

Notes 44N, Copy 2

Master Sergeant George E. Dumcke

Arlington, Va.

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Interviewed on May 1, 1961, by Edward M. Coffman.

I enlisted in the Army in May, 1917. I was brought up in the cavalry where my father served for thirty years. He told me to join the cavalry when the war began. I was in the First Cavalry at Douglas, Arizona.

In 1923, I was in Honolulu -- teaching in the automobile school at Schofield Barracks when General W.D. Connor came through on his way to z China. He wanted a mechanic to drive his car; so I was sent. I drove for generals from that time on. I was on the DEML /Detached Enlisted Men's List/.

It was in Tientsin that I first met General Marshall. He was lieutenant colonel of the infantry regiment. Since the colonel was drunk most of the time, Marshall had to relieve him. I paid a Chink ten dollars a month to wash the general's private car. One day, Marshall came by and saw the man working. He came up to me and said: "Why is that man doing your work?" I told him that I had paid him. He said: "You can't pay anybody to do your work." I told him that it was the general's private car and that I had the general's permission so he could take it up with him, I was a staff sergeant then.

There weren't very many cars in Tientsin. Most of the officers had rickshaws. Mrs. Connor would always ask me to stop by for Mrs. Marshall when they went to functions. They didn't have a car and she was sick. She died when General Marshall was at the War College. She was just another's officer's wife -- not as dignified as the second Mrs. Marshall who was a Chief of Staff's wife.

I came back with General Connor and drove him while he was commanding general of the Second Division at Fort Sam Houston and later at the War College. When he went to West Point, I started driving for General Simonds.

When General Malin Craig became Chief of Staff, he called me in. He asked me if I was any relation to the Dumcke who was first sergeant of Troop B. Sixth Cavalry. I told him that he was my father. He said that he had been his first sergeant when he first went in the Army. General Craig played golf more than he did the chief of staff work. He asked that I handle his funeral arrangements. He said that my father had inducted him into the Army and that he wanted me to induct him out.

When he went on leave, I took a furlough. General Marshall was only a brigadier general when he was made Chief of Staff -- he jumped over a lot of good generals. He called me in and asked me what I was doing I told him that I was on furlough and had fifteen days to go. He said: "Report Monday." and that was that. He was a hard man to work for --everything had to be perfect. But I think he was the greatest general the United States ever had.

I had to be at his home at seven in the morning. He would come out between seven and seven-thirty. He would leave his office in the middle of the afternoon -- around three or three-thirty. Some people criticized him for leaving so early; but I would point out how early he came to work and how hard he worked. He used to say that a man couldn't think after three o'clock. I

would drive him home where an orderly would be waiting with a saddled horse. He would then go for a ride.

He was always on time. We drove black Cadillacs. Sergeant Powder / M/Sgt. James Powder who now lives in St. Petersburg, Fla./ drove until he had a heart attack and then the General kept him as an orderly. He would go on trips with him. A WAC - Sergeant Payne - drove for him also. He used to say that she was the best driver he ever had. She was a good one she always kept the car up and was always on time. She had a wreck and tore up one of the Cadillacs however.

He thought a lot of Pershing. Pershing was god to him. He would go out there /to Walter Reed/ a couple times a week and take him papers to look over. He would tell me to go up Rock Creek Park Drive rather than Sixteenth Street because there were too many stop lights on Sixteenth. I remember the day he got his appointment as Chief of Staff. He and Mrs. Marshall had me drive them out to see General Pershing.

Enlisted men were god to him. He said that the Army was the enlisted men. He always wanted me to stop and pick up any boys in uniform that we saw. One time, we picked up two or three boys from Fort Belvoir. He was in riding clothes so they didn't know that he was the Chief of Staff, they griped about the food. The next day, he went to Fort Belvoir and gave the messes a thorough inspection. He later set up the joint messes to make sure that the boys were well fed.

He rarely talked much while I was driving him.

Before the Pentagon was built, I would drive him through the Arlington Cemetery and on down across the bridge. After the Pentagon was built, there was no direct route so he had them build a cut-through road which is still there /through the Cemetery - as I understood EMC/. He said that he didn't want to waste time going all over Arlington County, Getting to the. Pentagon An MP would block traffic on the two major roads we crossed so that we wouldn't be held up.

Before the Joint Chief of Staff meetings, he would have "Hap" Arnold, Admiral King and Sir John Dill out to his house for lunch. Then we would go to the Federal Reserve Building on Constitution where the meetings were held.

After he left the office of Chief of Staff, I drove for a while. Then after I retired, after thirty years service, I drove for the White House for three years.

Marshall's son-in-law, Colonel Wynn, turned down promotion to brigadier general because he wanted to stay with his regiment. He said that he didn't want to get away from his men. The one who was killed wanted to go directly overseas against the General's advice. The General wanted him to go through training here after finishing officers' school. The other one who drank a lot did stay here. Mrs. Marshall's brother was a brigadier general.