

INTERVIEW WITH
General John W. Leonard

by

Dr. Maclyn P. Burg
Oral Historian

on

March 15, 1972

for

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



Gift of Personal Statement

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This is an interview being taped with Lt. Gen. John William Leonard at the San Antonio Officers' Club. The interview is being conducted on March 15, 1972. The interviewer is Dr. Maclyn P. Burg of the Eisenhower Library Staff.

DR. BURG: Now, General Leonard, let me ask you this in the first place, since you are a classmate of General Eisenhower's: how close were you during the West Point phase of your army service?

LT. GEN. LEONARD: With Ike?

DR. BURG: Yes.

LT. GEN. LEONARD: Pretty darned close.

DR. BURG: You were in the same company with him?

LT. GEN. LEONARD: We were in the same company for four years and were in the same division at least one of those years. And if I remember right, P. A. Paul A. Hodgson and Ike lived across the hall from us, but I'm not sure of that. But it seems to me that this man that I was telling you about told me that that was so.

DR. BURG: I see.



LEONARD: I think it was when we were getting ready for our forty-fifth reunion or something that a classmate of ours named Harold Eugene Small--somebody up at West Point--suggested they put a little tab, a little metal marker, on each room that Ike lived in.

BURG: I see.



LEONARD: So he was in F Company. He lived there at Cornwall New York. So he wrote all of us that had been in F Company to see if we remembered what rooms Ike was in. Well, we all agreed it had to be in the same four that we had. See, we had the 20th, the 21st, the 22nd--that was a sort of half division--the 23rd, and the 24th. The 24th was the last one. I was in that for four years. And I knew that Ike and P. A. were in there one year because P. A. was on the football squad and he had awful rheumatism. And I can see him yet crawling up--hanging on those steps--crawling up to his room. He might have been on the second, but I thought he was on the third floor. I don't know. But I'm not sure they lived across the hall from us. I wouldn't swear to that. But we were there in that same company. The companies then were small. And our classes were small--I guess

about 10, 12 students to a classroom. The Corps was a closely knit unit in those days, you know.

BURG: Now, in light of the fact that it seems to be later--in the 1920s--that he began to take fire as a serious kind of student of military affairs, what is your recollection of his performance in the West Point classes?

LEONARD: Well, Ike was not trying to be number one. A lot of people think he could have been if he wanted to, but Ike was--I wouldn't say "devil may care" or anything like that. He was happy, almost--you might say--"happy go lucky." He wasn't a serious student, although I would say he probably was a good student 'cause he came out well.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: He probably would have come out higher if he'd--now P. A. was a student--his roommate. He came out in the engineer's, see.

BURG: Right.



LEONARD: But Ike was a fine, a good fellow--good mixer. You know, he's friendly, outgoing. Very friendly. And nobody could step on his toes.

BURG: He was a little feisty?--as the Irish would say.

LEONARD: No, no, he wasn't. He had no chip on his shoulder. But you couldn't push him around. And another thing I've always thought about him--he was blessed with a good physique.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Ike was a very well built, strong individual; and I think that gives one confidence.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: He knew he could take care of himself. A lot of people say they knew he was going to go places. Well I suppose you could say that he was. He was smart enough. And the personality is what he had then, see, that was cropping up. I don't suppose he had his aim set like he did later on, you know, as you develop.

BURG: Yes.



LEONARD: But he had it! Let's put it that way.

BURG: I'm not sure whether--

LEONARD: There's time and age you know.

BURG: --young men that age really think much about the future and--

LEONARD: Oh, I doubt it. You get too busy--too many other things going on. You got your friends there and all the athletic programs and what have you, you know. The life daily led! And your time was taken up at West Point in those days.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Wasn't much time and no place to go either.



BURG: Would you describe yourself, General Leonard, as being part of the group that Eisenhower usually ran with at West Point?

LEONARD: Yeah, I would say so, yes.

BURG: Can you estimate now about how big a group that was? How many people were kind of the close friends?

LEONARD: Oh, I would hesitate on that. I would kind of hesitate on that because I don't think that we ran around in groups much.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: It was a close-knit organization you know. And I wouldn't say we ran--we were all pretty good friends and also were closely knit. You know, when you were with a person day in and day out--the same company, the same mess, and everything--always friendly--I never had any disagreements with Ike the whole time we were there, you know.

BURG: What kind of men would he be drawn to, General? Do you remember? There must have been--well, maybe I'm answering it myself. Hodgson was a scholar.



LEONARD: Yeah.

BURG: And Eisenhower was drawn to him.

LEONARD: Yeah.

BURG: So clearly--

LEONARD: Well, they both came from Kansas, you see.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: And they both came from the same area. I don't believe Ike went to the university before he went to the Academy, but P. A. did.

BURG: Yes. No, Ike didn't.

LEONARD: Well, P.A. did, you see. Now where they met I don't know. They probably met, if they hadn't before, when they took the exam.

BURG: That could be.

LEONARD: See, we took our exams for a whole week.

BURG: Yeah.



LEONARD: I went to Columbus Barracks, Ohio, for a whole week taking them. You met people there that you sort of remember and maybe you contact when you get up to the academy, see.

BURG: Right.

LEONARD: And they may have agreed then to room together, you know. I don't know.

BURG: Well, maybe I should ask you, Did he seem to be drawn to various types of people? Was his friendliness sort of for every one?

LEONARD: More or less. Yes, I know it was.

BURG: A popular man?

LEONARD: Yes.

BURG: With the group?

LEONARD: Yes, I'd say that. I don't know that Ike pounced on anybody and sort of was with them constantly, you know--like some people are inseparable. I don't think that.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: I wouldn't say that.

BURG: So just sort of a gregarious man as you remember him?

LEONARD: Yes. I mean--I don't know whether that's a good word to use. Anyway, I think you're looking for something there that's pretty hard to put your finger on.



BURG: I know. That's why I'm looking for it.

LEONARD: And I don't think it's there, you know. I think Ike was a frontier-born kid who came up in Abilene, Kansas, which had quite a record, you know. He was able to take care of himself. He was friendly. That's about as far as I would go on it.

BURG: You may have done it by putting it the way you just put it. You see, you saw him then--and you see him now, evidently--as coming off the frontier--

LEONARD: Right, yeah.

BURG: --with certain qualities--

LEONARD: Oh, Ike used to like to sing "Calamity Jane," remember? What's that "Good Old Clementine"? You know.

BURG: Yes.



LEONARD: All his life he read westerns.

BURG: Yes, yes.

LEONARD: What was that "Oh, Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie"? Ike used to sing that quite a bit.

BURG: Oh, he did even then?

LEONARD: Yes, yes.

BURG: All right now let me ask you this: in 1915 you all graduate; where was your next assignment? Where did you go from there?

LEONARD: I went to El Paso, Texas, the 6th Infantry; and your friend you just talked to was the "king of the goats," the senior second lieutenant out there.

BURG: General William H. Simpson?

LEONARD: General Courtney Hicks Hodges was the next senior lieutenant. So you see I started in good company.

BURG: You came in as the green horn then--

LEONARD: Yeah, there was five of us--



BURG: --under those gentlemen?

LEONARD: --five lieutenants from the same class. There was Jimmy James B. Ord, Rosy John E. Rossell, Shorty Thomas Guerdon Hearn, Mike Michael E. Davis, and myself.

BURG: That's not the Jimmy Ord who was killed in the Philippines?

LEONARD: That's exactly the Jimmy Ord.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: Jimmy Ord's father had been killed in the 6th Infantry out in Cuba at San Juan Hill, and therefore--

BURG: For Heaven's sake!

LEONARD: --he was pegged for the 6th Infantry because his father was in it.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: And his grandfather, E. O. C. Ord of the Civil War, was the man that laid out this post.

BURG: I see. Now Eisenhower had gone down to Texas too.

LEONARD: Yeah, he come to San Antonio here to the 19th Infantry.

BURG: Now when did you next see him after graduation, and how long was it? Do you remember, General?



LEONARD: Yes, I came up here in September 1916 from Mexico with Rosy Rossell to take the exam for the Air Corps.

BURG: You did?

LEONARD: That was the Signal Corps section. Ike was out at training camp, and Rosy and I went down to his quarters. We didn't know he was married out here. We knocked on the door, and a young lady opened the door. And my God! We almost fell down, you know. And she said, "Come on in. I'm Ike's bride. I'm Mamie." We didn't know he had been married.

BURG: For Heaven's sake!



LEONARD: And that was our introduction to Mamie. We didn't see Ike that time. He was out at camp.

BURG: How did she strike you? You spent a little time there talking with her?

LEONARD: Oh, yeah. We all went to a dance that night. She got some friends of hers to go along, and went up in the roof of what was the Elks Club--then they called them the Travis Clubs. Sure, we were young.

BURG: That's a nice story. That's a very charming story.

LEONARD: And she was just as nice then and friendly as she is today.

BURG: Precisely. She is.

LEONARD: Absolutely. And so then the war came along and my regiment was transferred up to Chickamauga Park, Georgia.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: And Jimmy Ord--now we're getting back to the old days.

BURG: Is this 1917 now?



LEONARD: This is August, or September, 1917, yeah. Jimmy Ord was an instructor at the training camp--those reserve officer training camps--and he got ordered to West Point. And I was in the Park, see; and I was ordered over as his replacement. And the same day I got there Ike rolled in from down here. He'd been ordered up to the training camp.

BURG: Was this Oglethorpe?

LEONARD: Fort Oglethorpe.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Chickamauga Park, really.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia--ROTC training. They had two big battalions in there. They had one Infantry officer, or one Army regular officer, with each company,--see--each unit. And I was courting the present Mrs. Leonard at that time. And Ike--see, Mamie was down here--and I had a car, so Ike's gets to go in town with me and all. So he claims that he had a foot in my getting married, you know, and all that. But anyway when that camp ended, Colonel [Ira C.] Welborn was notified that he was to organize a tank battalion at Camp Gettysburg and he had his choice of one lieutenant. He could take one lieutenant from the bunch at the camp there with him. And he chose Ike. Now that's something that might indicate something, see.

BURG: I'm glad to know because I'm not sure we knew how that happened.

LEONARD: Well, that's how it happened. We were all a little bit disgusted. We thought we were pretty damned good too, you know.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: We worked hard in those days.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: The war was on and we wanted in on it. And so, anyway, I went back to my regiment and overseas with it. And General Simpson--as soon as we came out of Mexico--he was made an aide to General [George] Bell, [Jr.], and he stayed with General Bell and was with the 33rd Division during the war--



BURG: That's where he started?

LEONARD: --ending up as chief of staff.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Now both General Hodges--Courtney Hodges--and I stayed in the 6th; and when he got his promotion to major, I had a

company in his battalion [3rd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division]. Then when he went away on school, I had the battalion; and when he came back, I'd been promoted. We'd been in an attack, so it left me with the battalion. He got another battalion--the other battalion--the 2nd. The commander of that had been promoted. So we stayed neck and neck through the Argonne, and then he was notified that he was going to be given the regiment and be promoted to a colonel to get the regiment. And by that time the war ended.

BURG: Were you then a lieutenant colonel, General?

LEONARD: Yeah.

BURG: And Eisenhower meanwhile had been training tank people--

LEONARD: Eisenhower was back here.

BURG: --in Gettysburg, and he too had reached lieutenant colonel.

LEONARD: That's right.

BURG: Then all of you reverted back to your permanent ranks at the close of the war?

LEONARD: I was demoted on the 13th of February, 1920, to a captain. We all were.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Different dates.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And then July the 2nd, 1920, why that new promotion list come up; a new bill went in, you know. I was made a permanent major--ranked from July 2nd. Most of '15 were in that group. Then in 1922 all of '15 and a few more were pushed back. We had our permanent major, and they were taken away from us. We were pushed back, demoted to the grade of captain on account of money.

BURG: Oh, boy.



LEONARD: Reduction of the Army, see. So we were--most of us were--two years or so before we got back to major again.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: So we were up and down.

BURG: And then probably spent quite some period of time as a major too, didn't you?

LEONARD: Yes, a long--oh, my, yes, I didn't get to be lieutenant colonel til 19--I think--37. I'm not sure.

BURG: General Simpson said fourteen years for him.

LEONARD: Yeah, took me about the same, see. Promotions came in bunches you know.

BURG: Yes. Now during that period of the '20s did you go to the branch school in preparation, let's say, for--

LEONARD: Now when I came back, now this is my next tie-in with Ike. Well, there's a little personal thing. When he was there at training camp at Oglethorpe, he got the telegram from Mamie that the baby had arrived--the boy that died.

BURG: Yes, yes.

LEONARD: And then when we came back from the war, four Infantry officers were ordered out to Ft. Sill to take their Field Artillery Officers Course which ran from January to December, 1920. Ike was at Camp Meade, see, in the tanks, and Georgie [George Smith] Patton was there at the time.



BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And then when the reorganization came out, they assigned all the tanks to the Infantry; so all the Cavalry people left. But when I finished the school--that was a motorized course, see-- Ike told Brig. Gen. Samuel D. 7 Rockenbach to get me to the tanks there at Meade. So I was assigned to the tanks at Camp Meade. And Ike was there. We got there in December of 1920, and that little boy died New Year's '20-'21 a few weeks after we got there.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: In the meanwhile, I think Patton recommended to Fox Conner--Fox Conner had been staff, see. He was going down to take a brigade at Panama, and he wanted an Infantry officer who had been in the Infantry School.

BURG: Oh.



LEONARD: And so he took Ike. Ike then went down as executive officer, brigade executive officer, to Fox Conner in Panama; and I think that's where he got that tie-in with Fox Conner, who was at that time one of our--you might say--scholars or great tacticians and so forth with all the experience. And the thing that always

amazed me--Fox Conner always has said--at least he's been quoted as saying--that if we ever had another war he hoped to God we wouldn't have allies, see. He had been in Pershing's headquarters, see.

BURG: Yes, I know.

LEONARD: And here's Ike, his pupil--you might say Fox was one of his teachers--he was the other way around.

BURG: Precisely, yes, one of the few men who thought they could make an allied coalition work.

LEONARD: Yeah, I mean there you are now! Figure that out!

BURG: Yes.



LEONARD: If you want to know what kind of a lad he was as a cadet, pile it all up. You might get something out of it.

BURG: It's one of the difficult things that we are now trying to establish: what kind of training did Fox Conner give him; what kind of books did he have him read.

LEONARD: Well, I gave Ike a book that he liked very much. He did me a favor in 1933 when he was with MacArthur there in the chief of staff's office. I lent him a book called Liaison [1914. A Narrative of the Great Retreat (London, 1930)].

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: That was the book that [Brig. Gen. E. L.] Spears wrote. He was liaison officer with the French Army for the British in the early days of the war.

BURG: Yes, I think I remember.



LEONARD: [Ike read it]; you know, and liked that very much.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And I gave him another book. I can't think what it was. Some place along the line there Ike got serious; there isn't any question about that.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: When he went to Leavenworth, he said he was going to come out number one.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And he did. Maybe just by a neck, but he did.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And you had to work like hell to do that.

BURG: Now you were at Leavenworth yourself?

LEONARD: No, I didn't go. I came later. I didn't go till '28.

BURG: Oh, yes.



LEONARD: I graduated in '28. Ike went there in about '23, '24. I wanted to, but I got shanghaied up in the chief of infantry's office and lost the beat, you might say.

BURG: I see. Did you consider at that time, General, that the chief of infantry's office was kind of a sidetrap?

LEONARD: No, it was supposed to be a push-up. It was supposed to be. I was young and captain. For me to be selected to the chief's office was supposed to be--I was commander of the Tank Battalion down at Benning, the Infantry School, and in addition to that I was an instructor in the Infantry School. I didn't want it, but the man in this training section had been chief of staff for the 5th Division, Colonel Clement Augusta Trott, see.

BURG: How is that name spelled?

LEONARD: T-r-o-t-t. Trott.

BURG: O.K.

LEONARD: I think he is the one that probably put a bug in old
[Maj. Gen. Charles S.] Farnsworth's ear, see.

BURG: Farnsworth was chief of infantry?



LEONARD: Chief of infantry, yeah. Well, I didn't want to go, and
I asked two people about it. One was Troy [H.] Middleton--you
know, the Eighth Corps--and the other was Johnny [Walton H.]
Walker, you know, who was killed in Korea.

BURG: Oh, yes, yes.

LEONARD: And I said, "What do you think about it?" They said,
"Well, you can't turn it down." So I went.

BURG: How long were you involved in that?

LEONARD: Well, I was up there three years. Then I came back to
take the Infantry School--it was an advanced course--and then the
Leavenworth, see. Well, by that time I'm thirty-eight years old, see.

BURG: But, as I remarked to General Simpson, you had to go to the Infantry School although you had led at least a battalion on the Western Front in World War I?

LEONARD: Me?

BURG: Yeah.



LEONARD: What are you talking about? I almost got a battlefield promotion. You might as well turn that thing off, for this is prudent. I was commander of the 3rd Battalion of the 6th Infantry in the Meuse-Argonne. I got a DSC [Distinguished Service Cross], and I got a battle promotion to a lieutenant colonel. We're at Ft. Sill, and I was demoted on the 13th day of February to a captain. The very next day I was ordered down to El Paso--Ft. Bliss-- to take my examination for promotion to captain. I went down there. I stayed a week. In the meanwhile, I got promoted to a major, see. And then I get word--a nice letter from the adjutant general--saying I'm now carried on the roles as eligible for promotion to the grade of captain.

BURG: Oh, my gosh.

LEONARD: And not a damned man on that board that examined me

had been in France, see.

BURG: Yes, yes.

LEONARD: And, you see, in 1917 we were all pushed up with the extension of the Army, you know.

BURG: Surely.

LEONARD: We were all pushed up to the grade of captain; but the law requires you be examined, and they examined. My first exam to be a first lieutenant you went in and saluted: "Do you want to be a first lieutenant?" "Yes." "Get out."

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: That was the same way with a captain. That's all it could be, see. But the board met, and they took the seven in the Infantry first and the other one next and the other one. We were the last. But before they got to us we moved to Chickamauga Park, so I never got examined.

BURG: I see. And it had to be done.

LEONARD: Yeah, and they picked it up a long time there. But when



we was overseas, you know, I'm a lieutenant colonel. I'm president of a board that determined whether these fellows who came in 1916--see, provisional; they had their time in--are qualified for permanent now. I'm on the board, and I put them all in! And here--that's the Army now!

BURG: It struck me so funny to hear you tell this and to hear General Simpson talk about it--the two of you going to the Infantry School and the two of you having led troops in combat already.

LEONARD: In 1933--the war was over in 1918--I went out to China, and I got a battalion--the battalion. The Army was way down on its back then, you see, and my battalion was less one company. See, they had to cut from four companies down to three on account of money.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: The companies were about fifty men or so. Nothing much to do, you know, and all. So I get my efficiency report. And I saw the colonel put down there--he hadn't been in the war either--he put down there, "This officer has been away from troops for a



long while. He is now demonstrating his ability to command a battalion of infantry."

BURG: Oh, for gosh sakes.

LEONARD: Now that was on my efficiency report.

BURG: Did you see it at that time, or was it later?

LEONARD: Oh, I didn't see it then. No, they didn't show me. No, I saw it later. But the old man wasn't bad. He rated me excellent, see, which wasn't too bad.

BURG: Yeah.



LEONARD: But it wouldn't get you to the War College. The next year he gave me a superior. So at least he's thinking, or rather I figured he was thinking, you see. But you didn't get to the War College unless you had a string of superiors.

BURG: I see. Now at the time that you go to China--and this is almost the time when Eisenhower goes to the Philippines--he goes a little later than that--

LEONARD: Yeah, he went in '35, I think. He was then with Mac Arthur in Washington.

BURG: But then you didn't overlap in Washington, or did you for a while?

LEONARD: When he was in Washington, I was up on ROTC duty at Chester, Pennsylvania--Pennsylvania Military College.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: And every time I was down to Washington I saw him there, you know, and so forth.

BURG: That would be in the middle part of the '30s.



LEONARD: You see, China was a great detail in those days; and I was number one on the voluntary list for foreign service, and I'd asked for it. And I was to get it. And then I got tipped off that there was a little finagling going on here: "You're not going," see. So I went down to Washington, you see. Chester, Pennsylvania, to Washington is nothing.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And I went into Ike. I said, "Ike, there's somebody nipping me here, and I want to get them out." He said, "What's the reason?" I said, "Well, I understand that they got word from out there that the replacement had to come in May. I can't.

I won't get there till July." Ike says, "The hell with that." He said, "I got a letter from [Lt. Col. Karl] Truesdell [executive officer, 15th Infantry Regiment] out there wanting me to come out, and they'd wait till I could come." So he said, "Come on out with me." Now this is direct action.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: He said, "Come out with me." We go into the adjutant general's office--a major general--I've forgotten who it was--I don't remember who it was. Anyway Ike explained to them, you know, that here was "flying up" and somebody was trying to block it. [Major General Charles H.] Bridges--that's who it was--Major General Bridges. He threw it out right now.

BURG: 'Cause you had to finish out the school term, of course, at Chester?

LEONARD: Up at Chester--well, yes; but I mean school was darned near over then, see. This was about April or so.

BURG: Sure. It wouldn't have made any difference waiting that little bit.

LEONARD: No, they could have waited. They had nothing to do anyway.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: They would fix it for one: somebody they wanted.

BURG: Was Ike working for [George Van Horn] Moseley at that time?

LEONARD: No, he was working for [Hugh A.] Drum. Drum was vice [deputy chief of staff], and Mac Arthur was sitting there.

BURG: Yeah, I see.

LEONARD: He was working with Mac Arthur. He was writing Mac Arthur's annual reports and all that.

BURG: I see. All right, fine.



LEONARD: So there was no question. I was right there in the front office, see; and Ike didn't wait five minutes, and that thing was settled right then and there.

BURG: Was that the kind of reputation that he had at that time, General, of being a man who would act and act quickly?

LEONARD: Absolutely.

BURG: Was his reputation among your colleagues a pretty good

one at that time?

LEONARD: A lot of people were--when you get out in front, people shoot at you.

BURG: Yes, sir.

LEONARD: Ain't any argument about that!

BURG: Right.



LEONARD: A lot of people say, "Well, Ike wants to be around with generals and all that sort of thing"--that sort of stuff, you know. "He's gone above us." It was the same damned thing after the war. Anybody that didn't get to be a general--somebody give them a rotten deal, you know.

BURG: Yes, I know.

LEONARD: You know that.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: That's the way it is, you know.

BURG: Sour grapes.

LEONARD: Yeah, absolutely. Yes, see, old Ike would stand by you, see, and he stood by me three or four times.

BURG: Now some scholar is bound to wonder, General, and let me ask this question right now. He stood by you, and I know of other cases where he stood by men who were not his classmates. Is that your recollection too?



LEONARD: Oh, yes, Ike was your friend, and he stood by you. Now I don't think he'd stand by a tramp that really got in trouble, you know, and expected Ike to pull him out again--to get out of a murder charge or something. He wouldn't do that. But I mean in an ordinary run of things where something comes along and you need a friend that could help you along with it, yes, he'd do it. I mean he did it for me three or four times.

BURG: Now it looks to me as though people were looking at him and evaluating him. I'm sure that it would be a natural thing that they were looking at him. Do you get the impression from those days in the '30s, for example, that he too was looking at others and thinking in terms of the future and what the future might bring when he might have to select people?

LEONARD: Well, I heard Ike one time say that early in his

career he picked out three generals that were outstanding and studied why they were, see. And he sort of tried to follow them, their good points and so forth.

BURG: Do you remember the three?

LEONARD: No, I don't. I suppose Fox Conner was one.

BURG: Probably was.

LEONARD: Yeah.



BURG: If it ever strikes you--if it ever comes to your mind--the other two--

LEONARD: It might have been Briant H. Wells. I don't know. He was down at Benning there. He was sent down there to straighten it out, oh, in the '20s. Now who the other would be I don't know.

BURG: Briant Wells was one that you think would have qualified, a good man?

LEONARD: Well, I never served with him. I know his reputation and all that, and he was a good man for that period and all, you know. I'm not qualified to even pass an opinion on it.

BURG: But you do know that Ike had picked out three general officers--

LEONARD: Well, I think it was three. I mean I know that he was observing--to bring the point to the question that you asked, see--he was observing what makes the watch tick or what makes the world go round. He was looking ahead in other words.

BURG: Yes, yes.



LEONARD: He wasn't just sitting down doing nothing. He was planning, planning ahead.

BURG: Did you ever hear--and this is a difficult question to phrase--but did you ever hear a good, competent man shooting at him? Or was it your impression that those who kind of sneered or who said that "he wants to be with generals"--did they later turn out to be kind of second raters, General?

LEONARD: They weren't the big wheels--no, none of them. They were the boys who would sit back and expect the tide to carry them with it.

BURG: Yes, I didn't want to ask you for names, you see, but I--

LEONARD: No, I don't know any names right off hand. But no real up and going guy ever felt that way about him. Aside from that now, here's a little thing--I'm off on the sidetrack--that might throw a little light on it.

BURG: All right.



LEONARD: I've forgotten what year it was, but it was two or three years before the war broke out, see. Well, I say the war. They attacked London in '40. That's when we started getting up.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: It was a couple of years before that. When Marshall made generals--they usually in those days were picking them from top older people, see. Well, on this particular list there were two junior generals on it, two young fellows. And one of them was Jackie Jacob Devers, and the other was Courtney Hodges. And now I don't know who it was. I can't think of who it was. But some officer, older officer, who was an intelligent General Staff man and all said, "Oh, oh, old Marshall is planning on ahead. He's picking those two outstanding ones--prospects that he thinks will go some place--and letting them fight it out among themselves." Let them fight it out, see, as they come on up.

Now I will say that--

[Interruption]

BURG: Yes, I remember reading about kind of bitter complaints from younger officers that seniority seemed to be everything.

LEONARD: Well, you know Wop [Leroy Hugh] Watson was a classmate of ours. He was demoted, relieved of the 3rd Armored Division on the land right after V-E day [sic; relieved, August 1944]. And he went back. He had to go back through Brad, then through Ike. And he got to Ike. Ike said, "Well, we're going to send you back home." And old Wop said, "The hell you are!" He said, "I came over here to fight. I can fight just as good as a colonel as I could as a general. Give me a colonel's command." Well, Ike was tickled to death with that, you know.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: So there was a vacancy in the 29th Division, and Wop was assigned to the 29th. They were down at Brest at that time-- in the fight at Brest. There was a circling movement; there was a flank movement of some kind. They put Wop in command of it--the movement. It worked out well, and pretty soon he got one star back.

BURG: So this is right after the landings at Normandy?

LEONARD: Yes. [sic; battle for brest: 25 Aug.-.8 July 1944].

BURG: Now I can't remember reading about his being relieved of the 3rd.

LEONARD: Oh, yes, 3rd Armored, yeah--

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: --VII Corps. I think Joe [J. Lawton] Collins relieved him. [sic; Gen. Watson was removed from command by Gen. Collins and succeeded in command by Major General Maurice Rose].

BURG: Do you remember the reason, General? Do you recollect that?

LEONARD: Well, hell, I suppose he relieved him because he figured he didn't have it. I don't know.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: Well, you know what happened. I don't know. You can hear a lot of stories. I think what happened was that it was the first time they come on there; and you know the armored division, the big armored division. Christ° They had more junk than you could carry, you know--all the tanks and all the supporting

vehicles and all. You had a terrible--what we call a tail-- you had a terrific tail.

BURG: Yes, yes.

LEONARD: And the roads were congested. They kept telling you to get off the road to curl up. Well, hell, you couldn't, you know. You'd go along; and here's a goddanged woods and here's a goddanged woods and here's a ditch. When you stop, you're supposed to curl up. You're supposed to so you can come right out. Well, that's the equivalent of a parade plane, you know.

BURG: Try to come off the road into the woods and turn in--

LEONARD: Circle around--



BURG: Circle the wagons.

LEONARD: The next guy to do the same thing, see.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: You gonna knock down all those trees? Can you do it in five minutes?

BURG: So you think that perhaps Watson--

LEONARD: Well, I don't know--

BURG: --got the sack simply--

LEONARD: --I don't know the reason. But anyway the point was Ike was tickled to death and sent him up. When the war ended, he was commanding a division. He hadn't got promoted. As I say, he stopped. He might have got his second star over there if it had gone on any longer. But he finally got it out on the Pacific coast before he retired.

BURG: He did get a second star?

LEONARD: Oh, yes.

BURG: When did he retire, General?

LEONARD: Watson?

BURG: Yes, sir.

LEONARD: Probably about '54, '55, '56--in there some place. See, I retired in '52. He was three or four years younger than I was.

BURG: I can't help but wonder whether the president took any action in Watson's case then in '52 or '54?



LEONARD: No, I don't think so. Purely military matter.

BURG: O.K.

LEONARD: Oh, you mean Ike as president?

BURG: Yes, sir.

LEONARD: Oh, no, I don't think so.

BURG: You don't think so. O.K.

LEONARD: I don't think so.



BURG: We know him to be a generous man, a man who did remember people who had impressed him.

LEONARD: Yeah.

BURG: And it does come up from time to time, and we wonder about it.

LEONARD: Well, no, I don't think Wap got a job, a government job. The only classmate of mine--

BURG: No, I meant he got the second star.

LEONARD: Oh, he had that before Ike was president, I'm sure.

BURG: Oh, O.K.

LEONARD: I believe he did because I was out at Presidio for a short time in '50, and I believe Wap had two stars then.

BURG: All right.

LEONARD: I'm not certain, but I think so.

BURG: Now when you came back from China, how many years had you put in out there, sir?

LEONARD: Three, '33 to '36.



BURG: Did you see Eisenhower between then and let's say 1941?

LEONARD: Yes, sir. Yup, he came here. Ike came here.

BURG: That's right. Was he chief of staff?

LEONARD: Well, you see the tables of organization called for a colonel as chief of staff in an army--no, called for a BG as chief of staff of an army. And it called for a colonel as deputy.

Walter Krueger had the army, had just gotten it.

BURG: That's 3d Army?

LEONARD: Yeah. And [Herbert J.] Brees had been retired, see, for age. And Brigadier General Joe [Joseph A.] Atkins was his chief of staff. He had had them in the 2d Division. Then we got word that Ike was coming from out there in the Pacific coast to the 3d Army staff. Well, he was still colonel, see.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: So I was G-4 of the 2d Infantry Division here. So we all said, "Hell, what's he doing. Is he going to be a deputy chief of staff." And Ike came, and I asked him--a lot of hush-hush going on, you know, about it. I said, "Say, Ike, what the hell's going on?" I said, "Are you going to be deputy?" He said, "Deputy, hell! Look at this telegram." He had a telegram assigning him as chief of staff.

BURG: As a colonel.

LEONARD: --of the army, see. He was ready to be nominated, you see. I don't know whether Atkins' crowd was hushing it up 'cause he got the gate, see. Old Krueger let him go. Well, that was

either in June or July, early July, of '41.

BURG: Yes, sir, you're right.

LEONARD: '41. And the reason I know is because shortly after that I was ordered down with the chief of staff--on account of there'd been two officers sent to Brazil on training--to draw up a secret war plan, see. And we were gone four months. Ike got promoted shortly after we left to BG.

BURG: Yes, yes.

LEONARD: And then--

BURG: After the Louisiana maneuvers, I think.



LEONARD: Yeah, well they hadn't started, see, when we left. I don't know whether he got it during the maneuver or not.

BURG: Right at the end, I think.

LEONARD: Was it?

BURG: Yes. You had gone? You didn't take in the maneuvers?

LEONARD: Oh, no.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: No, we left before. We didn't get back here till October. Yeah, we got back in October. In Washington we had to draw up the plans, put it all together. And I got back here in October. Ike in the meanwhile--just before I got back--had been ordered up to War Plans.

BURG: Yes.



LEONARD: And I also had been promoted to temporary colonel just before I went down there--first list. We were in Washington for a briefing before we went down, and I went by to see my old friend, Courtney Hodges, chief of infantry, see. And I said, "I want a regiment, like a regiment." He said, "You got it." He said, "There's a vacancy in the 6th Infantry. That's our old regiment." He said, "It's just waiting for you, but don't stay down there too damned long. Either get back here or I might have to fill it." So when I come back, 6th Infantry. O.K. And that's the 1st Armored Division: that's how I got back in the bloody Armor.

BURG: That's one of my questions here. I can scratch that off. I couldn't figure out exactly how you got into the armored outfit.

LEONARD: Well, you see, I was assigned to Armor right after I left Ft. Sill in 1920. That was on account of Ike. And then I went down to Benning and had the tank battalion there. And then when I was in the chief's office, I was the Infantry representative on the Tank Board. See, that was one of my jobs.

BURG: Ah, yes.



LEONARD: And when I left Washington in '26, I said, "I'm going to get out of this tank business." They weren't getting anywhere; they couldn't get any money. And one of the main reasons I got it, though, was because of the 6th Infantry. Courtney and I had been in the 6th in Mexico and in World War I. I had served every commission during that 6th Infantry.

BURG: Now maybe I don't fully understand you. Courtney Hodges, as chief of infantry, sent you to the 6th as you--

LEONARD: That's right. He gave me a regiment. He assigned colonels to the Infantry regiments. And I was assigned to command the 6th Infantry. There was a vacancy in it, see, and he kept it open till I got back.

BURG: All right. What was it that moved you then into Armor again from that?

LEONARD: That was armor, part of the armored division. Oh, oh, you mean the Armor--

BURG: Oh.

LEONARD: Oh, I see. Well they're part of Armor: Infantry is just as much Armor as anyone else. The 6th Infantry was the armored infantry outfit of the 1st Armored Division.

BURG: Ah, that's where I'm wrong. I see, yes.

LEONARD: And the organization was different then from what it is now.

BURG: Precisely, yes.



LEONARD: We got back from the maneuvers in North Carolina on the 6th of December. The next day was Pearl Harbor, see.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Well, in March, Jackie Devers sent me up to the Pine Camp because they were going to organize eight or ten new armored divisions, see, in July. And he picked me to be a combat commander in one.

BURG: So he sent you in March of '42?

LEONARD: Well, actually--

BURG: In the summer of '42 they would have been activated.

LEONARD: --it was March of '42 that I went up to Pine Camp because the cadre for the 9th Armored was up there. And I was to go up there and sort of get acquainted with them. Furthermore, I was to study the organization and learn what the organization and the functions of a combat commander--which was new you see--of an armored regiment [sic; division] was. So I got up there in March; and in June, late June, I got a promotion. The 9th was activated in July out at Fort Riley. So I left Pine Camp in late June or early July and went out to Riley, and we activated on July 15th of '42.

BURG: And which unit did you have?

LEONARD: You see, we were a heavy armored division, a big armored division. General [Geoffrey] Keyes was division commander. There were two BG's, two combat commanders. Ernie [Ernest N.] Harmon was one--

BURG: Oh, yes.

LEONARD: --and I was next. Well, Ernie left right away--almost

right away--'cause he got promoted and got the 2nd Armored Division. In September, General Keyes left. He was going to be chief of staff for George S. Patton's landing--the western defense attack force that landed in Africa, you know.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: So I step up in the division commander's shoes, and in October I was promoted. I had the division then until it was deactivated.

BURG: So actually, General, you made a pretty quick rise there yourself to major general.

LEONARD: Oh, once I got the gate, you know, and got out in front, I kept going.

BURG: Yes, sir.

LEONARD: Lucky, lucky.

BURG: Lucky in the sense that you were there and you'd had the experiences?

LEONARD: Oh, no, the breaks.



BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Like a football player that hits the line: it closes on you, you're dead; you get through one step ahead of that guy, you're liable to go a long ways, you know.

BURG: Now while you were training the division, Ike goes overseas to take over over there. Did the two of you exchange correspondence after he got over and particularly after he got down to Africa?

LEONARD: Yeah, I wrote him, congratulated him on a couple of things. He wrote me back, and he said, "There's two things you want to do. They got to learn how to handle the motor transportation of a tank--got to learn how to handle it and keep the roads open and how to manage them to maneuver. And also discipline in your smaller units--the smaller units got to be trained."

BURG: Right.



LEONARD: That was basically what he wrote me.

BURG: Yes. And so then you tried to incorporate that into the kind of training you were giving the 9th?

LEONARD: Oh, yes. We all were trying that.

BURG: Yes. Did you at that time exchange any letters with, say, someone like Patton or any of your other friends who were over--

LEONARD: No. My experience with Patton was rather interesting. You were talking to General Simpson about the split, you know-- the "Bulge." Well, see, we were in the 3rd Army, and we were scattered from hell to breakfast in the "Bulge." I and my CP was at Mersch, Luxembourg, ten miles north of Luxembourg [city], and Georgie moved up, you see, into Luxembourg for his CP. Bradley's headquarters were already in Luxembourg city, and Georgie put his in there. On the 19th--the "Bulge" hit on the 16th--and on the 19th they made the decision to split. Hodges and the rest of them went over to Montgomery, see--

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: --to the bitter disappointment of Brad. Boy, that made him mad.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Well, anyway, that afternoon who comes up to our CP in



his jeep but General George S. Patton. And he said, "I want you to get out of here and go over to Middleton." Middleton was run out of Bastogne and was down there. "You go over to Middleton."

BURG: The same Troy Middleton you told us about, right?

LEONARD: So I said, "All right." William H.H. Morris Jr. had the 10th Armored. He said, "Morris will relieve you." "Yes, sir." So Morris didn't get up, see. So on the 22nd--the 19th, 20th, 21st--three days later--Morris gets up. So I went down. Have you read William Henry Mauldin's book or the brief--the outline--on Mauldin's latest book, you know?

BURG: No, I've not.

LEONARD: Well, he describes Georgie's room there at--

BURG: This is Bill Mauldin?



LEONARD: Lost phrase place. And it's correct, absolutely to a tee. I had read where Mussolini, you know, sat in this room, deep room, you know.

BURG: Yes, sir.

LEONARD: And you would come in, and he'll be there at this bare desk. And, Jesus, you have to walk down that last long mile, you know.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: So I got down when Morris gets up--it's only ten miles down to Luxembourg city--to see if they have any orders. And the G-3 is [Halley G.] Maddox. He said, "Lucky Six wants to see you." Well, that was Georgie, see.

BURG: His code name?

LEONARD: Yeah.

BURG: Codes, yes.

LEONARD: It was a telephone code line, you see. So I knock on the door. "Come in." And there he is sitting back there, you know. So I go down to give him the old one-two, you know. He said, "I thought I told you to get the hell over to Middleton three days ago!" "Well," I said,, "you did." I said, "But Morris didn't get up till just now." He said, "Well, get the hell over there right now." And I said, "I'm on my way." And then he kind of softened down a bit; and he said, "Well, I guess this turned

out better the way it is. What do you think?" I said, "I don't know, but I hope it has." But we were with him after that, and towards the finish we were attached to him again. We got a good rating from old Georgie.

BURG: Yes. It was your outfit that held Bastogne, wasn't it, until the 101st--

LEONARD: Yes, we had combat command in there, see--what was left of the combat command.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And then the 101st came in.



BURG: Now let me ask you, when did you bring the 9th over from the States?

LEONARD: We came on over in August, '44. We went up into Luxembourg, see, as reserve. First we were assigned to the 9th Army as General Simpson was telling you. He was at Arlon.

BURG: Ah!

LEONARD: We were assigned to the 9th Army, see. He was to go in between Patton and Hodges, and his headquarters were to be at

Arlon.

BURG: I see, yes.

LEONARD: That's Belgium. That's right back of Bastogne. So we landed at Glasgow and got equipped at Tidworth and then went across the pond. I went up to Arlon to report to him. And they're packing up and getting out.

BURG: They were being shifted up to--

LEONARD: Shifted up to Montgomery.

BURG: --between the 21st Group and Hodges, actually.



LEONARD: Well, what happened as I understand it is this: Montgomery had been promised an American army, and he thought he was going to get the 1st.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: That's what he wanted.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: It was a big army. Now the 9th was a new army just getting formed, so Brad was smart enough to shove the new army

up there--the smaller army you see--

BURG: Right.

LEONARD: --and save his power.

BURG: Yes, 'cause actually he was putting something up there that was really green, untried--

LEONARD: Oh, I mean they had to get--like you say--"get your feet wet."

BURG: But your 9th [Armored Division] didn't go with Simpson?

LEONARD: No, we were stayed. We had been assigned to the XIII Corps, which was [Major General Alvan C.] Gillem. Simpson went.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: But we were left to be the reserve of the VIII Corps, Middleton's Corps. "Cause, you see, when you took the Ninth out-- the Ninth Army instead of coming in that gap--all they had in there was the VIII Corps. They had the 2nd Infantry Division, the 8th Infantry Division, the 83rd Division.

BURG: Very, very few units to cover the ground of an army.

LEONARD: Well, they were enough at that time 'cause they were all full strength and they were all combat divisions.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: Been in combat.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: But they took all of them out, little by little. Huertgen Forest chewed those people up.

BURG: Yes, that's right. When you got there, was there any opportunity for you to see Ike, or did you simply bring your units up into the line?

LEONARD: He came through there.

BURG: Did he?

LEONARD: Came through just before the "Bulge." He came through-- no it wasn't just before; he came through in, I guess, in November. He came up with Brad and inspected the whole line.

BURG: You hadn't seen one another for several years, had you?

LEONARD: No, we hadn't. Ah, well, we hadn't seen each other--



BURG: 1941, I guess.

LEONARD: Yeah. I saw him in '41. This was '44. I don't believe I saw him in '42 or '43. No, I don't think I had. I think that was the first time I had seen him.

BURG: Did you have much chance for any conversation when he came through?

LEONARD: Oh, yes. He stopped by the CP, and then I rode up with him.

BURG: Oh, did you?

LEONARD: He and Brad and I and Troy Middleton rode up to Wiltz where the 8th headquarters was--8th Infantry Division headquarters. And he [Eisenhower] got my chief of staff back.

BURG: Got your chief of staff back?



LEONARD: Well, what happened was my chief of staff had died of a heart attack before we left England.

BURG: Oh.

LEONARD: And, you see, at that time you were supposed to have surplus colonels with the units, you know. Well, my G-3,

Harry [W.] Johnson, a lieutenant colonel, had been promoted to colonel and taken away from us before we came over.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: So when Colonel Kelly died, I immediately tried to telephone; but Bradley's headquarters was part across and part still in England. You couldn't get too much done.

BURG: I see.



LEONARD: And they turned me down. It was the easiest thing to do, see. I think it was the rear echelon that turned us down. They wouldn't ask for a colonel by name or some damned thing or another. And so we were riding up in this car, and Ike asked me, "How are you fixed for extra colonels?" I said, "Extra! I'm short. This old guy here"--I was referring to Brad--"I asked him when I could get Harry Johnson, and he turned me down." Well, Brad didn't know a damned thing about it.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Naturally, he wouldn't. So Ike said, "Well, I have a policy that if a division commander wants an officer and my staff approves it they don't have to tell me. If they disapprove,

it's got to come to me."

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: He said, "What's his name?" So when we got up to Wiltz, his aide, [John C.H.] Lee, said, "Come on with me." So we went into the headquarters, and I got the book--the register. I wanted to be sure. There are a lot of Johnsons.

BURG: Oh, indeed, yes.



LEONARD: And I wanted to be damned sure I had the right name, so I got it: Harry W. Johnson. And Ike took his serial number. I said, "That's the boy." Well the next day or so I got a copy of the telegram--Eisenhower to Marshall--requesting the assignment of Colonel Harry Johnson to the 9th Armored Division. It said, "For General Marshall: if this officer is available, request he be sent by air," which is a polite way, you know.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Hell, two days later we had him.

BURG: Very good, very good. Another example then of something nice done for you.

LEONARD: Damned good thing we had him too. We needed him before we got through.

BURG: Well, only a few days later then in point of time you're hit; you're all hit. Is that true?

LEONARD: Yes, because Johnny [Johnson] didn't get back much before. Let me think now. The "Bulge" broke on the 16th. Johnny wasn't with us much more than a month or so when the "Bulge" broke out.

BURG: So you might have found yourself in a very bad spot with no--



LEONARD: Well, we were much better off having him--

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: --'cause he was competent. We could depend on him. Then when CCR [Combat Command R] got chewed up, I got another colonel.

BURG: CCR?

LEONARD: CCR. You see, we had three combat commands: Combat A, Combat B, and R which was a reserve combat command then.

BURG: All right, good.

LEONARD: And Bill [William M.] Hoge, you see, had CCB.

BURG: How does he spell his last name?

LEONARD: H-o-g-e.

BURG: O.K.

LEONARD: Bill Hoge.

BURG: All right.



LEONARD: Well, you see, when we took the bridge at Remagen, Bill was promoted and sent down to 4th Armored Division. So I just took old Harry Johnson and shoved him up there at B, and I brought someone else in as chief of staff.

BURG: I see. Did you talk about anything else on that ride up?

Do you remember? That obviously was one of the biggest pieces of business that you wanted to conduct.

LEONARD: Oh, yes, sure.

BURG: How about reminiscing in that ride, or were you talking mainly about your problems of the moment?

LEONARD: Just the problems of the moment.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And, see, Brad was talking, and Troy Middleton was talking too, you see.

BURG: Oh, yes.

LEONARD: We all had problems. See, the question Ike asked me was, "How are you fixed on extra colonels?" That opened the door.

BURG: That's interesting too to those of us who were not there. We might see you West Point classmates out talking about the good old days.

LEONARD: Sure, which was swell; but, no--the old school ties. I had a very good BG, Ed [Edwin W.] Piburn.

BURG: May I have his last name too--the spelling?

LEONARD: P-i-b-u-r-n. He's dead now. He lost a leg with the 10th Armored.

BURG: Yeah.

LEONARD: Piburn was sent over. He was a crackerjack. He went



over with the advanced detail of mine and selected all the equipment and all.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: Very competent. Well, one day when we were moving up from the beaches to Luxembourg--it was raining like the devil--Brad's car passed me--three-star car, see. I was ahead of the column in my jeep because we had had trouble getting our full amount of gas the night before and I was going up and see that we were going to get plenty 'cause we'd need it. And he saw my jeep, you know, by then; and he pulled up quite a ways and then stopped. And he got out. First time I'd seen him. He said, "I'm going to send you Bill Hoge"--no, he says, "How would you like Bill Hoge?" And I said, "Listen, I'd rather have Bill Hoge than anybody I know, but he ought to get a division. He should have a division." He said, "Well, we're making a lot of changes in the Armored, and we're going to send him to you."

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: I said, "Look, I got a good one; I don't want to hurt him." I said, "Piburn's a good man." He said, "Well, you won't have anything to say about it." So I get Bill. Piburn went to



the 10th and did a good job of it. See, he lost a leg. His jeep hit a mine one time.

BURG: Oh.

LEONARD: And so that's the way it was. And that's about the time they relieved [Lindsay M.] Silvester. You see, there was a shakeup in the 7th Armored. And I think one other, a BG, [John Bellinger] Thompson, had been relieved in the 7th, and a few more changes had happened. In the changes we got Bill. Bill had been with us before, see. He joined us at Riley. When we were in the desert--just before we left the desert to go to Fort Polk--we got a phone call. He was to go to organize one of these special engineer battalions that was going to be on the landing.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: He was ordered down to Florida, and they said, "Don't you try to change it; this came from General [Lesley J.] McNair personally."

BURG: You would try to hang on to him?

LEONARD: We didn't try to change it, no.

BURG: Oh, boy.



LEONARD: Say, the time is running out. It's a quarter to six.

BURG: We must be very close to it too. Well, let's break at this point and hope to go on, perhaps in November.

LEONARD: Fine.



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EILEEN O'B. LEONARD

to the

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This is an interview in San Antonio with General John Leonard made on November 5, 1972. The interview is being conducted in General Leonard's home, and the interviewer is Maclyn Burg of the Eisenhower Library staff.

DR. BURG: Now when I left you last, we had brought you up to the "Bulge." Now my question then is, from the Battle of the Bulge on what is the activity of the 9th? Where do you go before you hit Remagen?

GEN. LEONARD: Well, of course, at the "Bulge" finally they split the two armies, you know, and sent Hodges and everything up to a certain point to the British and the rest to Georgie [Gen. Geo. S. Patton]. And Georgie's army came up and started driving towards St. Vith, you might say against the shoulder of that thing. My CCA [Combat Command A] was relieved by 10th Armored that was holding the shoulder above Luxembourg city. It was brought back; but before it rejoined me I was pulled back and sent over in Belgium back of Middleton, you know, south of Bastogne. And I had no troops because CCB [Combat Command B] was up with Hodges's army.

DR. BURG: Well, they had split your unit up.

GEN. LEONARD: Oh, hell, it was split up all through it. CCR [Combat Command R] had been boxed up--what was left of it--had been boxed up in Bastogne. And so I actually had no combat troops



under me except a few maybe odds and ends. And CCA, as it was relieved and they marched them back to join us over at Tailles, Belgium, why, their order was changed, and they were attached to the 4th Armored Division to support the 4th Armored in the drive to relieve Bastogne.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: So CCA under General [Thomas L.] Harrold--at that time he was Colonel Harrold--went up and supported [Creighton W.] Abrams's dash into Bastogne. They protected his left rear. I believe they took Sibret, and they broke up a German counter-attack that came around and came out of the woods in the fog and all--disorganized as hell. They were just mowed down by the tank gunners. But anyway Abrams got in, and the relief was established, you see. And I know that one of the first people to go in was General Patton. He came up, and General Harrold and a few of his men escorted old Georgie into Bastogne.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: And then as this thing stabilized, I got CCA back and **CCR--what was left of it. We were pulled back below the Meuse--** some place back in there: I've forgotten the name of it--to

re-equip and so forth, and in the meanwhile the CCB hold was released by the 1st Army. We assembled back there, and then we moved over east of the Mosel between Thionville and Metz. And we were in the area of the XX Corps. There we were re-equipped and also received lots of replacements. We trained there. I don't know the dates; I've forgotten.

BURG: This would be, say, January, 45.

LEONARD: That's January, yeah. January and probably in February. And then sometime late in January--my birthday came when we were there at Tailles--we were ordered up to the XVIII Airborne Corps, which was in--I've forgotten the name of the place; it's all in the after action reports. There we were to be part of the III Corps--or rather the XVIII Airborne Corps--in the drive from the Roer to the Rhine. And before we got there, the XVIII Airborne Corps of [Matthew B.] Ridgway was pulled out to form a nucleus with the airborne divisions, and the III Corps--[John] Millikin--was put in there and replaced them. And so actually we joined the III Corps. Then we started the drive from the Roer to the Rhine. It consisted of the 1st Division, the 9th Infantry Division, the 78th--[Edwin P.] Parker--and ourselves. We crossed the Ruhr. I'm not sure whether it was the 1st and the 9th that were the first ones across. We crossed, you might say, in echelons. Whoever went across first spanned out on the other side, and then

they pushed forward. Then back of them you were able to cross the Ruhr without having to fight your way across. So the 1st, the 9th, and ourselves and the 78th--

BURG: They fanned out in the direction of the echelon?

LEONARD: Well, if you cross with two divisions abreast both crossing at the same time, you got to have two or three crossings, all of which could be under fire. You got to fight. Now the first division that went across--I believe it was the 1st--it might have been the 9th--when they got across, we all stayed on this side till they had got a foothold across. Then they fanned down--

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: --along our front, see--

BURG: Right.

LEONARD: --so that we could put a bridge across with no trouble--not under fire--and then push on.

BURG: Right.

LEONARD: Well then one combat command was attached to the 9th Infantry Division--now wait a minute. No. At first we were in



reserve--rather support--of the infantry. Then we were passed through, and we pushed CCB through. They reached a place and took a little--there was a lot of little streams in there--they took a stream. They again were attached to the 9th Infantry Division in place. In other words they passed from my control up in front there to [Louis A.] Craig of the 9th Infantry Division. And in the meanwhile the 9th Infantry Division--the 60th Infantry Regiment--had taken Zuelpich, a town there, see. And everybody thought the key to the whole area there was Euskirchen, a great big railroad yard--terrific big. They had a lot of airplane photos of that town, and first they were given, I believe, to the 9th Infantry Division. They were the ones that were to take it the way that we started. Well, as we went forward things changed, and they were passed on to the 79th [78th?]. Then about the night before--it was raining like hell--they brought down the photos to me. We were to take it. And I was given the combat RCT--Regimental Combat Team--number 60 of the 9th Infantry Division, which was to be attached to me. But there was a string on it, and that string was I could not use them except to take Euskirchen. In other words, we had to fight up to the edge of the town, and then let him go in and take the town. Well I consulted him. It was Colonel [John G.] Van Houten. And I asked

him, "What do you need? What do you want from us?" Well, he wanted quite a bit. And I thought, well, to hell with that! We'll take it ourselves. It was raining. So I assembled my commanders, Harrold and [Walter] Burnside. Oh, I had a battalion of the 79th [78th?] attached to me. Fellow name of [Harry?] Lutz commanded it, a crackerjack bunch. So I had three infantry battalions: I had my own 60th, my own 52nd, and the battalion of the 79th [78th?] Division commanded by a Major Lutz. He was a good one.

BURG: L-u-t-e-s?



LEONARD: L-u-t-z, I think. I'm not sure. But anyway we had a meeting and discussed it. It was about 9:00 o'clock in the morning; so I asked Harrold, who was off a little bit to the right, how soon he could attack. He said he could attack about 12:00 or 12:30. I said, "Well, we'll make it 1:00. And we'll make it an infantry crack. We'll put all three infantry battalions abreast followed by the tanks, and we'll go to it." I told Harrold, "Now if you get into a hornet's nest when you get to Euskirchen"--which we all really sort of expected 'cause it was a key point--"use your head. Stand tight, and then we'll cover it by fire and all. Then at night when it gets dark, we'll support

this RCT 60." But I said, "Unless it's a real tough cookie why we'll go right on through it and take it." And it was raining so bad that--it wasn't too strongly defended, but with what they had they were looking for tanks. They had a lot of anti-tank guns out. And out of the rain and the kind of mist and all that damned infantry surrounded them, and it was over before they knew they were there.

BURG: I see.



LEONARD: Our tanks were behind. So actually we went into that thing with hardly any trouble at all. And two of the battalions passed right on through the town, but then there was a little river there--E-u-r-e [sic; the Erft River]. I believe the name Euskirchen comes from it. It's on that Eure [sic; Erft] River. And that wasn't much of an obstacle itself, but the approach was so damned muddy that to get a bridge across--to get your artillery and your tanks across--it took a little time. And it was kind of difficult. But then the worst of it was after you got across. The main road the way we wanted to go was blocked because the autobahn went across there, and the Germans had blown--Jesus! They did a beautiful job of blocking that road. But we had to find a way around it, and it took time. Then we started on down.

That was the beginning, you might say, of our breakthrough down towards the Rhine. We passed where Hoge was. He was returned to us, so we had the whole division. And now I've forgotten the names of those towns. But we had Harrold on the right, and then that left Hoge on the left. We kept our [unit's name omitted] in reserve or support, rather. And I believe that battalion of the 79th [78th?] Division was attached to Harrold, CCA. But our orders were changed a couple of times, and we went on down. See, the 27th Infantry was having a lot of difficulty in losses. The losses weren't heavy, but they were losing key men. If they had ten losses, seven of them would be either officers or non-coms.

BURG: This was just accidental?



LEONARD: Oh, not just accidental. It just happened that way.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Whereas the 60th Infantry over with Van Houten might have forty casualties; but there wouldn't be any key officers or key non-coms, so your organization always was in tact. So CCB was not moving as fast as I thought it should. I went up to General Hoge, and I said, "Hell, let's take"--oh, I sent my headquarters company commander up to take over one of the

companies of the 27th. They were short of company commanders. I followed them up in about three hours, and as I went up to see General Hoge there was a commotion over in the woods on one side. They were bringing some of the wounded men out in a stretcher, and someone hollered at me, "Hey, it's your man!" I've forgotten his name now. He was a good one. Here was my headquarters company commander.

BURG: He hadn't lasted three hours.

LEONARD: Yeah, he hadn't hardly got in there, and he got hit. That's the way it was going. So I said to General Hoge, "Bill, my 52nd Infantry is in pretty good shape, and they've got the key organization. This outfit is pretty well bunged up, and down in key people." I says, "How about my tonight relieving your 27th and put the 52nd in?" He said, "No. The only way they're going to learn to fight is to fight." And so we stayed with them. That night they got to Stadt Meckenheim, and that's the night before we took the bridge. And that's where I saw him [Hoge], probably late in the afternoon. That night they got to Stadt Meckenheim. Under the original order, CCA were to have gone into Remagen and B would have been over on their left to tie up with the bunch that were driving on Cologne. Our original

order was only to go to the Ahr [River]--push on and push to the Ahr. Then they changed the order, and CCA was to cross the Ahr and go down to some high ground there. That was the first change. And that night we changed the boundary line between the two combat commands. So that threw CCB into Remagen. Now in the meanwhile we had another battalion, a different one of the 78th from that one I was talking about. I can't think of that man's name. He was attached to the 78th--or 79th. Wait! Seventy-eighth. Seventy-ninth was wrong. It's all 78th.

BURG: All right, my transcriber has got that now.



LEONARD: Eddie Parker. Yeah, it's all 78th--Parker. Seventy-ninth is a different--

BURG: All right.

LEONARD: --outfit entirely. 78th was Parker, Eddie Parker. Now General Hoge had that battalion; so when he attacked, he had [William Raymond] Prince with the 52nd [Armored] Infantry [Battalion] with some attached tanks all moving down towards Sinzig, which was on the Ahr River almost where it ran into the Rhine. That was his right flank. His center was the task force under [Leonard] Engeman, who commanded his tank battalion. Then on his left flank

he had this battalion of the 78th. Prince in Sinzig got information from the people there and also from a couple of prisoners they caught that their bridge [means bridge at Remagen?] was going to be blown up at 3:00 o'clock that afternoon. It was getting along about that time then. That word got back to General Hoge, and he pushed everything he had down to there. I had gone over to follow CCA. There was a place there, Bad Neuenahr, on the Ahr River. It was a place that the Germans were using as a convalescent hospital. It had a red cross on top, and you weren't allowed to shoot on it. And our orders always were "never fire on any ambulance or anything like that." Well, the CCA ran into some anti-tank guns by the edge of those buildings. So what are you going to do? They wanted artillery support. Well, we decided that it wasn't that urgent--to see if they couldn't work around it with the infantry they had. In the meanwhile, if it got worse, why then we'd use the artillery--use every damn thing we had, order or no orders. I mean, you can't stand and let somebody blow you apart. Well then in the meanwhile, 27th Infantry, Lt. [Karl] Timmermann's platoon, and some of the tanks had rushed to the [Remagen] bridge and found it still there. These details are

written up pretty well in some of these books and after action reports. I had started back from Harrold and landed into Bill Hoge's CP, oh, probably twenty minutes or so after they had taken the bridge. He was trying to get in touch with me because at the time they had got the darned bridge and started over some damned message that had changed our mission to go on down and join up with the 3rd Army--which in the meanwhile was breaking through towards Koblenz--reached him several hours later than what it should have. I don't know what happened. These things happen. So he was kind of in a stump there. This latest order stated that we were to sweep on down the River--nobody expected a bridge: that was the one thing about it--sweep on down the darned river and across it instead of stopping on the hill--which was our second order--to go on down and join up with the 3rd Army, which happened to be the 4th Armored Division. It had broken through and was driving on Andernach just down river from Koblenz. Well I got in there. Bill Hoge and I were friends and were cadets together. He was one year behind me. And in World War I he had a battalion, the 7th Engineers; and I had a battalion, [the 3rd Battalion of] the 6th Infantry [Regiment in] the 5th [Infantry] Division. And we were together in a pretty tough fight in the Meuse-Argonne at the Romagne Canal. Between the wars we'd see a lot. He had joined us after we organized the 9th Armored Division.

As a matter of fact, he'd been up on the Alcan Road, you know. He had built the Alcan Highway.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: And then he was offered as a BG to the Armored Division, and he told General [Jacob] Davers if he could he'd like to go with me 'cause we had been together in World War I and he'd rather be with me than anyone else in the war. And so I told General Boyd [Leonard R. Boyd?] I'd rather have him than anybody, you know.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And so he joined us out at Riley and was with us through most of the training. We go out to the desert, and we weren't there long before we got an order that General Hoge was to report to Washington for instructions and we were not to ask that the order be changed or anything because General [Lesley J.] McNair had personally ordered this. Well, he was put in command of one of these engineer--I don't know whether you call them port battalions or beach battalions. Their job was to get on the beach, clear it, and keep stuff moving. He had that. And so when that job ended and when they pushed out from the beaches, there was no need for that. He was got back into the combat line, see.



And General Bradley assigned him to the 9th Armored Division; he came back to us, see. He came back to us in October when we were up in the Luxembourg area and stayed with us until shortly after this the breakout. Just before the breakout he was promoted, given the 4th Armored Division, you see. Well, anyway--to get back--he said, "We got you a bridge." Well before that--and it's written up and great play put on it particularly by [John] Toland in his book [The Last 100 Days (N.Y., 1966)]--Millikin had called. He had the corps, see. He called me up the night before the attack when everything was lined up, and he said, "You see that black line across the river?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, if you take that, your name will go down in history." I said, "Well, O.K."

BURG: But none of you thought it was still there?

LEONARD: Well we didn't expect it there. Nobody did. Well, anyway, he didn't have to tell us to take the damned thing. If it was there, we'd have taken it, see. But Bill said, "We got you a bridge." So I come in, you know, and I said, "What in the hell did you do that for?" I said, "My God, if you hadn't taken that bridge, we could have sat on our butts here for a whole month and really enjoyed life." And in the meanwhile, of course,

now we knew each other well enough to--

BURG: Of course.

LEONARD: --know what it was all about, see. In the meanwhile, we had a map there. You know if you get a bridgehead, you're supposed just as quick as you can to get out beyond machine gun range--get the bridge out of machine gun range and then artillery and so on. Well, gee, if you look at that damned wall, as soon as you got over there here's the mountain. A tunnel goes through it. It's terrific. Well, then, another thing. I said, "Well, hell, Bill. We'll get a battalion or part of us over there, and the damned delayed"--you know the Germans were good on delayed--

BURG: Delayed fuses?

LEONARD: I said, "Two or three tanks from now the whole thing will go up, and there it is." He said, "Well, the war's going to be over anyway in a short time." So we started right over. I said, "All right, you get everything you got across the bridge. The division will be responsible up to the bridge." Now I said, "Prince in Sinzig--pull him back. I'll have CCA or Harrold"--



who was over and above there, a little bit above it--"relieve them right away. You see, I'll send troops so they'll take care of that." I said, "Your man"--what the hell was his name over there now? Oh, they had the [Battalion of the] 78th Division that was on his left. I said, "Bring him in too, and get them over. I'll have a reconnaissance troop take care of him--relieve him"--see.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: 'Cause that's all I had. So the reconnaissance troop will relieve him. Then we started everything in movement. They were raving to beat the hell all night long. And I don't know how they got there, but they got there. We got across. They had, of course, the bridge, you know; but the MP's and patrol stuff--they were good. And anti-aircraft were moved in there promptly. We had a good anti-aircraft battalion. He [not named] came to me. He said, "Let me get all the things I got down there right away, and let's get the corp and everything they got down. Going to be a lot of action down there."

BURG: Sure.

LEONARD: And actually it turned out later our people intercepted--

that is, up higher in order--the whole darned Luftwaffe over that bridge that night.

BURG: To try to get it.

LEONARD: They couldn't get it on account of the weather, see.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: We were cussing like hell because, oh, it was raining and we were trying to move, you know, and everything--moving this guy this way, trying to get something that way, and stuff coming up from the back. It was something. And the road was bad. The road that Hoge had gone down was just an ordinary country road, you might say, with ditches on the side and woods right up to it.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: Now where are you? You can't get anything off the road unless it takes a lot of time and blocks everybody, see. Well, that's the way--that's the weight of it--that developed.

BURG: Now you came back and actually came into Hoge's CP about twenty minutes after he--



LEONARD: Twenty minutes to a half-hour, yeah.

BURG: --he knew that he had that bridge?

LEONARD: Yeah, he knew that he had orders to get across too.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: He knew that everything was backing him. Well, the same thing happened. The word got to my chief of staff, Harry [W.] Johnson. He notified the corps, and everything was "go" as soon as Hodges found out that it was "go." As soon as Bradley found it out--and if you read Bradley's book, you'll see he was mad as hell because the G-3, Pinky [Harold R.] Bull-- have you ever had him on your--



BURG: He's next.

LEONARD: Is he?

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Pinky Bull?

BURG: Right.

LEONARD: He's a good friend of mine too. Well, Pinky Bull was

G-3, and he was in Brad's headquarters when the word come in.

BURG: Now who sent the word?

LEONARD: Well, it goes back up through channels--Hodges.

BURG: So you passed the word on?

LEONARD: Well, actually, before I got back from my CP my chief of staff relayed the word to the corps; and the corps to the army; the army to Brad; and Brad to Ike. There you are.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: But Bull, who was Bradley's [sic; Ike's] G-3, was in his headquarters, and Brad--you reading his book?

BURG: Yeah, I've got the book.

LEONARD: Well, anyway, it's just what he says. "Ah," Brad says, "hot diggity-dig. We got a bridge." Or he said, "Hodges has grabbed a bridge" or "Leonard or somebody grabbed a bridge." And according to his story, Brad's story--you know Brad is not the guy that'll deviate one solitary bit for anybody. And Pink said, "Well, you got a bridge. What you going to do with it?" Everything was ordered up for Montgomery. You know our roads were

cluttered after that "bulge" with everything. All our bridge equipment, our smoke generators, and God knows what going up for Montgomery to cross the river, you know.

BURG: In style.

LEONARD: He had everything, you know. And here the dumb Americans, you know, grab a bloody bridge, you see. Then in the meanwhile the 2nd Infantry Division was working up along the Ahr; and as soon as they got up, CCA was kept away from me. The corps had it guarding that Ahr until, oh, maybe the second or third day. In the meanwhile, Hodges ordered that the 9th Infantry Division take over the command on the other side of the river there because they had better communication, you see. And they brought in elements of the 99th Division; the 9th Infantry Division came in; and, oh, artillery was brought up. Every damned thing was brought up, you know, and from there went on.

BURG: Now first let me ask you this: when you travelled around-- you had travelled to CCA, and then you came back and ran into your man right after the bridge had been taken--what were you travelling in?

LEONARD: Jeep.

BURG: That was your customary means of transportation?

LEONARD: I had a jeep. I kept one jeep with me and another jeep back there. I also had a command car. I mean--what do you call these little cars? Something like a light tank--command car--you know, fortified.

BURG: Like an armored car?

LEONARD: Armored car, yeah. But they were too slow, and they were bad where the roads were narrow. You couldn't pass anybody. So the tendency was to ride in a jeep or else--if it was good weather--take an L-5, you know. But I usually used a jeep.

BURG: No radio in the jeep?

LEONARD: Oh, yes.

BURG: You did have one?

LEONARD: Oh, sure. Yes, indeed.

BURG: And then after you started to funnel stuff across--the decking was still on the bridge?

LEONARD: *Oh, I meant to tell you that. Yeah, when we started*

that night, the first--

BURG: You went right to the bridge then? You were at the bridge?

LEONARD: Well, I was not in there.

BURG: Right.

LEONARD: Actually go to the bridge? No. There was too much to do otherwise. Hoge was handling the bridge. And you could have too many people. I had seen too many cases where general officers have too much to say without thinking out everything-- just impulsive, you know. Hoge was down there. He could run it just as well as I could; probably better. And, anyway, I went back to make darned sure that we carried out our end of it--take the MP's down to the bridge, you know. Then there was a road over here, a better road over toward the Ahr which we didn't use right away because, you know, the Germans kept pounding away at that bridge with artillery for a couple of days. And so we had to keep this other road until we got a little further out from the water's edge. Then we could use this better road to bring in supplies and all.



BURG: But you had to push the Germans back out of artillery range before you could do it.

LEONARD: Oh, yeah. It was tough in going. What we tried to do--wanted to do--we wanted to move out along the river down the road and come like this out beyond this mountain--this ridge--these hills--you see, out to where the main road was. But we didn't get to it. It took quite a while to get to it.

BURG: Why? Because they were stiffening up on that other side?

LEONARD: Germans were coming in there fast as they could. You see, when we hit that thing, we were spread to hell and breakfast, you see, spread out all over. It took a little time to get things together and get over.

[Interruption]

BURG: So you were saying that your problem was to funnel the stuff in there 'cause you were--

LEONARD: Didn't have no problem! They built a pontoon bridge right away--the corps did. And that was an interesting thing. **They built this pontoon bridge. The river was about three** hundred feet wide as I remember it at that time. And just as

they finished it, I saw the prettiest artillery shooting I ever saw. The Germans fired, and there was four bursts that landed above the bridge, you see. And then, by golly, there was four more, and they landed the same distance on the other side of the bridge. Then four plunked down and knocked out about four sections of that bridge.

BURG: Perfect bracket to--

LEONARD: Perfect bracket. Artilleryman's dream.

BURG: Boy, oh, boy.

LEONARD: Then we were a long while getting that fixed. Well, later on, of course, they built--what do you call the old time bridges?

BURG: Bailey?

LEONARD: We used--

BURG: No, it wouldn't be a Bailey bridge.

LEONARD: No, we didn't have a Bailey there. A treadway bridge, you see, was the one we usually used. Of course, we had the big bridge then. *We had this pontoon bridge and--no, first was rubber*

pontoons, you know.

BURG: Oh, yes, with a wooden deck.

LEONARD: And then they had a wooden pontoon bridge, a regular permanent pontoon bridge that you build later.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Army engineers built that. That was up stream near Linz. Well, I guess that takes us across the bridge.

BURG: And you were slowed at first in the bridgehead that you had created, and then you were able to push out of that. Of course, a lot of troops that were not yours really by then had been pulled in.

LEONARD: Well, it doesn't matter whether they're yours or not. They're attached to you, you see.

BURG: They were attached to your command?

LEONARD: Well, you see, Hoge was in command over there at first, see; and then everything sent over reported to him. First they cleared through us, and then they reported to him. Probably the 9th--Craig's outfit--was pulled over there, and then they took

control of that over there.

BURG: So you have great flexibility in the way the American army was set up.

LEONARD: The American army could take any division--you could go to one corps or the other and never know the difference. You could attach artillery--my artillery--to the next division or the next corps, and you'd never know the difference. They'd fit right in. That was their training.

BURG: You yourself were actually directing infantry units as part of your work although you were commanding an armored division?



LEONARD: In what way do you mean directing infantry units? What way do you mean?

BURG: Well, it sounds as though you have various infantry battalions from various infantry divisions--

LEONARD: Well, they're attached to you.

BURG: --attached to you.

LEONARD: Oh, yes, you'll fight with them.

BURG: And you're employing them in combat?

LEONARD: Well, sure. Your armored division is part infantry. You had three infantry battalions and three tank battalions.

BURG: Yes, but this combination of--

LEONARD: Oh, well, you formed combinations. Your combat command, generally, is a reconnaissance unit, some signal people--everybody has its own signal: most of the armored now-- you had tanks, infantry, and artillery. If I sent a combat team off on a mission--one here and one there--they all were self-contained.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Now if it was like the drive at Euskirchen where it was a division as a whole operating, we were bunched together, see; and the artillery was under my control--one of my artillery commander's control, see.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: But as soon as I break loose, he's got to have the stuff to do the job with.

BURG: And Hoge goes across the river, and the practical thing is to put him in command over there.

LEONARD: Yes, he knows what he wants.

BURG: You knew him well too.

LEONARD: Responsibility was his. He was responsible for that over there until Craig relieved him.

BURG: Was the British army as flexible in its use--



LEONARD: Hell, no! I don't know. I don't know enough about them.

BURG: Neither do I, but it doesn't sound to me as though they are.

LEONARD: Our school system did it.

BURG: Leavenworth and the War College?

LEONARD: Another thing--they made us flexible. We were taught all along that you establish ammunition dumps and food dumps and all that sort of stuff in piles and all. Well you know when we got rolling what our dumps were?

BURG: No.

LEONARD: They were trucks pulled off the road some place. You come up and drew your ammunition from that. As soon as that truck was empty, it went back instead of rolling up and dumping a lot of damn ammunition and maybe not using it all and going on and then having to reload it and take it back. There's your flexibility.

BURG: I see, yes.

LEONARD: Everything was flexible. And you're fighting. I'm going along fighting as part of the III Corps. Here's my boundary: III Corps here, V Corps here. The army changes the boundary over to here, and I'm in this corps under a new commander, new staff and all.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: All right.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: That's the way that we were developed during the war. The amazing thing--your history certainly will bring it out--is **how we went from nothing, absolutely nothing, to the magnificent--** well I don't know whether to call it magnificent or not--but to



the tremendous Army we had. Well, you know, look at the size of the army in Europe with divisions, corps, armies, army groups, Eisenhower and his headquarters. The same thing out in the Pacific. And the Navy, you might say, the same way. The Air Force the same. What did we have before?

BURG: Yes. You know, you're making another case for the broad front over the narrow front approach that Montgomery favored. You know, when you stop to think about it, one reason perhaps why Eisenhower and others were so confident about a broad front was that they knew this flexibility existed.

LEONARD: Well when Eisenhower--when the Americans--came into things, you know, we had the stuff; we had the manpower. And so I think you could do things you wouldn't otherwise have been able to do. Now, originally, it used to be you drove; and then when you drove through, you widened out the shoulders. That was the theory in World War I and all when there wasn't much mobility.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Well the first one that changed that was Ludendorff on a drive in March of 1918. When he made that drive, they had what they called infiltration. They spread way out and then filtered

through. And if there was a weak point, they exploited it; and another weak point, they exploited it.

BURG: And avoided the strong ones--went around.

LEONARD: Yeah, they went around, and the strong ones fell. And I remember Ludendorff's G-3, [Max] Hoffman, was supposedly one of the greatest brains in the German army and probably was. He was their G-3 in Russia, and he's the one really that deserves credit for Tannenberg and so forth up there, you know. He criticized Ludendorff to beat hell for that 'cause he believed in the other thing, you see. Oh, I can remember that well.

BURG: Now the British--very frequently we read about their commanders in the Second World War harking back to the western front and their experiences there. Well, Montgomery, if I remember correctly, always implied--if he didn't say directly--that Eisenhower, you know, didn't count 'cause he hadn't been there.

LEONARD: I'm not a Montgomery booster, supporter; but I tell you one good thing about him--one little thing about him--two things. Bruce [G.] Clark was leading combat command of the 7th Armored Division. They came into St. Vith in the "Bulge." And he was

there when Montgomery took over that part of the army. And when I was in London, Bruce came over there. He was in command of the armored school, and he came over to some conference. I took him over to Montgomery, who was then chief of the Imperial General Staff. And he told Field Marshal Montgomery, "I want to thank you for pulling us out of the area around St. Vith there because we had reached the point where we couldn't do it." Well Montgomery said, "The ground isn't the thing." You know in the First World War your orders were to hold the ground at any cost.

BURG: Indeed.

LEONARD: Well, that's what Hitler did. They wouldn't give a bit of ground in Russia. All those--Goering and the rest of them--said, "For God's sake, let's pull back during the winter and shorten our line of communications then." "No, don't give up another inch." In the First War you didn't give up a damned inch.

BURG: Right.

LEONARD: So Montgomery said, "No, the point of the ground isn't the thing. The men--get back, reform, and then hit." Well, that

was one point in his favor.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: Well, what the devil was the other thing I had in mind about him? Oh, when I was in London there, most of the [British] officers didn't like Montgomery particularly. They admired him; they respected him; and they respected his ability as a commander; but they just didn't like him. But he had a flair. And one of the old field marshals, [Sir William] Slim, said, "The 8th Army belongs to Montgomery." They have a reunion every year there, you see, in London. Gosh, they'd tear the place down if Montgomery would come.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: The soldiers were strong for him.

BURG: Right.

LEONARD: Well you can't take that away from him.

BURG: He had been a victorious general--

LEONARD: Oh, yeah.

BURG: --when they didn't have much.

LEONARD: He was a hard man to handle, and a hard man to get along with.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: He wanted to run the show. He was not a good number two man.

BURG: Yes. Now after Remagen where did you then take your division? Do you get out to the Elbe?

LEONARD: We were stopped just short of the Elbe. We got to Mulde River, but not to Leipzig. After we broke out from the bridgehead, which was on the 25th of March, we went to Limburg. Then we swung up towards Warburg because they were making that drive to bottle up the Ruhr pocket. And the 3rd Armored Division was on the right of the 1st Armored, which is making the encirclement movement. The 2nd Armored, which is under General [William H.] Simpson, was coming up; and they joined up at Paderborn. Now on their right rear--echelon to the right rear--was the V Corps. We were the leading element of the V Corps, so we were supporting--covering the flank--of that drive there.

BURG: Turning movement. Yes.

LEONARD: And then when that was done, we were pulled back. We started--the V Corps with the 2nd Infantry Division, the 69th Infantry Division, ourselves, and I believe that was all--the 2nd, 69th and ourselves: under [Clarence R.] Huebner, V Corps-- we started for Leipzig. And we were to go to the Elbe. Well, we bypassed Leipzig--my division did. The 69th came in back of us and come in this side, and the 2nd went in this way. Leipzig is a hell of a big city.

BURG: Yes, it is.

LEONARD: Well on the way driving up we got word that we would stop on the Mulde. The Mulde is about ten miles before you get to the Elbe. It was about ten miles between. So we got to Mulde without any particular trouble, and we established bridgeheads across it. We weren't allowed by any matter or means at all to go beyond. They said, "You might run into Russians and cause trouble," you see. So we were pulled out after everything settled down and relieved by the 2nd Infantry Division. We were brought back and sent down to [George S.] Patton's army-facing Czechoslovakia, and the 69th and the 2nd took over on the Mulde. And that's where the 69th sent a patrol out. They violated orders, and they joined up with the Russians.

BURG: Met them on the Elbe.

LEONARD: On the Elbe.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: The 2nd--they carried out their orders. They didn't send any patrols out, and they missed the boat not meeting the Russians.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: But anyway, we went on down to Czechoslovakia. First of all, they detached CCA and sent it down. The V Corps was pulled down there. They hollered for the CCA; they went down there. The 1st Infantry Division was down there. Then they sent the rest of us down there. We sat there for three or four days, and then they decided they were going in. So the 1st Infantry Division went in on the left, and CCA--Harrold--was attached to it. He led their attack--that column. They got to Bad [Karlsbad]--something or other: a little town. And they got Kruschnik [Kynsperk?] or something like that. They got strict orders not to cross a little bitty stream there. And the German 12th Corps--I think it was under General [General]feld-marschall Ferdinand] Schoerner--were trying their best. Russians

carried the surrender to the Americans, see.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And so that's where we ended.

BURG: Now when you were on the Mulde, is it your opinion that you could have reached Berlin? I mean what was the condition of your vehicles, of your men?

LEONARD: Oh, we were sitting pretty!

BURG: Supplies up? Ammunition up?

LEONARD: Oh, well, you see--another flexibility--we were using most of our ammunition trains to carry gas. There wasn't much fighting, you see, on the breakthrough like that.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: So once we started rolling out after we left Warburg and started up towards Leipzig, I would say that--oh, I don't know what percentage--but we were loading our ammunition trucks with gasoline--five gallon cans of gasoline. Oh, we had plenty of gasoline--no trouble. And we had enough ammunition as far as that went.

BURG: Now you had not been taking heavy casualties as you made--

LEONARD: Oh, it was light, light fighting. It was a question of go, go, go!

BURG: The roads in good condition?

LEONARD: The roads were in good condition. And, well, I'd have to look at the map now and see what it is, but we didn't have anything to do with that. See, we were here--the V Corps and the VII Corps. Well, I'm getting a little bit off now 'cause I'm down in Czechoslovakia where we ended. But to come back, we're on the Mulde there at a place near Colditz. It was an old time fortress--

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: --fourth [sic; 16th century] century fortress--Colditz.

BURG: Used as a prison.

LEONARD: Yeah. The V Corps was still there. We were pulled out, and the VII Corps took over. They could have gone. Joe [Joseph Lawton] Collins would have taken them in there come hell

or high water. The interesting thing about Colditz--just before

we reached the Mulde this famous 1st Calvary Division had burst into that prison in Manila, you know, and released those things.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: So one night we get word: "Form a task force and drive on to Colditz and release Viscount Leselles [?]-he was a nephew of the king, a cousin of Churchill. He and a couple more famous generals were all prisoners in this Colditz castle.

BURG: Right.

LEONARD: So we were to do that. Well, you know to organize a raid you don't do it in ten minutes. We were going as fast as things could go anyway, so we didn't pay any attention to it. And the next day we were on the river. We had a battalion of the 69th attached to us then, the "Big Irishman." They had crossed over and no trouble at all. The guards surrendered, you know, at Colditz, but these guys weren't there. We found out that they had been taken out about a week before when the Americans started driving close.

BURG: As you got close.

LEONARD: Yeah.

BURG: I see.

LEONARD: So all this hullabaloo, you know, about making this raid was just phooey. Somebody had an idea, you know.

BURG: Yes. Now did you see Eisenhower there toward the close of the war?

LEONARD: No. I saw Ike--the war ended on May something or other--

BURG: 8th or 9th? Around there.



LEONARD: And now let's see. We had our 30th reunion down at Cannes--class of '15--and Ike was there.

BURG: Oh, I see.

LEONARD: And he was there for a night and a day. And, let's see, that was in June. No, the next time I saw him was in either late July or August. I had buttered myself up to stay on duty, and my division was about to be deactivated--the 9th Armored. And I found out the 4th Armored was going to remain--or so the plan was then--in Germany for the army of occupation. And they didn't have a major general assigned at that time. Hoge had

gone. So I cleared it through General Patton and General Bradley that they'd give it to me, and they said they wanted to wait until Ike came back. He was over in the States, you know.

BURG: Yes.

LEONARD: And when he came back, nothing happened; so I went up to Frankfurt to find out what the score was. And I found out that Ike had assigned me to the 20th Armored which already had been sent back to go out to Japan--already had left. And so I went in to see him. First I saw the G-1; then I went in to see him. He said, "What are you doing here? I thought you had gone back." And I said, "No." I said, "I just heard from [Williard S.] Paul"--he was the G-1--"That I'm to go out to Japan but that he had to clear it through the War Department 'cause it was another theater." Ike said, "Oh, that's already cleared. General Marshall cleared that when he was here." So he picked up the phone and told Paul to get the order out. So in a couple of days I flew back to here and got back and went on fifteen days R and R instead of thirty. Fortunately, while we were on our R and R, V-J came. I went out to Camp Cooke where the 20th was, and we never unpacked our tanks and all. We just were busy demobilizing everybody out there for the rest of it.

BURG: Sure.

LEONARD: So that was that phase of the war.

BURG: Well, that's good. That covers the whole span of time that I wanted to cover.

LEONARD: Well, I think it would be well--

BURG: Right.

LEONARD: Do you have the after action reports--access to them?

