

INTERVIEW WITH
Colonel James R. Stack

by

Dr. Maclyn Burg
Oral Historian

on

January 29, 1973

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



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This is an interview being taped on April 21, 1972, with Col. James Stack. The interviewer is Dr. Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library and the interview was taped in Col. Stack's apartment in Tacoma.

DR. BURG: The first thing I'd like to do, Colonel, is just have you sketch in for me your own background, where you were born, where you were educated and how things went for you in your life up to the time when you did meet the Eisenhowers.

COL. STACK: Well, I'll do it very briefly. I don't know how pertinent it is to the thing but I was born on a railroad train.

DR. BURG: With that kind of a lead-in you can't lose.

COL. STACK: My mother was from Virginia and my father was from Vermont. At the time, we were going to New Jersey, but my mother--my grandmother was down in Virginia, and so my mother decided that she would leave New Jersey. Essex County, it was--

DR. BURG: Uh-huh.

COL. STACK:--I won't call it Newark--but Essex County, and go down to see her mother, because I think this was her seventh month.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And, unfortunately, I was born on the train and years later I got to know a fellow named Jim Symes who was president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and when I told him about it, he sent me a life-time pass which I've never used.

BURG: You mean he really did?

STACK: Yeah.

BURG: Good Lord.

STACK: But I went to school, prep school, at both Rutgers Prep and Andover.

BURG: I see.

STACK: And then only a year. And then--I mean at Andover--I went on the University of Michigan, and was there for three years.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: I got some ROTC training there which stood me in good

stead later on.

BURG: I see.

STACK: During the depression, I had left school and things were rather difficult for me--

BURG: Yes.

STACK: --so I decided to join the army. I learned that you could go in for a year and then get out and I thought, well, I'll go in for a year and--especially wanted to go in foreign service somewheres.

BURG: How old a man were you, Colonel, when you made that decision?

STACK: Oh, about twenty-three or four.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And so I went into the army, I asked for duty in the Philippines, and I think this was about July 1930--and after they talked to me, they told me there were vacancies in the



6th Engineers at Ft. Lewis, here.

BURG: I see.

STACK: I'd never heard of Ft. Lewis and, as a matter of fact--I don't think the chamber of commerce will like this--I'd never heard of Tacoma.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: But this was down in California at San Pedro. They told me that Mt. Rainier, in describing Tacoma, was a stone's throw--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--from Tacoma. Well, I don't think Grover Cleveland Alexander could have pitched a rock up there because it's sixty miles away, as you know.

BURG: Right.

STACK: At any rate, I came up here and joined the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Engineers at Ft. Lewis. And I was the, probably--



I know I was--the youngest man ever to become a sergeant major in the army since World War I, because I did it in three years, which was quite unusual. Well, the facts really--I mean, I don't want you to think I was that good at all--the facts really were that I had three years of college.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And I had ROTC training at school, so that when I went into the service, this was the time--and I'm talking about 1930--

BURG: I see.

STACK:--and this is when the army was a two-fisted, tough organization where the 1st sergeant controlled the company because he could control any man in that company--you know, it was a physical thing.

BURG: Right.

STACK: But they were great fellows, but it was very physical. And I came along with a bit of education, so that the Engineers



used me, and I became an assistant to the sergeant major of the 2nd Battalion, the 6th Engineers, a man named Williams who at that time had about forty years service and was tickled to death to have somebody else type and work in the office. He wanted no part of it. He was an outdoor fellow--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: --good engineer--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: --great fellow. And then about three months later, the division headquarters--the 3rd Infantry Division headquarters was in at Ft. Lewis--and they asked me if I wanted to transfer up there, and told me that if I did they'd make me a sergeant.

BURG: You were at the time a private?

STACK: No, I was at the time a corporal.

BURG: I see.

STACK: Uh-huh. And they told me they would make me a sergeant.



So I talked it over with the adjutant of the Engineers, who was quite incensed about this proselyting, and, however--a division is a lot bigger than a battalion, as you know.

BURG: Of course.

STACK: So I was transferred up there. And I went through staff sergeant, technical sergeant and all that stuff and became the--eventually--the sergeant major of the division. Because at that time a master sergeant and a sergeant major were not synonymous. You couldn't become a sergeant major unless you were a master sergeant, but it was not a synonymous thing; it wasn't parallel at all, now it is. They call it command sergeant major.

BURG: Now were there regimental sergeant majors as well as say a division--

STACK: Yes.

BURG:--sergeant major.

STACK: Yes. There's a battalion sergeant major, and a regimental



sergeant major. At that time there was a brigade sergeant major-- this is the old square division.

BURG: Yeah.

STACK: I don't know whether you know what I mean or not.

BURG: I think I do and I think most researchers will be able to trace it down.

STACK: Yeah--I can explain it very briefly--and then the division sergeant major. See, in those days, a division was about, oh, about sixteen thousand men, and it was composed of some special troops--MP's, division headquarters, an ordnance company, a signal company, a quartermaster company and that sort of thing.

BURG: Uh-huh.



STACK: But the combat elements in it were four regiments of infantry--that would be the 4th Regiment, the 7th Regiment at that time, the 30th and the 38th. Now, the 4th and the 7th were banded together in a brigade, and it might interest you to know

that General Marshall was the commanding general of that brigade.

BURG: I see.

STACK: And then the 30th and 38th were also in a brigade, so there were two brigade headquarters. Then the artillery, they had one regiment of heavy artillery (seventy-fives), the 10th Field Artillery, and attached to them--it didn't really belong in that division--but attached for training and so forth was the 9th Field Artillery, one hundred and fifty-five heavy howitzer guns. And the regiment of engineers, the 6th Engineers--

BURG: Uh-huh.



STACK:--and there may be other miscellaneous troops but that's the base of it.

BURG: No integral tank unit?

STACK: Yes, one tank company.

BURG: I see.

STACK: The 3rd Tank Company, which was part of special troops.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: The 3rd Tank Company was a part of our division, but every division had a tank company. These were all World War I tanks; they were nothing like we have now.

BURG: Renault.

STACK: The old type, real old.

BURG: Right.

STACK: Made an awful lot of noise.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And you couldn't sleep if they were running. And, so, to be promoted to that sort of position and grade was quite unusual; the AP ran a story about it.

BURG: They did?

STACK: At that time, yeah. And the fellow that wrote it, Jack-- I'll think of his last name, I can't at the moment--became Mark



Clark's aide during World War II.

BURG: All right, now--

STACK: Beardwood, Jack Beardwood.

BURG: Jack--

STACK: Beardwood, Beardwood--he was an AP correspondent out here.

BURG: B-e-a-r--

STACK: B-e-a-r-d-w-o-o-d--he was quite well known.

BURG: Fine.



STACK: And, so, I had lot of difficulty with that because you see, at that time, most corporals had about ten years service, the duty sergeant had at least fifteen years service, and what they called the first three grades at that time, staff sergeant, technical sergeant, and the first sergeant and the master sergeant, all had about twenty-five years service, at least, before

they hit those grades.

BURG: You know, it sounds like the frontier army of the 1870's.

STACK: Yes, it was, it was.

BURG: Very much the same thing.

STACK: The proof in the pudding was that the 3rd Division had headquarters at Ft. Lewis, but it had a battalion of engineers here, a battalion at Ft. Lawton in Seattle. The 7th Infantry had a battalion up in Chilcoot Barracks, Alaska; they had the other two battalions at Vancouver Barracks.

BURG: I see.

STACK: The 4th Infantry, as I remember, had a battalion in Spokane--Ft. Wright--and they went up to Ft. Lincoln, North Dakota. And the 30th, 38th,--

BURG: For heaven's sakes.

STACK:--30th Infantry were all down in San Francisco, but the 38th



Infantry was headquartered at Salt Lake City--I forget what they call that place, or what they did call it--and then had another one at--they had a battalion at Ft. Lincoln, North Dakota. And they had another one at Ft. Douglas, Utah, that was--

BURG: At Douglas, uh-huh.

STACK: And the heavy 18th Field Artillery, which we never saw, actually, went down in Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. And that's why the 9th Field Artillery--which really belonged to the 4th Infantry Division which was inactive at the time--we were training them, heavy guns.

BURG: Uh-huh, I see.

STACK: So that Ft. Lewis, at that time consisted of the 3rd Division headquarters and these miscellaneous troops. There were only twenty-six hundred men. Today there are thousands and thousands

BURG: Yes.

STACK: And, during World War II, I think they had two full combat divisions--over eighty-five thousand troops there at one time.



I think that's the top, and even now they just closed that personnel center--and I'm on the Board of Directors of the Association of the United States Army out here--

BURG: I see.

STACK: They closed the personnel center and are bringing in the 9th Infantry Division, reactivating it, the 9th Infantry Division, at Ft. Lewis so they'll have--

BURG: I read some place about it.

STACK: --they'll probably come up to about twenty-five thousand there.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: So that, this, in essence, is what you asked me, I think. I ramble a little bit.

BURG: Not at all; this is very much to the point.



STACK: Well, anyway, that was basically my background. General Eisenhower came into my life as a lieutenant colonel--he had just been made a lieutenant colonel. The 15th Infantry came back from China in 1938--he was not with them then; he was, I believe, in the Philippines.

BURG: Yes, he was.

STACK: And then he came in, I think, in '39--it might have been '40, but I'm pretty sure it was '39.

BURG: I believe you're right, '39.

STACK: Now, I was not in the 15th Infantry; I was in the 3rd Infantry Division. The 15th Infantry became a part of the 3rd Infantry Division when the 3rd Infantry changed from a square division to a triangular division. Now, you lose the brigades, and you only have three regiments, instead of four regiments of infantry.

BURG: Now, did you lose the 38th?

STACK: We lost the--I think we lost the 4th.



BURG: I only said 38th because in the 2nd Division after the war we had the 38th.

STACK: Well, the 38th belonged to the 2nd Division--all the time. But in World War II I'm talking about--World War I, rather. But they became a part of the 3rd Division later on. Now, when the 15th came in, it became the 4th--you're right--it became the 7th, the 15th and the 30th. The 4th Infantry Regiment went up to the Alaskan Command.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And the 38th, as you know, reverted to the 2nd Division--they had been in the 2nd Division in World War I.

BURG: Uh-huh, right.

STACK: The 2nd was a part army-part marine division at that time.

BURG: Now, that would mean that George Marshall's brigade command--

STACK: Was wiped out.



BURG:--was wiped out. He was then a brigadier?

STACK: Yeah, George Marshall was a brigadier, and I had additional duty--because, I suppose they thought, because of my education--as the assistant to the inspector general. Now, I was the only enlisted man who was in the IGD; other assistants were all either commissioned officers or warrant officers. And I replaced a man who had twenty-five years service--because they couldn't find anybody else, I guess. You know, I posed quite a problem, because when I would go out with Col. [Isaac J.] Nichol, who was the inspector general for the 3rd Infantry Division--well, we'd go out especially on audits having to do with disbursing officers, which we did, too.

BURG: I see.



STACK: He knew nothing about accounting, and I had majored in the thing, so I got the brunt of that, but the reason I posed a problem was, wherever I went, I had to go in civilian clothes because I couldn't stay in an officers' club unless I did, and I

couldn't do this and that, and Colonel Nichol was always calling me, "Mister" he never did call me sergeant major.

BURG: Now, you're answering questions that, if I haven't written them here on the question sheet, I certainly had them in mind. We wondered how did you bring it off? How did you ever do it? We knew something about what you had done; we knew, for instance, that you knew Marshall through this very route.

STACK: Yeah, I knew a lot of them.

BURG: That's how.

STACK: See, than-Major Mark Clark was our G-2 in the 3rd Division.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: We had other men that became very well known during the war--Col. [Robert L.] Eichelberger was the commanding officer of the 30th Infantry Division.

BURG: I see.



STACK: And there's a whole flock of them, if I could think of them off hand, that became quite well known. You must remember this: we only had--before the expansion of our army--we only had a hundred and twelve thousand officers and men in the American army. And this included Puerto Rico; it included Panama; and--of course we were no longer in China--but it included the Philippines.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And you could have taken--the best way for me to illustrate this to you--you could have taken the whole American army, and they could have watched a football game in Soldiers' Field in Chicago or the Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles.

BURG: I see.



STACK: Because we were down to rock bottom, because of the Depression, I would presume. Our pay had been cut--you remember President Roosevelt cut our pay fifteen percent, all that sort of thing. So that it was rather difficult--and I don't think

people really realize that in allowing you [an army of one] hundred and eighteen thousand it would expand into millions. [Yet] they were able to do the job they did in World War II, and I don't think anybody really gives credit to the great leadership of people like General Marshall, and General Eisenhower, and all the rest of them.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: Including a flock of them that nobody ever heard of--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--who did great jobs General [Thomas] Handy is one up there.

BURG: Yeah.



STACK: A lot of them. And they did a tremendous job--General [Walter] Bedell Smith, General [Lucius DuB.] Clay, General [Leonard T.] Gerow, General Courtney [H.] Hodges--who I don't think, I would say, that maybe one out of a thousand people in America knew that he led one of our armies in Europe, Courtney Hodges.

BURG: Yes, or William [Hood] Simpson.

STACK: Yes, Simpson, or I keep thinking--[cannot make out this name]--these people were magnificent, they were just tremendous people. And our country is just fortunate that people like that-- Omar Bradley, Tooey Spaatz--came along when we needed them so badly.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And were able to do what I--as I say, it was just a magnificent job. Now again, coming back--I'm rambling again--but coming back--

BURG: No, you're answering questions that have to be asked, would have been asked.

STACK:--coming back to Ft. Lewis, at that time, because you told me this was the period that you didn't have too much on.

BURG: That's right, we don't.

STACK: Well, General Eisenhower, then Lieutenant Colonel Eisenhower, when he was assigned to Ft. Lewis, he became--he had the



first actual command he ever had in his military career. He became a battalion commander of the 3rd Battalion of the 15th Infantry, right here at Ft. Lewis.

BURG: Everything else had been training.

STACK: That's right, he's always been a, well, a staff.

BURG: Or a staff.

STACK: Because he came from General Marshall's staff, I mean, General--

BURG: MacArthur.

STACK:--MacArthur's staff. So, it was always tremendous staff work, and he was known in Washington--terrific reputation for his staff work. Actually, this is the thing--when he left here, and went down to the maneuvers in Louisiana--this is the thing that caught Marshall's attention--you know they didn't know each other.



BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And Marshall left before General Eisenhower came here.

BURG: Right, right.

STACK: This was the first time in the history of the maneuvers that the aggressors beat the defenders.

BURG: Yes, and what should have been a set piece--

STACK: It never happened--

BURG: Yeah.

STACK:--because of General Marshall, General Eisenhower.

BURG: Now, when he got to Ft. Lewis--

STACK: When he got to Ft. Lewis, he was the commanding officer of the 3rd Battalion, the 15th Infantry, and that's why he has such an affectionate regard for that 3rd Division's striped patch and the 15th Infantry, you know; there was always a warm spot in his heart for it.



BURG: Yes.

STACK: And the short--he wasn't there very long when he was transferred to division headquarters, and became the chief of staff of the 3rd Infantry Division, and shortly, oh, almost in no time, was made a colonel, full colonel.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: I think that the first commanding general he served under at Ft. Lewis was Charley Thompson, General Thompson. I think it was General Anderson that followed General Thompson, but I don't think General Eisenhower was there under Anderson--but he was there under Thompson.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: General Thompson commanded the division and General Eisenhower was the chief of staff, and I was his enlisted assistant.

BURG: Eisenhower's enlisted assistant?



STACK: Yeah, that's how I--and did a lot of personal, I'm talking about official, work; I don't mean valet service--

BURG: Yes.

STACK:--or orderly service, but a lot of personal things that he would call me in on. Now, this had especially to do with IG investigations, and things of that sort.

BURG: Now, you had actually handled one of these or had worked on one of these with regard to funds at Vancouver Barracks?

STACK: Yeah, but I would rather not go into it.

BURG: You'd rather not?

STACK: No, because it had something to do with General Marshall, and he might have, I don't, I don't, he--actually, it happened down there because he was the commanding general of Vancouver Barracks, but the thing that happened down there is something he knew nothing about.



BURG: Well, that was what I had understood.

STACK: He had to take the burden because he was the commanding general.

BURG: Right.

STACK: I picked it up in an IG investigation, you see.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: The point is--I really, I don't want to get off base on this--the funds really were eventually all accounted for. It was irregular, the way it was handled down there by the people that handled it--in the post exchange is where this developed.

BURG: I see.

STACK: But General Marshall really knew nothing about it and had nothing to do with it. He was just utterly flabbergasted when it was brought to his attention.



BURG: Well, was it more in the nature of someone understood that funds could be used in a particular way which was wrong?

STACK: No, I can tell you that part. What happened was, that the United States at that time had taken issue with the State of Washington, and perhaps other states, about the collection of the tax on gasoline on military--sold on military reservations. The United States claimed that the state had no authority to collect taxes on gasoline at post exchange gasoline stations--

BURG: I see.

STACK:--sold to people that lived on the post.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: So all that was put in escrow--all this money that came in--until a decision was made. A decision was finally made, and I don't know whether it was made in a federal court--I would imagine it would be--that the state did not have that right, so rebates were made to all the various army posts.



BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: Now, Vancouver Barracks--Ft. Lewis got its share-- but down at Vancouver Barracks, apparently they didn't know what to do with it, when it came in.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: So they put it in a special fund--and that's what they called it, "a special fund". And, for example, when they needed new pumps at the gas station, and the, this ran--this was quite a bit of money I'm talking about--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--as I know money--they needed pumps at the gas station, and the post exchange council turned it down, they bought it out of these funds.

BURG: I see.

STACK: When the 7th Infantry Band--they wanted to orient them on music, so they would send them down to the Portland Symphony.



So they bought season tickets, and they sent three or four of them from the band down there. They bought the band dress blue uniforms out of this money.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: As I say, it wasn't, I wouldn't call it so much illegal, as very irregular.

BURG: Uh-huh, right.

STACK: Because they didn't have the authority to do it. Well, "Solomon" of the Department of the Army--at that time it was the War Department--came through with a decision. They had to refund all this money to the PX, put it back in that account, and then they made a special dividend to all the units for their recreational equipment and this and that and that sort of thing.

BURG: Day rooms and--

STACK: Yeah, because, you see, the PX in those days was not handled



the way it is now. In those days, the units owned the post exchange, and the stock held was based upon the authorized numerical strength of each unit--not its actual, but its authorized strength. They had so many, that if your company had two hundred men in it, you had two hundred shares of stock--

BURG: I see.

STACK:--in the PX. At the end of the year, they would then divide whatever profits, because it was supposed to be a non-profit operation. And you know that's not government funds, it's quasi, is the official word.

BURG: Right.

STACK: They divided that into the number of shares, and they would give each unit their bonus or dividend and, for, again, recreational equipment, baseball uniforms, football uniforms, pool tables, what have you--anything like that; because there are no army funds for that sort of thing.



BURG: That wouldn't go to purchasing uniforms for a band?

STACK: For the band, no.

BURG: Or suits--

STACK: So, anyway, this was--

BURG: Now, "Solomon" being--?

STACK: The Department--

BURG:--you're saying he worked for the War Department at that time?

STACK: No, no I--

BURG: You just spoke of "Solomon"--

STACK:--I just did that to be funny. After all, the decision had to be made almost like Solomon would make them, that's what I say--

BURG: Yes.



STACK: --what do you do with that?

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: Especially after most of it's spent, a good share of it's spent.

BURG: Now, did you pick up the irregularity--

STACK: Yes.

BURG: --yourself as you were here at Ft. Lewis?

STACK: Yes, I did. You see, now, the division inspector general goes to each of the army posts once a year to make an inspection. His assistant does what they call the money inspection--it's not actually money--but you check the company funds, the PX, and all the funds that are operated on the post.

BURG: I see.

STACK: We go even further than that; we used to go to Helena, Montana, and Eugene, Oregon--Salem, Oregon, I guess it is--



and Camp Murray, here. Wherever there was a federal disbursing office for the state, and the dams--you know, Ft. Peck Dam and all that sort of thing--I had to check them, too. Had to check them out. Well, in this case, the way I discovered it--I'd been trained that way; I just did what I was trained to do.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: I wasn't too concerned about it, because Price Waterhouse was doing a regular inspection down there--just like up here Bush and Webb were doing it. They're certified public accountants.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: So I wasn't too worried about anything being wrong, but we had some forms, and we had to fill them out and mail them. Well, I sent a letter down--as I always did--down to the Clark County National Bank, and asked for the balances on a certain date by authority of the War Department, which I gave them, and told them we would be down on a certain date and would like to pick them up. When I got down there, they gave me all the accounts



that they had pertaining to Vancouver Barracks. And in the PX there was a special account--"Vancouver Barracks Special Account"--and when I first looked at it, it didn't dawn on me that it was anything improper, but when I started checking it, I could tell by the action of everybody I talked to--and I got out of my depth, because I began to deal with colonels and people like that, and I was a sergeant major. So, I decided I'd go see Colonel Nichol, who was at the officers' club, and who was a great man, just a great guy. And I told him what the problem was, so he took over from there--but I was with him. Now, the only thing I want to point out, tell you, which might be of interest to you--General Marshall was really upset when this happened. You can delegate authority, but you can't delegate responsibility.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: That's yours.

BURG: Right.

STACK: I'm going to skip a whole period of time. When I was com-



missioned and went to Washington, D.C., I was commissioned directly to the General Staff, which had never been done, since, before, or after, as far as I know.

BURG: Interesting to know.

STACK: Yeah, you're ordinarily commissioned to Engineers, Artillery, something, but I wasn't; I got commissioned directly to the General Staff. And the first day there--there was no Pentagon, but in the old Munitions Building--I also was out looking for a place to live--things were rather hectic and chaotic around then and you had to get to work--so they gave me twenty-four hours to find a place to live and get back to the office.

BURG: Right.



STACK: Well, I was in the Munitions Building, and I hadn't yet been trained to not notice rank, because I had been trained in the field and knew rank when I saw it.

BURG: Indeed.

STACK: So I, I was standing in the hallway, in the corridor talking to somebody, and down the hall came General Marshall, and his aide at that time was a Major Flap Adams, who I knew quite well. And, so, I snapped to attention, which in itself is unusual--now, if you're ever around the Pentagon, you never see anybody snap to attention; you're not required to do it.

BURG: Right.

STACK: Anyway, I did, and I guess that made General Marshall kind of blink, and he turned around and he walked back there and he said, "I know you, don't I?" I said, "Yes, sir." He says, "Something to do with Vancouver Barracks?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Your name is Stack, isn't it?" "Yes, sir." And he said, turned around to Adams, and he said, "Have"--I was lieutenant--"Have Lieutenant Stack report to my office at one o'clock this afternoon." This was in the morning. I immediately started trying to find my wife to tell her, "Forget it." I was going, going to Siberia or some place.



BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: Yeah, so I went back up to the office, and then Major [Charles K.] Gailey, who was executive officer--this was the Operations Division of the General Staff, this was the Chief of Staff's command post, this was the hub of all activity directing the war on all fronts around the whole world.

BURG: Right.

STACK: How many people know that setup? It's quite interesting. It was different than World War II, quite different, for reasons that I won't go into now. But this is where the control of the whole war is--

BURG: Right.

STACK:--and its actions and directives and all that. And this is why they brought me there, and General Eisenhower came up, oh, I think three days before then. He was the one that got me commissioned. I had an ROTC commission, and Colonel Nichol was



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about to get me commissioned, and I had three wires came in the same day from the Department of the--I keep saying Army, not the War Department--but the one from General Eisenhower was the most intriguing, because this was a directive to the General Staff and to the Operations Division too. I was going to the place where the action was.

BURG: Right, and he had gone there just a--

STACK: A few days before.

BURG:--five days after Pearl Harbor.

STACK: That's right. And he, what he was doing was reorganizing the staff because the Operations Division was the old War Plans Division.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: Because the War Plans Division, they only had about a dozen officers in there, and all they did was make plans for the future. And now they became an actual operational division. So,



then, war plans became a part of that. There's General [Alfred C.] Wedemeyer in there--they weren't generals then--

BURG: No.

STACK:--General John E. Hull, General--oh, men that really became well-known and famous. Major Gailey was the executive officer of the Operations Division. I ostensibly was to be one of his assistant executive officers on that mission. And I mean a specific assignment--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--I was actually to be General Eisenhower's aide, but the staff offices at that time did not have aides; they couldn't have aides.

BURG: Oh, they couldn't?



STACK: Not on the General Staff. They had other names for them, and they did the same thing, but they were not called aides.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: At that time. Now it's changed, since. So, I went back up and I told Gailey what it was all about, and I said there's no point in me trying to find a place to live, I'm pretty sure I'm going to be reassigned. He said, "You better talk to General Eisenhower." So we went in and talked to General Eisenhower and I told him the whole story. He said, "When you go back there this afternoon, I'll go with you." So he went with me--and do you know this fellow, Frank McCarthy, do you know who he is, Col. Frank McCarthy?

BURG: I don't think I do.

STACK: Well, he was General Marshall's secretary of the General Staff, under General Marshall.

BURG: I see.

STACK: And Frank McCarthy, he became the top of the, head man of the movie industry later. He's a VMI man.



BURG: Oh, and thus the connection with Marshall.

STACK: So was Marshall, a VMI man.

BURG: Sure.

STACK: So was Handy, a VMI man. Anyway, General Marshall, I think, was a little surprised to see General Eisenhower--
(Interruption while cassette is being changed)

STACK:--and he asked me where I was assigned, where I was going to work. And I said, and pointed to General Eisenhower, "In the Operations Division." And he turned around and caught me completely by surprise--and I know he caught General Eisenhower completely by surprise--he said, "I would like to have Stack in here, in my office here. I think I can use him." And General Eisenhower said, "But, General, I brought him up here, and I had him commissioned for this specific job, and we need him there." And he kind of grinned, you know, and said, "Well, I didn't know that, but I sure would like to have him--but I don't want to take him away from you." And Ike stood there with utter, utter amazement, you know. Well, it developed that General Marshall said



later that the reason he was so interested in me, because if I hadn't found that, that could have gotten completely out of hand down at Vancouver later--

BURG: Yes.

STACK:--without his knowledge, and could have been really serious. So the fact that I found it, he told me he was grateful to me.

BURG: I see.

STACK: Now that didn't--

BURG: Wasn't what you expected when you went there at one o'clock.

STACK: That's not what I expected. And another interesting angle of that is that, when General Eisenhower went overseas--his first assignment overseas--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--he made a list up of the officers he wanted to take with



him out of the War Department, out of the General Staff, for his own staff.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: Now on that list he had me down there, and then he had an officer who's dead now Col. Ernest R. (Tex) Lee.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: Tex Lee was going to--he had enlisted to stay in the War Department as his personal representative on General Marshall's staff, and General Marshall changed that; that was the only change he made. He put me under him as General Eisenhower's personal representative, and Lee went overseas then. Ike wasn't very happy about that.

BURG: I see.

STACK: But we made exchanges back and forth. I made thirty-four trips overseas during the war with special messages that couldn't be sent on wires or even on the--what'd they call that radio



thing that they polished up in there? It was some mechanism they had where they'd send messages that couldn't be read on the air; you couldn't make anything out of them.

BURG: Kind of scrambled sort of thing.

STACK: Scrambled that's it.

BURG: Scrambled the message, uh-huh.

STACK: And so I made, as I say, thirty-four trips overseas, and I really did get in on a lot of things, though, that compensated during the two years, until he finally decided he wanted me over there.

BURG: All right, before we get back to that, that shows a relationship that I wanted very much to have on paper--the unique way in which you came to know one-half of that combination and to be trusted by him.

STACK: I got to tell you the funny story about that--the actual



way I came to his attention. When he left Ft. Lewis--I was at Ft. Lewis--he asked me if I would take care of his correspondence if anything came in addressed to him. If it was official, personal, if I would send it on to him, or if I would research anything that was official so that he could have the reply--you know, things that were in our files, because at that time they were separating our files. The combat divi--, the housekeeping chores were taken away from this combat division, and they were forming a whole new outfit to stay home and take care of the housekeeping, so that the division, when it went into combat, would have its own records with them--they wouldn't be confused with the headquarters or the post records.

BURG: Now, he, being General Eisenhower, asked you to do this?

STACK: Yeah. And he asked me if I would--lots of things came up and he had to, oh, everyday it was stuff that came in that I combed the files to find what he wanted to know, and all that sort of thing. Well, we had a fellow with us who was my assistant--his name was Holloway Cook; he was an Englishman, and a

good man. He was killed on Bataan.

BURG: Oh.

STACK: And Cook got a commission almost immediately, and I couldn't understand how Cook would get it--I guess I must have been a little envious. But I want to tell you this is a good man.

BURG: Was it Pearl Harbor, shortly--

STACK: Pearl Harbor, yes.

BURG:--after that he got his commission and you hadn't gotten yours yet?

STACK: That's right.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: So, when I sent General Eisenhower the stuff that day, I put a little note in that Cook had gotten his commission and I



hadn't, and I said, "theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do or die."

BURG: An old phrase!

STACK: And I thought, how corny can you get! And I went down to the post office and tried to get that back, and it had gone-- I really did try to get it back.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And when he got it, I guess he thought that was funny enough to get me a commission immediately, because at that time Gailey told me that he had this tremendous job--you see, the War Department was in a bad state of, at the beginning of World War II what happened was that in this General Staff there were no enlisted people at all. The chief clerk, who was a good man, but he was an old man, and all of the rest of them were just old people that had been there all their lives--and there weren't very many of them, very few. Now, they were used to coming in the office at



eight o'clock in the morning and going home at five or six at night--now, this is with a war on, you know. And there were messages coming in, oh, literally by the hundreds from Bataan and other places.

BURG: Frantic messages.

STACK: Yes, and they had to be--they were in code, they had to be decoded, and they had to be brought to somebody's attention and all that sort of thing, and there was no way to do it. So, the first thing General Eisenhower wanted me to do was to revise the whole system in that Operations Division. Well, I told him, "If they're going to do that, the only way I know to do it is to get in--" see, at that time sergeants majors over thirty-five were not sent overseas in most cases. They may have been. Most of them were sent to schools to train people.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And I said, "Why don't I look to find sergeants majors, as many as I can, who are older men, but who certainly know their



army and know the administrative processes, and bring them in here, commissioned, and put them on a job here." He told me to go ahead. And I brought some good men in; I had a beautiful group in there.

BURG: You, yourself, then, a 2nd or 1st Lieutenant?

STACK: I was a 1st Lieutenant. You had to be commissioned over-age in grade when you commission directly like that.

BURG: I see.

STACK: You couldn't be commissioned, you couldn't be commissioned like anybody else was. I don't know why, but this was a regulation. They changed it later.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: I was promoted pretty rapidly, so I didn't have any reason--beside, we were too busy to worry about that.

BURG: Yeah.



STACK: But anyway, I brought these men in, and they were--I only know one word--they were fantastic. They worked all night, they set up their sections, they worked out a system, they gave--the War Department found a man named [first name & initial?] Royce, I'm sure he's dead now, who was the executive vice-president of the Ralston Purina Company, dollar-a-year man.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: An efficiency expert. He and I were supposed to collaborate on a new system, and so we worked on it, and this man was brilliant.

BURG: And a civilian?

STACK: Oh, yeah.

BURG: He was not commissioned?

STACK: No, no, he was too old; we didn't get him until--he was about sixty-five then.

BURG: I see.

STACK: But he was a brilliant man. And so between the two of us--I want to give him, you know, the major kudos, because this man was, I never saw a better man in my life. And we worked up a system--they gave us three weeks to do it--and we did it, and I just--

BURG: Colonel Stack, they gave you three weeks to change what had gone on for all those years?

STACK: All those years. That Legion of Merit above you, actually, well, is for that job.

BURG: I see. I should think!

STACK: And it's one of the few things signed personally by the, by the Secretary of the Army, Secretary of War, Henry Stimson. He never signed those things, but he signed that one.

BURG: For heaven's sakes!

STACK: That was a job! I've never been in anything like that.



Anyway, and then General Eisenhower told us that General Marshall had told him, "It better work, it better work." Well, at midnight, on the 15th of May in 1942, we changed as of midnight.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And it was a beauty. It worked, because we had all the administrative people in, and all these sergeants, who were then lieutenants, and they worked like dogs, and they put it into operation and oh, gee, what a change, what a change! You wouldn't believe it. For example, just to make it brief, if a message would come in, say, from General MacArthur on Corregidor--in that area--and it was something that needed immediate action, we would put a green cover on that, and they would call them a "green hornet."

BURG: I've heard the term.

STACK: That meant that the man that gets--they still do it--that meant that the man that did it, that got that paper--what they call "the principal action"--could not leave that building until



the answer had gone out.

BURG: I see.

STACK: He had to stay there, sleep there, eat there, but he couldn't leave it, and they would put a date on it--they called it a tickler date, a suspense date. In other words, if it came in on the first of June and they'd say, well, we'll give you three days, June the third, you have to have this answer. Now in order to save time, the initial copy went directly to this officer, another copy went to his boss, the section chief, another copy went out to, if it was a southwest Pacific problem, to the chief of the Southwest Pacific Section, another went to the chief of the--what do we call that--the Operations Division part, so he would know. Another one went to the War Plans Division, where they had to be sure that the thing was in, within the broad outlines set up by the Joint Chiefs of Staff--you can step out of bounds here and there.

BURG: I see.



STACK: And the other one, if it was involved, if there was any logistics involved, or troops were involved, went to the logistics section to be sure they have the stuff, and the troops and all that, and didn't take it away from somebody else and all that sort of thing. It was the best-coordinated thing I have ever seen in my life. And they do it; they still do it.

BURG: So, if I got one of those "green hornets," and I'm the officer who has to take care of it and get the answer out in so many days, as I make the phone calls to help me line up what has to be done, I'm probably talking to officers who also got a copy--

STACK: Who already have it on their desk; that's right.

BURG:--and they, too, know that the goad is going to be out for them.

STACK: That's right, that's right. They've got to work with you.

BURG: Ah-ha. Uh-huh.



STACK: Now if, if in the preparation of this thing, you ran into people who didn't agree with you, they had an area where they could state their disagreement.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: But General Eisenhower had a rule that was kept--I think it's still on--you couldn't disagree unless you came up with something better. You just didn't say, 'I don't think it will work.'

BURG: I see.

STACK: They wouldn't take, they wouldn't accept it. You had to come up with something better than whatever this officer had proposed who had the paper.

BURG: So it would do me no good to say, 'It won't work, because of these reasons.' I'd have to say, 'It won't work, because of these reasons, and we will have to do these things to set it right.'



STACK: Unless in the case of logistics, they came up: 'It won't work because we don't have this equipment that we want,' or 'The equipment is in Europe and it's more important over there than it is over here; we don't have enough,' or something like that. But it had to be--it was pretty well coordinated. Now, if you had this paper in by the third of June, you didn't do anything. Otherwise, you'd get a telephone call from your boss, because that tickler was on his desk, and it was on the desk of everybody, going all the way up to the--

BURG: I see.

STACK:--executive office of the whole area, the whole Operations Division. So that everybody wondered, 'Where's the paper?'

BURG: Uh-huh, uh-huh.



STACK: 'Why isn't it in here?' Well, it caused people to work twenty hours a day, eighteen hours a day--actually people were carried out of there, overworked.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: I know that there was a whole procession almost every morning to Colonel Gailey's--not colonel; he was a general-- Colonel Gailey's desk saying, 'We want out to the battlefront; it's easier.'

BURG: Yes.

STACK: That's a fact.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: And, because, you see, now we had a hundred and sixty-four officers in the Operations Division and the General Staff, and a hundred and twenty of them were West Pointers, which was unusual. Because you needed them in the field, but you had to have people who were trained to do this thing.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And, we initiated, General Eisenhower initiated, this



business of, well, if you're in the European Section, you had a counterpart in Europe. Once a year you took his place for three months and he took your place on the General Staff for three months--so you'd understand each other's problems.

BURG: Oh, really.

STACK: Yeah, that was done, initiated by us.

BURG: I see, I see.

STACK: And it worked pretty good, because you didn't ask for things and think I'm the only person in the world, and so give it to me and forget everybody else--you began to see there were considerations back here, and here they began to understand that it was a matter of life and death out there, and so they better get with it.

BURG: And, unfortunately, this couldn't be done earlier, early enough to--

STACK: No.



BURG:--give the men in the--

STACK: No.

BURG:--the Philippines any--

STACK: We had several officers--I know [Brigadier] General [Carl A.] Russell was one and [Col. P.R.] Pop Goode was another--who were killed, who were on the General Staff in Washington, D.C., were killed in combat.

BURG: Yes, I remember reading about several deaths of that sort.

STACK: That's right.

BURG: They were out there learning what it was like at that end, and died doing it.

STACK: And got involved in--we had one fellow, Darby, I can't think of his first name, he was the chief of our commandos, he was--

BURG: Darby's Rangers.

STACK: Darby--that's right. He organized the Rangers.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: He was our chief, he was--and I never seen a guy like that--he's the moving-picture type of a real combat officer. And a real nice guy, too. He wasn't blood-thirsty at all; at least I never saw him in that capacity. They finally brought him home because they thought he had enough. And they sent him out on a mission along with, I think, General Spaatz, and he went to Italy with the 10th Mountain Division and the commanding general of the 10th Mountain Division was killed while he was there, so he took his place, just took over until he was sent somebody, and he got killed.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: Now he never got killed in hand-to-hand stuff. He got killed by an artillery shell.

BURG: William Darby, I think.



STACK: Bill Darby.

BURG: Bill Darby, yes.

STACK: Yes. And that's the way it went. But anyway, these were innovations that were brought in by, mostly by, General Eisenhower.

BURG: All right, now that means we've got to get back to Ft. Lewis where you met him, because very obviously this is unique all the way through--

STACK: It is unique.

BURG:--there couldn't have been very many young college men who went--

STACK: There were very few.

BURG:--into the army as you did.

STACK: They came in later--lot of them came in later, but not when I did.

BURG: And because of that, you'd gone up.



STACK: I, I, I had the jump on them.

BURG: Right, I see, I see.

STACK: You'll be interested--well, I was a fraternity brother, for example, of about six officers that were pretty high-ranking in those days that were around here, and I just stayed away from them. You'll be interested in--Elsa and I have been married now thirty-two years, and Elsa was a nurse, registered nurse--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--an anesthetist--and she worked for the chief of surgery at Tacoma General Hospital when we met. I was a sergeant major; I was an enlisted man. And there was a call for a nurse, an anesthetist, they needed some nurse anesthetists--Red Cross handled all this stuff back in those days; it was all on a voluntary basis. So they contacted her, and she joined the service to be a nurse anesthetist.

BURG: Oh, she did?



STACK: Yeah. Now, she was a 2nd lieutenant when she went in; I was a sergeant major.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: We already were engaged to be married in July of '41. Well, when she got out there--she went to Ft. Lewis--when she got out there, her commanding officer, the chief surgeon at the hospital there, called her in one day and told her that there was an unwritten law you didn't run around with enlisted men. She pointed out to him that we were engaged and were going to get married, and rank didn't seem to--it didn't seem to make much difference. Anyway, she told me about it and when I came back to headquarters--I think it was--I came back afterwards and I was mad. I guess I started tossing things around, and Colonel Eisenhower came in and said, "What's wrong with you?" So I told him--he was a lieutenant colonel--and I told him. He picked up the phone and called this colonel and I believe his name was [first name & initial?] Clark, and he said, "Colonel

Clark, this is Eisenhower, the executive, the chief of staff of the 3rd Infantry Division, and General Thompson, the commanding general"--mind, he hadn't even talked to him--

BURG: Yeah.

STACK:--"directs me to inform you that you are not to interfere with Sergeant Major Stack and his fiancée."

BURG: Good gosh.

STACK: "And he is to be married and you're not"--and he hadn't even talked to Charley Thompson.

BURG: And didn't, didn't use his own rank either, did he?

STACK: No.

BURG: But used the title of his office.

STACK: That's right, title of his office. "The commanding general directs me." Well, that ended that. Alden Hatch in his book had



written about this--the first, I think that's the first, autobiography of Eisenhower.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: It was written way back.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: And the General told about it.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: Anyway, that, of course, endeared him to me.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: My wife said we fell in love with him right then.

BURG: Now when he was with the 15th, your contact with him was a little at a distance because you were operating out of the division headquarters.

STACK: Yeah, except that he would come to, they, the battalion commanders would come to meetings, and I would be in at the



meetings, taking notes and making notes and all that sort of thing, you know.

BURG: Now, did anyone try to push a commission at you during the--

STACK: Yeah.

BURG:--any time from your enlistment up to--

STACK: Yeah, two people did. This Colonel Nichol did, Isaac J. Nichol, and also a judge advocate, Charley Moffitt--he's dead-- tried to get me commissioned, and then two or three others. But, and then a promotion of warrant officer came through at the same time, come to think of it--a regular promotion. I never was a warrant officer, but the promotion was there.

BURG: I see.

STACK: But there was no point in--

BURG: Did the offers or the attempts to commission you fail for any particular reason?



STACK: No, they didn't fail at all--I just selected this one.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: I had a hunch that it would come through, and I just waited for it.

BURG: But there was a period of time of ten years, eleven years, that you spent as an enlisted--

STACK: Twelve years.

BURG: Twelve years, uh-huh. And your offers for commissioning came--

STACK: Oh, you mean in those, that period, no, because you couldn't be commissioned then. You only got--this business of being commissioned came later, came when war, about the time war was declared, is when you could get commissioned.

BURG: As an enlisted man, then, in the earlier '30's--

STACK: No, we had no--



BURG:--there was no chance.

STACK:--we had no, in those days we had no officer training school. We didn't have enough men to go to anything like that. And besides, we didn't have the type of men that would go. This happened when war started, is when we had our schools, our officer training schools.

BURG: Now did you hold a reserve commission--

STACK:No, no--

BURG:--granted at the University of Virginia--

STACK:--no, no, no--

BURG:--or Michigan?

STACK:--no, I had been a, I had three years of ROTC training, but I didn't hold any commission because I didn't finish it.

BURG: Right. But three years of,of regular officers training--

STACK: Yeah, plus--

BURG:--as--



STACK:--in those days a lot of the ROTC stuff was 'squads right' and 'squads left'--it wasn't so much classroom stuff. I actually didn't, wasn't, I was in an infantry outfit, not the engineers.

BURG: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

STACK: But anyway, to pick up the chronological order, shortly after General Eisenhower, Colonel Eisenhower, became chief of staff of the 3rd Division, the expansion of the army started.

BURG: Would that be because of the 1940 draft laws or--

STACK: Well, some of the people, well, the draft laws were incident to that, too, but what I mean is, that the war in Europe was such that we knew we were going to get into it--we just, I mean, you could see it coming.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And so they began to build up the National Guard, the Reserves, the Regular Army--and all that stuff began to be built



up. And they organized--or the War Department directed--that the IX Army Corps be organized at Ft. Lewis, and the IX Army Corps was to be composed of two divisions, the 3rd Infantry Division and the National Guard's 41st Division, which was in this area--it comes from the Northwest.

BURG: Right.

STACK: And they were to be put together, and General Eisenhower was moved from the 3rd Division, as chief of staff, up to the IX Army Corps, as chief of staff, in Ft. Lewis. That's when he became a colonel--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--come to think of it. And we went on maneuvers in late '40 or maybe early '41--it must have been late '40.

BURG: Late '40.

STACK: Down on the Hunter Liggett Military Reservation--that's the William R. Hearst place at San Simeon, which they call the



Juan--J-u-a-n--Grade near King City, California.

BURG: I see.

STACK: We had forty thousand men down there.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And we maneuvered along with then-General Stilwell, who commanded a corps, army corps, that he was assigned to, which consisted of a 20th [California] Division and the 7th Division which we started with men from our outfit. We furnished the cadres for the 7th Division.

BURG: I see.

STACK: We furnished the cadres for a lot of divisions, 5th, 6th 7th--a lot of them. Anyway, remember, we only had three army divisions in the United States before this started.

BURG: I hadn't known that.

STACK: That's right. The 1st Division in the east, the 2nd



Division at Sam Houston--

BURG: Sam Houston.

STACK:--and the 3rd up here. That's all there were.

BURG: I never knew that. I knew the 2nd had been down there, but I assumed it was just one--

STACK: Huh-uh, huh-uh--

BURG:--of several.

STACK:--there were only third then--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--three then. They all were formed later on cadres from the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Divisions' furnished men. For example, when I, when I arrived in Washington, they were discussing then, when this project started for the invasion of Africa, and they were talking about units on the General Staff that would spearhead the thing, and they had the 3rd Division set up, the training



section reported that it was eighty-five percent ready, and General Eisenhower called me and he said, "Do you, you believe that?" And I said, "No, sir, I sure in hell don't believe it." He said, "Why not?" And I told him. He said, "You come with me." And we went up to General Marshall's office, and he called in G-3, the training people--I forget who the G-3 was--but he called them in, and several others, and ground force chief, General McNair--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--and he asked me to speak up. Well, the fact is that the, our division had had a lot of training, especially in the, in amphibious assaults--we had trained with one of the marine divisions down at San--

BURG: Clemente?

STACK:--Clemente.

BURG: Uh-huh.



STACK: And had a lot of training. Unfortunately, we gave up fifteen hundred men from each one of our infantry regiments to form the 7th and the 6th and, I think, the 5th Divisions. So the people that replaced them weren't down in San Clemente.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: They had no knowledge of this.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And so--

BURG: Would fifteen hundred men be approximately half?

STACK: That's forty-five hundred--yeah, that would be forty-five hundred men, and they'd be replaced by mostly recruits--

BURG: Yes.

STACK:--who didn't have all this training. So that--maybe some of the key people did, but--and then, again, the same thing applied to officers--they were being transferred right and left--



BURG: Sure.

STACK:--for new units. You lost almost all of our officers, our young officers, to the 41st Division who went to the Pacific.

BURG: Now this was the Rainbow--

STACK: No, no, the Rainbow was the 42nd. This is a--it's kind of a sunset they wear.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: Looks like a rainbow, but it isn't.

BURG: That's right, the rainbow is only a quarter.

STACK: Yeah, the 42nd Division, which is an eastern division--

BURG: Yeah.



STACK:--they're the Rainbow Division. Anyway, they found this quite interesting, so they began to check out the 1st Division and the 2nd Division and they found the same thing was true there.

BURG: Almost a relapse to the old hands--

STACK: Well, some, you make progress reports, but there was nothing in that report to indicate that the personnel change--was it the same personnel that was involved in these things, and it wasn't.

BURG: Yeah, yeah.

STACK: And I think, maybe--well, no, they couldn't have done that; it had to be done that way. I was going to say, maybe they could have held this division intact for that particular purpose, but then they wouldn't have had the noncoms in the offices to fill any other divisions and those fellows--

BURG: You needed, needed--

STACK: That's right.

BURG:--that seed.

STACK: You have--that's right--you have to spread the seed.

BURG: Right.



STACK: And, so, I can understand how difficult it would be to do it and so--

BURG: Now, you must have done maneuvers up here in the state of Washington?

STACK: Oh, we did a lot of maneuvers up here.

BURG: Do you happen to remember where they were held? He speaks of them, but I'm not sure that he tells where.

STACK: A lot of them were. Actually, we had a lot of command post exercises, too, but--

BURG: That's part of the 3rd Division.

STACK:--around Centralia and Chehalis we'd set up out in the, out in the boondocks, not down in towns or--

BURG: Right.

STACK:--anything like that. And in areas like that, and--



BURG: Out towards Raymond, perhaps.

STACK: Yeah, all around there.

BURG: It sounds like you were in some pretty rugged forest--

STACK: It was rugged country--

BURG:--and cut-over country.

STACK:--it was. I remember getting a charley horse one day--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--and I remember Colonel Eichelberger, God love him. He came in--we were knee deep in rain, that's why we went to Centralia and Chehalis--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--we were knee deep in rain, and we were miserable. And, Colonel Eichelberger, who, as I told you, commanded the 30th Infantry, came in and he said to me, "Sergeant Major, here's a,



something the doctors gave me for medicinal purposes; see that everybody gets some." And it was a couple of bottles of Scotch.

BURG: I see.

STACK: And so I ladled it out to everybody and boy, he became our, our hero.

BURG: Yeah. If I remember right, it's autumn when this occurred.

STACK: Yeah.

BURG:--in the state of Washington.

STACK: Very rainy weather.

BURG: Uh-huh, and chill.

STACK: And down in the Hunter Liggett Reservation--now I don't know exactly the time of year, but we were in awful shape down there. We had forty thousand troops down there and half of them had dysentery. You see, we were out in this rain in this area

where I don't think any human beings had been for fifty years. We found snakes all over the place, rattlers--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--really. We killed fifteen, twenty rattlers a day, and nobody wanted to lay down on the ground or a little head would pop up alongside of you, not a snake but a--what do you call these things--gopher.

BURG: Might be a gopher or prairie dog.

STACK: Prairie dog--and full of the mange. And the engineers set up showerheads because we were just torn apart by ticks. It would be a hundred degrees in the mid-day and forty or thirty at night. And they set up these showerheads all over the place, and you'd go down there and take a shower, by the time you got back to where you came from you were just as filthy as when you left it in the first place. And because of the dysentery, all our mess equipment, when we went to eat, we scalded it before we



ate and then we scalded it after we ate. And we'd do this constantly, because we thought there was something in the air. And a lot of them had this poison oak--not poison ivy, but poison oak--and I understand--I'm no authority on it--I understand the difference is the pollen, poison oak is a pollen sort of thing; you pick it up in the air.

BURG: I see.

STACK: Ivy, you have to make contact with it.

BURG: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

STACK: Well, we were in bad, sad, bad shape.

BURG: Now was General Eisenhower--

STACK: Oh, yeah.

BURG:--hit by this same--

STACK: I don't think he was hit by it, but--



BURG:--affliction?

STACK:--he, he wasn't very happy. None of us--General [George A.] White died down there. He was a National Guard general.

BURG: I didn't know.

STACK: Yeah, he died. He was the commanding general of the 40th [or 41st?] Division. Actually, he didn't die down there, but he became ill down there and died shortly--

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK:--oh, in a short period of time.

BURG: So you had a chance to see Eisenhower, at that point, under perhaps even more stress than he would have been under during maneuvers here in the state of Washington. What was your impression of him as you watched him work under those conditions?

STACK: Well, he had another difficulty there. General Thompson and General Kenyon Joyce--Kenyon Joyce was commanding general,



and was an old friend of General Eisenhower's, of the IX Corps. The 3rd Division was under the Corps.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: And they had some difficulty, General Thompson and General Joyce, and they hardly talked to each other. Now, General Eisenhower had to handle anything between these guys.

BURG: I see.

STACK: These two guys. And it wasn't very pleasant, but he managed it' he did a beautiful job.

BURG: And worked between two men who were at swords' points?

STACK: Oh, yeah, well, I wouldn't put it, swords' points; they just didn't particularly like each other.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: They weren't at swords' points. The general--the 3rd Division, for example, I think perhaps because it was a regular



army division, had to go up through the hills and all that back area while the 41st got the nice assignments. Well, it depends, there was a reason for it, but Thompson didn't think so.

BURG: He thought, he thought discrimination against them.

STACK: Well, he thought that they weren't getting a fair shake.

BURG: Uh-huh.

STACK: So General Eisenhower had to convince him.



Gift of Personal Statement

OH #317 PRCQ

Lt.Col. James R. Stack

Elsa A. Stack

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, Elsa A. Stack, 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 September 29, 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:

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Date:

October 13, 1975

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Date:

November 6, 1975



This is an interview with Col. James Stack on January 29, 1973 by Dr. Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff. The interview took place in the home of Col. Stack.

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DR. BURG: Now the last question that I'd put to you had to do with the maneuvers. We talked about the state of Washington maneuvers and the rough country that you had worked in there, and then you spoke of the Hunter Liggett Reservation and the God-awful conditions that existed for all of you at that point. We had moved back in time in other words just to pick up that story. Now you did not go down to the Louisiana maneuvers did you?

COL. STACK: No.

DR. BURG: So you had no data on Eisenhower's performance down there.

COL. STACK: No, none at all. I rejoined him again right after that.

DR. BURG: In Washington?



COL. STACK: Yes. I don't know whether I told you or not; but, at the time that he went to Louisiana, he asked me to take care of his mail and some of the other things--see that his mail was forwarded to him and a few other personal things--which I nat-

urally did. And then when it looked like war and a few fellows around me were being commissioned, you know, that had reserve commissions--I'm talking about enlisted men in the headquarters of the 3rd Infantry. Let me think a minute. Well, I sent him some mail one day, and somebody that had been my assistant had just been commissioned--a very good man who died later at the time. But I don't know what made me do it but I wrote a note about Holloway Cook; he was an Englishman. I wrote a note about Holloway Cook. Did I tell you this before? I think I did.

BURG: You were a little disappointed that Cook had gotten his, and you didn't get yours.

STACK: Yes. I wasn't disappointed about his getting his, but I was disappointed in my not getting mine. But I wrote the note "Not to receive--" How does that quotation go about--

BURG: "Ours not to reason why--,"

STACK: "But to do or die." And I tried to get that out of the mailbox. After I sent it I thought, now that's a presumptuous thing. Well, the next day I had a telegram, or two



days later, from the War Department and another friend of mine, Colonel [Isaac J.] Nichol, had asked the Department of Commissioners for me, but I didn't, this was for the Army Exchange Service, and I wasn't interested in that because there was a war going on. Anyway, because I had worked for Nichol at the time of that Marshall episode, they had made him the chief of the Army Exchange Service for a certain area or something, he thought of me because I had worked for him. Well, this thing came through from the War Department asking if I'd consider a commission on the General Staff which was very, very unusual to be commissioned directly to the general staff. You're usually commissioned to a service or an arm and then go into the general staff, but this was direct commission to the General Staff. And there was another one at the same time making me a warrant officer. I had passed some examinations; so I never did become a warrant officer. I went right into this General Staff job.

BURG: Not as a second lieutenant, I believe you told me.

STACK: First lieutenant. I think I told you in those days you had to be over age in grade for duty with troops. In other



words, my age governed my rank, and I had to be over the average of that rank, not under it, but over it. Why, I don't know, but anyway that's the way it was. When I arrived in Washington I was one of the very, very few 1st lieutenants there. That was a very low rank for the General Staff. Matter of fact, I don't think there was anybody else with that rank on the General Staff. So that's why they promoted me immediately within a couple of months--so that I wouldn't look bad, I guess.

BURG: Well, I suppose it would give you a little more opportunity to operate if you had a little higher rank.

STACK: That plus the fact that it gave me a little better opportunity to exist because it was impossible to live in Washington at a 1st lieutenant's pay. You just couldn't do it.

BURG: Before we go to Washington, D.C., we talked a little about the War Department, but we wanted to know whether you can tell us anything about the General and Edgar during that period at Fort Lewis. You saw the two men together?



STACK: Yes. Edgar Eisenhower was a very, very independent man. Of all the Eisenhowers he probably was the best known. Now that doesn't mean that any of them were really well known, but, at least, he was the wealthiest of the lot.

BURG: At that time, say around 1940, 41.

STACK: At that time. And his brother then was a lieutenant colonel. Dwight Eisenhower was lieutenant colonel. Ed was a very, very articulate lawyer. I think he's dead, but he was a corporate attorney and made an awful lot of money because he was smart enough to take his fees in stock. So he became a director of I don't know how many corporations before his brother was grown up. And there's a, this is for, did you say Mrs. Stone?

BURG: Yes, Lillian Stone. [A member of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library staff]

STACK: This is for Mrs. Stone. One of the funniest things I ever saw happen (I don't think I gave you this before in connection with Edgar Eisenhower)--he had a very successful transaction that he completed in Oregon. He and his associates,



one was Reno Odlin who was president of the Puget Sound National Bank and who later became president of the American Bankers' Association. Another was a man named Henry Gonyea who was involved in all the deals that they were making.

BURG: How did he spell his name, Colonel?

STACK: G-o-n-y-e-a. After their successful transactions down there they went to a night club, the three of them in Portland. Portland doesn't have many night clubs, but they went to one to celebrate. And I guess they were feeling pretty good, and the master of ceremonies apparently was told that Edgar Eisenhower was the brother of the President of the United States. So with microphone in hand and a long cord he started across the dance floor obviously going to say something to Mr. Eisenhower. And Ed saw him coming and said to Reno, he said, "You know if he comes over here and announces over that thing that I'm the brother of the President of the United States, I'm going to break his neck." And Reno, who was a tremendous speaker, brilliant speaker, a natural (that's how he become president of the American Bankers' Association), said to him, "Ed, just don't get up tight; I'll handle this." The man comes across with a micro-



phone, and Reno gets up and takes it out of his hand and says over the PA system something like this: "Ladies and gentlemen, at this table we have the brother of one of the most famous men in America. He is the brother of Arthur Eisenhower, the vice-president of the Kansas City Trust Company." And of course this story went to the General who thought that it was pretty funny.

BURG: And Edgar thought that was a pretty amusing thing too?

STACK: Well, after a while he saw the point, but he was pretty mad.

BURG: Oh, he was! It kind of irked him?

STACK: Well, it always irked him if he could be thought of in connection with his brother's apron strings. He wanted people to know he made it on his own. His brother didn't have anything to do with it. I don't know, later, when Edgar was made national director of Coca-Cola where the chairman of the board was a great friend of his brother's, that would have been Bill Robinson, whether or not that had anything to do with Ed's relationship. I don't know about that. But I do know that



most of the things that he was involved in he made on his own because of his brilliance. I'm sure you know the story that must have been told to you if I didn't of Edgar and Earl and Dwight Eisenhower going to school. Did you know about that?

BURG: No, I don't believe so.

STACK: Well, Edgar Eisenhower and Dwight Eisenhower had a pact.

BURG: Oh, yes, the arrangements for paying off.

STACK: The arrangements for paying off. Well, to make it brief, when the General went to West Point and Edgar didn't have to send him to college after Edgar graduated, he instead considered that this was an obligation and took Earl, who was next in line in age, and sent him to the University of Washington to study engineering. And so he, Ed, actually paid Earl's education up there because he had been committed to Dwight, not to Earl. But he did it because he felt that it was the right thing to do. Which gives you a little more insight of the kind of man Edgar Eisenhower was, a tremendous guy. But never could you look him in the eye and say, "You're



the brother of the President of the United States." I'll tell you that. He resented it. He was independent, and he wanted people to know that he was independent. Now Edgar Eisenhower, politically, was far to the right of his brother, Dwight. Edgar was a more of a Taft-type Republican, and I think that probably it was a little difficult for him during the Taft-Eisenhower fight for the nomination because all his instincts were with the Taft group. But, Dwight Eisenhower was his brother, and he came through for the 'I Like Ike' people. But most of his close friends were really identified with the Taft group including this man

BURG: Yes.

STACK: So it wasn't easy for him. It wasn't easy for him. But fellows like John Bricker [Senator; Ohio] who were close personal friends of his--

BURG: Of Edgar's?

STACK: Yes. --who ran for Vice President on the Dewey ticket. They'd come out and out here very often and reminisce.



BURG: Well, would the General see Edgar pretty frequently during the Fort Lewis days?

STACK: Yes, yes, he would. By pretty frequently I don't mean that he saw him once or twice a week or anything like that; he might have seen him once every two weeks or three weeks or something along those lines. He played golf with him quite a bit. I think they probably saw each other more playing golf than in any other capacity. Ed, you know, is a great golfer--far better than the President. He was the senior champion of the Pacific Northwest including Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia on several occasions. He shot in the low seventies. He was a real golfer and loved it. Even when he was eighty he'd go out there and he shot his age. He always bragged about that. And he was in many ways quite a lot like his brother; they laughed hearty, the same way. They had a lot in common. I think the classic thing about Ed was when Ed differed with the General after he was President. When Ed differed with him on something or other, some reporter asked the President, "Your brother, Ed, doesn't agree with you." And he said, "We haven't agreed since he was five years old."



BURG: But the relationship that you saw was a close one.

STACK: They were very close. I think of all the brothers (this is a little presumptuous for me to say) but from my own experience at the time when I knew all of them, I'd say that probably the closest relationship that he had was with Milton. Because in the east for one thing he saw Milton a lot more. Secondly, Milton was quite a bridge player and liked to play bridge and so did Ike. And Milton's wife who is dead now, Helen, was a favorite of Ike and Mamie. She was a beautiful, charming, perfectly wonderful gal. And it was just a tragedy when she died. So they were really close. As a matter of fact, I don't know the details, but I know that when Harry Butcher became the naval aide that most people thought that it was Milton that put him in that position and advised Ike to take him. Butch was quite a bridge player too.

BURG: Yes, that he was.

STACK: Well, they thought maybe this had happened because of Milton. Butcher at that time was the vice-president in charge of public relations of the Columbia Broadcasting System. And you know the type (I don't mean this as a



derogatory thing at all) but, you know, the happy hand-shaking type because that was his job. So he actually was a pretty good public relations man.

BURG: Hail fellow well met.

STACK: Yes. He had a lot of personality. I don't know if you met him or not.

BURG: No, I never have.

STACK: Things happened later which I'd rather not talk about. That sort of cooled it off, let's say.

BURG: There's some questions about that book, certainly.


STACK: The book, the book especially.

BURG: The book caused problems overseas.

STACK: The book caused problems in many areas, especially between General Eisenhower and Churchill; that was regrettable. I really don't know whether I ought to tell you this or not because Butcher I know would resent it if I did, but it had to do with that book. When General Eisenhower visited



Churchill at Ten Downing Street after he had been over there, he had really never been with him for any length of time; so he was invited to dinner. And he went over there and Churchill entertained him, and when he came back that night people were curious, you know, and asked Ike what was he like. And so to a few very close intimate friends the General said, "Churchill drank his soup, put his head down over the soup bowl and just spooned it." And Butcher wrote about that in his book. The General was just furious when he read it afterwards, the book had been published; he didn't know it was in the book. And he wrote a letter to Churchill in which he told him that he wanted to apologize for what his aide had done; that there was no excuse for it at all; and said, "I did do this, but I thought I was in the intimacy of my family." Churchill's response said something like this: "When I'm in the bosom of my family I do a lot of things too which I'd rather not publicize, but in the case of your aide, Commander Butcher, I suspect that big things that go into little minds become little things."



BURG: Is it your impression that Edgar introduced his brother to prominent Washington Republicans, prominent Tacoma business

leaders and political leaders while they were here? Perhaps at the golf course.

STACK: You mean when he was on active duty?

BURG: When he was here in '40?

STACK: I wouldn't think so. I think he would have introduced him to some of his friends who might have been prominent leaders here in Tacoma, but I doubt that outside of this city he did. Now you see a man like Reno Odlin was a very prominent Republican. All this golf was played at the Tacoma Country Club, and I'd say being a member there myself, that ninety-five percent of the people there were Republican. But I don't think it was planned or deliberate at all. It was just something that just happened--that they were there and shot off with them or something like that. But he was more interested in getting a golf game, and I'm positive without any question that neither Ed Eisenhower nor Dwight Eisenhower had any idea that he'd ever been in it; so why plan it; why do anything about it.

BURG: So that was the club where they played, and so if you happened to need a foursome--



STACK: That's right. If he played at Burning Tree, the same thing would have developed. Not by the furthest stretch of the imagination would I say that this was done with any deliberate intent, because I don't think that Edgar Eisenhower was very enthusiastic initially of his brother running for political office. I don't think he was.

BURG: He might not have been.

STACK: It's like tossing somebody to the wolves, and he had too much affection for his brother to do anything like that. The way that I could tell that they had been associated with Ed, I had a little key of my own, the way I could tell, if they called him Dwight, because that's what Ed always called him. He never called him Ike. But if they called him Dwight, they got that from Ed Eisenhower. So I knew immediately this was somebody that had played golf with them and invariably was because Ed always introduced him as Dwight. And there's still half a dozen older people around here now that refer to him occasionally, when they talk to me, as Dwight. So that was always a key to me that they met him through Ed because Ed's the only one that ever called him Dwight that I knew. Well, you know Mamie never did. He was always Ike to



her. He was Ike to Milton. Helen called him Ike all the time, and Earl called him Ike. But Ed, it was always Dwight. I don't know why, but that's what he did.

You know very, very few people know that he was born David Dwight Eisenhower and that was reversed later in Dwight David Eisenhower. Very few people know that. One day I was listening to something on television, a quiz, and they wanted to know what Eisenhower's middle name was. They rewarded the person that called in and said it was David, but actually that was picked up later. His middle name originally was Dwight.

BURG: Yes, that's how the family Bible has it, David Dwight, and that tosses some people when they first encounter it.

STACK: Yes, I know that. Anyway I almost was inclined to call the guy and tell him he was wrong.

BURG: Now John's relationship evidently was pretty decent with the uncle. The uncle offered to do some nice things for him.



STACK: Yes. John was very close to his uncle Ed. Ed of course was here when John was going through high school; he went through Stadium High School. And Ed I think counseled him quite a bit. John had a lot of affection for him and a lot of respect for Ed. And Ed wanted him to get out of the service and go into law. He always asked him to do that, even later. But John had a natural penchant for writing, and this is how he got involved in the field that he's in. But, yes, I would very definitely say that John was quite enamored of his uncle and liked him, had a great affection for him, and it was reciprocal.

BURG: Some people I think feel that Edgar comes across as a very conservative and austere figure, but the kind of man that you're painting is not quite like that in his family situation.

STACK: Ed is very conservative, no question about that in politics especially, extremely conservative. But he was a man that had a tremendous sense of humor and a vigorous laugh and could tell stories, I don't mean questionable stories, I mean good stories. And was extremely well liked,



a lot of personality, and he was not a drab figure by any means. And he certainly in many ways resembled his brother, in other ways he didn't. But there were certain characteristics that you could tell that they were brothers other than that they looked quite a bit alike.

BURG: Was he ever out there at the Fort, Colonel? Did you ever see him out there?

STACK: Yes, used to visit with him quite a bit.

BURG: And courteous to you?

STACK: Oh, courteous to anybody. Ed Eisenhower, when I came back from service in '47, was extremely nice to me. He called me in his office and wanted to know if he could do anything for me, and I was not well and all that sort of thing, he took a lot of personal interest. I thought, I don't know about this, but I thought maybe his brother had written to him and asked him to keep an eye on me. Now I don't know if that's true or not. I think that it might have been. But again, I wouldn't swear to that.



BURG: But then he would remember you from that pre-war period too?

STACK: Oh, yes. He knew me and we were at parties together and saw a lot of each other, and we both belonged to the Tacoma Club and we both belonged to the Tacoma Country Club different times. And I saw a lot of him.

BURG: Now when you were looking at Eisenhower at that stage, this is before you joined him in Washington again, does anything strike your mind about his methods of handling men? You probably were in a good position to see him handling subordinate officers and superior officers. You should see it as well as anybody could.

STACK: Well, his handling superior officers, I'll tell you this: at the time that he came here, shortly after he came here, the 9th Army Corps was formed which meant a major-general. This was Kenyon Joyce, who was an old friend of his, of Eisenhower's. The 9th Army Corps, that general, although he was the same rank, ranked by date of rank Major-General Charley Thompson who commanded the 3rd Infantry Division.



Colonel Eisenhower was chief of staff of the 3rd Infantry Division and was moved up to this higher unit, the 9th Army Corps, to be its chief of staff. So he knew Thompson and he knew Joyce. Now there had developed a bit of a feud between Joyce and Thompson over quarters at Fort Lewis. Thompson had quarters and had moved into them, and Joyce came along and ranked him and therefore was going to move into the quarters. Well, anyway, there's no point in going into that. So they were at loggerheads, they didn't get along at all, these two generals. And Eisenhower bore the brunt as the man that had to handle both so that there wouldn't be any difficulty. And he did a beautiful job, because it wasn't easy. He did a beautiful job. That to me always gave me some indication of his great tact. Now as far as men were concerned, enlisted men, he always had a high regard for the top three grades of sergeants, thought quite a bit of them, and they thought quite a bit of him. I'm talking about the ranks staff sergeant going up to technical or first sergeant which were the same rank and then master sergeant or sergeant major. Especially with them he was really popular, they liked him. You got the impression this



was because primarily he was fair. You would get a fair shake from him. He wasn't too critical or demanding or anything like that although he said you had to toe the mark.

BURG: Set the ground rules out pretty plainly for everyone to see?

STACK: Yes. And he never bawled anybody out publicly. He'd always call them in his office and talk to them with the door shut. I never heard him go out on a tangent in those days with anybody--irate and get excited and upset. He was always calm, cool, deliberate, and you never were embarrassed when he went to read you out or as we used to say chew you out.

BURG: What kinds of techniques do you recollect that he might use in moving out somebody who just wasn't cutting it? This is at that stage where he's at Fort Lewis for example.

STACK: Well, of course the job that he held when I knew him best was when he was chief of staff of the allied division. He had a job earlier than that being a battalion commander in the 15th Infantry, and I didn't know too much about him there.



But he was there so such a short time, it wouldn't have made any difference. So the jobs I knew him in were the chief of staff of the 3rd Infantry Division and Chief of staff of the 9th Army Corps. We're talking about enlisted now?

BURG: Yes, or officers who aren't measuring up.

STACK: Well, of course, with an officer it isn't very difficult. If you want to move them out you just take steps to move them out if he isn't satisfactory. Of course you have an efficiency report you have to report it on, and he, that officer, gets that report so he can reply to it and defend himself. But for an enlisted man of course there are no reports like that. But then there wasn't any great big fuss made about it; he just had them moved to another section, another area, another place, or something like that.

BURG: And he did it himself.

STACK: No, no, he never did that himself. He'd call in the adjutant and have it done for the enlisted men. Now with officers, of course, they didn't do it that way. But with enlisted men, he simply called in the adjutant and said,



"I want Sgt. John Jones, taken out of this division or this particular job; put him elsewhere. I don't think he is doing the job here he should be doing." See he would only do that with key men because he wouldn't go over the heads of men of lesser positions because they had bosses of their own.

BURG: He'd work through them.

STACK: Yes.

BURG: At that stage of his career and at the time when you knew him very closely, what would you rate as the outstanding characteristics in him? You have mentioned that he was considered to be ~~Mr~~ by those of you who were top three graders.

STACK: Well, of course, we're talking about the pre-war area.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: And things change quite a bit when you're involved in a shooting war. But in this pre-war period the emphasis was on training more than was on anything else--get yourself



prepared, train. As the chief of staff he would be required to supervise his assistant chiefs of staff: G-1, personnel; G-2, military intelligence; G-3, training; G-4, logistics. Now these are the fellows that would handle that particular sphere. Now it was up to him as chief of staff to either approve or disapprove whatever they were doing or suggest something entirely different.

[Interruption]

STACK: Well, the General would then get the report from the various assistants chief of staff in the area or sphere that they were operating in with the chief of staff's recommendations on it. He could concur; he could be opposed to it. I think I told you once before, he developed a philosophy that you couldn't say something was bad unless you yourself could come up with something that was better. In other words if somebody turned a survey in or something of that sort and said, "My assistants recommended so and so, but I disapprove." He would then say, "Well, you can't disapprove unless you know something that is better. If you don't know anything that's better then this is the best that we have; so you



must come up with something better." This made it not so easy to disapprove things, and he used to use that quite a bit, that thinking. When he was Chief of Staff he very definitely used it. When he was a general officer, he always used it. And even in the War Plans Division before the war started when I was with him then in so called OPD, Operations Division, no staff memo could come in and have the chief of the section say, "I disapprove" unless he could come up with something better.

BURG: I remember you said that you had to be able to state what it was that was needed to correct the situation.

STACK: That's right. He didn't like anything negative unless you could up with something that was positive. And he worked that way. This became part of his operation.

BURG: As an officer, again in the Fort Lewis phase, do you recollect anything that you would consider to have been a weakness in him as an officer? Or maybe I could put it another way, Colonel, and say, we know some of the strength areas he had, were there areas where you felt others surpassed him as military officers?



STACK: No. I would think by that time I had served possibly a half a dozen chiefs of staff in that capacity, division chiefs of staff. And I don't recall any of them that I would rate better than him. Now there were some good men there, but I think that he was, in my books, the best of any that I have ever ran into or ever worked with or worked under.

BURG: Well, good, then, could you just give me the names of some of the men who held that same position so we have an idea of what kind of a group are we ranking him with?

STACK: Well, I don't know that that would be fair to those fellows for me to mention them by name. I have names in my mind, but it wouldn't be fair.

BURG: Well, we can put those names aside for as long as you wish to.

STACK: Well, there was Joseph K. Partillo, who was a colonel. They weren't there the same time he was, naturally. There was a Eugene Landrum, who became a general and was quite good. There was a Hindman Hills that was rated pretty good. Actually you have to understand that in those days when competition was



pretty keen that to become a chief of staff you had to be above the crowd or you didn't become chief of staff. They're all hand picked very often by the commanding general who moved in who knew them or knew of them or knew them personally. In other words, General Eisenhower was moved down to Louisiana; he became a chief of staff down there I think to the 4th Army or something like that or division.

BURG: In Fort Sam Houston.

STACK: Well, he was hand picked by General Gerow and General Krueger; they knew him from serving together elsewhere. So all these men that I'm talking about are hand-picked by the current commanding general at the time, you see. So he was another man that came up, and he had come from the Philippines; he had served under MacArthur there, and he had quite a reputation, General Eisenhower did. This was before he became well-known down in Louisiana.

BURG: But it's very valuable to us when a man in your position who had worked under a number of them can then look back on it and say, "By and large Eisenhower was perhaps performing better than the rest of them."



STACK: Yes. There were others. There was Col. Henry Hosfeld, Col. Ralph Glass. These are all top-notch men that I'm talking about. They were all good men. And then, too, the commanding general is evaluated, and very often it depends on his chief of staff of how good he's rated. By the same token the chief of staff himself has to rely quite a bit on his assistants; G-1, 2, 3, and 4. They determine how good a chief of staff he's going to be by their contribution.

BURG: Now, Colonel Stack, were any of those men who served under Eisenhower as G-1, G-2, 3 or 4, later achieve fame themselves or high reputation?

STACK: Yes. Mark Clark was one. General [Jesse Amos] Ladd later on was one. This Ladd PieE in Alaska thing. [Robert L.] Eichelberger was one. Quite a few because you see it was a small army we're talking about.

BURG: Yes, we are talking about some famous men.

STACK: And as you remember while [George C.] Marshall didn't serve under him, Marshall was in that same unit too as brigade commander down at Vancouver. So there were quite a



few. [Arthur Gilbert] Trudeau was another one. I'm doing this off the top of my head, but there were quite a few. If I were to pick a number of chiefs of staff, maybe there were ten that I knew of, I'd rate him one in the order of ten, including the assistants chief of staff. Some of those fellows went up too. But he was always outstanding to me. Now maybe that's a phobia of my own; I don't know, maybe because I'm associating him with what he did later.

BURG: It's always possible. On the other hand, you've given us an ample description of how you had come to be at Fort Lewis yourself and the kinds of duties you were performing. You were in a position to evaluate those men in a unique way.

STACK: Actually there were several commanders there. I mentioned Charley Thompson; I mentioned Kenyon Joyce and General Lucas and Rosenbaum and, oh, quite a few others. And I would rate him higher than them even at that time. It was very obvious to me that this man was going a long way. Matter of fact my old boss, Colonel Nichol, who was an inspector general at that time of that division told me that one day.

BURG: Oh, he did!



STACK: He said, "He's going a long way. This man's going to go a long, long way."

BURG: And he was making that observation about 1940?

STACK: Oh, he made that earlier than that. He made that about 1939, '40. He told me the same thing about Mark Clark, Nichol.

BURG: I see.

STACK: He's still living; he's over ninety.

BURG: A pretty perceptive man.

STACK: Yes, he was. He was a very perceptive man, one of my favorites.

BURG: Where is he located now, Colonel?

STACK: Oh, he's extremely old and he's become quite religious you know, and he's late in his nineties. We got a Christmas card from his wife, and I guess he is beginning to get senile. But in his day he was a brilliant man.

BURG: Indeed.



STACK: They used to call him Ike because his name was Isaac J. Nichol. He was called Ike quite a bit.

BURG: I see. Well, that's a good sketch of Eisenhower at that period of time. When you went to Washington you filled us in the last time on the typical way in which routines operated while you were there. Among other things that I wanted to get from you was your impressions of men, for example, Thomas Handy. Now you've spoken of your great respect for him and you've described him as a man of considerable depth, a quiet man, a man who's never received much attention, but a man who you seemed to rank very high.

STACK: Yes, I do, I do. When I first knew him he was the deputy to General Eisenhower who then had become chief of operations which was the old War Plans Division. And he was his deputy and replaced Eisenhower when Eisenhower went to Europe later. And I would rate General Handy extremely high, not very high, but extremely high. And, I think, I'm sure so did Eisenhower. There's a picture on the wall there of General Handy standing next to me and General Marshall shaking hands with General Eisenhower when he came back, that's down there. And incidentally that lady is Mrs. Bedell Smith and



that's Bedell Smith's hand.

BURG: Oh, yes.

STACK: But Handy always had Eisenhower's respect, and I'm positive it was mutual.

BURG: Handy you viewed as an intellectual kind of officer.

STACK: He was an intellectual but never let you know that. You got the Will Rogers feel by looking at him and just talking to him, you know, with that pipe always there, with his hair sort of ruffled a little bit like Rogers hair, very homespun language as you probably know.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: And you would think that all he needed was the chewing gum and the rope.

BURG: Now the impression that comes through when you talk to him in person nowadays, as I did earlier this year, is a man of great calm.

STACK: Yes, he was calm then. He didn't get excited.



BURG: No matter how bad the situation was in early 1942, he wasn't excited.

STACK: He never got excited. John Eisenhower was a little mad at me. He had written a letter to me when he was writing the book about the Battle of the Bulge, and he wanted to know from me what the reaction was in the War Department and especially in the command post, the Operations Division, when this developed. I told him, in this book, that I had never seen such calm. And he didn't want that answer. They didn't get excited, and this was because of Handy. Obviously he had tremendous control because nobody got up tight about it, the Battle of the Bulge. And Handy apparently foresaw that this was the last gasp and that maybe they were shortening the war by taking this shot at us at that time when they knew they had nothing to shoot with. And it was that last effort; and, if it wasn't successful, they went down the drain; and they did go down the drain. But he never got excited.

And others then, General [John E.] Hull for example, who was chief of operations, I think, I'm not sure about that but I think so, he never got too excited. He had quite a lot to do with the nuclear stuff after the war. But he was Handy's



assistant in charge of all the war fronts. Just took it calm; things didn't rush around then, papers running around, people all excited; you didn't see any of that.

BURG: And Gerow was there at the first too, Leonard Gerow?

STACK: He was there originally, matter of fact Eisenhower replaced him. But he was in there later. He had gone.

BURG: Now what kind of a man was he in that setting?

STACK: Gerow?

BURG: Yes.

STACK: Well, I didn't see too much of him because you see Eisenhower replaced him.

BURG: He was only there a brief period of time that you were?

STACK: That's right. But [Alfred] Wedemeyer who worked there was in command of the, well, I shouldn't use the word command, but he was director of the strategy and policy group. He wasn't an excitable guy either. They had picked these fellows obviously very, very carefully. And they didn't blow up when



something happened. They had a tremendous effect on the rest of the staff.

BURG: Wedemeyer, at least in his book, comes across as being a very forceful outspoken kind of man.

STACK: Well, Wedemeyer's actual service during those days or a little later was in connection with China and the east rather than with Europe. General Marshall had selected him to be, as you know, his personal emissary to Chiang Kai-shek and

. So he was out of our sphere and later on he moved into another area entirely. But when he was chief for that strategy and policy group he was quite an officer. There's something funny about him, too. You know the day after (some of this may be repetitious, I kind of have a vague feeling that it is) but the day before we declared war, the Washington Post and the Chicago Tribune printed on the first page a, I don't recall now whether it was an exact copy, I don't think it was, but anyway it was a composite of our war plans. There was only two places that could come from, there were only two copies, the White House or it could come from the War Plans Division of the General Staff. And they sent a man over there who only died a few months ago, named Joe Genau. The FBI send him over there at the request of the President.



BURG: How did he spell that name?

STACK: G-e-n-a-u. He was I think about the third top man, third from the top under, I think there was [J. Edgar] Hoover and then [Louis B.] Nichols [Assistant to the Director] at that time and then Genau. Genau looked like Jim Farley. As they say in some parts of the country, a dead spitting image of Jim Farley. Anyway Joe Genau was sent over there to investigate; and, because I didn't arrive until two days later, I was out of that picture; I couldn't be a suspect; I wasn't there. I was assigned to help him get through this place or that place--make it easier for him. And General Marshall called me in and told me that he didn't want anybody to stop him, Genau. He was to have everything he wanted; it didn't make any difference what the rank was of the person he was interviewing and those were the orders: Give him every bit of cooperation we can. Well, Wedemeyer was German by name, and he was a graduate of the German Military Academy. So he immediately became, not exactly suspect, but they were checking on him. And Genau was checking on him very carefully. As a matter of fact later they were two almost inseparable



friends later. So Joe did his job, and it developed that nobody on our staff could have done it. We were very carefully checked. And they moved over to the White House, and three days later the investigation was stopped by the President.

And _____ was so damned mad, but that's the way it was.

BURG: Somebody over there had let that out to the newspapers?

STACK: Don't know.

BURG: They don't know, but they stopped it.

STACK: I wouldn't say that because I don't know, but it was in that newspaper, and it didn't come out of the War Department; so obviously it had to come from there. Where else could it have come? And even out of there, what a tough thing to get out. But it's happened before, I guess.

BURG: Somebody had been very careless.

STACK: Somebody had been very careless or somebody didn't realize what they were doing.



BURG: Before we run out of this tape, let, let me ask you some things that relate strictly to you for a bit. When you arrived, what kind of a work assignment did they give you? You helped Genau of course, but what kind of a work assignment did you have and under whom?

STACK: In those days the general officers on the general staff were not allowed to have aides. They were not in the table of organization. Now I was made an assistant executive officer to Charley [Charles Kenon] Gailey. Gailey died real recently. Not too recently, but he died. And he was the executive officer of that operations division. At that time he was a major; he died as a major-general, but he was a major then. And in my book he was the hardest working man I have ever been associated with. The guy never would let go of anything he had and expected everybody else to do it. He worked seven days a week, maybe twelve to fourteen hours a day. He'd always tell you if you even looked at him to try to tell him you were tired, "There's a war going on."

Well, the War Department at that time was staffed by civilian personnel, I mean the clerical force. They had a chief clerk and others like that. Most of these people had been there a



long, long time, and they were quite old. Julian Green who was chief clerk for the Operations Division must have been sixty-two or three then, I'm guessing, but I'm pretty sure that was it. Well, these people would come in at nine o'clock in the morning and leave at five o'clock at night, and there was a lot, maybe you should make it a hell of a lot, of confusion going on. They had messages coming in in code from Bataan and this place and that place and Hawaii, all over you know. They were in code and they just got beyond these people; they just couldn't handle it. So the first job I was given. Now the decision had been made that sergeants-major over thirty-five years could not be sent to combat; they were too old for the rigors of combat. So I got the idea that I could call in maybe two dozen sergeants-major who knew their army and they knew the administration. They knew the handling of things and time would mean nothing to them. So I went to Gailey and he went to General Eisenhower about this and they told me to go ahead. Commission them and we'll bring them in. Matter of fact one of them just died here a couple of weeks ago, Virgil Field, who finally wound up as secretary to the chiefs of staff. That's how



good he was. There were others.

I made a tour around the country and picked these guys out, and I want to tell you, I fought a lot of battles on different posts to try and get them. And we brought them all in there and they were given sections, different sections. I brought a man named, well he was executive vice-president of the Ralston-Purina Food Company. He was one of those dollar-a-year efficiency experts. And I brought him in, I'm trying to think of his name, I can't, but I brought him in after talking to several people who knew him, and they considered him the finest man on that sort of thing in the country. Royce was his name; he was with Ralston Purina. And we worked together from my angle on the military side and his angle on the other side, you know, the civilian normal business way of handling things. And we worked up a scheme, not a scheme, but a format for the operation of the administration of papers including decoding all that stuff.

BURG: And the Green Hornets--

STACK: The Green Hornets.

BURG: --and all of this.



STACK: You've heard of that. I must have told you about the Green Hornets.

BURG: Right, you did.

STACK: Anyway they gave me until, I forget when, I think May 15th. By the night of May 15th, midnight, we were supposed to put that in--this may have been a period of maybe six weeks. And I took all these men, and we had classes for them with Royce showing how a paper would come in and what would happen to it and all this sort of thing. We worked out quite a scheme; they still use it.

BURG: That was a drastic changeover that took place.

STACK: A complete change. Very, very drastic.

BURG: Some have remarked, really a dangerous thing to do at that stage in the war, and yet you did do it; you carried it off.

STACK: Well, a dangerous thing to do, but you have to do things like that. When somebody says there's a paper in there from General MacArthur to General Marshall, and you have to



take ten officers and go out there and each gets a stack of paper and you look through to find it--that's a hell of a position when they're out there fighting.

BURG: And that's the way it was before you were able to put that in.

STACK: That's the way it was. And it never happened again after we put it in. Yes, it was a dangerous thing, but on the other hand it really worked well. Other people in the department, including even the adjutant-general's department who was responsible for that sort of thing, came down to find out how we were doing it. In essence, when a message came in and it was decoded, it went to what they call the "action officer." There's an officer that sat there and did nothing but look at these messages and send it to Dr. Burg because you had primary interest in that message; you were going to work up the reply. A copy of that would go to your section chief, a copy of that would go to the executive, Gailey, a copy of that would go to General Marshall's secretary. All these had what they called tickler dates on them so that they could tell on their file what hadn't come through. When anything came through they simply took that copy and sent it in.

Other officers had secondary interest. For example, if they wanted troops or wanted a unit, somebody's got to figure out the transportation for that unit, another person's got to figure out whether or not that unit was equipped to do this, another person had to look at it whether they had been trained to do this and all that sort of thing. So they got copies of that at the same time you got the first copy. Then you could consult with these guys who were ready to consolidate. They should be and they were prepared to talk to you so that then you could figure out your action, what you wanted to do, and sent it up to your section chief.

BURG: Now some of this you had told me before, but here's an aspect that I hadn't realized and we didn't talk about before --that's this business of when the time came for you to know whether that unit was trained and equipped to do that job the man responsible knew whether it was or not.

STACK: That's right, that's right. And they could tell you then. But these fellows got that paper the same time you did. For example, I'll use MacArthur again. Coming from his headquarters on Bataan this thing had to have an answer within



six to eight or ten hours. Then you'd be able to get it within the six or eight or ten hours. The other way, the thing would be sitting there and nobody would even see it. Nobody would know it was there until an inquiry would come through: what happened to our message?

BURG: So everyone that comes in as you say with a ten hour kind of urgency about it went out to everyone who needed to know and everyone saw ten hours.

STACK: Plus that Green hornet meant that everything had to be out of the building within twenty-four hours. When you got that, you could not leave that building, it wasn't the Pentagon, it was the munitions building. You couldn't leave that building until your answer was ready for General Eisenhower, who was the chief of the division, and ready for General Marshall, who was chief of staff. You couldn't believe the change in this operation; it was just incredible. That was my first job.

BURG: After May 15th what happened to you though?

STACK: The reason that was my first job was because this was



something that had to be done right now. And General Eisenhower said, "What the hell, we've got a former sergeant-major here, let's put him to work on it." That's how I got that job.

BURG: I see.

STACK: Well, after May 15th, you see they carried me as assistant administrative officer for several reasons. It was May the 23rd, I think, when General Eisenhower went to Europe.

BURG: Yes.

STACK: I believe somewheres in there. Then they changed my job to personal representative of General Eisenhower on General Marshall's staff. I handled all his personal inquiries, all of his personal things that he wanted to know. If there was anything that he wanted to push through, I'd represent him at conferences, staff conferences and all that. Very often I would send the reply to him overseas through our coding and even talked to him on scrambled telephone on occasion about some of the things that he wanted to know right now. He wanted to escape all the so-called red tape



and get right to the crux of the thing.

BURG: Faster system even than the green hornets.

STACK: That's right. Because it had to be that way. So this is something we just cooked up; we had no precedent for that at all.

BURG: So that appointment putting you on that kind of duty was in part at the instigation of General Eisenhower--

STACK: And General Marshall. Together, yes. And very often I had to take this stuff and fly out to him and talk to him about it. Quite a few occasions I was on the plane all by myself.

BURG: That position you held is a very special kind of position then?

STACK: Yes, it was created. It was created because, as I say, if he had an aide and could do this with an aide that might have been all right, but he didn't have any aides until he went overseas. Then he had them. But he didn't in the War Department, there are no aides; so they make you an assistant



executive officer. I had to be covered up as you well may imagine. They couldn't just say this is the guy's job or I might have been knocked on the head some night. So I was carried as I say on the table as assistant administrator in charge of personnel. But I had an assistant that did the personnel work; I didn't do much of that. He handled promotions and citations and all that sort of thing. He did almost all of it. Occasionally I would go before a personnel board and make a plea for this or that or the other thing; but, again, this was mostly to cover up my real job.

BURG: Just quietly you were serving as the man on the spot for General Eisenhower.

STACK: Just as the Operations Division, which was referred to as the chief of staff's command post, was a creation of World War II, we never had anything like that before, so was the job I held and quite a few other jobs. It was something that World War II brought into effect and died right after World War II went out because we didn't need it any more.

BURG: Well, let me ask you this, Colonel Stack, was there a

man in the War Department serving in that same capacity on behalf of Douglas MacArthur?

STACK: No, because I handled quite a bit of MacArthur's stuff. Now they had a man in the Southwest Pacific section, which was also in our outfit, and he handled quite a lot of MacArthur's stuff. I can't think of his name, but he handled quite a lot of it. But very often something would come in from MacArthur, and Gailey would call me and say, "Jim, can you handle this?" or "Will you handle that?" I'd handle it, and I'd do it. When MacArthur came through Tacoma after he came back, I was made the chairman of his reception committee; I was out of the service then. He really was nice and kind to me. I tell you he was very kind to me.

