 and landed at Jolo, Sulu at 4:00 o'clock, drove down and inspected training cadre and took off at 4:45 and landed at Zamboanga at 5:50. Col. Stevens met us, Gen. Santos and Col. Eisenhower inspected training cadres while we gassed the ship. Gen. Santos spent the night at San Roman Penal Colony farm and Col. Eisenhower and I spent the night with Col. and Mrs. L. R. Stevens". Now he was--



THOMPSON: He was camp commander?

LEE: No, he was the commander for that area, Col. Stevens was. You see, he was a constabulary officer, an American. "Took off from Zamboanga at 7:15" that's on April 9 "landed at Iloilo at 10:10. We flew over Canlaon volcano and the island of Negros, we were about 11,000 feet high and looked right down into the crater. It's not active but it was a few years ago. Gen. Santos and Col. Eisenhower made an inspection of Iloilo while Santiago and I gassed the ship. We all went to the island hotel and ate

some sandwiches and left Iloilo at 12:15 and landed at Camp Murphy at 2:55. Had good flying weather all day. Got home about 4:00 P.M." O.K. Here's something else here somewhere, what's that? "Wire your mother at once terribly worried about not hearing from you". That's to me.



THOMPSON: Had they lost track of them down there in the island?

LEE: No, I was just like all kids, you know; let your folks go to the devil, "had a telegram from Clara asking them in San Antonio, 'please wire your mother at once'". That's what that was about. Oh here, we'll get over here about something about Ike, "Col. and Mrs. Eisenhower came by for a few minutes they just gave Bill a golf bag, a putter, mid-iron and a brassie that used to belong to their son, John. They didn't get out of the car as Mrs. Eisenhower had been sick and was out of the hospital on pass." That was April 11, 1937.

MRS. LEE: I think that's when Mamie had that perforated ulcer, I believe.

LEE: That was Sunday, April 11, 1937. Let's see, don't see anything about Ike on that page. Must be something over here,

says, Lt. Parker and I went by the military advisor's office to see Col. Ord and Col. Eisenhower for a while". That's all it said. I don't know what we went to see him about, but probably something about the air force. "I didn't fly any today. Col. Eisenhower was out to talk to Lt. Orobias, Lt. Paredes, and Cadet Cruz about going to Randolph Field this morning. Cadet Zosa wasn't present as he hadn't returned from Tacloban." We left him down there, when we went down there. "He got in on a boat this morning. Worked in the office the rest of the day. Bunch of the Philippine Officers gave a dutch treat party at the Bamboo Cafe for Major Olympia tonight. I was invited to attend but didn't go as I didn't feel much like it." O.K., let's see if we can find something about Ike here, "Col. Eisenhower was out for a while this morning; he's getting to be a nuisance".

THOMPSON: All right, here we are April 19.

LEE. 1937.

THOMPSON: All right.



LEE: 'Means well but has some ideas and plans for the Air Corps that we can't hope to put in force now.' So I don't remember--

THOMPSON: Remember what those plans were?

LEE:--what they was. I don't remember, I don't remember what they were.

BURG: Whatever they were they didn't match up with what you had suggested--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG:--in your budget request.

LEE: Yeah, something was wrong "that we can't hope to put in to force now" but I have no idea what they were.

BURG: "He meant well" --

LEE: Yeah.

BURG:--so you evidently felt that his request was not out of line--

LEE: No.

BURG:--his timing was poor as far as you were concerned.



LEE: Well, either that or something was wrong, says "means well but has some ideas and plans for the Air Corps that we can't hope to put into force now" and I have no idea, can't remember what they would have been about. Says, "flew with" this is April 20, "flew with Lt. Acosta and Lt. Ebuén for 30 minutes". Incidentally, Ebuén was flying the airplane that President Magsaysay was killed in in Cebu in 1957, March of '57.

THOMPSON: For Heaven's sake.

LEE: Ebuén was, was a Col. at that time and he was a good pilot, but they did the wrong thing at Cebu and I know exactly what happened, 'cause it danged near happened to me at times. Says, "then I rode with Col. Eisenhower for 50 minutes and flew to Nichols Field and picked up Lt. Parker". Says, "then went to the military advisor's office to see Col. Eisenhower and Col. Ord for a while." I have no idea what I went to see them about but we were talking about air force, I'm sure. "I flew Lt. Col. Eisenhower to Baguio this morning in an O-19-C, came back solo," that was on April 21, it was on a Wednesday, 1937. "Left Nichols Field and landed at Baguio at 7:40" and so forth. "Sol-



dier at Nichols Field was hanging by the neck in their #5 tee caddy house on the golf course was found dead this morning, apparently was suicide." That has nothing to do with Ike, but it shows you how I pick up things from my diary. There must be something about Ike here; I have it here. Oh, "I left Nichols Field 6:00 A.M. in an O-19 for Baguio solo and landed at Baguio at 7:10, picked up Col. Eisenhower and took off at 7:20 and landed at Naguilian [Naguilian was just a few minutes from Baguio on the coast] at 7:30, made an inspection and left at 8:30 and landed at San Miguel Tarlac at 9:20 and made an inspection; the cadre was found in a filthy dirty condition" that's probably the time that Ike got on that kid for smoking that cigarette, made him throw it out the window of the barracks, some Lt. he had. "Left at 10:00 A.M. and landed at Clark Field at 10:10 drove down and made an inspection of Camp Dau and took off from Clark Field at 11:35 and landed at Nichols Field at 12:05. I drove Col. Eisenhower to his office and then went to my office." That was April 22, 1937. So we were doing or getting around quite a lot. You see, Ike being a U.S. officer, he could ride in a U.S. airplane any time we got one. I had to get so much



time in there in a U.S. plane so I could get my flying pay, you see. In those days we had to put in four hours at least each month to get flying pay.

BURG: So you could simply requisition an American aircraft--

LEE: Yeah, I could ask them there at Nichols Field to schedule me an airplane to fly on a certain day, see, and then we lived right out across from Nichols Field and I could drive over there and fly and then get in my car and drive back, and sometime drive over there to fly and Lt. Parker or somebody come over and pick me up at Nichols and fly me out to Camp Murphy.



BURG: So none of your training time in Philippine aircraft counted toward flight pay for you?

LEE: No, it didn't. See that's the reason I had to fly in the--

THOMPSON: In the O-19s:

LEE:--in the O-19s. Now you see, this is strictly a log book for the Philippine Air Force. This is marked X, time in a Philippine Army plane, and I think I wound up with a total of--

Gen. William L. Lee, 12-9-70, Interview #1, Tape #2 Page 200

I depart from the Manila May 1939 in a U.S. Army transport bound for the United States. I wound up with, that says only 734 hours in Philippine airplanes. But every place in that log book is marked with a paper where I flew with Ike, see.

BURG: I see.

LEE: I brought it on the trip you see; he was there, some way or other.

BURG: Uh-huh.

LEE: Ah, "worked at Camp Murphy a while this morning, flew Col. Eisenhower to Calamba [located in Canlubang] to make an inspection of the training cadre." We both stayed at the . "Flew down in the Stinson Reliant, Sgt. Ojeda went along as a passenger." Sgt. Ojeda was one of our crew chiefs on that Stinson Reliant and was a pretty good boy, too.'

BURG: So you're using all Filipino line crew.

LEE: Oh, yeah, everything on our planes out there were the Philippine, Filipino boys.



BURG: Had been trained by American Air Corps?

LEE: Well, we trained some of them you know we got some of them trained over on-the-job training at Nichols, and then Mr. Lambert knew quite a lot about the airplanes and we, just on-the-job training. They didn't have a technical training at all; you know, as a school like at Chanute Field or at Lowry Field. We did have some boys in training that we sent to these schools, but they hadn't gotten back. So these boys, like Ojeda and these other boys that went with us on these trips--but those airplanes were simple though, at that time. They were simpler than a car is today, you see. And--

BURG: Of course you risked your life each time you got--

LEE: Oh, yeah.

BURG:--in that aircraft.

LEE: Well, that's for sure. That's what I say, it's amazing-- the Good Lord was with all of us in our flying, like flying all around down there in Mindanao over that unexplored--at that time, I don't know whether it's been explored by now or not,



but the map at that time showed it as "unexplored". Flying over trees 2-300 feet high in weather that, well you could just see maybe 3 or 400 yards ahead of you.

BURG: But you don't seem to have been worried about the maintenance of your aircraft.

LEE: I wasn't concerned because as long as the engine was ticking, and it just had one engine, see. I guess, I guess we didn't have enough sense to be scared. Maybe Ike was; he was older than we were course, 13 years older than I was, and he might have been more concerned than I was, but I guess he felt it was just like the time we took off at Baguio. He said, "Well, you're the doctor", he said, "I'm with you." You see.

BURG: Uh-huh.

LEE: Well, he was with us all the time, and if that old engine would have just coughed a couple of times we'd have been hanging up there on top of some big tree somewhere.

THOMPSON: Unknown, unmarked, unreported--



LEE: Unmarked, cause we--

THOMPSON:--cause they never came down.

BURG: Gosh, yes.

LEE:--cause we were not found, see. So it was just the Good Lord was with us, and no question about it. And I think Ike and a lot of us realized it in later years, but at the time, it was no--

THOMPSON: It wasn't extraordinary at all.

LEE: No.

THOMPSON: It was the kind of things you do.

LEE: No, it was normal business day. Says, "General Santos, General Francisco, Col. Eisenhower, Col. Ord and quite a few more officers were out." What was this for? That was on Monday, May the 3rd, "Tutt" Imlay was his name, "Mark Lewis, Lefty Parker and I went to Camp Murphy today at noon and had dinner with the boys"--must have been a special occasion--oh, yeah,



"yesterday completed the year's operation but it being Sunday we declared holiday for today. We have had a very successful year and I believe that everyone has been satisfied." So that was the second year see, we started flying on May 2nd, 1936, that's the first time I ever flew an airplane from Camp Murphy, so this was the celebration and first anniversary.

BURG: A year of training.

LEE: Yeah, year of flying.

THOMPSON: Year of having airplanes to work with anyway.

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: Yes, and having planes.

LEE: That's what that was about, said, "I went by to see Col. Eisenhower at the military advisor's office about an endorsement that I wrote to the Chief Quartermaster service regarding writing letters to the air corps about the expenditure of gasoline. Damnedest people in the world and can worry hell out of a man if he would let them." That was the quartermaster of the Philippine Army, see.



THOMPSON: Giving you static over--

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: --too much gas consumption.

LEE: Yeah, "regarding writing letter to air corps about the expenditure of gasoline" so that's what that was about. So I go to Ike when I have trouble and he and Col. Ord, usually got things squared away, one way or the other. Good people to work for; you sure knew where you stood all the time. Says, "Lt. Parker and Sgt. Vegara flew the first one of the Philippine Army BT-1s or Stearman 76-B-1s for a few minutes this morning, then Col. Eisenhower rode with him and then Mr. Lambert. I flew it for 15 minutes, worked in"--that's the first one of those big--

BURG: Yes.

LEE: --the big engine. That was Feb.--March, May 5, 1937. Now something in here about "I went by Col. Eisenhower's office after the boat sailed and talked to him a while", says, "I saw



the transport, Grant, leave at 12:00 noon today we had four Filipino boys, Lt. Orobia, Lt. Parades, Lt. Cruz and Lt. Zosa on it going to Randolph Field for flying training." That was the U.S. Grant; they came back on the boat.

THOMPSON: So, one year after you started, your first students went off for Randolph--

LEE: Went to Randolph, yes.

THOMPSON: Very good.

LEE: We had a graduation of our own here a little later on.

BURG: Now, in our own Air Corps, General, was training carried on in about three different levels? Did a man start in primary and then go to basic and then go--

LEE: Advanced.

BURG:--advanced.

LEE: Yeah, that's what I went through.



BURG: Now, were your Philippine cadets put through the same three stages before they went to Randolph, or did you just give them primary?

LEE: Well, we gave them primary and that's all we could give them.

THOMPSON: Only had the PTs.

LEE: PTs, and then later, after we got those BTs I mentioned there, the 76-B-1 or whatever they were, we gave them some time in those ships. They were heavier, with more power. But we were primarily interested--we figured if we could train them in the primary flying and be reasonably sure they could get through Randolph Field, the primary side stage, they would make it the rest of the way, you see. Cause at Randolph Field we had the west side of the field was primary and east side was basic when I was there in the 30s. And then when they finished the basic they all went to Kelly Field and took the advanced in the fighters, or we called it pursuit then, and attack, bombardment, and observation; we had four phases of aviation. Of course, all we had was those little planes, but we were reasonably sure that they could make it before they went.



BURG: Alan, if we don't think of it now, we'll never think of it--the color scheme of your aircraft, your PTs, were they a standard army blue fuselage and the yellow wings?

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: They were painted to our standard but they had the Philippine blue diamond--

THOMPSON: Diamond.

BURG:--with white surrounding it.

LEE: Blue and white diamond, yeah.

THOMPSON: It's a inner blue diamond in a larger white diamond.

LEE: Yeah.

THOMPSON: Wasn't that it?

LEE: Yeah, that what it was. Sat there trying to figure out what kind of an insignia; I wanted something simple that you could see at a distance and--



BURG: Yes.

LEE:--and recognize, like our circle.

THOMPSON: Like our circle.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: And that was about the best thing that we could come up with, and I drew it just roughly with a ruler; of course, I didn't have it exactly to scale, you know, beside I'm not very good at that, and I got Jimmy Lambert to kind of touch it up some. We called it the "blue-white diamond". We didn't have any red in it, and I think the boys later put a red border on the outside.



BURG: I believe you're right, General. Now, it did not say under the lower wing "Philippine--

LEE: No.

BURG:--Air Corps", there was no large--

LEE: No.

BURG:--lettering on it.

LEE: No, just had the--

BURG: All right, fine.

LEE:--insignia on it.

BURG: Fine, thanks. Pardon me, Alan, I didn't mean to--

THOMPSON: No, that's fine. Great. Now we were in May 17 or so. We're about to come up with the solo.

LEE: Yeah, we'll get there in a minute.

THOMPSON: All right, then I think we're going to have to break it off.

LEE: Well, O.K. We done passed that, it's May 15th, "Col. Eisenhower was out and flew for 15 minutes, makes a pretty good landing"--

THOMPSON: You're testing him out, here.



INTERVIEW WITH
General William Lee

by

Dr. Maclyn Burg
Oral Historian

on

May 12, 1971

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



Gift of Personal Statement

GENERAL WILLIAM L. LEE

to the

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 as amended (63 Stat. 377) and regulations issued thereunder, I, William L. Lee, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a transcript of a personal statement approved by me on October 22, 1975 and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. The gift of this document is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.

2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by the terms of this instrument available for research as soon as it has been deposited in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.

This is an oral history interview with General William L. Lee of May 12, 1971. The interviewer is Maclyn Burg; and present are General Lee and his wife, Mrs. Lee. The interview is being done in the afternoon of the 12th.

Page 212

DR. BURG: I think that we'll start by asking General Lee to say something about the circumstances under which he left the Philippines in 1939--I believe it was. For example, was this the completion of your tour of duty, or was it that the onslaught of the war in Europe caused you to--

MRS. LEE: 1938, not '39.

GENERAL LEE: It was '38--

DR. BURG: '38, that you left.



GENERAL LEE:--when we came home. Well, it was actually the termination of my tour of duty, which had been extended. Normally, tour of duty in the Philippines was two years at that time, but General Eisenhower who was then colonel, and General MacArthur got me extended one year to continue with my training of the Philippine Air Force. And then as this year was almost ending--the third year--Ike talked to me about extending another year to continue with the job, and I agreed to do so if they could get the War Department in Washington to approve of the extension. And so

General MacArthur--course Ike prepared the message that came to Washington asking for me to extend another year. And as well as I remember--I don't remember what the wording of the return message was--but they refused to let me stay another year.

BURG: Oh, they did?

LEE: Yes. Even though General MacArthur had been appointed chief of staff for five years, they turned him down on his request for me to stay another year--the fourth year, rather.

BURG: Did you ever suspect, General, why that might have been? Did you ever hear or--

LEE: No, but I had a suspicion. General MacArthur, you know, was a relatively junior general at the time he was made chief of staff. When he was selected as chief of staff, my recollection was that there was some hundred and some odd generals who was senior to him on the regular promotion list.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And he was selected over them. And I've always felt myself,



personally--not that I new this to be a fact--but felt personally that there was a certain amount of petty jealousy among those people who MacArthur jumped over when he made chief of staff.

BURG: I see.

LEE: Then when he was given the job to go to the Philippines and had served almost five years as Chief of Staff, some of those generals moved up into positions of power. See?

BURG: Yes.

LEE: So then when General MacArthur requested certain things, I think they were vindictive. That's my own feeling. I don't know for sure. And they refused him everything that they could legally do.



BURG: You heard, then, other circumstances than just the refusal on you?

LEE: Oh, yes.

BURG: You knew of other things that had been refused?

LEE: I knew of things that happened that was refused, and I always thought that it was vindictiveness on the part of some

people who had been passed over or jumped over when he was promoted to chief of staff.

BURG: I see.

LEE: I wouldn't swear to that at all--don't have any proof of it. But anyhow I didn't stay. There were reasons for not approving me another year: I was too important for a specific job then at Kelly Field. And I never will forget Ike. He was telling me how about this situation, and he said, "You're really an important man." He says, "Here's the former chief of staff of the Army wanting you to extend a year, and you are so important to the Air Force"--or the Air Corps at that time--"that they won't let you."

BURG: And he was laughing at you--

LEE: Oh, yes.

BURG:--when he said this?

LEE: Sure. It was in a joking manner. But then he said, "They won't extend me a year. How about seeing if we can't get them an



extension for two or three months?" Because I wanted to stay until the school year was out. You see--

BURG: I see.

LEE:--my tour started in March, or March of '35 we got there. And Bill at that time was a youngster--a little boy--and he wasn't going to school. He was going to school at the time that I had to return, so we finally got them to extend me for two months from March to May. And that's when I left and came back to the States to Kelly Field.

BURG: Did they tell you ahead of time, General, what the assignment was specifically at Kelly Field?

LEE: No.



BURG: You didn't know that.

LEE: No. Then when I got there, there wasn't a damn thing. A corporal could have done the job. And I wrote Ike about it because when I got to Kelly Field I was given the job of Field

Maintenance Officer, which was to see that the Kelly Field itself and the outlying field that they used for training--that the fences were up and no cows were on the place or something like that.

BURG: Ho, ho.

LEE: It was an insignificant job, really. And that always made me believe those people in Washington didn't know what kind of a job I was going to get at Kelly Field. They hadn't planned for me to have any particular job. It was the War Department just refusing General MacArthur his request. I've always felt that, see, because if I had been so important then I would have had a certain specific job assigned to me at Kelly Field. Then I would have felt different. I didn't have any important job. And then I was in charge of the transit aircraft hangar for a while and those kind of insignificant jobs that most any first lieutenant--see which I was at that time--could have run, could have handled. Always made me believe that there was vindictiveness on the part of somebody against General MacArthur.



BURG: Now would you say that those jobs that you had were actually the kinds of jobs that first lieutenants got in those

days? Is that kind of typical of what a first lieutenant might expect?

LEE: No, a first lieutenant in those days wasn't too junior a type of individual. It was just a job that, as I've said, anybody could have handled. There was no--didn't have to have any technical ability at all to handle it. A second lieutenant could have handled the job as easy, or a good sergeant could have handled it. I imagine a sergeant--master sergeant now--could have held the same job that I had.

BURG: So in effect too you're saying it didn't take a flying officer to handle the job.

LEE: Oh, no, definitely not, definitely not. But their story to Ike--to General MacArthur--as well as I remember was that I was to head a special kind of a job to train a special type of student. Well, now, I thought--Lord, I didn't know what I was going to get into when I got to Kelly; and that's what I got into. I was what you say--wasn't unhappy with the job I had to do and



anybody had to do. It was a job that had to be done. But I was a little disturbed by the fact that I got such an insignificant job when all this hullaboo was to have turned me down to General MacArthur.

BURG: And about the special kind of training which would fit what you had been doing. You had been training flyers.

LEE: Yeah, sure. I had been training flyers and Filipino people.

BURG: Now you say that you told General Eisenhower about this. He was then Lieutenant Colonel Eisenhower?

LEE: Yeah, I wrote him about it.

BURG: You wrote to him?

LEE: Yes.

BURG: Do you remember approximately what you said? Just express your dissatisfaction and leave out the profanity?

LEE: Well, I don't remember exactly what I told him, but I know that probably in my diaries I might have listed where I wrote



General Ike. I probably didn't say what I wrote him, but I'm sure that I told him how insignificant the job was. I probably told him it was my opinion that somebody in the War Department decided that they didn't want me to stay in the Philippines.

BURG: Did he reply, by the way? Did he? Do you remember?

LEE: Well, he was a pretty busy man, and he wrote me fairly often. I don't remember whether he wrote me back. Unfortunately, I've lost or never saved some of his letters. I don't save many letters; I usually destroy them when I answer them. But I'm sure that when he found out what kind of a job I had gotten he was just disappointed as I was about this situation.



BURG: Well, now once you're at Kelly and you're assigned to this duty, how long is it before you make captain? Are you a captain before the war?

LEE: Yes. You see, at that time--after I returned to the States to Kelly--the Congress passed a law which authorized the promotion of all officers to the grade of captain after ten years of regular duty, see. So I had put in this ten years of regular duty on May the 2nd, 1939, and I automatically moved up to captain.

Before that time, of course, you only got promoted when you moved up on the promotion list or, as I always said, when somebody died or retired ahead of you. Then you would move up a file-- and 'cause I was a second lieutenant myself for five years and I think about ten months. And now, of course, they promote them within a year or so, or they are selected. But I made captain on the 2nd of May, 1939, automatically.

BURG: Now let me ask you this--it's something I think we'd want to know. You suggested that General MacArthur didn't get what he wanted, perhaps because somebody in the War Department was being vindictive. Would you say that your promotions came at the regular rate that you could expect them to come during those pre-war days?

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: In short, no one in the War Department seems to have had anything against you for your association with MacArthur?

LEE: No, nothing against me at all.

BURG: All right. Now, once you're promoted and after you leave the transit aircraft hangar job what is the next job they line



up for you? Is it after your promotion?

LEE: Yes. They didn't necessarily give me another job when I got promoted. I worked. For a short time after I was at Kelly Field I was assigned as a base engineering officer, which was in a hangar which was in the engineer's shops where they worked on airplanes that were damaged to some degree you see. And then shortly after that I went over to Maxwell Field, Alabama, in 1939-- in September, 1939--to the Air Force Tactical School, which was a short course. Normally it's a nine month course, but they had cut it down to where they had a concentrated course of three months. I went over in September of 1939, and I came back in December, 1939, having gone through the Air Force Tactical School-- a short course. And in this diary in 1939--there are many entries in there of my ninety days or three months at Maxwell of who gave the lectures--and what officers gave the lectures. For instance, General Claire Lee Chennault was one of them, and Muir S. Fairchild, who was then a major and wound up as major general and died of a heart attack in the Pentagon and so forth. They're all mentioned. But anyhow I went to this tactical school at Maxwell Field.

BURG: Not, technical in the sense of--



LEE: Tactical.

BURG: Oh, tactical. I'm sorry--

LEE: Uh-huh, tactical.

BURG: The employment of the air corps.

LEE: Employment of the air corps. Then I came back to Kelly Field, and I believe that was when I came back. After that I was assigned to the base engineering officer's job, not because I was particularly qualified for the job--because I wasn't basically educated as an engineer--but because in those days a man took a job like a post exchange job or defense counsel or on a court martial irrespective of his--we'll say--basic education. We did what we were assigned and did pretty good I guess for the time. Then after I was in this engineering officers job a while--I think it was along the first part of 1940--they reopened Brooks field as a training school.



BURG: I see.

LEE: Brooks Field was on the southeast side of San Antonio, and

Kelly Field was on the southwest side. And Brooks Field was an old primary training school. That's where I went when I went for primary training in 1928. But it had closed. It had been used as an observation post or base--observation--I mean air force observation. See, we had observation and pursuit, bombardment and attack. Well, this was observation. Well, then they opened that, and they sent several of us officers from Kelly Field over to man Brooks Field. I mean to--well--let's say to man it, sure.

BURG: To man it as part of an observation squadron, General?

LEE: No, as part of training flying students, you see. And Tommy [Thomas Richard] Lynch and Bill [William H. II] Maverick and myself were---. It was being redesignated as a flying training base, you see.



BURG: Could this be that earlier plan finally coming to fruition, do you--

LEE: No.

BURG:--think? You don't think so?

LEE: No, because, when I was assigned to Brooks Field, they had a commander assigned there by the name of Stanton T. Smith, and we called him "Alibi". He was a World War I man, and in my diaries of 1940 I mention his name several times as being nuts and crazy because he had us out--he was the commanding officer, but that didn't keep me from making entries in my diary about him--he had us out picking up little old rocks off the field. We had no runways in those days, you see.

BURG: You officers were out there too with the rocks?

LEE: Oh, the officers were out there working, helping. And I went over. I've got an entry in my diary where I went over to Randolph Field, which is Training Command Headquarters at the time, and talked to Colonel [Thomas W.] Hasty about getting "Alibi" Smith moved and talked to Jack [George M.] Palmer, who was then the Deputy Commander at Kelly. I thought the guy was going to run everybody nuts. And everybody was trying to get away from there 'cause General [Frank D.] Lackland who was promoted to brigadier general and who was my former commander at Kelly Field when I came there--he had been transferred out to



March Field, California. There's entries in my 1940 diary, I'm sure. I remember reading them because I reviewed them where I wrote General Lackland--Bo Lackland--to try to get me assigned out there with him--to get out of Brooks Field. Well, anyhow, I--

BURG: Would Smith have had to approve the transfer? Was he your commanding officer?

LEE: Hell, no. He wouldn't have to approve it. He was commander of Brooks Field, but he would have had to approve--he might have objected to me being transferred, but he couldn't do anything about it. It was like I was telling you a while ago while we were drinking coffee: that if somebody wanted one of your officers, they got him--period. They'd go through the higher headquarters, and if they said they want Lee--Lieutenant Lee--why he'd move. Incidentally, I did eventually get away from Brooks Field. But I tried to get away earlier, and I guess I'm fortunate in that I didn't get the job. There came in a volunteer job to go back to the Philippines for captain; and, of course, when that came in,



I was one of the first to volunteer. And a good friend of mine, a classmate of mine in flying school, by the name of Bill Maverick volunteered too. He was a captain, and he didn't like "Alibi" Smith either. But he got the job simply because he had been back from Panama, which was considered foreign duty, longer than I had been back from the Philippines; so they selected a man who'd been back in the States the longest for the job. Well, poor old Bill. He got back to the Philippines in time and was there when the Japs hit the place. He was eventually murdered on a prison boat going when they moved them out of Japan.

BURG: I see.



LEE: A Japanese guard hit him over the head because he was trying to get some steam dripping in the hold of the ship for drinking purposes for ill prisoners.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: Well, it could have happened to me. So I guess I was fortunate in that they didn't take me back to the Philippines at that time.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: But then shortly after in the fall of 1940 I was transferred to Langley Field, Virginia, from Brooks Field. Now I don't know who arranged it, but I was sure happy to get the hell out of Brooks Field and get to Langley Field.

BURG: So this Smith--you've sighted the one incident--there's more than the one incident. The way he was--actually was driving you--

LEE: And not only me but others.

BURG: And others.

LEE: Other officers who were over there who--

BURG: Yes.

LEE: Well, "Alibi" was the type of man--and he had a son. "Alibi's" been dead for a number of years, and I think--. There wasn't anything vicious about him at all. He had these screwball ideas of things, you see. And he could do most anything he'd tell you he could do, too. He could play golf; and he could hunt; and he



was a type of guy who was a kind of a braggart. He had a son, Stanton T., Jr., that wound up as a colonel in the air force. And I never did know him--the boy personally--but I understand he was a pretty good officer; and he's retired too, now. He's retired from the Air Force. But "Alibi" was the type--he was a damned agitator. Can you imagine having a turning out of the whole command to go out and pick up rocks, little old pebbles off the flying field. 'Course I can understand it. If you hit one of them on the landing, you might bugger up a tire a little bit.

BURG: Or it might get thrown in--might shatter a prop and might get thrown through the fabric.

LEE: Yeah, those old planes that we flew in those days were old open-cockpit, Stearman type planes: PT-1's, PT-3's and DH's, and O-19's and things--and no brakes, just tailskid and things.

BURG: But what was unusual, General, was that he had you all out there.



LEE: Yeah. Well, of course, the officers wasn't actually themselves picking up the rocks, but they had our people out there--our sergeants and all of our enlisted personnel, see. Things like that. Now those were the kind of things that--that was just one thing. Now I can't remember off hand the others; but I'm real sure, and I know in that diary of 1940 there are plenty entries in there--a number of entries in there--about "Alibi" Smith.

BURG: Well, good. Your remarks now will be a clue to researchers to go to the diaries to check this out. Well, before we go to Langley Field, let me ask Mrs. Lee, When General Lee got the second chance at the Philippines, how did you feel? Happy about that?

LEE: Surprised.

MRS. LEE: You mean--

LEE: When Bill Maverick went.

MRS. LEE:--when Bill Maverick went?

BURG: When he went in place of your husband.

MRS. LEE: That's been so long. I don't remember--don't recall.



BURG: Don't remember whether it made you happy to think of going back there or--

MRS. LEE: It might have at the time because we didn't have to do any work when we were over there.

BURG: Most pleasant--

MRS. LEE: We had a houseful of servants.

LEE: She had a houseful of servants, and then she was a great horseback rider. She liked to ride horses and jump and everything, you know. They had all the facilities over there because it still was the old cavalry up at Stotsenburg. And then we had a lot of horses down there at the riding club at Nichols Field that she rode, and--



BURG: I see. But your present recollection is that you don't remember being distressed at the idea?

MRS. LEE: No.

BURG: The chances are you were pretty pleased about it, or you certainly didn't mind.

MRS. LEE: Imagine I was.

BURG: Now, how did you feel about Langley? Was that--

MRS. LEE: Oh, I liked Langley Field.

BURG: So that turned out to be a good tour.

MRS. LEE: Didn't stay very long.

LEE: See, we didn't stay long for the war started to develop then.

BURG: Well, then what? You were there in 1940?

LEE: I went there in the fall of '40, yeah.

BURG: And to what job at Langley?

LEE: Well, I tell you what I did. That was when the 2nd Bomb Group had the B-18's. Actually, in those days we didn't have much of an Air Force--or the Air Corps. We had the fighters, the bombers, and the attack--

BURG: Now the B-18 is a twin-engine bomber--

LEE: Yeah.



BURG:---with a greenhouse out in front. It has sort of like a shark's nose if I remember.

LEE: I believe so.

BURG: It bulged out at the top and then dropped back in.

LEE: Then we had started getting the B-17's at that time, too, you see. We got back from the Philippines in '38, and we started getting our B-17's. The first time I ever rode in a B-17 was when Don Maj. Gen. William D. Old/Old, who was married to a first cousin of mine--William D. Old--. He retired and then died. He retired as a Major General, and died two or three years ago. But the first ride I believe I ever had in a B-17 was with him. And they were beginning to get those B-17's at Langley Field for the 2nd Bomb Group then. But they had B-18's when I went there, and the B-18 is practically the same as the old C-47, you see.

BURG: Yes. A deep-bellied aircraft if I remember.

LEE: Yes.

BURG: Was that--pardon me for breaking in--but was that aircraft



considered light bombardment compared to the heavy bombardment you were in in Italy?

LEE: Yes. Well, actually until they got the B-17's, it was the heavy bombardment, see.

BURG: I wondered.

LEE: It was the heavy. And then we got those B-17's later, but I never did get to fly them at Langley. It was only B-18's that I flew. And I got in the 2nd Bomb Group.

BURG: You were a squadron pilot in that Group?

LEE: Yes, I was assigned to the 2nd Bomb Group and the 96th Bomb Squadron. See, we had three squadrons in the group, and I was in the 96th squadron. I was operations officer for the 96th Bomb Squadron of the 2nd Bomb Group, you see. Darr H. Alkins was the squadron commander of the 96th Bomb Squadron, and Hal Harold L. George--I believe was his name--was commander of the group. But I didn't stay very long in the 2nd Bomb Group because, see, that was in 1940, and things was--we'd already gotten in the war in England that was going. And we were anticipating it; and we



started expanding, so to speak--spreading out. And from the 2nd Bomb Group they organized the 22nd Bomb Group, and the 38th Bomb Group--

BURG: 30th or 38th, sir?

LEE: 38th. And one other--the 14th or something. Anyhow I was pulled out--and a number of us; or three--out of the 2nd to go into the 32nd Bomb Group. And then later--a week later--I was assigned to the 38th Bomb Group, and we wound up down at Jackson, Mississippi. And when we got in the 22nd was when we started getting the B-26's, and that's when I went to Wright Patterson Air Force Base with eight other officers for three complete crews to run service tests on the Martin B-26.



BURG: So it's a brand new aircraft type--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: --and it's late 1940.

MRS. LEE: No, this was '41.

BURG: We're into '41 now.

MRS. LEE: In Jackson.

LEE: We moved in the first part of '41. It was on March 7 of '41 that we went to--

MRS. LEE: Was it in March?

LEE: Right.

MRS. LEE: I thought it was later than that.

LEE: Well, that's when I was doing the B-26 flying for the service tests on them.

MRS. LEE: We moved about May to Jackson, Mississippi, but I could be wrong.

LEE: Well, we moved into Jackson, I think, in June, Mom.

MRS. LEE: Was it June?

LEE: Let's see: Quoting from Diary now deposited at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library "Colonel Knapp, Major Fay Roscoe Upthegrove and I rode around all morning and put part of the afternoon with a Mr. Magruder and a Mr. Miller, a couple of real estate men in Jackson, looking at houses." That was May 27th, see. We went



down there--

MRS. LEE: Yes, I remember.

LEE:--to look for houses. So we moved to Jackson, Mississippi, in June. Quoting from Diary"Bert, Bill, Mickey, and I drove into Jackson. Stopped at a Pig Stand and ate breakfast. Drove out to the airport and looked things over; then drove around in west Jackson awhile and came back to the tourist court in which we were staying." That was on June 8th. We moved to Jackson in June of '41. But in the early part of--

MRS. LEE: '41.

LEE:--'41 was when we were running service tests. Oh yeah, here's in April. Now let's see. It says--this was March 31st--Quoting from Diary"I took off in a B-18A as passenger with Major Lauback as pilot from Langley Field at 10:40 A.M. and landed at the Martin Plant, Baltimore at 11:45. Had lunch and took off in a B-26 as pilot with Captain Reynolds as co-pilot at 1:25 and landed at Langley at 2:15." This says, "landed." It says:"Then took off at 3:20 in a B-26 with Captain Reynolds as pilot and I as co-pilot and landed at Patterson Field, Fairfield, Ohio, at 5:50.



Got lost right close to Patterson Field and it took us 20 minutes to find the place. Intended to fly from Baltimore to Patterson, but the weather wasn't so good so we went back to Langley and came from Langley to Patterson. We are on the accelerated service test and will probably be at Patterson for two weeks." So that's when we were running the service test on the Martin B-26 is in March of 1941.

BURG: And at that time you're already with the 38th Bomb Group?

LEE: No, I was with the 22nd--

BURG: Still with the 22nd?

LEE:--see, and I was transferred to the 38th before we moved to Jackson, Mississippi. It's an entry in here about that somewhere because Swede [Brig. Gen. Westside T.] Larson, who had the group that went up to Massachusetts--I was originally in his group. And some guys pulled a fast one and got me--made a switch on me--and got me assigned to the 38th Group with Bob [Robert D.] Knapp to go to Jackson, Mississippi; and Swede has always kidded me about



getting out from under his wing, you know.

BURG: Did Larson's outfit also use B-26's?

LEE: No, I think Swede Larson's outfit when they went up to this Westover Field--I believe is where they went--had B-25's.

BURG: I see.

LEE: I believe that's what they had.

BURG: Now are both of those bombers classified--or were they classified at that time--as medium bombers?

LEE: Right, right. Medium bombardment.

BURG: Now you have the aircraft, and you're back at Jackson. Is the job then--you're captain then--are you people--

LEE: No, I had been promoted.

BURG: Oh, you had.

LEE: Matter of fact I had been promoted. I was promoted to lieutenant colonel when I was over there--

MRS. LEE: I think you were promoted to a major first.



LEE: I was promoted to major when I went to Langley; and then, when I was over there on that service test, I got my word that I was promoted to a lieutenant colonel over at--when I was at Patterson running that service test--because there's an entry in here about me getting promoted to lieutenant colonel.

BURG: So promotion for you is stepping up just as it stepped for Ike. It's beginning to move for you.

LEE: Moving right along pretty fast.

BURG: Yes, after quite a long dry spell, however. You'd been a second lieutenant--a first lieutenant--for--

LEE: A long time.

BURG:--ten years.

LEE: Ten years. But anyhow there was two or three of us got promoted about the same time to lieutenant colonel while we were on that accelerated service test over there.

BURG: Well, well, General. As a lieutenant colonel in the 38th--



LEE: I was squadron commander.

BURG:--that made you--

LEE: I was squadron commander of the 69th Bomb Squadron. And, incidentally, the 69th Bomb Squadron is having their reunion in Houston in August which I will attend. I attended one in Jackson, Mississippi, two years ago this August. I was commanding officer of the squadron when the war started and the boys have had these reunions. Bert and I--Mrs. Lee and I--went to the one in Jackson last year--not last year--1970--'69. And we had boys from the old 69th squadron all the way from Seattle--came to this party.

BURG: You know I was going to say that that must have put a terrific strain on you. I'm forgetting that you as a first lieutenant--second lieutenant, I guess, and a first lieutenant--you had been operating independently--pretty much independently--and in sort of a squadron leader's capacity--

LEE: Yes.

BURG:--in the Philippines.

LEE: Yeah.



BURG: So now this promotion to command of your own squadron-- one can't say that there was no background for it. You did have background for it.

LEE: Yes, sir.

BURG: How old a man were you then?

LEE: Well, I was born in 1903, so I was thirty-eight years old in 1941.

BURG: And again, can you tell me, is that pretty typical do you think, for a man of your age to get that promotion at that time and to take over a squadron? Is that about the way it was, or do you think you were older than the average officer?



LEE: I think that was about normal.

BURG: Just about normal for that period.

LEE: About normal.

BURG: Later on is when we're going to find the young--

LEE: Of course, we'll put it this way: I was a little old when I came in; see, when I got my commission in 1929 I was twenty-six years old. Now Fay Upthegrove and some of my contemporaries along about that time graduated from West Point. Fay Upthegrove graduated in '27; and he was born in 1906, so he was--ah, 1905--so he was twenty-two years old when he got his commission. So he moved up. When we went to Jackson, Mississippi, Upthegrove went along with us, and he was senior to me by having graduated from West Point in '27 and got his commission. I didn't get mine until '29, so there was a '28 West Point class between us. Well, he wound up as deputy group commander along with General Bob Knapp--Robert K. [D. ?] Knapp--who was the group commander. So then Flint Garrison, Moose Mussett, and myself and Pappy--what the hell was his last name? Pappy--we wound up as squadron commanders in the 38th Bomb Group.



BURG: Is that Pappy or--

LEE: We called him Pappy Lewis; so it was Pappy Lewis.

BURG: How about Moose--the last name on Moose--how was that spelled?

LEE: Moose Mussett. Eugene Mussett. We called him Moose. He wound up as a major general retired--

BURG: Was that M-u-s-s-e-t?

MRS. LEE: Yes.

LEE: Double t. Mussett.

BURG: Now do you think, sir, that the fact that you were not West Point--did that seem to make any difference in your career?

LEE: Matter of fact, I've always believed, in our time, the fact that you weren't a West Pointer was an asset for you getting into the Air Force. And I'll tell you why. It was my observation-- and I don't know it to be a fact, though; it was just my opinion-- you see, when the boys graduated from West Point they had to go through the primary flying school and advanced flying school just like anybody else.

BURG: Right.

LEE: I went through as a flying cadet even though I was graduated from Texas A & M and had a reserve commission in the Field Artillery. The class or two previous to mine was when they finally



stopped sending reserve officers through in grade, you see. Before that, for instance, I was a second lieutenant in the Field Artillery. I could have gone through the flying school as a second lieutenant by transferring my reserve commission from the Field Artillery to the Air Force--which I had to do anyhow when I graduated from flying school. But a class or two before--you see, they took a class every four months in the flying school. Well, by the time I had gotten ready or had made up my mind or so how it happened that I decided to go to flying school, they had stopped that; so I had to enlist as a flying cadet and go through as a flying cadet. I was a Texas A & M boy. But getting back to the West Point boys--they had to go through the same instruction that I did as a flying cadet, but they were already second lieutenants, you see--



BURG: Yes.

LEE:--by having graduated from West Point. They were graduated just like Ike and all the rest of them. They were given their commission in the Infantry, the Artillery, or Engineers, or what-have-you--determined by the requirement, I guess; maybe their grades in school.

Most of our instructors in the flying school were not West Pointers. They were from various schools . You see?

BURG: I see.

LEE: So if you didn't part your hair right, then they could eliminate you for lacking in having flying ability. You see.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And I personally think there were quite a lot of West Point boys probably who had ability to fly and probably would have made good Air Force officers if they'd have gotten through the flying school that were washed out.



BURG: Rubbed somebody the wrong way.

LEE: Yeah, they didn't like the way they parted their hair, or the way they talked to them, or the way they something or other. Well, Jack Sprague, for instance, was my primary instructor on PT's, and he was not a West Pointer. But he was a Virginia University graduate and a little short character. And, of course, he spent a lot of time with me trying to teach me how to fly, and raised hell--a little short guy. Used to make me so damned

mad I'd want to kill him, and I was big enough to do it, if it hadn't been in the service. But I personally think that West Pointers were at a disadvantage, and I still think they are in a flying school.

BURG: Well, then let's look back at this, at your bomb group. There were three squadrons in it? And you commanded one--

LEE: There were four squadrons in the bomb group.

BURG: How many West Pointers were commanding squadrons in it?

LEE: None.

BURG: I see. That tends to substantiate your thought.

LEE: See, Flint Garrison and Moose Mussett and myself and Pappy Lewis--was Pappy Lewis--no, he wasn't West Pointer. Upthegrove was the only West Pointer in any rank in the group. He was deputy group commander--Fay Upthegrove.

BURG: Now was your Knapp--was Knapp--

LEE: No, no, he was an Auburn University man.



BURG: I see.

LEE: You see, I have another thought on this; and, of course, I've never tried--

MRS. LEE: Better watch your time.

BURG: Yeah, I am.

LEE: I've never tried to sell it to anybody, but I've always maintained that the ROTC schools--for instance, Texas A & M, Oklahoma A & M, Auburn University and those schools--years ago had ROTC training, that they got as good of an academic basic education as--better perhaps--they could get at West Point or did get at West Point.



BURG: Maybe broader.

LEE: Yeah. Then I thought this up years ago--I don't know whether anybody else had thought about it but myself--to make the service schools select from the ROTC schools those students who desire to make a career in the military and were adequately qualified--as we have now. We have what is called Honor ROTC students.

They're pretty nearly automatically given commissions in the service of their choice. Take those people, and then send them to the Naval Academy and to West Point and to the Air Force Academy for specialized training in the branch of service in which they're going into.

BURG: A kind of graduate school.

LEE: Graduate school in other words, ses.

BURG: For military.

LEE: For military. Maybe make it a one year course or what have you. Now I don't know whether that would work or not. I'm not kicking these other schools. I think they're wonderful schools, the academies--West Point, Annapolis, and also the Air Force Academy--but I've always thought that with so many people right at ROTC who are commissioned officers in the various ranks of their service that that would be a good idea--to kick it around some. Let somebody think about it 'cause--

BURG: Let's hold it for a minute.



LEE:--West Pointers, the Annapolis people would object to it because they don't want to give up their schools.

(Interruption) (Tape #2)

LEE: And then he went to Baylor Medical School and got his doctor's degree.

BURG: Now, at the time that all this is happening--at the time, for example, that they expand--were you saying this then?

LEE: What? About the schools?

BURG: That's right.

LEE: No.



BURG: This is an idea that occurred--

LEE: It occurred to me later in life--

BURG: After the war?

LEE: After the war. We had so many people.

BURG: Did anybody propose it, General, that you can remember at

that time?

LEE: Not that I know of.

BURG: They were satisfied to have the West Pointer come in and do his flying school training and then go into the Air Corps?

LEE: That's right.

BURG: I suppose there may have been some talking about a special air academy, and that was their solution.

LEE: It probably was at that time.

BURG: Have an air academy and--

LEE: Why, we even had Naval Academy's graduates go through the flying school, you see, too.

BURG: Rather than go through the navy--

LEE: They had graduated from Annapolis and then came--transferred-- to the air force for flying training. Well, when they graduated, of course, they were given a commission in the air force. We



had a few navy boys.

BURG: I see. They had graduated, so they were ensigns in the navy--

LEE: Yes.

BURG:--took Army Air Corps flying training--

LEE: Flying training.

BURG:--and resigned their navy ensign commission.

LEE: Resigned their navy commission and got their regular commission in the air force.



BURG: Second lieutenant--

LEE: Second lieutenant--a few of them--and, of course--

BURG:--Army Air Corps.

LEE:--later--I'd say later--I don't know how much later--but you know they had the Naval Training School at Pensacola and then probably at the same time that we had our primary training schools too. Pensacola for the navy boys who graduated from Annapolis and those who didn't graduate from Annapolis--they took navy ROTC

boys and sent them to the Navy Flying School down in Pensacola.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: Marines had the same. But, you know, one thing I thought, maybe, that gave me the idea about using the service academies for graduate schools was we had so many graduates of Texas A & M, which is one of the old land grant schools of Texas and used to be an all-boy school. We had twice as many graduates of A & M who were commissioned officers in the military services--that's air force, army, and we had a few that went into the navy--than any other school in the United States, including the academies. You see, from Texas A & M alone!



BURG: That's unusual. I hadn't known that.

LEE: It was unusual because everybody who went to Texas A & M up until recent years that were physically able had to be in the corps for cadets. And most everyone of them--everyone of them who was in the corps of cadets when they graduated--got a reserve commission either in the Infantry, the Artillery, or the Air Corps or Cavalry or the Engineers. And the majority of them kept up

their commissions by taking correspondence courses and going to summer camp every so often. Well, when World War I--this happened in World War I, too. Now in World War I and World War II we had more people graduates of A & M as commissioned officers than any other two schools. So when World War II came along, it was just as simple. See, you come on in the service. You got your reserve commission and maybe a second lieutenant or first lieutenant or captain or whatever you are; but they brought them right in, see.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And, of course, I had a lot of classmates in A & M that came right into the service because they already had a commission. It all was a simple fact for the War Department to put them on orders and order them right into active duty.

BURG: Right, right. Well, then at Jackson you've got four squadrons operating out of there--

LEE: That was the 38th Bomb Group.

BURG: And you're all 26's, all Martin B-26's.

LEE: Well, I'll tell you what happened. When we first got there,



we didn't have any airplanes. We had some old moth-eaten B-18's, two or three of them.

BURG: Sounds like you in the Philippine Islands a few years earlier.

LEE: That's right, that's right. And then we started getting those 26's, gradually.

BURG: Now let me ask you before we go further on this, You were in then on some of the service flight testing of the B-26?

LEE: Oh, yes, from six weeks or so.



BURG: What did you think of it as you saw the aircraft then? This was before you go back to those B-18's and wait.

LEE: Well, in these [diary] entries when we were over there in April of 1941 we thought it was a pretty good airplane, but they were giving us some trouble. Matter of fact, they were popping rivets on the skin of the thing; and we had to send them back to the Martin Plant to have the rivets--and then old Swede Larson, who was on this service test with us, he was the senior officer. And he had a boy by the name of Major [J.R.] Red Selby, S-e-l-b-y,

and [Dalf Muelheisen?]. And Swede Larson taxiing around out there on Patterson Field--that's before we ever had any runways, you know. And the ground would get soft, and he made a turn out there and popped a landing--a front--landing gear. Broke it, you see. And, of course, when finally the evaluation board reviewed it, he got 50% of the blame; and it made him madder than hell.

BURG: So, in effect, really, that aircraft was--they were too modern for the fields that--

LEE: That we were trying to use it on.

BURG: --that you people had to use it on.

LEE: That's right. Because when it'd rain over there at Patterson, the ground would get soft. You'd try to turn one of those airplanes with the nose wheel, and it would get sideways--like that--and it would pop the strut.

BURG: Yes, I see. And also the rivets that popped--

LEE: They were in the fuselage, and that was due to landing on the hard, uneven field over there, you see.



about him being mad about this. Oh, yeah, here it is. It says,
[Quoting from Diary, April 16, 1941] "I hung around the 2nd
Bomb Squadron operations office all morning. Had a letter from
Johnny Mitchell today but didn't answer it."

BURG: General Mitchell. Now is that Billy Mitchell?

LEE: No, Johnny Mitchell, that's Johnny Mitchell, an old friend
of mine who was then living in Brownsville. Says, "An 18th
Reconnaissance Squadron B-26"--no, this is not it--"cracked up
on landing this morning. The top part of the landing gear strut
on the right gave way and broke off which let that wheel up. No
one was hurt but the airplane was pretty badly damaged." That
one must have been at Langley Field. "Lieutenant Brian O'Neil
was one of the pilots which is the second B-26 that has cracked
up with him as pilot or co-pilot." That was at Langley Field.



BURG: But these are problems that are showing up in the B-26
before they're actually issued to your outfit at Jackson.

LEE: Yeah. That's right--to us to use. And we started getting

them at Jackson, and I had made a trip or two back to the Martin plant at Baltimore to pick up these B-26's. I remember one I picked up in Langley Field on my way back to Jackson; and I couldn't get the damned wheels up when I took off from Langley Field, but I just flew it on to Jackson anyhow.

BURG: Wheels down?

LEE: Wheels down. And I got to Jackson. Course I landed, but I wasn't sure that the wheels were going to stay down cause I couldn't get them up. But they were down and locked, so I left them down. I didn't go back to Langley Field because I was determined to go back to Jackson. I was on my way to Jackson, and that's where we went.



BURG: Now Jackson had hard runways, did it? Or was that too a dirt field?

LEE: No, they had begun to put the runways in. They had hard runways, but they didn't have any taxi strips to amount to anything. It was all mud, you know. In other words, if you got off the runway when you landed, you had to taxi back up the runway or get off the runway. And if it was raining, you couldn't get off the runway cause you'd get stuck, you see. And when

the Japs hit Pearl Harbor, the night that they hit--that Sunday-- we had to go in the middle of the night to disperse our few old moth-eaten B-18's and two or three B-26's that we had off the runway and disperse them around over the field. And that was a hell of a job because we didn't have any taxi-ways and no hard stand to put them on; so we just pushed them off in the dirt. They still were afraid that the Japs were going to come over and blow up all the airplanes we had down in Jackson, Mississippi, see, since they'd hit Pearl Harbor. That was a mess.



BURG: All right, I'm going to follow a lead that--it's me talking as a non-aviator type. Was it common then, do you think, to have undercarriage difficulties with retractable landing gear? Was that common in other aircraft beside the B-26? Would, for example, the P-40 pursuit ship have trouble with the landing gear?

LEE: Yes, I think they would have. I think they would have for the simple reason that it was a new development and they weren't developed to stand landing on cow pasture fields that we had in those days--the rough fields and whatnot. I think, well, let's put it this way: they hadn't perfected the landing gears to where they would withstand the rough treatment on the cow pasture type field.

BURG: Yeah. So it wasn't a new development. Retractable gear were being used in the '30's; but the field technology--the ability--

LEE: Yes, I think that was responsible--partly responsible--for the failure of the landing gears. And then we did have some trouble with pilots or copilots pulling up, retracting the landing gear before the airplane was airborne. Several serious crackups were caused by that.

BURG: Faulty cockpit procedure?

LEE: That's right. The copilot would pull up the gear before the airplane had cleared. You got to get a flying speed--and a definite flying speed--before you pull the airplane up off into the air. Until you get that, it's running along at a high speed on your landing gear. And if you lift--if you release the landing gear lock--that lets the landing gear loose, so to speak and it'll settle. For instance, I know one officer who died a number of years ago by the name of P.D. Ent.

BURG: Yes, I've heard his name.



LEE: Well, he was an old timer, a World War I man, sort of a individual. And his copilot pulled up the landing gear on a B-25 one time, and the prop broke off and ran through the side of the cockpit and severed his signal column. And he was out at Colorado Springs a long time. As a matter of fact, they named a field there after him, Ent Air Force Base. Well, those things happened too in this retractable landing gear type business.

BURG: Now in that case did you later go to a system where the pilot himself gave the signal to--

LEE: He was supposed to at all times anyhow. He was supposed to have done so.

BURG: Even then. But the copilot was doing it on his own.

LEE: He was a little, we'll say overanxious or something or other and he just reached down and flipped the lock and pulled it. And when he did, sometimes the copilot blamed the pilot for giving the signal to raise the landing gear. But, while the pilot could have, I guess, he might have thought he was airborne at least to do that to the copilot.



BURG: Thumbs up.

LEE: Thumbs up to pull the wheels up. We liked to get those wheels up quick as soon as we were airborne simply because when you got the wheels up you didn't have all that resistance. And especially those B-26's. Boy, I wanted those wheels up as quick as I could get them up because if I had flying speed with that thing I wasn't afraid of it.

BURG: What was your takeoff speed usually? Where would she lift off? At 100 miles an hour?

LEE: Just about that. It was just about that. It was one of the hardest airplanes we had because we landed that thing at better than 120 miles an hour.



BURG: Now it was a high shoulder wing, twin-engine, monoplane bomber and very streamlined: single vertical tail fin and slightly dihedral in the--

LEE: Yes, that's right. On the stabilizers on the wing, yeah. We used to call them the "flying prostitute" because there was no

visible means of support.

BURG: I've heard the term; I've heard the term.

LEE: Because the wing area was low square-footed, the wing area was way below a normal airplane that we had been flying, say the B-18. And that's the reason it was what we called a "hot airplane."

BURG: So you got plenty of power in your engines but what you've got there is a critical moment once you clear the ground where anything, any drag--

LEE: That's right. Anything go wrong with the engine, you're a dead duck.

BURG: You mean land straight ahead or--

LEE: Yeah. And when you landed straight ahead, you usually went in the bay or somewhere and right on into the water. We used to call it "one a day in Tampa Bay" when I was down there training groups of B-26's. That airplane--we called it "props running away". But that wasn't what the problem was we figured out



later. The props were overspeeding because of the power in the engine; but the reason they were overspeeding--we had the electrical controlled props.

BURG: These are Hamilton?

LEE: Yeah, Hamilton props. Three-bladed deal. And as they picked up speed, the blade would increase the pitch.

BURG: It was not intended that this happen?

LEE: No, it was supposed to do it-- . It was automatic that way. But when you didn't have enough electric power to make that switch--to make that pitch increase--then your prop blades stayed more flat, and it'd just over speed, see?

BURG: I see.

LEE: Therefore you were losing power because that prop wasn't biting the air to pull you. So the airplane would come around this way. Say it was a right prop that went haywire and the left



prop was functioning properly. The airplane would come around this way into a spin.

BURG: She'd swing right.

LEE: Right into the bay or into the ground, see.

BURG: There was no way to overcontrol that tendency--it was such a powerful tendency.



LEE: No. It was such a powerful--we had "2600" engines--we called them--2600 cubic inch engine--and they were terrific engines and good engines. They later whipped that thing by putting an auxiliary starter for them, you see. Had a power generator in the airplane with a little gasoline engine. You'd start it, and that would put out the voltage to start the airplane--start the engine. Previous to that time we started the engines with our batteries. O.K., when the battery was down, then you didn't have enough juice or electric power to change the pitch of the prop on the takeoff, you see. So when the pitch of the prop didn't increase with your speed, then you had what we called a "runaway prop." They were running away, too, brother. Sometime they'd be up to better than

3000 r.p.m. a minute.

BURG: All right, let me ask you a key question here. It's going to be difficult for you to remember. About how many aircraft do you think you lost in your group before that was found--the cause was found and corrected? Have any idea?

LEE: I have no idea. Of course, it wasn't as serious as a lot of people used to call it--"one a day in Tampa Bay"--but we'd lose probably an airplane at least once a week down there.

BURG: Now is that frequently crew and all--or did they get--

LEE: We lost everybody. The trouble was--

BURG: They're too low.

LEE: What was the problem--what bugged us--was it was kind of like them having a murderer running loose in the neighborhood killing people when we had no trace or clue of who it was. So when we'd lose an airplane, we'd lose the whole dang'd crew.

BURG: And nobody to tell you.



LEE: And nobody to tell us what happened, see?

BURG: And there is no flight recorder or any instrument of that sort?

LEE: No, nothing was on the airplane, you see, like that. And it would happen; and though they were in communication with the tower, they couldn't tell them what was going on--it'd be so suddenlike. You see. Mostly on the takeoffs. Nearly every one of them was on takeoffs simply because they call them "runaway props".

BURG: But it's no problem in level cruising flight?

LEE: It was a good airplane in level cruising flight cause you could fly it on one engine.

BURG: So if you did have a runaway, you had a chance of either holding the aircraft under control or bailing out of it.

LEE: Oh, yes, definitely.

BURG: She would swing if one ran away in midflight.



LEE: Yes, if you didn't adjust the stabilizer to hold. And with your leg on your rudder you could hold the one engine--well, on the service test over at Wright Patterson we used to cut the engines--cut one engine--at 8,000 feet and fly it on one engine to see how it would perform, and it performed real good because it was airborne and had flying speed. The problem was when we were losing them that we didn't have the flying speed and the props running away, see. We didn't have adequate flying speed. And that's what bugged us.

BURG: Now it happened to you experienced pilots in your group as well as to the young pilot officers that you were later training on B-26's?

LEE: Well, we had kids come down there that were assigned down there to train on them that didn't want to get close down. They were afraid it would fall down on them. And I tell you personally in 1943--I guess it was--I had an officer--one of my own officers in my own group--I was supervisor of training at MacDill--that was what my job was in the 3d Bomber Command--who refused to fly. They were pilots. They were instructors. And I could have tried



them, but you know what I did?

BURG: You had mutiny?

LEE: I could have. They just refused to fly. And I didn't do a damned thing but just let them go, and they got ashamed of themselves and went back to flying.

BURG: Now, let's follow that one down. That's an intriguing situation.

LEE: Well, what happened was this: see, we got to losing those airplanes, and we lost guys that were--we could say--instructor pilots training other pilots to fly them.



BURG: Now you tell General Eisenhower in one of your letters that a man by the name of--was it Mark Lewis? Was that--

MRS. LEE: Mark Lewis.

LEE: Mark Lewis. Mark K. Lewis. Yeah, he got killed out at--

MRS. LEE: El Paso.

LEE:--Biggs Field, El Paso--he and Dave Laubach.

BURG: On a B-26?

LEE: Right.

BURG: And he's an experienced man that Eisenhower had known?

LEE: He was an experienced man, and Eisenhower knew him. He was with us in the Philippines, and Mark took my job when I left there to come home in '38.

BURG: I see. He, too, was killed.

LEE: In fact, we got him assigned to--they got him assigned--to my job before I left even though he was a captain and I was lieutenant. And Ike told him they were wanting him but I was the boss until I left even though Mark was captain; and Mark understood it. He was a real fine fellow. And we were neighbors, and we knew him before we went to the Philippines. And I wanted him to have the job because he was a good officer. He was a West Pointer, too--27 class of West Point. Real fine officer. Well, Mark got killed--and Dave Laubach--the second day of the war on December 8th Dec. 8, v. Diary of 1941 at Biggs Field in a B-26.



BURG: Killed also--

LES: Killed everybody in the airplane except, well, Steve--oh, what was that guy's name?--one officer and one enlisted man. There were nine people aboard. Two of them didn't get killed, but this officer was terribly burned--face and everything--and they did lots of plastic surgery on him and got him somewhere half decent. Let's see, Dave Laubach and Jew Lewis. We called him Jew, but his name was Mark. He was dark complected boy. He wasn't Jewish, but we called him--nicknamed him that at West Point. And seven-- there was a total of seven killed. There were nine aboard. So, those two officers and five enlisted men were killed. One enlisted man was way back in the tail. He was saved. And this [Maj.] Stewart McLennan--that's what his name was--the other officer that wasn't killed--oh, Lord, I don't know how long he was in the hospital, and then after he got out they kept doing plastic surgery. I haven't seen him in years and years. But that B-26! When we were at MacDill Field, some of my officers-- and they were senior officers--I mean they weren't senior to me: they were first lieutenants and captains--refused to fly the B-26.



BURG: This was in 1943?

LEE: When I was down there training groups, yes.

BURG: Did they come to you as a body; or did they refuse as individuals; or how did they handle that, General?

LEE: Well, there weren't but about three or four of them that just decided---just told the---see, I had the group training; I was training groups and supervisor trainer--they told their squadron commander they weren't going "to fly the damned airplane any more. Period".

BURG: And even back from overseas service, sir?

LEE: No, no. So I had a squadron commanders' meeting nearly every morning. I required them to have a notebook and pencil; and if they didn't have one, I'd give them a notebook and a pencil and make them pay me a dime for them. I'd buy these little nickel notebooks at the PX. Anyhow they had to have them because we had a meeting every morning. And they came to me, and I said, "Well, let me think about this." So I told them the next meeting



the next morning. I said, "Just ignore them. Don't pay any damned attention to them, and let's see what happens." First thing I know they were back flying. They just got ashamed of it. You see. They wasn't like a strike over a whole plant or something like that--just a few of them, see.

BURG: You took a chance, didn't you?

LEE: Yeah, I could have ordered them to do it; and if they hadn't have done it, I could have tried them for disobeying an order. But, hell, that wasn't the point. I was kind of in sympathy with them in a way, and in a way--

BURG: Any one of those squadron commanders might have brought charges against any one of those men and presented you with the fact. Then you would have had to take action, wouldn't you?

LEE: Yeah, that's right.

BURG: So your technique was to just see what happened. Was it your belief that they would feel ashamed of themselves?

LEE: Sure was. Course I've always been the type who would never have asked anybody to do anything I wouldn't do myself, see, or you know. I would never ask a guy to fly that airplane if I



wouldn't fly them myself. Even though I was afraid of the damned thing, I wouldn't ask somebody to fly it and tell them to go fly it--and me not fly it, you see. Or we'll put it that way; that I'd never ask a guy to do anything I wouldn't do myself. So I figured that those boys had flown that airplane. Some of them had a couple hundred hours on them, see, cause they had flown every day. We worked Sundays and holidays and round the clock. At night there was maintenance; we had night flying you know. 'Course I was--all of us weren't up twenty-four hours a day. We'd get our normal rest, but it would be any time. And I figured those boys-- I guess--would get ashamed of themselves and go back to work; and they did.



BURG: Now is the problem that they face--and it was frightening them--is it still the runaway prop? The landing gear difficulties-- are you having less of that by that time?

LEE: We didn't have much. We had runways built.

BURG: So it's mainly those--

LEE: We had very little--no landing gear problem hardly at all.

BURG: So it's your variable-pitch propeller?

LEE: Variable pitch, automatic prop. Yes, that's what it was.

BURG: And then really what's happened is that from early 1941 until sometime in 1943 it hasn't been corrected.

LEE: That's right, and that's what I was raising so much hell about.

BURG: So that's why you write to General Eisenhower?

LEE: Write Ike. I wasn't--I couldn't write Hap Gen. Henry Harley Arnold or anybody up there 'cause I'd probably be shanghaied to the Aleutians or some other place, and I didn't want to--

BURG: Yes.

LEE: I wanted Ike 'cause he was in probably better position to take it up with Hap Arnold and R.E. Aker Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, Chief of Air Staff and some of those people. Matter of fact, we had some inspectors. Somewhere in that book in there--one of those diaries--a note that somebody was down at the MacDill Field checking on the airplane. And I'm sure it was due to Ike's talking to Hap Arnold to get something done.



BURG: Now was this about the first time that you wrote to him again after leaving the Philippines? You reported on what had happened to you at Kelly Field. Is there then a period of a couple of years or so where you're kind of out of touch; and now for the first time you write again, and it's to ask him for help?

LEE: Well, we weren't completely out of touch. In 1941 after I went to--see, we came back in '38--we had correspondence a time or two, and then one time we met down here at Wichita, Kansas. Remember? I told you about that. That's the time he and Mamie were out at Denver. And Earl [J.] Schaefer sent an airplane out there to get him and me and Lefty [Hugh A.] Parker--Lefty was at Barksdale--and came by Kelly and picked me up, and we all met in Wichita for a party.



BURG: Yes, I guess you did. I think you did tell us about that.

LEE: I think that was in '39. I know it was. It was after we came back. Well, we were in touch. And then when we were

transferred to Jackson, Mississippi, in 1940, Bert and I drove to San Antonio. That's when we took Bill down there to get his eyes worked on and trained. He had a lazy eye. And I left Bert and Bill down there. Ike and Mamie were living at old Fort Sam Houston. And here's an entry I made on August 3, 1941. It says: "Bert and I drove over to the Eisenhower's on Ft. Sam Houston, arriving about 10:00 A.M. We stayed until about 2:00 P.M. talking over various things and about the Philippines. Spent the rest of the afternoon with the Oeffinger's"--that's Bert's sister. "Bert, Bill and I drove down to the original Mexican restaurant and ate a Mexican dinner. Then drove out to Duncan Field where I took off at 7:45 P.M. in a B-18A and landed at Jackson, Mississippi, at 11:30 P.M. Had good weather and a good trip all the way. I brought my dog, Mickey, back with me." That's when I left Bert and Bill down in San Antonio because she was taking Bill out to Randolph Field to get some training for his eye.



BURG: Right.

LEE: But that was in August. He was still a colonel, and that was before the maneuvers over in Louisiana where he got his star, see. So we kept, well, reasonable touch. 'Course he was busy, and I realized he was busy. I never did like to bother a person that--

you know. Just like Mamie now. When I send her a birthday card-- or used to send them an anniversary card, too, but now I send her a birthday card--and I just write a short note on there. And that's the only time I ever write to her. And eventually--maybe a week or so--she'll answer--acknowledge--the birthday card and a note and make a few remarks herself. Well they're important people. And Ike was important too, so I never did bother him much. And even when he was president, we used to write once in a while.

BURG: I've seen those letters. But you didn't hesitate there in 1943 to--

LEE: No, hell, I was having problems; and I needed some help; and I figured he could help me. You see, he was up there in a position to do it.

BURG: It says something for you and says something about him too that you felt perfectly free to tell him you had an aircraft that was killing them left and right and you were unhappy.

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: And he took you seriously, and without getting you into any trouble evidently, he managed to go to Arnold and asked that



something he looked into. And as far as you can tell, it was looked into.

LEE: It was looked into, but Hap Arnold never did know where Ike got his information. 'Cause if he had, I'd have probably been on Hap Arnold's carpet.

BURG: It's possible. Now did they put in the generating unit within the aircraft sometime after your letter to Eisenhower?

LEE: Yeah, it was finally decided what it was. Now we had prop men; we had Curtiss-Wright people who built the engine; we had Martin people there on the base. You know, they were what we called "technical representatives", and they were trying to find what was wrong. And, of course, I guess they were doing the best they could; but I was unhappy with the damn airplanes, so I kept writing Ike. And they--those people--those technical representatives--developed that idea of putting an auxiliary power unit in the back. So before you ever started the engine the crew chief would get back there and pull the little old--I believe it was



started electrically, though. I know it was because they had the batteries to start this little old generator, see. That'd put out the current to start the engines you see. Well, we had an [Hetterington-Unser?] starter on the things. And we'd get the [Unser?] starter going and run it up there; and then we'd pull it on; and then it'd just grind and grind that big old prop, big old engine, see. So with that auxiliary power we weren't using the battery power. So when the airplane took off, the battery power would change the pitch of the props.

BURG: Now you turned off that generating unit before you--

LEE: Yeah, after we got the engine started it was just turned off, see. Just flipped off.

BURG: Right. Now other than that, your view of that aircraft was that it was all right?

LEE: It was all right. It was a good airplane; it was a good combat airplane. Boy, they didn't--'course I didn't fly [them]



in combat. I flew B-24's. But the boys who flew it in England in combat said, "Boy, they could take a lot of punishment." They got back with holes and everything made in them with flak and everything. As a matter of fact, they liked it. Those boys after they got that bug whipped in them--they liked to fly it. I liked to fly it, but it was--to me it was like--I'll tell you. I used to compare it to a pullman compared to a chair car.

BURG: Oh, yes.

LEE: The B-25 was a chair car, and the B-26 was a pullman. It was heavy, and you could handle them nice. The controls on there were, well, we'll say, easy. And it'd take the bumps. The rough air--it'd just kind of float like, you know, through the air. An old B-25 would bounce around and jump around, you know.

BURG: I see. Yet there was a time I think where you expressed the desire that you wished that you were on B-25's. Was that--

LEE: That's right.



BURG: That was mainly just because those 26's had gotten your goat and--

LEE: See, originally when I moved to Meridian, Mississippi, with the 21st Bomb Group--when I pulled off there at Columbia, South Carolina, and went to Meridian, Mississippi--I had B-25's. And we were training in B-25's to go to the Pacific when out of the blue one day Jimmy [Gen. James Harold] Doolittle blew in, landed, and told us that we were going to be a B-26 outfit. And that's when there was turmoil around there because we were getting ready to go to war with the B-25 outfit that we had been training in and they took them all away from us and made a damned B-26 training group out of us.



BURG: So originally in the 38th you had had B-26's.

LEE: Right.

BURG: Then later than that--sometime later in '41 or early '42--you had gone to B-25's with a different group.

LEE: I'll tell you what happened. You see, the 38th Group was ordered to the Pacific.

BURG: And you should have gone with them.

LEE: We did. The whole damned group went, and we got as far as San Francisco. And me and Flint Garrison and Bob Knapp and Moose Mussett and a boy--a lieutenant by the name of Parker-- I never have figured out how he got pulled out--but there was a group commander, Moose Mussett, Flint Garrison, and myself--

MRS. LEE: Upthegrove didn't come to--

LEE: No, Upthegrove took command of the group.

MRS. LEE: Yeah.

LEE: And they left him out there in San Francisco with the 38th Group--B-26 outfit--and brought us back.

BURG: So the West Point deputy commander is the man who gets the group.



LEE: Got the group out there. Then they finally wound up. And Uppy--well they brought them back here in the middle of--some-where up there in Ohio--and never did send the airplanes over to the South Pacific. But they sent the group: the ground echelon, the administrative people--like Murphy. He was one of them; he went over there. But they came back, and Upthegrove finally wound up over in Italy in a B-24 wing, see. He never did go to the Pacific with B-26's. So when we came back from that deal in San Francisco, they sent us back by train. They pulled us up out there. They said there was too much rank in that group. Pulled the group commander and two or three of the squadron commanders and this lieutenant and sent us back by train. And then we organized the 21st Bomb Group and went to Columbia, South Carolina, with B-25's.



BURG: Now what was the date that this occurred? Do you remember? Late in '41, do you think?

LEE: Oh, no, 'cause late in '41 the war started. It was in '42.

MRS. LEE: No, the war started in '41; that would be in '42.

BURG: O.K.

LEE: In '42 we went over there, and then they moved me to Meridian, Mississippi--B-25's. Boy, we had an outfit a going, and we were training for overseas assignment when Jimmy Doolittle came in and told us we were going to be a B-26 outfit. Lee's Diary Says-- I forgot when it was. I've got something marked about Ike. Oh, yes, it says quoting from Diary, November 9, 1942 "It looks like the U.S. troops are about to take North Africa with Lieutenant General Ike Eisenhower." That was on November the 9th, 1942.

BURG: '42, yes.

LEE: That's when Ike was--he was a lieutenant general then. I did that--just made that remark in there.

BURG: Now when--

MRS. LEE: We didn't move to Meridian until in '43, did we? Because '42 you were down in Tampa.



LEE: Yeah, but you see, I went to Tampa from Meridian. See, when we got to MacDill Field from Meridian, they had a 120 damned B-26's sitting on MacDill Field that the ferry command had brought in there. We only had the airplanes down there, and there wasn't but three or four of us in the 21st Group that had ever flown a B-26.

MRS. LEE: Well, now you were at Columbia, South Carolina--I mean from Meridian you--

LEE: Well, from Columbia I went to Meridian.

MRS. LEE: All right. Then you went to Tampa; then you went back to Columbia.

LEE: I went back up there to Columbia when I had the 47th Reconnaissance Group, you see. And I had a group over at Florence, South Carolina; and then I moved to Greenville, South Carolina, when I had the 49th Operational Training Wing.

MRS. LEE: Yeah.

LEE: And from there I went overseas in February 1944, but, see, I'd gotten fouled up in all that training. But when I got to



Greenville, South Carolina, and had the 49th Operational Training Wing, I'd gotten rid of the B-26's then. I was back in the B-25 business because we were training combat crews only--as a crew. And we were sending them out as replacement crews that had been to various places--

(Interruption) (Tape #3)

LEE:--Quoting from Diary, May 1, 1942 "wrote General Eisenhower a short letter today and enclosed a copy of the reprimand that I got from General Maj. Gen. Walter H. Frank yesterday for making some of my soldiers carry folding cots as punishment under the 104th Article of War."

BURG: What year is this? It's May, I notice, May of--

LEE: 1942. See, what happened was when we went out to Fiesco they sent us out there to go overseas, and they pulled us out. In the meantime, while we were gone, they had an inspector general come in there at Jackson, Mississippi, to check on the cruel and unusual punishment that some of the men were getting for carrying cots. Well, what happened--I didn't tell you this story, did I?



BURG: No, you never did.

MRS. LEE: I think you did when we were here before.

BURG: Not to me. He may have told it to Alan Edwin Alan Thompson.

MRS. LEE: Oh.

LEE: When we had these guys that would get drunk on payday and go AWOL for two or three days and come back, I'd put them on P; and the mess sergeant got mad at them 'cause they would break up the dishes and everything. So he came to me one day; and I asked my first sergeant if we had any rifles and packs, and we didn't. He suggested that we had some of these folding canvas cots. "Well," I said, "put them out there in the squadron area on the "bull ring," and then make them carry those cots. Carry them fifty minutes and then rest ten." I said, "I don't care how they carry them--on the shoulder, or in the arm, or in the hand, or how." So I had another officer there on the base that had a negro outfit; that's before we had integration. Lieutenant



Boneburg was his name. He saw my men carrying these cots-- these canvas cots--so he decided he'd make some of his nigger boys carry something. He didn't have any folding cots, so he made them carry these iron cots--you know, where the ends of them fold under?

BURG: Yes.

LEE: Old style. They'd carry them on their back and then had to carry a bucket of water in each hand. So one of the niggers-- or two of them--went over the hill and went to Washington and reported it to old Benjamin O. Davis, who was the first general officer--negro officer--we had, you know. And his son, Ben Davis, is a good friend of mine who wound up a lieutenant general. They reported to him, and he was then in the Inspector General's Department. So when they--when he--reported this to him, why things started happening fast. And so they came down there to find out, and Boneburg--where he made the mistake was he told them that he had seen a white officer having his men carry folding cots. But he wouldn't tell them who this white officer was. Well, they went back to Washington, and the inspector general



came back and ruled that he had to tell because it was not incriminating evidence on his part. So then he told them that it was me. Then I got this letter from Tony Frank, who was then Commander of the 3rd Air Force down in Tampa. Said he was going to propose to punish me on Article 104, which was a reprimand, if I didn't want to accept a court-martial. So here's where I said Quoting from Diary, April 14, 1942: "I got notice from Major General Frank, commanding officer of the 3d Air Force, that he was going to impose punishment on me under the provisions of the 104th Article of War if I did not demand a trial by court-martial for making some of my incorrigible soldiers carry a canvas cot while walking a beat for punishment. I wrote my good friend Major General Ike Eisenhower in Washington an air mail letter to ask him about it and his advice as what to do." That was on the 14th of April, 1942. Well, Ike wrote me back. And what did he say? Quoting from Diary, April 18, 1942 "I worked around my office all day. Had a letter from General Eisenhower telling me to not worry about what punishment that I might get



from General Frank under the 104th Article of War. Orders came in today"--and that's all I said about that--"orders came in today to move the 309th Group to Meridian, Mississippi, so we will get the 309th out Monday. No orders for the 21st Group, but I am expecting them any day now. It is supposed to go to Columbia, South Carolina." And that's where we went from Jackson, Mississippi. We rode the train to Columbia, South Carolina. But anyhow that's what Ike told me. And do you know the only time that I ever looked at my records in Washington was one time since I've been back to the States. I went up there for a promotion. I was on the promotion board, and I thought I'd just go around there and look in my record 'cause an officer could go and look at his records. I looked. That reprimand wasn't in my file.



BURG: There was no reprimand at all. You decided to take the reprimand rather than court-martial?

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: And you took the reprimand, but it wasn't in your file.

LEE: But it was never in my file.

BURG: Never recorded against you then?

LEE: No. I guess not because--Ike told me--he either got it side-tracked or he got it pulled out of the file because it wasn't in there when I looked. And it could have been after he got back as chief of staff or something later after the war--pulled it out--but it wasn't in my file.

BURG: He was in North Africa, or he was out of the country at the time that this occurred? Or was he in Washington?

LEE: No, this was--he was still in Washington.

BURG: I see. So he could have actually sidetracked it then at the time--

LEE: Yes.

BURG:--and your thought is he either did it then or he may well have done it when he came back and was chief of staff.



LEE: He may have done it when he came back as chief of staff.

BURG: I see.

LEE: I said, Quoting from Diary, April 25, 1942 "I worked around the office all day. Had a letter from General Eisenhower today but did not get to answer it the answer."

BURG: That was in April of 1942.

LEE: In April . Now let's see. Quoting from Diary, April 27, 1942 "I wrote General Eisenhower a letter this morning." And I didn't say what I wrote in it, but that was about the time that he was asking me if I wanted to go with him.

BURG: Yes, because on June the 15th of 1942 he offered you a chance in a general letter to state whether you wanted to come with him.

LEE: Yeah, that's right.

BURG: He said that he knew that you would probably prefer combat



command but he could use you if you wanted to do that.

LEE: Yeah, that's right. He sure did.

BURG: All right, what was your reaction to that, General? How did you react; what did you do?

LEE: When I got that letter?

BURG: Yes.

LEE: Well, I wrote him that I would like to go with him. I don't remember whether I put it in my diary or not, but in his letter to me--that letter there that you referred to--

BURG: The one for the 15th.

LEE: Yeah. When was that, the date of that?

BURG: June the 15th, 1942.

LEE: Well, in that letter he told me to write his secretary--I mean write him in care of his secretary--who would forward my letter on to him because he couldn't tell me where he was going and he didn't know right then his present address.



BURG: Yes, he gives you the name of Miss Joan Dunbar.

LEE: Yeah, that's right.

BURG: And he says, "I'm going away, and I'm not allowed to say in advance where I'm going."

LEE: Yeah, that's right.

BURG: He's on his way over.

LEE: That's right. Well, when I wrote him I told him I'd be happy to go with anywhere he wanted me or needed me. And I kept sweating it out, see. I figured, well, gosh, there's a guy that's going over there--that if he wants anybody he'd get them.

BURG: That would fit your belief about what happened in the military.

LEE: Yeah. And, hell, I got down to MacDill Field; and I kept sweating things out, kept figuring every day I'd get some orders to go somewhere where Ike was. I never did get them. So I finally got a letter from him--I don't know when it was; long in I guess



the latter part of '42--that the Air Force wouldn't release me, that I was too valuable for training and they wouldn't release me to his command. That made me mad, and it made me mad again because of what had happened to me when I left the Philippines, you see. Now I don't know whether you can blame vindictiveness on that part or not for Ike because he jumped a lot of people when they sent him to Europe, you know.

BURG: Yes. Yes, he surely did.

LEE: And it occurred to me at the time--and I can't say that it does now--but at the time it was some more of that same old damned malarkey that they handed General MacArthur when they tried to get me extended for the Philippines, see. Because you know and I know there were five people when I was down at MacDill Field that could've handled the job of supervisory training as well as I could. Matter of fact, the guy that I succeeded--they moved him out. What was his name? It was a long German name. He was senior to me. He was moved out, and I took over. But it occurred to me at the time that they were trying to smack at Ike for some reason; somebody was trying to smack at Ike for by



not letting me go with him.

BURG: Well, he told you in late March of 1943: Eisenhower to Lee, March 29, 1943, The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years, II, 1063 "I had one or two notes from Chuck Lt. Col. Charles H. Anderson before I left London, but have not heard from him in several months. I tried to get him on a particular job but something else came up and they would not send him to me. A long time ago I also put in an informal request for you but was told that you were on some training work where they wanted you to stay for the moment." Then he goes on to say, "The Air Force is really doing a splendid piece of work here and have had to improvise almost everything."

LEE: Yeah. That's right.

BURG: So at least in March of '43 he explains to you that he's tried informally to get you and he's not succeeded.

LEE: That's right. That Chuck Anderson was the boy that took over from Jew Lewis when we left there. Ah, let's see--no, this was when I was in Washington. Now what in the hell was I doing up there? Oh, says, Quoting from Diary, February 25, 1943



"Rushed over to the Navy Building, room 4842 Office of the Aeronautical Board where I attended a conference all day long about operations of aircraft under dimout and blackout conditions. Finished conference at 4:50 p.m. and rushed back to the hotel." Says, "It was over 2 hours late leaving"--our train. Says, "I called Mrs. D.D. Eisenhower, wife of the General, and talked to her a few minutes." That's when I was in Washington.

BURG: Now what was the date on that?

LEE: 25th of February, 1943.

BURG: I think you do make a remark somewhere in one of these letters of about that date that you had seen her, and you wrote to him and told him that you saw her and that she was in fine health. And he writes back, I think, and acknowledges that.



LEE: Yeah. Says, Quoting from Diary, March 4, 1943 "I wrote General Eisenhower a short letter today and mailed it to his wife in Washington to mail on to him." That was on March the 4th, 1943.

BURG: Yes. Now if we looked for a theory as to why you couldn't

go with him, it's possible that this was because somebody was a little resentful. We could also say it might have been because they considered you too old for combat command; only they then sent you on a combat command--within about a year's time.

LEE: Sure. That's right. I went to Italy as combat commander.

BURG: And you actually were on flying duty out of Italy with the 15th Air Force?

LEE: Yeah. Command of the 49th Bomb Wing.

BURG: So it's possible that you simply had a reputation--and had gotten that reputation maybe as early as the 1930's--as a training kind of officer.

LEE: Yeah, could have.

BURG: So you may have sort of been put into that mold whether you wanted to or not.

LEE: But the thing about it--now I appreciate the fact that during



the time that I was at MacDill Field it was an important job.

BURG: Yes, it was.

LEE: But the thing that bugged me, though, was the Philippine deal--coming when General MacArthur--and all that malarkey about me being needed for a special job, see?

BURG: You didn't get that same kind of feeling? It wasn't such a strong feeling when Ike put in the request and it didn't come through?

LEE: No, no, I thought about it; but, as I say, it was just a thought that maybe they were being vindictive toward Ike. But then I'd think, well, on the other hand, they gave him this big job and General Marshall was behind him all the way and they definitely couldn't turn him down just for some vindictiveness that they have. They'd have had to have a good reason to do it. And the reason is I think probably adequate. The job I was doing was an important job.

BURG: Yes.



LEE: But I've never been the type to think that I'm indispensable, that I'm the only one that can do the job. I figure that I might can do the job as well or maybe better, but I know there are other guys that can do as good a job and probably as good as I can after they got their feet on the ground. I can remember during the war I took off one time. General Twining authorized me to go to Belleveavre[?] when I was in England--yes, it was when I was in France--and I went by Ike's headquarters; and I went on over to England. Well, when I got back, my outfit had done a better job of bombing than they had done when I was there. 'Course I wasn't out on every bombing mission with them, but they did a good job.



BURG: Let me ask you this now: When--I'll put it in a way that you and I would probably put if we both were in the service--when did you start griping to get overseas to take a combat command?

LEE: Well, my first gripe was when I had that B-25 outfit. Well, after I got pulled out out at San Francisco in January 1942, I wasn't too unhappy. I could understand that situation because

we were too much rank in that outfit. If we were going to expand and develop other outfits, we couldn't send all of our key people in one outfit; and that's what it amounted to for us and what it amounted to for other people's groups. See, we had General Knapp--he was a colonel--and Colonel Upthegrove--lieutenant colonel--and I was a colonel--a lieutenant colonel--and Moose Mussett and Flint Garrison Jackson, who were lieutenant colonels. And, hell, that was a lot of rank for one outfit to go out of here.

BURG: So there was a lot of rank and a lot of experience in the regular Army Air Corps.

LEE: Yeah. I could understand that.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: But then when I got back and they gave me that B-25 group over in Meridian, Mississippi, and I was commander of it and we had been doing some real fast and intensive training for overseas, then he come down there--Jimmy Doolittle--he didn't make the decision himself--he just came down to tell us. He was a BG then, you know.



BURG: Was that before the Tokyo raid? Did he talk with you before that occurred? I'm sorry, the month escapes me. I think around April of '42 he might have been talking with you. I think it was right after that or about that time that they made the raid.

LEE: I believe it was after the raid because--I'm sure it was-- it was after the raid--the Sangular raid that he came back. And he was in Washington on leave, and he came down there. He told us because I remember Bill, our boy, was with me the day that Jimmy Doolittle came in the operations room. He was over there at Jackson with me. And then he got a picture of him--me and Jimmy Doolittle together in a big 8 x 10 black and white--and Jimmy autographed it for him.



BURG: I see.

LEE: That's when Bill was a little boy about twelve years old. And that was after he made that raid that he came in there.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: I've got it in my diary there somewhere about him telling us; and, boy, I never saw an outfit drop their morale so fast and quick on that deal. 'Cause all those boys at Meridian were B-25 people. There wasn't but three or four of us that had ever flown a B-26. And, of course, I had more time on them than anybody. And so when I went to MacDill Field, I had to take some of my people and send them up to Wright-Patterson to get some training on the B-26's before they could come back to MacDill Field and be instructors for pilots.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And some of the boys that were in the old original B-26 outfit, the 38th Group, who had never gone--they never did go to the Pacific. They were up here in Ohio; and they transferred some of them to me at MacDill Field, and I transferred some of my B-25 boys to them, see. And that's the way I built my training unit, or cadre we called it at MacDill Field.



BURG: But then you're with those 26's training combat crews--

LEE: Training combat groups--

BURG:--or groups--

LEE:--whole groups.

BURG:--until 1944?

LEE: Until we moved; yeah, until we moved. Well I went overseas in '44--February of '44 when I went overseas. But when I left MacDill Field in the middle of '43, I went back to Columbia, South Carolina, and operated out of there with B-25's, see. I went up to Greenville; I moved my headquarters to Greenville. The 49th Operational Training Wing is what we were called. And we were training crews--just crews--of the 25's, but down at MacDill I was training a whole group. What we'd do--we went down there. We'd take a few of the best trained people in a group--and there weren't very many best trained people at that time: we was training fast--and I put four or five in each squadron. And then I'd get in a bunch of recruits--a bunch of guys that had been down to the gunnery school; had been somewhere else and had their basic military training--put in these squadrons. And then I'd train them as a unit--as a squadron, as a group--and



send them out to North Africa or to Corsica or some other place, you know, where they were needed. But then when I got to Greenville, South Carolina, we were training combat crews as a unit. And maybe this group over here in North Africa had lost three crews on missions--or maybe lost four--and we'd have to replace them. So we'd send a whole crew with the airplane--brand new airplane. They'd go down to South American and fly across that way, see.

BURG: I see. Pilot, co-pilot, gunners, bombardiers--

LEE: Yeah, navigators.

BURG:--say, nine men.

LEE: Yeah. And they'd go over as replacements, see. And the same thing happened to us in Italy. When I finally got to Italy with a B-24 wing, we'd lose them; and we'd send in a request. We lost so many crews, so many airplanes. And they would go through the 15th Air Force back to the States; and we'd get re-



placement crews in for the crews we'd lost, bringing a brand new airplane with them, and--flying them over.

BURG: All right, now, how long do you do this training of crews before you yourself are tapped for heavy bombardment with the B-24's? You go in February '44, but do you remember when it was that they took you off the crew training?

LEE: Well, it wasn't right away because I think I moved to Greenville, South Carolina, along in the first part--maybe August of '43--somewhere along about that time--I mean of March of '43. And the way I happened to get this combat group--change my wing to combat, B-24 outfit--I was down at MacDill Field on a conference of some sort, and Jim [James E.] Parker, who was commander of the 3d Bomber Command--he was a BGen--told me they had received orders for the 49th Operational Training Wing to be converted to 49th Bomb Wing and to go overseas. And he wanted to know if I wanted to go or not. I said, "Well, yes, I've been wanting to go for a couple of years." He said, "Well, I'd rather



you'd stay and train." He said, "We're going to start a training unit here at MacDill for B-17's." "Well," I said, "Jim, I'm not a B-17 man. I've never flown heavy bombardment. I don't know anything about it." But he says, "Well, if you want to go," he says, "you go back to Greenville, and you think it over and send me a TWX in the morning of your decision." Hell, I done made my decision. Well, the next morning I sent him a telegram by an early TWX and told him that. I said, "I haven't changed my mind. I still want to go overseas and take my wing."

BURG: Did you know then they would be B-24's?

LEE: No, I didn't know at that time they were B-24's or what groups we was getting. And so they sent my wing, and they sent Bob Acheson's wing. He had the 55th Operational Training Wing at Barksdale Field in Shreveport. And he'd been training B-26's too. So his wing and my wing, the 55th and the 49th, were changed to bombardment wings and sent up to Italy. But I didn't know until I got my orders that we would have B-24's. But we went over as a wing headquarters complete with our staff officers and everything--



no airplanes--and we didn't have any groups assigned to us. We didn't know who our groups would be or anything.

BURG: And none of you then had flown any B-24's prior to leaving the States.

LEE: No. No. So we got to Italy--Bob Acheson and I did--got there in February of '44. I'm working on that diary now.

BURG: What was your rank by the way, at this time?

LEE: Oh, I'd gotten promoted to a colonel when I was at MacDill Field in July of '42, I guess. I was promoted to a colonel in July of '42. Anyhow we got to Italy, and we stayed there for two months before we ever got our staff, actually. Our staff came by boat! They went to Camp Lee, Virginia, by boat--convoy--and landed in North Africa; and they kept them over there in tents in a camp, and we finally found them. One of my officers got away and got a ride over to Italy and called me up and I found out where they was; and I got General Twining on the ball, and we got them back--got them over there. I had fifty-five officers on my staff, and so did Bob Acheson. The only people I had with me



when we went over was my A-2--was the intelligence and my operations officer.

BURG: Now, you went over by ship?

LEE: No, we flew over.

BURG: You flew.

LEE: Flew by MATS, Military Air Transport.

BURG: Now what was your route that you went into?

LEE: We went up to Newfoundland and then to the Azores; then to Maarakch where we had to stay there three or four days to get out of there to Italy. Finally went out of there in a damned old C-47 right on the ground 'cause we was afraid the Germans might see us and shoot us out of the air. And we got up there to some place on the north coast of Africa--and what the hell was the place in --and spent the night. That's in the '43 diary. I'm working on it now--'44 diary rather. And if I'd have cut across the Mediterranean--. We flew up. We flew across



there in that old C-47 right on the deck, you see, and got to Bari, Italy. And then we stayed--fiddled around--there. I'd have done anything. Hell, I volunteered to be defense counsel on a court martial--anything for something to do. They didn't have anything to do. We was waiting for our people. Well--

BURG: Not knowing that in the meantime your people have come to North Africa.

LEE: And they were setting over there in a damned camp--tent.

BURG: And nobody to ship them over here.

LEE: And then the first thing I did--I got a bomb group in. I got the 461st Bomb Group in and assigned to me, and there wasn't but three of us in headquarters: me and Major Art J. Lund and Lt. Col. LeRoy L. Stefonawicz--later changed his name to Steffen. And there we were up there trying to operate wing headquarters with three people. So we finally got a staff over there. They came over in a train; there's an entry in my '44 diary about them a coming in. And we went to work. And, of



course, I got the 461st and finally the 451st a few days later and then the 484th Group. I didn't have but three groups in my wing, but I had sixty airplanes in each group. I had 180 B-24's and about 9,000 people in my wing. At that time, you see, a wing commander was a kind of a small air force guy, see. Now a wing is just a few people and a few airplanes. The things have changed a whole lot.

BURG: But it took that many aircraft then to deliver a strike--a heavy strike.

LEE: Sure. We had 60 airplanes per group.

BURG: By the way, did they bring their aircraft? When they came in they were equipped with aircraft?

LEE: The groups did, yes.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: When they came in, here's what they did. They'd assign a group--see, it had been trained as a group in the States, somewhere in the States. We'll say Smoky Hill first. And then they'd



assign the group to the 15th Air Force. Well the 15th Air Force in turn would assign the group to a wing. So then Bob Acheson and I, being the junior wing commanders so far in the 15th Air Force--55th and 49th--well, we'd get the group--alternate groups--see.

BURG: But always brand new?

LEE: All brand new.

BURG: No combat experience there really at all.

LEE: No.

BURG: Now how about you? Did you get any flight time in B-24's so that you had an idea of what was going on?

LEE: I got in two or three rides after I got to Italy in a B-24. I've got some notes in my '44 diary of having ridden in a B-24 with so and so, a pilot. And then after I got my group I could go down to one of the groups and get them to set up a B-24 for me to get some flying in, you see. But when I went on missions-- I only got to make twenty-three missions, total, although I was over there during the war. But they had us limited. The wing



commander were the sensitive people--sensitive in the fact that if we were shot down and taken prisoner we knew too much.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: You see. So, General Twining--and I guess it was pretty well a policy in all the Air Force; 8th Air Force, too--probably limited their wing commanders to--and the group commanders were limited too--only a couple of flights a month, I think it was. And we were one, only one. And I got in twenty-three. But I went along normally as command pilot instead of flying the airplane. I'd go as a command pilot. See, I was a command pilot by having twenty years service.

BURG: This is the highest rank. Your wings, in fact had--

LEE: Had a star with a wreath around it.

BURG:--a star and a wreath, yes.

LEE: Yeah. Well, I went that way simply for several reasons. A guy flying a damned loaded airplane--those old B-24's--he had an all day job a doing it. Especially when you get up to 23-4



thousand feet with 5,000 pounds of bombs, you had a wallering airplane; and you fight it all the time. And it was a job in a seven or eight hour mission.

BURG: Is that because of the very thin Davis wing?

LEE: Yeah, and it wouldn't carry the load. The old B-17 handled a whole lot better at that altitude with heavy loads.

BURG: Oh, really, I didn't realize it would carry heavier--

LEE: That old 17 would--sometime they'd be 2-3 thousand feet higher than we could get. They'd be up to 27-28 thousand feet.

BURG: And carrying more tonnage of bombs--

LEE: Well, they're carrying the same tonnage. But what I had to do with my wing, my group--the lead group went in low, the second group higher by a thousand feet, and the third group a thousand feet higher than the second. In other words there was two thousand



feet intervals between them. This group--the low group that lead in--I'd load them with ten 500 pounders; that's 5,000 pounds of bombs. The group went in a thousand feet higher; loaded them with 4500 lbs--nine 500 pounders; and the next with 8 because they was higher. So they'd go in at 24, 25, and 26 thousand. Well, in those old B-17's you could see them. When we would go over North

Italy, etc., for instance, the whole damned Air Force would go out--maybe a thousand airplanes in the damned raid. The old B-17's were way up yonder, you know--way up in front--see those vapor trails out there a couple, three thousand feet above you. And, of course, they were better off because of the flack. *Cause flack could get up there; but the higher you were, the better probability you had of not getting hit, you see. And we envied them some 'cause the 15th Air Force didn't have but 28 bomb groups. We had 5 groups of B-17's; and, let's see, I said 28. No. Five of 17's--eight, eleven, had four, fifteen--we had only 20 groups of bombers. And then we had seven groups of fighters--the P-51's.

BURG: Now is this where you met the young Benjamin Davis?



LEE: Yes, originally, over there when he had that 334th Group, I believe it was--that fighter outfit.

BURG: Right.

LEE: And then, of course, he was with us in the Philippines. He had the 13th Air Task Force after his promotion. I got that job for him because I liked him and I knew he could do it; but I had to get a clearance from the Chinese, and I had to get a clearance with Admiral Felix Budwell Stump, who was then the commanding chief of the Pacific, see, because he was a negro, see. And 'course he was in the 13th--he was in the Air Force--Far East Air Force--as a combat operations man and a good one.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: So I got Maj. General Earle E. Partridge and asked him if he would release Ben for the job, and he said he could. So, of course, old Tiger Wong then was commander of the Chinese National Air Force, and he was agreeable. And the only problem was Admiral Stump on it. And Ben did a good job setting that



thing neutralization up there in Formosa, sea.

BURG: Well, what I never asked you--I don't know whether this is the place to do it or not. I never asked you to what extent you might have studied bombardment doctrines and everything else. We've talked about training without ever asking you. Now, there were men at this time--Arthur Travers Harris in the RAF for example--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG:--and Henry Harley Arnold and others in our own Air Force-- that were bombardment types and dedicated to it. Now to what degree were you?

LEE: I never studied it at all.

BURG: Never studied the theory of it?

LEE: Never at all. I never had occasion to do it. 'Course General Curtis E. LeMay was quite a student I think on that. I remember one time at MacDill Field. LeMay came back to the States--that's after he got his first star--and he came down to



MacDill and talked to all of our officers--we had a general assembly in the theater about the bombardment.

BURG: Oh, I see. He had been with the 8th?

LEE: Yes, he had. They had developed this daylight bombing, you know. The British were real opposed to it, as I understand daylight business, because they didn't like the fighters--fighters shooting a man's rear.

BURG: That's right.

LEE: And so LeMay developed in a way, as I understand it, the daylight bombing raids, and that's what he talked to us about at MacDill Field. I'm sure somewhere in my '44 diaries probably--no, it'd be in one of these--where I may have made an entry in there about him being at MacDill Field and giving us a talk. But, you see, I think the reason that I probably never got mixed in the student and development of bombardment--I was so involved in the training business all the time until I just got thrown into this right quick.



BURG: The one time that it seems to me when you might have been diverted into that kind of a path, the path of theoretics, was when they sent you to Langley. There was a brief time there when you might have become a bomber pilot and a bomber theoretician, and then right away there's the war and more training.

LEE: Yeah, just spread out overnight, you see. Just mushroomed there.

BURG: Right. So when we find you in Italy with your wing, it's not as a student of heavy bombardment--

LEE: No.

BURG:--theories whatsoever. You're a technician who was capable of training men, and you're now leading groups into combat.

LEE: Yes, that's right.

BURG: But if anyone is a student of it, it is your group commanders--

LEE: Yeah, that's right.

BURG:--presumably, and really not even them, General. They're green too, aren't they?



LEE: Yeah, green. Sure they're all green. They all came up fast like I did, and, of course, lots of them never had near the service I did.

BURG: So what you're doing then is following doctrines set by somebody else.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: It's all laid out for you--

LEE: That's right.

BURG:--and you're doing it. How about Twining? Does he influence you in any way, or is he someone kind of remote?

LEE: No, I tell you I was a great admirer of Nate Twining and still am. I liked him real well. And he was a good Air Force commander to my opinion. He was the 15th Air Force commander when I got to Italy. I think he'd taken over from Jimmy Doolittle. Didn't Jimmy Doolittle have that 15th Air Force at one time?



BURG: Well, he was in the Med, and I think that Eisenhower took him up north with him.

LEE: Yeah. Well, when he did, Nate Twining took the 15th. And, 'course, I wound up one time the commander of the 15th over there after everybody had left in late September--August. Well, rank, you know. I wound up as the war ended as the 15th Air Force commander.

BURG: Right.

LEE: But I was never a beginner. I had to sign a conviction on a nigger. A boy--soldier--there killed an Italian girl. And I remember another case I had to turn down: a negro, a corporal, who wanted to marry an Italian. We didn't allow it--negroes--the races to mix in other words.

BURG: This was Air Force doctrine at that time?

LEE: Well, it was ours, the 15th.

BURG: This was the way it was in the 15th and it was at the discretion of the commanding officer--

LEE: Commanding officer. I think so.

BURG:--of the 15th.

LEE: Well, anyhow, getting back to General Twining, he was a good



commander 'cause he'd have us wing commanders to come down there to Bari where he had the Air Force--15th Air Force--headquarters, which was the old Italian Air Force headquarters, you know, in Bari, Italy.

BURG: I hadn't known that.

LEE: Beautiful, beautiful set-up. And we'd have these wing commanders meetings, and old Nate was just one of us. Something that we didn't like--he said, "Oh, to hell with it." You see, I mean he was with us, you know.

BURG: Had you known him before the war during--

LEE: I had met him.

BURG: I see.

LEE: I had never served with him. And he was just a real good-- I thought--a good, honest to God, down to earth kind of a commander for us--not only for the 15th but anybody, any outfit. He'd go



out with us to pin decorations--DFC's and Air Medals and things-- on our troops. When we'd have a presentation, we'd line them up as a squadron or a group and let Nate, you know--and he'd fly up and come up to help us. And he wasn't one of the dressy type, you know, like a guy that was interested more in his appearance than getting the job done. He wore combat type clothes a lot of the time when he was out in the field, you see.

BURG: General, you're comparing him with others, I think, when you say all of this. Can you tell me others that you had less regard for? Clearly you liked Twining and had definite ideas about him and why he is a good commander. Did you experience other commanders of whom you thought less? For example, who commanded the 8th at that time, and did you have any particular--

LEE: Well, Jimmy Doolittle was commander of the 8th, but you see I never got over there but one time.



BURG: So you didn't really know their situation.

LEE: No, but I knew Jimmy Doolittle, and I knew his son. His son was with me when the war started--young Jimmy. And he was the hardest working little rascal--he wasn't little; he was bigger than Jimmy. Big boy. And, hell, when we got orders to move out

of there when the Japs hit Pearl Harbor--was two days later we had orders to move somewhere--we had four sets of orders in three days. Hell, he was driving trucks; he was driving those four-by-four trucks; he was second lieutenant in my outfit. He was a working type. But I didn't know Jimmy Doolittle as a commander except one time when I was in England I went by to see him over there at High Wycombe where he had his headquarters. But I was comparing--well, let's see, I'll compare Nate Twining with Tony [Maj. Gen. Walter H.] Frank, for instance.

BURG: Now that's Tony Frank, 3d Air Force here in the States?

LEE: Yeah, was then. And that's who was my overall boss for a while then. See, we had the 3d Air Force; and then the 3d Bomber Command was under the 3d Air Force; and I was in the 3d Bomber Command. Now Tony Frank was to my opinion a damned picayunius type of individual. And he--well, I'll tell you the difference in the way I'd compare them. Nate Twining was a soldier's general, see. In other words he'd get down and mix it with his soldiers as well as he would--he wasn't a high, aloof type of individual,



you see. Now Tony Frank, on the other hand, as well as I remember him was a dressed, immaculate type of person and kind of--well he wasn't--I don't mind a person being demanding if he's got something to demand. Now Ike was demanding, but, hell, he was a down-to-hell-to-breakfast type of a fellow to work with, you know.

BURG: So you would put him in the same category with Twining as a man who was a soldier's kind of a general.

LEE: Oh, yeah, definitely. That's right.

BURG: Frank was not. Alibi Smith was not.

LEE: And Alibi Smith wasn't, no.

BURG: How about Doolittle? I know your contact was fairly limited.

LEE: Well, my contact with Jimmy Doolittle was very sparse, but I liked him too. I think he was the Nate Twining type and General Ike's type of personality, you see. Of course, his son was just a youngster, but boy he was a working rascal. I don't know what ever happened to that boy. He went on with the 38th Group. See, the whole 38th--the whole ground echelon--went on to the Pacific, and the flying echelon didn't go.



BURG: This was after the collapse in Europe.

LEE: No, that's when we got orders down at Jackson.

BURG: Oh, you mean when you were pulled back.

LEE: Yeah. See our ground echelon--my first sergeant and all my squadron and everybody except the flying boys--went on to the South Pacific.

BURG: Yeah, that's right. I remember now.

LEE: My first sergeant went over there as a first sergeant and came back as a first lieutenant. And I got him when he came back, and I took him with me every place and finally got him up to lieutenant colonel before he came back from Italy, you see. See, those days I could get a friend in Washington and get him transferred to here, you see, with me. And he went out as my first sergeant and wound up and retired here last year as a full colonel--permanent full colonel. But he was a good, outstanding officer.

BURG: If I drop back in time for a just a minute, has it ever crossed your mind that after that period in late March of '43



when Eisenhower was telling you he had tried to get you--perhaps just before the North African invasion--he'd tried to get you and he hadn't been able to get you--do you suppose it's possible that that was what got you the combat command, that sometime in '43 he may have been able to do anything to get you in combat; or do you think that was something totally different?

(Interruption) Tape #4

BURG: Let's leave the war for a bit. It's V-E Day. And if I remember correctly, you had some communications with Ike because one of your first jobs right at the end of the war--you went on some kind of an allied commission, didn't you?

LEE: That's right, in Rome.

BURG: Well, could you tell me about that?

LEE: Well, the Allied Commission in Rome after the Italians capitulated was an organization set up to run all of Italy, actually, domestic and military. It was headed by Admiral Ellery Wheeler Stone, who was a U.S. Navy Reserve officer, and he was a pretty rough old cut.



BURG: Now does he take it over in 1943, General, or is he there when you got there?

LEE: He was already there when I got there. See this was after the war ended, after the Italians capitulated, see.

BURG: So it's '43; it's after '43.

LEE: Yeah. When the war ended in Europe and in--where was it?-- May of--when did the war end? In August--

BURG: May '45 in Europe.

LEE: Yeah. All right. Well, I stayed on over there--it's not in those diaries--

MRS. LEE: No, I know that. I just wanted to--

LEE:--as the deputy director of the Air Force Subcommittee of the Allied Commission. See, of the Allied Commission they had an Economic Subcommittee of some sort; they had the Navy Subcommittee; they had an Army Subcommittee; and they had an Air Force



Subcommission and various subcommissions of the Allied Commission. The Air Force Subcommission was headed by an Air Vice Marshal by the name of Ian Brodie. I still get Christmas cards from him. An Englishman, a Royal Air Force man--he was a two-star man.

BURG: I see. That's the equivalent rank and--

LEE: Yes, to us. And he assigned me as a deputy director, as a BG under him. He was the boss.

BURG: How did you happen to wind up there? Did you ever know? Was it just an assignment that was made and--

LEE: Well, I'll tell you how it happened. They had another officer--Air Force officer--by the name of Lyman P. Whitten-- I think that was his name: he was a little senior to me, BG-- that they had lined up for the job. Fact is, the people at Caserta, the Air Force people at Caserta --and he had a kidney ailment of some sort, and they couldn't keep him over there. They had to send him back to the States. So they asked me if I would take the job. I thought about it a little bit, and I said, "Yes, I believe I would. I'd like to have it." You see, I had



an ulterior motive. I thought when I got the job, I could get her Mrs. Lee to come to Italy. She'd never been in Europe, see. She'd been all over the Far East in '52 and while we were there the four years the last trip. And I wanted to get her to Europe; and I wanted Bill to get over here to Europe; and I figured it out. I found out he could go to American school in Switzerland; and I thought, well, if I got that damned job, well, I'll get my family over here with me. And they'd enjoy it. Well, the damned job--if I got it, it was kind of on a temporary basis. It was from day to day more or less--the job was--I found out after I got it, which didn't make me mad at all; but it kind of interfered with my plans of getting my family over. So it lasted for eight months. And all we did--we had control of all the aviation, both commercial and military and the Air Force's Subcommittee; and we could tell them what they could do and what they couldn't do and so forth.



BURG: This is what had been the Royal Italian Air Force and any commercial activity.

LEE: Any commercial aviation that they had, yes.

When I got the job, I got several of my own staff officers with me from my own wing headquarters down at--we were down at Bari or pretty close to Cerignola--actually, Cerignola and Foggia--between the two towns. So I got Frank Marek, who wound up, as I told you, as a full colonel retired and started out with me as a first sergeant. I got him assigned to me. I got Bob Warden, who was a colonel. I got Hack Mixson, who was a major. I got Tex Underwood, who was a captain. I got Jim Graves, who was a major, I think. I got those five officers assigned to me when I took the job as deputy director; and they worked with me, and they worked with the Royal Air Force boys too that were in the Air Force's Subcommittee.

BURG: You were Brodie's Deputy?

LEE: Brodie's Deputy.

BURG: And about how many men in your aviation subsection or sub-commission? Was it sort of an equally mixed bag, General?



LEE: Yes, it was about the same in both. It was about the same number of British as well as American and about the corresponding grade, you see.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: For instance, a group captain as a colonel, and I had Bob Warden as a colonel. And then I had Hack Mixson, and Frank Marek was lieutenant colonel which--I forgot the corresponding rank in there. A group captain--let's see, a squadron leader--

BURG: Probably be wing commander.

LEE: Yeah, wing commander is a--

BURG: Squadron leader, wing commander, group captain--

LEE: Yeah, yeah. Well, anyhow I had two. Let's see, Bob Warden was a colonel and Frank Marek was a lieutenant colonel. Jim Graves and Hack Mixson were majors, and Tex Underwood was a captain and kinda as my aide too, see. As a BG I had an aide, and Tex came along as my aide. I think that's the way it was.



BURG: So Marshal Brodie had approximately the same number.

LEE: The same people. Maybe he had a few more British boys.

BURG: Five or six. Perhaps so. So the subcommission was perhaps 10 to 15 men.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: British and--

LEE: Officers--

BURG: All officers.

LEE: No, we had a few British enlisted people. I didn't have any enlisted U.S. Air Force people, but I did have an American girl for a secretary. Her name was Estelle Lukomski. She was from Milwaukee; and I used to keep in touch with her for several years, and then she got married and had two or three children. She was a pretty girl. She was of Polish--I believe--descent--Lukomski.

BURG: Women's Army Corps or was she civilian?



LEE: No, she was civilian. Over there we had quite a lot of civilian people working in the theater--in the European Theater. In Italy too--well, I guess I mean in Europe too. We did have WAC's-- a lot of WAC's--down in the 15th Air Force Headquarters.

BURG: But not on this commission?

LEE: No.

BURG: Now you didn't know it would be temporary. Was the idea that as quickly as possible your activities--the allied British-American activities--would be phased out?

LEE: They phased out, and we'd be returned to the States.

BURG: Right. It would turn it over to the British.

LEE: British--to the British.

BURG: Now, at that same time was there any thought of moving you to one of the B-29 wings since the war is still going on in the Pacific?



LEE: Not that I know of. That another letter from Bill?

MRS. LEE: Uh-huh.

LEE: Well, better pull it out of there then. I musta missed it.

BURG: Has that got a date on it?

MRS. LEE: No, but it's at sea.

BURG: Here, I'll give you my pen so that you can note that.

So even though you had been in the Far East and you were an experienced Philippine hand, to your knowledge there was no temptation to move you over there to that other activity?

LEE: No. If I remember correctly, 'long about the time the war ended we were still down in Italy; and at my headquarters there was some talk about sending our headquarters, 49th Bomb Wing, intact as a headquarters, wing headquarters, to the Far East-- somewhere over there--for B-29's; but it never did materialize. I remember that definitely because the plan was to send us through the Suez and that way instead of back to the States.



BURG: Yes.

LEE: The talk was to send us that way to Guam or wherever it was.

BURG: Pick up the aircraft there--

LEE: About like we did when we went to Italy originally.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: Send the whole wing headquarters. But it never did develop anything like that. Now Tommy [Thomas S.] Power, who wound up over there as Curt LeMay's Deputy--who eventually [was] commander of SAC, you know--he was a classmate of mine. Wound up a four-star general. Incidentally, Tommy died a couple of years ago or less. Had a heart attack out at Palm Springs, which was a great surprise to me. I didn't know he had ever had a heart condition, and he may never have had one.

BURG: May not.



LEE: He was a couple of years younger than I. But Tommy Power came over there to Italy after I had gotten there and after I had already been assigned these groups, but he didn't stay. There was some flub-up in Washington that sent Tommy and several of his staff people over there to command a wing.

BURG: In the 15th Air Force?

LEE: Yes. But they didn't have any wing for him to command. So they sent Tommy back, and that's when he wound up a going over to Guam, I guess, with Curt LeMay. Anyhow, Tommy was a good officer. I've got entries in the diary--in my '44 diary, which I moved in now--of seeing Tommy down at General Upthegrove's headquarters when he first came in; but he came on back; he didn't stay.



BURG: Now in your work with Brodie during this period of time-- I don't recognize his name. I don't make any particular tie to his wartime service in the RAF. Do you remember what it was he had done, briefly, during the war?

LEE: No, I don't. In fact, he was an older fellow, I would say. His name was Ian, I-a-n, Brodie. I forgot his middle initial. I have it at home. I would say he was at least seven or eight years or maybe as much as ten years older than I am.

BURG: So he might have been an RFC or RAF pilot, let's say, at the end of World War I?

LEE: Yes, could have been. But he was a little, small, blond headed type fellow, and I don't know what his job was during World War II. I have no idea what, where. I don't know what his background was, whether he was a bomber pilot or fighter. I'd say off hand his size--small fellow--he probably was a fighter type.



BURG: Could have been. Now since you don't seem to remember that, it's interesting because you do remember so much. Is it that with Brodie you didn't have much contact between the two of you?

LEE: I didn't have a whole lot of contact. We didn't live in the same quarters. He had his quarters, and they had their own mess.

We had our own mess, you know, where we ate.

BURG: Did you use the same office?

LEE: We had the same building. Now the same floor of this building-- our offices were on the same floor. My office was down in a-- well we'll say it was in a corner of the building like this on about the fifth floor.

BURG: I see, you had sort of a corner office.

LEE: Corner office, myself. And Brodie's office was up the corridor--hallway--and in a corner up on the other side of the building. Actually our associations officially were very, very slim.

BURG: Would you see him daily, General?

LEE: No, sometimes I wouldn't see him for four or five days.

BURG: It just wasn't necessary for--

LEE: It wasn't necessary. It wasn't. I never did really understand



it, now, what the hell our position was or theirs, either. I will have to check in my diary in '45 and '46 to refresh my memory on that job.

BURG: All right, I would appreciate your doing that because--

LEE: 'Course, you see, it was an eight months that I spent there that didn't amount to a whole lot as far as I can remember.

BURG: O.K. The reason I think we would like to know is that here immediately after the war is allied cooperation which is something less than "arm-around-the-shoulder and buddy-buddy."

LEE: Yeah, yeah.

BURG: And yet that commission seems like it might have been a pretty important one.



LEE: I remember one incident that happened not with me particularly, but the Russians had a mission there too, you know.

BURG: Well, thank you. I didn't know.

LEE: Oh, yeah, in Rome they had a damned big outfit. And I remember a couple of Russian officers run a road block down there south of Rome one time a going down to Naples, and the military police shot the damned tires off of their car. And they raised a fuss with old Admiral Stone about it; and Admiral Stone restricted them for ten miles diameter of Rome, and that's as far as they could get of Rome. He was meaner than hell, and the damned Russians--they got their set-back, you see. They don't understand anything but force. And I remember I went to one of their parties one time at their establishment, and they served vodka--little bitty old tiny things like communion cups in church--communion glasses--you know.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: You could drink three or four of them without batting an eye. And we had vodka and [?]WR. They were pretty strong then--in the commission in Italy.



BURG: Now was there any Russian representative on the air subcommittee?

LEE: Not on the subcommittee, but I think they had one or two in the Allied Commission--representatives. But they had a

separate kind of a building where they had their set-up.

BURG: So they were not only quartered apart from you; they didn't even have their offices in the same building.

LEE: No.

BURG: All right then, let me ask you this: are the French there at that time as part of the Allied Commission?

LEE: Yes, they were into it, but I don't remember the details of where they were. They weren't in our building. 'Cause I remember that's when I got presented the--what the hell is that they call it? I got the Croix-de-Guerre and the something else.

BURG: They have the Medal Militaire, or there is the Liberation of France.

LEE: No, it was quite a medal that--

MRS. LEE: St.--

LEE: No, that's Italian.



MRS. LEE: Oh.

LEE: was the Legion of Honor,
Officers' Grade, I believe it is. Legion of Honor--

BURG: I see.

LEE: It wasn't a ribbon. It's a thing you wear around your neck.

BURG: The red rosette in the buttonhole if you want to afterwards.

LEE: Yeah. Legion of Honor. And this French general presented
it to me in my office. I never will forget them telling to be
prepared to get kissed on each cheek. Which he did.

BURG: He did?

LEE: Yeah. I probably got that entry in my diary about when he
presented it to me--in my '46 diary--because I think it was some-
time in the early part of '46 before I came back to the States.

BURG: Well, I've made a note on this, and what we'll do is you'll



be proceeding in your diaries and we'll pursue that a little further. I'd like to have you think back--

LEE: I would. You see, that's the reason I want to review those diaries because you take in that period of time and it's been so long ago that you don't remember the details too well. And by--

BURG: Although you do. I think back to the same--

LEE: By looking in those diaries I can refresh my memory real well.

BURG: Yes, yes, indeed. You're coming up with information about names of people. Clearly these diaries are making all the difference in the world.

LEE: What's that thing?

MRS. LEE: Something about being an American.

LEE: Oh, that's just something about some--I'm a great guy to--

MRS. LEE: From the New York Sun.

LEE:--to keep things like that and make copies of things and carbon copies and mail them.



MRS. LEE: I'm just going through to see if we forgot some more letters. That's a picture of--

LEE: Who's that?

MRS. LEE: Rudy.

LEE: Oh, that's the one that was taken from Milwaukee.

MRS. LEE: I almost thought at first it was Bill.

LEE: That was Milwaukee at the Sojourner's convention.

MRS. LEE: Rudy T-e-s-c-h-a-n.

LEE: Yeah, some people we met in Milwaukee one time when I was up there for a Sojourners convention, and it was when he was a little boy.

BURG: Oh, yes. Well, in '46 then you had put in eight months on the commission. It phased out, and then you came back here to the States.



LEE: Ah, Mac, I don't think it phased out completely. I don't remember the dates. I know why I got to come home: that's the time I slapped John Maragon, you know. You knew about that?

BURG: No, I didn't.

LEE: For goodness sake, I thought you'd read that story in The Saturday Evening Post about me.

BURG: No, sir, I did not.

LEE: Well, you got one of them here, haven't you?

BURG: O.K., we must have. I was saving that--

LEE: I was going to say I'll send you a reprint 'cause I got some reprints.

BURG: Oh, if you do--

LEE: A friend of mine had a bunch of them made for me one time, and I've never gotten rid of them all. I still have a few left.

BURG: See, here again, you may have told Ed/Edwin Alan/Thompson



about this at lunch.

LEE: I may have. Well, anyhow--

MES. LEE: Yeah, I know he told him about it.

LEE:--I got sent home because I got mixed up with John Maragon, who was a Greek. You know anything about him at all?

BURG: Not a thing. I knew that you'd had some difficulty there--

LEE: Well, when John--

BURG:--and I didn't know anything about it.

LEE: When Truman was running the haberdasher shop in Kansas City, John Maragon was a shoeshine boy in the hotel there; and he got acquainted with Harry Truman. He was a Greek-born American. And to get back a little bit now--Harry Truman when he was president he had a military aide by the name of Harry Vaughan.

BURG: Yes, I remember him. Colonel or general, I guess.

LEE: Well, he wound up as major general. But General MacArthur run him out of Australia when he was a lieutenant colonel and



made him leave--sent him back to the States. He got mixed up in one thing or another--deals over there--so the story goes--and came back here, and Truman was vice-president. He got Harry Vaughan as a military aide, the first time in history of the United States that a vice-president had a military aide. Anyhow when President Roosevelt died and Truman came in, Harry Vaughan moved in as President Truman's military aide as a BG. Next thing you know he was a major general. Well, Harry Vaughan was in ill repute around Washington with all the military and every other branch of government 'cause he'd call up these people, tell them the president wanted this, the president wanted that, and so forth. Anyhow John Maragon was sent to Greece--being a Greek horn. He was sent over there as special assistant to Ambassador Henry F. Grady, who was then the Ambassador to Greece. Ambassador Grady--

BURG: At Grady's request, sir, or--

LEE: No.

BURG: I see.--



LEE: Harry Vaughan, I think, sent him over there as special assistant to Ambassador Grady for the Greek elections. So he came through Rome. He came in on MATS airplane, Military Air Transport.

BURG: Late '45, General, or '46?

LEE: In early '46. And he had to lay over two or three days in Rome before we had a MATS plane going into Athens. So Bob [Robert M.] Webster, a major general who was in command of MATS in Europe and had his headquarters in Paris, used to come down to Rome once in a while to check on MATS operations down there. Lew Gravis was a colonel in command of the MATS operation in Italy--Rome--and he lived in the Hassler Hotel. Well, Bob Webster blew in to town--flew in--and he called me at my apartment that night to tell me he was in town; and my roommate, who was Colonel Bob Warden, had gone to Caserta for the weekend. So I asked Bob to come out to the house and have dinner with me and to ask him when he



MRS. LEE: You want to leave it in there or take it out?

LEE: I want to read it and see what it is. They come out and have dinner with me and stay with me overnight because Bob Warden was gone and he could use his room in this penthouse apartment that we'd requisitioned from Prince Vittorio Massimo. So I went down to get him. I drove my own staff car. And I kept the staff car at the apartment and kept it in the garage and had to keep it locked up because Italians steal the damned tires or anything else off of it. Instead of keeping a driver overnight I'd keep my Chevrolet staff car at the apartment locked up in the garage. So I got out and drove down there; and I drove up in front of the hotel--past the hotel to a big kind of a-- call it plaza and everything--piazza I think or something the Italians call it--where you would park. So I was backing into this place to park to go in the house to get into the hotel to get Bob Webster, and I backed right in front of a bus. The bus was headed this way, and I backed in this way; but my car didn't back all the way from in front of the bus. The bus was stopped. It was a GI bus, an American bus. So the guy that was driving the bus was Italian, and he started blowing his horn when I backed



in there. So I got out of the car; and I asked a couple of GI's standing there if they could speak Italian, and one of them said he could. And I said, "Well, ask that damned fool what he's blowing his horn at me for." So he asked him, and the driver said that his battery was low on the bus and they might have to push it to start it and my car would be in the way. Well--I told the GI--I said, "Now you tell him that I'm just going to be a few minutes. I'm going inside to get General Webster, and I'll be right back." Well, I was kind of irritated by all this confusion going on--the guy blowing his horn. And I turned around to leave, and there was a guy standing right under my nose. I damned near stepped on him. And I didn't know who the hell he was. Then I--I don't remember the exact words--I said, "What in the hell are you doing here?" And the reply was that he was doing what he pleased; he could do--go--where he wanted to. And I said, "Well, that may be true." He didn't talk with a distinct American accent. See, I figured he was more an Italian. Actually, I thought that's what he was. I said, "Well, you can if you don't stick your nose in other people's business"--something to that effect--and he said, well, he could stick his nose in anybody's



business he wanted to. Well, that was the wrong thing to tell me 'cause I'm kind of hot-headed anyhow, and I slapped him twice before he could get away from me. I didn't hit him; I slapped him. And he did run.

BURG: He didn't run?

LEE: He did run.

BURG: Oh, he did.

LEE: Well, I didn't run after him. I wasn't intending to mutilate him or anything. So I went on in the house. And I found Lew Gravis--Colonel Gravis--and Bob Webster and Dick [?] Mazzarini, who was a TWA representative, and his wife down in the cocktail lounge having a martini. So I went in and ordered one too. And I sat there, and I was telling Lew Gravis that I had just slapped a guy out there in front of his hotel. In case he got some complaints, I wanted to tell him ahead of time. And Lew wanted to know what he had done, and I said, "Well, he was sticking his damned nose in my business." And I told him what it was about.



BURG: And the martini you were having--that was the first drink of the evening?

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: All Maragon had run into was your temper.

LEE: That was all. See, I hadn't had time. I hadn't had time to have a drink. There wasn't anybody at home to have a drink with because I only had my Italian maid and cook there that couldn't speak English. And she cooked--was a good cook--and took good care of our apartment. And it was a little early anyhow. So I got Bob Webster, and we went on out to the house. And after we got out there, why, we decided that he ought to spend the night out there instead of staying in the hotel. So we went back to the hotel to get his B-4 bag, and I waited in front. I drove up and parked and let him go in to get it. Well, he wasn't gone ten minutes or five minutes--had to have been stairs at the desk. And he came back, and he threw his bag in the back end of the car in the back seat and got in the front and said, "Say, you know who that guy was you slapped out here in front of the hotel a while



ago?" And I said, "No, I have no idea." "Well," he said, "he's President Truman's special representative to the Greek elections." "Well," I said, "what in the hell is he doing here at Rome?" And he said, "Well, he's on his way to Athens, and he has to wait till a flight goes to Athens." "Well," I said, "hell, I guess I better go to talk to him, straighten this thing out." He said, "Hell, leave him alone." He said, "He's been in there trying to call Washington, raising all kinds of hell, and," he said, "Lew Gravis has had the operator--keep her from trying to put a call through to Washington." "Well," I said, "hell, I can maybe go in there and explain things to him, and I can send him to Athens in my B-17 tomorrow if he wants to go. I got some pilots." I had a B-17 and a B-25 I kept when I went up there, see, with the Allied Commission.

BURG: I see.

LEE: We flew our boys; me and the other boys flew. I said, "While he's here, I'll let him have a staff car. I got two staff cars. Show him around Rome." I said, "I'll fix him. I'll straighten that thing around." "Oh," he--Bob Webster--said, "leave him alone."



He said, "The damned fool!" He said, "We got him calmed down now. He's up there in his room, and he'll be all right." Well, that's where I made my mistake, I guess, if you want to call it a mistake, 'cause I could have gone there and talked to the guy and explained to him that I thought he was an Italian because he did have an accent. And I could have said, "Well, hell, while you are here I can show you Rome and have some of my people show you Rome. I could fly you to Athens if you want to go." And anything, you know--I could have placated him some way or other and got him off his mad spell. Well, I didn't. So he went on over there. Ambassador Grady run him out of there in less than a month--got over there and got in the money market business. You see, he could take U.S. money; and instead of getting 2,000 Drachmas--Greek money--back in a regular normal exchange, you'd get 8 or 10 thousand back if you was in the black market. So they run him out of there. So, when he got back to Washington, he went to see Barry Vaughan. And Harry Vaughan got in on the damned act and got the military to investigate it. So I got reprimanded by John C.H. Lee-- lieutenant general. We used to call him John "Court House" Lee. He was in command of the Allied Forces down at Caserta. I got



sent home. I got reduced and sent home. I got knocked back to a colonel and sent home.

BURG: You had been at that time at what rank?

LEE: B.G.--brigadier general--and probably might have wound up as a two or three stars if I hadn't have got mixed up in that deal. But anyhow I got sent home. And that's the reason that I got out of there when I did. 'Course I went to the Pentagon when I got home to see people in the Air Force to ask them what the hell happened and what all this business was about, and they told me. And then after I got to the Philippines the last time--after John C.H. Lee retired from the army--I got a letter explaining to me why he had to reprimand me.

BURG: Oh, he wrote you. Lee, himself, wrote to you.



LEE: After he retired he went into the Episcopalian--what was that he went into?--ministry. He wasn't a minister. He got mixed with the associated--with the Episcopalian Brotherhood. Is that what they call it?

MRS. LEE: I don't know.

BURG: That sounds accurate.

LEE: Anyhow, he retired as lieutenant general of the Army, and he wrote me a letter--personal letter--in the Philippines which I have telling me why he had to reprimand me for slapping this one John Maragon. It was ordered from the Pentagon, Washington, see. And who did it? Harry Vaughan. I doubt if President Truman ever knew a damned word about it--one thing about it.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And so he, John C.H. Lee, was real frank about it. He said, "I was ordered to reprimand you." Well, when the inspector general came to inspect--to check on the thing--there was a colonel from Caserta who walked into my office that morning with an article in Time magazine with a picture of John Maragon about his shady activities in Greece. And he laid it on my desk in my office in the Allied Commission building and said, "This is the character I'm up here to investigate you--or talk to you--about you slapping



him. And," he says, "when will it be convenient for me to talk to you?" "Well," I said, "Now or tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock will be convenient, and we'll go over the whole deal" So he made his report. And the reprimand I got from John C.H. Lee was another one on the 104th Article of War and more of a kind of a half-way apology for having to do it. Then he later wrote me in the Philippines and told me why he did it. So then I got sent home.

BURG: Now did you at that time again write to General Eisenhower?

LEE: No, I didn't write him.

BURG: Now do you think he knew about it? Surely he knew about it.

LEE: He might have, but I doubt it because when I got to the Philippines in '52 Bill was thinking about doing his residency in the Presbyterian Hospital in New York City, which is a teaching hospital for Columbia University.

BURG: I understand.

LEE: Ike was then elected president. Matter of fact, he was already in the White House. And Bill wrote me and asked me if I'd write Ike a note to ask him if he could drop by the White



House and see him on the way to New York to check on this--doing his residency at the Presbyterian Hospital. So I wrote Ike a short note from the Philippines and told him that Bill was to graduate from medical school in 1954--but he was held up in '53, I guess, 'cause we got to the Philippines in August of '52 to June '53.

MRS. LEE: '52 to '53.

LEE: But Bill was going up there, and school was out in June of '53. And I wrote Ike this letter--a short letter--and told him that Bill would be graduating from medical school in '54 and he wanted to go to Presbyterian Hospital in New York to see about doing his internship. He wanted to know if he could drop by and say hello to you. Well, I got a letter right back from Ike--less than a week--I sent it air mail and he sent it air mail back--that said that unfortunately he wouldn't be in town. He would be in Denver or be in Colorado fishing--for sanity reasons that he had to get out of town. Among other things, he'd gleaned some information from my letter that he was not aware of. He said,



"I thought you were a general officer, and," he said, "I was surprised that Bill graduated from medical school so soon." Well, it wasn't but a damn short time after that till I got my star back you see.

BURG: Yes, I do see. So presumably he didn't know anything about this?

LEE: He didn't know, but he found out about it. And when he did, something happened; and I got my star back--

BURG: I see.

LEE:--short time after I got this letter. So I think he probably asked the Pentagon what the hell happened; and they probably couldn't tell him or told him that I was reduced due to a reduction in force, which was a damn lie. That was the lie they tried to pass it off on. It wasn't a reduction--they had a reduction in force; but anybody with any common sense knows that I was reduced for slapping one John Maragon and the reprimand, you see, because there was a hell of a lot of others that were general officers that wasn't busted back to colonel.



BURG: Let me ask you if John Lee was able to tell you--or did he tell you?--who it was in the Pentagon that had signed the letter directing him.

LEE: No, no, he did not tell me. All he said, he was ordered.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: He was ordered, and that's all he said.

BURG: Now when you looked at your records on that time when you were in Washington, was that reprimand in there?

LEE: It was in there; but there was some communication in there about trying to get it out, but I don't know who started the argument. I didn't even go into it, but it was in there.

BURG: With communications that indicated that there was someone who was trying to get it removed.



LEE: To get it removed--that's right. And they wouldn't do it.

BURG: What year would that have been, General, that someone was trying to remove it? Do you remember?

LEE: Well, let's see. I retired in '59. I came back to Amarillo in '56, and I was up there, I think, in '57. So it was sometime while I was in the Philippines, I believe that this thing was-- the correspondence in there was. And I don't know who it was that was trying to get that out of there. I'm sure it wasn't Ike because if it had been Ike he'd have got it 'cause he was president then.

BURG: And other than thinking about the possibility of going up and talking to Maragon, which you didn't do because Webster convinced you otherwise--

LEE: He discouraged it. He figured he was all right.

BURG:--no one ever asked you afterwards to apologize to Maragon or to handle it in any way--including Harry Vaughan?

LEE: No.

BURG: And you never got a communication from Harry Vaughan on this?

LEE: No.



BURG: So it just appeared to you and perhaps to some others who knew you that Harry Vaughan had gone to the Pentagon, had applied pressure--perhaps in Harry Truman's name--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG:--without Harry Truman ever knowing about it.

LEE: Well, I know it. Listen, I saw a letter that he wrote to another damned major general over there. I'll have to get my diary on that for the fellow--

BURG: O.K.

LEE:--that period.

BURG: Something else for us to think about.

LEE: But he wrote this letter to this major general who was in Italy--wasn't Bob Webster. Wanted to know what this damned character Lee was doing over there. He said, "I propose to hold



up his promotion to permanent major." See I was a permanent captain then. I wasn't due for permanent major till I put in seventeen years service.

BURG: Now this is Harry Vaughan who writes the letter?

LEE: He wrote the letter, and I saw it. I didn't get my permanent majority till I was over here at Smoky Hill, see. In seventeen years--that was 1946 after I got back. He wrote this letter to this fellow--this general, major general--and he the major general showed me the copy of the letter that he wrote back to Harry Vaughan telling him that if he held up my promotion to major he would have to hold up everybody's promotion to major below me on the promotion list because they couldn't promote anybody below me if they held mine up, you see, 'cause it's--



BURG: Permanent rank in regular Army.

LEE:--permanent rank, you see. What was that guy's name? Anyhow that was put out in Saturday Evening Post, see. So when that

article appeared in the Saturday Evening Post, Mr. Harry Vaughan-- General Harry Vaughan--was proposing to sue Curtis Publishing Company, Bob Robert Sherrod who wrote the article, and me as co-defendant for that particular statement; but he backed down on it and didn't do it because he knew damned well that he had written the letter and he knew damned well that this fellow that wrote in had the copy of the letter that he wrote to him back to back my promotion.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And he backed down because Curtis Publishing Company at that time--I guess they still have a battery of lawyers. But I told him--I told Bob Sherrod--about this letter. Bob Sherrod was writing the story about me back in 1955, and I told him about this letter that Harry Vaughan had written proposing to hold up my promotion to permanent major and that this major general had wrote him and I saw the copy of the letter. I didn't see the copy of the letter that Harry Vaughan wrote to him, but I saw the



copy of the letter that this general wrote back to him, see, because he brought it in and showed it to me--let me know what was going on.

BURG: Well, I'd appreciate it if you would send a reprint of that Saturday Evening Post article.

LEE: I will. I'll mail you one when I get back.

BURG: Very good. That's very good. Let's do this. Let's close on that note, which gives you a chance to get back to Salina and rest up a bit before your party and gives you a chance to think how you are going to occupy your time--

MRS. LEE: Oh, I know.

BURG:--with your husband gone.



INTERVIEW WITH
General William L. Lee

by

Dr. Maclyn Burg
Oral Historian

on

January 12, 1972

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



Gift of Personal Statement

GENERAL WILLIAM L. LEE

to the

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

In accordance with the provisions of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 as amended (63 Stat. 377) and regulations issued thereunder, I, William L. Lee, hereinafter referred to as the donor, hereby give, donate and convey to the United States of America for eventual deposit in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, and for administration therein by the authorities thereof, a transcript of a personal statement approved by me on October 22, 1975 and prepared for the purpose of deposit in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. The gift of this document is made subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. Title to the material transferred hereunder will pass to the United States as of the date of the delivery of this material into the physical custody of the Archivist of the United States.

2. It is the donor's wish to make the material donated to the United States of America by the terms of this instrument available for research as soon as it has been deposited in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.



This is an interview being conducted on January 12, 1972, in the Eisenhower Library with General and Mrs. William L. Lee.

Page 369

DR. BURG: Now, General, the last time that we were talking we talked about the Allied Commission in Rome and events of the late '40s. Perhaps we'd gotten up as early as the '50s. After the Maragon affair you were then brought back to the United States to Salina? Is that when you came to Salina?

GENERAL LEE: I was ordered back to the States, but I didn't have an assignment except to SAC, Strategic Air Command. I didn't know where I would be stationed.

DR. BURG: Now Strategic Air Command was brand new when you came back?



GEN. LEE: Well, pretty new. The headquarters was at Bolling Field in Washington, D. C.

DR. BURG: Now, who assigned you to SAC? Do you know? Was it simply a War Department assignment, or did somebody ask for you?

GEN. LEE: I don't know. I came back to the Pentagon--the first place I went to after I got back to the States--and checked in at Air Force Headquarters and talked to General Ira C. Baker.

Carl Spaatz was then chief of staff of the Air Force. And they told me I was being assigned to SAC Headquarters at Bolling Field.

BURG: What was the year by the way?

LEE: That was 1946.

BURG: SAC was that early?

LEE: Yes.



BURG: Ah, I'd not realized that. I thought it was later.

LEE: No, and General St. Clair Street was the first commander, or the man that I talked to at Bolling Field when I first reported in. He was a major general. And they didn't know where they wanted to assign me, but they did, in fact, decide to assign me to the 15th Air Force which headquarters were at Colorado Springs at the time.

BURG: And what were they equipped with, may I ask? Basically?

LEE: Well, basically, with B-29s.

BURG: I see, O.K.

LEE: B-29s. So finally I went all the way out to Colorado Springs. And General [Charles F.] Born, Charley Born, was commander of the 15th Air Force at the time. And he didn't know where he wanted me. So he told me to go back on leave and to go back to Jackson, Mississippi and wait. That's where we were living--Bert was living--when the war was on.

BURG: O.K.

LEE: And went back there, and finally I got ordered to Salina, Kansas. The commanding officer there then was Moe [Maurice Arthur] Preston. His name was Preston. He was being transferred somewhere, and I was moving in to replace him.

BURG: Now were you taking over as a base commander?

LEE: Yes. Well the commander--at that time the base commander--would command everything on the base.

BURG: And what was stationed there? Do you recall?

LEE: B-29s. I forgot the number of the unit. I think it was the 97th Bomb Group.

BURG: O.K.



LEE: And the type of airplanes we had there was the B-29's.
I had a whole group of B-29s..

BURG: Now I happen to remember from an article written about
you that you had commanded one hundred and sixty B-24s in Italy.

LEE: That was during the war.

BURG: Now would a B-29 group be that large?

LEE: No. You see what I had during the war was a wing.

BURG: Oh.

LEE: And it had three groups.

BURG: I see, I see.

LEE: Now a group was the next unit down from a wing. We had
a wing headquarters which was kind of like a small air force
during World War II. I had fifty some odd men on my staff in
my wing headquarters, and then I had all these groups and group
commanders. Well, when I came to Salina, I had a group of B-29s,
which was the flying unit. And, then, of course, you had the
housekeeping units and the supply and the hospital and all of



this. In addition, the base commander had all of that under his command. In this B-29 group, which was I believe the 97th group, we had a colonel commanding it. And we had a lieutenant colonel commanding the hospital. Then we had a lieutenant colonel that was in command of what we called housekeeping units.

BURG: Messing facilities.



LEE: Messes and supply and so forth like that and the maintenance people.

BURG: All right. Now what kind of a mission was assigned to your unit at Salina? You're part of SAC?

LEE: Part of SAC.

BURG: Let me ask you this, too. The SAC that I picture is the SAC of the motion pictures--all top discipline, highly motivated, very gung-ho kind of unit, run everywhere, do everything double time. Was it like that in the earlier days of SAC when you went into it?

LEE: No, it wasn't necessarily that way. Of course, we were very proud of the outfit, and we did do our work with enthusiasm.

And our crews--training on B-29's--they all had certain targets, target practice, and bombing practice and simulated bomb practice and things like that; and they took great pride in it because it was a competitive deal. You see, all SAC units, all groups and what not in SAC, are competitive. And every year they have a competition like--well, we say baseball teams playing against each other--to see who can be most accurate with bomb dropping and with the gunnery and so forth. And so it was a competitive thing all during the year. And then at the final time they'll go out to Tonopah, Nevada, or wherever the bombing range is, and drop bombs. And the group that gets the most bombs in a certain small area--they're number one for the bombing, you see.



BURG: Now a B-29 has a fairly limited range, let's say, compared to a B-52, later bombers, jet bombers.

LEE: Oh, yes; oh, yes.

BURG: Did you exercise your B-29's out to the full extent of their range in mock raids, for example?

LEE: Well, our limitations was continental-wide. We never did get out of the country up as far as Alaska like the 52s and what not.

BURG: Do you know the reason for that?

LEE: Well, it was because of the limited range. I think it was the gas supply. We didn't have refueling capabilities then. As I remember, they hadn't been perfected for bombers. They were perfecting them for fighters all right at that time.

BURG: All right.

LEE: But we didn't have refueling tankers like they have now.

BURG: Now a question that comes to mind: you're part of Strategic Air Command, and you're based in the absolute center of the United States with an aircraft that doesn't have the range to reach any target opportunity that we might think of as being normal. How come? It's rather unusual, isn't it?

LEE: We couldn't take the B-29s, we'll say, for instance, like the 52s do now with their refueling capabilities, to hit a target in Russia.



BURG: Right. So what was the plan? Let us say that the Russians had launched a strike of some sort at us. You would have had to launch your group and land them somewhere to refuel and then pass on to strike?

LEE: Then pass on--that was the reason actually. Of course, I'm not too well informed about it, but I know that that was the reason that we had the Strategic Bomb bases on North Africa and places in Turkey--you know, so that we were within range of our potential enemy with the then existing airplanes that we had. See, we had bases on North Africa. We finally gave them away. We got run out of those places. We had them in Turkey; we had them in Italy, you see. And we had them in Spain. Why? Because we didn't have the range; we didn't have the potential to get to the target that we would have to hit with the airplanes that we had.

BURG: So you're saying, in effect, that one of the reasons for our post-war diplomacy and our relationships with other countries was that we had such short range, short-legged bombers that we had to be on good terms with Turkey, Italy, other countries--



LEE: Spain and those places--North Africa.

BURG: --in order to launch strikes. Or, we could get it and couldn't return it.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: Now as the planes improve, then we're able to back away from some of those bases and--

LEE: Sure.

BURG: --into diplomatic positions--

LEE: Right.

BURG: --that we held. All right, now, who did you say was in charge of SAC at this time? Street?

LEE: When I first came back, General St. Clair Street. "Streak" we called him, but I think it was St. Clair Street. And I don't remember how he spelled his name, but his first name was called St. Clair. Now he was the man that I reported to when I first came. And when I get to that in my diary--I haven't got through my 1946 diary yet, but I'm sure I will have an entry in there of



who I reported to when I came back from Italy. See, I came back from Italy in May of '46. I had been over there eight months after the war ended or something like that. I came back, and the first place I went to was direct to the Pentagon to the chief of staff of the Air Force's office. And I reported in, and I said--who did I say it was? Ira Eaker? Well, it wasn't Ira Eaker. As well as I remember, it was Tully [Charles C.] Chauncey. Tully Chauncey was then a major general, and he was, I guess, the right-hand man of the chief of staff of the Air Force. Tully Chauncey wanted to know why I didn't kill the guy.

BURG: This is Maragon?

LEE: Yeah. Well, I said, "Hell, I get in enough trouble with just slapping him. If I'd have killed him, I wouldn't be here today, chances are."

BURG: Right. So you were back. When you came back, you were a colonel?

LEE: Yes, I was a colonel. I was reduced to a colonel before I left Italy. And, of course, I've got a reprimand about it; but it is not in my records, I don't think, now because--maybe it is.



BUR: anyhow, I still have the letter that I got from General John C. H. Lee--

BURG: Yes.

LEE: --that reprimanded me, told me why he did.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: That was after he retired.

BURG: I think we have it on the other tape that "Court House" Lee--

LEE: Lee, John Court House Lee.

BURG: --had waited until he retired himself@-

LEE: To write and tell me.

BURG: --and then he felt he was free to tell you what had happened and how.

LEE: And that was while I was in the Philippines.

BURG: And a very good letter if I remember, a very nice letter. So now when you're at Salina with this B-29 outfit--how long are you there?



LEE: Well, I was only there fourteen months, and strange thing I was only there that short a time. The commanding general of the 15th Air Force, who was my boss at the time, was Charley Born.

BURG: Might get his spelling too.

LEE: B-o-r-n. B-o-r-n.

BURG: All right.

LEE: Born--was Charley Born. And he got reassigned to the Tactical Air Command over at Langley Field, Virginia. The Tactical Air Command was the same as Strategic Air Command except they used smaller airplanes and they support ground troops and so forth.



BURG: So more limited objectives for that--

LEE: That's right.

BURG: --Air Force than for yours.

LEE: And shorter flights.

BURG: Right.

LEE: Well, he got reassigned as deputy to Pete [Gen. Elwood R.] Quesada, Q-u-e-s-a-d-a, you know. He was, I think, pretty well known by Ike too.

BURG: As a pioneer aviator.

LEE: Yes, that's right. Well, Pete Quesada was commanding general of the Tactical Air Command and Charley Born was assigned as his deputy. So when Charley got Tactical Air Command, he went to Washington and got me transferred to Turner Field--Air Force Base--in Albany, Georgia, for 31st Fighter Wing. And I'd never flown fighters in my life--that is, except just to piddle around with them: fly the old P-1s, P-12s, and P-36s during the war just to have me an old airplane to fly in.



BURG: Right.

LEE: But I never commanded a tactical fighter outfit. But I got sent to Albany, Georgia, to reopen the base and got the 31st Fighter Wing in there with the--what was those? F-80, F-36s, or something. I don't know.

BURG: The Shooting Star?

LEE: No, it was a reciprocating engine.

BURG: Oh.

LEE: Twelve cylinder engine in them. Anyhow, I got that assignment, and I never had flown one. And I never will forget the first time I flew one down there because everybody got the word around that the 'old man' was out flying this fighter. Even when I got home Mrs. Lee wanted to know what I was doing out flying this airplane. Well, I said, "I'm commander of this outfit. I've got to know how to fly the airplane." So during the noon hour I got the thing up and flew it about an hour; and I think half the base was out to see me land when I came in, and fortunately I made a good landing. But--

BURG: But it was still a prop-driven aircraft?

LEE: Oh, yeah, yeah. The 12 had a Curtis-Wright V-12 engine in it. Now, gee whiz, it wasn't--it wasn't a jet.

BURG: A single-seat aircraft?

LEE: Yes, that's right.



BURG: That is a fighter?

LEE: Fighter attack. We used them during the war; had lots of them.

BURG: Not a P-51?

LEE: Yeah, it was a 51.

BURG: North American P-51?

LEE: 51--that was what it was. They brought them in from the storage out at Pecos or somewhere out there and brought the whole bunch of them down there to Turner Field. There were 90 some odd of them sitting down on the field, and that was when we got them. And I'd never flown one; so I got the book, and I'd sit in the airplane and read about it. So one day I told the sergeant--I said, "If you'll get me a parachute and helmet and goggles, I think I'll just fly this thing." So he got me a parachute and helmet and goggles, and I took off. It was during the noon hour, see, cause I didn't eat lunch. And so finally I think I had to get twenty-five hours in it before I could take it across country, which I did. And after the



first time, well, it wasn't such a show for people. The 'old man'--the first time, though--he was flying, and they were afraid he'd crack up or spin in or something.

BURG: Well, for the record, we should say that a P-51 is perhaps the hottest long range fighter aircraft that we developed in World War II, and it was in use at the end of the war. Definitely, a young man's aircraft. They are still racing them with Packard or Merlin engines, I guess, at the National Air Races in Reno, Nevada. It's still a young man's game, and how old were you, General, when you got in that thing and taught yourself how to fly it?

LEE: Oh, it was '48--'47. I was forty-four.

BURG: Forty-four years old, and you learned by reading the manual as you sat in the cockpit.

LEE: Flying yet. That's the only way you could fly. Same way with an airplane--I mean single-seat--because you couldn't have an instructor with you.

BURG: Right.



LEE: You had to be your own instructor.

BURG: So you have that outfit under your control.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: Did you ever find out--well, let's put it another way. Why does General Born ask for you? Is it because of his work with you in SAC?

LEE: Well, I guess so. Well, Charley, you know, he was with us during the war.

BURG: Oh, he was in heavy bombardment with you?

LEE: Yes, but--

BURG: Oh, I see.

LEE:--he was on staff. He was General [Nathan F.] Twining's operations officer down at 15th Air Force in Italy. And I was commander of the 49th Bomb Wing, and so he knew me from there--from Italy. And then I think he had something to do with me being assigned to the 15th Air Force when I came back



because I wound up with him, you see. Word gets around. Here's the way things happen. For instance, kind of like an officer gets made available like I was for reassignment. Well, the word gets around, and they send out messages to the various commands like Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command, and--I guess that's all they got now. But Jerry Lee, William L. Lee, was being made available for reassignment. Who wants him? And I think that's the reason Charley Born got me at Salina--because he commanded 15th Air Force in Salina. And then when he got transferred to Tactical Air Command, he goes up to Washington and gets me--from SAC--assigned to TAC and then an assignment to Turner Field.



BURG: He never told you that he was going to do this?

LEE: No, I didn't know it till it was done. And then, of course, I was kind of half mad about it because I was happy with what I was doing, but you don't have any preference. You have your druthers, but you don't have any preference.

BURG: Yes, right.

LEE: And I, not being a fighter man in the first place, thought it was a little odd and strange to put me in a fighter outfit. Well, what it was--that base had been closed.

BURG: Turner.

LEE: Turner Air Force Base had been closed, so they were reopening it, see, and putting the 31st Fighter Wing in there. So it was a job of administration as well as tactical. Actually, I didn't get to stay there very long because I was there only about ten months before I got assigned to the National War College as a student, which was a surprise to me after being in the trouble I had been into.



BURG: Now this has all happened in a span of roughly two years, hasn't it?

LEE: Easy two years.

BURG: So we haven't reached 1950 yet?

LEE: Oh, no.

BURG: Let me ask you this, while we are at this stage: you, Mrs. Lee, had moved from Jackson out to Salina with Bill?

MRS. LEE: Yes, that's right.

BURG: Now then you come back to Virginia--

MRS. LEE: No--

BURG: --or to Georgia, rather.

MRS. LEE: --Georgia. That's right.

BURG: You're back in the south again--

MRS. LEE: Yes.

BURG: --after the long time that you had been there during the war. The National War College is Washington, D.C., or environs?

LEE: One hour--one year there--moved there.

BURG: And this came as a surprise to you. You felt that slapping Mr. Maragon had probably blighted your career?

LEE: From then on, yes. I figured that was the end from the standpoint of ever getting back my star or getting any further than just a colonel and retiring as such. I thought I'd just be



kicked around here the rest of the time that I had to put in from one job to the other as colonel. And while they weren't insignificant jobs at all--I wasn't unhappy with the jobs at all. Matter of fact, I wasn't unhappy any time except the time I got busted. But that was my own doing. It probably wouldn't have happened if I hadn't been a little hot-headed.

BURG: Your remark to Mr. Robert Sherrod, the reporter, was that if you couldn't be a tree, you'd be a damned good bush.

LEE: "Damned good bush." Yeah, I meant that; and, as a matter of fact, if you can't be a tree, why, be a good bush.



BURG: Yes.

LEE: Do the best you can with what you got. So that's what I was doing all along. When I got this assignment to the National War College, I questioned it because my boss then of the 9th Air Force--I was in the 9th Air Force of the Tactical Air Force. See, Turner Field was in the 9th Air Force with headquarters at Greenville, South Carolina. And it happened to be Major General William E. Old who was commander of the 9th Air Force.

BURG: O-l-d?

LEE: Yes. And he had married a first cousin of mine back in 1924--or '25 rather--when I was at Texas A & M. He had graduated from A & M in '24.

BURG: I see.

LEE: Well, Don called me from Greenville, South Carolina, and told me that he had just received notification that I had been selected as a student for the National War College, which is the highest school we have--or did at the time. I don't think they have any higher now either. And I told Don--I said, "Well, check that again because I don't believe it." I said, "I don't see how I could be selected for the National War College; maybe Air War College,"--which is at Maxwell Field, Alabama, which is top for the Air Force. He said, "No, it says right here National War College." I said, "O.K." So then I got my orders, and Bert and I went to Washington to look for a house to live in while we were there.

BURG: Who made the recommendations? Who made the selections to the National War College? Do you know?



LEE: I really don't know. I think it's a group of officers in the Pentagon--senior officers--that probably select those people because there were only one hundred twenty students a year. And, of course, only a few of those are Air Force; few, Navy; few, Army; and a few, Marines; few, State Department; and maybe one or two--well, we had six British and Canadians in that class, I think: Air Force, Navy, and the Army--one each from the British and one each from Canada. But there was only a hundred and twenty students total, and so you got to be--somebody's got to make a real tight and precise selection, I guess, to get a person to go to that.

BURG: I don't want to ask you about the whole course and what was going on there. I want to ask another question or two first. Had you ever attended the Command and General Staff School?

LEE: The only school--

BURG: Fairly unusual, isn't it, for someone to go--

LEE: Yes.

BURG: --to the War College and not have gone to the other?



LEE: The only school I ever attended was what we called in those days the Air Corps Tactical School, which was at Maxwell Field, Alabama, in 19-- it was after I came back from the Philippines. It was 1939.

BURG: Right.

LEE: And it was a very short course. Normally it was a nine-months course, but they shortened it to only three months--very concentrated course. And we had quite a few of the old officers like Muir S. Fairchild, Ralph F. Stearley, and Claire Lee Chennault.

BURG: How is that last name spelled?

LEE: Stearley.

BURG: Stearley.

LEE: S-t-e-a-r-l-e-y. He was one of the instructors. So was Claire Chennault, you know--

BURG: Right.

LEE: --of Chinese fame.



BURG: These men were all there--

LEE: As instructors.

BURG: --in '39 as instructors.

LEE: And they were all 1st lieutenants, captains, and majors, you know. In those times there wasn't much rank.

BURG: I remember you and I talked about your rank and when you got it. We had you down as attending the Air Technical School; and I listened more carefully, and we got it right as Air Tactical.

LEE: Yes, Air Force Tactical School.

BURG: Well, before going to the War College let me ask you this, Mrs. Lee--and this is a question that you certainly can reply to or not as you choose: When General Lee told you of the affair in Italy and what had happened, do you remember what your action was? How you took that yourself? How you felt about it?

MRS. LEE: No, I don't recall. Of course, I hated to see him lose his star, but I knew how hotheaded he was. Then I found out what had happened, and I wasn't surprised then.



BURG: Yes, yes. Now again--I hate to ask this with the General sitting right here--in his letters to you did he complain about what had happened to him, or did he treat this as the result--the natural result--of his own actions?

MRS. LEE: No, I think you came back shortly after you lost the star, didn't you? And there really wasn't, as I can remember, very much correspondence.

BURG: I see. Wouldn't be much time for it.

MRS. LEE: No.

LEE: They got me out of there in less than a week.

MRS. LEE: So until he got home--I mean there wasn't anything for us to write back and forth about. He just wrote and said he was coming home.

BURG: And when he got home what he said to you was about what you would expect him to say under the circumstances.

MRS. LEE: Well, I think--



BURG: Like, "Oh, darn, I wish I hadn't done that."

MRS. LEE: Well, he probably said the mistake was made when he should have gone in and talked to Maragon--

BURG: Yes, I remember him saying that.

MRS. LEE: --instead of letting someone else try to handle it from there through Washington--

BURG: Right.

MRS. LEE: --that he probably could have smoothed everything over had he talked to Mr. Maragon.



BURG: I remember him saying that if somebody hadn't talked him out of it right on the spot and if he had followed his inclination he'd have gone in the hotel and gone upstairs and--

LEE: And tried to straighten it out.

BURG: Yes. You might not have succeeded, but you might have.

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: All right. Then within just a few years of that event-- it's a matter of about two or three years at the very most-- here you are not having gone through Command and General Staff, and you're appointed to the National War College. We don't know who or why that was done. It's possible we could find out at sometime. Is there anything in your own mind that would lead you to think that your friend Dwight Eisenhower had anything to do with it? Or was he placed in a position where he could have had anything to do with it?

LEE: Well, yes, he was; he had been. See, when he was chief of staff, I was stationed in Salina. And I flew to New York one time to help Gene Tunney--or not to help him really--to talk with him and another friend of mine by the name of Bill Fruzer, who lived in Connecticut, about getting a citizenship for a Yugoslav man who is now an American citizen living in San Diego. But I knew I was going to New York and I would be coming back from New York to Washington, so I wrote Ike this letter--a short letter--and told him what I was going to do and I would be coming back to Bolling Field and asked if I might stop in and visit with him briefly a few minutes at his office.



BURG: He was Chief of Staff then?

LEE: That's right.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And that was when I was still in Salina. I figure it was in early '47 because I left Salina in August of '47 to go to Turner Field. And so Ike--I forgot what the message was I got back--but it was O.K. Well, when I was in New York, I spent the night there, and I had a call from Washington. They were trying to run me down, and they found from Mitchell Field where I was landing and in what hotel I was staying in New York City. And they called me there to tell me that General Eisenhower wanted to see me. Well, I already knew that because I had arranged it--to see him. I mean I had written him. So as soon as I landed at Bolling Field, why General Ike's--one of his aides was out to pick me up to take me to the Pentagon. But I always think that Ike kept his eye on me and Lefty [Maj. Gen. Hugh A.] Parker too. Of course, Lefty wound up as a major general, but he didn't get in any jams like I did. But Lefty and I were close to Ike in the Philippines; we flew with



him, taught him how to fly. And, of course, I flew him all over the Philippines in that little old Stinson, and then we played golf with him.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: He liked to play golf. And so I think he kind of kept tabs on us. Lefty went to the War College, too, you know, National War College.

BURG: No, I hadn't known that.

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: Had he gone to Command and General Staff too?

LEE: No.

BURG: Very interesting.

LEE: I think Lefty was a class ahead of me in the National War College; I believe he was in 1948. I'll have to look in my book 'cause I get a new book every year. I got one just the other day of all the former students in the National War College,



their present address, and those that are deceased. There are two or three pages of those deceased, and see--

(Interruption)

BURG: So Lefty was in the 1948 class?

LEE: I believe he was; I'm not sure. I think he was the class ahead of me in the War College.

BURG: You know if Eisenhower was watching your career, he was quite shocked when you two sent him a Christmas card--I believe it was a Christmas card--and on the return address it said, "Col. & Mrs."--

LEE: No.

BURG: --"William Lee? And he remarked to you, "What about that?" Am I right?

LEE: I wrote him a letter from the Philippines. It wasn't on a Christmas card. See, our son was graduating from Baylor Medical School, and he had an idea that he might want to do his internship at the Presbyterian Hospital in New York.

BURG: Yes.



LEE: It was a teaching hospital for Columbia University.

BURG: Oh, yes, I remember that letter.

LEE: That was after Ike was elected president. See, we went to the Philippines in '52, and Ike was elected president, of course, in November. But I wrote Ike because Bill had written me and asked me if I would write General Ike and ask him if he could stop by the White House to say hello. He hadn't seen Bill, and I knew he was always fond of Bill. So I wrote General Ike--or, then president Ike--a short letter from the Philippines and told him what Bill was doing and that he was going to New York to see about doing his internship at the Presbyterian Hospital. So Ike came right back air mail--it wasn't a week's time between my letter and his--and said, unfortunately, that he would be out of town. And I'll never forget the words that he said: he'd be "out in Colorado fishing for sanity reasons." You remember that in that letter he wrote me. I don't know what I've done with the letter. I don't know whether it's in--

BURG: I think we have that letter on file here. We have his copy.



LEE: Yesh, Well, anyhow, he said, "From your letter I have gleaned some information that was startling to me. First," he said, "I thought you were a general officer."

BURG: Yes.

LEE: And secondly he was surprised that Bill would be graduating from medical school so soon. You see, he didn't realize that the time had passed.

BURG: Yes, yes.

LEE: And I remember this thing. But that was when he found out that I wasn't a general officer. But about a month later I did get reappointed.



BURG: Then this happened later than I thought it had; that's later than I thought.

LEE: It was '52. It was after he became president.

BURG: I thought that it was earlier than that. Well, when he saw you now, he was chief of staff?

LEE: That was the time I was stationed in Salina. I was a colonel then.

BURG: On the trip back from New York?

LEE: Yeah, I was a colonel.

BURG: You called him.

LEE: See, I'd lost my star. I came back, and Salina was my first station after I came back from Italy. But he knew that I was a colonel then. Why he had thought that I had been promoted in the interim from the time I saw him as chief of staff until he became president I don't know, unless he thought that I should have been promoted back to the star grade.

BURG: Well, that could be.

LEE: And by him receiving this letter and saying that he thought that I was a general officer he might have thought that I was-- that after finishing the War College in '49 that I would have been promoted to a general 'cause most everybody who graduates from the National War College becomes a general officer or a



flag officer. So he might have thought that. I don't know.

BURG: He may have lost touch then at the very end of the war and not realized that you'd gotten the star and had lost it. Well, at the National War College what were the courses like? Now you went there. You hadn't had anything quite like that in your career. How did it strike you, and what was your general experience there? What kind of courses were you taking, and how did you get along?

LEE: Well, I got along fine. I've always been a kind of a student. I've never been a real scholar because I don't have, we'd say, that kind of a mind; but I'm a student about things, and I like to study certain things. And I was real interested in the school. And I always got to the school early in the morning for two reasons: to avoid traffic; and secondly, to get the day started out by myself. I've always done that in my office. Well, that's an unusual school. There's no school solutions, none at all.



BURG: No accepted answer that the instructors have agreed upon.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: O.K.

LEE: So the group of students--one hundred and twenty students--are divided into twenty sections--I guess you'd call it--twenty or twenty-two. Sometimes they only have five students in a group.

BURG: Could you call it a seminar?

LEE: No, not exactly, because they're only this way for a short time. They'll give you a problem. We'll say, for instance, if the Japanese--well, we'll just say this is an assumption. They had already attacked Pearl Harbor, of course, in '49. And we've got to figure out strategy--not the tactics, but the strategy--of what we were going to do to prevent the Japanese from invading the west coast of the United States. All five--all six of us. Maybe there was one Air Force colonel, one Navy captain, one Coast Guard; and of the five, they tried to get one from every branch of the service, including the State Department man, in on this deal. So we may have that problem thrown at us, and we'd have to work on it for four or five weeks.

BURG: Would every one of the groups have that same problem?

LEE: Every one would have the same problem.

BURG: O.K.



LEE: Then this faculty and the staff--after the problem was completed--they would review it and figure out which one would be the most controversial. I believe that's the way they determined it. And that group would have to present this before their whole student body in the auditorium. Now there had been, say, the group of five or six working on a problem. There would be one dissenter. And he'd have to submit a minority report. I remember "Reggy" [Reginald P.C.] Vance was one of them. And I'll never forget old Reggy Vance, who was a classmate of mine at flying school and also in the War College. He dissented from the rest of his group one time; and he had to make a minority report before the student body along with, or after, the other group had presented their problem. They had maps. We had everything we needed--visual aids and everything we needed. See. O.K. When that problem was finished and completed, it was filed in the archives--all of them from the National War College. And I guess they're still there from now on. That basement was loaded with them. And then they would reshuffle. Gosh, you could see guys running down the halls from this room to that room taking their books and their material--see--'cause



we were assigned to a new group. And they would give us another problem: Suppose that the Russians were going to take over the Panama Canal and how to figure out the defense for it and what we would do, see; and where we would put our troops to head them off and so forth.

BURG: All of this with the purpose of sharpening up your minds, but also putting you into contact with members of other branches--

LEE: Of other branches of the service.

BURG: --like the State Department.

LEE: And we had the top people. We even had President Truman. He came down and lectured to us at the War College in the auditorium. We had lectures every day in the auditorium.



BURG: Examinations?

LEE: No examinations.

BURG: I'd heard that it was different from Leavenworth.

LEE: No examinations of any kind.

BURG: No exams at all.

LEE: No.

BURG: Really, a man could distinguish himself, couldn't he, if he happened to take a dissenting point of view?

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: Might mark himself out for promotion.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: Did you ever take a dissenting view--

LEE: Never.

BURG: --in your group?

LEE: I had some hot arguments, but before we got in final form, you see. We'd have to get it in final form. Then we had a secretary pool there. They would type them all--everything--up for us, you see. Then we had a speed reading course; and we had one or two courses in economics, which I didn't go along with. As well as I remember, I didn't like the system: you spent everything you make and not save anything. That was the basic of this economics course that we got.



BURG: Who taught that? Do you remember the name of the man?

LEE: Oh, some guy from Harvard I think. I forgot who he was. I probably have some real good remarks in my diaries about the '48 and '49--about the War College--when I get to them. When I go through them, I'll mark them with a slip if I have any.

BURG: You're smiling as you think back at these arguments, I can see.

LEE: 'Cause I took issue with the Navy quite frequently. One particular guy I had always bugged me; and, of course, we were real good friends and still are: old Rear Admiral John Cromelin. He retired and lives down in Albany--

MRS. LEE: Alabama.

LEE: --in Alabama--there out of Albany.

BURG: C-r-o-m-e-l-i-n, I believe.

LEE: Yes.

BURG: Very well known officer.

LEE: Two or three brothers, you know; they were all Navy people.



BURG: But the two of you would take different views.

LEE: Oh, yeah, at times, because, see, he was in my class, John Cromelin was. And he worried me a lot about his own thinking because I was afraid he was going to get in trouble with people. And he eventually did. He finally got pushed out, you know; he had to retire. He called them Prussian Pentagon politics. And he just hated the Pentagon and finally wound up when he graduated from the War College being assigned to the Pentagon.

BURG: And he called it Prussian--

LEE: Pentagon Politics.

BURG: --Pentagon Politics.

LEE: Yeah. Boy, he sure got busted over at the Pentagon, and--

BURG: Why?

LEE: Well--

BURG: I suppose he told you?

LEE: Well, I don't remember exactly. I never did have much use for the Pentagon people either.



BURG: That was the next question I was going to ask you.

LEE: I haven't yet--because, you see, I didn't get to the Pentagon. I got assigned to the Pentagon when I graduated from National War College because that's pretty nearly cut and dried. But two of us in the Air Force didn't get assigned there. I got assigned there, and I was going to be in operations. And I went over and talked to them and tried to get them to--they said, "No, you're needed here. You own a house in Arlington, and that's a prerequisite to being assigned to the Pentagon." Well, I knew Curt LeMay real well, and I knew Tom [Thomas S.] Power who was his deputy. Tom was a classmate of mine in flying school. And I wrote them, and I told them--

BURG: Wrote to both of them?

LEE: Yeah, and told them what they were trying to do to me and I didn't want it. They had priority on personnel.

BURG: For SAC?

LEE: Yes.

BURG: LeMay at that time was commanding SAC?



LEE: Yes, so they got my orders changed.

BURG: I see. Let me ask you, where did you graduate? With what rank did you graduate from the National War College?

LEE: Just a colonel. You couldn't--

BURG: There was no number? You didn't graduate tenth in your class or so?

LEE: Oh, gee whiz, no, I don't think there was. I don't know. As I say, there's no examination, and I don't know how they graded you.

BURG: I wanted to make the remark because you sit there--a man who claims he's not a student--but it's my understanding that you graduated in the top ten per cent at Texas A & M when you left there.

LEE: Well, I did at A & M, yeah. I was in A & M. But I said I'm a student--

BURG: When did you stop being a student?



LEE: --I'm a student, but I'm not a scholar. You know, I distinguish them this way: I think a person that gets interested in anything and really digs in and studies it, you see, is a student. I think a scholar is on a little higher plane in that he retains more of what he studies. Well, maybe I'd put it this way: I classify politicians and statesmen in the same kind of categories. A scholar is one that has a limited circle, see, and he knows it; he knows it backward and forward. A student has a larger area with a not too thorough and complete knowledge of a subject that a scholar has--if you get what I mean. In other words, I look at an education like this, like you're standing inside of a sphere, you see. And a limited education person is in a small sphere; he can reach out and touch the sides of it with his hands. But the more education he gets--the more knowledge he obtains--the larger that sphere gets, and he finally decides that, hell, he can't learn everything, see. And that sphere gets too far out for him to touch.

BURG: But he can still preserve his interest in it--

LEE: Oh, yeah, that's what I say.

BURG: --and follow his leads.



LEE: He can be a student of it, see. In other words, you can be a student of something. You can follow it by being a student--and the same way with a politician. I always said that a politician, usually a real politician, usually dies and is well off; but I've never known a statesman that has died in all of my knowledge of history that has ever had anything more than just maybe his house to live in--never left anything for his family or anything like that--because I think a statesman is an honest person. And I think a politician, while he can be honest, he can be a kind of a conniver too.

BURG: You don't think that goes with being a statesman?

LEE: No.

BURG: You don't think there's much chance of it?

LEE: It hasn't been in my knowledge of them.

BURG: Well, again we'll make the remark that the man who was just a student also has an honorary LLD from Texas A & M. That I just found out about.



LEE: Yeah, well, that was awarded to all those men who were made general officers during the war. See, General Ike got one, too.

BURG: Yes, I understood that he did.

LEE: But he wasn't an A & M man, but he got one. When I think, there were twenty-seven or eight of us that got the LLD; for all of us were general officers during the war. And I was in Italy when they awarded them, and I didn't get down there at the time of the whole thing. They give them to everybody. So Bert and I went back after I got back from Italy and drove down from Jackson, Mississippi, when I got mine.

BURG: I don't want anyone reading this record to wonder how you happened to wind up in National War College. I wouldn't want you to modestly pass yourself off as, you know, not having merited this.

LEE: Oh, well--

BURG: You were there because of your demonstrated abilities in the field.



LEE: I'm sure of that. I'm sure of that because I feel this way. I feel that Ike, for instance--he never supported anybody that didn't have some good sense, common sense or otherwise.

BURG: Precisely. In other words, you didn't get anything--nothing was ever handed to you--because you were a friend of Ike's?

LEE: No, no, no, I don't think so.

BURG: There's no question of that.

LEE: But I think Ike was kind of watching after me and Lefty Parker, and I think he knew our abilities from having worked with us in the Philippines. Matter of fact, those efficiency reports that I have during that period--I don't know whether you ever saw them or not.

BURG: No, I've not.

LEE: I've got them at home. The next time I think I'll bring them up here and let you have them because I've got copies of them.

BURG: That would be good, fine.



LEE: The remarks that was made on my efficiency reports--now I know General MacArthur signed them, but Ike made them out, see.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And he knew Lefty and I had the ability from having worked with us. And I know that Ike wouldn't have pushed us to go to National War College or do anything else if he hadn't thought in his own mind that we did have the ability to do what he wanted us to do. That's been demonstrated by Ike in all his whole career. If he had a guy working for him that couldn't cut the mustard, he wouldn't keep him; he got rid of him. I mean that was my observation of Ike.



BURG: And I noticed too that Sherrod remarks that Nathan Twining said that he considered you among the top eight out of the hundred and sixteen general officers he knew. He considered you among the top eight.

LEE: Well, I worked for Nate during the war, see, in Italy. He was my boss. He was commander of the 15th Air Force.

BURG: But it occurred to me that sometimes in these interviews I've placed stress upon the fact that you knew Ike, not ever meaning to indicate that you were making your career on the fact that you were riding his coattails. I knew that Ike wasn't the type and neither are you.

LEE: No.

BURG: You have the ability.

LEE: No, I never would have thought Ike would have pushed anybody, me or if it was his own son. I don't think if Ike had not thought John John S.D. Eisenhower, for instance, was capable of doing what he thought he wanted to do he would have pushed him into trying to do it, see.



BURG: Yeah.

LEE: He wouldn't have had John or me or anybody else on his staff if he hadn't thought that we could have cut the mustard, so to speak--done the job.

BURG: Yes. You saw that in the Philippines then?

LEE: Oh, yes.

BURG: When he has a position that is nowhere near as exalted as he was later to have, these are characteristics that you felt you could see then very clearly.

LEE: Yes, definitely, definitely.

BURG: Other people seem to share that belief with you?



LEE: I think so. I'm pretty sure they did. I know that Lefty Parker and Jew Lewis did. Of course, Jew got killed the second day the war started, but he was very fond of Jew Lewis, too. Jew was what we called him--Jew. His name was Mark K. Lewis [Jr.]. And he graduated from West Point in '27, and, of course, he took over when I left the Philippines--took over my job. But Ike was very fond of Mark, and I'm sure that Mark would have made an outstanding general officer during the war if he'd have lived 'cause he had the ability.

BURG: Well, I've not spoken with Lefty Parker. He is still--

MRS. LEE: In San Antonio.

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: --in San Antonio.

LEE: Lefty still lives in San Antonio. We didn't see him the last trip down there. I'm going to try and see him in February when we get down there.

BURG: Well, I haven't written to him, but I notice that we have quite a number of contacts in the San Antonio area--Texas, in general. So we hope to plan a trip down there; and I'll see you, and I'll also try to see Lefty Parker and pursue that matter with him too. Now you speak of your friendship with Curtis LeMay. You had never flown with LeMay during the war? He had been, I think, in the ETO for a while and then out to the Pacific.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: He was on B-29s.

LEE: You see, I never was with Curt at all during the war. Curt was at Langley Field, Virginia, when we were stationed there in 1940 and '41; and I saw him before the war started.



We were transferred there from San Antonio to Langley Field, and Curt was there. But he wasn't in the same squadron I was in; he was in the old 2nd Bomb Group which had B-18s. I was in the 96th Squadron there. Curt was originally about a year behind me in the flying school. He was a first lieutenant then, and our friendship from the standpoint of friendship--it wasn't what you'd say a close friendship. We were never, we'd say, even close from the standpoint of social or official, see. However, we knew each other, and I knew him. And Tom Power was, of course, a classmate of mine. And Tom was with us in the Philippines in the 30s.



BURG: Can you explain to me why you didn't have a close relationship with LeMay? Was it just that you were different men, different interests, or--

LEE: Well, it was this way at Langley Field. Of course, not being in the same outfit and, we say, same squadron, we didn't have any--what you'd say--official contact much during the day. And about the only time we had any social contact was maybe at a general party or something at the officers' club at night,

say an oyster bar night or something like that. That was it. And the people that we were closest to were people of our own squadron, whether they were the same rank or not. They could be first lieutenant, second lieutenant, captains. If we were in the same squadron, we were close officially and close--more closely--socially, we'll say.

BURG: Now would that apply to you too, Mrs. Lee? For example, was there a Mrs. LeMay at that time, and would you not know her because her husband was of another squadron?

MRS. LEE: That's right.

BURG: I can't remember whether there was a Mrs. LeMay.

MRS. LEE: Yes, sure there was.

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: Oh, of course. He married her pretty soon after he was out of flying school, I believe.

LEE: That's right.



MRS. LEE: Then we didn't stay at Langley very long either, see. We--

LEE: No, you see, we left there in June of '41 and went to Jackson, Mississippi. We weren't there too long.

MRS. LEE: Let's see, we went there in October of '40 and then were gone in June; so we really weren't there very much.

LEE: See, things were getting hot then, and they were splitting organizations up. I was in the 2nd Bomb Group, then 96th Squadron. The next thing I know I was in the 22nd Bomb Group, then finally wound up in the 38th Bomb Group at Jackson, Mississippi--all that happening there in a period of a few months.



BURG: A few of you were experienced professionals. They were fanning you out to make a new Air Corps.

LEE: Yeah, boy, they were. See, we were cadres or whatever you want to call them for new outfits.

BURG: Yeah, right.

LEE: And that's what happened when we went to Jackson, Mississippi, to the old 38th Bomb Group.

BURG: So then you have no real contact with or close contact with LeMay until after the National War College, and then what you do is call upon an acquaintanceship you had with him before the war and with Tom Power?

LEE: He and Tom Power. I was closer to Tom Power than I was to Curt LeMay because we--Tom and I--had served together in the Philippines. And then during the war Tom Power did come to Italy as a wing commander; but there wasn't any wing for him to command, so they sent him back.



BURG: I see.

LEE: And that's when he wound up in the B-29s over in Guam with a wing. But as a matter of fact, I'm not sure whether I wrote Curt and Tom both or just wrote Tom and asked him to talk to Curt to see if they couldn't get me out of that Pentagon job. Anyhow, I got out of it.

BURG: All right. Before we join them, which I want to do too, I want to hear more about what it was like to be with LeMay and that outfit. Anyone specifically in the Pentagon that you didn't care for, or was it the whole establishment?

LEE: The whole damned establishment. And I'll tell you why I didn't like it. I still don't like it. I think for instance-- me! I'd been a field commander; and I know the ground work, and I know what's going on in my base and my outfit. Those guys in the Pentagon--even though they had been in the job that you're holding--once they get in the Pentagon and get disassociated with the field troops, they forget all the trials and tribulations and everything that goes on at a lower level, you see. And they arbitrarily issue instructions and orders and what not without really knowing what the consequences are going to be or what the circumstances are in which they issue them. I never had any use for them.



BURG: Was it your experience that that happened to virtually everyone who in the course of his career was sent to the Pentagon for a period of time? They all seemed to be like that?

LEE: Yeah, after they got up there they forgot about the boys down on the ground level. Now it's to my mind--I may be rabid about it, but I still think that's what happens. And I think it's ruined many a career of officers in this manner: a man can not make a decision. He can't command any more. He can't command because they tell him what to do and what he has to do. For instance, you can't make a decision. Now when I came in the service in, well, my early days in the Philippines, even I could make a decision. When I was running the Philippine Air Force, I made a decision to give Ike his solo flight. I didn't ask anybody. If I'd asked General MacArthur, boy, he'd have blowed the top off of his office or somebody else. All right. Now--if you do do something and you haven't been told to do it or told how to do it, then you're in trouble if it by chance blows up. For instance, I always like to remember what General Pershing told somebody during World War ~~II~~ II. I don't remember who it was; but somebody complained to him about some general making mistakes, and General Pershing said, "Yes, but he's making them fast." See? You don't ever learn anything by not doing something.



BURG: So your thought was that once they got into this bureaucratic installation--military installation--it tended to take over, and it tended to think for the people out on the field.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: Now you figured it would have happened to you. Now you did not go there, so you never had the chance to see whether you could have beaten that or what effect it might have had on you. Do you suppose there was a reason? Do you suppose that men in the Pentagon became what they became because of the nature of the work that they did? Do you suppose that sort of forced it on them?

LEE: Well, it is possible. It is true to a degree because I've had some friends in the Pentagon that hated it; and they were a hell of a lot readier to get out of there than they were to get in there, we'll say.

BURG: Was it about a three year tour of duty in the Pentagon, General?



LEE: Oh, sometimes four.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And I tell you one person I remember real well that was a good friend of mine--he's retired as a Brigadier General now-- Colonel Bacon, [William C.] Bill Bacon. And he lived in our house. We kept our house in Arlington after I got out of there because I thought someday the buggers would catch me and send me back to the Pentagon; so I kept it and rented it, see. And I rented it to Air Force officers. So, Bill Bacon was one of my good friends. He retired as a BG and lives in Roswell, New Mexico, now. And he hated that thing. And he said, "I'm telling you"--he said, "Jerry, you can't have any idea of what we go through in that deal. We'll work all day--we'll work a whole week--on some problem; and somebody higher decides it's no good, and we tear it all up and throw it in the wastebasket." Wasted effort! Well, there was a good commander. Bill Bacon, one of the good commanders--wasting him and putting him up there. There's a difference between a commander and a staff officer from the standpoint of personality and the standpoint of running the show.



BURG: And it's not your belief that coming up through the ranks and then into staff is necessarily a good thing? The result may not necessarily be good?

LEE: No.

BURG: You think that they're two separate career lines, perhaps, that ought to be followed?

LEE: Right, I think so. I think it's--we'll classify it as a first surgeons. You have neuro-surgeons and you have this other kind of surgeons. And, same way, you have no people. You have people with a mind and the qualifications and personality and what have you to be a staff officer--

(Interruption)

BURG: You were saying that you thought there were probably two different lines of career development: a staff officer and a line officer; and I made the remark, "never the twain shall meet." You started to say something about General Ike.



LEE: I think Ike was a real commander. He had the ability in my opinion to surround himself with staff officers that could do the job; and he did. They had to do it, or else he'd get rid of them. But at the same time there was no question but what everybody knew who was boss: Ike was. And I'll take that just in my own association with Ike during the Philippine period. Of course, I wasn't a commander of anything then except running that little old Air Force training, but it always occurred to me that the staff officers couldn't go out and tell another commander under them what to do in the name of the commander without the commander knowing it. In other words, I always hated and didn't think it was right for an adjutant--we'll say T.J. [Thomas J.] Davis, who was General MacArthur's adjutant--to issue a directive by command of General MacArthur to prohibit a commander under him from doing something. I think General MacArthur should have told this commander, personally; and I made that my policy. I think Ike had this policy. I don't know 'cause I never worked for him; I wasn't under his command. But in my wing, for instance, I had three group commanders. They were colonels. I didn't permit any of my staff officers to ever tell one of those



colonels that he couldn't do something. If they couldn't tell him "no" or couldn't tell him "yes," then I was the only person that could tell him "no."

BURG: I see.

LEE: There was nothing made me madder than to get something from a higher headquarters telling me I couldn't do something signed by some second lieutenant or first lieutenant adjutant by command of Major General Don Old, for instance, you see. Now if I couldn't do it, he was the one that ought to have told me I couldn't because he only had a few commanders, you see. I had three wing commanders during the war, three colonels. Good Lord, couldn't I associate with those three and tell them what I wanted--that they couldn't do something?

BURG: And you felt in the Pentagon that that situation was just carried to a greater degree than ever before?

LEE: To a greater degree.

BURG: Numbers of staff officers giving--

LEE: Broadwise, yeah, over all things.



BURG: All right. You come in with LeMay and Power. Does their philosophy fit with yours? When they grabbed you out of there, when they kept you from having to go to the Pentagon, how did they feel about this kind of thing. Do you know?

LEE: Well, I didn't get to work for them long 'cause I got fired. I had a run-in with Rosie [Maj. Gen. Emmett O'Donnell, Jr.] O'Donnell, who just died recently. I guess you saw General Rosie O'Donnell dying here with a heart attack just a week or so ago.

BURG: What was his job?

LEE: Well, Rosie then had become commander of the 15th Air Force with headquarters in Colorado Springs.

BURG: This is the one that you had come to right fresh out of World War II?

LEE: No, that was Charley Born I came to first.

BURG: Yeah, but he had commanded the 15th at that time.

LEE: Yeah, but Rosie had taken over the 15th.

BURG: I see.



LEE: And what we had a run-in about--

BURG: Maybe we better find out--what did LeMay assign you to then?

LEE: Assigned me to March Field, California, the 22nd Bomb Group and the 1st Fighter Wing. I had both fighters and bombers out there. I had a big outfit.

BURG: I see.

LEE: Well, I went out there and took command.

BURG: You're under O'Donnell?

LEE: Under O'Donnell then.

BURG: You're in the 15th Air Force.

LEE: 15th Air Force.

BURG: O.K.

LEE: But LeMay assigned me. He didn't ask O'Donnell whether he wanted me or not, I don't imagine. I went out there, and there was a colonel that was, it seemed to me, in command; but I was assigned as commander so I could take over. A fellow by the



name of Snuffy [George McCoy, Jr. ?] McCoy was commander.

BURG: Both of you colonels.

LEE: Yeah, but he was senior to me, and normally the senior guys command. So I asked Tom Power about it when I came through Omaha, Nebraska, on the way out there, and he said, "You're the commander; you take over." So I did. But Rosie-- I don't think he had anything to do with me getting sent out there, but he was going to move his headquarters for 15th Air Force from Colorado Springs to March Field, California, and set up his headquarters there. Well, that was all right. And when I got out there, he sent me a message not to occupy the commander's quarters because he and his family were. Well, that was all right. I didn't give a damn about that. I wasn't worried about a great big old set of quarters. But what bugged me was I got word through my air installations people--that's the people who take care of the maintenance of the base--that Mrs. O'Donnell wanted to saw about an inch off the bottoms of the doors in the house--and those were heavy oak doors--so that she could put a certain type of carpet in there.



BURG: Probably a thick shag carpet.

LEE: Yeah. I objected to that. Well, that didn't set too well with Rosie O'Donnell, and I think they eventually did it. And then another thing: he came around, and he wanted to have a commander's reception on New Year's Day at the officers' club and wanted the officers' club to pay for it. I objected to that. I said, "If it's a commander's reception, the commander pays for it and not all the officers in the club"--- 'cause we paid dues to the club and then we was taking the money. I objected to that. Well, the next thing I know, I was made available for reassignment.



BURG: On the basis of those two incidents?

LEE: Well, I imagine that was it, because we didn't get along. And then I guess he decided there wasn't any use in putting up with me any more, and so he got Curt LeMay to make me available for reassignment.

BURG: Be interesting to know what he told LeMay to get that.

LEE: Well, I don't know, but anyhow I was made available; and that's when General Harper, Bob [Robert W.] Harper, grabbed me for training command down in Houston in 1950. But the thing was-- and I've always maintained--that, by damn, if a commander is going to have a reception, it's his reception and he is to pay for it. I'm not supposed to pay for it and the second lieutenants who belonged to the club--that's their money.

BURG: Did you have any contact with O'Donnell after this?

LEE: Not a damn bit, and I didn't care about having any with him.

BURG: And he, of course, didn't seek you out--

LEE: No.

BURG: --to talk with you?

LEE: No, but I--

BURG: Now the house deal we should understand. Because you were the base commander, that set of quarters was part of the installation committed to you, to your trust.

LEE: That's right, that's right.



BURG: And so when she wants an inch hacked off the bottom of all the doors in that set of quarters, why--

LEE: That was my responsibility.

BURG: Your responsibility.

LEE: --to protect the government property, as I reasoned. And there wasn't any damn point of her--I don't know who paid for the carpet to put in there, but I never was in there.

BURG: The officers' club perhaps.

LEE: But that's why Rosie and I--we never did see--I always said he was a damned big clown. And, of course, he got to be a four-star general, but I don't know whether he got that from clowning or what.

BURG: Now had he seen combat in the European Theater or the South Pacific?

LEE: Yes, he was in there, and, of course, I have to give Rosie credit for a lot of things. I can't beat him down all the way. He was with MacArthur during the Korean War. He



was trying to fight those damn--he was set to go to bomb the Yalu River bridges and everything, work for General MacArthur. And Rosie liked to get in trouble about bellyaching about them stopping that, too, 'cause he stood up for General MacArthur on that deal. But, of course, we all can't see alike, and I've never had a run-in with very many people. But we didn't-- Rosie and I didn't--see alike at all.

BURG: You tend to be kind of selective about your run-ins; and when you have one, it's a good one.

LEE: Yeah, it winds up being pretty good.

BURG: Now going to training command with General Harper was a very reasonable choice for them, wasn't it, because you had done a great deal of training--a good bit before the war, let alone in the war, but before the war too. So in training command in Houston what kind of duties are you performing there?

LEE: Well, I commanded Ellington Air Force Base, which is a navigation training school. And I had at that time, oh, around four thousand officers there, in addition to the other



people. What was going on there? You see, that was when the B-47 was in its heyday. That's the bomber with three crew members. They were sending pilots through the navigation school who--some of them--had as much as five thousand hours of flying. Some of them had twelve, fifteen years service. They sent them through the navigation school, and then they would send them out to Mather Field, California, to get the bombardier's course so that every member of that three-man crew was a bombardier, navigator, and a pilot.



BURG: I see.

LEE: So I had--in addition to my regular staff of instructors and maintenance and administrative personnel--I had around a thousand instructors, all officers, teaching navigation.

BURG: Now are all the students SAC personnel, or going to be SAC?

LEE: Going to be SAC, because B-47s were SAC airplanes, you see.

BURG: So are the navigational instruction aircraft B-47s too?

LEE: No.

BURG: You're training them in something else?

LEE: We're training them in T-29s. That was that Lockheed-- was it a Lockheed--it was a nice little airplane; but it was a regular-airplane built, T-29, for teaching navigation. It had the navigation desk in it and all the radars--two, three sets of them--and several desks on each side.

BURG: Fairly small aircraft, a twin-engine aircraft?

LEE: Twin-engine aircraft. What was that? Was it Lockheed? It was a T-29; it was a good airplane. Keep flying on one engine--it was real good performing airplane. And that was the plane we used to train them in navigation. Now I don't know what they used to bomb at Mather Field when they got out there, but it wasn't the '47s cause most all these boys who went through that navigation and that bombardier's course were already B-47 pilots.



BURG: Did that create any problems for you--men who were pilots and now being asked in effect to learn another trade? Not that they were converting to be navigators, but they are now being trained for this totally different, totally new enterprise?

LEE: No, I never had any as I remember it--no complaints at all--because it seemed like everybody was enthusiastic. Well, those that I talked to and associated with--a reasonable amount were enthusiastic about being able to learn navigation.

BURG: That's interesting.

LEE: And they were also enthusiastic about learning about dropping bombs. For instance, I remember when I graduated from the National War College they sent us out there to Mather Field before I went to March Field for two weeks to get some bombing training, dropping bombs.



BURG: Is it your recollection that in the old Air Corps, the pre-war Air Corps, that pilots would have been as enthusiastic about learning something in addition to their piloting skills, do you think? Do you remember?

LEE: Not generally. I don't think so.

BURG: What do you suppose made the difference in a relatively short span of time? The war, just the war itself? Or was it that technology had advanced so far that many of the flying

officers could see at once that there was more opportunity if you could get into B-47s and to do that you'd have to learn the other two?

LEE: I tell you what I think perhaps maybe had an influence on it. I'm not sure of this, but I feel that a pilot flying one of those big airplanes--and a fast airplane like that--felt that he ought to know navigation for his own safety. I can remember the time myself during the war--and before the war--flying and having a navigator that'd get me lost. I was flying from Greenville, South Carolina, to Fort Knox, Kentucky, one time; and hell, I got lost a hundred miles off course; and I had a navigator down in an old airplane. I had to land at a little old field to find out where we were. Well, I think perhaps those officers that, we'll say, had been flying ten, twelve years at least were enthusiastic about learning navigation for their own safety and having the knowledge of what that airplane could do and what they would have to do with it.

BURG: I see.



LEE: Because you take a fast airplane like that and flying a high altitudes--it's always a pretty good idea--not even in the airplanes. Well, we'll take yourself. You say you don't know much about automobiles, but you do know how to change a tire.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: That's better than my son knew. He had to change a tire on his Mustang here a while back. He had a flat tire on it and had to go to a filling station to get somebody to show him how to use a jack. Now he's a doctor, see. But I think anybody that operates anything for his own good or own safety should know a little bit of something about it. And I'm sure that's what motivated these boys who were pilots into wanting to take the navigation course.



BURG: Were they volunteers, General?

LEE: Well, I don't think so. I think they probably had a choice, we might say in a way. Of course, if Curt LeMay said, "You go down there," there wasn't any question; there wasn't any choice. They went.

BURG: So the choice might have been this: if you want to be a B-47 crew member, you better embark on the program.

LEE: Yeah, embark on this navigation and bombardment part.

BURG: But do I understand you correctly that a man who had been a bombardier would go to pilot training?

LEE: Oh, no.

BURG: It didn't work that way?

LEE: No, no.

BURG: These were all pilots--

LEE: All pilots.

BURG: --who got the other two schools.

LEE: That's right.

BURG: O.K.

LEE: Because, you see, if a fellow had a bombardier training only and was up in years, he wouldn't be eligible to take the pilot's course.



BURG: Yeah, pretty rough on him to do that.

LEE: Yes, he wouldn't be eligible. These were all pilots, most everyone of them. Now we did have a few--the boys who had poor eyesight; they didn't have 20-20 vision but it could be correctible to 20-20 with glasses--they could go through that navigation course. Twenty-forty I think was the limit on it. But anyhow we had some boys going through there that were not eligible to take pilot training, but they were eligible to take the navigation course. They didn't wind up in B-47s, you see. Those boys--



BURG: They wanted to preserve that ability in the three crew members.

LEE: Yeah. Boys who just took the navigation course and didn't have another rating. We'll say they wound up in MATS; we'll say Military Air Transport or some other outfit.

BURG: Air Sea Rescue or something of that kind.

LEE: Air Sea Rescue--something like that--where they could navigate--need them for navigators.

BURG: All right, now how long were you at Houston doing this kind of work?

LEE: Let's see, I was there two years and eight months about. Let's see, I went there in the first of February in '50, and I left in August of '52--two years and seven months, or just about.

BURG: Who was your deputy at Ellington?

LEE: Well, I had a boy by the name of John N. Reynolds for a while. Golly, I don't remember who was the deputy besides John Reynolds. There was one other; but I can't remember who he was, but he was rated pilot officer. All of us rated; nearly all of us rated. My adjutant wasn't rated, and my executive officer wasn't rated. I call them rated. We're talking about pilot ratings.



BURG: Pilot ratings.

LEE: But John Reynolds was one of my deputies there for quite some time. He was an old Air Force brat; his father was an Air Force pilot in World War I. But it was a good, interesting deal, and I got into a damned jam down there.

BURG: What happened there?

LEE: Well, one time one of my student officers went out and killed a nurse and two old guards down there at that hospital and nurses' home down in Houston. Remember that guy. Then they tried to blame me for it, and even after I got to the Philippines they sent a deposition over there--had the inspector general from the Air Force down there and all his crew. This crazy captain--he was a student down there; and he got sweet on some nurse down there at one of the hospitals in Houston.

MRS. LEE: Yeah, I remember that now.

LEE: And she wouldn't have anything to do with him. And we found out about it in a way, and got a call on it. And I had him slapped in a hospital, and I had a psychiatrist give him a check.

BURG: Because he kept persisting? He wouldn't let it go?

LEE: Yeah, yeah. I had him put in a hospital, and they kept him about a week in there. And I even had a psychiatrist from down at Galveston at the Texas Medical School down there to



come up there to check him. And he couldn't find anything wrong with the nut, so we turned him out of the hospital. And the very day--I think that night--he goes down with a 380 calibre pistol and kills the nurse and the two guards--what do they call them? Burns Detective Agency?--

MRS. LEE: Yes.

LEE: --in this nurses' home and then himself, see. He shot the guards as they was trying to come up the steps. And then he shot the nurse and then shot himself and fell across her in this place. Well, some of those damned politicians down there at Houston said I was derelict in my duties for letting him out--something or other to that effect. Well, hell, next thing I knew a congressman from down there was on Air Force's back, and here come the whole team out of Washington for an investigation. Well, I had to go to the Philippines, and after they interviewed with me and what not I took off for the Philippines. Finally, the Air Force absolved me of all blame. They had nothing else to do. And--



BURG: It is a little difficult to see how you, since you didn't have any degrees in psychiatry, could certify to the sanity of this man. You had a man who did that.

LEE: I had a man that did that. And when he couldn't find anything wrong with him, I couldn't keep the man confined in a hospital, no more than I could keep a guy confined in jail without some reason.

BURG: But you had already been assigned as deputy commander of the 13th Air Force in the Philippines?

LEE: Air Force in the Philippines.

BURG: So you were off and going for that?

LEE: I was off and gone; and I thought I was going to be held up on that from going to the Philippines, but the inspector general from Washington said, "No, you go ahead. Comply with your orders."

BURG: All right, now, let me ask you, where would that assignment have come from? Would that have been from Curtis LeMay, or did that come from Air Force Headquarters?



LEE: It came out of Washington. And I tried to get out of going, not because I didn't like the Philippines but I had put in time over there and I wanted to go to Europe because my time was getting short, you know, in a way. And I wanted Mrs. Lee to spend some time in Europe before I had to retire. I went to Washington with two or three high ranking people trying to get me out of that assignment to the Philippines, but they didn't do it. And O. [Otto] P. Weyland, who was commander of the Far East Air Forces--

BURG: How does he spell his name?

LEE: W-e-y-l-a-n-d.

BURG: All right.

LEE: And he was an old A & M man, Texas A & M. Graduated in 1923. And he worked for--was it General Patton during the war? Supported him with the Air Force? Or was that Pete [Elwood R.] Quesada that supported General Patton?

MRS. LEE: I don't know.



LEE: Anyhow he was in the European Theater with one of the ground commands, and he was the air commander supporting it. Well, O.P. wanted me over there; and period, and I went. He was commander of the Far East Air Forces in the Philippines-- I mean in Japan--and the 13th Air Force was one of their units. They told me in Washington why I had to go.

BURG: And it was because he was yelling so loudly for you that--

LEE: Yeah, he said, "I don't want anybody else. I want Jerry Lee." And I wound up over there. Of course, when--John W. Sessums, Jr.--they transferred him, I fell heir to the 13th Air Force.



MRS. LEE: Yeah, but Mickey [?] Moore was the man when we first went to the Philippines.

LEE: Yeah, but Mickey Moore was leaving, see.

MRS. LEE: Yes.

LEE: John Sessums was coming over as his replacement, and I went in as--I don't know who the replacement--but I went in as deputy commander in the 13th Air Force with John Sessums as commander.

BURG: What is John's last name? How--

LEE: S-s-s-s-u-m-s, John Sessums.

BURG: Did you know him from before, by the way?

LEE: Never knew him. He was a class behind me at the flying school; but he'd been in the Air Materiel Command all the time, and I had never run into him. But he's retired now. Lives in, I think, Redlands, California. Hell of a good officer. And so when John got ordered back to the States, I was in Singapore on some kind of a soires down there with the British. And I got a message from Far East Air Force through the British Royal Air Force in Singapore telling me that John Sessums was being ordered back to the States and "the chief of staff of the Air Force recommends that you take command of the 13th Air Force" and wanted to know my decision. Well, hell, there wasn't decision to be made. It was already made. I said, "I'll accept."

BURG: Who was chief of staff of the Air Force?

LEE: General Twining.



BURG: Twining, yes.

LEE: So I was only in Singapore a couple of days. I came back to the Philippines, and John Sessums got out shortly after. And I think he went to Wright-Patterson, didn't he?--back to the Air Material Command.

BURG: Now what year was it that you went out to the Philippines?

LEE: '52.

BURG: '52.



LEE: And I stayed four years and one month and probably would have stayed longer if I hadn't gotten in another run-in out there. But I got run in to a damned ambassador out there 'cause they were trying to give away all of our property. And I had a damned Filipino up there that was intruding on Clark Field. We had a hundred and eighty some odd thousand acres in there, and they found a mine up there. And what was this ore you were getting out of there? Anyhow, I put a guard on the gate and stopped them from hauling that stuff off. It wasn't theirs; it belonged

to the U.S. Government. Then the ambassador, old Homer Ferguson, who is still alive I think--one of these lame duck senators that Ike appointed as ambassador and a lame duck: he was one that didn't get re-elected from Michigan--well, he took issue with it in the State Department.

BURG: On what grounds, General? Do you remember? What kind of grounds could he give for allowing Philippine citizens to mine minerals on United States Government property?

LEE: I don't know, Mac, but it's a hell of a long story. And I wouldn't remove the guard. So this guy that was with him-- not Ben Benson--but who was the deputy secretary of defense at the time--he came over there.



MRS. LEE: He had the paper mill--owns Champlain Paper Mills or something.

LEE: Champlain. Ben Benson was connected with him too. But anyhow--

MRS. LEE: Oh, what was his name?

LEE: --the guy later got killed in an automobile accident. But he was deputy secretary of defense, and he came over there to straighten this mess out. We had a meeting at the officers' club, luncheon and everything; and I then agreed to him. I said, "Now if you will keep me from getting in trouble, I'll get that guard removed. I'll have him removed within thirty minutes. But you have got to wire my boss," who was then General Lawrence S. Kuter--Kuter, K-u-t-e-r--who was commander of the Far East Air Force in Tokyo. I said, "You got to wire him and tell him that I have removed the guard by your request." Well the stamp hit the fan.

BURG: Ferguson wasn't there at that meeting?

LEE: No, he wasn't at the meeting at the officers' club.

BURG: This was the deputy--

LEE: Deputy secretary of defense. So that bugger went back to Hawaii and talked to Admiral Ellery Wheeler Stone--who was the overall Pacific commander; he commanded everything in the Pacific--about me. And the next thing I knew I had orders to leave the Philippines. Well, I had two or three good friends in Congress;



and I wrote one of them to find out, and I got the straight dope. He found out it was the State Department that got me sent home from there. There I was trying to take care of Uncle Sam's stuff, and here was an ambassador--I always thought an ambassador was supposed to look after the interest of his own government. But I was sure disillusioned about this deal. His predecessor as the ambassador over there was a retired admiral; and he looked after the U.S. Government, but he didn't last long as an ambassador--

[Interruption]

Charley Wilson was secretary of defense, and this was a deputy. Now the deputy, you know, he runs the show; nearly every deputy runs the show. But, anyhow, Homer Ferguson was very unhappy because I was prohibiting this Filipino from hauling ore off the reservation.



BURG: Well, let's ask this question: did you think at the time-- or do you think now--that Ferguson was profiting in some way from this arrangement?

LEE: No, no, no.

BURG: That's the legitimate question, I think, that comes up right away.

LEE: No, I don't think he was. I think what disturbed him was old Ramon Magsaysay, who was then the president of the Philippines. And I think this guy that was hauling the ore off was a friend of Magsaysay's. And he had gone to Magsaysay about it, and Magsaysay had gone to Homer Ferguson about it. Now I knew Magsaysay real well, but I think that is the way it all got worked around there, see--got Homer Ferguson worked up--because the Filipinos were unhappy about me having a guard. Now their guard who was on this post on this gate was a Filipino guard--Filipino people--but they were old U.S. soldiers--retired, you know. And they didn't care. They'd have shot that guy full of holes if he'd have tried to go through there, and he knew it. So they confiscated his truck and the ore, and they made him leave it right there. And that upset them.



BURG: So you figure Homer Ferguson thought that he was doing the best job for the country--

LEE: For public relations.

BURG: --by giving in to Magsaysay, if that's the man who put the pressure on him.

LEE: And that's what this damned deputy secretary of defense did. He went and saw Magsaysay too and told him that he had gotten the guard relieved.

BURG: Well, when you told them that all they had to do was just write to your superior officer, he didn't want to--Ferguson didn't.

LEE: Send a telegram up to Kuter? No. I was running the show down there; Kuter was letting me run it. When I put that guard on, I wired him, sent him a message, see. I knew Kuter pretty well. The only way he would have accepted the guard to be relieved was for me to relieve him. He wasn't going to come down there and relieve him. I was boss down there as far as he was concerned. So I told this guy, "You wire General Kuter that the guard is being relieved at your request."



BURG: And the deputy secretary didn't want to do that? He didn't want to make that gesture at all?

LEE: No, but he did. But then he raised "unsurrogated" hell when he went through Hawaii.

BURG: Oh, he did. He gave in and did do it your way--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: --and then fixed your wagon?

LEE: Fixed my wagon with Admiral Stone when he went through. And then, of course, a major general by the name Sory Smith-- S-o-r-y Smith--and I think it fit him real well.

BURG: The name?

LEE: Yeah. But that was his real name: S-o-r-y Smith. And he worked for Admiral Stone. He was commander of the Pacific Air Force under Admiral Stone. And I wrote Sory two or three letters and asked him what the hell was going on here about this deal. He never did answer. I got my reply--I got my real dope--from a Congress friend of mine who is still in Congress and has been and probably will be the rest of his life. He got the dope from the Air Force as to why I was being relieved and sent home.

BURG: Can you give us the name of that congressman?



LEE: Well, he told me not to tell anybody, but I'll tell you. His name was [Olin E.] Teague, T-e-a-g-u-e.

BURG: Congressman from what state?

LEE: Texas.

BURG: Texas.

LEE: Olin Teague. He was an old Texas A & M boy.

BURG: I see.

LEE: And he went in there from the Air Force and found out and wrote me the letter, and I was supposed to destroy it. I don't know whether I did or not. I may still have it. But he said the State Department is the nigger in the woodpile.

MRS. LEE: Well, you have violated a confidence now.

LEE: Well, that's been so long ago. It's been fifteen years ago.

BURG: We'll be happy to seal that, too, if you'd like to have it sealed for a while--be glad to do it. Same with that letter.

MRS. LEE: Well, he's still up there.



LEE: And he'll be there from now on too.

BURG: It's very, very easily done.

LEE: He's head of the Veterans Affairs, and "Tiger"--he's been up there. See, he was an artillery officer in World War II and got his leg all shot up and about an inch shorter. We used to call him "Tiger," and I still call him "Tiger" when I write to him. But you can get in these things looking after the U.S. Government.

BURG: Well, other than this unpleasant situation that understandably angered you, you're now back in the Philippines where you had served for a number of years much earlier. When you came back, was there any kind of ceremony marking the fact that you were back again at much higher rank? Was any attention paid to that?

LEE: Oh, yeah, yeah. The Filipino people that I knew in the older days and some of the boys that we taught to fly when Ike was over there were still there. Some of them were chief of this and the Philippine Air Force and everything. They came to see me and had parties and things like that. I was pretty well



known all over the Philippines from the first time. And then when I came back, why I spent over four years there. I was all over the Philippines and making talks at Rotary Clubs and attending various affairs and things. And it's been said that I was about, next to General MacArthur, probably the most popular military man they had in the Philippines--independent of the Philippines from the military standpoint.

BURG: Interesting.



LEE: Because I did--not only the first time, but the last time too--associate with the people like they were my own people. In other words, of course, there were a lot of things that I didn't approve, but, hell's fire, that's their country. They did things, of course, to their customs and the way they wanted to do them. It wasn't my business to tell them how to do things, and so I associated with them. I went to their fiestas and drank whiskey with them and beer with them and various other things all over the country. And I was just one of them. 'Course, one thing I never could do was eat their baloots.

BURG: Now these are the ancient aggs?

LEE: Yeah. The eggs are about ready to hatch that they boil. But I did try to be one of them; and they're good folks, by and large are good folks. They do have a few smart alecks, but you have those everywhere. And I still have friends over there. Of course, you know I've quit smoking, and I got two boxes of fine cigars from friends in the Philippines for Christmas. Still correspond, send Christmas cards to them. And I guess I'd be pretty well accepted if I went back for any time for any reason.

BURG: So that second tour was as enjoyable as your first tour of duty?

LEE: Yeah, it was more enjoyable in some respects because the second time we had the facilities to go places more than the first time. The second time we went to Japan frequently; went to Hong Kong, went to Burma, went to Singapore, went to Jakarta--

MRS. LEE: Guam and--

LEE: --Guam and various places. See, I took--

MRS. LEE: --Okinawa.



LEE: --her with me because this was part of the protocol. A commander's wife is just as much protocol as he is.

BURG: Of course, you didn't have Bill with you, did you, Mrs. Lee?

LEE: This time, no.

MRS. LEE: He was married.

BURG: You were on your own there. Was this second trip different in any way for you? Anything stand out in your mind other than the fact that you sure did travel and got to see things?

MRS. LEE: Well, we got to do that, but, of course, I had a lot more responsibilities this second time than I did the first time, I suppose.

BURG: That's right, you would.

LEE: Social life is terrific.

BURG: I'd forgotten about that. You would have to entertain frequently.



LEE: We went to Manila on the average of three times a week for social affairs.

BURG: You know I stopped to think about it, and I think you will be amused too as we all three think about it. Here are your diaries with all those invitations in them from the 1930s. You were invited here and invited there; and now, on this next time around, I presume we're going to find some invitations in there you're issuing yourself. The social affairs are the ones that people are coming to--

LEE: We issued some, coming to Clark Field for the affair.

BURG: Sure.

LEE: And then you get the protocol business--seating them--and that's what your aide is supposed to do: take care of all that stuff.

BURG: Yesh. How big was the 13th Air Force.

LEE: Well, really it wasn't very big when I was there. We had a fighter outfit, and then we had all the base. Clark Field--and



they had a depot there--was actually kind of a staging area where you'd go through, a going and a coming--boys to Thailand and to Korea and Vietnam. And we didn't have any units except at Clark Field at the time. We did have a 13th Air Task Force up on Taiwan that was under us, and our first commander of that unit that set it up was Ben [Benjamin O.] Davis, the negro officer.

BURG: Yes.

LEE: I got him assigned to set it up for us. He was a BG. I got General Kuter to let me have him out of the Far East Air Force to set that up and run it because he was a good officer and I knew him. And, of course, Admiral Stone had to clear him, and also Chinese Tiger Wong had to clear him. And when they said he was O.K., why then he took over. That was the only thing I had. At one time while I was there, they were talking about dissolving the 13th Air Force Headquarters as such. And I fought it. And you know who commands it now. Three star general commands the 13th Air Force in the Philippines now.

BURG: Who wanted to get rid of it?



LEE: These squirrels in the Pentagon!

BURG: Any particular reason advanced on it?

LEE: Hell, I don't know what they wanted. Some smart aleck up there decided they didn't need it, you see.

BURG: Trim out a little dead wood, eh?

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: How about the Filipinos themselves? Let me ask you this; then I've got a number of questions that I want to ask about this phase of your career too. How did they feel as far as you could tell? What was their reaction to the 13th Air Force being there? This is a post-war world, and they're now independent. What's the reaction? Any change from what you'd remembered earlier? I know they were friendly to you personally. How about the reaction to Americans in general?

LEE: The Filipino people in general liked Americans. There were a few Americans as well as a few Filipino agitators. The few Filipino agitators--politicians--insisted that they ought to be running the whole Clark Field. It ought to be all their



property. And that's another thing for them. When Nixon came over there as vice-president to give away all the property that the United States government had over there--real estate: and it cost the taxpayers money, plenty of money: in the past even after World War II we bought a great big section of land up there at Clark Field--I wanted to turn in my uniform because I didn't want to give that property that the taxpayer--the American people--had bought and paid for back to the Filipinos without some kind of a reimbursement for it. But we did. Nixon came over there. I was on the boat with him when we went to Corregidor and what not. And I wrote Earl [J.] Schaefer down here in Wichita; and I told Earl--I said, "I'll gladly give up my commission and revert to the grade of corporal if you can do something--if Ike can do something--about not giving away this property." But we give it away. And, of course, I kept my star.

BURG: Because you were in the service--

LEE: I didn't want to give it away to them.

BURG: --you didn't want to write to Ike yourself?

LEE: No.



BURG: Do you figure that you really couldn't on that deal?

LEE: I felt I couldn't on that deal. I thought that was a cut and dried deal in the State Department, and I don't think Ike would have even listened to me. And then I didn't have any hope of sending a personal note. I thought maybe Earl Schaefer might--being an old friend of his from West Point and having corresponded with him all the time--he might put a bug in his ear. But we not only had property at Clark Field. We had it down at Cebu; we had it down at Zamboanga; we had it down at Davao and at Tacloban--

MRS. LEE: Some at Manila.

LEE: --and Manila--that port of Manila--and over at Sangle Point and those places.

MRS. LEE: And over at Fort Stotsenburg.

LEE: Well, that's what I was talking about.

MRS. LEE: I mean McKinley.

LEE: Yeah.

MRS. LEE: Fort McKinley.



BURG: Well, let me ask you then, did--

LEE: We give them back to the Filipinos.

BURG: There's no monetary reimbursement. Was there anything, any quid pro quo, given at all?

LEE: No. Now at Clark Field--and I fought that--they wanted to fly the Filipino flag along aside of the U.S. flag; and they're doing it. They've got a liaison officer, a full colonel or maybe brigadier general, now at Clark Field--Filipino, you see. When I was there, I fought all that business of getting them mixed up in our business. We were there. We were there to help them, and we did. Whenever their damned trucks sneaked in the base and stole things, our Filipino guards shot them. I mean our security guards who were Filipinos. And that was it. If they would run and then honk, why they were shot.

BURG: So you ran the base as a U.S. territory?

LEE: Right.

BURG: And then, at the close of your administration there, the base property was turned over to the Philippine government?



LEE: Turned over to them.

BURG: Now the base stayed, and the Americans stayed.

LEE: The Americans stayed and are still there.

BURG: But now it was more or less that we were leasing this property from the Philippine government?

LEE: Right.

MRS. LEE: Yes, and they got Baguio too up there--Camp John Hay.

LEE: They got Camp John Hay in the mountains, the Baguio province. Camp John Hay was the old U.S. Army recreation center. They've got that. They got it all.

BURG: But your strong feelings on the matter are mainly that these pieces of property had all been bought and paid for--

LEE: By the U.S. people.

BURG: --by the American people.

LEE: We bought and paid for them. We liberated the Filipinos from the Spaniards, and we protected them during World War II.



We fought their battles for them and finally run the Japanese out of there and then gave them their independence. Why shouldn't we hang onto the property that we rightfully owned. Just the same way with the Panama Canal. I'm against anything giving that to Panama because that's our property by the treaty of 1903. And the Filipinos--what do they want with it? If we pulled out of the Philippines now, they couldn't carry that place for six months. They don't have the funds. It takes money to run establishments like that Clark Field.

BURG: Right. Now is that field still being leased and still utilized by--

LEE: Still utilized by the U.S. troops, but I don't know just what kind of a bases' agreement deal that they are operating on. See it's a bases' agreement--that deal between the United States and the Philippine government.



BURG: What did you think our motive was in turning it over to them without seeking reimbursement? Was it ever announced, or did you ever--

LEE: Well, it was just the same motive as Ambassador Ferguson had for me for letting the guy steal the ore off the reservation there. He maintained it was their property and their ore. And it wasn't their property, and it wasn't their ore. And my idea of what the basis was--it was our property, and we should keep it unless they wanted to fight. The fact that we had an enclave over there now--if it was our property, why that made no difference to me.

BURG: Now did you discuss your views with Philippine leaders that you knew?



LEE: I talked to several of them about it. I talked to old--what was the mayor of Manila down there? ___?___ Lackson, wasn't it?--Lackson and several other Filipino people, but I didn't have any hope of ever stopping it. But what they were trying to do was to placate--it was placate--some of the radical politicians. I had a Christmas card from a guy the other day who is a retired master sergeant in the Air Force--eighty-two years old. He is a Filipino: Alvarez. He said that three-fifths of the Filipino people would like to be a state of the United States just like Hawaii and Alaska are. So most of the Filipino people would

rather be under, we'll say, the supervision and direction and command--if you want to call it--of the United States. Matter of fact, when they had the people decide over there if they wanted to be an independent nation, there was just a nip and tuck as to whether the people would vote for it.

BURG: That occurred after you left? You were not there when the--

LEE: I wasn't there, no.

BURG: --vote was taken?

LEE: No. But you see what they did. I asked old Paulino [?] Santos. He was one of the generals, you know. He was the chief of staff, and he was the one that was lost with me that time.

BURG: Right.

LEE: I said, "Paulino, what in the hell do you want your independence for?" I said, "Your country is doing as well and better than it will ever be able to do as an independent nation." I said, "You don't have the wherewithal to run a nation. You don't



have the manufacturing." It's strictly an agricultural country; and they are very poor people, and they're overpopulated for the ground they have. "Well," he said, "you all wanted your independence." I said, "Yeah, but we had a reason for wanting it. When our boys had the Boston Tea Party and everything, we were taxed without representation and various other things." I said, "Your country's been treated better than any country in the history of the world has ever been treated by a foreign power." And they know it. And he said, "Yeah, that's true, but we want our independence." And they got it.

BURG: Now one might presume that because of the training they received in the schools, which was training about our experience and what we had done and how we had gained our own independence, it was pretty natural that they felt that that was the thing--

LEE: That was the thing to do.

BURG: --that they wanted more than anything else.

LEE: But it sure has harmed them. It hurt them. It hurt their country, hurt the people. Just like another card I got from old Dr. Leo--what's his name?--that's teaching school where there



were 63,000 students in the university, the second largest school in the Philippines.

MRS. LEE: He's a Chinaman, though.

LEE: I know, but he's teaching school in the Philippines.

MRS. LEE: I know he is.

LEE: I send him a Christmas card every year. Every time we exchange Christmas cards we write notes.

BURG: This is a man you knew from your first trip there?

LEE: Yes. What are they going to teach them? What are they teaching them for? What can they do? There's nothing they can do. They don't have the industry to expand. They've got over thirty-two million people over there in that country now. They had twenty million when we left there in '46.

BURG: And industry is not moving in, and they're--

LEE: No. I worried about it. I worried about it, but, hell, it's not my worry particularly any more than it is for me to worry about Red China and India with all their population, you see. They starve to death, poor people.



BURG: But having spent that time there, why you feel drawn to them and their problems.

LEE: Yeah, I've got a lot of sympathy and compassion for them. But if they hadn't have gotten their independence, their population would have been rampant anyhow.

BURG: Yeah, probably.

LEE: See, I'd say ninety percent of the people are Catholic. Of course, the Catholic religion in most part believe in large families. However, I know a lot of Catholic people, friends of mine, who only have a couple of children. But, on the other hand, over there I knew one guy that had fourteen children. You know, old Tiad's father?



MRS. LEE: Yes.

LEE: Two wives, and he wound up with fourteen children. Five guys came by my house one day up there that lived up in the northern province. Five of them together had fifty-six children.

MRS. LEE: Well, poor people--I mean--

LEE: Well, I like children, and I like people; but, boy, when you can't take care of them, it's brutal.

BURG: Now when Nixon was there, was your position such that you had any chance at all to talk with him?

LEE: I couldn't talk to him about what I wanted to. I was commander of the 13th Air Force when he came down to see the State Department people. And I was on the boat with him that went up to Corregidor to see the ruins of Corregidor and what not.

BURG: Now how did he strike you? Was that your first acquaintance-ship with him? How did he strike you as you saw him, given the condition that he was vice-president and you were commander of an Air Force?

LEE: Well, yesh. He didn't strike me as being a warm person at all. He was a kind of aloof type--above, you see, in a way. 'Course he probably had a reading on me before he got over there 'cause Homer Ferguson had a reading on me before he got over there as ambassador.

BURG: Oh, he told you that he had?



LEE: Oh, yeah, sure. He knew about me before he got over there. He had read the Saturday Evening Post article too.

BURG: Oh, he had.

LEE: Oh, yeah. Well, I guess Nixon was on a mission. He was sent over there by Ike--State Department people--to perform this mission, and that's what he went for. All my talking wouldn't have done any good if he'd have listened to me. He was--appeared to be--a distant type to me, and I think he still is. Of course, he has to be in the position he's in now, 'cause as president of the United States he's a man that nobody ever--hardly ever--sees as an individual.

BURG: Did he pass on any greeting to you from Ike?

LEE: No. I doubt if Ike even mentioned me being over there.

BURG: May very well not have known--

LEE: Yeah.

BURG: --that you were there.



LEE: I always felt that a man in a position like an ambassador or like myself as commander of an installation in a foreign country--we were there to look after our country and the problems of our country. And everything else being equal, why then we would try to placate or pacify the country in which we were. But the British, boy, I'm telling you, boy, they used to look after their interest for their government wherever they were as ambassadors and State Department people. Well, we finally pushed them into giving up India and Pakistan and the Dutch into giving away Indonesia and all that business--our government!

BURG: So if I understand you, your belief is we should be there.

LEE: Be there is right. Our interest is there.

BURG: Well, when you say our interest is there, how do you mean that?

LEE: I mean our interest from the standpoint of global strategy and protection of the future of, well, let's say, our own country;



but I'd say the world. Now when we pulled out of the Philippines, we just might as well pull plum back to Hawaii.

BURG: So you don't go along with the fairly strong current that runs, especially among the young kids, toward pull out--getting out of those foreign areas and sticking to our own.

LEE: We neglected the Far East; we neglected it from the very beginning. We neglected it during World War II for sure. We let MacArthur down the vine, damned near. 'Course, we had to win this war in Europe--that's true--but we neglected the Far East long before World War II. If we hadn't neglected it, the Japanese would have never moved in like they did. They moved in, boy, fast, and they're moving back in fast right now. They're going to be the power in that part of the world in the next few years. They are now as far as that goes. They don't have the military that they once had, but that will come. You can't tell me that a nation like that is going to sit around and fold their hands.

BURG: Do you think that this poses a threat to the United States?



LEE: No. I don't think so. I think our threat is a communist threat in that part of the world. If we pull out of Vietnam, which we are going to do, we just might as well pull plum out of the Philippines and back to Hawaii because they're taking over the Philippines fast. The Hucks are going back into the Philippines.

BURG: Oh, are they?

LEE: Had a letter from one of my friends over there just at Christmas time. He all the time, a business man. Thailand is in a very vulnerable position, and Thailand has been a pretty close friend of ours all along. Of course, they capitulated with the Japanese right quick when the Japs moved in to Thailand; but of our friends that we have had in that part of the world, I would say that the Thailenders are about our staunchest friends. Of course, the Filipinos--most of them--would fight for us if they have something to fight with.

BURG: Yes.



LEE: But we just as well can pull plum out of the Far East.

BURG: Now were you discussing these matters in, say, 1951, '52? When you were there commanding the 13th, were you having discussions with the British, for example, the French and the Dutch?

LEE: I discussed them with the British, but, see, I went back there in '52. I discussed the Suez Canal business with the people. I got some bad publicity on that. I got a nasty letter from Homer Ferguson about what appeared in the newspaper because I made some remarks.

