

Oral History Interview

with

COL. LAURENCE E. BUNKER

Chief aide to General Douglas MacArthur, April, 1946 to November, 1952.

Independence, Missouri

December 14, 1976

by Benedict K. Zobrist, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library

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## NOTICE

This is a transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted for the Harry S. Truman Library. Due to the death of the interviewee this transcript was edited by his sister Miriam Hawthorne Bunker and his brother Colonel Raymond Thayer Bunker, who served in New Guinea, Luzon, Japan, and Korea. Only minor emendations were made; therefore, the reader should remember that this is essentially a transcript of the spoken, rather than the written, word.

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BUNKER: For identification purposes, I am Colonel Laurence E. Bunker, from Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, at present a first vice-president of the MacArthur Memorial Foundation in Norfolk, but formerly aide to General MacArthur for six years and a half, from April 1946 until November 1952. That service started within six months after the Headquarters transferred to

Tokyo for the Occupation, and then I returned to the States with General MacArthur when he was recalled in '51, and stayed with him in New York for a year and a half, until

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the time of the election in 1952.

During most of that time I was in charge of his office--his military affairs office--ran his schedule, handled the correspondence, and that sort of thing, on a personal basis. Of course, Headquarters correspondence was carried on primarily through the Chief of Staff's office, but MacArthur's personal correspondence and his personal engagement calendar were my responsibility, both in Tokyo and New York. So I had a chance to become pretty thoroughly familiar with the General's affairs. Also this gave me access to a great many people who would come in to ask me to deliver messages to the General because they didn't want to bother him but they did think he ought to have certain information. Then, of course, as I circulated later I ran across a great many people who would say to me, "Well, did you know?" and thus I

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gathered more information.

One of the interesting things in that period was my close association with General Charles Willoughby, who was the G-2 in MacArthur's Headquarters. Incidentally, I heard General MacArthur tell one of the Secretaries of the Army when he came out, that in his book Willoughby was the finest G-2 officer he had encountered in his fifty-odd years of service in the Army, and he was so much the number one that he wouldn't know whom to name the number two.

ZOBRIST: I was very fascinated with what you had to say about the way Willoughby wrote the book about MacArthur. Would you mind just telling us about that very briefly?

BUNKER: The way I got the inside information on that was not only from my contacts with Willoughby but through Eddie Aswell at McGraw-Hill, who was

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the Adair editor in charge of bringing out the Willoughby book, which, of course, was written in conjunction with John Chamberlain. I never have checked out with John Chamberlain how much of this background he had from his contacts with Willoughby. But the situation there was, as I understand it, that Willoughby had been working on a book to be known as *MacArthur's Intelligence, 1941-1951*. In other words, it was to be the story of that staff section which had been under his command.

McGraw-Hill, because of the popular interests in the General at that time, wanted a biography of MacArthur during the war years. And they really forced Willoughby into converting his volume

into a biographical outline of the history of that part of the General's life, and announced it to the press in such a way that it gave the impression that this was MacArthur's story being

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edited by Willoughby. It hadn't been brought to the General's attention that this was being done, and he was rather irate when he found that it had been announced in this particular way. I believe he wrote a letter to McGraw-Hill disclaiming his acceptance of that basis for publication.

Well, the book came out, and in order to pad it to the extent that McGraw-Hill wanted it, Willoughby gathered a lot of material from other officers of the staff, so that it did become a somewhat general history of the period.

Of course, the basic influence all the way through, was the intelligence end, so that a number of the other officers were very critical of Willoughby for putting out the book and trying to give the impression it was he who won the war with a little help from somebody else. But that was because of the pressures from McGraw-Hill and Willoughby's conforming, shall we say, to the

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minimum extent practicable for what McGraw-Hill was asking. On the other hand, the report in that book of those war years, I feel, is probably as sound and reliable as anything that has come out. Actually, as you know, General Whitney's book came out not much later, which was *MacArthur His Rendezvous With Destiny*. When they brought that out, they had their manuscript readers and lawyers go over it with the greatest care to make sufficient changes so that they wouldn't be sued by Willoughby for plagiarism, because a great deal of it was taken from Willoughby's writings. It so happened that when Willoughby was working on his draft, he would submit it to MacArthur for comment and changes. Apparently MacArthur would discuss it with Whitney and Whitney somewhere along the line, decided he wanted to write a book, too. Maybe it had been in the back of his mind all along, but

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it was obvious that because of Willoughby's writing he, Whitney, decided he wanted to bring out a book and since it covered the same period, he had to use a great deal of the same material, and the question is just how much did he take from Willoughby's book. I don't know whether anybody, aside from the McGraw-Hill lawyers, or the lawyers who were handling Whitney's book, or anybody else, ever sat down and made comparisons as the book went along, but it would be an interesting study for anybody...

ZOBRIST: I thought that this dimension was interesting. It shows the trouble you can get into by the publisher giving you a title and then you having to write up the title.

BUNKER: Yes. The other thing I was telling you about was that I'd got to know Willoughby very well all the way up the line from Melbourne on,

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because I got to Melbourne on another assignment just about a week after General MacArthur and his party came down from the Philippines so I was in one headquarters or another there for some time. The first year I was not in the top headquarters, the General Headquarters, but I was in the Headquarters of the U.S. Army forces in Australia, and in the office of the General Purchasing Agent. Then when General MacArthur revived the USAFFE command in February 1943 and made Richard Marshall Deputy Chief of Staff in command of USAFFE, Marshall took me under his wing as his assistant and I followed him around from that time on. When we first went into the USAFFE Headquarters and he made me secretary to the General Staff that put me right outside his office together with the Adjutant General of the headquarters to handle all sorts of things. And, of course, again that was a different head-

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quarters than the one that Willoughby was in. Later on I maintained contact with Willoughby all through that period, and when Dick Marshall went in to General Headquarters again, I went with him so there I was once more in close personal contact with Willoughby because I was always very interested in the intelligence reports that were coming through, trying to keep posted so that I would be able to do my own job that much better.

Very often in the files that came to Dick Marshall, there would be material which indicated that it had not been distributed to G-2, so I would call Willoughby and tell him that there was such and such a dispatch or paper and noted that G-2 wasn't on the distribution list, but I thought that he'd be interested to have one of his people get hold of a copy. Thus I was able to help Willoughby a great deal on a

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number of things, and afterwards, when we came back to New York, Willoughby returned very shortly after that.

He was in New York for a time, and then went to live in Washington and I used to see him from that time on, as a rule, only at the birthday dinner parties given for General MacArthur by General Sverdrup which always took place on the General's birthday, the 26th of January. Willoughby was not on the most cordial terms with quite a number of the other officers in Headquarters and particularly not with Jack Sverdrup, for various reasons, and the result was that, with Sverdrup acting as host, frequently Willoughby was not in the inner circle at the head of the table, and so I had a chance to sit next to him. He always had a lot of interesting information that was very useful to me in other ways, so I used to

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cultivate that opportunity.

ZOBRIST: Was this dinner normally held in New York City?

BUNKER: Yes. Up until the time of the General's return in '51 all of these dinners were held in Washington, because Sverdrup had offices of his engineering firm there, Sverdrup and Parcel, and also for some time, I understood, Sverdrup had a financial interest in the Carlton Hotel and the dinners would be held there. After the General came back, Sverdrup wanted to make it into a real birthday party for the General, always having the General as the principal guest, so the General said, "Well, all right, Jack, but not in Washington." The General was through with Washington as far as he could be. So the dinners were then transferred to the Waldorf in New York and it was only a matter of the General

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going from his apartment down to the banquet, and back.

Sitting next to Willoughby one night at one of those dinners in '55, '56, or '57, he said to me, "Larry, I've had a problem presented to me in the last couple of weeks, and I don't know just how to handle it, and I thought that maybe you would have some idea." He then said, "The problem is this, not long ago a very close friend of Harry Truman," (and this of course was after Truman had left the White House), "came to see me the other day, a man named Charles Patrick Clark, and he said he had been asked by Mr. Truman to come and see me and raise the question as to what channels and what techniques he could use to effect a rapprochement with MacArthur, because he was unhappy about the lack of contact."

Actually I noticed that in that letter

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from Sverdrup that I saw today, there was the reference to the fact that Sverdrup had talked to Mr. Truman about a meeting with MacArthur. So apparently Mr. Truman had explored it with Jack as well as having Clark come to explore it with Willoughby. Sverdrup had received a favorable reply from General MacArthur, so that would sort of kill this other idea which I'd had that Mr. Truman might have been unhappy because the feeler that he put out through Willoughby didn't produce any result as far as I could find out. When Willoughby talked to me about it, we discussed it for a bit and, at that particular stage of affairs, Willoughby was not on the most cordial terms with MacArthur, partly over the book, and also the fact that Whitney had stepped into the picture and upset the very pleasant arrangement which had been enjoyed by Willoughby in submitting page

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proofs or galley-proofs to MacArthur for comment, and then amending his manuscript with McGraw-Hill.

Incidentally, MacArthur wrote quite a lot in the way of comment and recommendation--these notes were written on little slips of paper from a box of memoranda at the Waldorf, and the General would write one and clip it to the particular place in the manuscript and then go on to

something else. According to Willoughby they were quite extensive. I've never seen the full collection, but before Willoughby turned them over to McGraw-Hill for incorporation in the next proof, he had photostatic copies made, and he kept those copies for obvious reasons. After Willoughby died, I asked Bill Sebald, his brother-in-law and executor, what had become of them. He said he had them, but Willoughby's widow wasn't quite ready to give them up yet,

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so I've never been able to get hold of them for the archives in Norfolk, but I expect to before time runs out, because I think it's important as they show the changes that MacArthur made in Willoughby's book, which had never been acknowledged, except as Willoughby released some of the photostats later in his *Military Intelligence Digest*.

Going back to the conversation at the dinner, and the question of his attempt at rapprochement, I told Willoughby that was a question I couldn't answer right away, I would have to think about it. I called him a few days later after I returned to Boston, and he was back in Washington. I said, "General, I've been thinking a lot about the story you told me about Mr. Truman, and I feel that it ought to be done if possible. However, it's going to require somebody getting to MacArthur who can

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see him and talk to him about it without having to tell him why he wants to talk to him, without having to go through General Whitney to get to him, because anybody who went through General Whitney would have to tell him exactly what he was after. And someone who perhaps can talk to the General from the point of view of an old friend or somebody who can put a little pressure on him to understand how important this is."

Now, of course, that letter from Sverdrup indicates that there really wasn't any problem in persuading the General, but this letter I have seen today only for the first time.

So I said to Willoughby, "I've thought it over very carefully, and the only individual that I know of who fills all those requirements is Cardinal Spellman," because Cardinal Spellman had for a long time been a very good friend of the General. He came out to Tokyo and he was

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the first important foreigner received by the Emperor during the occupation, and Willoughby had been in on that to a considerable extent, so I knew that Willoughby knew the Cardinal very well, and also that the General was accessible to Spellman at any time, on any basis, and Spellman could call the General's wife and say that he would like to come and talk to the General about an important matter and could he see him. I was sure that the answer would have been yes and it would have been immediate, and there would have been no problem. Also Spellman would be somebody who could take an attitude in presenting it to the General which I felt would be desirable.

Willoughby said he had never thought of that channel, and he certainly would think it over. I watched the papers for some time to see if there was any report of Mr. Truman having

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a chance to talk to the General, and there wasn't. And then other things intervened. I don't think I had any contact with Willoughby personally during that intervening time, because I wasn't getting to Washington very often then. The next year at the birthday dinner in January, again I was sitting next to Willoughby and I said, "By the way, what ever became of that problem that you told me about last year about Mr. Truman and the General?" and he said, "Well, to tell you the truth, Larry, I let it drop, and I didn't do anything about it." Frankly, I was a little annoyed, but there was no use getting into an argument with General Willoughby at that particular point because he went on to say "You'll be very interested to know that just about two weeks ago, Mr. Clark came to see me again with the same question." I said, "Well, what did you tell him?" And he replied, "Well, I

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haven't answered him yet. I suppose that in the way things have developed now, the only thing to do is to get in touch with Whitney and see what the present situation is up there." This didn't appeal to me at all, and I guess I indicated that to Willoughby.

Anyway, as far as I know, nothing ever came of that, and I have always felt that it was the failure of that message to get through to the General, because I'm quite sure that Willoughby didn't present it to him, and that if Willoughby had turned Clark over to Whitney it probably had died there because of Whitney's intense seriousness about maintaining as close control over MacArthur even after that period, as he could. I always felt that Mr. Truman must have believed that somehow his idea had been presented to the General, and that the General had discouraged it.

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Now, this letter from Sverdrup shows that exactly the opposite happened. That when Jack took it up with him, he said, "Fine, I'd like to see him." But we never worked it out.

ZOBRIST: So really, it's sort of difficult to account for where exactly things broke down.

BUNKER: Well, I have a feeling that what happened was that when Mr. Truman began to lose his grip on certain situations that this may be one of them. Of course, he was always being needled I'm sure and criticized for having recalled the General. It's one of the things that people bring up with me over and over again and it's always been my position you shouldn't blame Mr. Truman, because it was a decision that was forced on him like anybody in his position--I saw even with General MacArthur there was one situation in Tokyo where an order went

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out to the Japanese Government that I thought was bad--just plain bad. So, I asked the General about it, and he said, "Well, to tell you the truth, Larry, I kept that in the desk drawer for three days before I approved it, because," he said, "I don't like it either. But it was recommended unanimously by the staff all the way up, and I felt that it was a matter that, while I felt it wasn't really the right thing to do, I didn't feel that it was something that I wanted to use as an issue with my staff when they thought it was the thing that should be done."

So, I'm sure that Mr. Truman found himself in that situation many times, and I feel that as far as the recall of the General is concerned that was one of those situations.

ZOBRIST: This is a unique story, because it tells about a dimension of both men. It's the type

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of thing that we will probably never find written evidence on one way or the other. And as I told you earlier today, if we don't get it on tape, I just fear that the whole story will just disappear.

BUNKER: Well, you get part of it in that letter from Sverdrup and I can give you this other part that you can add to your part. Because, as I think I've told you, actually the last comment I ever heard the General make about anything other than strictly personal fears, was after the last birthday dinner in 1964, which was only three months, or two months and a half, before he died, and he had made a great effort to be at that dinner. Because of my former position as aide, Jack Sverdrup used to invite me and Roger Egeberg and Larry Lavis, while he was still around, to serve as an escort for the General from his apartment to the dinner, and back to

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the apartment afterwards. As we left the dinner that night, and they were going down the corridor to the elevator, the General was saying to Jack Sverdrup, "Now, you mark my words, Jack, Harry Truman is going down in American history as a far greater President than Dwight Eisenhower." He said, "He made more decisions on basic issues in the good American tradition than Ike would ever have dreamed of making." So, it shows that even after all the things that had happened, the General had a great respect for Mr. Truman's management of the Presidency.

In many ways the General had some characteristics of Mr. Truman, and there were times when he had a very short fuse. And I have had him react to something I told him in a way that I knew that he didn't want to be official or on the record, but at the moment he had to let it go. And then when the time came to take any action, the action was quite different.

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ZOBRIST: You were going to tell us a couple of other stories I think. Or did you want to say more about this?

BUNKER: Well, I wanted to go into the other story about reports on Mr. Truman's decision to recall General MacArthur from Korea.

Let's start first with the story that was told me by Paul McNutt and also by his wife Kathleen McNutt on different occasions, but the same story, about their being at a house party, I believe in the Adirondacks, not long after MacArthur had returned, and among other guests at the house party were General and Mrs. George Marshall, so of course, there was considerable discussion of the return of General MacArthur. And the question was put to George Marshall, "Well, why did Mr. Truman decide to do that?"

George Marshall said, "Well, to tell you the truth, Mr. Truman didn't want to do it." He

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said, "Believe it or not, even now, after the General is back, General MacArthur is one of Harry Truman's--well, he is Harry Truman's greatest military hero. This goes all the way back to the First World War in France when Harry Truman was over there and got to be a captain of artillery and he shared the admiration of practically all the military personnel in France for MacArthur," and Marshall added, "he never got over it. When it was first suggested or recommended that he recall MacArthur, he said that he wasn't going to end the career of a great American soldier that way, and he refused to do it." Marshall went on and said, "And it wasn't until the second time that it was pointed out to him that he really had to do it, that he reluctantly agreed." So obviously the question was, "Where did the pressure come from the second time?" George Marshall said, "From the Joint

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Chiefs of Staff."

Now as far as the first part of General Marshall's statement was concerned I am willing to accept that completely, because, in a sense, it was adverse to his personal interests to have that story circulated, that they had to bring pressure on the President to get him to do something he didn't want to do. But as to the second statement about the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I can't believe that it was unanimous and my own suspicion, which has been confirmed or strengthened by stories from other people is that it was essentially Dean Acheson and George Marshall who put the pressure on the President.

ZOBRIST: We were talking this noon about the files that were apparently handed the President to read.

BUNKER: Yes, I'm very curious about that, because in the film of "Give 'em Hell Harry," there is

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a scene where he had a file of papers on his desk and apparently he had called George Marshall in and said, "I want you to take a look at these. These are dispatches from General MacArthur, and messages, and I want you to look at them and tell me what I should do about them." Then

the scene jumps to the time a few days later when Marshall comes back and returns the file and says, "Mr. President, I don't see that you have any choice in the matter. I think you've got to recall him, and frankly I think you should have done it months ago." And Mr. Truman says, "All right, I agree with you."

ZOBRIST: And we have just really never identified those files.

BUNKER: I would like to know what they were, because I've had another story. I'm not free to give you the name of the individual who told me except

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to say that he does have standing as having been a man who was very close to Mr. Truman at various times and who was in a position for Mr. Truman to talk to him quite frankly about things as they happened. He was told by Mr. Truman that when it came time finally, the situation got to the point where George Marshall and Dean Acheson came to him and said, "Mr. President, you've really got to recall MacArthur because he's bad-mouthing you in his dispatches to the Pentagon."

Mr. Truman said;. "I don't believe you, you will have to show me."

So a few days later they came back with some letters which were copies of documents which they presented to Mr. Truman and Mr. Truman, in reporting to this individual, said, "When I read them I agreed, so I picked up the telephone and fired the sonofabitch." This, I

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expect, is a condensation of historical time, but on the other hand that is that version.

Now the truth of the matter is that Mr. Truman's firing of General MacArthur, or ordering his recall, was something that had to go through George Marshall and so there's reason to be a little skeptical even about that story, because had Marshall brought these papers into Truman, he wouldn't have had to pick up the telephone. He could have told him right there, "I agree with you, you get the orders out," and it has always been my understanding that those orders were prepared from General George Marshall's office and sent to the White House for approval and endorsement.

Now there's another story, which I don't know whether you have in your oral history program, of Harry Vaughan's reports on various things. One of the stories that has been passed on to me, was that Harry Vaughan had told various people in this area that

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when it came time to get Truman's signature on that particular message to MacArthur, it was only after they had considerable conversation and considerable whiskey that they got him to initial it. He was still basically opposed, but realized that it was something he had to do. Those

are all things that I have only second or third hand, but I do feel the report of McNutt about what George Marshall had to say is authentic, and the story that I had from the gentleman here who had known Mr. Truman extremely well and who was in a position for confidential conversations, is reliable.

Now, how reliable his memory is over the period of 25 years, I just don't know; but he seemed to have a pretty good memory about a lot of things. I am interested in the question of whether, in the sorting out of the material that is available to you people in

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connection with the recall of MacArthur, there had ever been any successful attempt to identify the papers involved. Either those which Mr. Truman gave to George Marshall saying, "What do I do about them?" Or perhaps George Marshall handing them to Mr. Truman and saying, "Here is the proof you asked for," because these would have been dispatches that were not addressed to Mr. Truman, but were taken out of Department of Army files, and presented to Mr. Truman by someone.

ZOBRIST: Could I get you to talk about General Sverdrup a bit more?

BUNKER: Yes, because you see when I was here last year, Sverdrup was still alive. There are some things in relation to Sverdrup and his relationships to General MacArthur and to Mr. Truman, which I think are of great importance. But as long as Sverdrup was alive the story was that he had

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said to somebody who had asked him a question, "Well, I'm not going to answer that. That's my story, and I'm writing a book." And he wouldn't answer this author who was looking for the material. But now Sverdrup has died and he very obviously left no manuscripts of a book. His papers are being worked over by his close associate and friend, General Healey, with the idea of preparing a biography.

ZOBRIST: And this is in Washington?

BUNKER: The last I knew Healey was in Washington. I've not heard whether he's gone to St. Louis or not, but I can find out about it. In any event, the Sverdrup papers are in his hands, just the way the Marshall papers are in Pogue's hands. But Healey is not a professional historian, so nobody knows what's going to come out of that. General Sverdrup's widow has indicated that when General Healey is finished with the papers she's

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entirely agreeable to having them go to Norfolk and become a part of our files, which is where I think they belong, at least that section which deals with his association with General MacArthur and with the three incidents there.

To start with, I've always understood that Sverdrup had been the individual who saved Harry Truman financially when he went broke in the haberdashery business, kept him going until he was picked up by the politicians and elected to the--what was it, the judgeship of Jackson County?

ZOBRIST: Yes, county judgeship.

BUNKER: But that over the years since then, and probably before, Jack Sverdrup had been at least an acquaintance of Harry Truman and frequently played poker with him.

ZOBRIST: How did they become acquainted?

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BUNKER: I have no idea.

ZOBRIST: Their friendship began before this?

BUNKER: Yes, it goes back before--just how far back I don't know.

ZOBRIST: Is Sverdrup basically a St. Louis individual?

BUNKER: Yes, as far as I know he was born in Norway, but came fairly early to St. Louis and he grew up there and developed his business and his fortune.

ZOBRIST: It would seem to me that about the only place that they could have met would have been during the First World War.

BUNKER: Well, I've never heard. I just don't know. As far back as I can go is this question of the period just after the failure of the haberdashery.

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ZOBRIST: What business was Sverdrup in at that time, do you recall?

BUNKER: I don't think he has ever been anything but an engineer--a construction engineer. Now, where the contact developed I don't know. Presumably that would show up in whatever Healey is putting together. But the story goes on from there. Jack Sverdrup, as a construction engineer, had been sent out to Australia to prospect for possible sites for airfields. When Pearl Harbor came he was there, and he had been a National Guard reserve officer. In the file there are details about a dinner that they wanted Mr. Truman to send a message to, which he did. He sent the message to Dick Amborg, who by that time was the publisher of the *Globe-Democrat*, and also someone who had known Mr. Truman. There it refers to Jack retiring after thirty-some years, or twenty years, or whatever it was, in

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the Reserves as commanding general of one of the Reserve outfits. So, when the Army authorities who had arrived in Australia, or were there, knew that Sverdrup was also there, he was told, "You stay, because they need you out here and you get into uniform and report." He became deputy chief engineer in the MacArthur headquarters (GHQ SWPA), and he was a very able and dedicated officer and he had a fabulous career. He was Norwegian by extraction. His grandfather, I believe, had been Prime Minister of Norway at one time. There are Sverdrup Islands in the North Atlantic and he really was the true Viking type. Over and over again he was taken up to New Guinea by airplane, dropped behind the Japanese lines, made his surveys, was picked up by a submarine off the coast, and brought back with his report of this, that and the other.

So he was a very dramatic, romantic figure

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really, with bright blue eyes and very arrogant bearing, to a degree which could be justified in dealing with the ordinary run of people because he didn't belong to them, and everybody recognized this. He was highly decorated and he was really a terrific man in the field.

Then just before the war came to an end or just at the time that the announcement was to be made as to who was to be the Supreme Commander of the Occupation Forces in Japan, the story is that he was in Washington and that he heard that it had been decided, and agreed to, by George Marshall, that Admiral Nimitz would be made the initial commander of the occupation forces for a period of three months, at which time the command would be turned over to General MacArthur. Jack was horrified, as a great many people would have been if they had known about it. I never was able to pin Jack down and I would

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have to go back to the timing of the announcement, but there is a note there that on August 10 without a date, Sverdrup telephoned the White House that he wished to see the President. And there is a note that he did see the President at 10:50 or something of that sort.

Now, it doesn't say a.m. or p.m. and it doesn't have the year. I can only believe that that was '45 and that it was 10:50 p.m. because the story I had was that when Jack called (probably to Harry

Vaughan) and said, "I must see the President," he was told, "Well, he has no free time until tomorrow." And Sverdrup said, "I must see him tonight, something of the greatest urgency, and I will come over to the White House and I will wait until he can see me."

Then the other version is that Sverdrup was scheduled for a poker session at the White House that night and insisted on staying after

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the people went, to have a private talk with Mr. Truman, and at that point he went to work on Mr. Truman and said, "You just cannot do this. As far as the Far East is concerned, MacArthur is the one who has won that war against the Japanese, and if you put anybody else in command, it's going to downgrade MacArthur, he'll lose face, standing, out there. You won't be able to use him at the end of three months. You can't do that."

And so Mr. Truman, after they had discussed it, agreed, and he called in, I don't know whether it was Vaughan or somebody else, and said, "The orders will go out ." This was to be announced the next morning in time for the press, and the orders would go out that General MacArthur was to be the Supreme Commander from the very start.

Now, interestingly enough, I heard from State Department sources that that announcement

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caused utter confusion and almost panic in the ranks in Washington, especially of the anti-MacArthur group. One of the bits of confirmation was that one of the Foreign Service officers had been deliberately assigned to Admiral Nimitz' staff in anticipation that Nimitz was going to be the initial commander-in-chief and that his personnel would stay on as non-Navy personnel with the new commander and that there was panic in the State Department and utter rushing and tearing around to get this particular Foreign Service officer transferred to MacArthur's office, or staff, and sure enough, he was there as one of the initial members. So it's not a preposterous story.

Another confirmation of that report is when talking with Mrs. MacArthur one day, I brought up the question of whether she had any extensive file of letters from the General. And she said, "No, I don't have any." She said,

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"We were always within reach," because when she got off the ship in Manilla and stayed on if he did write her some notes, she just didn't keep them. She said, "As a matter of fact, the only letter that I remember, really, is a letter that he wrote me at the time that he was appointed Supreme Commander, telling me about Jack Sverdrup's conversation with Harry Truman," but she can't find it. It's a fascinating story because there's another confirmation. I heard General MacArthur tell that story about Jack and Harry Truman, several times, not just once, and a lot of people knew it, but as I say, I didn't feel free to pass it along in conversation where it could be used by

anybody writing, and when I did pass it along I said, "Now, look, this is the story that I've heard from General MacArthur and confirmed from other sources, but you can't use it as my story, it's Jack Sverdrup's story and

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he's writing a book. So, if you want confirmation you've got to get in touch with Jack." And I don't know whether any, of them ever did, and I'm quite sure if they did they got the brushoff, that "This is my story, and I am writing a book."

ZOBRIST: That may well be because we have no record of anything like this and we're not aware of this story.

BUNKER: As a matter of fact, after I went back to Boston, I came to know Admiral Morison and his wife quite well. In talking with Morison on one occasion I told him that story and Morison was completely taken aback by it. He had never heard any indication of it whatever. Actually, the last query I had about it came from Bob Sherrod, who was doing a book on MacArthur. He said that the last time he talked with Sam Morison,

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which was not long before Sam died, that Sam had mentioned that I had told him this story and would I just tell it to Bob or give Bob the details that I gave to Sam. I don't know whether Healey is going to find it in any form in Sverdrup's papers or whether that was something which was so vividly in his mind that he never put it on the record and was planning to put it into the book. It should be recognized that Jack Sverdrup died very suddenly, and very unexpectedly, and with no anticipation that his time was running short, so there is every reason to suppose that he hadn't got it done.

ZOBRIST: We appreciate the fact that you would give us this interview and that at least we have this much down for the record and hopefully if anything is done on the Sverdrup biography, it'll be in black and white.

BUNKER: That effort of Sverdrup was really the basis

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of the Generals willingness to go through these birthday dinners year after year, because on one occasion he told me the next day, "Larry, these dinners embarrass me." He said, "I am really embarrassed at being subjected to the adulation which Sverdrup stirs up on these occasions." And he said, "I submit myself to it because I am under tremendous obligation to Jack." So that is it, as I say, these are interesting footnotes to events of the times.

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