

As I had indicated to General Kenney during the war (and approved by General MacArthur), we wanted to have a centralized construction force that concentrated on whatever phase of construction, air or other, was most important; but that, as and when airdromes were completed and insofar as the maintenance phase of those airdromes was concerned, it would be our policy to allocate aviation engineer units or other units under their direct control for such maintenance responsibility.

Nonelection for Chief of Engineers

Q: What were your relations like with Raymond Wheeler, who was Chief of Engineers after the war?

A: They were excellent. I might tell a little story indicative of that relationship, indicative of such a relationship. I had known General Wheeler when he was a district engineer on civil works duty and I was in the Chief's Office. I'd also known of his excellent work during the war in the Southeast Asia Command. We'd had one or two joint conferences during the war.

But, indicative apparently of his feelings with regard to me, when he was about to retire as Chief of Engineers he wrote me a personal handwritten letter saying that he wanted me as his successor. He said that he felt that President Truman was favoring General Pick [Brigadier General Lewis A. Pick]. General Pick was Missouri River Division Engineer at that time, and with Truman having come from Missouri there was a close relationship between him and the contractors there pressing for Pick. I, of course, was doing nothing nor would I do anything to seek that office. In any case, Truman was President and wanted Pick. Wheeler wrote to me that he was going to defer his retirement and continue on duty as he expected that Truman was not going to be reelected, as everybody did; and that after Truman's successor came in, then he would retire. He thought that I then would be selected as Chief as the choice of the War Department.

Of course, Truman was reelected. Harry Vaughn, who was Truman's principal aide in the White House, served out in the Southwest Pacific. But he had been relieved and sent home by MacArthur, and he held a rather bitter hostility to MacArthur because of that. I think he personally wanted

to be sure that nobody of MacArthur's group was going to be Chief of Engineers, and he particularly wanted Pick.

As I understand it, the board of officers submitting recommendations submitted my name at the top of the list, along with several others; and Pick's name was not on it. It was sent back by Truman with directions to include Pick.

After Truman's surprise reelection, I received word from "Spec" Wheeler that I was being ordered to Washington for conference. So I took references on several matters of engineering concern with me. When I got there, he told me of this situation. He wanted me to be Chief. He said he had arranged an appointment with General Bradley, then Chief of Staff; then with Kenneth Royall, the Secretary of the Army; and then with the President. That I was to meet them, I assume in connection with having them see who I was as potential Chief.

I did meet with General Bradley. He told me the same story, that the Army wanted me as Chief and not Pick and had therefore set up these appointments with the Secretary of the Army and the President. I saw Secretary Royall and he told me the same thing. He said he'd set up an appointment for me with President Truman. This was only a few days after Truman's reelection. I had a very fine meeting alone with President Truman, who asked about the situation out in the Pacific. Of course, I made no mention at all about the Chief of Engineers appointment because I, unlike others, had not been actively seeking it. I'd have been highly pleased and honored if I had been so designated. We had a very pleasant conference. He inquired about things out in the Pacific and sent greetings to General MacArthur through me, and after 20 minutes or so we ended the conference. I proceeded with my other functions and duties and conferences in Washington and returned to the Pacific. Shortly after that Pick was appointed Chief of Engineers.

Q: I think the universal opinion is that the engineers lost. General Pick is certainly not considered to have been very good.

A: I didn't think he was.

Q: After Pick's appointment, then you decided to retire. Did General MacArthur try to convince you to stay on?

A: No. He did try to convince me on one thing. Just prior to our departure, he had Mrs. Casey and me over to luncheon. Just about that same time I received a cable from the Indian government making a very, very fine offer for me to head up their Damodar Valley Project. It was very similar in size and scope to our TVA program—construction of dams for power and irrigation and so on. They offered me a very fine retainer, living quarters and staff, car, pension, and so on. They wanted me to proceed at their expense down to India for a conference on it.

But here we were, all packed up. Our household goods were on the transport. We were getting ready to leave the next day. He said, 'Pat, go down there and talk to them. You can't lose anything.' Then he said, 'Though you won't get on the transport, I'll send you on the *Bataan* (his plane) over to Hawaii and you can catch the transport there. You have nothing to lose.' But I'd been out in the Pacific for 11 years, so I felt that it was time to get back to US terra firma and see my family. My mother was ailing; so I declined and did not go.

Shortly after my return I was sent over as the American delegate to the Permanent International Association of Navigation Congresses [PIANC] to their session in Portugal. As representative there, I attended those sessions and then made a tour through North Africa and Europe, observing various engineer activities there prior to my return to the States for duty as division engineer of the Ohio River Division. It was not what I thought then was the ideal appointment, but I was ready to accept it and proceeded there.

I was there only a short time when I received several enticing offers for outside employment, so I decided to retire from the service and get into civilian activity.

Observations on Douglas MacArthur

Q: When you were in Japan during the early postwar years in the occupation, you got to see at first hand the impact of General MacArthur on the people