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Maj. Gen. Leo M. Boyle

Springfield, Illinois

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Interview with Major General Leo M Boyle, adjutant general of Illinois since 1940, at Illinois State Guard Armory, Springfield, April 29, 1958, by FC Pogue.

(Gen Boyle was adjutant of 33d Division--as a captain--while Gen Marshall was there. He sat in the adjoining office).

When Marshall came to Illinois, Colonel J. P. McAdams was senior instructor. His tour was to be up in 1933. Gen Keehn talked to Gen MacArthur and asked for a good instructor. MacArthur said I will give you the best man in the U. S. Army--Marshall. Keehn said he had never heard of him. He had recently finished a tour at Ft Benning. He was assigned to us, but was not happy. He was ready to quit. MacArthur told him to come out and try it. He had never served with National Guard and MacArthur thought it would help him. He did come. After awhile he got to like things and mellowed. He got down to business. Marshall left his mark on the 33d division. He worked tirelessly on staff, training, organization, responsibilities. He was out in the field a lot. He was a very positive character. Human being socially.

The old arsenal had burned here when McAdams was sent here. He was an expert on property; he straightened things out. But in 1933 the 33d was ready for serious training; this was what Keehn had in mind when he asked for a good man.

Marshall operated out of Chicago. He had 18 regular army officers in various parts of the state. He worked through Keehn and the rest of us on our side. He dropped in on various armories from time to time.

McAdams had once told Keehn you can't do this. Keehn said don't tell me I can't. He and Marshall would argue back and forth. Marshall had an open mind on everything. He could see advantages in new ideas. Just to show you how he worked. I had worked out plans for a small arms school and no one thought it was workable. They didn't want to fool with it. One day after Marshall came he asked me if there were any weaknesses which should be corrected. I said they should do something about small arms training. He had me get out my plan. He asked me one question and said can you do this. I said yes. He said do it.

I had talked with Keehn before he went to Washington to ask for a man. He and MacArthur had become friendly because of a fight. Keehn was head of the National Guard Association in 1935. As president of it he had to go to Washington. MacArthur and Keehn tangled. Keehn had a lot of resolutions. One was to increase the strength of the Guard. MacArthur wanted an increase in the Regular Army. Finally MacArthur said you are out of luck. Keehn said you don't mind if I try to get my program through Congress do you. MacArthur said go ahead and see how far you can get. Keehn beat him. When Keehn lost his arm, MacArthur kept him on as commander. Later said he had rather have Keehn with one arm than most generals with two.

National Guard training a good break for Marshall. At the time he became Chief of Staff he was perhaps the only general in the regular army with 32 years with National Guard troops.

Brig Charles E Black was AG in those days. There were 23 instructors and 22 sergeant instructors. Some of the staff included Maj Gen John L. Homer, now at Civil Defense HQ,

Museum of Arts and Sciences Chicago. Then a major and instructor with 202d AA Rgt. Another was Sgt Frank S Singer, retired as brigadier general of National Guard. Another was Man Gen Lloyd S. Brown, a captain here, later relieved from command of 28th Division. Another was Lt. Col. Buchanan. He is in the National Guard Bureau in Washington. Was there when Marshall became Chief of Staff. One day after I became AG here I was in Washington and Marshall invited me over. I was with Buchanan so I took him along thinking Marshall knew him. He stared rather blankly and I told him who Buchanan was. (Kenneth L. Buchanan). He talked to him a few minutes and then said thanks for coming in. When B left he said don't do that anymore. I knew I was wrong. Buchanan was in uniform. He didn't want people in uniform just running in.

Marshall lived for a time in an apartment on Pearson Street. Mrs. Marshall not well then. Children were away. Marshall rode a lot.

Mrs. Marshall took a trip once. General Marshall had a list of all the stops and had flowers and candy for her. Then he had letters and telegrams delivered at various stops. When my son George (named for Gen Marshall and my father) was born, Mrs. Boyle developed some trouble and had to go back to the hospital. Gen Marshall asked each day how she was. When I brought her back from the hospital, I was just putting the key in the door when here was a bouquet Gen Marshall had sent. When I would see him later he would ask about the Missus and little Georgie. He spoke to the National Guard Association once when I was present. I started out feeling he was too busy to bother with me. He yelled say Boyle.

Marshall was adviser to the National Guard. He kept tabs through his instructors. There were 49 different stations if you include a whole regiment in one building as one. They ran Cairo to Waukegan and Quincy to Danville. There are now 77. He got a chance to learn about city people, miners, farmers. He learned you can't force issue on these people. About 450 mi north and south, 250 east and west. I think he made a careful study of Illinois history.

We asked Jimmy Roosevelt once why Drum didn't get the Chief of Staff job. He said Drum out-drummed himself with father. Meant he worked too hard at it.

Marshall handled the Russian flyer visit at Vancouver well; did a fine job as he always did. Hit the front pages everywhere; made people aware of him.

When the 33d Div was mustered in it went to Camp Peay (this later became Camp Forrest). They took their papers with them. Presumably they went later to the Sixth Service Command. (Guy M. Chipman was the senior instructor; he is now retired and living around San Antonio).

Marshall would outline the training program on the basis of a War Department directive. He would outline regular type of training. We would prepare a training memorandum to cover all branches. This would be discussed with Gen Keehn When it was finished I would send it out. The schedule was prescribed by regulations. Instructors would check on the way these were carried out. The directive would call, let us say, for a CPX. This would use Regular Army and some National Guardsman. This gave us a great opportunity to work up something. In one CPX the Cavalry captain got sick; the general called me in and said I want you to run the cavalry

phase. He never once questioned my loyalty on the basis of the fact that I had been working on the others side previous to this time. He accepted your loyalty. He wouldn't tolerate in competence. He would tolerate anything but that and stupidity.

We would go from armory training to field training. Things we did were aimed toward field training in the field. Would work them out on maneuvers. It was a great outlet for Guard energies. Always had a good efficiency rating. Seemed to jump right up.

Marshall made frequent spot checks. Every drill night the local instructor was on duty at each armory. He would show up often at one of them.

Marshall spoke a great deal to various groups. I remember once he was asked to speak to osteopaths. He had hurt himself in his early life and had been worked on by an osteopath. He gave a great speech. I kidded him about the speech.

He could go to a unit and know more about it than the people there. On inspections, he could ask a million questions. He was very soft-spoken. Always a gentleman. His questions were clear, pointed, understandable. He wouldn't listen to poor stuff. Time was the most important thing. Don't waste time was his motto. There was never enough time. Time was of the essence. Never enough of it for training.

Trouble came in Europe while he was here. He thought and talked a lot about it. He was built that way. He had a fertile mind, He was a genius. He would ask me a 1000 things. He never forgot little details.

He would come in at 8:30 or 9. He walked to his apartment. Walked home at lunch (this is when he lived in the city). Back about 1:30. May have taken a nap. Left at 5 P. M. Forgot the cares of the day the moment he left.

During the day he would have in instructors. He saw Keehn three or four times a day. I think Keehn fascinated Marshall. Undoubtedly Keehn would talk politics. Marshall undoubtedly learned something about political facts from him. Keehn had a great sense of humor. He would say to Marshall, "how about it professor." Marshall didn't like it. When he pulled at his sleeves you could tell he was mad and he would pull at them. He said one day "don't call me professor." But Keehn would keep on.

Marshall was quite a bit in uniform. If he was going out he was in uniform. Always in uniform at inspections. Checked everyone else on appearance.

For Marshall to think was to act. He started his wheels at once.

Marshall had a big role in maneuvers out here. You can read about them in the GUARDSMAN. General McCoy on hand. Marshall worked hard.

Marshall worked hard on Guardsman. He also collaborated with Prof. James Weber Linn n publishing a pre-Revolutionary book on British National Militia, adding material on our National Guard.

One of the people who worked closely with the General here was Sergeant Singer. Marshall had implicit faith in Singer. Singer idolized Marshall. After Gen Marshall left, Singer was sent to Blanding. I was adjutant general here then. I got the idea of filling officer spots with former noncoms. I called Singer and asked if he would like to be a major (this was when the division was nationalized). He was here in two days as manor; later a lieutenant colonel. After the war he came here and worked on reorganization. I made him assistant adjutant general and a brigadier general in the Natl Guard. Is retired.

Even when people were taking care of details Gen Marshall was watching. He watched little things but didn't get lost in them. I learned a lot working with him. He told me he had learned a lot from me. He said that once when he had worked out a schedule and told me to check it. I said what you are asking is impossible. This is in Cairo, Illinois. It will take those eight days to do something you want tomorrow. He said change it.

Marshall was right down at the grass roots out here. He hadn't thought of a lot of these things (difficulty of getting things dons) in a Regular Army post. Here he was dealing with citizen soldiers. Learned a lot about what can be done.

We had a small arms school here; tried to give a modified Benning course in four days. We taught all the instructors herd to teach others. Standard system throughout the state. I had worked out a plan before Marshall came. Couldn't get people interested. It meant too much work and disturbance of their routine. One day Marshall asked me what we needed to do here. I said needed better small arms instruction. He asked me if I had a plan. I said yes and he looked at it. He asked can you do it. I said yes. He said OK. He saw it in a minute. When the setup was ready I went to Keehn and said I needed Marshall to help. Marshall said he was tickled to death with the set-up; greatest thing that had happened. When the people began to arrive at Camp Logan, I lined them up. Keehn and Marshall were watching. When the first outfit began to straggled across a bridge leading into camp I stopped the first man and asked who was in charge. They told me and I told him to assemble his people and take them to a special place. Marshall turned to Keehn and said this school, is a success right now. Boyle took over. He took over a mob and showed them we mean business. Marshall thought this was the greatest innovation he had seen. I conceived it, but he saw the possibilities. He had a fertile, open-mind. He was visionary.

Camp Logan had trouble over food, morale, etc. Keehn sent officers to check. Finally he said I order you to report on the situation. I said I already know. He sent me to make a report. I tore the place apart. Marshall said that is what I want.

We had the small arms school for four years. Nearly every officer went through it. They asked for the small arms school staff at Camp Forrest later. The division got superior. We got hundreds of letters on this from men who got commissions. The average American boy likes to do things well, but we hadn't been teaching them how to do things well. This was the Benning

system modified. All done on a volunteer basis. General Hammond agreed to take the course. He lived in the barracks; worked as hard as anybody. But he didn't qualify and I didn't permit him to wear his medal. Ours was the job of teaching method of instruction. The qualifications which went up were bona fide. People who had medals had to run the range after this. Prior to this the markers and firers came from the same outfit. I had markers from different units to score.

QM truck companies got their first trucks in this period.

I asked why Lawton was relieved. He said deserved to be relieved; not a good commander. Boyle said confidentially--my son is in the Army but I wouldn't want him in a National Guard outfit.

Said there were rumors of longtime feud between Pershing and MacArthur. No evidence of this between MacArthur and Marshall, but thinks MacArthur thought he was being sent to the sticks when he was sent here.

Keehn and McCormick were bitter enemies. By orders the Tribune always referred to Keehn as a general of militia. Thinks Marshall went to McCormick personally to get more favorable attitude toward the 33d or to express resentment. Thinks TRIBUNE'S later criticism of Marshall had nothing to do with this period. McCormick gave the Guard publicity.

Marshall took the structure, personnel and unit and raised the standard by personal leadership, seen insight, personal knowledge, military knowledge and made it a far more efficient unit. Be left his mark on the 33d Division.

Keehn's removal was pure politics. Lawton's removal something else.

Marshall had great sense of humor. Gave several talks on World War I experiences. Use to show us a little notebook and say the whole Argonne plan was worked out in this little notebook.

See AG in Mail Carrier Bldg 100 Indiana NW DI 7-0311.