

Q: Did your appointment as commander of ASCOM pose any difficulties for you? Essentially, you were still the chief engineer of the Southwest Pacific.

A: Yes, but my deputy, Jack Sverdrup, then became acting chief.

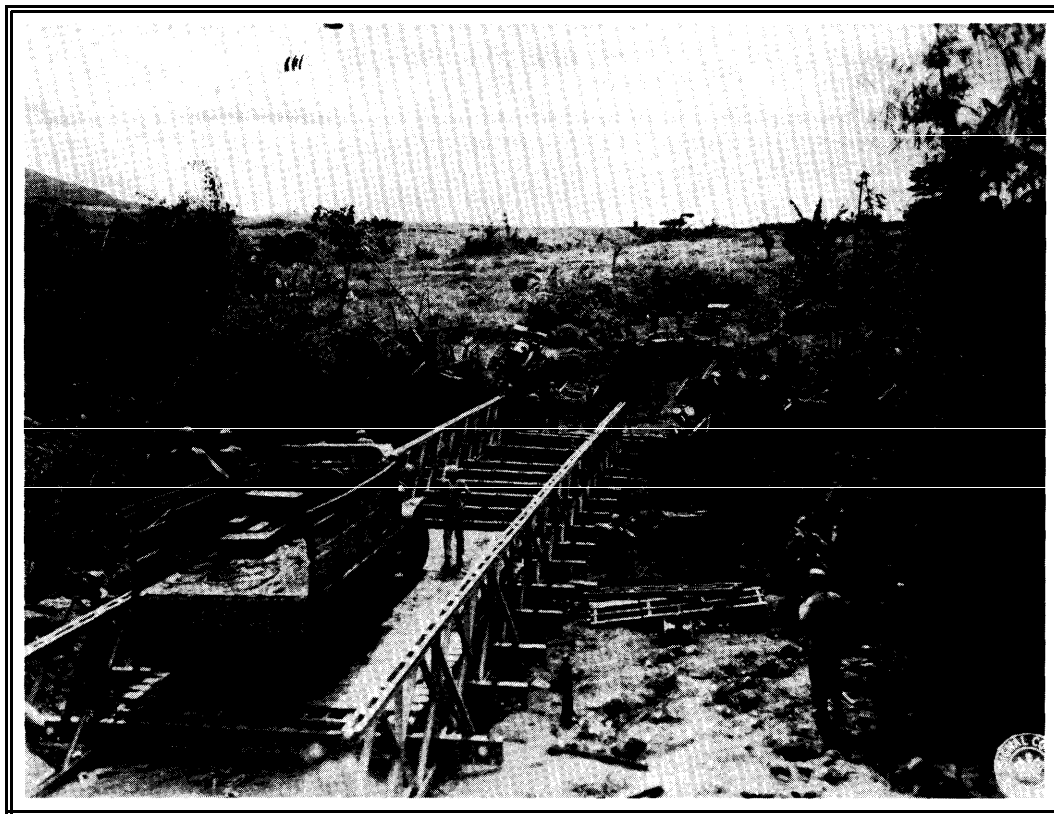
Q: He was acting chief. And yet you came under the USASOS and then Sixth Army, which nominally were under your technical direction for engineering purposes. Did that confuse the situation any?

A: No, no. It was understandable that ASCOM would operate under USASOS during the period of organization because it was necessary for me to get, in addition to our engineers, quartermaster corps, medical personnel, transportation personnel, signal personnel, and so on to handle the varied functions, the service functions of this new command. We worked with Frink readily and very well in setting up that organization prior to our transfer to Sixth Army when we were actually to join them prior to this advance, prior to these projected operations.

Leyte and Luzon Invasions

Q: For the major operations in Leyte, it appeared that you were going to have sufficient time, for possibly the first time in the theater, to develop plans for engineer operations and for base construction. Then the projected invasion date was jumped ahead two months to October. How much did this disrupt your planning?

A: Untold problems. First of all, advancing up to then was putting us right into the middle of the rainy season with all the problems that that was going to bring about. The other thing—and this was a very vital deficiency—by reason of this foolish setup that the War Department had, we had to submit the overall supply project and get it approved. Based on that approval, you requisitioned backup supplies. They were finally approved; and then they were projected to come to us in time for this Leyte invasion, which was to occur later.



Construction of a Bailey bridge over the Sawaga River at Malaybalaya, Mindanao, by Company C, 106th Engineer Combat Battalion, 31st Infantry Division, 23 May 1945.

Well, when they advanced the operation, that meant that all these critical items of equipment, supplies, and whatnot were not going to be available under our prior carefully planned time schedule. We had also planned a landing preliminary to the Leyte operation in the Mindanao area. So when we went into Leyte, we had to use what equipment or supplies that had been approved for the much smaller Mindanao operation instead of utilizing the equipment, supplies, and troops that were projected for the Leyte operation.

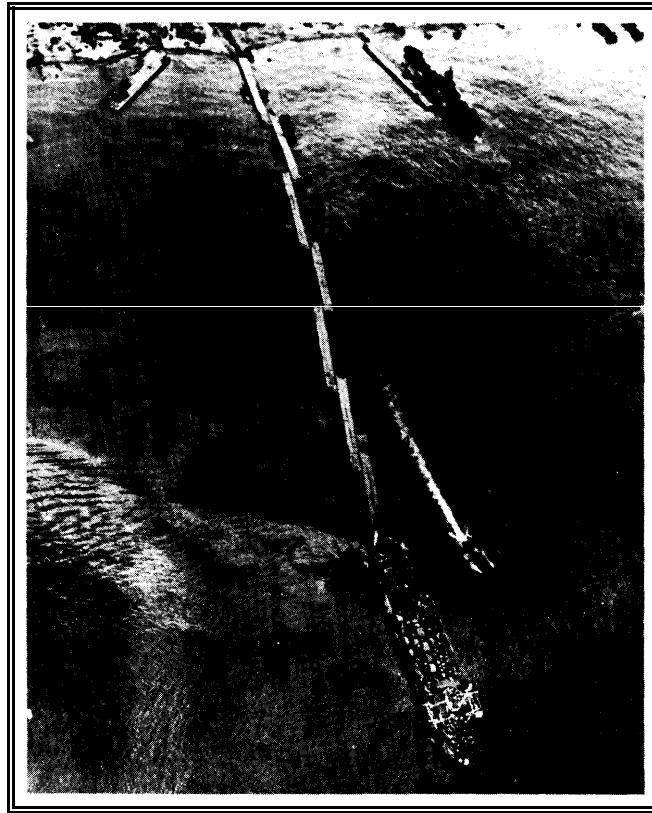
Furthermore, for example, we diverted a Central Pacific corps that was on its way for another Central Pacific operation to ours. They had equipment and supplies tailored and shiploaded for their originally projected area. But it was a discombobulation, as for example the delayed shipment of ponton cubes for floating docks, the delayed arrival of steel landing mats for airdromes and roads. It meant a shortage of certain critical supplies and

equipment that we needed because they were not to arrive until some months later for the originally projected date of those operations.



American soldiers pass supplies ashore from a landing craft, vehicle and personnel, at Leyte Island, 20 October 1944.

Another difficulty we had in the Leyte operation was that there was a much greater enemy force and greater enemy resistance than had been projected or anticipated. The Sixth Army had a much more difficult tactical operation. They were trying to take over the area against intensive enemy opposition. The combination of rain and its effect on supply roads and the tactical force demands meant that the number of engineer units that were coming in primarily to do certain ASCOM construction phases were not released by Sixth Army but kept by them in support of the tactical elements trying to keep these muddy roads open and supporting the tactical elements in a much more difficult type of situation than had been contemplated.



Aerial view of the attenuated ponton causeway spun out by the Navy's Seabees for water traffic in the invasion of Leyte Island.

Q: Leyte presented some different engineering problems to you. For the first time, you were going to have difficulties with extensive bridging support. How did you go about organizing yourself for that?

A: Actually, we didn't have in the Leyte operation any particular bridging situation. We did have, or would have, up in the Luzon operation in the advance on to Manila. But we didn't have, as I recall, any major bridging difficulties or problems on Leyte.

Q: By the time of the Leyte operation, how well developed was the coordination between the engineer special brigades and Admiral Barbey's 7th Amphibious Force?

- A: I think it was excellent. I went upon the *Blue Ridge*, on Admiral Barbey's command ship, in the Leyte operation. We worked very, very well together. I think he appreciated that and respected the work of the engineer special brigades, both in the boat echelons and on the shore units.
- Q: General Sturgis noted the GHQ allowed Fifth Air Force to select the airfield sites on Leyte rather than following what had been the routine procedure of allowing the task force engineer to select the sites with the air task force commander's concurrence. Why was this change adopted?
- A: I don't think either of those is quite literally so. I think, based on map studies and available engineer intelligence, potential air sites were indicated; and those that were indicated were approved by the Air Force. As we got in there and found that conditions were different, particularly as affected by the torrential rain situation, changes were made not just by the task force commander, but by, let's say in this case, the ASCOM commander charged with that construction. But I didn't think that that was a special situation there. We did make changes in the location of the airdromes because some of them had been selected based on aerial reconnaissance and the terrain proved not up to the standards that we thought they would be—there were drainage problems and other problems.
- Q: When you went ashore at Leyte on A-Day, did you go with MacArthur?
- A: I unfortunately did not get ashore on A-Day. It so happened that on the *Blue Ridge* I sustained a very severe and painful sacroiliac problem, a cracked vertebra. All of a sudden I was in intense pain; I couldn't stand or walk. So the medicos took me and shot me with pain-killer and put me in my bunk. This was one landing that I could not possibly miss because I had left the Philippines 2 1/2 years earlier expecting to get back in 21/2 months. So they gave me an injection of dope and taped me up. Initially, they wanted to send me back to Hollandia for x-rays and treatment. I resisted firmly. So during the initial landing I lay in my bunk with a mirror through the porthole and watched the landing.

Then later on my chief of staff had gone ashore and found a set of quarters suitable for my temporary headquarters. He came back; they rolled me over, all taped up, onto a stretcher, lowered it onto a landing craft, and we

made the landing. I was the only one that went in on a stretcher. They were taking them out on stretchers, but I went in like one of the old Chinese imperial warriors taken in a sedan chair.

Unfortunately, I was laid up for a week or more before I was able to get up and around. We had no hospital facilities there. However, the Seabees made me a corset from some canvas and some hammered-out damaged jeep springs and I wore that corset throughout the Leyte and subsequent Lingayen operation-not too comfortable, incidentally, under the high heat and humidity that prevailed.

In that connection, my chief of staff had selected this house, a rather large house. By the time they got me in the ambulance and came on up to this house there was a four-star sign over the arched entrance. I was wondering why I had gotten such rapid promotion. What had happened was that General MacArthur's aides had come by and seen this house and took it for his quarters. Well, by then there was nothing to do but to take me on in there.

So for several days I was in there in General MacArthur's headquarters. And he told Colonel Roger Egeberg, his medical aide, "Now you take care of Pat. Don't let them send him back to Hollandia and Australia, because we won't see him again." So Roger said if I were a cripple for life, I could blame it on General MacArthur because he charged Roger with taking care of me.

During that time and in those quarters, I was carrying on operations from there with my staff members. While there, my quarters were hit. You may have read about it in General MacArthur's book, where a shell went through the quarters and landed up on the roof rafters without exploding. Later a bomb landed just outside my window but fortunately just dug a big hole in the muddy earth, softened by the intense rain, and failed to explode. We had a busy time. I know that through the wall of my room, one of our own 20-millimeter anti-aircraft projectiles went through the wall, fortunately missing me. But it was an interesting time for General MacArthur and his headquarters and for me as a temporary residence until we found other quarters.

Q: Did you hear anything about the famous MacArthur debarkation from the landing ship and walk up the beach at Leyte?

A: No.

Q: There were many stories generated about that.

A: Yes, because, as I say, I wasn't there because of my injury. But I've seen pictures of it. Of course, it all happened.

Q: Is it true that they did rerun the scene until they got it correct?

A: I don't know. As I say, I wasn't there.

Q: From what you knew of him, do you think he would have done something like that?

A: It's possible. I don't think so. I know that it was his inner nature to want to be in the center of the picture and build up the MacArthur image. He was not one who was going to subordinate his actions or his personality if there was some opportunity to make it look more glamorous. He wouldn't forego that opportunity. However, I don't think he would go out and actually build up or make up such an artificial incident.

Q: That brings up another question. I think you were one of the few people who were there. Is there any truth to the famous "I shall return" statement?

A: Yes. That, of course, was down in Australia. He had a prepared message. He didn't say, "We shall return." He stressed "I shall return." I think it was a very effective thing to do because it caught world attention, and I think it sort of helped bring us all together and say, 'You're damn right we will. "

Q: Sturgis, John Elliott, and Bill Ely quickly saw after looking at the airfields selected for Fifth Air Force that the soil conditions and drainage and road situation were really impossible. They then had a conference with ASCOM

and Fifth Air Force on A +4 at which the recommendation was made to build alternative strips or to concentrate on Tacloban and Dulag. The Fifth Air Force refused and insisted that work continue on San Pablo and Buri. Were you at that conference?

A: No, but we continued on those others, but on a greatly reduced effort. We recognized that those fields were almost hopeless of construction in the time period in which they would be required.

I might say that on the Tacloban field, the Japanese had already built a short field there. But it was in the wrong direction for any extension. In order to get the proper length we had to make a major change in its direction, involving also a massive fill operation to extend it into the bay. For the first time in our operations, we had made previous arrangements to bring up a dredge. This was the first time we used a dredge to pump material and dump it on the projected extension. It involved a change in direction for the field and then putting in all this fill in order to get an airdrome of adequate length. It was a very special problem and, as I say, the first operation, I think, in which an engineer dredge was used for our operational airdrome construction.

Q: Why do you think the Fifth Air Force was so adamant about their airfield selections?

A: Well, they had approved them and they felt that those were the ones they wanted and damn it, let's go to it and get them.

Q: Apparently Colonel [later Brigadier General] David Heiman, who was responsible for some construction of the airfields, even took the extent of taking Generals Whitehead and Kenney out and showing them how bad it was, and yet that did no good either. So they were very stubborn.

A: They felt, "We want to go ahead and do it," not appreciating or recognizing the fact, too, that a lot of the engineer effort planned for airdrome and other base development and which would have been on such construction was diverted by Sixth Army in support of the tactical elements because of the difficulties the combat troops were having in trying to make headway against the very strong Japanese offense and under terrible support conditions, where

roads just became a mass of muck, requiring a massive diversion of engineer effort just to maintain the support roads for the advancing troops.

When we had this problem of airdrome construction and the fact that certain of the sites were almost impossible, we did come up with a proposal that we move Sixth Army Headquarters, which had set up its headquarters along a beach area where there was a good foundation for drainage and so on, except that one end of it faced this steep hill. But the need was so great, we finally got Sixth Army to move out, relocate their headquarters, and then we developed that airfield and developed it quickly. It was a good operating airfield except that it was restricted to a one-way approach. At the end of the runway on the land side there was a steep high hill so that planes had to come in in one direction and take off in the opposite direction, rather than be able to fly from both ends of the field.

But it served its purpose and did call for the cooperation of General Krueger and his headquarters to vacate their headquarters and set up new signal installations and so on. But it made possible an early development of an additional airdrome that worked effectively.

Q: That airfield, for my note here, was Cabanatuan and was built by Colonel Harrison. I have a hard time with those Philippine names. Tacloban came under heavy enemy air attack on A +5 as the Japanese Navy moved during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Despite these attacks, despite the landing of Navy fliers from the escort carriers that were being sunk by the Japanese, your engineers kept working on the field. Were you at or near Tacloban during that period?

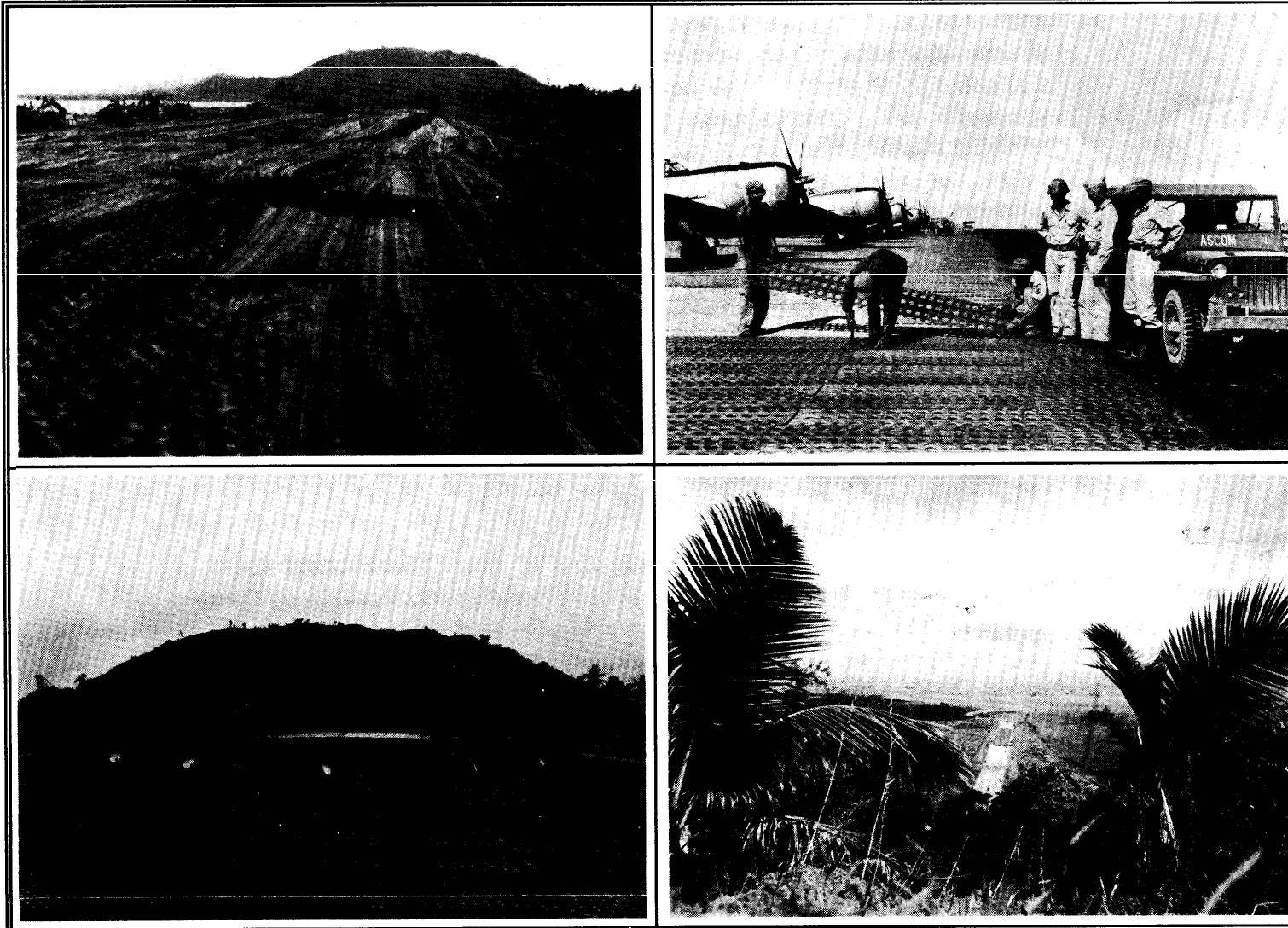
A: Yes. What had happened there, Admiral Halsey, whom I respect very well, was always eager for a fight with the Japanese. He had that characteristic more than I sensed other Navy heads had. But his primary mission was to protect the landings at Tacloban and on Leyte. But he got word that there was a Japanese task force way off to the northeast somewhere. He took his force, headed for it, and left. He was really giving up his primary mission of protection.

Well, in the meantime, there were three Japanese naval forces approaching Tacloban: one coming up through the straits there by Mindanao; another one coming down from the north; another one coming through one of the

interior straits. Fortunately, Admiral Kinkaid, with his old battleships, met this southern force as they were coming through this narrow channel and he was able to sink practically all of them [Battle of Suragao Strait]. He did a wonderful job. The Japanese force coming down south started their bombing and so on, attacking our few small escort carriers. Now if he had kept it coming for another 20 minutes, I think he could have sunk every transport that was in the bay and just would have destroyed the Leyte operation. But we sent instructions to the Navy fliers, who had taken off from their escort carriers—they had no place to land when they were sunk—we sent radio instructions to them to land on the Tacloban strip. But the Tacloban strip was not completed and in a partial stage of construction, but the Japanese apparently felt that here we had an airstrip for land-based aircraft. Considering that, or for some reason or other, they turned around and went back north. If they had kept on coming for only 20 minutes or so more, they would have destroyed our whole invasion force and our entire Leyte operation.

In the meantime, Admiral Halsey got word of this. So he turned about, rushed down as fast as he could, and he was able to hit this northern Japanese force on their withdrawal and effect major casualties. We were very fortunate that the Leyte operation was not a disaster due to Halsey's failure to comply with his primary mission instead of going off shooting s w a l l o w s .

- Q:** So you must have had some pretty anxious moments, A+5 and A+6, when you weren't too sure what was happening. Did you have a grasp of what was going on in those battles?
- A:** We had hopes. Our combat troops were having problems. The Japanese were sending down reinforcements to their land forces. As I said, we had this problem of the naval, Japanese naval attacks in which, fortunately, in the way it ended up, we had taken care of the Japanese Navy quite well. From then on it was just a matter of carrying through on strong enemy ground operations and, with great difficulties, carrying on our construction program.



This series of pictures shows the development of the critically needed Tanuan airdrome of Leyte.

Top left: Looking south. Strip site clearing and rough grading in progress. Note the hill squarely across the south approach.

***Top right:** Looking southwest. Men of the 1897th Engineer Aviation Battalion lay steel mat over base. Major General Hugh J. Casey, standing center, watches.*

***Bottom left:** Looking south. Completion of the steel mat over base. In spite of the hill, the strip was used for two-way operation for fighters.*

***Bottom right:** Looking northeast. Strip was in operation 16 December 1944.*

Q: Even before Leyte was secured you began work on the Luzon operation. How much did your familiarity with Luzon help you in your planning?

A: The fact that I knew the Philippines, and more particularly Luzon, I think was very helpful, knowing what the situation was at Lingayen Gulf and the Agno River, in the Central Plains, and also, as I say, having had a personal relationship with the Philippine forces and the Philippine civil works group.

I think all of that was helpful. One other thing, too, that we had in connection with the Luzon operation was the experience of the Leyte operation. I had gotten Colonel Herbert D. Vogel as the projected base commander for the base that we were going to establish up at Lingayen. I had him and some members of his staff working with General Wallender on Base K, observing the setup, the problems, and this and that. I think that was most helpful in preparing him for his projected assignment. Incidentally, Vogel did a very fine job on the Lingayen operation.

Q: In the Lingayen Gulf operation the selection of landing sites was extremely critical. You did a lot of study and very careful selection of the sites.

A: Well, I don't think that the selection of landing sites at Lingayen was a super-critical problem compared, for instance, to what it was down at Leyte. At Leyte we had, as usual, made our engineer intelligence studies beforehand. Our office turned out this study before the operation indicating that on Red Beach we were going to have difficult landing conditions; that we would not be able to get landing craft less than, I don't know, maybe 600, 700, 800 feet or more from the shore. In case of enemy opposition, it was going to be difficult traversing that distance from where your landing craft would be grounded. We had to assemble ponton cube ramps and so on. But up at Lingayen our studies indicated that we had a relatively smooth beach over a great expanse. I didn't remember any special problems in selecting the landing site.

Q: The problems were in the selection of the beach in respect to the area behind the beach that would restrict egress from the beach area.

A: No. Up there it was relatively open behind and over a broad area. The Japanese had made their landing there, and we made our landing at virtually the same spot.

Q: For the drive down the Central Plains toward Manila, as you mentioned previously, one of the major problems was going to be bridging.

A: One of the major problems was going to be bridges. There was very little Japanese opposition at our landing. The Japanese had withdrawn gradually, planning to make a stand at Manila. Other major enemy elements had moved up to the mountain areas around Baguio and up to the northeast. There was a threat that if we made a landing and proceeded due south they could come down from the mountain area, cut off our base and supply lines, and do a lot of damage, so that the Japanese force in the northeast created a serious tactical problem.

But going on south there was the matter of crossing streams and rivers, and with this large force moving south, there was a big requirement for bridges. In anticipation of that, we had requisitioned large quantities of Bailey bridges. Most of that bridge construction was done by the combat engineers with their divisions and under Sixth Army Headquarters direct, as they were the direct support of the advancing combat divisions. ASCOM's problem was on the development of the bases, airdromes, oil pipelines, and similar support facilities.

We did have a number of bridging problems. Some of the major bridges which we had destroyed several years earlier in the early phase of the war in opposing the original Japanese advance from Lingayen to Manila still remained destroyed. But another problem we had in connection with the repair of bridges was that our over-ambitious Air Force, in their bombing on ahead of our advancing forces, chose a lot of the bridges which we needed to cross on the way down. So one of the problems we had was that here was a beautiful bridge, but the Air Force had come along just ahead of us and destroyed it. Within hours the poor engineers had to go about rebuilding it.

Q: You wanted to mention something about General Sturgis in connection with the Lingayen operation?

A: Sam was a classmate of mine whom I knew very well. We worked together extremely well. Sam did exceedingly well on that operation, as he did on anything which he was involved in. Anything with which Sam was involved was the most important phase of the whole war effort. His mission was primary. It was more important than what anybody else was doing or had to do. He would fight for the maximum amount of engineer support or equipment or priorities, priorities of transportation. He was so persistent in it that he was successful. Sam was able to get, I think, support for Sixth Army to a greater degree than what possibly almost anybody else in a similar capacity could do. We had a good relationship with his engineer units and commanders; and his engineer section functioned as a very smooth-running machine.

Q: Due to the problems that had been encountered with the airfields on Leyte, Kenney requested special consideration for airfield construction in the Lingayen operation, even to the fact of calling a conference that included himself, you, General Krueger, and Sturgis to discuss the preparations for the airfield.

A: The ones who were primarily concerned with early airfield construction were not necessarily Kenney, but the Navy itself. The Navy had brought in their aircraft carriers to lend air support to the operation. An unfortunate situation, however, with respect to Navy Air is they do not want to risk loss of their aircraft carriers from enemy air action. The Navy had given notice that they would remain up there giving air support, I think, maybe for five or six days only, at which time land-based aircraft had to take over.

So that was Kenney's concern. We knew we had to have an airfield ready, let's say, in six days. That was when we decided that we were going to build our airstrip right on the beach area, right in Lingayen. The soil conditions were excellent. We had insisted that we had to get first priority in ship loading and unloading for steel landing mat because this was to be a steel landing mat field. That was an important phase, because usually with a task force they're concerned with getting ammunition, getting their rations, getting certain things like that unloaded first. They're not so much concerned with the things that go into engineer construction.

At that conference with General MacArthur and others, we stressed that the first priority in unloading had to be given to special ships carrying the

landing mat that we were going to utilize on this airstrip. I might add that we did build that airstrip, and on schedule. You talked about dust. I remember we used brush and so on under the landing mat to control dust. In any case, under intensive effort we did have the field ready. I don't know whether it was in five days or six days after the landing. But we had it in time, so our land aircraft were operating from there in time to relieve the Navy aircraft carriers on their projected schedule.

In that connection, we had projected another airdrome in that general vicinity which involved removal of a lot of heavy timber, trees and whatnot. It was going to be a rather delayed task. I had set up my headquarters in a small schoolhouse in a place called Mangalden, and adjacent to it was a very large flat rice paddy area. During the rainy season this whole area would just be a mass of mud and small dikes where they were raising their rice crop. But this was the dry season, and I decided to check to see what the possibilities were for an airfield. So I got some heavy equipment and moved it over various parts of the field. We found it did not sink into the ground. So we went ahead and bulldozed down all the small dikes that embraced this vast area of rice paddy and leveled it. In very short time we had prepared a landing field about 2,000 or 3,000 feet wide and 6,000 feet or more long. It was just a beautiful area for an airdrome.

To our great delight, it was stable enough so that the Marine Corps aircraft could use that as an airdrome. We'd have three or four or five or six planes take off simultaneously, and it worked effectively for the duration of the time that we needed it. If you tried to look for that maybe later during the rainy season, you wouldn't have found it for several months.

I might add an incident that happened there. One morning, as a flight of three light bombers took off, the bomb on the near plane came loose and whizzed along on the ground only a short distance from my office where I was at my desk. Fortunately, not having been dropped in flight long enough to be set for detonation on impact, it failed to explode. I then grabbed my phone, called up Colonel Jerome, the Marine air commander, and said, "Colonel, will you please add some stronger mucilage to your bomb attachments as you've just dropped a bomb here that just missed my IN basket, which is full already. Thank you." In no time flat he hopped onto his jeep and rushed over to apologize. We became good friends from then on.

Q: At Lingayen, from what I read of General Sturgis's work, you had supplies that were shipped directly from the United States to Lingayen, and you had a lot of difficulty with some of the materials you received directly from the United States, specifically pipeline supplies.

A: Yes. You wouldn't always get a tailor-made integrated shipment. You might have the fittings for the pipeline and iron for the tanks on one ship and the pipe on another. You frequently had a lot of miscellaneous equipment that was put aboard a ship, but some critical parts that were supplement to it were in some other ship someplace else. You must recognize, however, that in time of war you will not have a relatively smooth operation with everything precise. That means that you have to be prepared to accept difficulties, problems, and still work around them.

Q: In general, did the Japanese defenses in the Central Plains cause any great problems in your drive to Manila, or was it primarily the fact that they blew some bridges and they hadn't repaired the others?

A: There was no particular problem in connection with any Japanese defenses—defenses that they made prior to our advance south. There was the matter of obstacles in crossing the streams and so on where bridges had to be constructed—that is, until we got down to the strongly defended Manila area.

Q: On 13 February 1945, ASCOM was transferred to USASOS and became the Luzon Base Section, while you returned to be chief engineer of Southwest Pacific. Could you evaluate ASCOM's performance? Did it achieve generally what it had hoped for?

A: I would say generally so. As I say, ASCOM had problems at Leyte by reason of the abrupt change in plans advancing the projected invasion date by over two months, and also by the extreme rain conditions and the fact that our combat troops were held up, both by weather and intense enemy opposition, such that there was a great diversion of engineer effort that was supposed to go into base construction for combat support.

Up at Lingayen, where the weather conditions were more favorable, I think everything went along extremely smoothly. We were able to get in readily,

build the supporting airdromes, build the supporting base, setup supplies, arrange for forward movement of supplies and so on, in support of the advance of the Sixth Army; also in support of the Sixth Army elements that were operating against the large enemy forces in the northeast toward the Baguio area and also the local units that were requiring direct ASCOM or base support. In our transition we already had Base M [Manila] all set and organized. So it was turned over to Vogel and USASOS, and the turnover and subsequent operation went along quite smoothly.

Q: Do you have any explanation at all for what was apparently the very amateurish use of mines by the Japanese? They didn't really present any problems at all in delaying your advance.

A: No major problems. It could have been due to shortage of them for the rather extensive area involved or because they were moving out in such haste. I do know, however, that in a carefully prepared defensive position, such as in the jungles, where they had time to prepare, they did a very good job in connection with obstacles and booby-traps and things like that, as well as in location of their machine guns and utilizing cover.

Q: Did you accompany MacArthur on his return to Manila?

A: No, I actually got into Manila well ahead of him. I wanted to see what the problems were with our tactical forces as well as to ensure that our ASCOM logistic support to them was functioning. First I went up to observe the tactical forces operating in the mountainous northeast area. General Krueger found me there and he was quite stem wondering "what in the hell" I was doing up there. He told me I was supposed to be back nearer my headquarters. He had arrived there with a platoon of troops as his protective guard, which routinely accompanied him. Of course, all I had was my own small jeep and driver.

Later, as we were advancing on down to Manila, I drove down and joined the 1st Cav [1st Cavalry Division] in its advance down Dewey Boulevard. I arrived while we were retaking the Army-Navy Club and entered it right after we had taken it. The number of Japanese dead was an index of their strong defense. Then we had the problem of capturing the Manila Hotel and the intervening area against continued strong enemy resistance. So in

answer to your question, I was down there before rather than with MacArthur.

Q: Was General MacArthur disappointed at what had happened to his former headquarters? Apparently he had lost a great deal when he got back.

A: I don't think he was overly concerned about that. That was just one relatively minor element. His former headquarters were comparatively small. This small structure was built on the old stone wall there at 1 Cane Victoria. It was a very modest setup. And the loss of that and its contents was relatively nothing.



Major General Hugh J. Casey discusses the rebuilding of Manila City Hall with Sergeant Hugh D. Mason, 1879th Aviation Battalion, 23 March 1945.

I think, however, that he and all of us were disturbed at the tremendous amount of destruction in Manila, not just the demolitions that the Japanese had performed but also what later happened from the destruction our own troops did. We brought up tanks and artillery, blasting into the public buildings, the Manila public buildings where the Japanese had holed up and were making their final stand. We had to go in and blast them out. Loss of structures is less than the loss of lives.

Q: Could you tell the story of your personal papers from the time you were engineer of the Army Forces Far East in 1942 and you had them buried?

A: I didn't have them buried prior to my departure. When we left, I left them and all other files at our engineer headquarters there. But when it came time for the surrender, the staff that we had left took our principal papers and

records that we had in the Engineer Section, and they took them out and concealed them in a garbage can and put them in a small cave on one of the roads.

Later on, when we got to Manila, we freed the prisoners who had been there. I found notes from Major Kircher, who had been one of my assistants, and also from Major Bill Gay, both very outstanding officers who were killed when the ships taking them and other prisoners from Manila to Japan were bombed, unfortunately by our own American aircraft. But they had left pencil notes for me, which I still have, relating where they had hidden certain records. So I sent a small task force out and we were able to recover them. They were the ones that secured them.

Q: The clearing of Luzon and the rest of the Philippine Islands took some months. But most of the significant engineering problems were in the rehabilitation of the islands and the development of a base for the coming attack against Japan.

A: As I say, Manila was a wreck. The water supply had been destroyed. The water lines were all shattered. When, for instance, during the reconstruction we repaired one section of the water distribution system and built up pressure, that in turn could create more breaks in some other parts. It was a long, arduous task to rebuild all of the utilities.

There was also the problem of clearing out all the debris, even before rehabilitating or constructing headquarters buildings and depots. There was a problem with revamping Clark Field in central Luzon, and also the other airdromes around Manila and elsewhere.

Engineer Organization in the Southwest Pacific Area

One interesting thing, as I said before, I had built the Caliraya Hydroelectric Project in my 1937-40 tour as engineer adviser to the Commonwealth government. And shortly after war broke out—at that time I was chief engineer, GHQ—I was the one that had to destroy it prior to the Japanese advance on Manila. Now that didn't mean destroy it, but to disable it from operation, because we were sure, at that time, that we'd just be out of there