

INTERVIEW WITH
CHARLES R. BROSHOUS

by

Dr. Thomas F. Soapes
Archivist

on

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for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library
Abilene, Kansas



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This is an interview with Charles R. Broshous, Brigadier General, Retired, United States Army, at his home in Denver, Colorado, on March 17, 1976. The interviewer is Dr. Thomas Soapes of the Eisenhower Library. Present for the interview are General Broshous and Dr. Soapes.

DR. SOAPES: General Broshous, would you tell us where and when you were born.

GEN. BROSHOUS: I was born in Atchison, Kansas; father, Walter Broshous and mother, Stella Mae Robinson Broshous, in 1908, February 6.



DR. SOAPES: Were you educated there in Atchison?

GEN. BROSHOUS: I was educated and lived in Atchison throughout my childhood up until I left to go to college.

DR. SOAPES: And where did you go then?

GEN. BROSHOUS: I spent one year college at Kansas State Teacher's College, Pittsburg; one year at Kansas University; and then four years at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, graduating in 1933.

DR. SOAPES: And where did you go then on commissioning and graduation?



BROSHOUS: Immediately upon commissioning I was assigned to the Corps of Engineers Kansas City District, River and Harbor, and was sent immediately to Fort Peck, Montana to work with a survey crew in developing plans for the gigantic, then, one hundred million dollar Fort Peck Dam. During the time I was there, President Roosevelt directed that the dam to be built even though the planning was not complete, due to the fact that the farmers in the area were practically starving due to dry winter wheat crops that had failed for several years. Since I was the only army officer on duty in that area at the time, I received orders to go ahead and start construction of the dam without specific plans. Of course, having a little sense gained through a few years of college, I immediately organized a crew similar to the structure we have at West Point with corporals and captains over a certain size and then finally commanders, and in two days we had over 500 men working. Any man could go to work who could bring an axe or a shovel. We immediately started clearing the area, building roads, entrance roads, because I knew roughly where the dam would be from our early data. I spent my first three years there, actually in charge for, oh, three or four months

until the Corps of Engineers could send in a permanent crew to take over and start construction. I remained at the Fort Peck Dam throughout my three-year tour of duty with the Kansas City District.



SOAPES: I see. Where did you go after that assignment?

BROSHOUS: From there I went to Fort Logan, Colorado, which was the home of the 2nd Engineers and served there one year. During that assignment I met Barbara Blood, who, when I left Fort Logan I couldn't leave without her, so I talked her into going with me. She became my wife.

SOAPES: Was engineering your first choice of what you wanted to get into?

BROSHOUS: Engineering was definitely my first choice at West Point. In fact one time I considered trying to go into the Air Force, but received severe objections from my mother and decided to follow the easier track and not worry her too much, so I stayed with the Corps of Engineers.

SOAPES: And after Fort Logan and a marriage ceremony, where did you go then?

BROSHOUS: From there I went one year to California University and earned a Master's of Engineering, taking the standard courses there offered for the U.S. Army Engineers.

SOAPES: This was at Berkeley?

BROSHOUS: At Berkeley, yes.



SOAPES: And after the master's degree?

BROSHOUS: Then one year at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

SOAPES: This would have been about 1938, '39?

BROSHOUS: This would be '38-'39. I went there and took the one-year company officers' course, standard for regular U.S. Army engineer officers.

SOAPES: You were a 1st lieutenant at this time?

BROSHOUS: I was a 1st lieutenant at that time.

SOAPES: And after the course was over?

BROSHOUS: After that I was assigned to West Point for a tour as an instructor in the Department of Military Art and

Engineering. We first started out trying to teach both courses, one day military art, the next day engineering. But when several of the officers got up at night and started moving furniture and doing odd things, the department head decided that it'd be better to let the cadets alternate between instructors and have us teach two days of engineering or two days of military art, cutting down tremendously on the preparation load. So I was then assigned to the engineering side and taught engineering up until about three months before I left West Point in '42 to go overseas.

SOAPES: Now military art is military tactics?



BROSHOUS: Yes. History, more accurately called military history.

SOAPES: And your first assignment overseas then, where did you go?

BROSHOUS: Well, interestingly enough, in about February, 1942 the Army put out orders that regular army officers could not be aides of generals less than lieutenant general. The superintendent at West Point was a major general, so he had to lose

his aide. Well if there's ever a place where an experienced aide is needed, especially during graduation when they have all the celebrations and ceremonies around graduation, it's West Point. So I was selected by the superintendent to become his aide in addition to my teaching duties. I received considerable experience in what an aide should do at West Point, just before going overseas. In about March, my old boss from Fort Peck, then Colonel Thomas B. Larkin, was selected to become chief of staff over in the ETO and he called and asked if I wouldn't like to get in on the activity and go with him. General [Francis B.] Wilby, who was superintendent at West Point, stated I couldn't go until after graduation because I was very heavily engaged in preparations of and for the activities. So General Larkin agreed that I could wait and come after graduation. I was assigned and took off and went to London in June of 1942.



SOAPES: And you went then onto Larkin's staff?

BROSHOUS: When I got to London--I think it's a rather interesting little sideline--everything was so beautiful at that time of the year that you couldn't believe that there was a

war going on. I hope I'm not giving too many details.



SOAPES: No. Go right ahead, doing just fine.

BROSHOUS: So I got there and was very disappointed because General Larkin told me that he had to fill his staff shortly after getting there and that it was now full and he was sorry, but he thought he had a good slot for me and for me to come back the next day and he would talk with me about it.

That night I went to bed in a little hotel in London. London, of course, was full of bombing incidents. I was thoroughly briefed that I should not turn on lights at night and all those kind of things. So, sure enough, about two in the morning the Germans came over bombing and the racket of the ack-ack and bombing immediately got me out of bed. I put on my clothes as quickly as I could in the dark and ran out in the hall and found an old scrub lady out there scrubbing the floors. I asked her where was the air-raid shelter--she says, "Oh, go on back to bed. You're just as apt to get hurt running for the air-raid shelter as you are in bed. You might as well take it easy." I immediately turned around and sheepishly went back and got in bed and

that's the last time I got out of bed for the bombers.

The next day I went to see General Larkin and he told me that they needed somebody to start operations down in the southern area of England and that they had decided I would be a good one to start it. So I immediately got in one of these old, big, high command cars and tookoff. My attempt to drive on the left-hand side of the road was the scourge of everybody from London down to Wilton, just outside of Salisbury. It's one of the beautiful cathedral towns in the Salisbury Plain area. Wilton is where they make Wilton rugs. There I reported in to the British Southern Command headquarters in the castle there in Wilton.

SOAPES: And what was your specific assignment there?

BROSHOUS: I was directed to start a headquarters there in preparation and support for the American forces that would soon be coming to England to invade France. I reported in to the British Southern Command headquarters and there talked to the administrative commanding general. I was rather upset when I first talked to the Commanding General because he had it in mind that I would just be a liaison officer there



and would maybe bring a few liaison officers down and that the British would provide all the command supply support for the Americans. He said this would be so much easier for the U.S., all you need to bring is the labor and fighting troops. I, of course, having talked with General Larkin, in London, saw it otherwise--that we would provide our own command and have control of our own supplies, and troops, because if we had some other country, such as the British, dishing out our supplies they would control our every activity, almost to mothering us. So I told him that that wasn't it, he was rather indignant, I was rather stubborn. So finally, after much stubborn argument, he talked to his superiors and they agreed that we could set up a complete U.S. organization.

So immediately I went around and checked--I was the only American in southern England at the time, first one--I went around and checked and found that they had area engineers similar to what we have and they had district engineers with district administrative headquarters for quartermaster and ordnance and other needed services. So it seemed to me the easiest way to get along and to operate smoothly, because we all had to use the same roads, railroads, and communications,



would be to set up my organization paralleling theirs, which was pretty much the same as ours. So I selected places that I thought were most important and then awaited the arrival of officers and enlisted people to staff the organizations needed by our Service of Supply. Since it was going to be quite some time before, and none of us knew then exactly when the invasion would come, we wanted something more permanent than just tent camps. The British had already started in advance, anticipating our arrival, building a lot of, what they call temporary camps, but they were actually more permanent than we thought necessary. That was all right too, as long as mostly the British were building them in the early days. They built the camps or were working on them to the tune of four or five hundred thousand capacity. At the same time they were going through the towns, and we finally, we joined them to see how many soldiers they could house with private families in their homes. Their plans called for a headquarters and support camp in a town with the soldiers living with the families. The British Command were insistent and pushed the people into taking in the U.S. soldiers, much more so than I believe we could have done here in the United



States. I think we'd get reactions against forcing them into private homes.



SOAPES: Right. The Americans have this tradition about not quartering troops from two hundred years ago.

BROSHOUS: Right. And so we pushed on. As we received more officers, troops, and supplies, we established our own headquarters organization to work along side the British and started building our own depots, camps and headquarters. Of course, the main planning was done all up in London from information we gathered and sent to them. And then they would send back plans, approved by the British, for hospitals, camps, depots, and billets in homes and all needs of a gigantic operation. Training areas were taken over for the Americans. In fact, we in some cases took over some of their permanent army camps, such as Tidworth--they turned it over to the Americans and they moved elsewhere. We took that southwestern area, and the British moved over more to the east for their buildup.

SOAPES: Was there a particular reason why the Americans went into the southwest?

BROSHOUS: I can't answer that, but I think it was the larger area and we were going to have the larger forces and we could spread out. It was near the seaports where our materials were coming in. It just seemed to me the logical place. I wasn't consulted in that; the decision was made up in the higher echelons.



SOAPES: What type of information were you sending up to higher headquarters?

BROSHOUS: Well the British naturally were very careful; being a very small country they couldn't just use land as luxuriously as we. They tried very much to maintain their agricultural area. If we had our way we would take the best construction site; always that turned out to be the best agricultural site because it was well drained and level. They wanted us to build in the less desirable areas which created a hell of a construction problem--drainage, hills, and in some cases it was just loblolly mud down in the lowlands where it might be flooded. So we would gather in all that information on sites, plus go out and pick other sites which we thought could be used and send that info in to our side. The British

would send in their ideas, and then each side would get together in London at the bigger headquarters and negotiate. For instance they wanted us to build in a very, very poor site a very large depot, and I could see nothing but headaches and expense in building at the selected site. Of course I could agree with the British that that was the best site as far as they were concerned. But we picked out the Queen's race track at Newbury, feeling that it was high time when we forgot racing and got along with the war effort.

Actually it always seemed to me there were two ideas: One, the Americans'--let's get this damned war, excuse me, get this war over with and get home; whereas the British were more accustomed to war and many of them had better jobs, were making more money during war than they did in peace time and so they took more of a matter of fact attitude--we'll get it over in due time and let's don't rush at our expense.

Well anyway, there was a feeling on our part that in some cases they were building camps for further use after the war for recreation areas, whereas we as Americans were only interested in a camp for the period we were going to need it. In construction I'll always remember the British. When they made



a grease trap for a kitchen, where one pours the grease and it goes down and is trapped, the British would trowel it very beautifully till it was almost a work of art. Whereas the British couldn't get over the Americans--we'd take a broom and level it off by brushing and that was it. It was going to be covered up with grease anyway. I think you'll find that British construction is usually over built. It's built for long-time permanency, whereas we build these aluminum buildings and other works planning to tear them down anyway in a few years so we might as well get on with the job and get on to something else. We decided that if we're going to fight a war, we've got to get things done and get it done in a hurry and on with it.

So we developed the big Newbury race track. All that was needed was a few holes through the grandstand to run the trains in, knock down the fence and use the center and entire racing area for beautiful storage. Of course that was a little sacrilegious to the British to tear down the Queen's own race track, but I understand when we sent all this dope in to London that the powers that be got together with Churchill and he agreed with the Americans that the track had to go.



So there was considerable arguments, two factions. One who wanted to save the good ground for other purposes, especially agriculture, and make use of the inferior land; whereas we--the heck with that, we didn't want to expend all that time and expense.



SOAPES: Were there arguments between you and the British who you had direct contact with on this point, or were these types of debates held mainly in London and you got your impressions of the British view from there?

BROSHOUS: Both.

SOAPES: Both ways?

BROSHOUS: We had our debates with our own opposite numbers in rank and then, of course, each one would send their viewpoints and arguments up through their chain of command to London for decisions. In fact, recalling one very serious one--when we got our own construction troops in England and started building with American soldiers and our own construction men, many of our construction regiments were made up of people from construction agencies in the United States, and

they were professionals and hence didn't like to waste time. But from out of London came a British directive that we would only get gravel and building materials from specified low bidders. So we would start building. Well once in a while the cheapest sand, gravel, or sewer pipe bidder would be up in the middle of England, one hundred miles away, whereas we could go right across the road from the job and get our needs from a local contractor. Once in a while we would get orders to get gravel, to run our trucks, say, twenty-five miles down the road to a specific gravel pit who was low bidder and carry the gravel back twenty-five miles to this site, whereas our construction down near that gravel pit would be coming down to the gravel pit near our site for their gravel. This made each one travel fifty miles when they could have gone across the road and traveled a minimum of miles. This immediately upset the American construction efficiency men tremendously. So we got in an argument--why couldn't we select the nearest and easiest and save a lot of effort and time? Well they said no, we're directed by the Blue Coats, they called them, in London as to where we get supplies for each job. Well I just thought this was so ridiculous that I personally went in and talked with General John C.H. Lee in London, head of our



Service of Supply. General Lee arranged a meeting with his Chief Engineer and the British Chief of Engineers. When I showed them what was happening General Lee said, "This is ridiculous." Shortly thereafter we received orders, I think a little begrudgingly, that we could swap and get the needed materials where they were most readily available. Some cases we were being served construction materials from the middle of England, the trains would be stopped due to embargo for more important traffic and here was our thousands of construction men sitting there waiting for materials doing nothing, with the materials available across the road at another unauthorized supplier. So I authorized our construction men to go across the road and say, "We're not going to wait, we're going to buy it here." Of course that was breaking British regulations and was very much frowned on by my compatriots on the British side. We had to go to London and get that settled. I told them that we're doing what's right to push the effort to get ready for the invasion. I think most British at our level applauded. It was the Blue Coats in London that objected but they soon went along with us.



SOAPES: Your immediate superior, was that Lee or Larkin?

BROSHOUS: Lee was the commander; General Larkin was his chief of staff in the early days.



[Interruption]

SOAPES: We're talking about the period about late '42, early '43?

BROSHOUS: Late '42, and all of '43. By '44 we had them in line.

SOAPES: Are you still a captain or have you been promoted?

BROSHOUS: No, I was promoted to Captain at West Point in 1940, to major enroute to England, and six months later, was promoted--after I'd been there in England--about December '42 I'd say, I was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. All this time units were coming in and we were building up our strength and we had established what we called Southern Base Section with three construction districts in the section, and each district had its own areas where we had sufficient activity to warrant them. And considering this organization, I always thought it

a humorous story, they had a big meeting in London, because we were working with the British so closely. And I remember one of the major decisions was that if we would call gasoline, "petrol," they would call lorries, "trucks." As things progressed we built up 200,000 hospital beds, getting ready for the casualties to come back when and if we had the invasion. We were heading for somewhere in the vicinity of a million spaces for people to be housed in our area for the build up, and then we built what they call marshalling areas, camps from Southampton, Torquay, Bournemouth, to Plymouth, all the main ports along the southern edge, camps and what the British call hardstands, we'd call them parking areas, for trucks with fences around them so that the troops could be placed in these areas, marshalled for overseas shipment in combat readiness, meaning that they would take away all the clerks and cooks and all unnecessary equipment so they could go on the invasion as stripped-down fighting units. Once stripped the five hundred thousand men would be fed and maintained by our SOS troops. And we were building that all at the same time.

SOAPES: You mentioned earlier that the British had had the idea that they were going to be in charge of supplying



American troops and that sort of thing. Was this a position that General Larkin had anticipated the British taking?



BROSHOUS: No, the first I ran into that was when I checked in with the British at their Southern Command at Wilton, the little town outside Salisbury where this castle was, and they gave me an office. I said, "I'd be interested in seeing where I could build my headquarters near you."

He said, "You won't need any headquarters; all we propose to have are liaison officers."

That is the time I had to bow my neck and say that's not it. Then I contacted General Larkin and he said, "You're definitely right. We, naturally, are going to bring our own supplies and set up our own supply agencies and supervise and command our own troops. We're not going to be dependent on any allied group for their whims and whatnot, especially when we move to France we'll be completely dependent on our own."

SOAPES: You said that you had several outlying base areas. What was your relationship with these, I think you said three, other areas?

BROSHOUS: Just like a division office in the corps of engineers here has three districts, we commanded them--thru Engineer Channels. We first built this up as completely an engineer command. But not too long after, headquarters in London decided to use our command organization, and they started sending in to Wilton a complete Southern Base Section of all services--we originally named it the Southern Engineer Section, they changed it into a base section and sent in General [Charles O.] Thrasher to command it. I helped him organize the base section and we decided naturally we'd have engineers, ordnance, transportation, medical, signal, and quartermaster, a complete SOS [Service of Supply] headquarters. Then down in the districts as we called them--the districts became little base sections with a few officers of each branch to supervise and inspect, construction and other services, to check the hospitals under development. We had this tremendous 200,000 bed outlay of hospitals under our command.

SOAPES: How fast did number of personnel grow? By say, mid-'43 is this now a large, growing operation?



BROSHOUS: The dates are a little bit vague, but we built up to a strength of something like three or four hundred thousand in southern England. A large number were engineers, construction people, to do all the building with a few people coming in as advisers and then gradually starting to operate the depots and the maintenance facilities, tank repair, all of the many--I could spend half the morning telling you all the various things we had going on to prepare to supply a tremendous force.

But then all at once we got word that we in England were going on a stand-by basis and that it was decided to invade Africa first. So immediately Hq. ETO took the core of the supply effort for Africa from England. That time I tried to get my name on the list and go where the action would be--to Africa. But General Lee, since I'd been there from the first and probably know more about the development in southern England than anybody, stated that if General Larkin was going and General [Morris W.] Gilland, who they sent down as a brigadier general over me, was going--they could not take us both so I had to stay. So I sat and watched our complete operation grind to a halt, but knowing that sooner or later



they were going to come back and we'd go into action again.

And we had some rather distressing events happen during that time. We constantly had problems with the black and white situation. In England there are very few colored people, and the British were constantly told by their command to take the blacks into their homes just like the whites. Well, our white troops were not accustomed to that, and in many cases there were conflicts. Probably one of my biggest problems during mark time days was to keep the blacks and whites from fighting. In fact we actually had to go in to authorizing colored troops freedom to go in to town one night and white troops alternate nights because when the white soldiers would see a cute little blond British girl walking down the street with blacks, they'd go and take her away. Of course a razor situation soon developed. We knew we couldn't win the war fighting each other, internally. Many injuries and even deaths were the result.

Our units then were either all black or all white except officers. The white units had the construction supervisors from the states who were true professionals, and were better organized and capable of doing much better work. The black



units had black sergeants who were untrained. Their equipment was ususally in terrible shape. They just weren't capable. We developed a new method of organization. I put one white outfit in charge, attached to them several black outfits--it was one of the starts of integration I guess--so that we could get the know-how of the white American, experienced professionals to run and supervise and assist, and direct the blacks. We, for practical purposes integrated these construction regiments. A regiment of engineers, construction, runs about fifteen hundred men. So we'd have one fifteen hundred white with three or four black outfits attached. It made a powerful and sizeable construction force. This super unit could take on all types of construction jobs. When Africa came up, General Larkin and his assistants in England knew which ones were the hot, good outfits and which ones were not. So they picked all the good ones to go to Africa and left us with the dregs. So I squawked heavily to General Lee. A rather interesting situation evolved because they'd ordered our one most efficient outfit under Colonel Carl Shaw to Africa. It was the most professional engineering construction unit I've ever seen. He had organized it in the



States and had gone around and picked professional construction people for it so that he had a well-experienced, smart, brilliant outfit. They were ordered to go and were a very smart outfit. They had band instruments that they'd smuggled from some place; had a tremendous PX, candies, tobacco and such, and more, and had it all hid in their construction equipment. Their construction equipment was in first-class superious condition as it was loaded on the trains to send to the port for loading for Africa.

By this time we were all screaming because they were taking all our best outfits. So then General Eisenhower made the decision that we'd have to split the wealth, keep some of the good ones back in our organization and send some of the less efficient to Africa. They decided to substitute a black regiment for Colonel Shaw's white regiment. So they dictated the way to do it, instead of getting the equipment back which had already gone to the port and was being loaded, just have the two regiments exchange equipment. You can imagine the screaming and yelling that the white outfit did while taking the equipment of the black regiment, in terrible condition, to replace their finely honed machines, losing all their band instruments, all their PX stuff, and everything that they'd



smuggled on to take with them. But they soon got over it.

We settled down to await the word to start up again. It was a rather slack time. One very interesting thing which happened--when the Engineer Construction Regiments arrived toward the end of '42 and '43. The Regiments were commanded by full colonels, and on arrival were assigned to my headquarters. So I'd go out and inspect them as a lieutenant colonel but I used the better valor of command--I asked them what orders they would give if they were me and had to give them instructions. And in most cases they would come up with what they would do, so then I'd say, "That's what we're going to do," rather than direct. They were very much senior to me, a lieutenant colonel. I'd only been in the service about ten years and some of those had twenty, twenty-five, thirty years service. It was rather odd for me telling them what to do. The crux of the whole situation came when the adjutant general said, "You, a lieutenant colonel, can't write efficiency reports on a full colonel." This created quite an administrative problem.

My boss, General Thrasher, was very pleased with my job as his chief engineer. So he told General Lee, "I don't want to give him up. See no reason why we should bring some



full colonel in and give him the job, when Broshous is doing it outstandingly well."

So Lee said, "How can we get this straightened out?"

Thrasher said, "Promote him to colonel, and then he can change his signature."

So, the adjutant general said, "I think that's a good solution." General Lee agreed, so they promoted me to colonel about two months after I was made a lieutenant colonel.



SOAPES: Oh, my.

BROSHOUS: That was a great break for me. I hope these aren't details which are uninteresting.

SOAPES: No, they're frequently very useful. One thing a historian learns very quickly is that you never know what story or what document might be useful to someone else. So we're certainly glad to have this, because this is the type of inside thing that's going on that doesn't get in the Army's official histories and certainly isn't reflected in our manuscript holdings.

This slack period, how long did that last?

BROSHOUS: I guess about six months when they invaded Africa, the invasion of Sicily and Italy, and then they decided they were prepared to come back and go from this end. I would say it lasted for about six months.



SOAPES: And during that period, you did very little construction or--

BROSHOUS: Well we worked with what we had. We continued on, but they took the guts out of our operation. We worked as hard as we could with what we had left, because the supplies and everything were all going to Africa and we were playing second fiddle.

SOAPES: Did you ever use British civilian employees?

BROSHOUS: Yes, we had quite a few British civilian employees that worked for us, but mostly the British worked their own people under what they called MOWP, Ministry of Works Public. Most of those people were very fine but old artisans. They worked pretty much for the British doing the work for us. We got along very well with the British at the lower level. The only thing I ever felt is that they make these very

detailed plans and then follow them very slowly and carefully, whereas we were anxious to get along and get things over with. Whenever we had a meeting to discuss a site, a construction site, there'd always be about one or--usually myself, but there'd be eight or ten British officers of general and colonel's rank. And of course, for that reason, I would never allow us to vote. My vote was as good as all of theirs because we'd never have won when they have many more staff officers attending the meetings than we did. I think they used their heads, which is all right, I mean there's nothing wrong with it--they'd have a meeting the night before and determine their position so they had eight votes and here I was with my one vote.

SOAPES: So there basically was a harmonious relationship between American and British military types.

BROSHOUS: In overall, yes. In fact we celebrated the 4th of July together. [Laughter] Big celebration. And I lived for quite a while right in the British mess, with the British officers and got to know them and liked them very much. In fact I still have some mementos around that they gave me--



good-luck charms we gave each other. I'd give them an American dollar and they'd give me a British crown or something like that to carry around.

SOAPES: Were you in position to see or have some opinion about the cooperation of the American War Department with London? Did you see any of the traffic between those two?

BROSHOUS: Of course I had a very good friend, General George Lincoln, who then was Colonel Lincoln, and he was in England with the British War Office, and he always indicated to me they got along very well. He was a Rhodes Scholar, I think he understood them and he went back to the States and was [General John E.] Hull's chief planner. And I saw him in England once or twice when he'd come over and visit. I, personally, was down fairly low on the totem pole and had my own little problems, keeping me from worrying about the big ones. So I'd rather say that as far as I know they seemed to get along fine.

You're talking about the war offices, I always, from what I saw, thought [Field Marshal Sir Bernard] Montgomery



was a little pompous and thought he constantly showed it. Whenever I saw him with Eisenhower, he was a little miffed at having to take instructions and having to show any deference. He should, because Eisenhower was the commander and he was the commandee. Monty wanted it the other way.



SOAPES: Did you have much direct contact with Montgomery?

BROSHOUS: Just saw him at times, same as Eisenhower. He came down to view our headquarters and to see our plans. That was later on when we were getting close to the real invasion, which we haven't gotten to yet. But I would say I didn't have much contact other than just when the two were together.

I always remember the one incident where I was on the train arriving for a meeting with Eisenhower. Of course I was back with the hoi polloi. The big generals were up in the very front cars. The two trains came together and we kind of watched thinking that Montgomery would get out and come over and pay his respects to Eisenhower. He came on a special train, too. But, no, he got out, took right off. It rather griped us that he would so publicly snub the

Commanding General, but Eisenhower just passed it off and figured that was the best for the big effort.



SOAPES: Can you tell me something about the personality of General Larkin--what type of a man he was to work with?

BROSHOUS: General Larkin, when I first met him, was a major when he arrived at Fort Peck, Montana. He was one of the finest, kindest men I have ever known. He had a lovely family, a lovely wife. He was very quiet-spoken; he loved to play tennis and squash. In fact I was a junior officer and could play a little tennis and squash, so I was ordered to come in and pull him out of the office once a day, which I did. He ordered me to and so I went to his office and say, "Tennis?" He'd say, "I'm too busy."

I said, "No, you must go. You told me."

"Okay," he would reply.

He was, as far as I know, revered by everyone who knew him. In fact I've heard people say that they've gone into his office to make a complaint and after five minutes there they were very happy with his discussion of their problem and they would leave, but when they got three blocks down

the road, they tried to figure out what they'd gained and they'd gained nothing. He was very intelligent, very smart, a very close friend of Eisenhower's. Eisenhower used to come down to Paris and play bridge all the time with Larkin. I was invited several times to play, but I didn't think I was quite their speed so I reneged, but I've always regretted that I didn't accept.



SOAPES: But General Larkin was a man who certainly knew his job, had firm grasp of what was going on?

BROSHOUS: He was a terrific man and he used to run the communication zone. General Lee was one of these that always wanted to hear good things, so we'd have a staff meeting and everybody would tell only their good things, and then General Lee would leave and then Larkin would hold the second staff meeting and say, "Now tell me really what the bad things are so we can straighten them out." That's where the fights would surface between branches of the command. Larkin would actually settle disputes. It was a tremendous blow to our operations when he left because I don't think we ever got a chief of staff with near the finesse and ability and with the

affection that the entire unit had for him as General Larkin. After Africa he resumed Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff.

SOAPES: Who replaced him?

BROSHOUS: I believe the first one was Weaver, General [William G.] Weaver, infantryman, and he just didn't have the organizational experience. He was an infantryman, if you don't mind my saying so, and there's a hell of a lot of difference between the administrative experience of a man who's spent thirty years in the infantry versus a man who's spent thirty years in the corps of engineers.

SOAPES: Did this change hurt your operation markedly, or were you able to take up the slack because of your own experience and others'?

BROSHOUS: Well I think by that time we were pretty well set and I don't think it hurt us any to speak of. I think we could of gone on in the Southern Base Section if we hadn't had a headquarters above us. Sometimes I thought they were hindrances.



SOAPES: So you pretty well were running yourself by that time--

BROSHOUS: Right.



SOAPES: --and these people were acting as a liaison at a higher command level.

BROSHOUS: That's right. They'd set down the broad picture. We knew what we were doing, too. Now so far we've just gone up to where they've gone to Africa.

[Interruption]

SOAPES: You said you had several anecdotes.

BROSHOUS: During the period we're talking about in the early stages there were some quite interesting little things happened that I always recall. One was the fact that when we started counting up the number of billets that we had in all these British towns, countryside and all these places, trying to send in a report as to how many we had for sure now or what percent we had, we had an old adding machine--one of these with a crank you punch and pull the crank. When we

were working with the machine, I was quite amazed when the British officers said, "What is that?" We showed it to them, and they were so amazed at this labor-saving device--they'd had never seen one--that they took it back to their officers' mess for the weekend to play with. [Laughter]

Also I hadn't realized how superior our scientific technical aspects were because, when we went to the bars, they didn't have ice in most of them, only in the big hotels. And, of course, that was a little touchiness because the American GI would, "What?", you know, "you don't have ice in here; you're backward a hundred years!" And I just wonder sometimes if the Americans, if we'd been on the reverse as the British, could have stood it without a lot of fights.

Another thing, we tried to educate the GIs not to brag that everything back home is better than England; after all we're here as guests. But they'd tell the British about the pop-up toasters and all of the special machines which they don't have. In fact when I went in the bank there to cash a check I saw them all adding up figures, these long balance sheets and everything by hand. It seemed to me that that was another thing which made things difficult. If we ever have



to send a force over to a country again, (God forbid), that we've got to get a little better education about--mind your manners, Mr. GI, if you want to have the full cooperation of your hosts.



SOAPES: Right. I certainly saw some of that in Vietnam when I was there. Same sorts of problems. What I'd like to do now is to move on to the actual planning for the invasion. When did you get the word that we're definitely going in and we've got a target date?

BROSHOUS: We got the word rather roundabout. In fact I think it brings out a tremendous lesson in allied activities. I'll tell it the way it happened from my point of view.

SOAPES: Okay, fine.

BROSHOUS: One day about Friday in about the middle of November of '43 I got a call from General Royal B. Lord, chief of staff who had taken over from General Weaver, who took over from Larkin. He asked, "How are you doing on the Slapton Sands area?"

And I said, "How are we doing; I haven't heard of it."

British to turn over this area and to move everybody living there out, and to take all of the glass out of the churches, move everything of value, to make this area into a really a practice invasion area, full fledged, full dress, for as many as forty thousand troops at a time, and every week to try a new group until all U.S. invasion forces go through at least once, preferably twice, to give them vitally needed experience. And you haven't heard about it?"

I said, "No."

He said, "No one sent word down through the British Command channels?"

Bull said, "We just thought the British would tell them."

And Lord said, "Well this is terrible because we've just gotten word that the British are starting to move these people out. Some of these old people, eighty and ninety years old, are just dying rather than leave their homesteads. But General Devers has said we need it and the British said, 'Can't we wait until January sometime?' But General Devers said, 'No, that's too long, we've got to do it now, even before Christmas. We will have landing practice going on in there before Christmas.' And here it is the middle of November and you've done nothing."



We said, "This is the first we've heard of it."

So they said, "Well, what can we do?"

Our chief of staff said that he didn't think it was possible to get it done by then, very definitely.



They asked me, as Engineer, and I said, "We'll get it done. I don't know whether we'll come running down the road with our clothes hanging out of our suitcases but we'll get it done somehow."

They said, "The meeting is closed. Come back in fifteen minutes." We came back in fifteen minutes and they'd announced, "Broshous, you're now chief of staff and Deputy Base Section Commander, because we want somebody that says he can do it, at least make an attempt." I'm afraid our Chief of Staff was influenced by the British in their planned, calculated, slow movements.

Then they called in the British. The British said they thought it was impossible because it's right in the middle of what they call their slimy season when white chalk gets mushy. If you get off of the road you just sink into your vehicles' axles. We were less than half finished with the camps down in Plymouth area for the actual invasion because

they'd set the date to finish them up probably the first of May or something like that, and they really couldn't be used. So about that time they told me, "This has got to be done; we just can't get these people out of their homes and everything else unnecessarily; it'll be a hell of a blot on the United States if we don't use the area."

They then took off to London and that put me in a hell of a bind. But I knew I had working under me a man, who was actually my boss in Fort Peck days, Colonel Theodore Wyman. He was the man really in charge from the Kansas City end of construction of the Fort Peck dam, a tremendous construction planner and expediter.

SOAPES: Excuse me--his name is spelled W-y-m-a-n?

BROSHOUS: W-y-m-a-n. And he, also, before that, was instrumental in building all the airfields over towards the Philippines, that route which was tremendously effective in the effort over there. But he was one of these who was his own worst enemy; he was gruff and he'd chew on people above him a little bit once in a while, face-to-face, and so he was more or less stymied as a colonel. But anyway he had arrived



and reported with his regiment for duty with me. It's funny-- I reported for duty to him in '33, and he reported for duty to me in '43. So he was in charge of our western district as home base; in Taunton, England. He was in charge of the Plymouth area where we would load out and come back and land on Slapton Sands with the navy, the air force, and everything as in a full-fledged landing. He wanted to plan for about forty to forty-five thousand troops per week, Wyman had that area under his command. I called him late Sunday afternoon, said, "I'm in a hell of a spot." Told him the problem.

He said, "Come on out."

I said, "I'll be out tonight. We've got to spend the night and come up with something pretty quick."

He liked to drink; so I took a bottle of scotch and drove out, oh, about a hundred and fifty to seventy-five miles.

He had been sitting there thinking, and he said, "We don't have any time to finish these camps. They're not adequate anyway for a thing like this, too hard to run." He said, "You know, I've come up with a solution I think will work. What do you think of it?" And his solution was



what we called the bologna or sausage camps. Have you ever heard of it?

SOAPES: No, I haven't.

BROSHOUS: The idea is this--see if I can explain it. There were, leading into Plymouth and that area where we wanted to load the ships from Torquay to Plymouth about five parallel roads, five miles apart which go down north and south. There's farming on both sides, very few settlers. They're paved roads. He said, "We can get the British to let us close off every other road, the three big ones. They're about fifteen miles long. We can make them into one-way roads, we'll park all vehicles on the right side of the road, just on the shoulder, not getting out into the muck--our tanks and all types of trucks and vehicles in a big long line. Then just over the fence, on the edge of the farming area, we'll pitch tents, have our messing and kitchens and living quarters in tents. We'll order some units in to provide all the messing and administrative facilities so that when these units come in to embark they'll have already stripped down from their cooks, clerks, and extras. As for tentage, I've checked and



we can get it in a few days, we'll just go in tents instead of permanent camps using these bologna tent camps along these parallel roads. When ready to load, the troops can move out along the road of camps they occupy."

I said, "The one thing I'm worried about is an enemy airplane diving in and strafing up and down the road." So we checked with the air force and they guaranteed that they'd go onto full duty and alert. Further they said the greatest thing in the world would be if the Germans would send the rest of their planes back over here and let us take care of them. "Don't worry, for that would be one less thing to worry about on the main invasion. Give them the best target you can. We will take care of them."

So we made out the plans. I slept in my car as I rode into London with the plans. All were happy and overjoyed with the development of the bologna camps, thought it was great. Hq. SOS ordered the troops we needed. We set up the camps and were ready to go in about two weeks. On the day before Christmas, troops started arriving and were put in line at the bologna camps. The day after Christmas they took off



and made their practice landing. It was a huge success. We used those bologna and sausage camps through constant practice sessions and actually for some of the actual invasion forces. So that's the story of practice invasion. All Americans were happy. We didn't actually use some of the permanent camp. We used tent camps saving much time and money.



SOAPES: Now, getting--

BROSHOUS: Did I explain it well enough?

SOAPES: Fine, I think I've got a good idea of what you were doing there. Starting now about January of '44, is your routine beginning to change any at this point, or are you still doing the same sorts of things?

BROSHOUS: No, about that time in addition to building and pushing--hospitals and whatnot--we started receiving troops. I had to get into arranging for training areas to keep them busy. Of course they were always getting into problem situations which required a legal group to go around with the British and pay off the farmers for damages.

SOAPES: Was that a major problem in terms of your relationships with the British?

BROSHOUS: Well I don't think there ever was any problem. In fact they really pay off less than we do, so they were quite overjoyed with our settlements, and we were overjoyed with it because they were less than we estimated. For instance we had a rape case, that, when it all ended up, I think they charged the guy fifty dollars which was supposed to help pay for the baby. Everybody was happy. When I first heard about it I thought they'd probably put him in jail for ten years. The British are not as heavy on these kind of things as we are.



SOAPES: There was general cooperation then on these sorts of things.

BROSHOUS: Yes.

SOAPES: Did you think you really came to a satisfactory solution of the problems of what to do with the troops as they were coming in and finding enough for them to do to keep busy, and you were still building your physical plant, weren't you also?

BROSHOUS: We were still building the physical plant and getting it together. I can remember I had quite a time going around and settling the problems at night when they'd turn the troops loose on the town. They'd go into town and just take it over. They had more money, dollars, than the British so the pub owners raised their prices. Of course that didn't make the old British common person happy. And they'd run out of beer or ale or whatever it is, and that made the British very unhappy. So there was a little resentment there, but I would say that in general the British, although they would come and talk to me about it--I mean our opposite numbers--I thought they and the people practiced very good self-restraint. I think there'd been much more trouble with the flamboyant American if the British came in and took all the liquor and filled the theatres and really cramped us in a little area, especially if they had twice as much money and could buy everything. The British men were upset because the British gals liked to go out with the boys with the dough.

SOAPES: Turning back to the construction of your physical plant, did you encounter any new or different problems here,



or did this proceed smoothly to this point?

BROSHOUS: Well, we realized that with the flow of supplies and materials, that we wouldn't make our deadline. The plan was first developed with a few Americans and the British and it was to construct camps, Nissen huts and hard stands, semi-permanent construction. And we realized we'd never make it in time for the schedule. Also, then we had to plan how we would actually load the troops. For instance, we housed them all in central and southern England in semi-permanent camps that we had built for them to train and to live in. Then they were to be called forward to the marshalling areas according to General [Omar] Bradley and General Eisenhower's directives. We had room for about two hundred thousand in what we called our marshalling areas. The marshalling areas were just behind the docks. When troops were called to the marshalling areas, their cooks and clerks were sent to holding areas further back. The fighting troops lived in fenced in areas where they could be briefed on their exact points of landing and their objectives, maintaining secrecy. It was pretty hard to keep the fact secret that we were going to land someplace with all the activity going on, but the exact



point and time was what must be kept secret along with the exact objectives. Once they had all American, British, and French units briefed on where they were going to land before they loaded them on the landing barges and troop ships, they became pretty hot subjects; so they kept them locked in the gigantic pens so they couldn't communicate with anybody outside. One didn't know who they might talk to, who would divulge the secret information with millions of lives depending on secrecy. ETO produced a troop list made out listing the troop units they wanted to start with. Then they had a long list showing the units which they estimated they would want to follow. But the commanding general reserved the right to delay anybody and move a unit forward. For instance, if he'd lost on the invasion all his artillery, then he'd want to move artillery forward to make up for the loss. Now the way we took care of that is, we had communications with all of the camps of the entire area from up in this middle England to the docks. We, in liaison with the headquarters in London, the planning people, ordered the troop movement. The troops moved gradually down in a planned marching order from camp to camp site towards the marshalling areas. Then we had it



so that on certain orders from London, units would make certain moves on D minus 20, D minus 15, D minus 10, et cetera. Well everything worked out fine. We had all units listed on tags and kept on nails on our huge map with the camps showing their locations; so that when a unit had an order to move they'd put a red notice on the board that they were under orders to move to their next stop enroute to the marshalling areas. Upon arrival they would phone in to our central headquarters and check in. Further they also had orders that when they hit certain places they were to draw certain materials and equipment. Many units came overseas with minimum equipment. We couldn't give each unit their full complement of equipment the minute they landed. Usually they received fifty percent for training purposes. We would bring them up to seventy-five percent when they hit certain areas near our equipment depots. By the time they reached the marshalling area, units should be with full equipment. The only equipment we had in the marshalling areas were replacement vehicles and replacement equipment for machines that wouldn't work. We didn't want a soldier to have to push his tank on and off the landing craft, which actually happened



in certain cases in the British invasion--actually they had to push the truck on and push it off the landing craft and then get it started under fire. We tried to give our Americans full, workable equipment, the best we possibly could. We got all set to go and reached the point close to the D minus 20 day. Someone had to start the initial movement. I said, "I'm not going to initiate the move," because it doesn't take a very smart man who gets orders to move the first step down toward marshalling areas on D-20 to count on his fingers, learning D-Day is twenty days later. To me that's giving away top secret information. I think only one or two people in our area knew the actual date of D-Day.



SOAPES: Were you one of those people?

BROSHOUS: I was one of those. I didn't know how to get the movement started without more or less divulging top secret information; I drove up to Bradley's headquarters, I said, "Who is going to give me a written note saying it's okay to put the revealing orders out? I don't want D-Day to become known and have the powers that be put me on the cross for divulging the top secret which I've been sworn to keep."

going to go? If we end up in France without our full equipment,

General Bradley said he didn't want to do it, it was a little bit too hot for him to handle, that he was going to see Ike that night and he would talk with him, see if he would say go ahead and do it and give kind of an okay so we would be protected. He would call me that evening. He called me that night and said, "Ike says use your own judgment."

SOAPES: Whatever's right!



BROSHOUS: Whatever's right. So I said, "Somebody's got to start this war." So, on the proper day, we had all our officer messengers lined up and we started sending out the orders to move on the 20th of May and later. All major units had books; all they had to do was look in the book and match up the D-minus date and the movement date and they'd know D-Day. But as far as I know it never leaked out, because we caught the Germans by surprise.

[Interruption]

SOAPES: As you got down into this last twenty days, you've talked about the movement of personnel. Were there any particular problems in getting equipment, getting it in place where the men could pick it up and be supplied? And

also the larger equipment, vehicles, tanks, that sort of thing--major problems there?

BROSHOUS: We had some very interesting problems during this stage which I'll try to recall. First of all we had one of the early units arrive, scheduled to draw equipment at certain times. The depot commanders, who were a little lazy, told them, "Oh, no, you can wait til you get down to two or three more stations; they'll give you your shortages of equipment down there."



Well at the last minute General Bradley decided that he needed more infantry. So he said, "Substitute such-and-such infantry division for a like number of other troops. Push them ahead."

We sent orders out to this division commander to jump everybody and, instead of going to station two to go down to station six, beyond the point he was supposed to have already drawn his full equipment. He thought at station two or three he'd have time to get it. Well immediately I had outside my office quite a senior group crying, "What the hell are we going to do? If we end up in France without our full equipment,

all of us are going to be sacked. We realize we should have drawn it back at the places ordered, but we were lulled to think we could get it at the next few stops, that we had a couple of weeks instead of two days." That night I had my staff check with them on exactly what they needed and we called the depots that had the equipment, told them to put it on trucks and deliver it to the marshalling area. We realized then we would have to have express service to correct mistakes.

Interestingly enough, all my life in Atchison, Kansas, my family used to take me down to see the Missouri Pacific fast freight which delivered fruit from the south through Kansas City to Omaha. It always had a couple of engines steaming and was quite a fast train. It went up a hill near my home there, steaming and a-puffing. It was called the "Red Ball." So I decided that that was my idea of fast freight; so I said, "Put a big, red ball on the front of your truck and that will immediately give you priority with all MPs and British on express deliveries." That was the beginning of the "Red Ball Express Service," used in England and later carried on, which I arranged for with the advance



section in France, on the "Red Ball Highway." It was named after the old Missouri Pacific fast freight from Kansas City to Omaha.

SOAPES: I'll be darned. I've never heard that story before.

BROSHOUS: Well anyway, our depots delivered the missing equipment to the division at the marshalling area via Red Ball. I understand the division was still getting equipment to the proper units when they landed in France, just due to the fact they didn't draw it when they were told. With all that traffic going to the docks and with civilian traffic too, there were traffic jams, but it all worked out very well. Before the actual invasion, there were a number of feints, sending troops out then bringing them back, just like the real invasion to keep the Germans off balance. At the same time in a large area in eastern England a special army group headquarters operated with all their radios. The British Home Guard radioed messages back and forth, put up fake airplanes and fake landing barges and all sorts of activity to try to give the enemy the idea that the major action was in the east and they did suck them in, that they were going to cross from



Dover, the short way. As they had all these feints, the medical corps--guess these things are written up in all the books--were there. When they went out on a feint they had to put blood on, gallons of whole blood. In these big ships with refrigeration it was all right, but in these small landing craft, they had nothing but put it in ice, then dump it at the end of the feint. The doctor came steaming up to our office saying, "My God, we're losing thousands of gallons of blood. We're not going to have enough for the invasion." People in the States were giving it pints at a time. When they had one of these feints and when it came back, they couldn't use it again--it had been out from refrigeration too long. So we assisted the Medical Corps to put a pen around their blood distribution facility and then we put MPs around it so there'd be no communication. We told the commander whether it was a feint or not and he filled these big milk cans accordingly with water, saving the blood for the final effort. We lost a hell of a lot of blood till we learned our lesson.

Could I give you a couple of other little quick ones?

SOAPES: Sure, sure.

BROSHOUS: The other thing we realized, the mappers, engineers, and their maps had a special map distribution area and they planned for the users to come and pick up the maps, but we wouldn't let them out of the pens because after all, carrying these maps around with them with all of the objectives and secret info marked on them was not good. So we immediately had to come up with a plan in which we got a series of MP escorts and took the maps out to the marshalling areas. That was one big problem which should be thought of if we ever have any other invasion like this--is how you deliver secret information.



Then I got a call from General Lee himself, just before the invasion when we locked the troops in the pens. He said, "You've got to do something because the chaplains are raising hell." You see, you have one chaplain maybe or two for a brigade of field artillery. When we loaded them in the pens, rather than have a complete unit go by itself, if the ship was sunk we'd lose the whole unit, a major portion of our field artillery. So we split them up in small units, pieces, and put them in different pens so they'd go in different ships and then come together when they got over there with what was left.

SOAPES: Did they actually come together, were there any problems with--?

BROSHOUS: Well there was problems finding each other, but they did pretty well. They were all landed on the same beach but in these different little ships so that if one ship goes down we wouldn't lose all of one type unit.

The chaplain had been with a unit for some time and he wanted to see his men and the men wanted to see him before they took off on this dangerous mission. The chaplains wanted the right to go back and forth between all of these pens to give solace to all of their young men. Well we couldn't allow the chaplains freedom, they could've been the biggest spy in the world running around with his collar backwards, roaming back and forth between pens, out and back. We had to make a decision in a hurry. I decided that we'd have jeeps running back and forth with MPs and they would take chaplains from pen to pen on schedules with a guard with a gun in their back with orders to shoot them if they had any contact with anybody outside the pens. That's the way we got over that hump, which I think is rather interesting.

SOAPES: Getting down to the actual day of the invasion, June 6,



and 7 and 8, did things go according to plan at the time of the invasion? I know there was that delay of a day because of the weather and then you have the actual invasion itself. Did things go as you expected them or were there surprise problems?

BROSHOUS: Well, there's one really funny problem, if you don't mind a little nastiness.

SOAPES: Okay.



BROSHOUS: When we had our first practice invasions, that's when we found a lot of the problems cropping up. One of the first problems we found out was they they considered one "Mae West" per soldier. On the first one we found it was averaging considerably more. Why? Because American GIs, who are very innovative, realized, in his "Mae West", trying to carry a base plate to a machine gun would throw him over. We lost a hell of a lot of base plates because, hell, a guy's going to drop his base plate; he's not going to drown there hanging on to it or even the muzzle of a machine gun, the barrel, was just too heavy. So the second time around they were smart. They put "Mae Wests" on them too. We had to fly over a hell of a lot of "Mae Wests" in a hurry, even for the practice invasions because we were using them up faster than planned. Although

we got most of them back in the practice invasions, we knew we wouldn't when they were sunk. And one joke among all the people there was the GIs got smart as we practiced--I think we learned more in supplying them in these practice invasions than they did going on them. They learned to draw a dozen condoms before each landing. They'd put one over the rifle barrel, put their Bible in one, put their cigarettes, four or five packs of cigarettes and matches in several, their wallet in one, in fact it was the greatest waterproofing equipment in the world. Even in the practice invasion we realized it took us about ten to put a GI on the beach. Of course the quartermaster, when he first found out they were being used like flies, phoned me up and said, "I need a plane load of condoms flown over immediately from the States." Of course the standard answer was, "What the hell we going to France for?" We did fly a plane load over before the invasion for the waterproofing assistance. If you were going to land on a hostile shore and wade in up to your neck in water--you, too, would want your matches and cigarettes and candy and whatnot dry.

Then we had a big problem. When we first started these practice invasions, we found that it takes quite a few people to pass out cigarettes and candy and all that stuff needed and



to feed and clean one group and get ready for the next group to come in at the same time. And, as usual, our staffs had underestimated the amount of people required. They didn't want to send them over a large number of service people who, once the invasion was launched, would be useless. So they sent combat troops, and we used combat troops to run the camps. Well of course they had to put their vehicles over in storage areas, and they were very unhappy, you know, great big fighting troops being KPs and stuff like that. I was called to a meeting. Some friends of mine were in the group that were coming over from the U.S. to inspect our preparations and General [Joseph] McNarney was the big efficiency man from America heading the group. He told my friends on the plane coming over, they told me, that he was going to tear us apart, that we were just crazy--using too many troops and putting out too much stuff. We gave the troops only beef and chicken--we refused the pork because we were afraid it'd make them sick; the doctor said that beef and chicken was the best as far as seasickness is concerned. As far as we were concerned we wanted to do everything we could for this GI which we knew many would not be back, wouldn't live through it. We thought the people back home would say, "Give them the best." Well anyway McNarney



came in and we showed him everything we had planned, how it operated, how we were going to operate, how we had operated on the practice ones. He said, "Don't you think that's too expensive? I think we ought to cut it down."

I said, "General, I think if we went home and asked the people back there what we should do for these people who many are going to sudden death, they'd say, 'Leave no string unturned.' And that's my policy, to leave no string unturned for their comfort or to assist them in this mission, to live through this mission. Now if you want to cut out anything, if you'll just tell me so, I'd just like a little written note what you want us to cut out."

He said, "You make it too tough. Thank you."

So we went ahead and operated on as planned. We actually had one full division. In fact it turned out better than several regiments lay down their arms and then move in to handle marshalling duties--cooking, KP, cleaning, bedding, passing out materials. The division had their own command group. Marshalling areas had special depots of a few items so they could exchange any item that was bad, because we didn't want anybody to get on that ship without full and best equipment we could provide. The 5th Armored Division was our biggest marshalling unit. They were



really unhappy, but I told them and luckily, I said, "I'll try to get you out of it in a month," knowing that I thought we could get them out in two weeks. So I was quite a hero. I got them off this job in two weeks, but they did a beautiful job and it's my recommendation not to send a bunch of casuals ever to handle housekeeping jobs, but to send trained units with their staff and commander because then you've got a full organization to do the job. They all did a fine job until we closed up the marshalling areas, as soon as we could send ships directly in and troops and all directly to France.



When the invasion started, because of the storm, the ships did not come back. A lot of them were held up in France and some of them never came back. Our pipeline started clogging up, because everybody was moving down towards the marshalling areas and nobody going out. This started quite a traffic jam, but we were able to hold them up enough--and the storm ended just about the right time or we would have been in trouble--to take the load off and relieve the jam.

Two other things which I think are quite important. One

was, I said before, the British used the permanent camp setup, and they planned for that. Our units all carry complete tentage. When we did get crowded we'd just say, "Here's a field; draw your supplies over here; glad to have met you; take care of yourselves." The units were very resourceful and enabled us to take care of these jams by just putting them in the fields using their unit tentage. In fact, as I said before, we didn't complete the full permanent facilities. We actually used many fields with British permission. The units just took care of themselves, their own tents, latrines and all. I started in June of '42 with one man in southern England; I signed a ration strength just before the invasion for feeding nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-one.



Let's see I had one other point that, see the tentage-- just can't think of it now.

SOAPES: Okay, perhaps we can come back to it. After the invasion, did your unit move physically over to France?

BROSHOUS: Actually, five days after the invasion, D+5, an advance section similar to ours at Southern Base moved over

to France and started supply facilities there. The deputy commander and chief of staff of the advanced section had a heart attack D plus 8. He was just a little too old and couldn't take it. So I got orders to pack my bags and get up to London and take an airplane out for France on D plus 10. I became the chief of staff and deputy commander of the advance section following right behind [Leonard] Gerow, 1st Army, Bradley, 12th Army Group, and [George] Patton, Third Army. And at Southern Base Section, I don't know how they got along without me, but they continued and finished the operation supplying and shipping troops over from England until they finally opened ocean-going ports in France. Then they shipped everything over direct from the U.S. leaving the forces back in England to clean up. They kept shipping until they emptied these depots, and then went through the business of closing out.



SOAPES: After the invasion was underway and the beachhead was established, did supply come directly from the United States to France, or did it go through England?

BROSHOUS: As soon as we opened up deep water ports and

facilities so we could take ocean-going ships, we started unloading in France. But they kept supplying from England as long as supplies lasted.

SOAPES: Did this supply from the United States, did that come through Quiberon or--

BROSHOUS: Through what?



SOAPES: Quiberon. Perhaps my French is not--Q-u-i-b-e-r-o-n. I think was a large port that was opened on the--

BROSHOUS: No, first U.S. supplies on ships came through Cherbourg. Then the Brittany Peninsula opened up and supplies came from ports in that area, finally LaHavre was opened for business. Then finally Amsterdam was set in operation.

When we first arrived in France we were all crowded into a little area--practically every available space was occupied by depots, supplies, or troops. Everyone said, "This is the time, if the Germans use it, they'll use gas, so keep your gas masks close at hand." That alerted the guards. Practically every night they'd ring the old gong, the "gas attack" signal. When one guard'd hear it from the next door neighbor, he'd

signal and it'd keep going around. I remember I put on that gas mask, scared to death, went outside with my gas mask on, I've never found one that I thought was comfortable; you're breathing in hard--and finally after about ten minutes I thought, "What is the signal for gas attack over?" I still don't know. But when breathing got so damn hard you thought I'd just as soon die as keep this damn thing on, so I took it off. We had one very senior officer who tied his gas mask to the tent pole. When the alarm sounded he put on the gas mask and ran outside. Of course when he got to the end of the straps, it threw him back by the neck. He was off duty for about three or four days.

There was many stories during that close living until Patton finally broke out. From then on our major problem was to provide Patton with gas, petrol. Advanced Section jumped from near Carentan and followed Third Army into LeMans. When we moved forward we turned over our area to the new Cherbourg base section. I will always remember our push to build gasoline pipelines. While we were at LeMans we anxiously awaited the completion of the first long section of pipeline because that would cut our truck haul--from back at Cherbourg to the



end of the completed first section station in the center of France (Chartres). Next day after reported completion, other reports showed our trucks still hauling from Cherbourg. I called the POL boss in and said, "Why in the devil don't you start taking it from Chartres?" He replied, "Do you realize we can't stop to fill the empty section of pipe, we don't have enough gas coming over to fill the pipeline and daily needs. It'd take two days or so, and we can't stop." So here we were with this nice long pipeline but not enough gas coming in to fill it and also supply the army needs. So that's when we went back to the "Redball Highway," and took over two main roads following right after Patton and made them one-way down and one-way back. Patton said at meeting, "If you'll provide me gasoline, we'll forage for our food and other needs." We then ruled nothing could go down the highway but gasoline. I flew over next day to check the line just to see. The first darned convoy I stopped was a fifty truck convoy of oranges. We immediately had the trucks dump them, gave them to the public, then go back for gasoline. And we went back and checked why the oranges and we found this grand old colonel just couldn't deny the fighting troops oranges.



[Interruption]

SOAPES: When we broke for lunch we had the invasion underway, and you had gone at D plus 10 over to France. What sorts of special problems now came up in the logistics area as you began; you had your beachhead established and were beginning to move on?



BROSHOUS: Well the first thing I learned was the Germans were sending a plane or two over at intervals trying to hit our ammunition dumps. Once in a while they'd hit one and we'd suffer a heck of a loss and it was kind of easy to hit something on our crowded beachhead. That was our real big problem, plus the constant worry about poison gas with everybody so jammed up. Gas isn't too effective if you're all spread out. In that small area gas would have been good pickins; so everybody really worried. When we moved over there weren't many accommodations, everything was pretty much slit trenches and pup tents. Back in the supply area, a lot of our officers were people that came in from the reserves, national guard, who were fairly old, and that was pretty rough on them. I can remember two or three of our lawyers saying, "I'll be damned if I can work one more day

after sleeping one more night in that damned pup tent. My back's aching and everything else." So when we once broke out of the beachhead, took over a lot of territory, we could move our supply people into hotels where there were beds; they could get a decent rest at night and things came back together. It was early in the game for this new headquarters, and they were very gung-ho to get everything done. We were having staff meetings in the early morning about seven o'clock. We found that some of the staff chiefs were up fighting fires most of the night, especially the ordnance officer and the engineers, when they came to these early staff meetings they were exhausted. So everything was pretty much in edgy circumstances. We greatly improved operations by cutting out so many staff meetings and having them at the end of the day light work day.

SOAPES: Did you set up a depot system of supply?

BROSHOUS: Oh, yes. We were able to have the regular POL depot, and the food distribution depots and ammunition depots and all that. It was all organized and planned before hand. Worked very well. Maintenance companies came in later. Earlier they

were left at home. The troops did their own maintenance. Troops were just getting off of rations, the old canned rations at D plus 10, because at that time few cooks and clerks were brought in. They actually brought the cooks over about round D plus 10 with company clerks etc. so all got back to normal. Can I revert back to one thing before they start the break out?

SOAPES: Sure.



BROSHOUS: Just a thought, when I was talking about clerks that one day I was sitting in my office in Wilton, and we were just getting ready for the invasion--it was about D minus 2 or 3, something like that. I got a call from London that the Bank wanted to send the invasion currency down to me. And I knew that it would soon be coming and our finance people were well organized to call in all the finance officers and get it distributed, which was a hell of a task to get this money out to all these troops. London said they wanted to send the money down, so I said, "Send it right on down; I'll be here." I thought I was going to get a couple, three trunk fulls. You know, that to me was more money than had ever been printed. And later that afternoon an assistant I had, came in and said, "The money's here." I said,

"Have them just bring it here and put it in the office for safe keeping."

He said, "Bring it in heck, there's fifteen truck loads!" There was a lot of money in the trucks, I don't know how much-- someone said several hundred million francs, because francs weren't worth much and each soldier was scheduled to get his share of invasion currency. I put the money in a Nissen hut, with a GI and rifle walking around the hut guarding the fortune. I hate to think what would happen if somebody'd ever robbed us.

SOAPES: In reading through the official history, I recall one conclusion that the authors reached was that it was really impossible to maintain the armies on the run at the rate desired. Does that square with your recollection, that you just didn't quite come up--



BROSHOUS: Well very definitely the ordinary way, an advance of this type must be in planned controlled advances. The Russians and British and others operated so that they moved ahead, say, fifty miles then stopped to let their supply units bring their depots forward; that was their definite limit. I

can't say exactly fifty miles, but that's about it. If you recall that's the way the Russinas invaded Germany. They'd go so far then catch up.

But Patton was so anxious to get the job done he would go the planned fifty, then he'd call a meeting and say, "Can't you supply me? Can't you, just cut out ammunition. We'll get along on what we've got, just bring us POL. That's all we want--petrol, oil and lubricants." We must continue while we have them on the run.

We said, "We'll do the best we can."

That's when we became too far behind, constantly moving forward, we couldn't fill or maintain the gasoline lines. Had we been allowed to move our depots forward as planned, it would have worked all right, but it was just the over desire of Patton and everybody to go as far all the way. We got to the point where we developed the "Red Ball Highway." We had to get some way to get POL up ahead and get out from going through the towns which wasted a lot of gas and a lot of time. So we took over two highways and made them one-way down and one-way back. I guess they were a few miles apart, ten miles, something like



that. Then in the center we put camps for the driver to rest, eat and sleep. Thus the drivers could go from one camp to the next. Then he'd get off and rest and another driver would take over. There was just a steady stream constantly going both ways to and from the Third Army, that was going on like hell.

SOAPES: Where was the starting point?

BROSHOUS: At Cherbourg.



SOAPES: And it just went up to wherever the action was.

BROSHOUS: Well it just kept following right along. Of course Patton was going down these main highways too. We finally got to the point to where we couldn't put enough gasoline on a truck to get it to Patton and back, let alone leave any when we got there. At that point there was nothing we could do, but sooner or later all the trucks got down to one end--we were through. I will always remember the last day we only had ten gallons of gas in our whole headquarters, and we just had to call a halt and move stuff forward and actually fill the lines. Really how far you can stretch if you want to. I'll never know;

I think we'd have been better off if we'd have gone ahead with our early plan and have gone so far then stop and move supplies forward in an orderly manner, as did the Russians and British. Patton had them running and he didn't want to let them stop. Of course the Germans might have regrouped but I don't think they could have.



SOAPES: The official history, in talking about the "Red Ball" says that there was a very high cost in terms of equipment and personnel. It seemed that there were wrecks, that sort of thing. Do you recall a great number of problems like that in terms of cost of equipment and personnel?

BROSHOUS: I don't think it was unusual. They wanted us to drive at night with "cat's eye" lights, practically no lights, we had quite a few accidents outside the "Red Ball," a hell of a lot of accidents night driving, and a lot of losses because the trucks in many cases were full of troops or supplies. And I talked with a couple people higher up, First Army G-4s, and Third Army G-4 and said, "Why can't we just, back in this area, declare lights on?" They agreed, we did. Our accident rates

went down tremendously. In fact, the German air force was pretty well licked by then, and we didn't have the airplanes coming in and diving on our convoys. Our losses were very much less from driving with lights on than with lights off. There's no question about it, any operation like that took personnel. Why not wait and move depots up, because to supply an army at two hundred and fifty miles distance takes eight times what it does at fifty miles. I mean, that's just mathematics, and more trucks you put on the road and the harder you drive your people, the more accidents you're going to have.



SOAPES: I think so. How long was it before you started putting the lights on? How long did you go in blackout conditions?

BROSHOUS: Well we were in blackout conditions for years in England, before the invasion.

SOAPES: But I meant on the "Red Ball," once you were over there. Did you go for, was it a month or so before--

BROSHOUS: A month I'd say. In fact we had a hard time because new units would come in from the States indoctrinated--no lights, and here'd be our trucks coming down with lights. Of course they had the checkpoints round there and they'd stop the trucks and say, "Put your lights out!" Of course our people weren't accustomed to driving that cat's eye business any more and they'd go down the road a little bit and we'd tell them to put lights back on. It was constant, within our own forces, arguing one way or the other; lights on or lights out.

SOAPES: Were you able to use air much for supply?



BROSHOUS: I don't recall a heck of a lot of supply by air. We did ship gasoline forward by air towards the end to try to assist, but in those days air transport was not a big enough thing to make a good dent in the needs. We used an awful lot of air for transporting people around, inspection groups and needs like that.

SOAPES: What about captured stocks, was there much significance to that for supply?

BROSHOUS: The Germans, as far as I know, pretty much destroyed anything really of value. We did capture or liberate many whiskey and brandy dumps, which I think the Germans had originally taken from the French. We passed that around quite freely to the various units, booty of war. But I can't remember very much stuff that was captured which was used. There were a lot of guns, pistols and hats and equipment like that that the soldiers keep to take home as souvenirs, but I can't recall capturing gasoline. I think the Germans were pretty well set to destroy anything of use.

One thing was very interesting. Of course you've got to plan for all occasions, and heretofore whenever the Germans have retreated, or anyone's retreated, they've cut down all the telephone poles to destroy communications. We brought over immense numbers of telephone poles, but for some damned reason the Germans, to my knowledge, didn't destroy a single one. We didn't use any. Towards the end of the war when our congressional committees came over to investigate, that was one of the problems of "Why were you all so stupid to order all these fields of telephone poles and didn't use them?" Just shows you that you can't win.



SOAPES: Was there a special command and control setup for the "Red Ball"?

BROSHOUS: Yes, we had a regular "Red Ball" command. In fact our headquarters had a transportation section, the regular transportation section, and they came in, and in conjunction with my office, made the plans. TC then went back and selected a couple of very fine officers who did nothing but execute the plans and direct the "Red Ball" until we finally had to cancel out and move forward. The advanced section followed closely behind the Armies, turning over each area as they moved forward to newly established Base Sections.

SOAPES: Do you remember the names of those people?

BROSHOUS: Well, Bob Tripp, General Tripp, Robert C. Tripp, who lives now in Oakland, was the transportation officer. He could give you the names.

SOAPES: Okay. Perhaps we can get in touch with him. We'll be out on the West Coast before too long, talk with him about it maybe.



BROSHOUS: General R. C. Tripp.

SOAPES: Is that T-r-i-p-p?

BROSHOUS: Right.



SOAPES: Was the size of the force you were supplying constantly increasing during this period?

BROSHOUS: It was increasing all the time, more and more troops were coming in. Of course we had the First and Third Armies just the initial troops to begin with, and then, as they kept on moving, troops were landing all the time. Then eventually when we got up in the area of the Bulge, the Ninth Army came in. We were constantly directed to supply the British and French during the entire period with mainly POL. This was a big thorn in our side. So we had three armies plus the British and they were all growing all the time. The advance section kept moving forward, kept in contact right with the armies. When we would depart an area, we would turn it over to a Base Section, the first in from Cherbourg. At Cherbourg we left behind a skeleton crew and they formed the

Cherbourg Base Section, to run that area. When we got up to LeMans we left a LeMans base section behind, and then Rheims, we left another. So our section kept moving right behind the armies right into Germany.

SOAPES: And you stayed with this all the way to the end, to 1945?

BROSHOUS: No. In February, right after the Bulge, we were in Namur, Belgium, and that's when General [Brehon B.] Somervell felt they should get a check on the supply services. They wanted to get a planning group in Paris and develop a control division. I was transferred into Paris Hq. SOS to be Deputy Chief of Staff and in charge of the Control Division. I never really enjoyed the job because it was always checking on agencies, saying they weren't doing quite right, actually efficiency experts. We got a good nucleus of people for the section that came over from Washington, SOS. Actually Major General Clint [Clinton F.] Robinson was in charge of General Somervell's Control Division and he sent some of his best men. One was Mark Cresap, he has a big efficiency agency in, I think, Pittsburgh.



SOAPES: How is his name spelled?

BROSHOUS: C-r-e-s-a-p, I think it is. And, of, four or five of them; I can't recall their names right off hand, but if you ever need it, write me a letter and I'll find them for you. They came over with the express purpose to determine if the war was going to be over soon, and if so, set a date, and then to see what we could start cutting down on supplies to help MacArthur in the far east. That's a very sensitive situation because each supply agency doesn't want to run out; they'd rather have a good stock on hand. So it was up to us to snoop around and find out, talking to people, "of course" there's always some guy that'll snitch and say, "You know we've got more damned cigarettes in that warehouse over there than we'll ever use." Of course cigarettes was a sensitive item. We checked and found out that they were just being careful, not that they were asking for oversupply. So we cancelled a couple of "Liberty Ships" of cigarettes, which didn't make us very popular with the supply agencies. Our job then was to figure it out, the end of the war we all sat down and tried to come up with a date. I think we picked the 15th of May and



the war was actually over one day later or one day earlier; the 14th I think, the armistice was signed. We went through some pretty heavy stomach pains because right towards the end, about the 1st of May, when we thought it should be slowing down, things were still going strong. We had cancelled in April, something like eighty "Liberty Ships" worth of supplies of all types. What they wanted to do was to cancel the supplies coming over there so we wouldn't be left with huge surplus of war materials in Europe. They wanted to start sending more supplies to MacArthur. We were very fortunate; in fact I got dizzy one day and keeled over. I think it was just plainly worry from what would happen if the war didn't end and we started running out of ammunition or other vital materials.



SOAPES: Who all was involved in this plotting of May 15th?

BROSHOUS: Carl Bendetson who later became assistant secretary of the army, and Cresap. It was mainly our control division after we talked with various heads of the staff agencies. We also talked to the intelligence agencies. It was kind of a

combined effort of the agencies in and around Paris and our group.

SOAPES: Do you remember what the major considerations were that caused you to say May 15th is about when it's going to end?

BROSHOUS: Well I think the main thing was that we got that from the intelligence that the Germans were running out of supplies and troops and that the Bulge was their last gasp, their airplanes and their factories were going out of business. It just seemed to us the whole war was crumbling.

SOAPES: This was about January, February of '45?

BROSHOUS: I would say around the first of March.

SOAPES: First of March, '45. One other thing I haven't touched on was the Mulberries. Were you involved with those at all?

BROSHOUS: No, not too much. I saw them, those tremendous things they floated over for loading docks. They were built



in Southampton under another base section. We had our hands full of our own problems and didn't get into that.

SOAPES: What about the railroads out of Cherbourg and the other costal areas? Were they left intact and valuable to you?

BROSHOUS: Pretty much intact. I'll never know why the Germans didn't destroy them, but I think that they were surprised. They thought Patton was going to stop as usual, going only so far, but he kept them on the run, that they were running for their lives and they just didn't have time to destroy the rail and the telephone lines of communication, which was a bad mistake. That was one of the great things for us which was a derivative of his desire to go ahead in not the usual step-by-step manner but to go ahead "hell for leather."

SOAPES: Was there general agreement, as you were able to see it, with Patton's approach? Any opposition from Bradley or any of the other commanders, thinking, well, let's do it the way we planned it, and George is doing too much?



BROSHOUS: Well I talked with everybody and it seemed to me that everybody was happy. Everybody but Montgomery. I think he was very unhappy because he was afraid Patton was going to get to Berlin first and the British wanted to get there first to make up for their earlier loss in prestige. They were pushing ahead in a leisurely manner; they drove for a short while and then held off. The only real griping I noted is the fact the British had all their supplies neatly stacked, if we could have drawn from them, they were closer to Patton. But no, they were calling on us for supplies, which I think was just an effort to hold back Patton. Then, towards the end, I think our government decided that--(this is my thoughts) that maybe the British should go on in first. We were told and we put out orders to hold back on the supplies, because Patton was using everything, most all our efforts, all our trucks and everything else. Poor old First Army was up in the North on pretty lean rations, because the old Third was scooping up everything. But the morale of the soldiers in the depots was so happy that if the Third Army came in on a "moonlight requisition," they'd give them most anything they needed. A



lot of times they came back to the depots to pick up stuff when we said we couldn't deliver, because we had other orders to deliver it elsewhere. I personally think it was a combination of everybody was glad to see the war getting over--they would do everything to help it. From the big time strategy, the powers were trying to give Montgomery his chance to march in triumphantly.

SOAPES: Of course the criticism of Montgomery, I think, hasn't it always been that he waited until he was absolutely sure he was going to have enough people and enough supply and everything and always wanted to wait, exact opposite of Patton.

BROSHOUS: There's two very strong differences between the two armies. There was, I don't know if there is now. In the planning before the invasion, they wanted to stop training and move all troops down to the locked pens about three weeks before D-Day. To me there's nothing greater to hurt morale more than to put a person in the dental chair three weeks before he's going to have a tooth pulled, let him sit there and think about



it with nothing to do; he'll go crazy. So I investigated why in the devil we must stop training and send our troops down to the pens that early. We found out that it was because the British wanted to go in that early because of waterproofing their vehicles. They have waterproofing squads, one little squad that waterproofs all the vehicles in the whole division. It takes them two weeks to waterproof their vehicles. When you once get them waterproofed, you can't be running them around the area on missions and training. Whereas the American Army, each GI is taught to waterproof his own vehicle. There's a difference in the two waterproofing philosophy. The average American is more mechanical than the British. I talked to General Gerow, immediate commander of our invasion forces and he said, "You're absolutely right. I don't see any darned reason for it." Said, "I'm going in tonight," which he did and on his way back he told me Ike said for the Americans to go into the pens when they wanted to and to tell the British to go in when they have to. Really, to me, it was a stroke of genius to get that accomplished, because I actually saw the British waterproofed vehicles after they let them sit for



two weeks--you know your own automobile, it sits for two weeks and you have a hard time starting it. With all the waterproofing paraphernalia on, machines are difficult to start anyway. I actually saw them pushing some of their vehicles into the landing barges. To me it could be nothing more down-heartening than to have to push your own vehicle in and wonder if you'd have to push it off in front of enemy fire. Whereas our troops stayed and kept their minds busy on training, and we just went in the pens the last minute, waterproofed, and then took off.



SOAPES: I'd like to ask you about a couple of personalities that have been mentioned. You had a lot of contact with General J.C.H. Lee. He's a rather controversial figure, at least from my reading and what I've talked with other people about. How well did you know him?

BROSHOUS: Well I worked with him very closely throughout the war. He's a very religious man. I've heard him say several times when I was deputy chief of staff in Paris quote, "I went over to the chapel and prayed for this decision."

He had some very queer ideas. He used to get on his big train in England, which was far too luxurious I thought, and make his notorious inspection tours. Hell, he'd start in at three o'clock in the morning, and the poor units would be up all night getting ready. He had fetishes. One was never throw any garbage away. Of course he'd always inspect the garbage cans, and, if they had potato peelings in them, he'd pick out a few and eat them, which made us all gag. It got so that they all knew what was coming, they'd just clean their garbage cans of all food in advance, and he'd tell them how wonderful they were with these clean garbage cans. Well you know it was a farce; they couldn't be running a kitchen without any garbage, just cans steamed out clean. We'd follow him through the latrines and they'd just be immaculate. Hadn't been used for eight hours before the inspection. When you'd get next to the old GI he'd say, "Everybody has to go out in the woods until inspection is over." A hell of a lot of hours spit and polish was really a damned shame. We had construction outfits, and I went along with him during inspections. They were under me, one day he said, "I want to bring everybody



over and show them your beautiful construction outfit." They had drawn extra equipment, had it all polished and painted, their supply room looked like a brand new store. I went back the next day to find out where in the hell was the stuff they used. They said, "Well, we put it in trucks and sent the driver out and said, 'Don't come back for two or three hours until the inspection is over.' " I guess he was sucked in by that. Certainly he must have known that they couldn't keep their equipment and tools in that apple-pie order. Units couldn't stop work with all the inspections they had--in the present-day army somebody's always coming in to inspect--you'd never get anything done if you kept all your shovels bright and shiny awaiting inspection.

General Lee always said, "I don't want to hear bad news. I think we should always have just good news." Well that's not a staff discussion, it's a bragging session. Most of the 2nd staff meeting that General Larkin ran later after Gen. Lee's was straightening out all the staff after considerable argument. Such arguments as whose job is this? This guy isn't giving me enough help! You got to call a spade a spade at staff



meetings if you're going to get the job done.

SOAPES: He wasn't a man that you could take a problem to and say, "I have a problem, what's--"

BROSHOUS: No, he'd send you to somebody else, I'm sure, if it was a bad one. He was very much for older officers, his old cronies, and some of the promotions he made I felt were rather unwarranted. I think some of the people that were doing the job should have more aptly been promoted. Their morale wasn't good. Does that answer that?

SOAPES: Yes, very much. Did you know Patton?

BROSHOUS: I don't think anybody really knew him intimately, but I saw him many times, he was a tremendous leader. I remember a case where we sent a young lieutenant down with fifty truck loads on a convoy of gasoline when it was still in short supply. When the lieutenant got to Patton's area everybody'd gone to sleep; the duty officer was out. The lieutenant didn't know what else to do with the gas but he saw General Patton's tent, stopped, went over and awakened him.



BROSHOUS: Gerow was an outstandingly good man, but he was quiet, a fine leader, one who got things done, and had all the esprit and adolation of all those under him as far as I know. He was well, well liked. He had a young mind.

[Courtney] Hodges, I thought, was a little on the old side. He was a very fine gentleman. In those days I think a more agile, younger-minded man might have been a little better.

SOAPES: In Hodges' place?

BROSHOUS: Yes.



SOAPES: How about Bradley?

BROSHOUS: He's the greatest. Bradley is without doubt the tops. He was quiet, thoughtful, and efficient. He frequently stopped by our advance section headquarters and said, "How are we getting along?" He stopped by on the day he came back from the Bulge and he was relieved of command of the U.S. troops on the northern part of the Bulge. They were turned over to the British. Bradley was really down. Monty wanted to take over.

There were many interesting stories then. One I know

was true. The British have a rule that if you have a bridge and you want to blow it at any time, you put the charges in and get all ready as soon as possible. Our doctrine says get the charges to the site but don't connect them early because a near miss of a bomb or shell is liable to blow up the bridge, blow off the charges, before you want the bridge down. During the exchange of Command when the British took over from the Americans there was much confusion. A young American Lieutenant and his men had the job to demolish the bridge when the Germans appeared. During the confusion as to just who was in command the Americans directed, "Put the charges in place and install them, get all set, but don't actually connect them up." Soon the British said, "Get it all set to go connected, just ready to push the button." As the British left an American came and said, "No, don't connect it up." This went on for some time. So this youngster had a progress report which on one side said fifty percent hooked up and other side fifty percent not hooked up, depending on who came to inspect.

When the Bulge came, there was pandemonium in parts of



the back area. Some senior officers were over excited. In fact General Lee was one. He came forward on an inspection and was going to immediately take charge. In fact I think one of the funniest true stories of the war was told to me when a young officer came in after the Bulge and said, "I would like to be relieved of my assignment."

I said, "What is your assignment?"

He said, "I have truck company with troops all up and down the area working at depots. I was going from one group to the other when I had to relieve myself. I had my driver stop and I went underneath the edge of a bridge, for lack of a better latrine, and while I was there up drove General Lee."

He called me and said, "Young man, you know the Germans are coming?" He said, "I direct you to go and get some charges and place it on this bridge so you can blow it when it becomes necessary and don't leave your post by any means. This is a direct order."

The young officer said, "I found an engineer outfit and they helped me put some charges in the bridge. I stayed there for three days. Now I think it's time that I went back to see



my troops. But I'd like to get authority for relief."

I said, "You're relieved. Go on, turn it over to the engineers." By that time things had settled down.

But there were people running around frantically, everybody wanting to help, and put in charges in the bridges and all. In fact it got so bad that--rumors were started that German parachutists had landed behind the lines. Then the troops started asking all suspicious people who won the World Series. That was one of the questions used to find out whether they were German or American, they caught a few Germans this way. Things were pretty hectic in those days.



I think it was around Christmas night, I got a call from General [Royal B.] Lord chief of staff to General Lee in Paris, a good friend of mine. He said, "We don't have any scramblers, this is urgent." He said, "Do you know the outfit that General Higgins, our mutual friend, is with?"

I said, "Sure".

He said, "Well we've got to move them to Bastogne immediately to protect the important five-way crossroads there." He said, "I told Brad and Ike that I'd call you and you'd take

the job. I said, "We will do the best we can."

The Higgins outfit or the 101st Airborne Division was at a rest camp near Rheimes, France. I got them on the phone, learned that the CO, General Maxwell Taylor, was in the U. S. on business, B. G. Anthony C. McAuliffe and his top assistants were in England for a weekend in London. The senior officer on duty was a Major. He did a beautiful job. Thank goodness he could read a map. We both were in phone contact, got our maps out. We both marked the Bastogne crossroads on our maps. We then marked crossroads near the 101st Camp where they could meet our truck convoys. He then told me how many trucks, how much ammo and rations they would need at each meeting point. I then told him to get things organized. I told him I would soon call back and set the times for his units to meet the trucks filled with needed supplies. He said he would have the units ready to go. Shortly thereafter McAuliffe and his staff arrived home to take over thus relieving the Major of a tremendous load. I called our depots and gave the orders. I then called back the 101st and set definite times for the 101st to meet our convoys. All reported they were on their



way. McAuliffe reported the 101st was moving out. Our Depots reported one by one they were moving out. To this day I don't know of one phone instruction that was misinterpreted. The trucks got there on time, picked up the troops and dropped them in Bastogne. They debarked just as the Germans were coming in sight. God was on our side that night.

SOAPES: Did you know McAuliffe very well?



BROSHOUS: Oh, yes. In fact I had quite an argument with him in England because he was the airborne-type general, very fine, polished, smart-looking guy, young but stubborn and wasn't going to have any young supply colonel, he called me, tell him what to do. I told him that he could only send his troops in town for recreation on Tuesdays and Friday nights, that we had to cut down filling the towns every night especially because of the complaints of the British populace there that the Americans were usurping everything, especially their ale, also black vs white problem. He said, "You're not going to tell me what to do." So I wrote out an order and put my name to it and said, "Here, take this." He didn't go into town on

restricted nights.

SOAPES: He didn't say "nuts" to you?

BROSHOUS: No. We were in control of the area and I knew damned well that if we went up to Ike or Bradley or somebody and said, "This General won't comply," he would have been chastized considerably. And of course I've known him since. While I was at West Point after the war, he was president of the association of graduates--used to come up quite often. He was a very fine officer. "Nuts" is just the message you would expect from him.



SOAPES: Did you ever have any contact with LeRoy Lutes?

BROSHOUS: Didn't he serve as an SOS general in Washington?

SOAPES: I believe he was.

BROSHOUS: I've just barely met him.

SOAPES: Where were you on V-E day? You were in Paris.

BROSHOUS: Yes. Getting back to the Battle of the Bulge, shortly after we got the 101st into place and started to take a breath,

we got another call from General Lord. Of course we were right up behind all of the armies. We were actually in lower Belgium. We got another call stating that Ike has decided to change the direction of the Third Army from straight ahead east to north, a ninety degree turn, and to do it in nothing flat. Most of the infantry outfits don't have much transportation. So I sent General Al Viney, then Colonel Alvin Viney, V-i-n-e-y, down to Third Army to get together with them. He had all the contacts with all our supply depots, and he ordered them by phone to send out convoys of trucks to help Third Army, which they did. We worked very closely with Third Army. It was the most beautiful movement of turning an army and moving them north to relieve McAuliffe at Bastogne with the least amount of wasted time the world has ever seen. I have to give a few accolades to the supply people because I think they did a hell of a lot more in this combat business than most people sometimes realize.

SOAPES: Right. You can't move without supply.

BROSHOUS: Once we got into Paris and the war was cranking down, immediately there was the cry to go home. Well we had about



three and a half million troops there at that time. We went to work with the point system. A GI got so many points for the time he had been overseas. But lo and behold we had to tell the high point men they had to stay. The low point men were sent home for a short leave then were going to be shipped on to the Pacific. In some cases they picked "high point" men--mainly communication specialists--to send directly to the Pacific, by air.

That caused a hell of a furor, the war was just over. Families wrote their congressman that here my son has been in Europe three years and the guy next door's son has only been there two weeks and he's coming home and my son has to stay. We had a staff full time answering letters. Congressmen would telegraph us, requiring an answer, time after time. In fact I felt a little bad one time about it. Senator [Richard] Russell was visiting and we'd worked together and helped him on his inspections. When he left he was greatest of friends. The next day I got a letter cussing me out for doing this awful thing, letting a man who'd only been overseas two weeks go home and a guy who had been there three years remain. I got very hurt about it because it was a bit rough. I saw Sen.



Russell a few days later. He was coming back through. I said, "How come you could do that to me?"

He said, "You got to be hard-shelled. You got to know I was just doing that for my constituents. I sent him a copy and made him happy, see, cussing you out. Don't you worry, you and I are the best of friends and I know what you're doing. I had to get an answer to send to him."

SOAPES: They were doing the same thing in Vietnam, and I had to handle a few of those myself.

BROSHOUS: Our planning group got together and got all the planes operating. We finally had our banner day when we shipped a thousand men back home by air in one twenty-four hour period. Using those old rickety airplanes that was quite a record. Now they damned near do it in one plane. We thought we were pretty great.

I had a very funny incident I think should go down in history. A letter from a mother in Texas to Vice President [John N.] Garner stated that since the war ended her son was being fed only two meals a day. She thought it was terrible, that undoubtedly the officers were selling the food for the



other meal for profit. Her poor son had been fighting for his country and was now limited to two meals to a day. Garner sent the letter to Roosevelt and said, "I think this should be investigated thoroughly." Roosevelt sent it to Marshall, Marshall sent it to Eisenhower, Eisenhower sent it to Lee, Lee gave it to Larkin, and Larkin gave it to me. So I went out to the unit, a truck company, a hundred and eight men. When I got there the officer laughed and said, "This is the funniest thing."

I said, "It's not funny to me with all these signatures on it."

He said, "Well we had a company meeting two weeks ago because on Sunday most wanted to sleep late and have brunch late in the morning and then a nice meal in the middle of the afternoon so they could go into town and roam around. So they had the vote of the company. It was a hundred and seven to one. The old chow hound wanted three meals."

So I said, "Well I think the thing to do is to have the cook, while he's preparing breakfast, give him a third meal, let it go at that." So back went the letter with all the endorsements so the little lady was assured her son really



wasn't being hurt too much. It was just on Sunday when the whole company wanted to have two big meals instead of three ordinary ones.

We had the plans and operation going smoothly. High point men were taking over, low point men were going home and then on to the Pacific.

Then came the Potsdam Conference. We knew about the conference; we didn't have anything to do with it. I was then acting as commander--General Lee was on a trip and General Larkin was on an inspection tour; so as deputy chief of staff I was sitting holding down the fort. I got a telegram from Marshall, desiring to stop in and have lunch, get gassed up, on his way back to Washington from Potsdam. Gen. Lee was way up in Germany some place, I couldn't get him right away, and he couldn't get back anyway. I thought I'd better get a general officer to meet Gen. Marshall instead of a little old colonel. I got Gen. Pleas Rogers, who was commander of the Paris section. Said, "You have to come over." He was glad to; he knew Marshall. He was a major general glad to come to the Chief of Staff to lunch. I went along also. Lo and behold



the second man to get off the plane was my friend General Abe Lincoln, George Lincoln. So we went to lunch together, sat at one table and Rogers and Marshall at the other. During the conversation Lincoln said, "Russ I'm going to tell you one thing." He said, "You better make plans for a quick change-over."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "Well about the middle of August you might get orders overnight to shift around from high point to low point, that the low-point men'll stay and the high point will go home." Well you can imagine what confusion if that'd happened if all at once someone ordered, "Everybody now working goes home and an entire new gang comes in." We didn't know exactly what it was all about; we guessed something was in the wind. I called all the staff agencies together and said, "Come back within three or four days with plans what you'll do if you get a directive to switch high and low pointers." Sure enough, the atom bomb was dropped and within forty-eight hours we got orders to change horses in the middle of the stream, every horse, not just one.

SOAPES: Were you able to pull it off?



BROSHOUS: It came off very nicely and thank God, that two weeks notice from Gen. Lincoln was a God-send.

SOAPES: Well, this gets us to an appropriate point to end the interview and we thank you very much.

