

Oral History Interview
with
GENERAL LOUIS W. TRUMAN

A second cousin of Harry S. Truman; Aide de Camp to General Walter Short in Hawaii; Chief of Staff, 84th Infantry Division; Commander of 223rd Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division in Korea; Assistant Division Commander of the 2nd Infantry Division; Service with NATO forces in Italy; Commanding General, VII U. S. Army Corps in Germany; and Commanding General, Third U. S. Army.

Independence, Missouri
December 7, 1991

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Summary Description:

Subjects discussed include Harry S. and Ralph Truman's trip to Texas in 1902; the career of General Walter Short; the personality of General George Patton; military preparedness in Hawaii prior to December 7, 1941; the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7th; the Roberts Commission report on Pearl Harbor; 84th Infantry Division; President Truman's review of the troops during Potsdam Conference; Truman's offer of support to Eisenhower to run for President; Louis Truman's relationship with President Truman; Sunday dinners on the Martha Truman farm; the assignment of General Matthew Ridgway to Korea; and the dismissal of General MacArthur.

Names mentioned include William T. Truman, Deborah Gray, Ralph Truman, Nanny Louise Watson, Jacob L. Milligan, Harry S. Truman, General Walter Short, Margaret Stevenson Truman, General Benjamin Lear, General Walter Kreuger, General George Patton, Jr., Walter Phillips, Admiral Husband Kimmel, Fred Bays, General Leonard T. Gerow, General Charles D. Herron, J. Lawton Collins, General Delos C. Emmons, General George C. Marshall, Colonel Philip Hayes, "Swede" Henderson, Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, General Max Murray, General John DeWitt, Floyd Parks, Nelson Walker, General Maxwell Taylor, General Bedell Smith, General Alexander Bolling, Roger Colgan, Jim Sommers, Matthew Connelly, General Matthew Ridgway, General James A. Van Fleet, General Jim Fry, and General Douglas MacArthur.

Donor:

General Louis W. Truman

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Independence, Missouri
December 7, 1991
by Niel M. Johnson, Harry S. Truman Library

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JOHNSON: I'm here with General Louis Truman, and the date is December 7, 1991, which of course, is the 50th anniversary date of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

General Truman, before we get to Pearl Harbor, if I can get just a little background on you. We do have a biographical sketch here that will serve as a kind of an overall guide, but would you relate for us who your parents are and where and when you were born.

TRUMAN: My parents were Nanny Louise Watson Truman, and my father was Ralph Emerson Truman, Major General Ralph Emerson Truman, with the National Guard and the 35th Division. I was born in Kansas City, Missouri on the 20th of June, 1908.

JOHNSON: What was your mother's maiden name again?

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TRUMAN: Watson. My middle name is Watson. Nanny Louise Watson Truman. And so I'm Louis, knocking the "e" off, and Watson Truman.

JOHNSON: I believe your mother died when you were very young.

TRUMAN: When I was at West Point. I didn't get home in time to see her before she passed away. She died of peritonitis.

JOHNSON: What year was that?

TRUMAN: That was 1930.

JOHNSON: I see. And your father later remarried and her name was Olive.

TRUMAN: Olive Johnson.

JOHNSON: Of course, your father was a first cousin of Harry Truman.

TRUMAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: Your father's parents -- what do you recall about them?

TRUMAN: I don't remember the grandmother, but William

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Truman was my grandfather, my father's father. He came from Texas, I think it was Bomar, Texas. But in some way or other, my father was separated from his father and he was brought to Kansas City and lived with the Gray family. I remember living at 1908 Michigan, I believe it was, in Kansas City, Missouri. I was born not too far away from there. Mrs. Gray -- Deborah I believe her name was -- was a wonderful person.

JOHNSON: What was the address of your birthplace?

TRUMAN: I don't remember right off hand. I believe it was Kansas Avenue; I have it someplace at home, but right away this morning I can't remember it.

JOHNSON: I think your grandfather, your father's father, was William, and apparently his wife died rather young and left three children, Earl, Grace, and Ralph Emerson.

TRUMAN: That's correct.

JOHNSON: Ralph Emerson was your father. And his father, William, when he remarried, moved to Texas apparently.

TRUMAN: That's possibly right.

JOHNSON: He took Earl and Grace with him, and your father stayed behind, stayed with this Gray family, which we

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were talking about. They had taken care of him as a baby apparently.

TRUMAN: That's right.

JOHNSON: After Harry Truman graduated from high school, he and your father went to Texas, apparently to visit your father's family.

TRUMAN: I don't know about that.

JOHNSON: Did your father ever talk to you about this trip that he made with his cousin to Texas around 1902?

TRUMAN: The only thing I remember him saying was that if they went to Lone Oak, Texas on that trip, why then that's when Harry Truman met my mother, and then he introduced my mother to my father, and my father finally married Nanny Watson, Nanny Louise Watson.

JOHNSON: Do you have any idea how Harry Truman knew this Nanny Watson?

TRUMAN: I have no idea. Maybe it's in the autobiography that I'm going to send to you.

JOHNSON: I want to ask you if you have any papers at all that are connected with Truman and the Truman administration.

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TRUMAN: As far as Ralph Truman is concerned, my father, that autobiography would have all of the information in there. [A copy of Ralph Truman's manuscript copy of his autobiography is located in the Papers of Ralph E. Truman, Box 4.]

JOHNSON: Good. I'd be happy to receive that.

Would you tell us about your education?

TRUMAN: I started at Irving School on Prospect, and I think I went up to the sixth grade there. Then we moved to Springfield, Missouri, and I went to Bowman Grade School and Springfield High School. After high school graduation, I went two years to Southwest Missouri Teachers College. I then went to a prep school, because the first time I tried to get into West Point in 1927 I was not high enough on the list. It was a competitive examination, and I didn't rank high enough. There were 24 National Guardsmen that had gotten in and I was number 26, so the next year I went to Columbia, Missouri and went to Hall Prep School. Then I took the examination and I think I ranked about number 4; I got into West Point in 1928 and graduated from there in 1932. Then I went to the National War College.

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JOHNSON: When was it that you attended the National War College?

TRUMAN: That was in '48. I had correspondence courses with the Armed Forces Staff College. Although I wanted to go to the C&GS [Command and General Staff] school, the timing was not right for me to go, so I never went there. But I did take the correspondence courses so far as their studies were concerned.

JOHNSON: Who induced you to go to West Point?

TRUMAN: My father. Not induced me, but demanded that I go. I never will forget being in the upstairs bedroom -- I think at that time I was 16 or 17 -- and he was giving me a dissertation on the things that young men run into, so far as is concerned on the female side, and giving me a sex

lecture on that. At the same time, he said, "And by the way, I know you want to go to Rolla School of Mines to be an electrical engineer, and possibly to Massachusetts' MIT." And he said, "But we don't have enough money to send you to either place, so you're going to go to West Point." So therefore, I went.

JOHNSON: Well, how was your experience at West Point?

TRUMAN: Very, very fine. I really didn't want to go to

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begin with, but in the meantime I changed my mind completely. I was fascinated with West Point. I never walked the area as far as that was concerned; I was low as far as demerits were concerned. I wasn't a goody-goody so far as that's concerned. My first year I ranked about, oh, well below 100 because I had had most of the mathematics there, in the first and second years. The third year I dropped way down. We entered with 300 and some odd in the class in 1928, and in my third class year I didn't do too well because I started playing poker and I dropped down. I'll never forget that my father was tremendously upset with my activities at West Point.

But then I finally got to myself and I thought about my class standing which he was continuously telling me about. Class standing would mean a lot as far as ranking in the future life in the Army is concerned. In the overall, I ranked 109 out of 265 that graduated.

JOHNSON: So about half of them that started graduated.

TRUMAN: Oh, yes, that's right.

JOHNSON: In 1934, your father was the campaign manager for Tuck [Jacob L.] Milligan here in Missouri.

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TRUMAN: That is correct.

JOHNSON: Of course, Harry Truman was running for the Senate against Milligan.

TRUMAN: That is correct, in the primary.

JOHNSON: Yes. We have a little correspondence about that. Did your father tell you anything about why he was managing Tuck Milligan's campaign instead of Harry Truman's?

TRUMAN: I'm having to recall now, but I believe that he and Milligan had served together in the 35th Division in World War I over in Europe. And I think that they were close friends. I don't believe there was bad blood between Cousin Harry and my father as far as that's concerned, because he certainly supported him in the general election. If I remember correctly.

JOHNSON: Yes. Do you remember the name, James Ruffin? He apparently was a close friend of your father's.

TRUMAN: Who was he?

JOHNSON: He went to Congress, but he was persuaded by your father to support Truman for Governor in 1931. So your father had been involved in the Harry S. Truman for

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Governor campaign in 1931. You were at West Point at the time.

TRUMAN: Yes, and so I don't know about that.

JOHNSON: So he never talked to you about that?

TRUMAN: No. I know that Harry Truman and Ralph Truman were very close, very close so far as that's concerned.

JOHNSON: They always spoke favorably of his...

TRUMAN: I think they were practically as close as Vivian and Cousin Harry were.

JOHNSON: You never heard him say negative things about Harry Truman.

TRUMAN: Not a thing. He was very supportive of him.

JOHNSON: What was your first assignment then, after West Point?

TRUMAN: Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.

JOHNSON: In '32?

TRUMAN: In June '32, as a second lieutenant. That's right outside of St. Louis; it's a suburb of St. Louis. The unit was the 6th Infantry Regiment at that time.

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JOHNSON: That's where you met General Walter Short?

TRUMAN: Yes. Well, the first commander there was Walter Krueger, Colonel Walter Krueger, who became a four-star general, under MacArthur in the Philippines. Then Colonel Short came in 1934 to Jefferson Barracks. He remained there until '36. He was an outstanding and fine commander. He was very strong on machine gun training. He had been a machine gun trainer in World War I, and also was trained in rifle marksmanship. He wanted everybody to know completely how to use their weapons. He was a fine instructor. Later in 1936, I went to the Infantry School at Ft. Benning, Georgia. He went there as Assistant Commandant of the Infantry School and the Tank School, and was made a Brigadier General there. I went to the Tank School the next year during '37 and '38. During those two years my wife and I were invited by General and Mrs. Short to their quarters and to parties many, many times. We became very close friends.

JOHNSON: At the Tank School.

TRUMAN: And Infantry School, both schools.

JOHNSON: At both schools. When did you marry, and who did

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you marry?

TRUMAN: On June 24, 1934, I was married to Margaret Stevenson -- Margaret Blackwell Stevenson. She was from Webster Groves, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis. Her mother was a very outstanding concert pianist. She probably was one of the finest piano teachers in the Midwest. Margaret was one of seven children. She also started learning to play the piano at the age of four and she, also, started teaching at the age of 12. And she still plays very beautifully.

JOHNSON: What was your rank, and your role at the Infantry School?

TRUMAN: I was a second lieutenant.

JOHNSON: Yet you established this rapport with Colonel Short at the time. I believe at that time he became a Brigadier General.

TRUMAN: Yes. And I was still a second lieutenant. At that time, we had to wait quite a long time to get promoted.

JOHNSON: But there was certain rapport between you two.

TRUMAN: Absolutely. I admired him greatly, and I liked Mrs. Short; and Margo did too. They were just a

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wonderful couple. He was a very outstanding commander.

JOHNSON: So you're more or less in company with Colonel and then General Short in 1932 to 1934, at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri and then at Ft. Benning, Georgia from 1936.

TRUMAN: Through '38.

JOHNSON: After the Tank School

TRUMAN: During the Infantry School and Tank School from 1936 through 1938 at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

JOHNSON: From there you went...

TRUMAN: I went to Panama. I wanted to go to a tank battalion, after the Tank School in 1938, but in the meantime politics didn't permit me to do it, so they sent me to Panama. I thought that was the jumping-off place of the world, but probably those two years gave me more real know-how. Ben [Benjamin] Lear, was a Brigadier General at that time and he commanded all of the Army and Air Forces there in Panama.

JOHNSON: What division was this?

TRUMAN: There was not a division stationed there, just a Panamanian Department. I was in the 14th Infantry

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Regiment on the Atlantic side and there was another Infantry Regiment stationed on the Pacific side.

JOHNSON: So that's where you got acquainted with General Lear? And General Short is still back here in the States?

TRUMAN: Well, yes, from about that time, he was promoted to Brigadier General and he went to Fort Hamilton in New York as Commander of that post and as Assistant Division Commander, the 1st Infantry Division. Later he became Commanding General of the 1st Division. Later on he was sent to the Carolina Maneuvers against Walter Krueger. Major General Short commanded either the 1st or the 3rd Corps, Major General Krueger commanding the Corps on the other side. Although I was not in the States, I do remember an indication that General Short used to just beat the pants off of Major General Walter Krueger, time and time again during the maneuver.

JOHNSON: How long were you in Panama?

TRUMAN: Two years, 1938-40. I came back to Fort Benning, Georgia and was assigned as S-4, the supply officer of the 14th Armored Brigade, which was commanded by Brigadier General George S. Patton, Jr. There I was

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able to become acquainted with General Patton very, very well, I was still a First Lieutenant. I was promoted to First Lieutenant in Panama. General Patton then was promoted to Major General and Commanding General of the Second Armored Division.

JOHNSON: There's an incident involving General Patton that you have mentioned to me. Would you repeat the story that involves the general and you and your wife?

TRUMAN: General Short called me personally. He had then taken over the Hawaiian department on February 7th of 1941. Shortly thereafter, General Short called me. I was in the Second Armored Division, and he asked me if I'd like to be his aide, his senior aide. The then senior aide, Walter Phillips, was going to be moved on up into the General Staff, and Walter Short wanted me to come over to be his aide. I said, "I'd be delighted." He naturally wanted

Margo over there with me. And so he said, "Orders will be issued in the very near future from Washington directing you to come to Hawaii" I said, "Fine, we're looking forward to it."

I received the orders and so we made what was known as a PPC call on General Patton. That was whenever you're at a post, and on leaving it you always go in to see the commanding general, or commander,

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under which you served. Lydia, his wife, Mrs. Patton, was not with him. He didn't have her there because I guess of the training and whatnot, but he was living in one of the houses across the street from the Ft. Benning golf course. So, we walked up to the front door. The door was open. It was in February, but it was still quite warm there. I rang the doorbell, and the orderly came up to the door. So we gave him the cards and he said, "I'll take them into General Patton, and I'll come right back." We heard General Patton talking, and these other generals or senior officers talking there, and my wife said, "I don't want to go in there." I said, "Well, to hell with that, we're going in." And so with that, before the orderly got back, I heard this voice, "Blankety, blank, lieutenant, get the hell in here." And Margo said, "I'm not going in." But we went in. He introduced us around very nicely, and he said, "I hear that you're going to be over with Walter Short as his aide." I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Well, I'm going to tell you, I think a lot of General Short, a very intelligent individual and a very fine, fine commander. He trains his troops well." A few other comments were made and of a few other officers around, about five of them I guess; brigadier generals, one major general, and the other colonels.

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Margaret and I were in a rarified atmosphere as far as that's concerned.

At any rate, he turned to my wife and said, "Mrs. Truman, do you like rice?" She said, "Well, yes, but why?" "Well," he said, "by damn you better, because you're going to have to eat it for a long time after the Japs take Hawaii." Well, of course, we thought that was in jest, but I might make the observation that it was prophetic on his part, because he knew Hawaii inside and out. He had a yacht over there and he used to go everywhere around it. He knew the Japanese on Hawaii, and he had studied Japanese history. He knew from past history, but I didn't know it at that time, that really since 1923 the Japanese wanted to take Hawaii some time, and to get it away from the United States.

Now, whether he knew anything in February of '41, Admiral Yamamoto had a plan in his mind, at the very beginning, of knocking out the U.S. fleet, but looking back on it afterwards, we thought that was a very -- his was a very prophetic statement.

JOHNSON: General Short had been assigned to command the Hawaiian Department, with the Army.

TRUMAN: And Air Force.

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JOHNSON: Yes, and the Air Corps, Army Air Corps, in February, 1941.

TRUMAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: You were assigned to go over there on what day?

TRUMAN: I got there some time in March, about the middle of March.

JOHNSON: So this incident that you're talking about with General Patton, was that in March?

TRUMAN: No. That was about early February. We went by boat around through the Panama Canal, so it took us about thirty days to get out there.

JOHNSON: So you became a good friend of General Short.

TRUMAN: Yes. In fact, we used to get Christmas cards from him.

JOHNSON: And you would be his Aide de Camp.

TRUMAN: Senior Aide de Camp.

JOHNSON: What are the duties of a Senior aide de camp?

TRUMAN: Well, an aide de camp is supposed to do anything that the General, to whom he is assigned, wants him to

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do, professionally, socially or personally. And he could be in sort of a staff assignment with the General, doing research, or keeping him informed about different things that are happening in the staff. I don't mean by that that he was an individual who was a spy, or anything like that sort of thing, but he was just to do practically anything the General wanted him to do.

When I arrived I was 33 years of age. I graduated from West Point in 1932, as we stated before. I was then a permanent First Lieutenant. During the summer, I had been promoted to temporary Captain. During those times, before becoming a captain, one had to go through four or five years more as far as service was concerned, twelve or thirteen years. But they speeded up promotions at that time, both not only to First Lieutenant and Captain, but all up the line, because the Army was doing quite a bit of training and expansion.

During my time with him, I accompanied him almost every time that he had a meeting with Admiral Husband Kimmel. We would go in an official car over to Pearl Harbor, the submarine base, where Kimmel's office was. There I would sit outside with Commander Freddie Bays, his Flag Lieutenant. He was a Lieutenant Commander,

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and flag secretary. Kimmel and Short did not have a secretary or any other person in with them. They did their speaking, or their talking, to each other during their discussions; we would get a

call to go get a certain piece of correspondence, or find out this or that. Then, on the way home in the car, back to Fort Shafter, General Short would summarize, generally, the discussions he had. I did not make notes because he did not want me to make any. If I started to make notes, he would say, "I don't want you to make any notes on this." But I knew what the subjects were. The same thing happened when we went over to see Rear Admiral Claude C. Bloch, who was the Commander of the 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor. Bloch was under Kimmel, but he also reported to the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Starke, in Washington on another activity.

At first, General Short was assigned long-range reconnaissance out to 500 miles, but then it turned out that he didn't have sufficient planes (that is enough B-18s and B-17s) to conduct long-range reconnaissance covering all 360 degrees of the Island. [Major General] Fred Martin was the head of the Air Corps over in Hawaii and Rear Admiral [Patrick L.N.] Bellinger, was, I believe, Navy head of the submarine base and

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also in command of about four different things, one of which was long-range reconnaissance. So, it was agreed that Kimmel and Bloch would be assigned the job of long-range reconnaissance out to about 550 miles, and Short would be responsible for short-range reconnaissance out to about 20 miles. That was the agreement.

JOHNSON: Was that put in writing?

TRUMAN: Yes, it was between times agreed upon and also agreed upon in Washington.

JOHNSON: What planes would Kimmel use to do that?

TRUMAN: Well, I don't remember.

JOHNSON: That's long range, 500 miles.

TRUMAN: But in the meantime there were some planes that they had that could do it.

JOHNSON: They had the Catalina flying boat?

TRUMAN: I don't know. I can't answer the question.

JOHNSON: So you're explaining now why there were not daily reconnaissance flights.

TRUMAN: I might say that before December 6th the planes

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that were there requested a lot of maintenance and also personnel. Pilots were getting tired. So I would say from the very beginning there, for four or five months, both Short and Kimmel were pointing those deficiencies out to Washington. Actually, Short had started, I think on February 19th, writing into Washington asking for a million and a half dollars for the construction of bunkers and chain fences for the planes at Hickam Field and Wheeler Field -- the bombers at

Hickam and the fighters at Wheeler -- asking for money for construction of bunkers and also for a chain fence to put around these fields, so that they would not have to have so many guards against sabotage.

He never heard back. I remember, very definitely, that he talked to [Brigadier] General [Leonard T.] Gerow in October, or it could have been November, saying again that he needed the money, \$30,000 for chain fences for Hickam and Wheeler fields. And again they said, "We just don't have the money." They were using all of it for other things. He also asked for anti-aircraft guns, too, which we didn't get. These were being sent over to England in their war against Hitler. The B-17s were the Flying Fortresses which Kimmel needed very much. I would say that some of these long-range bombers that we had, were given by

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Short to Kimmel for some of the reconnaissance, I remember that now. Some of the B-17s that came from the U.S. to Hickam Field, and that were supposed to go to Bloch, were rerouted and sent on to the Philippines.

JOHNSON: Clark Field, I suppose.

TRUMAN: Yes. That's right.

JOHNSON: Did General Short ever say anything to you about briefings that he had received from [Lt.] General [Charles D.] Herron, who apparently was his predecessor?

TRUMAN: I can't remember exactly. I don't know whether it was General Herron or [General George C.] Marshall, that told him that the Hawaiian Division was too large and too cumbersome to use. The terminology that I heard, "The Division couldn't fight its way out of a wet paper bag." It was either from Marshall's or Herron's suggestion that the Hawaiian Division be split and made into two divisions, the 24th and 25th divisions. Short did that, and he was the one who got them trained and combat-ready. And these two divisions were the spearhead for future activities out in the Pacific.

J. Lawton Collins came to Ft. Shafter with

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Lieutenant General [Delos C.] Emmons, when Short was relieved on December 17th. Emmons was an Air Corps officer, and Colonel J. Lawton Collins came with him to replace Tige [Lt. Colonel Walter] Phillips. Collins wanted me to stay with him in Hawaii rather than to go back to the United States with General Short. General Short was coming back to the United States to see what assignment he would get for some other place. I told Collins that no, I didn't want to stay there with him, that I wanted to go back with General Short. And he said, "Well, I'm going to command the 25th division later on." He was only a Colonel then, but a senior one, and he did a splendid job out there I believe. I can't remember the islands where it was. I knew, but I can't recall now. But he said, "You'd be a battalion executive, and before long you'd be a battalion commander." Well, that was quite a thing for me to think over, and in time I thought that my loyalty was to General Short.

JOHNSON: Did all the communications to General Short come through you, or did you see virtually all of the communications?

TRUMAN: They did not all come through me; they came through to the Chief of Staff, but it was one of my jobs to

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read everyone of the messages that came in there and those going to Washington.

JOHNSON: This Alert Number 1 that General Short's command went on, did you report that back to Washington, that they were on Alert Number 1?

TRUMAN: That was in answer to message number 472, on the 27th of November. That same day that he and Phillips went over that message number 472. I was in the room when they were talking it over. They read the message over word by word, because the last sentence of the message said that you take no action that shall cause unrest in the civilian populace, and not to give away intent. [The message from the Army Chief of Staff directed General Short to initiate "reconnaissance and other measures" but "not to alarm civil population or disclose intent."]

JOHNSON: There was fear that the civilian population would get panicky, and disclose the high state of alert?

TRUMAN: Something of that nature, yes. General Short didn't want this to get into the newspapers. They had had sabotage alerts quite a number of times. They had not gone into, if I remember correctly, either Number 2 or Number 3 alerts.

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JOHNSON: So General Short did not go to Number 2 and Number 3 mainly because he did not want to panic the civilian population?

TRUMAN: Because they were told not to do so in that last message. That same message was sent by Washington to the Panama Canal, the West Coast, and to MacArthur, but that particular sentence was left out in all of the messages to the other three places.

JOHNSON: Oh, so it was only in the message to Pearl Harbor?

TRUMAN: Certainly, in the message sent to MacArthur in the Philippines there was not that sentence about not "getting the populace unhappy," or something like that.

JOHNSON: So General Short reported back to Washington?

TRUMAN: That same day, indicating that "Alert Number 1 directed against sabotage, was in full force, and that there was liaison with the Navy as directed."

JOHNSON: Did he report that to the Chief of Staff, General Marshall, in Washington?

TRUMAN: To whomever got it. I would imagine that Number 472 was signed by Marshall but was signed by Stimson. I'm pretty sure the reply went back to Marshall.

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JOHNSON: Did General Short ever get a reply?

TRUMAN: Whoever got it in Washington either didn't read the message correctly, or didn't understand what it said was being done, or expected Short to do more than what he understood from the message. As a result the next message he received from Marshall was three or four hours after the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7th.

JOHNSON: Did General Short interpret that silence then to be approval?

TRUMAN: Yes, he did.

JOHNSON: Of his status on Alert Number 1?

TRUMAN: He did so far as Hawaii was concerned. It did indicate in message Number 472, if I remember correctly, that activities could be expected against the Philippines, Thailand or the Kra Peninsula. That was the first part of the message.

JOHNSON: Well, General Short, apparently, did not believe that it was possible for a sizeable fleet of Japanese warships to stage an attack on Hawaii.

TRUMAN: That is correct.

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JOHNSON: Did Admiral Kimmel think the same way?

TRUMAN: Yes, both the Army and the Navy in Hawaii believed that the Japanese would be stupid if they would try such a thing. They just wouldn't be able to get in, because we would get information soon enough to keep them from coming in. And the people in Washington, both General Marshall and his staff, and the CNA, Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Harold Stark his staff, had the same ideas.

JOHNSON: Do you know if they had a strategy for something like an air attack from Japanese carriers? What kind of defense strategy would we have had. Would we have any carriers in the vicinity to launch its planes, to meet the Japanese planes?

TRUMAN: You must remember that I was a captain at that time, and I was not privy to all of those plans. Those war plans were very secret. But in the meantime, I do know that Short was given a mission to protect the fleet in Pearl Harbor and also to be able to guard against an amphibious assault on Oahu.

JOHNSON: Was Admiral Kimmel advised at all of the plans for defense of his fleet? In other words, was he aware of all of Short's plans?

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TRUMAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: For the defense of the fleet.

TRUMAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: Did he ever question those plans?

TRUMAN: As far as I know he did not.

JOHNSON: Were you in on some of these meetings?

TRUMAN: Not in them. I was given summaries of the discussions.

JOHNSON: Summaries, orally or in writing?

TRUMAN: As I told you, when we came back from meetings with Kimmel and Bloch, coming back in the car, he would summarize the substance of the conversation that he had there, and he would say, "Don't make any notes on it." But I do know that Phil [Colonel Philip] Hayes, who was chief of staff before Phillips. Colonel Hayes would always meet with Kimmel's chief of staff and also with Bloch's.

JOHNSON: But there were no written records of these meetings -- these coordination type meetings between Kimmel and Short?

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TRUMAN: I don't know of any.

JOHNSON: In Gordon Prange's book, *Pearl Harbor, the Verdict of History*, he and the other two authors that wrote that book, say that General Short ordinarily did not attend his departmental staff meetings. [Gordon Prange, with Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1986), p. 340.]

TRUMAN: That's a damn lie. That's a damn lie.

JOHNSON: It does seem unlikely.

TRUMAN: I can't understand anything like that. I attended them, and he directed them. Now, maybe the chief of staff had some of the division chiefs around for certain meetings, but when there was anything of importance, General Short directed those meetings, himself.

JOHNSON: Were there several of them, or quite a few of them?

TRUMAN: Why, sure. Usually the staff was called in and they were told about the messages coming from and going back to the War Department. And particularly on the 27th of November when they received Number 472, they

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had a staff meeting and Short went over this message completely, although it said at the bottom of the message to hold off on dissemination of information in the 472 message.

JOHNSON: That was a secret...

TRUMAN: Yes, but he outlined what the message was.

JOHNSON: Were there periodical staff meetings then?

TRUMAN: Oh, absolutely. Just like any high headquarters, I would say you have a staff meeting practically every morning of G-1, 2, 3, 4 and other staff support affairs.

JOHNSON: How frequent would these staff meetings be, in which he might preside?

TRUMAN: I'm going to have to guess. I certainly would say [there were many], with Phil Hayes then, the Chief of Staff, who plainly thought that he was just on the right hand side of the deity. But I thought was pretty pompous.

JOHNSON: The Chief of Staff?

TRUMAN: Phil Hayes, Colonel Phil Hayes.

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JOHNSON: He was a pompous type.

TRUMAN: Absolutely.

JOHNSON: Well, did he try to preempt General Short on any of these meetings?

TRUMAN: Well, he couldn't have. Short would have none of it.

JOHNSON: Was General Short an inspirational type?

TRUMAN: Well, he was no George S. Patton type as far as inspiration is concerned. He was not bombastic. He was a very cool, somber type individual. Very intelligent, a Phi Beta Kappa out of the University of Illinois in 1902. He was very knowledgeable. He didn't raise his voice in any of these meetings. But when he gave directions and they were not followed, he had a temper. You never know about it. But then, when the temper came up, he was tough.

JOHNSON: In other words, he made it clear that he had certain opinions or judgments and that they were firm judgments?

TRUMAN: Yes, sir. General Short did not have the personality that Admiral Kimmel had, who was more

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brusque. But as far as that is concerned with his people, but I think that his people admired General Short just as much as Admiral Kimmel's people admired him.

JOHNSON: Could you tell us who he seemed to rely on mainly, in his staff, for advice?

TRUMAN: Yes. Walter Phillips had been with Short for years, both as Captain and a Major. Actually, Phillips was with him when he was with the 6th Infantry at Jefferson Barracks in 1934 to '36. Then, when Short went up to the 1st Division, Phillips became the G-3 of the Division and I believe later on, the Chief of Staff of it. Then, when Short was a corps commander, Phillips went with him at that time. He could have been Short's senior aide, when Short was corps commander, because he was senior aide when General Short went to Hawaii. Then shortly after I arrived in Hawaii Phillips was assigned as the G-3 and given the job of dividing the Hawaiian Division into two divisions. I think that for a week or two he continued to be the senior aide and then I was assigned as the senior aide. In November, Colonel Phil Hayes, the Chief of Staff, went back to the United States, maybe for retirement, maybe for another assignment, I don't

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remember.

JOHNSON: He's the one you referred to as pompous.

TRUMAN: Yes. Then Phillips was promoted to Colonel and made the Chief of Staff of the Hawaiian Department.

JOHNSON: I notice as of December 7th he was Chief of Staff.

TRUMAN: I think he was put in that position about the middle of November. In fact, he was the Chief of Staff when the November 27th message came in.

JOHNSON: How did Hayes get into that?

TRUMAN: Hayes was not in on that.

JOHNSON: Did you work closely then with Colonel Phillips?

TRUMAN: Oh, yes, very closely, as well as with Colonel Hayes too previously.

JOHNSON: Were you ever questioned by the Roberts Commission?

TRUMAN: Well, they pulled me in there and then decided I was too low ranking, that they couldn't get anything to help out the people in Washington, to clear their skirts. Of course, the real purpose of the Roberts Commission was...

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JOHNSON: Did they feel you were going to "whitewash" General Short?

TRUMAN: I don't know what the feeling was. I remember I was called up to the second floor of Department Headquarters to make a statement to them. No, they didn't want...

JOHNSON: Where did you live then?

TRUMAN: Right next door to Department Headquarters, at Fort Shafter.

JOHNSON: At Fort Shafter.

TRUMAN: General Short lived in the Commanding General's house which was about 300 yards away, on Palm Circle, about 300 yards.

JOHNSON: That was not targeted by the Japanese?

TRUMAN: No, it was not. But when after 7:55 a.m. I ran next door to the Department to see the duty officer in my golf clothes, because Short, Kimmel and I were supposed to play golf that morning at 9:00 o'clock at the Shafter golf course. After seeing him, I ran out of the headquarters building to go back into my quarters which are only about 25 feet away, I heard an

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airplane above. It was a Zero fighter banking over the headquarters and over the flagpole, and I could see the pilot's face and the great big round red circle on the plane. As he was not shooting, I thought probably that was making a reconnaissance with the possibility of later attacks on the installation.

JOHNSON: When did you first learn of the attack?

TRUMAN: On the evening before, my wife and I were supposed to go out to Scofield Barracks to accompany General and Mrs. Short to a program and a dinner dance at the Scofield Officer's Club. That was about 23 miles north of Fort Shafter. But my wife had come down with a very bad cold and so the Shorts said, "Well, she should stay in bed, so you stay there also." So the G-2 officer and his wife went out with them. They arrived back at Fort Shafter at about 11 o'clock (p.m.). General Short did not drink other than one drink a night, and it was practically no drink. It was only an ounce of bourbon, I think it was. It might have been scotch, but that was very seldom, and even then he drank very, very little.

JOHNSON: So you had plans to be golfing with Admiral Kimmel and General Short at 9 o'clock on Sunday morning.

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TRUMAN: At 9 o'clock on Sunday morning.

JOHNSON: So on Sunday morning you woke up at, at what time?

TRUMAN: I got up at 7 o'clock and went downstairs in my quarters for breakfast by myself, and then I came back upstairs and was dressing in my golf clothes. In fact, I had just finished dressing in golf clothes, when I heard these tremendous explosions at actually 7:55 the first wave of the Japanese coming in. Of course, I didn't know it at that time, but in reading reports later on, I found there were about 180 some odd Japanese planes in that first wave -- fighters, high and low level bombers, and also torpedo planes. But I had never heard such things before.

On Fridays, every Friday afternoon, I would get a schedule of practice, anti-aircraft firings and they'd let me know what time of day on Saturdays and Sundays that they would be firing. I'm sure information on all firings went to other sections in the headquarters, probably the G-3 section, but I got these for Saturdays and Sundays. On Friday afternoon the schedule said, "Make no firings" for Saturday and Sunday. So I knew something was happening that Sunday morning. There was a belief by a few military commanders that such an

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attack was possible at some time, but not a good probability. I immediately knew it was not just practice anti-aircraft firing because I'd heard that type firing many weekends, and this wasn't the same at all.

JOHNSON: In other words, there was a possibility but not a probability.

TRUMAN: That's correct. It awakened my wife and I said, "Get up immediately, and go down and take your Polo coat with you, your camel's hair coat, and put on warm clothes, and take plenty of kleenex and go down to Short's house immediately." I immediately rushed over to the duty officer on the second floor of department headquarters and I said, "What is it?" He said, "It's a Japanese attack against Pearl Harbor, Hickam Field and Wheeler Field, and the other fields here on the island simultaneously. Many ships have been hit and many planes have been destroyed." And he said, "I've notified General Short and Phillips, the Chief of Staff, and they're going to be coming here immediately."

So I said, "How about the rest of the staff?" He said, "We're notifying them to be here." I said, "Well, you better have the whole staff. Also I think

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we'd better alert the headquarters commandant." I walked outside and that's when I saw the Jap plane coming over the headquarters and the flag pole and I thought we might be attacked, or that it might be a reconnaissance plane.

I rushed upstairs to put my uniform on. My wife had not gone, and I said, "Now, get on out of here, because it looks like this headquarters, and this installation, may be hit later on by something, by a raid on this installation."

So she left immediately. I went outside and I think as I told you yesterday, Mrs. Marstin who lived in the house next to us -- she was the wife of the Department G-4 -- was out watering the flowers outside the house. I said, "Look," (I said it in a little stronger language), "you better get inside the house because there's shrapnel coming down all over the place." You could hear it.

JOHNSON: You could hear it coming down?

TRUMAN: Absolutely. The next day they picked up over three bushel baskets full of this shrapnel from anti-aircraft fire. She immediately went in, and General Short was coming up the walk toward the headquarters. I was right out in front of my quarters, and he said, "Lou,

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get Swede Henderson and go up and open up the underground CP [command post] in the Alimanu crater, and get it so it can be made operational." The Engineers, at Short's direction, had been working on this underground CP Since July. This CP was in an old ammunition depot, and it was being converted into offices, and sleeping quarters for men and officers and enlisted personnel, with kitchens, toilets and mess halls and things of that nature, so they could work underground in time of an attack.

So, before we went up there, headquarters personnel and signal and engineer personnel were notified to get there as soon as possible with the necessary tools and equipment in order to get the CP going. Henderson and I went up there immediately, and unlocked the place. Almost immediately the military personnel arrived.

It probably was about 8:20 a.m. by that time. This site was about two miles to the north of the headquarters, and it took them a little while to get there, but not too long. We put the personnel to working on the place, and about 9 o'clock, maybe a few minutes after, I was outside and heard some more explosions and it sounded like more of the same, down in the Pearl Harbor and Hickam areas. So I yelled at

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Swede Henderson and said, "Let's go up on top the crater and see if we can see anything." Well, we went up there, and had a direct line of site view right down on Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field. It was only two or three miles away. We were well up on the side of the hill there, in this big crater. And so we had a clear view of what was going on there. This was the second attack. They were hitting the ships and some installations, not many, around there at Pearl Harbor. On the misses, we would see these things coming down in the water, and they'd explode and great geysers went up. It looked like Old Faithful going up in different places down there. It was a hell of a sight. Then we went back in for about ten or fifteen minutes. I can't say how many planes were in that second wave, but they wanted to hit the ships more so that would be inoperable for at least six months more.

Now, as far as a third wave is concerned, as you asked this morning, from things that I have read, I didn't actually know it that day and I don't know if anyone else knew about it, but Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, the task force commander, asked what the damage was. He said, "How long do

you think that the fleet's going to be out of action," and he was told -- now this is very summary -
- that they would be out of action at least for

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another six months. I think his name was [Minoru] Genda, who was his chief of staff, who had actually developed the plan for the attack on Pearl Harbor, and he was there, and he wanted to make another strike. He wanted to hit the oil tanks, and other installations there, which would make Pearl Harbor unusable by the fleet for at least a year. That would mean that the fleet would have to be based out of the West Coast.

But Nagumo had his carriers to protect, and he was afraid that maybe there would be enough bombers left on Hawaii that would come out and attack his task force, or maybe that Admiral William Halsey's carrier force out there would know about it and attack his force. Of course, Halsey came into Pearl Harbor that night, and maybe he would have been close enough to come out and engage the Nagumo task force. So there was quite a bit of discussion, as I understand it, but finally Nagumo decided to go on back toward Japan.

JOHNSON: There were just the two Japanese attacks, weren't there?

TRUMAN: That's right.

JOHNSON: In the second attack, according to the *London Times Atlas*, there were 54 high level bombers, 78 dive

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bombers, and 55 fighters. It began at 8:50 a.m. and lasted 65 minutes. It says it was hampered by poor visibility and anti-aircraft fire, and 20 of the 29 Japanese aircraft lost came from the second wave. Did you see any Japanese planes being shot down?

TRUMAN: No, I didn't. But I know there was an awful lot of anti-aircraft fire.

JOHNSON: Here's Pearl Harbor, in this atlas, here's Hickam field, and here's Honolulu.

TRUMAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: Hickam field is between Pearl Harbor and Honolulu. Where was the housing for yourself and General Short, the officers, and commanders?

TRUMAN: Fort Shafter was right about here on the eastern edge of Honolulu. Fort Shafter and this Alimanu crater was right up about here, about two miles up north. And we had a clear view of Pearl from the crater area.

JOHNSON: And Hickam field was right down there in front of you too, wasn't it?

TRUMAN: That's right. Here's Pearl Harbor and the

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island is right out...

JOHNSON: Right in the middle of that. Of course, Wheeler Field is up here.

TRUMAN: Right up here. And then over here is Kaneohe Base, and Bellows Field is down here [on the southeast sector of Oahu].

JOHNSON: And they were all attacked, weren't they?

TRUMAN: Within ten minutes of each other.

JOHNSON: Yes. That takes you up to the end of the air attack, I guess.

TRUMAN: About 10 o'clock in the morning, the staffs were coming in to occupy the offices there on a skeleton basis. Then, I'd say by about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the underground CP was operational.

JOHNSON: When did you get to talk to General Short at this time? When did you first get to talk to him after the attack had started? And do you remember what he had to say, or his reaction?

TRUMAN: I don't know. I don't know that I went back to Fort Shafter after the skeleton crews came up there. I

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just think that he and I had lunch at his quarters. I know I checked this with my wife, and she and Mrs. Short and the other dependents, other than children, male and female, were gathered up about 11:30 and taken over to another tunnel on Fort Shafter where the Air Force, U.S. Army Air Corps, had been and were preparing their underground CP. Buses were sent around to pick them up and take them over there. (I'm trying to come to an answer to your question.) So they took the dependents over to this underground CP. But I think that I remember having lunch with him [General Short]; if it wasn't that day, it was the next day, when he said the Roberts Commission was going to come to Ft. Shafter. And he added, "I know that I'm going to be relieved, and I'll probably lose my second and my third star." I remember sitting at the table during that conversation. Now just exactly when that was, I can't say. (It was the second day.)

JOHNSON: Where did General Short go during the attack?

TRUMAN: He was immediately during the attacks at his office and then had been at the CP. Alert number three had been put into effect. Short and his staff expected an assault after the air attacks. They were expecting an amphib assault. I'm trying to recall this now, but I

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know it was in the afternoon that the CP was fully operational and continued fully operational, when Short was there, or back at the department headquarters. So I think, as I remember telling

you before, that at about 2 o'clock in the morning of that night, everybody was in the underground CP.

A G-3 officer came and told me that paratroopers were landing on the north shore of Oahu. I couldn't imagine how it could be done. But I went in and awakened General Short and gave him the report. He uttered a very strong expletive. He usually never swore, but he did then. Then he said, "That's impossible. Troop carrier aircraft are not developed enough at the present time where they are able to take off from carriers with paratroopers in them and then drop them on the target." And so he said, "Get General [Max] Murray on the phone. I want to talk to him. Either get him on the phone or the radio." I got General Murray on the phone and said that Short wanted to talk to him about the paratroopers.

So they got together on the phone and I heard Short say, "Well, I don't believe it." Actually Murray told him that it was mistaken identities by the reporter getting it. These paratroopers were clouds going across a bright moon and it looked like

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parachutes." Short said, "Well, I thought it was impossible for paratroopers to be dropped up there."

JOHNSON: Where is this underground CP located.

TRUMAN: In the side of one of the craters, Alimanu crater. About fifteen feet of rock on top of it. It had a great big area in the center out here for trucks to come in and put in ammunition. The facility was an ammunition storage depot.

JOHNSON: This was supposed to be kind of a secure place to retreat to in case of invasion?

TRUMAN: That was where we were going to be and use it as our combat command post. That was it. In fact of the matter, I thought it was very good on General Short's his part, foresightedness, to get some such place as that going up. It only took them about an hour to get it operational.

JOHNSON: Where was General Short's office, and where was that in relation to Admiral Kimmel's?

TRUMAN: General Short's office was on the second floor of the department headquarters, and my quarters were about 25 feet away from that. General Short's quarters were

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about five houses on down further, about 300 yards away from the department headquarters.

JOHNSON: You're talking about housing. You're talking about living quarters.

TRUMAN: Yes, I'm talking about the living quarters down there. The Department Headquarters was in a great big building; and there were the G-1, 2, 3, 4 -- the G sections located there. The

Chief of Staff's office was on the second floor next to General Short's office. I can draw you a little picture here.

JOHNSON: I guess we don't have a big enough picture here, in this atlas.

TRUMAN: Again, here's where Fort Shafter was, right here. The stairway is right here, and headquarters are here. The flagpole is out in front, and this is the Palm Circle with my quarters being here. General Short lived right here about like that. On the second floor, there was his office which was in the corner like this. Then, the Chief of Staff's office was right about like this, and then there's a little hall, and my office was right there.

JOHNSON: Where was the Admiral's headquarters?

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TRUMAN: His was at the sub [submarine] base in Pearl Harbor.

JOHNSON: Oh, at the sub base.

TRUMAN: Fort Island was over here, right over in this area here.

JOHNSON: Okay, so it's on the east side of the harbor.

TRUMAN: That's right.

JOHNSON: On the east side of the harbor, by the sub base.

TRUMAN: That's right.

JOHNSON: So when they coordinated, when they met, to talk about their mutual plans, where would they usually meet?

TRUMAN: In Kimmel's office. It was on the second floor of a building over there.

JOHNSON: Okay, so he went over to Kimmel, rather than Kimmel coming over to him.

TRUMAN: Well, Kimmel came to Fort Shafter too.

JOHNSON: Okay.

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TRUMAN: Bloch did not come as often as Kimmel did.

I played golf with Short a number of times, not too often. In fact, I won the Navy Cup there on November 24th, because all of the good golfers were all out with Halsey.

JOHNSON: You knew Admiral Halsey?

TRUMAN: I didn't know him. I had met him just in passing.

JOHNSON: Do you recall if the carriers and the battleships, the entire fleet, were ever moored in the harbor at one time?

TRUMAN: I can't answer the question. I'm sure they were, at some time. The fact of the matter, I can't remember exactly from reading different books. I don't know why Halsey was out with the carrier task force. I don't know whether he was out there looking around, or what the hell was his position. I don't know why he was out there, but thank goodness he was not in Pearl Harbor. The Japanese thought they were going to get it because I think this Navy spy who was a part of the Consul General's office, who did all of the spying on it, I think he reported the fact that the flattops were in the harbor at different times. So I think they thought they were going to find the carriers in there, because

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I think that Nagumo was supposed to have asked "Did we get any carriers?"

JOHNSON: Now, it is true, or is it true, that General Short felt that having the fleet, having these battleships grouped together in Pearl Harbor, was a deterrent to an attack by the Japanese, rather than an attractive target?

TRUMAN: I'm going to have to say "I think" -- it's a supposition since I never remember General Short making such a statement like was made at breakfast this morning, that having the fleet in there was a deterrent to the Japanese to strike. I think [Gordon] Prange brought it up in his book that Short thought, or Short and Kimmel thought, having the fleet in there was a deterrent because they would, along with the Army Air Corps bombers and fighters and also with the pursuit planes and everything else that they had, that the Japanese would be crazy to try to attack them, because they didn't think they could get through.

JOHNSON: How about the other reason, which would be that the Japanese Government would declare war and give us warning before attacking this country?

TRUMAN: Well, I think you mentioned that before, and I

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think it was mentioned again this morning at breakfast. They [the Japanese, by tradition] didn't do anything unless they gave a person a few minutes before they killed them, or something like that. I believe I've read that too, but I don't remember seeing it at any time in any messages.

JOHNSON: So they thought they had enough honor that they would...

TRUMAN: I don't think they had any honor.

JOHNSON: I mean...

TRUMAN: I'm biased and prejudiced.

JOHNSON: But Kimmel and Short, were they kind of assuming that there would be a declaration of war before such a move?

TRUMAN: Let's say it this way; I remember that Marshall and Admiral Stark, and also I think Stimson and the Secretary of the Navy, they all wanted us not to take the first strike, the first action. They thought that the Japanese would, but I think that they thought that they [the Japanese] just wouldn't be stupid enough to come in on Pearl Harbor to make that first attack. They thought they would hit the Philippines [first].

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JOHNSON: If they were going to attack an American target...

TRUMAN: They knew good and well that they would attack the Philippines. But they didn't think they'd come in on Pearl Harbor.

JOHNSON: Okay. You came back then after General Short was recalled to Washington.

TRUMAN: He was not recalled to Washington. He was relieved of command on the 17th of December, and General Emmons took over. Very shortly thereafter, he and I came back. Our wives had already come back to the West Coast of the United States. General Short and I came back, and we came back on a clipper, one of the clippers in Hawaii. I remember I was not a very good bridge player but General Short was an outstanding bridge player. He and a couple of fellows on there, a couple of businessmen from Castle and Cook or something, were there and they got in a bridge game and they needed a fourth. I think they were playing for a cent a point, and that scared the hell out of me. But Short said, "Oh, I'll pay for it." So we played bridge there, coming back.

So we stopped at the Presidio, and that's where

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the 4th Army headquarters was. General [John] DeWitt was the commanding general of that, a three star general. General Short called on him. Short had taken off one star, and so DeWitt asked him, "Walter, what can I do to protect myself here?" I was in the office sitting with them. I believe I heard Short say, "Well, be damn sure you know what the War Department is telling you." I remember him saying that.

JOHNSON: Of course, one of the big issues is what kind of information did Admiral Kimmel and General Short get from the War Department or the Navy Department, that would have alerted them to this...

TRUMAN: They say that the Department of Navy and Army, and Stimson, and the Secretaries of the Army and the Navy, stated that they felt that the November 27th message was adequate warning to Short and Kimmel. In the meantime, the last sentence to them [in the message] downgraded whatever the first part of the message stated. They wanted the Roberts Report to

clear their skirts in Washington. And Washington wouldn't let the Roberts Report even look at the "Purple" [decoded Japanese] messages that Washington had received but which they didn't send out to Short and Kimmel. If Short and Kimmel had gotten the "Purple" decoded

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Japanese messages, Short and Kimmel wouldn't have had a number 1 alert, they would have had aircraft out in bunkers and dispersed so far as the Air Corps is concerned. I'm sure that Kimmel would have taken a different action, and would have had his battleships and aircraft out of Pearl Harbor.

JOHNSON: But if we had been on alert 3 -- assume we had been on alert 3 -- the Japanese strategy would have been the same. They would have done the same thing that they did would they not?

TRUMAN: I would think so. I would think so, but if the populace of Honolulu [was alarmed] and that had gotten back to Tokyo, would they have gone on? Who would know? Maybe Nagume would have gone ahead anyway, because the Japanese had practiced this for so damn long that they would say, "Let's go take a chance on it anyway."

JOHNSON: Of course, General Short declared an alert as soon as he realized that there was an attack on...

TRUMAN: Immediately, 7:55 a.m. or :58.

JOHNSON: December 17th when you left Hawaii, they were all on alert 3?

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TRUMAN: I can't tell you how long the alert was on. Mrs. Short and my wife had gone together to the U.S. I moved into General Short's quarters. General Emmons and Colonel Collins, J. Lawton Collins, were in there also. I had one bedroom and the others had single bedrooms and Short had a bedroom. It was a large house.

JOHNSON: Between the 7th and the 17th was General Short still in command?

TRUMAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: Of course, I suppose that involved a lot of preparations for defense of the islands.

TRUMAN: The preparations for that defense had already been done. They were already out practicing alerts, in their battle positions against any assault landings on the north shore, and I think over on the west shore.

JOHNSON: He still didn't have the equipment, or the materiel...?

TRUMAN: He had the equipment for two infantry divisions, but not the anti-aircraft. To change offenses wouldn't have been worth a damn as far as an assault landing was

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concerned.

JOHNSON: Apparently, Oahu remained a stopover for the B-17s that were being shuttled to the Philippines.

TRUMAN: By Colonel Truman Landon.

JOHNSON: Yes, Truman Landon was the pilot of the first B-17 coming in...

TRUMAN: He was the director of the mission. I think he was fourteen or seventeenth.

JOHNSON: Is that what confused the radar operator?

TRUMAN: That's right.

JOHNSON: They thought the Japanese aircraft were probably these B-17s, and they came in about the time of the attack. Some of them were destroyed on the ground. Were any shot down, do you recall?

TRUMAN: No, I don't think so. I don't think so, but some of them were destroyed. I don't know how many of them were destroyed on the ground.

JOHNSON: Did your duties change substantially in the period from the 7th to the 17th? Did your duties remain the same?

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TRUMAN: Yes. I remember having dinner with the Phillips at the officer's club one night, and I don't know how many days after the 7th it was, but I remember sitting in the corner table there at the officers club, and Phillips said to me, "Lou, I think that what you better do is just get yourself away from General Short, because otherwise your career is going to be hurt." I said to him, "Tige, I'm not a rat jumping off ship."

JOHNSON: A lot of the work that had to be done now was salvaging the ships, and rescuing men. Was that the Navy's job, salvage?

TRUMAN: That was part of their own thing there. I don't know whether they asked for any Army personnel to assist them or not. I can't answer that.

JOHNSON: Did you ever go down there to the...

TRUMAN: Oh yes.

JOHNSON: You went down and you saw the *Arizona* in there and the *Oklahoma* capsized.

TRUMAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: That was a depressing sight wasn't it?

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TRUMAN: Absolutely. I remember that during that time between the time that Mrs. Short left and my wife left, General Short said, "I want to get my household goods packed up here, and you are going to be responsible for getting it loaded and getting it boxed. Get the engineers to come over and load it up in boxes, and get it put in big containers." I remember going down to where they were putting these boxes in the freight cars. One guy had a great big machine, trying to ram this big box into a larger crate. I said, "For God's sake, come off it, you're going to break up all of that furniture. So it was my job to see that the furniture and their possessions got crated up properly. That was one of my jobs.

Now, that you mention it., I am trying to recall. That was quite a time, getting everything packed up and all this. I didn't personally have to pack but I had to see that people were doing it.

JOHNSON: But you had to get your things packed up too.

TRUMAN: That's correct.

JOHNSON: Because you had decided to go back...

TRUMAN: That's right, to go back with General Short.

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JOHNSON: That was your choice. You had options?

TRUMAN: I had the option to stay there with Colonel Collins, later General Collins, but I just happened to think that maybe there would be a bad odor about me, or something like that, having been with Short and then leaving him. I just didn't figure it was the right thing to do. I didn't think it would be the best thing for me.

JOHNSON: When you came back to Washington, what was your position?

TRUMAN: I didn't go directly to Washington. On the 28th of February, General Short left San Francisco, and he got pneumonia. So they put him in Walter Reed Hospital outside of Washington. In the meantime, I was assigned to the Sixth Army in Calito, and was then made a reclassification officer to go up and down the coast reclassifying some National Guard divisions officer personnel, one of which was the 35th Infantry Division. My father had commanded that Division previously, and from which he had been relieved. There were some individuals in the 35th, regimental commanders and the Chief of Staff and a few others, the senior officers, that were being reclassified. They were being looked

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over to see whether they were qualified to stay on active duty, or whether they would go back to civilian life.

There was a major in charge of the reclassification board, and I was the second in command of that activity. I remember very definitely meeting with some of these officers the night before they would come before us to testify, to make comments, or answer questions. I would call my father and say, "Is this man any good? Is this man any good; we're going to look after him tomorrow." So I would tell them about what they were going to be asked. Now, whether that was right or wrong, I don't know. I might say there was this one regimental commander, from Nebraska, who became the commander of the 35th Infantry Division over in Europe later on, and after the war he became the chief of the National Guard Bureau. So I guess my helping him certainly didn't hurt so far as keeping him on active duty.

Then there was the chief of staff, and I don't remember his name. But he had a fine record in World War I. There were some that weren't worth a damn, so far as that's concerned. And we recommended that they not be kept on.

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JOHNSON: You spent how much time there, how many days, weeks?

TRUMAN: I would say I was there about three or four weeks. My wife had taken an apartment in San Francisco and so we were staying there. I would travel back and forth. I thought that I didn't like that at all. I was very unhappy with that. So I called Floyd Parks who was the Secretary General Staff of Army Ground Force Headquarters, with Lieutenant General Leslie J. McNair as commander. I had served with Floyd before and I knew him at Fort Benning; so I called him and said, "I wonder if you can get me assigned to the 3rd Armored Division." I had served with Parks in the 14th Armored Brigade of the Second Armored Division with Brigadier General Patton. Parks was the S-3 and I was the S-4. He was then a major and then was promoted to lieutenant colonel and made Secretary of the General Staff. I called from San Francisco, and said, "Can you get me assigned with General Gillem with the 3rd Armored Division?" General Gillem had succeeded Patton as commander of the 14th Armored Brigade and Patten became 2nd Armored Division Commanding General. I liked Gillem very much and I had known him as a senior colonel at Benning when I was in the Infantry School,

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and tank schools and had played golf with him many times. So I wanted to go to his armored division.

Floyd said, "Well, actually it would be better for your career if you'd come on in here and get some experience, and then be later on assigned down there." He said, "Maybe also, this will blow over about your having been with Short at Pearl Harbor." As a result I was assigned to the Special Projects Division with Nellie Walker, Nelson Walker, who was then a colonel. We were looking into mountain training, airborne training and amphibious training. I asked him if I couldn't go to each place and spend a week or two, and find out just exactly what these outfits were doing, or what this was all about. He said, "Yes, that would be a good idea, and then come back." I was then made Chief of the Special Projects Division as a Captain. My contemporaries

were being promoted to major, and my classmates were being promoted to major, but they didn't want to touch me with a nine foot pole. The assistant G-1 there was from the [West Point] class of '31. I went up to him and said, "What the hell is wrong?" He said, "You were at Pearl Harbor. They don't want to touch you." So that was quite a time for me. I lost quite a bit of time, getting promoted to major, but finally was.

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JOHNSON: As a major, where were you assigned?

TRUMAN: I was still in the Special Projects Division of G3, AGF.

JOHNSON: You were operating out of what city?

TRUMAN: Washington, D.C. in the Army War College Building.

JOHNSON: How about Senator Truman? Of course, you had visited the family, you mentioned this, during the '30s. There had been quite a bit of visiting between your father and your mother and the Trumans. You have a brother Corby, and a sister...

TRUMAN: Henrietta.

JOHNSON: You had been visiting with Senator Truman at Grandview you mentioned, the Grandview home.

TRUMAN: The farm home.

JOHNSON: The farm home, yes, and in Independence also at their Delaware Street home.

TRUMAN: That's correct.

JOHNSON: So you're friendly, of course, with the Harry Trumans. Now, he was Senator, starting in 1935. Had

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you visited him in Washington before 1941, say in his office? Had you had any contact with him before '41?

TRUMAN: I don't remember just what the contact was before 1941, I don't remember. I don't remember after my graduation from West Point whether I ever went to his office in Washington. I just can't say. When I brought the initial report, the Roberts Report back to Washington, I remember chairman Roberts saying to me, "I want you to take this preliminary report." I think they had made their final recommendations. "I want you to take this and have this handcuffed to your wrist, and take it up to General Marshall's office and give it to him personally." So I took off and got to Washington, and I took it into Bedell Smith's office; he was Secretary of the General Staff. Max [Maxwell] Taylor, then a lieutenant colonel, was the assistant to the Secretary General Staff. He said, "Truman, give me the report, and I'll take it in to General

Marshall." I said, "I was told by the chairman out there, the assistant associate justice there, that I should give this personally to General Marshall. I have a note here for General Marshall from him." And he wanted General Marshall to get it to the President as soon as possible, personally.

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Taylor was quite adamant that he give it to General Marshall. I had then taken it off of my wrist. I said, "We had better go in together, because I was ordered to give it to him." I wasn't going to do anything different. So, Bedell Smith said, "Oh, hell, go on in with him and let him give it to General Marshall."

Now, what General Marshall did with it...

JOHNSON: You had been assigned as a courier to take this report, this preliminary report. Where were they meeting, the Roberts Commission?

TRUMAN: The Roberts Commission was finishing their meetings in Pearl Harbor, at Fort Shafter.

JOHNSON: Oh, they were meeting in Pearl Harbor.

TRUMAN: They had meetings and had their discussions, interrogations of witnesses, on the second floor of the Department headquarters at Fort Shafter.

JOHNSON: When was that preliminary report ready? Do you recall what day that might have been?

TRUMAN: I think they went back to Washington on the 28th of December. I only went over to Pearl Harbor once after that.

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JOHNSON: But how did you get this preliminary report?

TRUMAN: Well, Roberts gave it to me in a mail sack.

JOHNSON: When you came back.

TRUMAN: No, when they were still there on the second floor of the Department headquarters. They were still meeting there, and they were going to leave the next day or so and they were going to go by ship back to the West Coast. Then they were going to take a train back to Washington, but they were afraid maybe the ship might be sunk by Japanese submarines and so they wanted the preliminary report to get in to General Marshall ahead of time and to the President, although there were no recommendations on this. It was only the testimonies that they had taken from witnesses in the department headquarters. I believe they did visit in Kimmel's headquarters over there, but I'm not privy to know what they did over there. I don't know. And I'm not too privy to know what the hell they did on the second floor of the Department Headquarters.

JOHNSON: But you had this chained to your wrist to go back to Washington.

TRUMAN: Now, after that I stayed overnight there in

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Washington. It was in early morning when I gave this to Colonel Taylor. I gave it to Taylor in the morning, and walked in with him to General Marshall's office and gave the report to General Marshall. I then left Marshall's office. That afternoon I called Senator Truman's office and asked that I talk to him. He couldn't see me until the next morning. I went up the next morning and he wanted to know what the hell everybody was doing over there [at Pearl Harbor, on December 7], all asleep and drunk? So, I very positively said, "No, they weren't." I said, "Possibly there were some of them that were drunk, possibly some enlisted men and possibly some of the officers. I don't know, but that would not be uncommon after a Saturday night, to be a little bit hung over on Sunday morning. But," I said, "certainly that did not include the commanders over there." He said, "I think they are derelict in their duties and they ought to be court martialed." I said, "I just don't think so, Cousin Harry." We had quite a discussion on it, and we went into the different things about what Short had done and what Kimmel had done, what I had observed as the senior aide there, and not only as a "go-fer." I didn't think I was a go-fer because I was in a position there of trust. So he may have taken it to heart. I believe he

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wrote an article before or after in *Colliers*. [Harry S. Truman, "Our Armed Forces Must Be Unified," *Colliers*, August 26, 1944.] I remember seeing a copy of that. In fact, I think I was at a concert one night reading that, and my wife nearly died because I was reading his article. But I went back and talked to him after he wrote the article.

I left him, and I may have changed his mind, I don't know. I have no idea what he thought about my...

JOHNSON: Later on, in 1945, I think Truman was quoted about the Pearl Harbor attack. They had some inquiries after the war, didn't they?

TRUMAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: Didn't he [Senator Truman] say that the blame should be spread around?

TRUMAN: Yes, and so did Short. He had had a lot of bunkers prepared, but because of the order to take anti-sabotage measures, he put them all together. It wasn't something that Harry Truman could have thought of, because Short thought of it before and was doing it. It was because of the [November 27th] message that he received from the War Department.

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JOHNSON: After this discussion with Senator Truman in his office, when was the next time that you saw him? Was he President? Was that the only visit, when he was a Senator?

TRUMAN: I don't remember seeing him while I was in the Army Ground Forces Headquarters. I might have, I'm not sure.

JOHNSON: Perhaps the next important episode involving you and Harry Truman is when he was President, when he was in Potsdam at the Conference. Is that the next important episode involving Harry Truman?

TRUMAN: Yes. And at the beginning of his second term he asked me to be his aide, on the day when he was inaugurated.

JOHNSON: Oh, in '49, January '49?

TRUMAN: In '49. In 1945 he was at Potsdam, and Churchill went back to England to get reelected, and didn't get reelected. But while he was gone, Truman came to my area, the 84th Infantry Division area. Evidently, he had told someone that he had a cousin who was chief of staff of one of the divisions, and so he came down. They first stopped at the boundary of the 3rd Armored

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Division and 84th Infantry Division. Our division commander, [Major General] Alexander R. Bolling, and I had an honor guard there for President Truman, after he left the 3rd Armored Division and came into the 84th Infantry Division's zone. After the honor guard, I rode in the car with General Bolling and Harry Vaughan to Weinheim. Weinheim is where the 84th Division's headquarters were located. We took him to where our staff quarters were, which was a beautiful home, a gorgeous home, and that was where we had lunch. General Eisenhower, Supreme Commander, was there at the luncheon as well as the Secretary of State, who had wanted to become Vice President.

JOHNSON: Jimmy Byrnes.

TRUMAN: Yes, Jimmy Byrnes. Also the Chief Justice was there at that time.

JOHNSON: Fred Vinson?

TRUMAN: Vinson, yes. Also, one of Truman's primary speech writers, or one of his advisors, was there. He was a tall thin person. And Harry Vaughan was there.

JOHNSON: Now, this was while he was at Potsdam for the Conference?

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TRUMAN: During the weekend there, when Churchill was going back for his election.

JOHNSON: I see.

TRUMAN: President Truman was not there too long. We had all of the 84th Division lined up all the way, about ten miles.

JOHNSON: Was that on the Autobahn?

TRUMAN: Well, it was right off the Autobahn.

JOHNSON: That's where all these tanks and self-propelled guns and so on were lined up?

TRUMAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: And you were part of that?

TRUMAN: Yes, that's right.

JOHNSON: And he reviewed this whole, huge line of weaponry and personnel?

TRUMAN: That's right. He came into Weinheim and there's where we had lunch. I can't remember what happened after that, but I think he went over to Mannheim and looked over there, and then some way or another I guess

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they took off, but I don't remember.

JOHNSON: Where's Mannheim from Potsdam?

TRUMAN: Oh, it's a long way; it's ten miles north of Heidelberg.

JOHNSON: Well, he had to fly down there, then.

TRUMAN: Yes, he flew and looked over the Third Armored Division, and then came to the 84th Infantry Division. After lunch with us, I remember they went to a town which was right about five miles away from Weinheim.

JOHNSON: Well, that's in the American zone there.

TRUMAN: Oh, sure. Absolutely, yes. We had just been moved back from the Elbe, 125 miles back, and that's when I asked Eisenhower about this thing. Heck, we had everything going; given another day we would have been in Berlin. And then he told me about Yalta -- not me -- but the gathering there at lunch time.

JOHNSON: The Russians did take terrific casualties, in taking Berlin.

TRUMAN: Yes, they did.

JOHNSON: A very bloody battle. Do you remember what he had

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to say to you at all?

TRUMAN: Who?

JOHNSON: President Truman. When you were with him that day? Small talk?

TRUMAN: I just can't recall. I can't recall. I know I was sitting right next to him, as far as that's concerned.

JOHNSON: I suppose that was kind of a thrill wasn't it?

TRUMAN: Oh, absolutely, thrilled to death, and proud.

JOHNSON: You probably got a little more deference than you would have had. General Eisenhower learned who you were too, right, for the first time?

TRUMAN: I don't know. I might say to you what I said to [Daniel] Holt this morning, that I briefed Eisenhower. I was on the Red team and planning team, and I briefed Eisenhower on a strategic analysis of what we ought to have all over the world. He was going over to be SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander-Europe]. I remember briefing them in the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

JOHNSON: When did you come back then to the United States, after your service in Germany in World War II?

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TRUMAN: Immediately after V-E Day we stayed there in the Weinheim area. They said the division was going to come back, and go out to the Far East. They reassigned General Bolling to be head of Special Services, and he took me along with him as his assistant to Frankfurt. I was then a colonel. So I stayed there, maybe two or three months, and I was then asked to come back to be assistant secretary of the United States Military Staff Committee in New York. There's where the five major nations were meeting, and this Military Staff Committee was the one that was taking care of that, getting military contributions from the different countries to be made available to the Security Council in the defense against Communism.

JOHNSON: So you weren't out in San Francisco to the conference.

TRUMAN: Oh, no.

JOHNSON: The 25th of April, that might have been when you met the Russians.

TRUMAN: Yes, we met the Russians.

JOHNSON: You were with the troops...

TRUMAN: Oh, yes, we went across the Elbe to meet with five

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division commanders, and later on we went even farther, made another crossing to meet two corps commanders over the Elb, Alec Bolling and me. I was the chief of staff of the division for General Bolling. I have pictures to show the meetings.

JOHNSON: That would be something. Did you go to the White House after you came back?"

TRUMAN: Oh, sure. And I went there to the United Nations [as Secretary of the U.S. delegation to the UN Military Staff Committee] in '46. I was there for two years. Kelly Turner was the head of the Navy [Representatives], and [Matthew] Ridgway was the head of the Army [Representatives]. I've forgotten who the Air Force three or four-star general was.

JOHNSON: But in the meantime, the Navy captain that I was assistant to, he was moved off to some other thing and I was moved as secretary of the United Nations group and I was there for two years. I went to the National War College. That's when Acheson was flying in from the West Coast to attend the United Nations meeting, and President Truman kept him flying up around in the air while he came over the National War College and gave me my diploma along with the rest of the War

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College class of 1948. You probably don't know that, but I have a picture of him handing me the diploma.

JOHNSON: Is that right?

TRUMAN: Yes. And I would say that's another very wonderful thing.

JOHNSON: You visited him in the Oval Office?

TRUMAN: A number of times. From New York, I'd come down there to Washington, in those two years. My wife could not move up to New York with me at the time and she was living in Washington. So when I would come down I would go over to the White House and contact him, I guess about every month or so, something like that. I mentioned to a man this morning, that that was when President Truman, Cousin Harry, mentioned the fact that he had offered support to Eisenhower to run for President, for the Democratic Party. Eisenhower turned him down. He also showed me the letter that he had written to Eisenhower. He had written that certain things would have to happen about his driver friend, or he was going to kick him [General Eisenhower] out. You probably have a letter here.

JOHNSON: He did make an issue of that [of the relationship

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between General Eisenhower and Kay Summersby].

TRUMAN: Yes, he did, very definitely. He told me about that.

JOHNSON: This was before the '48 campaign. In other words, was Harry Truman not expecting to run in '48? Was he actually offering to support General Eisenhower as a Democratic candidate in '48?

TRUMAN: I'm pretty sure of that.

JOHNSON: Would this have been in '47? Or was it the '52 campaign that he was referring to?

TRUMAN: I may be getting something mixed up. I do remember also being up at the United Nations, with Truman supporting Israel as a separate state.

JOHNSON: Was it at that time that this took place, this Truman contact with Eisenhower? May of '48 is when we recognized Israel.

TRUMAN: Well, let me get my memory straight on it. On one of my trips to Washington, Truman told me, and we talked about it. The subject of Israel was being discussed in the United Nations, and Truman said that he was going to recognize Israel. So I went back to

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New York. I didn't come down specifically to see him while I was in New York. But when I could get in to see him, why I always tried to do that.

I went back to New York and I remember that there was a reception given by General so and so of the Russian Army, who headed up the Russian delegation to the United Nations. We went to a reception that he had for some kind of a Russian holiday, or something like that. And he got me off in the corner and said, "Say, what were you doing down there in Washington on such and such a day? Were you told anything about Israel going to be recognized?" I said, "Well, how do you know where I was and what not." That made me so damn mad I could die. So I got my wife and I said, "Let's get out of here." I remember telling the President about that meeting, as soon as possible, and I didn't ever know that I was being tailed.

JOHNSON: The KGB or the NKVD, or whatever they called it?

TRUMAN: Whatever. But they knew the date and time I was in the White House and the minute I came out. They said, "You saw the President and we want to know if he told you about the recognition of Israel."

JOHNSON: But by this time, by mid-1948, as you recall, when

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we recognized Israel, he had already approached or made a contact with Eisenhower in which he offered to support him for the Democratic candidacy?

TRUMAN: I can remember it just as clearly. The date I cannot remember, but I remember the conversation with him very definitely.

JOHNSON: That implies, you know, that Truman really didn't plan to run in '48.

TRUMAN: Wasn't Eisenhower the head of Columbia University?

JOHNSON: Yes.

TRUMAN: All right, that may have been the time.

JOHNSON: He was president of Columbia University before he was chosen to command NATO forces. So you...

TRUMAN: No, I just remember that it was at some time in that era. I don't remember whether it was before or during Eisenhower's presidency of Columbia.

JOHNSON: I have a feeling that it must have been after the '48 election. I don't think there is any evidence whatsoever that Truman did not expect to run in '48.

TRUMAN: Well, it had to be when I was up in New York for

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the United Nations, and I left there to go with the class of 1948. I graduated with the class of 1949, at the National War College. So it had to be in 1948.

JOHNSON: It had to be in 1948. Well, I'll be. Yes, we don't seem to have anything in black and white on that. We need to talk to the Eisenhower people. But on inauguration day 1949, President Truman asked you to be...

TRUMAN: His acting aide for the day.

JOHNSON: Acting Aide for the day. Arranging, helping to arrange things?

TRUMAN: No. No, I was just window dressing.

JOHNSON: He just wanted you to be a part of it.

TRUMAN: I think that was it. I was on the stand there when the review and whatnot went by, and to the different parties the night before and throughout the week before.

JOHNSON: I've got some correspondence here between you and the President and, of course, quite a bit between the President and your father and with Olive. We don't actually have the time right now to elaborate on all of

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that correspondence, but I was kind of amused by a letter that your father had written to Harry Truman. Your father had been in the hospital down at...

TRUMAN: Fort Smith.

JOHNSON: Yes. And Doctor Graham, Wallace Graham, had gone down to visit with him, and so on.

TRUMAN: Hot Springs, Arkansas.

JOHNSON: Hot Springs, yes. President Truman said that your dad wrote a sentimental letter, and so I had to find it. I found, I guess, what he called the sentimental letter in which your father said he had felt so close to the family, to Harry and Vivian and Mary Jane. He felt closer to them than apparently to any other relatives. Is that the way you understood it too?

TRUMAN: Absolutely, yes. He wasn't very crazy about Mrs. Gray in the older years.

JOHNSON: You mean your father? This is his adopted mother.

TRUMAN: His adopted mother.

JOHNSON: In other words, his feelings had changed?

TRUMAN: I think so.

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JOHNSON: Well, we'll be glad to give you these for souvenirs.

TRUMAN: Thank you, that's very wonderful.

JOHNSON: Did your family visit the Trumans at their home on Delaware Street?

TRUMAN: I had a number of Sunday dinners, at noontime at Aunt Matt's place, at the farm, but I never had any meals at the Truman household on Delaware.

JOHNSON: On the farm then. Of course, we're interested in getting whatever anecdotes or...

TRUMAN: I have an hour or so to go, so no problem. Go ahead.

JOHNSON: What were the occasions that caused you to visit the farm?

TRUMAN: Well, I guess it was just one of these things that you're invited for dinner (noontime) at Aunt Matt's house. I guess she liked to have cousins and whatnot out there, and Harry and my father were very close, close friends.

JOHNSON: You're talking now about your parents, and your

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brother and your sister?

TRUMAN: No, not my brother. My brother was not alive at that time. My sister was three years older than I. I'm sure she did, but I can't remember that.

JOHNSON: Were there sometimes other cousins out there too?

TRUMAN: Oh sure, Virginia Colgan was there, and the Hornbuckles were there. Rog Colgan was there at different times. I know that Mary Jane was there practically every time I was ever there. I don't remember any specific things, like Christmas, or New Years or Thanksgiving. Just during the year at different times, we'd go out there. It wouldn't be every Sunday. And sometimes we'd go to the Hornbuckle place. I remember they were the mother and father of Virginia Colgan.

JOHNSON: Is this before you went to West Point?

TRUMAN: Oh, heck, this was when I was any age from five to ten. I never went out there after that time, because we moved away from Kansas City.

JOHNSON: Of course, Harry was farming there. Well, I guess when you first visited them, Harry was farming there.

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TRUMAN: I don't know, I can't say.

JOHNSON: Well, he didn't leave until 1917 for the Army.

TRUMAN: I guess you're correct. I don't know what he was doing.

JOHNSON: He didn't leave until April of 1917 for the service. So this was probably your first visit then, while he was still farming there.

TRUMAN: It could have been; I know he was there.

JOHNSON: When he came back, the story is that they may have lived out there about a month. But she did not want to be a farmer's wife.

TRUMAN: I see.

JOHNSON: You don't remember Bess being out there when you were there?

TRUMAN: I can't say that. This was the age from five to ten and my memory is not that good.

JOHNSON: You mentioned the meal, the menu, what they liked to usually fix for dinners out there, lunches, noonday meals. What was it they served?

TRUMAN: Fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans or some

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other vegetable, and Missouri tomatoes. I'll never forget them. And cornbread.

JOHNSON: Cornbread.

TRUMAN: Sometimes it was spinach

JOHNSON: They did not have a dairy herd, they seemed to want to avoid getting into the dairy business, although some of their neighbors were dairying. Did they talk to you at all about the farm operation?

TRUMAN: After all, I was very young. I don't know.

JOHNSON: And what kind of entertainment would there usually be.

TRUMAN: Nothing, just conversation between the different people there. Of course, I was not in the conversations. I probably was out running around with some of the other youngsters, Rog Colgan or maybe Virginia.

JOHNSON: Playing with wagons or that sort of thing?

TRUMAN: No. I can't tell, I don't know. Other than just tell you that we went out there, I cannot produce any other details.

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JOHNSON: So you were here in Kansas City then, from the time you were born until the time you left for college?

TRUMAN: Until I was ten years old.

JOHNSON: Until you were ten.

TRUMAN: We moved to Springfield at that time.

JOHNSON: You moved to Springfield in 1918?

TRUMAN: Right after my father came back from World War I. He went down there to be chief special agent for the Frisco Railroad for Southern Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas City, and Kansas, and I believe Nebraska. After he was with them for about two years, he was hired by the National Board of Fire Underwriters as a special agent for train robberies and that sort of thing in Springfield. That was when the Depression was going pretty hectic, about that time.

JOHNSON: At some time he moved back to Kansas City.

TRUMAN: Yes, he moved back there sometime after 1928 and he bought a place on Garfield. I remember coming back. My brother was about five or six years old, and I was coming back on furlough from West Point. Also, I remember visiting there in Kansas City after I

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graduated, and rather than have three and a half months vacation, I had only one month vacation because of Hoover. He had cut the pay [of new officers] to \$108 a month, which was supposed to be \$125 a month, and I made up my mind I would never vote Republican after that time. I'm sure that I wouldn't have anyway. Let's see, they then moved back to Springfield and he bought the place on Benton Boulevard, right close to Drury College.

JOHNSON: I don't think he moved back until 1952, isn't that about right?

TRUMAN: I cannot tell you. My wife and I visited them in Kansas City before they moved back to Springfield, and we visited them a couple of times after they moved back to Springfield on Benton Boulevard.

JOHNSON: Harry Truman was in the White House when you were out here visiting your parents, I suppose.

TRUMAN: Yes, that is correct.

JOHNSON: You say you didn't have meals at the house on Delaware, but you did come over to visit?

TRUMAN: That's right.

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JOHNSON: The home on Delaware.

TRUMAN: Just to visit with him, and also with Cousin Bess.

JOHNSON: Did you get well acquainted with Margaret?

TRUMAN: She was about fifteen years younger than I. I was reasonably well acquainted with her, yes.

JOHNSON: But you didn't do things together?

TRUMAN: No, because I was fifteen years older. My brother and she were more or less closer, much closer. Jim Sommers was too. He was a grand nephew of Grace Sommers, my aunt. He and Margaret hit along very nicely. They liked each other quite well.

JOHNSON: So sometimes these cousins would be visiting at the house on Delaware too.

TRUMAN: Yes. I usually went out with my father to visit them. I didn't go out with Olive, as far as that is concerned.

JOHNSON: So you remember the Truman home out here on Delaware.

TRUMAN: Oh, very vividly, yes.

JOHNSON: Did you ever stay overnight?

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TRUMAN: No.

JOHNSON: How about Mrs. Bess Wallace's mother? Do you remember her very well?

TRUMAN: Just met her but did not have a knowing, close relationship with her at all. I couldn't pick her out, I believe, if I'd see a picture of her.

JOHNSON: What was your understanding of her relationship with Harry Truman, with her son-in-law?

TRUMAN: You're asking me something I don't really know about other than by hearsay. I don't think they liked each other too well. Is that correct?

JOHNSON: Well, one of the stories is that she couldn't understand why her son-in-law was running against that "nice man," Tom Dewey. I don't know if she was Republican, but I think she had patrician, aristocratic type feelings.

TRUMAN: Yes. Certainly Mrs. Truman was well thought of as a first Lady.

JOHNSON: What were your impressions of Bess?

TRUMAN: I could just say that I thought she was very nice,

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not too talkative, as far as I was concerned. But there again, I was much younger than she.

JOHNSON: What about your mother? Let's see, your biological mother died...

TRUMAN: About 1930.

JOHNSON: Okay. Had she become a friend of Bess?

TRUMAN: I won't say they weren't friends, not bosom pals. There was just no occasion for them to get to know each other better.

JOHNSON: Do you know if Olive Truman and Bess visited together very much?

TRUMAN: I don't think Bess Truman liked Olive at all. I don't know how she abided her. I don't know how Cousin Harry did either.

JOHNSON: Did you ever stay overnight in the White House?

TRUMAN: No, I never did.

JOHNSON: But you had a tour?

TRUMAN: Oh, yes.

JOHNSON: What part of the White House did you tour?

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TRUMAN: Well, I guess I went through practically every place in there, and actually also at the Blair House when the Trumans were staying over there. They gave my wife and me a tour of that. I remember having some sort of food up in the White House before it was remodeled, and then after it was remodeled. Was it finished by the time he left the White House?

JOHNSON: Yes, around April of '52 they moved back in.

TRUMAN: Well, I remember. I know we went up and we had sandwiches or something with the President and Bess, my wife and I did. But I don't know what the occasion was.

JOHNSON: Were you a pretty good friend then of Dr. Wallace Graham?

TRUMAN: Wallace Graham? Yes, very good friend.

JOHNSON: Do you remember visiting him in his office in the White House? Did you visit him in his office in the White House?

TRH: I may have seen his office. I do not remember ever visiting with him in his office.

JOHNSON: We have a diagram of the White House which shows

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his office was on the ground floor of the White House.

TRUMAN: I was going to say I believe it was downstairs.

JOHNSON: Yes, under the State Dining Room. That's a diagram that shows the White House after it was renovated. Now, of course, during the renovation, that whole area was gutted, that whole mansion there. Were you ever there to swim in the pool?

TRUMAN: I looked at it, as I was taken around there by Matt Connelly, secretary to Harry Truman.

JOHNSON: In our earlier interview, we talked about his visit with you during the Potsdam conference, and then your services as kind of an aide there on inauguration day. When he left the White House -- that is when Eisenhower was inaugurated in January of '53 -- were you there at that time?

TRUMAN: In January of '53?

JOHNSON: Yes.

TRUMAN: I think I was in Korea.

JOHNSON: So the only inauguration that you attended was the one in '49.

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TRUMAN: That is correct. I did not attend the first one. I was in World War II at that time.

JOHNSON: Where were you on April 12, 1945, when Truman was sworn in as President?

TRUMAN: I was in Germany. As a fact of the matter, I think that we were up on the Elbe. I think we were up there until after V-E Day, May 8th.

JOHNSON: Who brought you the news? How did you find out about it?

TRUMAN: Oh, gracious, I don't know. I have no idea.

JOHNSON: Some people remember that like they remember the Kennedy assassination.

TRUMAN: Yes, the Kennedy assassination was rather something. In fact, I had a diesel train when I was Commanding General of the 7th U.S. Army Corp and we were on the train going to Hamburg. We were going to visit the U.S. Ambassador to Germany. And I used that train as a command post. I had all kinds of communications on it. We got word that President Truman had been shot. I said, "Oh, my gracious, that's really a shock." I had them call back to Stuttgart, and they said, "We just got this word here that

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President Truman had been shot." Then they came back, and said, "No, it was President Kennedy that had been shot."

JOHNSON: Where were you on November 1, 1950, when these two Puerto Rican nationalists tried to break into Blair House. Do you remember that episode at all?

TRUMAN: I was not in Washington then.

JOHNSON: We have correspondence about, well, two things. I think you probably were on the U.S.S. *Williamsburg* at one time, and then you were on a train I believe with the Trumans when they came up to Kansas City from St. Louis.

TRUMAN: Yes.

JOHNSON: You were on the *Williamsburg*, the President's yacht?

TRUMAN: Yes, for a luncheon, as I remember. I did not remember who was on there for lunch. I remember going to lunch with Cousin Harry, and I don't remember who was there. I know my wife was not. Probably some of his staff or someone of that nature. I believe on that train we dropped Margo off in St. Louis, because her home was in Webster Groves, and I came on out with them

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to Kansas City.

Another interesting thing that might be of interest to you. Talking about Korea now, and President Truman was in Kansas City after the war had started. He was at the Muehlebach Hotel.

JOHNSON: Yes.

TRUMAN: I was up there. I usually would go home and visit with my father and Olive -- he was married to Olive at that time -- and my brother was there with them also. I usually would try to be there for a day or two, and if President Truman was in Kansas City, I would drop in and say hello. It was in the evening, and Matt Connelly was there. I know Matt Connelly was there, because a call came in and Matt Connelly took it in the bedroom. Then he went out and got the President. The President called and said, "Now, Lou, you come in here too." So we got in the bedroom and Matt Connelly said, "Walton Walker has been killed in a crash over in Korea." He was the number one commander over in Korea. Connelly said, "They're asking you about a replacement for him, and they'd like to know if you, Harry Truman, would approve of Matthew Ridgway being assigned out there."

Well, as I told you before, when I was Secretary

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to the U.S. delegation on the Military Staff Committee in New York, Ridgway was the Army head and Kelley Turner was the Navy head. Ridgway was a very domineering type of an individual. I served with him before in Germany when I was chief of staff of the 84th division, and when he was a corps commander, the 18th Airborne Corps. There in New York at the UN he had his favorites and he played his favorites very much. So I wasn't a great admirer of him as far as that was concerned. I think maybe I had made certain remarks, but not too much, to President Truman about the different ones that headed the operation there in New York. So the President had talked to me about these people.

Now, he put his hand over the telephone and he said to me, "I've been asked if I would approve Ridgway going over there? What do you think of him being the commander?" I said, "I don't think that there's anyone you could choose to be a better man, as far as that is concerned, for the job over there." He was about like Patton as far as that is concerned. He was very dynamic and he really inspired the troops, even though some of them didn't particularly care for him. In the meantime, I said, "I think that of anybody that you have that I know of, he would be the one to do the

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job." So he turned to the phone and said, "I approve of his assignment to the Far East." Ridgway was sent over there to command the 8th Army.

JOHNSON: MacArthur was overall commander of American forces in the Far East. And later, after MacArthur's dismissal, Truman appointed Ridgway to take his place.

TRUMAN: I know [Lt. General James A.] VanFleet was over there, too, but that's after Ridgway was there. I served as a regimental commander under VanFleet.

JOHNSON: He was on that Greek mission I think, too, the military mission to Greece when we decided to give aid to Greece, against guerrillas. VanFleet was in charge of that military mission there.

TRUMAN: He was a good commander in Korea. Six of us were sent to Korea, six colonels to Korea, who were graduates of the National War College. We were sent to Korea to prove ourselves as to whether or not we should be promoted to Brigadier General. Let's see, Hugh Harris, Rolland Delmar -- I think three of us made it, and I don't believe the other three did. I won't say who they were.

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JOHNSON: Did Ridgway live up to expectations then?

TRUMAN: Absolutely. He did, absolutely. Turned around the morale of the troops there. Before, they had a defeatist attitude, and one division, particularly, had a defeatist attitude, from what I understand. Later on, he put another division commander in there and Ridgway relieved him. He put another commander in there and he brought the division up. Later, I was promoted to Brigadier General and sent over to the Second Infantry Division. I was Assistant Division Commander under Major General Jim Fry, who was a DSC [Distinguished Service Cross] officer, a couple of times before that, in World War II. In Korea he was a fine division commander. He was just fearless so far as that is concerned. Absolutely fearless.

JOHNSON: What did you think when your cousin, President Truman, fired MacArthur?

TRUMAN: I thought it was the right thing to do. After all, MacArthur was trying to take over the responsibilities of the President. He was not accepting the overall authority a President had over his subordinates. After all, Truman was Commander in Chief, and MacArthur just thought he was bigger than the Great Deity.

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JOHNSON: Did you feel that MacArthur was trying to save face by trying to expand the war?

TRUMAN: I think MacArthur was doing anything to make him look even greater. Selfishly, he was trying to make himself the greatest thing that ever lived.

JOHNSON: He was too egotistical?

TRUMAN: Absolutely, he was full of it. That's my opinion.

JOHNSON: Well, he was idolized pretty much by the Japanese.

TRUMAN: Oh, absolutely.

JOHNSON: That probably had something to do with inflating his ego, is that right?

TRUMAN: I'm sure of that. Well, hell no, he had that ego from the time he graduated from West Point.

JOHNSON: That goes way back.

TRUMAN: Of course, that was much before my time in the military, but my father, I think, served with or near him in World War I.

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, your father was really harsh on MacArthur.

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TRUMAN: Oh, absolutely. He didn't like him.

JOHNSON: Well, after President Truman fired MacArthur, your dad wrote a letter to him in which he referred to MacArthur as a "stupid ass."

TRUMAN: Well, I don't think my father used the proper term. I think the man was brilliant. He was a very brilliant man, but he used his brilliancy all to aggrandize himself:

JOHNSON: He used poor judgment in this case trying to defy the President, the Commander in Chief?

TRUMAN: Absolutely. No question about it.

JOHNSON: Thank you for your time, and the information.

APPENDICES

Biographical Sketch of General Louis Truman's career

Louis W. Truman was born in Kansas City, Missouri on 20 June 1908. He graduated from high school in Springfield, Missouri, in 1925, and attended Southwest Missouri State College for two years prior to entering the United States Military Academy in 1928. In May 1967, Drury College, Springfield, Missouri, honored him with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree (L.L.D.).

General Truman began his military service on 20 June 1926 by enlisting in the 140th Infantry Regiment of the Missouri National Guard, through which he received his appointment to the Military Academy. He graduated from the Academy in 1932 and was assigned to the 6th Infantry Regiment at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. His early assignments include attending the Infantry School Regular Course and Tank School Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, and duty with the 14th Armored Brigade in the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Benning.

When the Japanese launched their attack in 1941, he was Aide-de-Camp to the Commanding General, Hawaiian Department, at Pearl Harbor. IN early 1942, he returned to Staff at Headquarters Army Ground Forces in Washington, DC. In April 1944, he joined the 84th Infantry Division and served as both Chief of Staff and Assistant Division Commander with that unit in Europe during World War II. In August 1944, he was promoted to Colonel, after only twelve years commissioned service.

Between World War II and the Korean conflict, he served as Secretary of the United States Delegation to the United Nations Military Staff Committee, attended the National War College, and was a member of the Joint Strategic Plans Group on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In July 1952, he assumed command of the 223rd Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division in Korea. He later became Assistant Division Commander of the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea and was promoted to Brigadier General in March 1953.

In August 1953, he returned from Korea for his first assignment at Fort McPherson, Georgia to serve as Chief of Staff and later as Deputy Commanding General of the Third United States Army. In August 1955, he departed Fort McPherson to become the Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, Allied Forces Southern Europe, a multi-nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization military headquarters located at Naples, Italy. Upon promotion to Major General in July 1956, he was appointed Chief, United States Military Assistance Advisory Group in Pakistan and remained in that position until his return to the United States in June 1958.

After serving two years as Commanding General, 4th Infantry Division and Fort Lewis, Washington, he was reassigned to Fort Monroe, Virginia, as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans, and Training at Headquarters, United States Continental Army Command. Upon promotion to Lieutenant General in May 1962, he remained as Deputy Commander, Headquarters Continental Army Command and concurrently Commander, Joint Task Force Four. While at United States Continental Army Command, he also served as Chief of Staff to the Commander of overall operations during the Cuban crisis and later was selected to head a special military mission to the Congo during the Katanga revolution.

In September 1963, he began his last foreign service tour as Commanding General, VII United States Army Corps in Southern Germany, serving in that position until return to the United States in June 1965.

In July 1965, he returned to Fort McPherson, Georgia as the Commanding General, Third United States Army, the position from which he retires. His retirement at Fort McPherson climaxes more than thirty-five years of distinguished military service.

“Gen. Louis Truman Has Strong Ties to This Area”
Kansas City Times article, December 19, 1962

Lt. Gen. Louis W. Truman, 54, who has been chosen to head an 8-man mission to the Congo to survey the needs of United Nations forces there, was born in Kansas City and attended high school and college in Springfield, Mo.

He is a second cousin of former President Harry S. Truman and his service has ranged from combat in Europe and Korea to an advisory post at the UN

General Truman attended Woodland school before moving with his family to Springfield where he was graduated from Central high school and attended Springfield Teachers college for two years.

Son of Ralph Truman.

On his 18th birthday, he enlisted in the 140th regiment of the 35th division, which his father the late Maj. Gen. Ralph Truman (retired), commanded. His mother, Mrs. Olive L. Truman, lives at 5446 Harrison street.

His father died April 29, 27 days after it was announced President Kennedy had promoted the young Truman to lieutenant general.

While in the 140th regiment, young Truman took the entrance examination for West Point, ranking fifth in a group of about 40 applicants from Missouri. He was graduate from the academy in 1932.

General Truman has been in charge of reserve matters as deputy commander of the US Continental Army command at Ft. Monroe, Va.

In Pearl Harbor Attack

He served as an aide to Lt. Gen. Walter C. Short, US Army chief in Hawaii before World War II, and was at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked. He later went to Europe as chief of staff of the 84th division. In the Korean war he commanded an infantry regiment before being promoted to assistant commander of the 2nd infantry division.

He has served as secretary of the US delegation to the UN military staff committee, and as a member of the Pentagon's top strategic planning group. Since the Korean conflict, he has held a NATO assignment in Italy, and headed the military advisory mission in Pakistan.

He was graduated from the National War college in 1949. He holds the Silver Star and Bronze Star medals, the Legion of Honor, and other US and foreign decorations.

He is married to the former Margaret Stevenson.

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