CHAPTER IX

The Philippines

Q: In June of 1945 (I don't have the exact date), I think, you were given a new assignment to be the G-3 of the Army Forces Western Pacific.

A: That's right. There were many shifts coming about. There were a lot of people coming back from Europe and they needed places for them. We also needed to step up the size of our forces in the Philippines for the assault on Japan. Consequently a lot of us who hadn't gotten out to the war in Europe, at least on a permanent change of station, were assigned to the Pacific. I was one of those and, as I say, I was assigned as G-3. The Army Forces Western Pacific were the forces that really were to remain in the Philippines after preparing for and supporting the invasion of Japan, which, of course, was to be made by the old and new divisions which were being assigned to General Kruger's Sixth and General Eichelberger's Eighth Armies. These were the assault armies. I think it was probably quite natural that I would go over as the G-3 of AFWP forces since the commanding general assigned was General W. D. Styer, who had been General Somervell's Chief Of Staff all during the war. Consequently I reported normally to Styer as G-3 or Director of Training of the Army Service Forces. So when he went to the Pacific I went over on his staff. I lived in Manila; the war was still not over. There was scattered fighting in several of the islands and still quite a bit of it in the Baguio area, in the northern part of Luzon. That struggle didn't end until probably the middle of July -- something like that. Then there were sporadic little groups . . . you know, the diehards who wouldn't give up, who were shooting here and there. They hung onto the Baguio area pretty tightly. But, in any event, Manila was terribly shot up. We hadn't been back over three or four months and Manila was badly destroyed. General Styer asked me to live with him.

One of the tasks I didn't mention in my mission to Europe and Africa. I made a fairly extensive study of the operations of the port and base at Oran, which was one major port in North Africa. To a lesser degree, I surveyed operations in the Port of Naples in Italy. Consequently, I had absorbed considerable knowledge about the Transportation Corps and the Technical Services, their operations and training, whatever

their functions were. When I lived with General Styer he was very unhappy about the operations of the Port of Manila. It was in very bad shape. We knew it had to be built up to a capacity of 10,000 and preferably 20,000 tons a day. Only three piers were in full operation, including a temporary one of Quonset cubes, those heavy but useful Navy steel cubes. The harbor of Manila was filled with over 100, mostly Japanese, cargo ships half out of water that had been sunk by bombers. A number of them were American, but there were over a hundred -- and we're talking anywhere from 6,000- to 15,000-ton ships. Wherever you looked, there was another hulk half out of water. Attached to the port was a naval officer named Commodore Sullivan, whose business in civilian life was ship salvage. Sullivan was attached to the port to help clean up this harbor, but the harbor operations were not going well. The individual in overall charge, whom I met on two or three occasions, didn't seem to me to be devoting much time to really running the base. He was sort of running the people who were running the base, but all he was doing was listening to them. I don't think he was giving them much direction, if I do say so. I don't want to be overly critical, but, as an example, I went into his office one day while he was still in charge. I was just looking over the port at the time, and he said, "Sit down, I'll be with you in a few minutes." Well, I found out that what he was doing daily was to sign something in the neighborhood of 150 traffic violations by soldiers in Manila that had been made a matter of summary court-martials. I said to him, "How in the hell do you have time to do that sort of thing and still run this port and the depots and base areas around it?" "Well", he said, "I don't know, that's easy," or something of the sort. But it wasn't so easy, and Styer was very unhappy with him. General Styer, several times after dinner in the evening would say, "What are you doing tonight, Art? Let's drive down through the port." Well, we'd drive down through the port, and I guess I was getting myself in the position of the guy who criticized the mess, because he'd say, "What about this?" I'd make some answer which I thought was appropriate and which did have validity. Finally one day he called me in and he said, "You know I got you over here to be my G-3, and you can have that job as long as you want it. But you have frequently said how you would enjoy a command. I've got to do something about that goddamn port. Would you take command of the port?" "Well," I said, "General, I'm here to serve you in any way you want.

Yes, I'll take command of the port. I know what it's going to be, because General MacArthur and his staff ride through it every morning on their way to work, you ride through it every morning on your way to work and your staff does, but if you want me to take it, I'll take it." He said, "All right, it's yours." I guess I was asking for something, and I got it. It was really intriguing, but we did get the job done. I don't say it was a perfect job, and I caught as much hell as you would expect from all of these people who had authority and were passing through or by the fringes of Base X, Manila. There were fantastic problems involved and it was challenging to solve them.

I commanded that port and all depots and facilities in the Manila area -- designated as Base X, Manila -- from late July to the end of the year and then served on the War Crimes Tribunal. I only stayed in the Philippines nine months, but it was really a tremendous experience. We had to greatly expand the base and we were in the midst of the rainy season. The forces I had under me totalled about 300,000 men -- 88,000 American troops, 150,000 Filipinos and 60,000 Japanese prisoners. This constituted quite a force to keep busily engaged. I had some excellent commanders and excellent men on the staff and we got a lot done. There were wartime problems and we got wartime results, but it worked.

Truck transportation was a big problem. We had a few heavy trucks, only a few, and Styer immediately wired Somervell in Washington who immediately sent over a shipload of 100 to 200 heavy tractors and trailers, because we needed something heavier than our 2.5- and 5-ton trucks. They were operated seven days a week, 24 hours a day, in two 12-hour shifts, by negros, Filipinos or white drivers. They had their assigned drivers maybe on one shift, seven days a week, but then somebody else -- a Filipino or another soldier or somebody -- drove the other shifts. To hold anybody to even the responsibility for first-echelon maintenance became damn near impossible. In addition to that, these were all Class C trucks; in other words, they'd all come up from the Islands -- maybe Australia -- and most of them were in pitiful shape. When I took over the truck fleet, very few of the six-by-sixes -- the 2 1/2 ton trucks -- had dual wheels on them because it was "too much trouble" to fix a flat tire. What had happened was that all the duals disappeared. Where did they disappear to? Manila was

a shambles. We really destroyed that city -- we had to: it was a building-by-building job to knock the Japanese (mostly Navy) out of there, with the results that you had shards, pieces of mortar shells and artillery, all over the place. You couldn't go a mile on any road without getting a flat tire. The simple answer for the driver, as long as he had six wheels, was to chuck the four duals when wheels went flat. They got rolled off into the rice paddies by the side of the road and couldn't even be seen. I finally used L-5 planes (We didn't have helicopters in those days.) flying as low as they could spotting these wheels out in the rice paddies that couldn't be seen from the road and reporting back to trucks on the road, the pilot talking to the truck driver with a walkie-talkie. This was a hell of a job.

Finally what we had to do was this. I took one Quartermaster Service Company (200 men) and made it a Truck Repair Company. At the entrance to the port, when trucks came into the port, any that didn't have all ten wheels and all ten tires on it were immediately stopped. They put on other wheels and tires and, if you had flats, they repaired them. Now this was 200 men who did nothing except repair tires; jack them up and put then on. Later we shifted to Filipinos. The only way I could get proper truck maintenance was this: I had one gate where trucks came into the port -- maybe two; I 've forgotten. But in any event, I had control at these gates. Every truck had to be serviced one day a week; and every truck was serviced on a particular day of the week and worked seven days a week. Now, if this is Tuesday; and you're to be serviced on Tuesday when you come in, I see that you've got a white dot on your front bumper. You're siphoned over here, and you go through complete first- and second-echelon maintenance. You don't do anything else until you get serviced, and when you go out you have been serviced and there's a red dot painted on the front bumper. So next Tuesday you'll be nailed if you show a red dot. The next week you may go out with a blue dot, and somebody else has got a square or a triangle or two squares or a vertical line or two vertical lines or a horizonal line for other days of the week. Well, every truck did get serviced once a week, first- and second-echelon maintenance; that I could be sure of, and they had all their tires. That's just one example of the damn problems you run into. I had 8,000 people in Ordnance, and I don't know how many I had cannibalizing old trucks and vehicles to salvage

parts. The greatest work gang I had on that work were Japanese prisoners. They did all of the cannibalization of old trucks, and did a great job of it. The main problem was to keep Filipinos off their backs.

Q: About the same time that you're talking about the damage to the city because we had to fight our way through it, you received a letter from a fellow by the name of E. J. Morro; he was the President of Morro Electric Company. He was complaining that the U.S. troops were tearing up the streets of Manila. He was an American who had been over there. He was ashamed; he thought this was terrible. I don't know if you recall it, but your letter set him straight. You pointed out that we were supplying water and oil and everything that was really needed, and that in time the repairs are going to be made. I thought it was interesting to see an American who had been interned over there complaining to the Americans because we had caused damage to free them. It's very strange. I don't know if you had a lot of that type.

A: No, I don't think a lot, but you're always surprised with some people. Of course, men running American industries started returning and they had nothing whatsoever. These were businessmen who had been there before the war whether they were in copra or hemp or sugar. I reorganized one of the hospitals which was no longer needed as a hospital because the war was over, and we had to supply the American businessmen everything when he came in. This went right down to jeeps, food, and shelter. We did it and they had a hell of a lot to be grateful for, believe me, because they were well taken care of.

Q: I was interested in some of your responsibilities, one of them being to get two breweries back in operation, San Miguel and Balintowoc Brewery; I think you were "Mr. Brewery" then.

A: That's right. The Balintowoc Brewery was one that I think the Japanese had started and somebody wanted that put in shape. It was located in the northern part of Manila. The other brewery was the San Miguel and, of course, this was owned by a Filipino from one of the old grandee families and the wealthiest man in the Philippines. There were a lot of wealthy ones, but this was Colonel Andres Soriano. Soriano was a great friend of General MacArthur, and he had been taken out of the Philippines with MacArthur. He was a

very valuable man to have as a contact back to the Philippines. There were others of that group like Pete Grimm, an American who helped to run the port, and people of that sort. Soriano was one of them, and he wanted to put his brewery back in shape. At that time, the brewery provided the only refrigeration available for all American perishables. We were starting to get in some of the portable and prefabricated ice boxes or refrigerators that came in a couple of sizes: 1,800 cubic feet, which is about as big as this room, and 4,200 cubic feet. They all operated by separate compressors and air conditioners. You'd see 50 of them in a row, or on two sides of a street; we built up to 700,000-cubic-foot capacity eventually. Until October, however, we depended on the San Miguel brewery for ice, reconstituted milk, all soft drinks, and for ice cream. I'd met Andres Soriano when I was in Brisbane, Australia, on the amphibian mission in November 1942, so we knew each other pleasantly. I'd been in command of the base for maybe a week in early August, and things were happening fast. Soriano called me up one day and he said, "General, do you remember me? I'm Colonel Andres Soriano." I said, "Of course, I do. I remember you back in Lennon's Hotel in Brisbane, but I haven't seen you here yet." And he said, "Well, I'm here. Do you know that I own the San Miguel Brewery?" I said, "Yes, I do, and I don't know what we'd do without it, because it's really our only source here yet for ice and ice cream and reconstituted milk and things of that sort." (This was before they asked us to restore the brewery division.) He said, "General, could you do me a favor?", and I said, "I don't know, I'll try." He said, "I don't have an automatic ice box in my home, and I'm back living there now. Could I get 50 pounds of ice per day?" "Well," I said, "That doesn't sound too unreasonable for the man that owns the brewery." He said, "You know, you've got that lieutenant up there, so nobody can get anything out of him." I said, "That's great. That's the kind of lieutenant I want running that place. But in your case, I'm giving him a slip that will entitle you to a 100 pounds of ice per day. At least the owner of the establishment should get that much." He was tickled to death. Then they went after this brewery rebuild to get the brewery operating to provide beer for the troops. At the time, we had beer running out of our ears. We had shiploads of beer that were being rolled up from the South Pacific, Southwest Pacific, or coming from the

States. At that time, there were 900,000 cases (Yes, that's right.) piled 40 feet high along the south end of Deweyr Boulevard.

I got two cases from the Manila Times every year at Christmas for many years. I still have some friends over there. I used to get fine cigars for years -- because I helped to get them back into the tobacco business up around the Cagayan Valley to the north -- until I stopped smoking.

The pressures eased after September 2 when the Japanese surrendered. There was still much to be done, but the pressures were certainly less than when we thought we were going to have an invasion force land on Kyushu in November. It would interest you to know, as an indication of what we thought the casualties would be, that through prefabs and other construction, our hospital facilities for handling casualties in the Manila area were 37,500 beds. This is besides air evacuation, ship evacuation, or facilities in Okinawa -- 37,500 beds. When people tell me about the terrors of the atom bomb -- and it was terrible -- it saved us 500,000 lives, I'm sure; 500,000 casualties.

Base X was charged with completely re-equipping the Sixth and Eighth Armies before they set off on the invasion. When the armistice occurred in September, MacArthur flew to Tokyo and all his troops followed him right in by ship; they were freshly equipped with everything new, including trucks. We had 30,000 new 2.5-ton trucks to equip our forces going into Japan and Korea, where the 24th Corps went in for occupation. We had over 5 million tons of supplies in our depots; the quantities were fantastic.

Our depots were limited somewhat by the roads. We had to go out into the hinterlands, and we developed the land. Much of the work was in the rainy season. I've seen a D-8 tractor pulling a 2.5-ton truck through the mud, which is not good for the D-8 and it certainly isn't good for the truck. I have seen an acre of cases of mosquito repellent set in the mud, and then having to be three deep as it sank in the mud in order to make a platform to put other items on that had to be kept in the dry.

Q: You must have had a tremendous amount of pilferage.

A: Yes, we did. It got to the point where you could lose whole trucks. . . . We had men killed driving trucks. We used guards on trucks, and some were killed. There was always a tendency to hijack trucks. We took every precaution we could; this was particularly true with post exchange items and perishables, particularly meats.

Q: Was there any recognition at the time of the Huk problem starting to rear its head.

A: Yes, up north around Angeles. But I guess we had too many things on our mind to think that was a major problem. At the same time, you see, we were beginning to reconstitute the Philippines Army.

Q: This being your first large command, I could imagine it was quite a headache.

A: Well, it was in a way, but I got an early start. I told you about sweating it out with at least working direction of some 225,000 people back in New York back in 1935. These are the opportunities that begin to get you organized so that you can make decisions, establish broad-gauge policy, get organized and still decentralize, and develop better judgment in picking your people. It all fell into place rather nicely. This is not belittling the difficulties; there were plenty of them in this regard.

We went over to Corregidor and made quite a study of it. We went into some of the old fortress and the tunnel. When we entered we still found some food and medical supplies and ammunition. Off the north dock of Corregidor was the spot where all the silver from the Philippines Bank had been dumped; this was a lot of money. Commodore Sullivan and his salvage people were salvaging that silver. I remember when I took over from my predecessor he had a box of silver on his desk. I said, "What are all those pieces of silver?" He said, "Take a handful. This is some that we dug up from Manila Bay." Of course, it wasn't his to give away. We found very loose handling of finances. For instance, I hate to say it, but our Finance Officer shot himself after a while over there. He exercised no control over what he was doing -- no security, no guards -- and I guess he found himself in a bad way after the Inspector General got after him. One interesting note, since we mentioned money. We found that inside the Philippine banks, the records, funds, and whatever else was in them had

never been disturbed by the Japanese. Isn't that amazing? It is absolutely amazing. They are ruthless on the battlefield -- there is no question about that -- but maybe we are too much the other way.

After the war ended we helped with the rebuilding of Baguio, which the Japanese hadn't damaged much, and it became a delightful place for the men to go on R&R. Then we rebuilt the Army-Navy Club. Both officers and enlisted men had excellent clubs in Manila, particularly after the armistice in September. There weren't many difficulties in that connection. One of the first things we faced, of course, as the war ended was a mission from Washington. We had some senators and others who came over to investigate reports that we were throwing away property and doing things of this sort, which didn't turn out to be anything too serious. We always had a few -- and you always will have -- disgruntled people. Some of them were causing us a tremendous amount of difficulty when this "Send the Boys Home" hysteria hit. They would be sent home with a certain number of points, and we suddenly found some of these men -- and I'm including officers now -- who figured three days ahead when they would have the necessary points and on that day they disappeared. They hadn't turned their company over to anybody, just walked out and got on a boat somehow. You can't imagine the breakdown in discipline caused by this hysteria in the States. It was very hard to prevent, but we did our best. But it was also promoted and abetted by Communists and other dissidents who were anxious to do anything that would break down discipline.

I know some of these false claims that were made caused congressional investigators and senators concern, but seldom turned up anything substantial. Then we were visited by Mr. McKabe, who was head of the Federal Liquidation Commission, the FLC. The job of the organization was to dispose of the fantastic amount of equipment promptly; a great deal of it was sent to China and I'm sure it has been shot back at us. They have been moving a lot of Communist armies around in these trucks for years, bailing-wire jobs to keep them going. An awful lot of equipment went to China. Of course, we forwarded a lot to be stockpiled for the occupation forces that we saw were going to be in Japan for a long time and also to the 24th Corps that went into Korea.

I remember one of the interesting items that we had to dispose of. We had 8,000 cases of bonded 12-year-old bourbon whiskey. That was a great question -- how to handle that as a surplus, particularly since we had nothing except local brew and wines and some Tori, which is a lousy type of Japanese artificial scotch. The question was how to get our hands and the Army's hands on that bourbon; it was all bourbon whiskey for hospitals. It was finally worked this way: we had plenty of money in the Army-Navy Club in Manila (and from clubs all the way back to Australia), so the Army-Navy Club of Manila bought this bourbon -- 8,000 cases, 96,000 bottles -- for a dollar a bottle. We wrote the check for $96,000 to the government, but we only got it with the understanding that at least 50 percent of it would go to MacArthur. Forty percent of it would go to Japan, 20 percent would go to Korea, 20 percent of it would go to our troops in the Philippines, and 20 percent was the share that the Army-Navy Club got out of it. This took care of everything, at least on the initial ration.

Q: General, I know you were given additional responsibilities while you were the Base X commander, and I believe you were assigned to a military commission to bring to trial war criminals. One distinguished person that the commission tried was General Homma. I would like to read to you excerpts from a letter that you wrote back in 12 February 1946 to Colonel Harry Hoskins. You said that you finished the Homma trial yesterday and that you are glad it is over. I wrote this down; I think this will be a good introduction: "I still have a hard time deciding how high up a man can actually be held responsible to the extent of demanding his life for the errors of men in the lower echelons, particularly when they are the product of a civilization -- or rather of barbarism -- that had educated them to the belief that life is relatively worthless. However, his pound of flesh will be taken and perhaps, for purposes which escape me at the present time, let us hope it is for the best." That was written in February 1946, the day the trial was over. I know that your feelings have not changed but I would like to go back and talk about the tribunal. I'd like you to describe your duties there, perhaps some other individuals that came before it, and what were your feelings about this case.

A: To me this was a very unpleasant type of duty. Before the Homma case, we tried three or four Japanese officers who had related responsibilities on two or

three of the Central Islands of the Phillipines. They were being charged with the deaths of two or three American airmen who had had to parachute to safety when their planes were destroyed during an air attack. This raised the question as to how many echelons above the man actually committing the crime were seniors responsible, or what do proximity and distance and knowledge have to do with it. For instance, the overall commander in the Central Islands was on a different island than the commander on the island where these airmen were unquestionably tortured and/or killed. There was no evidence of any order that he had issued. Of course, orders could have been issued, sub-rosa, to kill or torture them. On the other hand, there was no evidence to prove that anything of this sort had been done or that the action went beyond the local commander condoning the action of two or three civilians on his island who said, "This is the hated enemy; let's get rid of them." The background raised a lot of discussion and concern. Our War Crimes Tribunal for the early trials consisted of Major General Basilio Valdes as President and Brigadier Generals Bob Gard, Warren McKnight, and myself as members. Major General Basilio Valdez was a noted surgeon in Manila from one of the really outstanding old Spanish families. He also was the Chief of Staff of the Philippine Army under MacArthur despite the fact that he was a surgeon primarily. He was a marvelous man and a good friend of mine for many years. Being next senior in rank, I served initially as the law member, so this court first tried the Japanese colonels and majors.

The temper of the times was such that emotions ran high and sometimes, it seemed to me, superseded the use of reason and judgment. I was troubled by MacArthur's instructions, which were presented by the prosecution, the Judge Advocate. I'm sorry I don't have a copy of them, but these instructions really said that circumstantial and hearsay evidence may be admitted if you run short of sound evidence. This bothered me and others, but I can only speak for myself in this regard. The result was that during some of the early stages of the colonels' trials, I ruled against the admission of hearsay evidence. I soon found out that this was being reported back to headquarters. Then, without a complaint or a ruling against me -- which would have been unethical for a higher command to take exception to a member of a court's actions -- the policy was suddenly changed so that the law member would be the president of the

court. The president of the court was General Valdes in these early trials, of course. So Valdes became the law member of the court. Since General Valdes was perhaps not as familiar with American military law was I was, he would frequently ask advice and I gave it to him. This still resulted in the rejection of some questionable evidence and still made certain people unhappy. When he found it desirable, he would adjourn the court to discuss the matter. Two or three examples may indicate the temper of the times; I think they are interesting, and we will discuss them in commenting on the trial of General Masukara Homma.

We next found ourselves confronted with this trial of the overall commander, General Homma, who was in command of the Philippines at the time of the Japanese invasion in 1941 and through the fall of the Philippines in 1942. There were a number of charges against him and probably 50 specifications. These included everything that those arraigning him could think of to charge him with, not only what he had done personally but anything that any of his troops had ever done. In the spring of 1942, the Japanese forces -- as well as our forces -- were suffering from dysentery, malaria, scurvy, and beriberi on the Bataan Peninsula. They weren't that much better as far as their health condition was concerned than we were. So the struggle reached something of a stalemate with the result that Homma, the Japanese commander, appealed for fresh troops, and the Japanese High Command sent him the 26th Japanese Infantry Division which had been fighting on a no-quarter-asked, no-quarter-given basis on the Chinese mainland for something over four years. These troops arrived at Lingayen Gulf and were quickly put into action with the final assault that overran the Bataan Peninsula. They are the ones who were largely to blame for any atrocities or torture that occurred on the so-called "Death March of Bataan," where our troops, after surrender, were marched north for 75 or 100 miles to this camp. Some who fell by the wayside from disease, illness, or lack of food were bayoneted or shot. The question that is brought up here is not whether this happened or not; it did happen. The question is whether or not the senior commander of all forces in the Philippines could exercise control down to the last Japanese private who had been under his command for maybe three or four weeks. Could he have prevented these brutalities or, to put it another way, was he even indirectly responsible for what happened here to a degree that he should pay with his life? This is one

of the questions we have to ask ourselves and it keeps arising again and again.

It concerned us at the time because we used to turn to each other as we would walk out on the seawall at the American Embassy in Manila where we tried this case. We'd walk out when we had a break or adjourned the court and say, "Thank God we didn't lose. This could just as well be General MacArthur." Then, much to our amazement, our Supreme Court came up and found Yamashita guilty for quite a similar action where some private soldier had committed some atrocity. Our Supreme Court found, without regard to echelons, the top individual responsible. This worried us a little bit more and then when we heard what happened in the Nuremberg trials we were even more concerned. Now we see it happening where we're doing this to ourselves in the Calley case; this should concern us because if it was General Koster who was to blame, why not General Westmoreland? Or do we eventually blame the President? Since most of the people in the so-called My Lai case were only under military direction and supervision for a brief time, perhaps we should hold their parents responsible. Just where do you draw the line? These are thoughts I've lived with since World War II. There is just as much question in my mind now as there was then. I'm not talking about cases like Dachau or Belsen; I'm talking about the incidents that occur in connection with combat; with the battlefield which is organized confusion at best, and where the curtain really should be dropped at the rear of the battlefield because of things that do occur. The emotions, terror, and frustrations that occur to men there permit some to rise to heroic levels and others to descend to cowardly criminal levels if you want to put it bluntly. These are uncontrollable forces and they can't be judged by either judge or jury or press or by people who have never been really exposed to what these pressures are.

Q: Well, General, since you were judge and jury, and since you have firsthand information as to some of the things that General Homma was charged with, I think it would be interesting to hear your account. What were some of the major offenses the general was charged with, and what was the conclusion of your court?

A: I really can't get into sufficient detail just from memory. There were some 50 specifications, as I say; let me refer to a few of the most prominent. Some of them had to do with police blotters in Manila. For

instance, things that happened in the city of Manila: many of them had to do with rape and the fact that the Japanese took no serious action in punishing rape. Question: Do you punish them according to our American code for rape or the Philippine code or the Japanese code? Under what law are you operating under such a wartime situation because actually it wasn't found that the number of cases of rape, at least on the police blotter, was any greater during the Japanese occupation than it was before the war or even after the Americans reoccupied Manila. There was not significant difference as far as the records were concerned. Now there may have been things off the record that we don't know about, but we can't go behind the record because we believe -- or used to believe -- in even the death penalty for rape. And now we do little here except turn them loose. We might convict them, but we turn them loose so they can go out and commit it again. The Japanese considered this as a relatively minor offense and this was a matter of maybe a month's punishment. How are you going to condemn a commanding general because there are some cases of rape on the police blotter? Now there were cases of torture; there's no question about it. Whether they were actually condoned or whether they were not clearly reported to the commander was a question, and this is the kind of question that exists in the My Lai case. How much did the commander know about it? Was it completely submerged by the fact that so many casualties were found on the battlefield -- whether they were combatants, or women and children who were booby-trapping our troops as part of their tactics (which was frequently the case)? When men see their buddies shot down -- and these things happen around them in the confusion of a battlefield -- they aren't too likely to ask many questions about who appears to be one of the enemy in that particular area.

Q: Wasn't it true that there were such charges as firing against the white flag (the flag of truce), the Bataan Death March, the open city. The fact that General Homma was the Commander in Chief of all the forces, how did this fit in?

A: I don't recall too much about the firing on the open city. There was not too much damage done to Manila in the early days because the American forces had moved

to the Bataan Peninsula. We were the ones to destroy Manila before we could recapture it from the determined Japanese.

Getting back to the Bataan Peninsula; the 26th Japanese Division had been fighting in China on a no-quarter-asked, no-quarter-given basis for something like four or five years. They were suddenly brought in when the Japanese found that their troops were either not adequate or in good enough condition, at least, to run the Americans off the Bataan Peninsula. They were tough, hardened troops; they were thrown into battle quickly and provided the necessary force to overcome our American troops, resulting in the surrender of our forces on Bataan. These were the troops also that were undoubtedly guilty of most of the atrocities during the Death March. There's no question but that some men who were either weak or wounded were shot or bayoneted on this Death March. The question is how many echelons of command up is a person responsible to the point where you should condemn him for murder or crime, and that is what General Homma was accused of.

An important charge was of firing on a flag of truce after our forces tried to surrender the islands in defense of Manila Bay -- Corregidor and the other islands which were still manned. General Wainwright was left in command of all of the Philippines when MacArthur withdrew with his retinue to Australia. Major General Moore was in command of the defense of Manila Bay. The physical condition of our troops and their morale was certainly not good; they saw no prospect of relief, food was short and being rationed, the medical supplies were getting shorter. So General Wainwright came over in a boat to Cabcaban on the mainland under a white flag to seek terms for surrender. With now-General John Pugh, then his aide (who was probably a major about that time), General Wainwright met with General Homma's Chief of Staff at Cabcaban, which is a little town on the south end of the Bataan Peninsula. Wainwright appealed for terms on the surrender of the forces guarding Manila Bay -- the defenses of Manila Bay -- whereupon the Japanese commander, being very astute, said, "Well, General, since when can a commander surrender only part of his command?" Wainwright replied, "I have released the rest of my command in the Visayan and Central Islands to the local commanders." Whereupon the Japanese asked another good question: "Since when does a commander voluntarily relinquish a part of his command

without orders from higher authority, and where are those orders -- your orders -- from the War Departent permitting this?" He didn't have any, and after some further discussion in which General Wainwright wasn't getting very far, they told him, "We'll give you 48 hours to go back to Corregidor and consider this. At that time if you don't surrender your forces, and we mean all the Philippines, we're going to seize Corregidor," which is what they did. But the charge and specification, of course, written with more emotion than judgment, was to condemn Homma for firing on a flag of truce in violation of the laws of war. We could not convict him and we didn't convict him. To make a long story short, in connection with Homma we felt that there's a definite limit on how many echelons up above the officer who violates the laws of war. Or how many echelons above him can you hold those in the chain of command responsible? Unless orders had been definitely issued by a commander or the matter is condoned, consideration should be given to the peculiar conditions that result in isolation with men operating largely on their own in the confused situation on the battlefield. This is one of the reasons why, when all of these factors are taken into consideration -- and again I'm afraid with more emotion than good judgment at that time -- we need to cogitate about our wisdom in condemning General Homma to death. I must admit I was not much in favor of it. In fact, I opposed it but I could only oppose it to a point that allowed him to be shot as a soldier and not hanged because that took a unanimous verdict, and I would not vote to hang him. I thought he was an outstanding soldier.

Q: General, I think we got the lesson from those trials. Do you desire to discuss anything further concerning the Homma case of the commission?

A: Only to repeat that I thought at the time, and still feel, that we were setting a bad pattern for ourselves and one that still is unrealistic of the problems and conditions that exist during major military operations and particularly in close proximity to the battlefield. I thought we'd pay a price then, and I felt more sure of it when they held Yamashita guilty for the actions of one of his privates. I felt it again at Nuremberg and I was sorry that we found ourselves in this embarrassing position regarding My Lai. Personally, I'm glad that the case against General Koster has been dismissed since there are certain unfortunate matters beyond control even of the most

conscientious commander and even with well disciplined troops, when the exigencies and actualities of the battlefield confront some individuals who may be the other extreme from heroes.

Q: Sir, I went back to perhaps just a few weeks after the Homma trial and the end of the military commission as far as you were concerned. You returned to the States and went back to your job as Director of Military Training but were soon appointed Chief of Manpower Control of the Army.