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BOLTE

BOLTE, CHARLES (OH-395) 189 pages Open

Chief of staff, U.S. Special Observers (SPOBS) in England, 1941-42

DESCRIPTION: Interview #1. [Oct. 17, 1973; pp. 1-80] Military training while in college. World War I service: Gen. John L. Hines. Fort Benning infantry school. Value of military school training in war time. George Marshall at the infantry school. Leavenworth: grading system; pressure on students. 15th Infantry Regiment in China: contacts with British, French, Italian and Japanese troops; extraterritoriality for foreign troops; Japanese interests in China. Army War College: faculty, Capt. Eddie Foy. Extensive discussion of U.S. Special Observers (SPOBS) in England, 1941-42: problems in communicating with War Department; SPOBS staff; Kay Summersby; cipher machine for secure communications; arrival of DDE; negotiations re legal status of US forces in England; Bolte's trip to England via Portugal; lodging and office space in London; marine guards; DDE's search for a headquarters; Sir Bernard Paget; DDE and George Marshall discuss early plans for cross-channel attack, 1942; J.C.H. Lee; Col. I.B. Summers and transport of SPOBS supplies by British convoy; Army-Navy rivalry among SPOBS officers; replacement of Gen. James Chaney by DDE; Chaney's disagreement with Gen. Henry Arnold over US air support of British; Bolte's inspection of defenses in Northern Ireland and Scotland; developing a chain of command for US troops stationed in England; Lord Mountbatten.

Interview #2 [Aug. 14, 1974; pp. 81-135] More discussion of SPOBS: comments re officers; duties of SPOBS; US defense of England so British could concentrate on North Africa; lack of resources for cross-channel attack in 1942; poor British defenses; lack of direction from War Department; Henry Arnold by-passing Gen. James Chaney; proposed GHQ in US, Gen. McNail, George Marshall, Mark Clark and Harry Malony; Bolte's inspection of defenses in Northern Ireland and Scotland; developing a chain of command for US troops stationed in England. Dwight D. Eisenhower: arrival in England; replacement of Bolte; search for living quarters; insistence that officers wear uniforms. John C.H. Lee: extravagance; Pleasant B. Rogers; request for a private train. Inspector General's favorable view of General Chaney.

Interview #3 [Jan. 29, 1975; pp. 136-189] More discussion of SPOBS: Lady Astor; DDE's irritation by social functions; US-British attitudes and social relations; putting navy forces under DDE's command; effect of DDE's arrival on SPOBS staff; lack of resources for cross-channel attack in 1942; arrival of US troops in England for Operation Torch; 1st Infantry Division on Queen Mary; importance of SPOBS work as preparation for later war effort; Status of Forces agreement; DDE's replacement of Bolte; Robert McClure; poor treatment of General Chaney. Bolte's later war career: ignored in War Department; joins 91st Infantry Division; extensive comments on Gen. Charles Gerhardt; training 69th Infantry Division in US; 34th Infantry Division in North Africa and Italy;

Clare Booth Luce and replacement of troops. Post-war contacts with DDE: wedding of John and Barbara Eisenhower.

[Eisenhower Library Oral History Project, interview by Dr. Maclyn Burg, 1973-75]