

Notes 84N, Copy 2

General T. T. Handy

Washington, D.C.

March 23, 1959

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Interview with General T. T. Handy, Washington, D. C., March 23, 1959 by F C Pogue.

(This is the unrecorded part of a tape recorded interview with General Handy. Several times he told me to turn the machine off and I have taken some random notes. Unfortunately, they are not complete and do not capture his manner of speaking).

General Handy said that he was recently sent a Ms on Pearl Harbor to read and that the man spoke of the untold story of Pearl Harbor. Gen Handy said he thought there was no hidden secret. Rather he believed there was plenty of material on Pearl Harbor. But that in spite of it all nobody believed it was going to happen. This was true here and true there. They asked me if I was surprised. I said I was shocked. Was a surprise that they would hit Pearl Harbor. It was one of our best defended positions for those days. Had a strong fleet, a strong garrison-- comparatively speaking, strong coast defenses and so on. Nobody thought it was possible they would try such or thing or that they could launch such an attack without someone catching it. Would not have been surprised had they gone down the coast towards Kamramh Bay or something like that.

He was surprised at Kimmel not taking greater precautions. In maneuvers, Kimmel was noted for taking extra precautions.

He thinks everyone was so sure of our strength, they just didn't believe attack would come. If people don't believe in attack, you can warn all you please and they won't act on it. Kelly Turner only one he ever heard say he thought it would come at Pearl Harbor.

Says not unusual for Gen Marshall to be taking horseback ride. A man carrying the heavy load he was carrying had to have some recreation. He had always ridden horseback every chance he could get.

Says Army Board made up of men who were inclined to be unhappy with Gen Marshall. Had been relieved by him. Theirs was a terrible report. I looked at it and told Gen Marshall he was involved in it and he had better not touch it, but send it on to Sect Stimson. He didn't touch it and later so testified.

Recalls that George Harrison, whose sister married Gen Keyes, was brought in by Stimson and that he was in on Atomic Energy.

Says he (Handy) gave directive to Spaatz because everyone in authority was at Potsdam. Tooley said if I am going to blow off part of the island of Japan, I should have a piece of paper. So I gave him one. I know people now say we didn't have to have Russia and we didn't have to attack Japan with the bomb. But remember the fanatic zeal of the Japanese soldier and the fact that they had a habit of fighting to the last. We never wanted to get involved on the mainland. We particularly didn't want to take on the Kwantung Army. Japanese air and navy gone, but the army pretty much intact. Could have caused us heavy losses. I don't know many who didn't want help. Of course, Stratemeyer thought it would just take a little.

Not sure but what we did all right on China. Thinks history in time may show we were well off being out of there. Heard Lineberger say that in time there would be great problems with China. He asked if Russia wouldn't have more trouble with China than with us. L. said likely so. Then, Handy asked, weren't we perhaps well off to be out of any ties to Chiang Kai-shek there. L. said he didn't think so then, but this probably so.

Marshall not easiest man in world to work for. Even Ike not always at ease with him. Handy told him once people were scared of him. He didn't like it. Handy said I was scared of you at one time, too. Gen M said don't I listen. Said one day he (Handy) was in bathroom. Heard Gen M hit the buzz box. Not one answered. Pulled up his pants and rushed in. Secretary standing there looking at it like it was a snake. I said why don't you answer. She said that's the Chief of Staff's buzzer, I wouldn't dare touch it.

He could get fixed ideas on people and it was hard to change him. I remember some fellow who was with the 7th Div in Alaska and they ended by putting him with the 90th and then he got relieved. The General said I knew he wouldn't do well. But they said he did all right with the 7th so I let it go. (But he had gotten an adverse view of him along the way).

He did like Terry Allen. Thought Terry was a fighter. And Terry--despite some of his faults--was a fighter. I remember he went to North Africa and found that someone wanted a lot of troops to take a place. He said he would do it with a battalion and he did. Ted Roosevelt didn't help him. Ted had good qualities. But he wasn't much help on paper work and the like. Bad on drinking. Gen Marshall had to warn him one more time and you are out. FDR always turned thumbs down on young Teddy, but went all out to help Kermit. Kermit in worse shape than Teddy. Other things wrong with him.

Terry a great story teller. Told a tale about Gen Paul B. Malone. Paul B with 23d Inf. Great talker. Terry said he told a lot about his command and made a speech about his people as if he were Napoleon talking at the foot of the Pyramids. And then he called in a runner--a country boy--and said take this man up to the forward unit. The boy said "Now, Gen'l you know it ain't my time." Terry said I always thought this was a chickenshit outfit and know I know it.

I asked about Gen Ralph Richardson. He said that when Richardson came back he wanted a corps arrangement (he had been a corps commander). MacArthur felt he had to give Australians something--US had air and navy and supreme command. Richardson swelled up and said he had been a senior commander. Said he wouldn't serve under any ex chief of police of Brisbane or somewhere like that--Blamey hadn't been a soldier. I told Gen Marshall this. Richardson had admitted to me that MacArthur said he could work it out with a task force or something. Can't understand him fussing with Gen M, since Gen M gave him a good command and Richardson had trouble with everybody out there.

Gen Marshall slow to change mind about people. I asked about Col. Cocheu. Says he thinks Cocheu was chucked out by Malin Craig and not Marshall. Says trouble came because MacArthur had made old-timers generals. Then, as always, when policy changed--as it was under Craig--it caused trouble. Craig decided not to make older men colonels. Cocheu came into Winder Bldg where we were at time thinks this must have been 1937 or 1938 and said well I

am having to get out. I said he could serve on a Coast Arty Bd at Monroe and have a good house. He said do you think I would serve under my inferiors. That was his attitude. Friend of MacArthur's. May be cause of feeling about Marshall.

Gen Marshall had feeling that military men in wartime just had to take their medicine, even if it might seem unjust. Recalls case of Gen Sylvester. He asked for court of inquiry after war when Eisenhower was C of S. Came to me and I recommended it. Gen Marshall later told me I shouldn't have done it. Said it just got a lot of stuff in the papers. Point was that at the time, he was not cutting the mustard so far as the man in command was concerned and that was it. Gen M said that something like this had come up under Gen Pershing and he had said no inquiry. Best way.

Says Gen Marshall and others put out because of Holland Smith's remarks about Ralph Smith and the soldiers. No one questioned his right to relieve Ralph Smith. Holland Smith was the corps commander. Says that while he (Handy) thought Holland Smith no part of a gentleman for his remarks, he (Handy) had recommended they go along because of the command set-up. Says not true that Gen Marshall said he would never let army troops serve under a Marine commander. Did say he wouldn't let them serve under Holland Smith again. But it was because of his statements about troops. Actually Marshall had great respect for Vandegift. Told King if he wouldn't make him a corps commander, he (Marshall) would give him a corps. King who had been slow in these matters gave cmd to Vandegift.

Says we at working level thought Brookie was the slowest of the British chiefs. Pound good at first; then was no good while dying. Portal was sharpest. Says he recalls that at Quebec Brooke spoke terribly to T. V. Soong. Says he had no brief for Soong or Chinese action, but Brooke acted in terrible way before everybody. Always heard British good on handling colonials, but this was not a good example. Says Marshall bawled out Soong but in private and kept his respect. Brooke bound to have built up resentment.

Says Huebner said Dunkirk first disaster he ever heard of which made a hero out of all the commanders. (I said like Bataan--he said this is a different matter. British and French had more tanks than Germans. Huebner said might have been best to have lost all of the troops.)

Gen Marshall very careful about West Point. Never meddled with them. Talks about West Point. Says after war, men who went there not interested. Attitude bad. Men wanted at time of Korea to get there to escape war service. Marshall wanted a young man with fine war record up there. Maxwell Taylor fine for the job. Thinks Taylor has done well. Hard job.

Tooley Spatz has written best review on Monty. Says he never heard Monty's great plan at any briefing he gave and he heard them all.

Marshall went way down the list to get his officers in WWII. None of top men were around for the big commands.

GCM told Bedell once if he couldn't get some publicity for Army band he would send marine lieutenant over. Burned Bedell Up. He liked to get Bedell. Told him once he had better send

some people back to see how to have a briefing (I had tried briefing and he told me to get some people especially for that).

Developed view--I think mostly on tape--that we should have made effort to work with Russia. Had to trust Russia (I agree with Mr. Stimson) if we are going to work with them. Could have worked. Thinks Mr. Roosevelt right. Now it is easy to work back and say we shouldn't have done this.