

Notes 112N, Copy 2

Col. J. E. McCammon

Bradenton, Florida

November 11, 1962

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Interview with Col. J. E. McCammon, Bradenton, Florida. Nov 11, 1962, by F C Pogue.

(Colonel McCammon died a few days later and was buried at Arlington before I returned from the trip. He was an attractive person but very bitter towards Stilwell. Must be remembered in using this material).

First went to China before 1923. Then was back when Marshall was there with 15th Infantry. Married in April 1927 and Marshall were at the wedding.

Knew Gen Marshall at Fort Benning (there two years) Says Charles Hall was secretary of the school then. I was at the Univ of Oregon as PMS and T when the Russian fliers landed at Vancouver Barracks. I was always close to Gen Marshall. On the receiving end practically all the time.

He called me in--in China and gave me a job. Wanted a mounted detachment for cross-country reconnaissance. Transportation in Tientsin was horse-drawn. Get raw horses and raw men and make a mounted detachment. Marshall got Lt. Burckhardt--a cavalryman on leave from Manila--for training. I was 1st Lt. Marshall wanted a little show outfit. British, French, Japanese and Italians all in Tientsin. Wanted to show off his troops. I would bring in my detachment--so by at walk, trot, and gallop. A little fanfare, Gave color to the reviews. I had this job for 2-3 years. These were Mongolian ponies--raw.

U. S. forces in China were first under Connor and then under Costner. 2d and 3d battalions at Tientsin 1st Bn in Manila.

Mollie Winn stayed with us in China on her trip around the world. (People to see--Col Jacob J. Gerhardt who was at Tientsin, Very fine. Graduate of 1914. Missionary daughter.)

Col Bishop was aide to Castner. I was hunting aide to Castner. I was always military around Marshall. Darned well better be. J Marshall called me in when Castner arrived--he had reputation of being tough. Marshall said do whatever he wants. Keen him happy. Castner had been CG of cavalry brigade in Texas. He inspected us; gave us a going over. Castner called for me. Rough talking, bull-voiced, big chested. I thought you are amned (?) by Nimrod or Ramrod. He said what do you hunt around here? I said a few jacksnipe. He was a this afternoon kind of guy. He said when are you ready? I got a car and guns. He thought it was wonderful. I became his hunting aide. I had also taken Newell hunting. Newell polished, suave, diplomatic personality.

I was on the last train that ran (I suppose to sea from Tientsin before the Chinese stopped it. I had to guard the railroad in 1923-24. Chang Tso-lin came through the pass.

Castner told me he wanted four 25 mile walks and wanted us to go out one way and come back another. Castner about six feet tall. He took the whole regiment up to a mud wall; had to about face in a village and get back on road. Discarded maps. He marched not 25 miles but 30 or 32. I had four days in succession instead of two days.

(In here he interjected that his wife--who came in--was the daughter of Colonel Bishop. McCammon was son of an Indian fighter).

(Mrs. McCammon spoke of Gen Marshall. McCammon said that General Marshall came to the Presidio--I suppose before he went to China--while McCammon was there. Asked him how many ships were there. Last time they talked together).

Marshall prejudiced in favor of his close friends. Close to Stilwell; backed him.

Stilwell spent all of his time with troops in Burma Headquarters. All negotiations left to us in Chungking. I was G-3 and lived in Chungking.

Marshall had greatness Stilwell couldn't have. S. was a good squad commander. Marshall had loyalty to people; Stilwell not loyalty to anyone. Criticizes misuse of Merrill's Marauders by Stilwell.

China Mission was tail of dog of all U S missions around the world. Tells how he came to be there. Had known Stilwell in Peking and Tientsin and Benning. One day he asked about going to China with him. I asked not to be in command of Chinese troops. I had four regiments of Chinese troops.

Stilwell not pro-Communist. McCammon thinks that people who spoke of Communists as agrarian reformers were not communists. Says he knew Lattimore, Davies and others. Went hunting with some of them. Not Communists (McCaammon had been assistant attach at one time in China and knew some of the people then).

Impossible to organize a liberal government under Chiang Kai-shek. This the problem.

Mission from United States from Agriculture Department to Outer Mongolia. Lattimore came to our office. He told the background--they are there to contact Communists. John Service sent on mission from our office. Didn't volunteer for jobs. Sent to find out what was going on in Chengtu(?). Chengteh came back with excellent report. Turned over to our Headquarters.

I felt Service and Davies were OK. Hurley was in a constant uproar from morning to night.

Back to Tientsin. I had to see Gen Castner every day at 9. I would go through the front door into a long hall. The desk was at the end of the hall. He would wave at me--no matter whether someone like the British ambassador was there or not. Would ask about hunting.

Gen. Marshall would come in. Saluted and came to attention. Castner would say sit down. Marshall would say I have some work to do--did you have something. Didn't want to get too friendly.

I rode with Marshall three or four times a week. I asked him have you got the Indian sign on Castner. He said if you give a man enough rope he will hang himself. Never let him slap you on the back.

I hunted a lot at Ft Benning with Gen Marshall. He let me see his papers of World War I ?  
MRS.MARSHALL SAYS SHE DESTROYED AT HIS WISH? Revealed views of different generals.

He had a way of putting over a lesson with a word or two or a short expression. Said don't believe what you hear as far as the enemy is concerned. Has to be verified. I recall a night maneuver at Benning. Used mules and wagons. I had a company. It was dark. Back roads were filled with mud, cliffs, and ravines. Gen Marshall came by. Said hello, come ride with me. It was stinking wet. Someone came up and said whole train tangled up. Marshall sent me back. One wagon toppled over; no loss. Lesson was--wait until you have verified the reports before getting upset.

Mrs. McCammon recalls that when they were at Fort Benning they were broke and were ordered to Oregon. Marshall asked if we wanted to go with him in his Packard. Said he had to sell his old car; wanted two or three days. We ended up not going with Marshall). This seems mixed up unless he refers to period when Marshall was at Illinois or unless this was before Marshall remarried.

We would visit him at his house in Benning. His fetish was always to be one pay ahead. He said you will never know how long you will stay at a post and you must be prepared to pay for a move. Gen M had an excellent colored man and woman who worked for him when he was a widower at Benning).

Speaks of Dabney--who died in China. He was debilitated from encephalitis. Doesn't think Marshall responsible.

Tells about Ridgway coming back with Dabney's widow. They married?

Marshall not a good horse man. He asked if my horse could lope? Said by horse slower than yours.

Marshall once prophesied he would get his star and the Chief of Staff position.

Marshall revamped the whole academic department at Fort Benning. Great job.

Bandits in China were renegade soldiers. Lived on the country attacked the peasants. One day Marshall riding on country roads and met a group of four horsemen. If you give a group a chance to make a plan they may kidnap you or do something else. They loped when Marshall did. Marshall decided he had better not give them a chance to get set. He turned his horse and charged them. They took off. You had to use the right psychology.

Chinese wouldn't intentionally break into our zone. It didn't take very much to do it if they decided to. Tuttle just had a platoon the time he stopped them.

Speaks of language school and says he studied Chinese for eight years. Didn't speak good Chinese.

Came back in May 1927 on boat with Marshalls, Tutttles, Hardings, Pierces, and Snodgrasses.

Tells of Castner march. Remembers walking beside Newell, who made it on sheer guts. Jens Doe led the group--marched 108 steps to the minute.

Marshalls were not party people. Would go to club and dinners. He was not party-minded. At Benning he was very lonesome. Very party-minded there. Had fun parties; played games