

Notes 83N, Copy 2

General Thomas T. Handy

Washington, D.C.

July 14, 1970

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Notes on untaped interview with Gen Thomas T. Handy at his home in Washington, DC, July 14, 1970, by Forrest C. Pogue. (I heard of Gen Groves' death just after talking with General Handy. I had interviewed Groves only a few weeks earlier.

(Handy quite small, now almost frail. Close cropped hair--once slightly reddish I imagine although he said he was a tow-head rather than a redhead. Almost square head; blue eyes. Kind face with a twinkle. A country boy's voice. Soft voice. Favorite expression "don't you see." /

Gen Marshall insisted on ending long wait for awards in war. Recalls that Gen Mull came in one day with a new ribbon (this in WWII). Gen Marshall said what is that? Turned out to be an Army of Occupation ribbon for WWI, Hull was just getting it. Marshall wanted none of that.

French were much better about these things in WWI and Marshall remembered it. Handy, who was aide to Gen Menoher of 42 Division and later commander of a FA Bn which supported MacArthur's brigade, recalled that in Champagne at time of big attack on night of 14th and 15th (see Clayton James book on MacArthur), the French IV Army, commanded by Gouraud, put on a remarkable operation. Pulled back out of forward area and left small detachments to hold. One lieutenant called in fire on his position, suffering several casualties. Gouraud gave him the Medaille Militaire in 48 hours. (You recall that Napoleon said men would do anything for a decoration).

General Marshall not one to build an empire or to keep people around him. MacArthur opposite. McCloy once said after he visited MacArthur's headquarters, he doesn't have a staff, he has a court. General Marshall worked with what he had. Of all the key people at his headquarters in Washington, the only one he knew intimately was Arnold. I was under him in War Plans in 1938, when Gerow was Executive Officer, and Gerow brought me back in 1941.

He inherited Gerow from Krueger. McNarney he hadn't known. McNair he knew in WWI. Eisenhower he hadn't known.

Commenting on Handy's handling of Pearl Harbor Inquiry by Army Board in 1944. Handy said we were surprised when they began to blame the old man (he invariably called Marshall the "old man" and MacArthur "Uncle Douglas.") Had known MacArthur quite well in WWI and had great respect for him as a brave man and a soldier but disliked his histrionics and political ambitions. Thought he had terrible staff.

The Army's Board report came in. I didn't read anything but short findings and I realize that the old man should have no part of it. I went to the old man and said "Don't you read it" Let Mr. Stimson handle it. It puts you on the pan. The wise thing is to have nothing to do with it." It was far better for him not to touch it. I took it to Secretary Stimson who was much wrought up. He handled it.

You might say that Grunert was not enthusiastic for the old man. Russell had been relieved; Frank had been knocked out of a place in Europe. Recalls nothing of Toukmin.

Gerow quite a man--the only one besides the old man who took blame. Yet it was G-2 at that time rather than Gerow who should have caught the business in Hawaii.

Thinks Gen Gerow probably helped bring Eisenhower in. Gerow, Haislip and Eisenhower served as lieutenants together at San Antonio. Gerow and Ike at Leavenworth. First time I saw Ike was one day when I was in War Plans (between 1936-38) and he came back from Ph Is to get munitions for Ph Army. Came in to see Gerow.

The ANC conversations came while I was away from War Plans.

McNarney and Embick talked about it; Forrest Sherman was in on it. Agreed on Europe First. It seemed sound to us when I came back in. Doesn't think that War Dept changed view on overall soundness of this concept. Sometimes in desperation as it looked as if the British were frittering everything away, it seemed we might have to go in the other direction.

I asked Handy about Pacific complaint that it was starved. He said I told them once, someone is going to tell the truth some day. 75-80 per cent of the naval effort was in the Pacific; all the air you could use; all the good troops you could use. Did more than we promised. Agreed early in war to send two divisions to Australia to take place of those they had in Middle East and elsewhere. Australian pressure forced their return; but we left the two anyway.

MacArthur make serious error when he predicted that the Japanese would never attack the Philippines and that it would be a great flop if they tried. He was extremely partisan. So much so he was super-sensitive about everything. He could be very petty about his authority. Recalls when he and Eichelberger served on a special board to determine ranks of officers after war, Eichelberger told him Marshall sent him congratulations on his birthday once without sending it through MacArthur's headquarters and MacArthur blew up. (Eichelberger said he wouldn't visit San Antonio--fellow officer there he wouldn't speak to.)

(On the promotion board, Bradley, Devers (chairman), Hodges, Haislip, Eichelberger, Handy. Stroh and staff did good job on records. We agreed had to be unanimous on general officers. Not always fair. Nine times out of ten depended on board knowing. If no one knew a man well or only one or two he was likely to get hurt.

Back to MacArthur. Remembers going to Japan after war (I assume Handy was Dep to Eisenhower then) and MacArthur invited him to lunch. MacArthur cut loose on everybody back here. Mrs. MacArthur tried to calm him down.

Said it was true about MacArthur walking up and down and lecturing his visitors. (Says Krueger at times could be difficult).

Stilwell--Perhaps stronger than discreet. Thinks Stilwell knew Gen Marshall and I were on his side. He told us to keep Stilwell quiet when he came back. Surles and I (I did main talking) told Stilwell right out not to talk. He said he would not talk). Later I asked him what he would have said. He proceeded to tell me. The White House was awful. When Marshall saw White House release on Stilwell recall I thought the old man would hit the ceiling. He said apparently

there are people over there who have no conception of the word integrity. Delicate time politically.

Handy talks about work as deputy to Marshall. I never wanted the job. OPD more interesting. Usually went with Gen Marshall to great conferences. Thinks he expected him to go to Yalta, but Ed Hull had carried the ball under great difficulties. Felt he should go with the old man. I had to stay home anyway in his absence.

Deputy job centered more on administration than operations. I did to go to all morning conferences because I felt I would be acting chief part of time and needed to be filled in.

Overall on operations was not through me. Administration stuff was through me.

On OPD--the old man told us way back after Pearl Harbor he wanted something which would operate his command post. In many ways you are my chief of staff.

My approach was you have a job or you don't. If you have it go ahead. G-2 was always looking over his shoulder. We didn't have this in OPD. Ed Hull carried me a good chunk of the war. We had a remarkable outfit. They worked ahead although he thinks everybody would have liked to get out.

Their attitude was good. I remember the case of Buddy Ferenbaugh who worked hard in the buildup for the invasion--troop buildup. McNair came to see me; wanted a young man for a BG spot. Had picked Ferenbaugh. I said can't spare just now; will try to release later. I told Ferenbaugh, I just kept you from being a brigadier general. He said all right. So far as I could see he didn't slacken a bit. I thought he had a lot to him. He knew what happened to men who didn't overseas service. But he had a lot to him. This pretty well illustrates way our people worked. They all looked up to the old man.

The old man didn't forget. Some man crossed him up at Benning as junior officer in Chief of Infantry office. Old Man was down on him. However, he didn't hold him up. Man went over as deputy to Joe Collins. He was given 90th Div after McKelvie relieved. Then he was relieved. Marshall said I knew I was right about him. 90th was never well trained. Only good part was McKelvie's artillery (he was arty officer; that was why he was picked).

Marshall would never hint that he wanted certain people taken care of. However when Forrest Harding was relieved we thought we ought to do something since Gen Marshall would not. So we worked up the Panama Command for him.

Reliefs and the like--we had to handle in OPD. Some fell to me as deputy. Some required handling outside. Patton would write to me outside channels about P Wood.

I got to the point where I didn't hesitate to take action on my own.

I asked about him squelching report on 12th A Gp by War Dept observer. Said oh that was headquarters gossip. TOP SECRET the best example I know of filling up a book with

headquarters gossip. Every headquarters thinks people up above too far away to know score; people down below too far down to know score. Only they know.

Gen Willoughby empty. Someone told me they took his course at Leavenworth. Fascinated by his language. Had to attend several lectures before he realized that the man wasn't saying anything.

McNarney told me my job would be to keep between old man and Arnold and Somervell.

On the piece of paper to Spaatz. Spaatz wrote an article on the atomic bombing. I had no specific directions on this. Tooeey said I'm supposed to blow off whole south end of Japanese islands and I think I need a piece of paper. I said I agree. I was sure it was all right. Someone had to finalize. But the operation was understood.

Uncle Douglas--Tooeey had the job of briefing MacArthur and Nimitz. Had to be told or Kenny's people would be up flying around. I said Tooeey how did you make out. He said no trouble. It took two or three minutes at most to brief MacArthur (had already told Nimitz). MacArthur immediately took me over--he gave me a lecture on the past, present and future of atomic warfare.

McCloy--Said he went to see MacArthur once. MacArthur took over. McCloy could talk too. He said I want a chance to tell my side. MacArthur sounded off. McCloy started again and MacArthur began again. McCloy said you have had your turn, I will talk. MacArthur agreed.

Has known MacArthur since 42d Div days in WWI. I had 151st FA Bn which supported MacArthur's brigade. Remembers him saying he could have taken Metz if he had a division. After war went over whole thing--conceivable he could have denied (?) it. He wanted very much to do something spectacular. Wanted to get in public eye. His ambition not limited--may not have been shooting at Chief of Staff job then but presidency. Division full of politicians from all over. National Guard outfit--full of politics. Regiment I was in was 1st Minneapolis. Colonel has his political feelers out.

MacArthur's ambition not limited to C of S.

No one could have handled Japanese like MacArthur did.

Fact that he acted high and mighty helped him there. Remember that the Far East Commission--headed by McCoy--was going to give him guidance. He sent message when indicated politely otherwise.

On the idea of starting cold war in 1943. Nothing in our action in WD in 1943 or 1944 to show we were anti-Russian. Quite the contrary. Our fundamental undertaking was the idea of keeping the Russians in the war. What could we do if they turned in their suits. How are you going to lick the Germans without them. What are you going to do if you don't keep them in. I said you be up against such a basically difficult situation you will have to draw in your horns and count up your chips. Keeping Russians in was a fundamental consideration so far as licking the Germans

was concerned. The whole policy of Mr. Roosevelt and of US was that at the end of the war you would have only two big dogs left. Either they would find a way to get along or they will clash (Thinks Nixon facing this today--of course China is in today.) Stimson thought this. He thought you must trust man to have trust. He wanted to give dope on the bomb to them. I know of nothing among us pointing toward hitting the Russians. We couldn't see how you could get along without them.

I asked about Churchill. He said if WSC had been in US position his view would have been different.

On Berlin--Having accepted coalition with Russians had to find a way to work with them. Had to trust them to some extent. If the Russians had played ball there would have been no problem on Berlin. On the matter of the corridor. We were in a far worse position by having British across our lines of communications on the way to Bremerhaven. No one queried that fact. It worked there. What we got on Berlin was not an unreasonable agreement with an ally. The Russians dumber than hell to upset arrangement.

Gen Mandy agreed with me that Allies in Berlin were giving hostage to the enemy. Not the best place in the world from the standpoint of defense of basic western position.

On development of OPD. Don't look for it on charts. I didn't like them. It grew as it had to. Lot of these things don't work along lines of charts. Gen Marshall and I not interested in charts. Lee Gerow meticulous--worried about who did what. We were busy. I said is there anything we are doing that you think you ought to do, we will pass it over, and you do the same with us. This didn't suit him.

We took a pragmatic approach and that suited General Marshall.

He wanted results.

On the October 1944 trip to France and Germany. Gen Marshall wanted to sell Sen Byrnes on need to continue high rate of industrial production. Did a great selling job on Byrnes. Recalls that not long after--after Byrnes had heard Marshall read the lesson on Sir John Dill's funeral at the Cathedral--Byrnes said Gen Marshall the greatest man to deal with different groups he held ever seen. He said I have seen him deal with his own people, with members of Congress, and the Press, and now I see him with holding his own with the preachers. I would like to see him once in a rough and tumble fight. I bet he would come out on top.

On that trip Marshall chewed up de Lattre. The French commander at corps headquarters had the French corps commander give a good briefing for newsmen. Then in front of newsmen he attacked US commanders. Bullitt no help. Marshall took it but later he tore de Lattre to pieces.

Gen Marshall could be distant. Different from Eisenhower in that respect. Ike would tell stories, relax. Gen Marshall all business.

I never saw anyone like Gen Marshall for budgeting his time.

Once in the Pacific trip, the people at the headquarters he was visiting had told him they would be on hand to show him around. They turned up after breakfast next day and kept waiting around. Finally said where is Gen Marshall we were supposed to take him to the hospital to see wounded men and sick. I said what time was that. They said ten minutes ago. I said then you will find him there and he was there at the time they set. If something was set at a particular time he started whether the people who were supposed to take him were there or not. If there was a meeting scheduled and only he and one other were there he began. He would listen as if he had all the time in the world, but when the time was up, he concluded the conversation. Never seemed hurried, but he kept things moving.