

Oral History Interview
with
BRIGADIER GENERAL PAUL H. GRIFFITH

Personal assistant to Under Secretary of War Louis Johnson and, as a member of the American Technical Mission to India, an Assistant to Mr. Johnson when he was the personal representative of the President in the Middle East, 1942. Served as Assistant Secretary of Defense, 1949-50.

Washington, D.C.
March 9, 1971

By Jerry N. Hess, Harry S. Truman Library

The Harry S. Truman Library
Independence, Missouri
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GRIFFITH: I was born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and educated in the public schools in Uniontown. I grew up in the wholesale dairy products business. My father was in the dairy products business, and when I came home from the First World War he made me a partner, and we went along in that business until about 1932. I was elected Department Commander of the

American Legion in Pennsylvania and severed my relationship with the business, because always after that I was in other activities.

HESS: When did you first join the Legion, just after World War I?

GRIFFITH: Yes, in 1919. I was Post Commander in 1928 when we entertained the State convention in Uniontown, which was quite an affair. And then I went right on as District Commander, Department Vice-Commander, and elected Department Commander in 1932. I came to

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Washington, D.C. in 1935 . Really I accepted an assignment down here in '34. I had been the nominee for Congress in my district and was defeated and took an assignment down here, I suppose, more out of trying to get away from the defeat than anything else.

HESS: You were going to come to Washington anyway.

GRIFFITH: Anyway, that's right. But I came down here at the request of the National Finance Committee of the American Legion to establish a headquarters for the American Legion in Washington.

I was Director of Small Business in the Defense Department. Of course, that was after my stint of duty in the Second World War. I guess I shouldn't put the cart before the horse. I was Director of the American Legion in Washington, D.C. from 1935 to 1940 when I went back into the Army as Assistant Executive in the office of the Under Secretary of War. It was really the Assistant Secretary of War then.

But I have to get into Louis Johnson a little bit...

HESS: That's quite all right.

GRIFFITH: ...because this was my reason for going back into the Army.

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HESS: When did you first meet him?

GRIFFITH: I met Louis in the Legion. He was almost a neighbor. I was in Uniontown and he was in Clarksburg, West Virginia in the Legion. I don't remember just when, but I suppose about 1930. At any rate, he was candidate for National Commander at the Portland convention, and I was Department Commander in Pennsylvania, and threw my votes to Louis Johnson which elected him. Pennsylvania is the largest department in the American Legion. We were staunch friends from that time on. I'm sure he was responsible for me coming to Washington, because he was anxious to establish a National Headquarters here. And I stayed on in the headquarters, after

establishing it, for...let's see I came in '35, for five years. Then I went back into the Army while he was Assistant Secretary of War.

I stayed in the Army as Assistant Executive until Louis went overseas as a personal representative of the President. President Roosevelt had me appointed to the "Bradey Commission" to go to India. I went to India, but Louis Johnson also went to India and I was made his assistant. He got sick over there and

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after a couple of months we had to bring him home, because he had taken shots that were affected. He had the disadvantage, I guess, of taking these shots that were bad, for he got yellow jaundice. He was a very sick man, and we brought him home.

Louis recommended me to General "Hap" [Henry H.] Arnold who was commander of the Air Force. I was transferred to the Air Force to be the Public Relations Director, I was then a lieutenant colonel. But General [Lewis Blaine] Hershey, who had served with me in Louis Johnson's office, found out I was back and asked me to come over and see him, and he made me an assistant to him. So I didn't serve in the Air Force, actually, because I was transferred over to General Hershey and I had several positions there.

I was his assistant and then I was chairman of the Veteran's Personnel Division, I guess the title was director, which was part of the law that guaranteed the man the right to his job back after the war if he was honorably discharged. So I served in that position until about '44, when I was made assistant administrator of the Retraining

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and Re-employment Administration, which was in the Office of War Mobilization. I was loaned to that office by Hershey's office and I served out the balance of the war there.

Then I was appointed on a new commission, the Appeal Board of the President for Selective Service, because of my knowledge I think of Selective Service. The board was over and above the Selective Service, but I was appointed as a civilian, and served there until Louis Johnson was made Secretary of Defense. And then he asked me to come with him as the Assistant Secretary, which I did, relinquishing the position on the Appeal Board, which was a part-time job, paid only when I served.

HESS: All right, now, since this is the main thing that we will discuss, let's break off here and then jump to when you left the Pentagon, and what are a few of the positions that you held, what have been your duties since that time, and then we'll come back to your days in the Pentagon.

GRIFFITH: Yes. Well, I was made President of the Small Business Advisory Committee. I had been adviser on small business, as you can see, to the Secretary of

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Defense. So, after I came out of the Pentagon, I was immediately elected to that position. This was a no-pay job, you know. I went with Bucharth-Horn Engineers and Planners, consulting engineers and planners, shortly after I came out of the Pentagon and I've been with them ever since.

But I've had a lot of appointments. My wife says that I get every free job that was ever invented, and I think that's true. I also went back on the Presidential Appeal Board, a second time. President Truman appointed me both times, before I went into the Pentagon, and after I came out.

Now the odd thing about that is that I'm a Republican and President Truman is a staunch Democrat, but he appointed me to more jobs, I suppose, than anyone else.

HESS: To what would you attribute your rapport with Louis Johnson, and Mr. Truman?

GRIFFITH: When I came into the Army, Louis Johnson made me his alter ego as Assistant Secretary of War. And I suppose it was because of how I performed there that he also took me to India with him. I say with him, I was on a different mission, but I served as his

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assistant all through. And immediately after he was appointed Secretary of Defense, while there was no provision for assistant secretaries, he wanted me to serve with him, and I have to give credit to the fact that he was satisfied with the services I performed in the other positions.

HESS: Now when you went in in March, as I see on this commission, [framed and hanging on the wall of Griffith's office] you were his personal assistant.

GRIFFITH: That's right.

HESS: That's correct. That was under the National Military Establishment...

GRIFFITH: That's right.

HESS: ...which made no provisions for the assistant secretary

GRIFFITH: Assistant Secretary, that's right.

HESS: ...which came up later in August of '49.

GRIFFITH: That's right.

HESS: All right, to begin, why do you think that Mr. Johnson was selected as Secretary of Defense at this time?

GRIFFITH: Well, I think that he was the best qualified man that could have been selected. I believe he was always a little disappointed, having been relieved as

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the Assistant Secretary of War by Mr. Roosevelt when he was President. Having been assured that he would be Secretary of War to succeed Harry Woodring, and then to have it all fold up in his absence. He was not here in Washington when the appointments occurred, but Bob [Robert P.] Patterson - or Judge Patterson was appointed Assistant Secretary of War and Mr. [Henry M.] Stimson, who was appointed Secretary of War, were actions that I'm sure no one anticipated except the President.

HESS: What do you recall about the relationship between Mr. Johnson and Mr. Woodring, was it as...

GRIFFITH: No, it wasn't as bad as -- if that's what you're going to ask.

HESS: That's right. It wasn't as bad as it sounds.

GRIFFITH: No. That's partly politics, and the relief of Mr. Johnson was politics I think.

Mr. Woodring and I were also friends, and Mr. Johnson, as the first act that he did was send me over to talk with Mr. Woodring, which would indicate that there was no closed door there. I believe that Mr. Woodring might have resented the fact that Mr. Johnson had been promised to succeed him, and that

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also President Roosevelt, bypassed Woodring on many occasions and went directly to Mr. Johnson. I suppose that that would cause some feeling, but there was nothing evident, except in the newspapers. I don't know what went on at the Cabinet meetings, because I never attended them.

HESS: In your opinion, what was the relationship between Johnson and Dean Acheson, Secretary of State?

GRIFFITH: Dean Acheson wanted to run the war, and maybe Mr. Truman wanted him to, but I'm sure that was the cause of Johnson's relief from the Defense Department.

HESS: The difficulty that he was having with Acheson at that time you think was the major thing?

GRIFFITH: I think so. Now I'm talking about the Defense Department. Mr. Woodring was not in the Defense Department, he was in the War Department, you see. He had been relieved during the war, or really before the war got under way, and this was almost nine years later that I'm talking about now. I don't know whether I bridged that gap perfectly or not.

HESS: Well, no, I lost out on that, because I was thinking of Acheson during the time of the Korean conflict.

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GRIFFITH: That's right. And that's what I was talking about; Acheson during the time of the Korean conflict.

HESS: All right, do you recall anything in particular about the mental breakdown that overtook Mr. Johnson's predecessor James Forrestal?

GRIFFITH: Yes, I went in to relieve Mr. Forrestal, or to take over, as the personal assistant to Mr. Johnson, before he was confirmed, so I worked in Forrestal's office, oh, I suppose it was 30 days, maybe not that long.

HESS: This was during March '49, probably. Now as I understand Mr. Johnson was supposed to take over on March the 31st, but Mr. Forrestal requested that it be moved up a couple of days so he could leave. And Mr. Johnson's date was then March the 28th, but you had moved into the...

GRIFFITH: That's right, into the Defense Department -- into Mr. Forrestal's office. He was very gracious to me, and knew what my purpose was there and I couldn't have asked for better treatment from Mr. Forrestal than I got.

HESS: Could you detect any signs of the mental breakdown

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that caused him to take his life?

GRIFFITH: No, not in the office. I know that he was very much disappointed, and I think that some of the things that Mr. Forrestal resented were the acts of people around him. Now, you told me that you had talked with Marx Leva.

HESS: Yes sir.

GRIFFITH: Marx Leva had a better idea of Mr. Forrestal than I had, because Marx Leva was really close to Forrestal, having been in the Navy with him. And I'm sure that he had a better understanding of Forrestal than I had, because I was not really well-acquainted with him before I went to the office.

HESS: There were some rumors at the time that Mr. Forrestal might have been replaced because of his pro-Arab, and therefore pro-oil, views. Do you recall anything on that?

GRIFFITH: No I don't, and I don't believe there's anything to that at all, because Mr. Johnson, who had headed up -- who was treasurer maybe I should say, of the Truman campaign...

HESS: That's right, they had difficulty getting someone to help do the money raising.

GRIFFITH: That's right, and Mr. Johnson took it over and

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raised the money and was entitled to a place in the Cabinet and he wanted the Secretary of Defense job because he thought he was qualified for it, and so do I. And Mr. Truman appointed him. I don't think there was any reason except his qualifications.

HESS: Have you ever heard if there was ever an agreement ahead of time that if Mr. Johnson would take the job of helping to raise money, that he could, therefore, join the Cabinet at a later date?

GRIFFITH: No. No, I don't believe that -- I'm sure he expected that, but I don't believe there was any commitment there.

HESS: I have also heard the rumor that Mr. Johnson could have had any position on the Cabinet that he wanted. Have you ever heard anything on that?

GRIFFITH: Well, I don't believe he was ever interested in any position in the Cabinet, and you can see, I'm sure, why he would be interested in the Defense Department, because he had...

HESS: He came so close once...

GRIFFITH: ...he had been ousted, really, by the action of Mr. Roosevelt, from the War Department, and he had a burning desire I believe to go back into the Defense

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Department. He was a student of all of the action in the Defense Department, and the forming of the Defense Department, and so forth.

HESS: All right, let's move into your duties. Just specifically what were your duties as personal assistant? That was from March of '49, until August of '49 when the bill was passed setting up the Defense Department and reorganizing the National Military Establishment. After that date you were Assistant Secretary. First, what were your duties as personal assistant, and were they any different than what you had later as Assistant Secretary?

GRIFFITH: No, they were practically the same. I was the alter ego of Mr. Johnson. I had served as his assistant executive officer in the War Department, and I knew his acquaintanceship. I think this was one of the reasons that I was appointed, really, because of my acquaintanceship with the same people that he knew. And of course, everybody who came to the office to see Johnson really had to see me first, you see, and I signed all of his -- or dictated all of his mail, except the very personal mail. Johnson was a man who didn't let anybody else sign his mail.

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Even though I dictated a great part of it, Johnson signed it and would send a letter back if he didn't like it, and we'd have to re-write it

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HESS: Did you deal with the veterans organizations?

GRIFFITH: No, I did in the Selective Service, I think that was one of the reasons for Hershey wanting me in the organization, was because of my acquaintanceship in veterans organizations. But we didn't have really, extraordinary relations, with the veterans organizations.

HESS: Did you have any occasion to work with the members of the White House staff, either Clark Clifford, Charles Murphy, Matthew Connelly, any of the men who were on the White House staff?

GRIFFITH: Well, I had more occasion to work with General [Harry H.] Vaughan than anybody else.

HESS: What was your working relationship with General Vaughan?

GRIFFITH: Very good. Very good. I think General Vaughan was a gentleman. I think that he was a whipping boy maybe for the President, but General Vaughan never had a crooked thought in my opinion, and I knew him pretty well.

HESS: What type of duties would you take up with General

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Vaughan?

GRIFFITH: Well, anything in the military. We had everything of course -- we had to clear everything, and before we would take it up with the Secretary we'd make sure that everything was cleared. We even had promotions to take up with General Vaughan. But we had everything

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of a military nature to take up with him, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, you see, they had been established.

HESS: When Secretary Johnson first came in, were there any particular changes that he tried to make in the Pentagon at that time, any innovations, any changes in routine or structure?

GRIFFITH: Well, yes, there were some. Mr. Forrestal had been in office just a short time, and had occupied the office that he had when he was Secretary of the Navy.

HESS: He just kept the same office.

GRIFFITH: He kept the same office, and when Johnson came in, it was thought that the Pentagon was built for the Army, and that the Army's headquarters would be the proper spot for the Secretary of Defense, leaving the Navy to operate where Mr. Forrestal had been operating. The Air Force, of course, was a new department and they were housed up on another floor, and the Army, they made new headquarters for the Army. But this was all a physical thing, not a policy thing I don't think.

HESS: Did you become involved in the myriad problems about the unification of the armed forces? That is

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one of the big problems at this time.

GRIFFITH: Well, now you see this had already taken place. The unification of the Armed Forces...

HESS: The dust hadn't settled though?

GRIFFITH: Well, yes, the dust had practically settled. I think we could say that the dust had settled.

HESS: Well, what I had reference to was...

GRIFFITH: ...the trouble I think was more with the Navy than with anybody else, and we had less trouble with the Navy after we got into the Pentagon, than we had with the Air Force. For it was just new and had been a part of the Army and the Navy.

HESS: Two of the big items of concern at that time, were the cancellation of the contract for the super carrier...

GRIFFITH: That's right.

HESS: ...and that was the Navy.

GRIFFITH: That's right.

HESS: And the B-36 matter where the Air Force was trying to take the air responsibility from the Navy.

GRIFFITH: That's right. Now the cancellation of the super carrier, was of course, a blow to the Navy, and Mr. Johnson of course was, I suppose, responsible for

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the cancellation of the carrier. Mr. Forrestal, having been a Navy man, you see, was definitely on the side of the Navy.

HESS: Was Mr. Johnson or was the Bureau of the Budget responsible for setting up a level of appropriations that could be spent on matters of defense.

GRIFFITH: Now, I can't answer that question, but Mr. Johnson led the fight.

HESS: He certainly did

GRIFFITH: Yes, and one of the things that they maybe secretly held against Johnson, was the fact that he did prevent the building of the super carrier.

HESS: This all revolves around the reduction in the armed forces, which came at this time.

GRIFFITH: Well now, the reduction of the armed forces, I carry this vividly in my mind. We reduced the budget, or the first budget that Johnson made up, from 16 billion to 13 billion five. Mr. Johnson called a meeting of the Congressmen and Senators over to his office, which of course was an unusual thing, to tell them after it was done what would be the result of the budget which would result in the closing of some of the facilities. It would be taking

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a serviceman away from some of the civilian jobs and putting in civilians. But it worked satisfactorily, and even though we got into Korea after the reduction was made, we had more men and material sent to Korea in seven weeks than we had had in eleven months to Africa during World War II. So it was a pretty efficient operation.

HESS: One question on that reduction: Dean Acheson has an article on Mr. Truman - it's on page 127 of the September 1969 issue of *Esquire* magazine -- in which he states that Mr. Johnson, "so vigorously applied," the retrenchment of the armed forces at that time, and he seems to believe that Mr. Johnson's actions were too severe. Do you think that Mr. Johnson was merely following the directions of Mr. Truman, and following the plans that had been established by the administration, or was he carrying them perhaps a step further?

GRIFFITH: No, I don't believe that he was carrying them a step further. I think he was trying to carry out the plan of the Bureau of the Budget and Mr. Truman. Now, Acheson, of course, vehemently took exception to

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most of the things that Mr. Johnson did, and that was the...

HESS: What seemed to be the basis or the cause of their lack of rapport?

GRIFFITH: This was in secret of course, but Acheson, I believe, wanted to run the war, and Johnson of course, was in the position to run it. I was there through this period and continued on with General [George C.] Marshall after Johnson left, so I had a pretty good picture of the efficiency with which the Korean situation was met. And I repeat that the greatest test would be the moving of men and material, and we did more in seven weeks without, or with less personnel, than we did in eleven months before Pearl Harbor.

HESS: Just an opinion, it seems to me that quite often, even today, we have a situation where the Department of State wants to set military guidelines, and we have the same condition where the military almost sets foreign policy. These are the two most powerful departments. Can a fine line be drawn down between the responsibilities of those two departments, or is it just natural that one is going to encroach

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upon the other?

GRIFFITH: Well, I believe that it's natural that they have to give in to each other's business. And I'm sure that even at present, they are in a situation, the same kind of a situation, that we were in during the days of Korea. Now they had Cabinet meetings almost every day. Mr. Johnson went to the White House every day of the world at noon, that he was in Washington, and talked with the President. I'm not sure that he talked with Acheson, but I'm sure that he talked with the President and covered every possible and conceivable plan to bring back to us.

Now we had a staff meeting every morning, and we were briefed on what the plans were, there was no secrecy at all. It was secret within the Defense Department, but I mean, it was explained to us every morning just what was to take place.

HESS: Who would attend Secretary Johnson's staff meetings?

GRIFFITH: Well, Marx Leva, [Wilfred J.] McNeil, who was the comptroller, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General [Lyman L.] Lemnitzer, General [James H.] Burns. General Burns was in the foreign, I'd say the foreign policy adviser. He had been the executive officer in Johnson's

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office when I was the assistant executive, you see, and we brought him back into the Army because of his superior knowledge and operational ability. But some of the Secretaries would attend, not always, but see we had three Secretaries, Army, Navy and Air Force, but it was -- well, all of Johnson's immediate staff would attend.

HESS: How were the meetings conducted? Would everyone get a chance to air their views?

GRIFFITH: That's right, everyone would get a chance to air their views, and of course, Mr. Johnson presided. He was a strong man with a strong opinion, and I am sure he stated his views before, and would ask for comments on his views.

HESS: Would he sort of set the agenda at the beginning?

GRIFFITH: Yes, he would.

HESS: All right now, before we move on into the events of Korea I would like to ask about the two men that you have mentioned. Now in August of '49 when the President signed the National Security Act amendment was when the National Military Establishment was converted into the Department of Defense.

GRIFFITH: Yes.

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HESS: And you and two other gentlemen were the first Assistant Secretaries of Defense.

GRIFFITH: That's right

HESS: Mr. Marx Leva and Wilfred J. McNeil being the other two. How would you characterize those men, what kind of men are they and what were their duties?

GRIFFITH: Well, they were the best men that I ever saw to fit into the picture. I certainly recommended that they be kept on. They were holdovers from the Forrestal regime. McNeil had a better knowledge of the money that was in the Department. And that's pretty strong language. Marx Leva, was perhaps the best qualified man, he had been general counsel, and his duties were still the legal duties, and McNeil's was still the comptroller duties, and I had really everything else. As I say I was the alter ego for Johnson, making his speeches, some of them, and writing his letters and things of that kind.

HESS: Mr. Leva was also in charge of the legislative matters, is that correct?

GRIFFITH: That's right. Marx Leva was a splendid fellow and Johnson got to like Leva very much. He recommended McNeil for Secretary of Defense later, not when he was

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relieved, but later on.

HESS: What time was that, do you recall?

GRIFFITH: Well, I'm not sure, but I believe it was when [Dwight D.] Eisenhower went into office.

HESS: Oh. Were there any times when Mr. Leva may have called upon you for assistance in legislative liaison when he thought you might know someone up on the Hill from your American

Legion days and could help to persuade them to come around to the Pentagon's way of thinking on a bill?

GRIFFITH: No, I don't recall any time that he did. I think Leva had the situation well in hand and he knew of my acquaintanceship and of my closeness to Johnson. We conversed among ourselves every day. Leva would come into my office and sit down, and if he had any problems, talk to me, or if he thought that I had done something that should be done differently he would talk to me.

I recall one day that I made a speech and it was just about the time that we were changing the Chief of Naval Operations. Mr. Truman wanted to announce the change and he didn't want anybody to leak it out, but I didn't know that there were reporters in the crowd, and when I finished my speech, I opened myself up to questions.

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And one of the reporters said, "Do you realize that there is to be a change in the Chief of Naval Operations?"

And I said, "I've heard that."

And he said, "Well now, did you realize that the new man has really been named?"

And I said, "No," I did not know.

And he said, "Well, would you think that the..."

HESS: Was this the time that Forrest Sherman replaced Louis Denfeld?

GRIFFITH: That's right, Forrest Sherman. He said, "Would you believe that Forrest Sherman was a highly qualified man for that job?" He had evidently had some news about that.

And I said, "I think he would be an excellent replacement."

And the morning papers had headlines, "GRIFFITH CONFIRMS THE REPORT THAT SHERMAN WILL BE APPOINTED CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS."

HESS: That was the time of the so-called "revolt of the admirals" over the super carrier deal. And Louis Denfeld was transferred and John L. Sullivan, who was Secretary of the Navy, resigned.

GRIFFITH: Yes, John was also a friend of mine. I'm not sure that that prompted his resignation.

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HESS: Oh, you think there were other reasons?

GRIFFITH: Well, I think there were maybe some other reasons, but John L. Sullivan was not only a friend of mine, but he was a friend of Johnson, and is still very close to me. I mean we don't see each other often, but he was a very close friend.

Denfeld, you know, was the Chief of Personnel. I don't believe that Johnson thought he was the qualified man for Chief of Naval Operations.

Now, I'm taking this off of the top of my head, and maybe some of the Navy people -- Leva and McNeil were both Navy men, Leva was a Lieutenant and McNeil was an Admiral in the Navy, so I wouldn't question their knowledge of what took place, because they were in the Navy situation, but I would say that they were the best qualified men for the jobs that they had.

And I did recommend that Johnson keep them on. There was no idea that Johnson was going to keep either Leva or McNeil, and I went in and told what I thought of them and he agreed and he relied on them very much.

HESS: Before we move on, do you recall anything about the statements that Secretary of the Air Force, now Senator, Stuart Symington was making about the B-36 matters?

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GRIFFITH: Well, of course, Forrestal and Symington were at razor's edge before Johnson came into the picture. Now, Johnson was the kind of a man that didn't allow Symington to run into his office. They had a special elevator there and Symington would come down on that elevator and was right at his office, and he stopped that. This is one of the things -- I believe, and you've already talked to Leva, but Leva would tell you (maybe I shouldn't say what Leva would tell you), but Leva would say that Symington had more to do with Forrestal going off his rocker than any other reason, this would be my opinion.

HESS: By the pressures that he applied?

GRIFFITH: By the pressures that he applied. Now, this wasn't true with Johnson because Johnson wouldn't let him apply this pressure, you see. This was...

HESS: A different type of personality.

GRIFFITH: A different type of personality.

HESS: All right, now back on the events of Korea, and Korea was invaded on Saturday, June the 24th, that was Eastern standard time. Just before that date Secretary Johnson and General Bradley had been to the

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Far East...

GRIFFITH: That's right.

HESS: ...on a tour that stopped in Okinawa and stopped in Japan...

GRIFFITH: Yes.

HESS: ...and they saw General MacArthur and I think they were still on their way back.

Did Johnson tell you what his findings were of that tour of the Far East, and perhaps what General MacArthur had said about the situation in the Far East at that time?

GRIFFITH: I'm not sure that he had told me everything, but he was very much pleased with MacArthur's conduct of the situation.

HESS: Of course, the war hadn't started at that time.

GRIFFITH: Oh well, the war hadn't started, but the dillydallying back and forth. See the North Koreans would come up to the demilitarized zone there, and come over and then go back. This Sunday morning they came over and stayed over, don't you see? And of course, MacArthur was in Japan, he wasn't down in Korea. But he was in charge, and if I was to say who we got the best recommendations from as to what we ought to do, it

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would be MacArthur.

Now, I'm not a great follower of MacArthur. I think he's probably the greatest general that ever lived, but he was not a fellow that you could make friends with easy. But Johnson, as I say, was very pleased with what MacArthur was doing. And I think that Mr. Truman, if he made any mistakes as President, I think this is one of his mistakes.

HESS: When he dismissed General MacArthur?

GRIFFITH: When he dismissed McArthur.

HESS: What should have been done? Should he have followed MacArthur's advice, or could he have appointed him to a different position without dismissing him entirely, but what should President Truman have done that April of 1951?

GRIFFITH: Now I won't answer that because I don't know. President Truman and I became staunch friends, and I believe in him. I believe he was a great President, and I preface this by saying that if he made any mistakes this was the one great blunder. And I know a lot of other people who were close to Truman who thought this. I can't say what he should have done, because I'm not knowledgeable enough as to just what took place.

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HESS: Do you think he should have been dismissed?

GRIFFITH: No, I don't. I don't think he should have been dismissed. He was doing a great job, and this was an unusual job. You know if we had had somebody like MacArthur to pacify the people that we have right now -- I took exception to MacArthur running the veterans out of Washington, even though I was not of the opinion that they should have been there.

HESS: The bonus marchers.

GRIFFITH: The bonus march. You see, I had no opinion that they should have been there, but they shouldn't have run them out.

HESS: Were you there at the time?

GRIFFITH: No, I wasn't here at the time. They came back through my town and I spoke to them, and I'm sure there were a lot of fine persons who were desperate who were down here with this bonus march, but it was a beginning -- you see I'm not in favor of any marches, and I wasn't in favor of that one. And I told these boys so when they came back through Uniontown. I was still in Uniontown. But MacArthur made a mistake, I believe, maybe under the direction of President Hoover, I don't know.

HESS: All right, now back on Korea. That invasion came on

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Saturday, June the 24th.

GRIFFITH: Yes, I thought it was Sunday.

HESS: It was Sunday their time and Saturday, late Saturday, our time. Where were you when you first heard the news?

GRIFFITH: Oh, in the Pentagon. I was the Assistant Secretary of Defense at that time.

HESS: That's right. What was the reaction of Secretary Johnson? How long after he heard the news did you see him? Was he back at the Pentagon at that time?

GRIFFITH: Oh yes. He was back at the Pentagon and I didn't see him until Monday morning. They had a staff meeting, really a Cabinet meeting, at the Blair House.

HESS: It was held Sunday night.

GRIFFITH: On Sunday night, and I didn't see him until the next morning, when I got his story.

HESS: What was his story?

GRIFFITH: Well, I don't recall, "We're at war." This was the announcement, "We're at war." He didn't find any fault with anybody, but at his staff meeting, I'm sure that all of us were not only surprised by the announcements in the newspapers, but we were a little bit surprised at his statement that, "We're at war and the thing to do is to win it."

HESS: And you have mentioned this before, but just what do you recall of the effort to build up our forces in Korea in those first few months?

GRIFFITH: Well, I recall it very vividly. You see we didn't have many soldiers in Korea, we had a police force there. We sent two battalions of soldiers down from Japan to Korea. I believe this was all, except the plan to take soldiers overseas. This was twenty-some years ago and I haven't recalled this, but I believe we took two battalions of military police down from Japan to reinforce the boys that were on guard down there until troops could arrive from overseas. Now I've said two times, I think, that we did a marvelous job, because we sent more troops and more equipment over to Korea, which was thousands of miles away, than we did to North Africa after preparing for war and having eleven months to do it in. So, I think that's the answer.

HESS: During this period of time the decisions were made to fight a rather limited war, not to bomb bridges over the Yalu, trying not to involve the Chinese Communists.

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Just what are your personal views about fighting a limited war?

GRIFFITH: I don't believe you can ever win anything fighting a limited war. We're trying to do that now. We didn't win in Korea, we just quit, and we're going to have to quit in Vietnam. After having participated in two wars, and I was very active in the First World War. I was in the 110th Infantry, in an infantry company, and was wounded and got to know just what war was like.

HESS: What division were you in?

GRIFFITH: The 28th Division, Pennsylvania National Guard, and spent my entire time with them. I did come home with brigade headquarters after most of my company was killed or wounded, which was the 55th Infantry Brigade.

I had an opportunity to observe a lot in World War II. I didn't take any active part in the fighting in World War II, but I was in every theater. And I don't believe that if we'd have fought a limited war, we would be here today because the Germans and the Japs were bent on defeating us. I don't believe in a limited war, I can't express that too strongly. I don't want

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to appear to be against the State Department, but I believe that the State Department is partly responsible, for surely Johnson wasn't responsible for that attitude.

HESS: Did you express your views at that time to Secretary Johnson?

GRIFFITH: I can't recall that I did.

HESS: Did you ever hear him comment in private or in the staff conferences about the feasibility of fighting a limited war?

GRIFFITH: No, I can't recall that I did.

HESS: Do you think that Chiang Kai-shek's troops on Formosa should have been used in one way or another?

GRIFFITH: Well, I got into that. The Chinese Ambassador here at that time, Dr. V. K. Wellington Koo, came to me in the office, and at my home, to ask me to do something that I thought should have been done. He asked me if we could sell surplus equipment to the Chinese at surplus price. And he said, "You don't need to send a single American over there. We have enough men. If we had the equipment we could defeat them."

And I couldn't get a hearing -- I'll have to say this, I couldn't even get a hearing from Johnson for Koo --

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I wanted Johnson to go to the President, but I couldn't get him to agree.

HESS: Did Mr. Johnson ever tell you why he would not see the President on this matter?

GRIFFITH: No, we had a lot of conversation about it. He felt that these Chinese were mercenary, you know, but I never found out why they charged them replacement price for the equipment they sold them, and sold it to everybody else for surplus price. All they wanted was to have it at surplus price.

Koo came to my house on Saturdays or Sundays to insist that I should do something. Well, I carried the message, but I couldn't do anything, and I've always regretted that I couldn't do anything because Chiang Kai-shek's men were anxious to fight.

HESS: Another thing dealing with Chiang Kai-shek, as you will recall, just at the beginning of the fighting, Mr. Truman said that the Seventh Fleet was going to patrol the waters between Formosa and China to keep Communist China from invading Formosa and to keep the Nationalist Chinese from invading the southern coast of China. It has been pointed out that by saying that we are placing this wall of the Seventh Fleet here, that the Chinese

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on the mainland know that Chiang Kai-shek is not going to come across, therefore, it frees Red divisions in China who would have to be kept there for defense, to go into Korea. Do you think it was a mistake for Mr. Truman to have placed the Seventh Fleet in that manner?

GRIFFITH: Well, I can't believe that it was a mistake at that time. Hindsight is better than foresight you see.

HESS: Any old day isn't it?

GRIFFITH: Yes, that's right. And I certainly didn't take any exception to it, I thought Formosa should be protected. And this was what Mr. Truman had been trying to do, was to protect Formosa.

HESS: Chiang Kai-shek didn't really want protecting, he wanted "unleashed," which was the word he liked to use.

GRIFFITH: Oh, yes, but he didn't have equipment and he wanted us to get the equipment and they couldn't buy it at the prices that they could pay. Koo went into detail with me as to what each item would cost.

HESS: In other words at this time, they had the manpower but not the equipment.

GRIFFITH: That's right.

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HESS: All right, does anything else come to mind before the events surrounding the resignation of Louis Johnson?

GRIFFITH: No.

HESS: Now this was the middle of September.

GRIFFITH: Yes, I recall. Now, let me tell you what happened there. I was going down to White Sulphur Springs to make a speech, for Louis Johnson.

HESS: Who was meeting down there, the governors?

GRIFFITH: No, the Insurance Underwriters. During the dinner I was called to the phone, from the head table, saying that Mr. Johnson had resigned.

HESS: This was the first you knew of it?

GRIFFITH: The first I knew of it.

HESS: Did you know that anything was in the wind?

GRIFFITH: No...except, that in Sunday's paper, in both the *Star* and the *Post*, I read two different statements; one from the Vice President, Mr. Barkley, and the other indicated it came from the White House, saying that it was a probability that Mr. Johnson would resign. Now, of course, we had never heard anything about a resignation, so when I went in on Monday morning I said to Mr. Johnson, "When you go over to the White House

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please ask Mr. Truman where these reports come from."

HESS: Sounds like planted news leaks.

GRIFFITH: I went down to White Sulphur Springs to make a speech for Johnson. It was a West Virginia meeting of Insurance Underwriters, and I wouldn't have any business there except Johnson sent me, because Johnson was from West Virginia. At any rate I prepared a speech with some help from General [A. Robert] Ginsburgh.

I was called to the telephone from the head table and told that Johnson had resigned. I didn't mention any of this in my speech, I just said that we had a great catastrophe in Washington, I called it a catastrophe because the Secretary of Defense had resigned, and I couldn't think of a worse thing to happen with the situation in Korea the way it was.

Now when I came back to Washington I talked to General Louis Renfrow, who was an assistant to Secretary Johnson. (Maybe you ought to talk to Renfrow.)

HESS: Is he here in town?

GRIFFITH: Yes. He has both legs off, and he's over in an apartment in Virginia.

HESS: What were his duties?

GRIFFITH: He was an assistant to Johnson, and really he

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was sort of an assistant to me, too, because of my political situation. You see anything political he would take care of.

HESS: He was a Democrat in other words.

GRIFFITH: He was a Democrat, that's right. And I couldn't really say that I got into the political situation, but he did.

HESS: Because of your peculiar situation...

GRIFFITH: That's right.

HESS: ...you could not.

GRIFFITH: Yes.

HESS: All right, now concerning Mr. Johnson's resignation, his letter of resignation was signed on September the 12th and it was made effective on the 19th.

GRIFFITH: That's right.

HESS: Now the Inchon landing, when General MacArthur took the troops in at Inchon was on September the 15th, shortly thereafter, and then events were turned around, things started going our way for a couple of months until the Chinese Communists came in. Just as a personal opinion, do you think that if Mr. Johnson's resignation had not taken place first and things had started to go our way, things had started to look up, that he might have

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not been required to have resigned?

GRIFFITH: No, I went to President Truman.

HESS: Good, what did he say?

GRIFFITH: Well, I went over to President Truman and offered my resignation. I said, "You know that I'm here because of Louis Johnson."

He said, "Louis Johnson didn't appoint you, Paul, I appointed you, and I'm not going to release you until I have somebody to take your place. General Marshall, who is going to succeed Louis Johnson, tells me that he and you were born and raised in the same town, Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and you can't let Marshall down."

You see it's not the same situation as today. They have ten or twelve assistant secretaries of Defense, they had only one then, except Leva and McNeil who had special duties.

HESS: They had special duty.

GRIFFITH: That's right.

I said, "Well, who makes these decisions?" This is a tough thing to ask the President, but I was concerned.

And he said, "Well, I make the decisions. I don't know of anything that has affected me as much

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as this, except the death of my mother," which had taken place just shortly before that.

You see, the next morning he knew who was going to succeed Johnson. Johnson had resigned the day before, while I was in West Virginia and I came back and went right over to see the President the next morning. I knew one official who did the same thing the next morning, he was a Democrat, and Truman accepted the resignation and said, "When do you want this to take effect?"

And he said, "Well, at your pleasure."

And the President answered, "Well, my pleasure would be tomorrow morning."

And so that shows that he didn't like the idea of people resigning, but with me he knew, I suppose, that I had a reason to resign. Now this is just the reaction that I got from my resignation.

HESS: Do you think that there were any further causes for this resignation other than Mr. Johnson's lack of rapport with the Department of State? In other words, what are the reasons behind the action?

GRIFFITH: I can't tell you that. The Vice President was in on this decision some way, because the Vice President...

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HESS: Alben Barkley.

GRIFFITH: ...Barkley, had made this statement to the press and somebody at the White House had made this statement (surely they didn't manufacture it), on Sunday before, so that something was in the wind. And I don't know what it was. I suppose it's like a man and his wife, the closer you are to them the less you hear about any rumor like that. I had no idea it was true when I saw it in the paper, and I wanted Johnson to go over to the White House and correct it. I probably brought it on sooner than it would have been brought on if I hadn't of told Johnson to go over there.

HESS: Dean Acheson in his book, *Present at the Creation*, states that in his opinion, Mr. Johnson was mentally ill during the last few weeks of his term. What do you think of that?

GRIFFITH: No, I think that Johnson was the best qualified man for the job that we've ever had. Maybe [Robert A.] Lovett was a good qualified man, but Johnson was the best qualified man and he was not mentally ill. Now later on, and you see there's a reason for that statement...

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HESS: He had a brain tumor.

GRIFFITH: That's right. Later on, and very late after that, he had a brain tumor and was operated on out at Mayo's, and I don't believe that Johnson was ever himself really after that operation. But at that time, as close as I was to Johnson, there surely was nothing wrong with Johnson.

HESS: Why was General Marshall the gentleman that was selected as a replacement?

GRIFFITH: Well, General Marshall had retired from the Army, and had been Secretary of State. And Truman thought that he was the greatest man living. He had been instructor in the National Guard out in Missouri and Truman was in the National Guard. Now, as well as I liked Marshall, being a hometown guy, and Marshall even after I was out of the Pentagon used to call me and have me ride with him down to Ft. Benning, or anyplace else that he was going, just to talk with me, so you know there was a mutual good feeling there. I don't believe that Marshall ever wanted the job. I don't believe that if Marshall hadn't have had Lovett as deputy, he would have taken the job at all.

HESS: He really let Lovett do the day-to-day work...

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GRIFFITH: Oh, yes.

HESS: ...and run the Department?

GRIFFITH: Then Lovett succeeded him, for Lovett was his assistant, too, in the State Department.

HESS: What time did you leave?

GRIFFITH: In November, 1950.

HESS: What part of November, do you recall?

GRIFFITH: I believe the 15th.

HESS: Now why I ask is because November is an extremely important month, because that is the time when it became obvious that the Chinese Communists were coming in from the north.

GRIFFITH: Yes.

HESS: Do you recall that at the time that you were leaving?

GRIFFITH: No, I don't, because I had a reason for leaving in November. I went to Chicago to a meeting of the National Organizations. And I was called by General Marshall at the hotel, and he said, "Paul, I believe that I have somebody that can take your place if we make some different arrangements, and I'd say to you that you could retire along about the 15th of November."

I can't recall what month this was, but that's

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when they appointed more than one Assistant Secretary of Defense. My office was occupied by Anna Rosenberg, who was appointed as the Assistant Secretary for Personnel. Now in my time, you see, we had a personnel department, but I was in charge of that Department along with my other duties, such as administration and personnel and medical, etc., but we had people to head the different divisions.

HESS: Well, before we move on from Secretary Johnson's resignation, in his letter of resignation, which is printed in the *Public Papers*, it follows Mr. Truman's letter of acceptance, and then there's Mr. Johnson's letter. And in it he used the term, he speaks of his enemies more than once. "Under normal conditions the fact that I have made so many enemies would not concern me too greatly." Who were some of the enemies that Secretary Johnson made that he referred to in his letter of resignation?

GRIFFITH: Well, I think that Denfeld in the Navy was one.

HESS: Well, he was transferred...

GRIFFITH: Yes, but let me tell you a little story. I took Captain [Laurence A.] Abercrombie, Abe Abercrombie, he

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lives out in my area. He was a hero in the war, got two or three Distinguished Service medals, Navy medals. And Abercrombie was not a well man and he wanted to work in my office, and I gave him the privilege of working in my office. Denfeld came by the office and told Abercrombie (there's no question about this), that he wouldn't be happy there, that he should get out of that office because the fellows that are in here are very much against the Navy and so forth.

Abercrombie said to him, "Well, Paul Griffith is a great friend of mine, I work with Paul Griffith and I can't understand why you'd make a statement like that. I've never been happier any place in my life than I have been here." It was fortunate that he did stay there, because when he got real sick and went to the naval hospital in Bethesda, they cut his spleen. I sent him up to Boston to the Lahey Clinic, and got him fixed up, but he was wasting away in Bethesda and would have died I'm sure in a very short time. I can't help but think that the situation in the Navy was responsible for the way he was treated.

HESS: You really don't believe he was given adequate

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treatment?

GRIFFITH: No, I know he wasn't. You could go to Abercrombie and find out. Even his wife came to me and said he was dying and couldn't we do something. The Surgeon General of the Navy came to me, said the woman was crazy.

Well, she wasn't so crazy because we sent him up to the clinic and he was on his feet in eleven days and has been on his feet ever since. He's a farmer out in Montgomery County.

HESS: It's a bad thing when politics enters into medicine like that.

GRIFFITH: That's right.

HESS: Any other enemies that you think that Secretary Johnson may have made reference to in his letter of resignation?

GRIFFITH: I think the Secretary of...

HESS: State.

GRIFFITH: ...State.

HESS: Dean Acheson.

GRIFFITH: Dean Acheson, because now it's hearsay too, because they were at each other's throats they tell me at all meetings of the...

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HESS: Of the Cabinet.

GRIFFITH: ...of the Cabinet.

HESS: Did you ever attend Cabinet meetings with Secretary Johnson?

GRIFFITH: No.

HESS: Okay, anyone else that he may have had reference to?

GRIFFITH: No

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HESS: Any other enemies?

GRIFFITH: No.

HESS: All right now...

GRIFFITH: But you can see from the tone of that letter that this is a forced resignation.

HESS: Did Secretary Johnson ever tell you that he did not wish to resign and was being forced to?

GRIFFITH: No, but I knew from his conversation that it was something that he didn't want, and he was really heartbroken, and this was the second time, you see, that this thing had happened to him.

HESS: What's your general evaluation of the manner in which Secretary Johnson handled the Department of Defense?

GRIFFITH: I thought he was the most competent fellow for the job that we've ever had in it.

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HESS: Do you recall any discussion by Secretary Johnson, or those around him at the time that he was in the Pentagon, that he might have been pointing to, hoping for the Democratic nomination in 1952? Would he have liked to have been the presidential nominee?

GRIFFITH: Well, I don't think he was doing anything pointing to the Presidency. You know during 1940 he was a candidate for the vice-presidency, when we went to Chicago. This was while I was in the Army. We went to Chicago and set up headquarters and Paul McNutt was a candidate, and I don't think Paul ever liked me or Johnson after that because he did say when we were on the Committee to Essential Activities and Critical Occupations, which I was on, that, not to repeat what I had said to his alter ego, because that was just what Louis Johnson was thinking. And of course, Louis Johnson was so far away from that. This was in the Army and after -- well, it was in the Selective Service system, when I was assistant to Hershey. I represented the Selective Service on the Committee of Critical Activities and Occupations, when this was said. But we were told by Harry Hopkins that former Secretary of Agriculture...was to be Vice President.

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HESS: Henry Wallace

GRIFFITH: Wallace was to be Vice President so we folded up tents and came home.

HESS: Did he argue?

GRIFFITH: No argument. Harry Hopkins was the man there, and we went over to see Hopkins and he was on the phone with President Roosevelt, and when he came back off the phone he said, "Well, it's settled, Henry Wallace is the man."

HESS: All right, now one other thing: The very important conference between President Truman and General MacArthur occurred while you were still at the Pentagon, that was on October the 15th

GRIFFITH: Yes.

HESS: ...of 1950.

GRIFFITH: Yes.

HESS: What do you recall about that visit? Anything in particular? Anything that may have been said about the conference after their return? General Bradley was along, the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

GRIFFITH: I don't know. Bradley was on our staff, you know.

HESS: That's right.

GRIFFITH: But I can't tell you anything about that. I was

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shocked when he was relieved, and I still think that if Truman made any mistakes (and I suppose he made lots of them because he was human), but that was the biggest one.

HESS: There are several things that General MacArthur would have liked to have done; bomb in Manchuria, bomb the bridges across the Yalu River, bomb their staging bases and things like that. Should we have done that?

GRIFFITH: If you didn't want a limited war, you should have gone out to win. I don't think there's any substitute for victory in war. And they could have won the war, you see, if they had done just what MacArthur indicated we could do, and I think we can win this war if we want to. I don't think we want to.

HESS: Well, we've got a close parallel there between Korea and Vietnam.

GRIFFITH: Very close.

HESS: In Korea there were Chinese troops that came in, so-called volunteer units.

GRIFFITH: Yes.

HESS: But if we had gone into Manchuria there was a very real danger that we would not have been fighting just

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some units, but that we would have been fighting the whole darn kit and caboodle of the Chinese.

GRIFFITH: I think that's true, but the Chinese didn't have any atomic bombs or anything else to fight against us and we could have done a good job there I think.

HESS: Were there any other things that you heard about the Wake Island conference?

GRIFFITH: Oh, I heard a lot of things, but there's nothing official. I mean, I indicated before that a lot of people who were very fond of the President were shocked at the relief of MacArthur.

HESS: All right, suppose we just take a few minutes. I'd like to ask you about just some general questions, about some of the people who worked in the Pentagon at the same time you did, and for Secretary Johnson, or in the Defense Department setup. If you could tell me just a little bit about the person. Did you ever work with them on any interesting assignments or projects.

Stephen Early was Undersecretary of Defense and then Deputy Secretary. What kind of a man was Steve Early and did you have any occasion to work with him?

GRIFFITH: Oh yes, I had a lot of occasion to work with

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Early. Early was a newspaperman and was Press Secretary to Mr. Roosevelt, and I think owed his appointment entirely to the fact that he had been Johnson's friend during the difficulty with Roosevelt. I don't believe he had any specific duties or added very much to the Department.

HESS: Was he there mainly as a -- since he had been Roosevelt's Press Secretary, was he there as Secretary Johnson's press secretary?

GRIFFITH: No, he wasn't. He was there and sat in on most of the meetings with Johnson.

HESS: I knew he had the title of first, Under Secretary and then Deputy Secretary.

GRIFFITH: Yes, that's right.

HESS: A few words about John Sullivan, who we have mentioned, did you work with him?

GRIFFITH: Yes, John Sullivan I thought was a great Secretary of Navy.

HESS: Well he left in May of '49.

GRIFFITH: Yes.

HESS: And then he was replaced by Francis P. Matthews. He was the Secretary of the Navy during most of the time that you were there, correct?

GRIFFITH: Yes, but Matthews afterwards was made Ambassador

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to Ireland.

HESS: Do you know why he was made Ambassador to Ireland?

GRIFFITH: Well, he just wanted to be Ambassador to Ireland.

HESS: Are you sure?

GRIFFITH: I don't know

HESS: I've heard he made a speech on how the war should be fought that ran counter to the Administration's view, and it was not long after that that he was Ambassador to Ireland. Is that correct?

GRIFFITH: I don't think so. I don't know. I didn't get into those things.

HESS: You didn't follow politics that close?

GRIFFITH: No.

HESS: All right.

GRIFFITH: You see, I was on the outside looking in politically.

HESS: Okay. Gordon Gray, Secretary of the Army?

GRIFFITH: Gordon Gray, I worked with him. Gordon Gray was not a dynamic fellow, he was more of a college professor and did go back to the University of North Carolina to be president of the university.

HESS: Frank Pace, who succeeded him?

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GRIFFITH: Frank Pace was more dynamic than either of the others that we're talking about, except Sullivan. Frank Pace was a wide-awake fellow and I think was very competent.

HESS: I have heard that at the time of the dismissal of General MacArthur he was in the Far East and was supposed to communicate the information to the General that he had been replaced, but that he could not be found.

GRIFFITH: I don't know that.

HESS: Secretary Symington, who we have mentioned?

GRIFFITH: Well, Symington was very controversial. Now, Symington is a good friend of mine, he had never done anything that would lead me to believe that he was the fellow that he has the reputation of being. I'd sooner you'd have Marx Leva's opinion of Symington as Secretary of the Air Force than mine.

HESS: Well, we have that, now I'm after yours.

GRIFFITH: Well, I wasn't associated with him for as long as Leva.

HESS: Was he a difficult man to work around?

GRIFFITH: He must have been. With me he was just all flowers and honey, and is yet.

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HESS: All right, now he was succeeded by Thomas K. Finletter. What type of a Secretary did Mr. Finletter make?

GRIFFITH: I think Mr. Finletter was a very competent fellow. He later became head of NATO, you know, over in Paris.

HESS: Was he somewhat easier to work with on Air Force matters than Secretary Symington had been?

GRIFFITH: Oh, much easier. Much easier.

HESS: All right, do you have anything else to add? What comes to mind when you look back upon the days you spent in the Pentagon we have not covered this morning?

GRIFFITH: Well, you know we were the beginning of Civil Defense. We had a division for Civil Defense, which later became the Civil Defense Administration, and is now back in the Army. We were the beginning of Small Business, and all of these things that I had the responsibility for. And they now have a Small Business Administration, which proves that these things must have made their mark or they wouldn't be administrations today.

I just can't think of -- I'm glad you asked me

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questions, because frankly, I have had some difficulty. I had a little stroke two years ago and while I've made thousands of speeches, I wouldn't attempt to make a speech any more, under any circumstance, because I can't think of the words that I would like to think of, or that's on my mind, like I used to.

HESS: You really seem to have no more trouble than most people.

GRIFFITH: Well, I have trouble. I should have told you that before I stammer around to get a word. And this arm is still bad. But I was on the platform to make a speech up in Pennsylvania up at a Catholic college and when I got up there I found that I couldn't say a word. And this is the first advance that I had had of a stroke. And I just said, "If you people would like to ask me some questions I'd be very glad to answer them. I think you'd get more out of questions and answers than you would if I made a speech." And I answered questions for an hour and no one knew that anything was wrong. But I couldn't make a speech at all. And I haven't made a speech since. And that's been over two years ago, and I do have a little...not a stoppage in

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my speech, but a difficulty in making words come out.

HESS: Well, I didn't notice it until you mentioned it.

GRIFFITH: Well.

HESS: Do you think we've covered most of the important things?

GRIFFITH: I think so.

HESS: All right. What in your opinion were Mr. Truman's major contributions during his administration?

GRIFFITH: Well, I think the major contribution was that he made up his mind, and spoke his mind, and nobody could doubt what he was saying. I think he'll go down in history as one of the great Presidents because of that. You see, even Eisenhower, lots of times you just didn't know what Eisenhower was meaning. I thought he was a great guy, I knew him very well, but Truman didn't depend on somebody else to make up his mind. He made up his mind and spoke it. Now the two things that I would hold against the President is the firing of MacArthur and the firing of Johnson.

HESS: You think he would have been better off if he hadn't made those two actions?

GRIFFITH: I do.

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HESS: All right. Okay that answers my last question, because my last question is your estimation of Mr. Truman's place in history, which you have mentioned

GRIFFITH: Yes.

HESS: All right, anything else to add this morning?

GRIFFITH: No, I don't think so.

HESS: Well, thank you very much General.

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