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LEE

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LEE, WILLIAM L.

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Military associate of General Eisenhower; organizer of
Philippine Air Force under Douglas MacArthur, 1935-38

Interview in 3 parts: Part I: 1-211; Part II: 212-368; Part III:
369-482

DESCRIPTION: [Interview is based on diary entries and is very
informal. Mrs. Lee is present and makes occasional comments.]

PART I: Identification of and comments about various figures and locations in film footage taken in the Philippines during the 1930's; flying training and equipment used at Camp Murphy; Jimmy Ord; building an airstrip; planes used for training; Lee's background (including early duty assignments; volunteering for assignment to the Philippines); organizing and developing the Philippine Air Unit of the constabulary (including Filipino officer assistants; Curtis Lambert; acquiring training aircraft); arrival of General Douglas MacArthur and staff (October 26, 1935); first meeting with Major Eisenhower (December 14, 1935); purpose of the constabulary; Lee's financial situation; building Camp Murphy (including problems; plans for the air unit; aircraft); Lee's interest in a squadron of airplanes for patrol of coastline vs. MacArthur's plan for seapatrol boats; Sid Huff; establishing the air unit (including determining the kind of airplanes needed; establishing physical standards for Filipino cadets; Jesus Villamor; standards of training; Lee's assessment of the success of Filipino student pilots); "Lefty" Parker, Lee, and Eisenhower's solo flight; early stages in formation of the Philippine Air Force (including legislation; expanding the size of Camp Murphy; facilities); General Paulino Santos, Chief of Staff, Philippine Armed Forces; Harvey Prosser, Russell Maughan, and the Bureau of Aeronautics; socializing between Philippine and American military people (including Lee's personal experiences and feelings); commercial aviation in the Philippines; starting the cadet program (including applications; Major Olympia, a flight surgeon; Jesus Villamor; Jose Francisco; further training of pilots and technical personnel at American airfields); comments regarding training flights with various cadets and other military personnel [ongoing and interspersed throughout the following commentary]; unpacking and assembling aircraft; assignment of Lt. H.A. "Lefty" Parker to Philippine Army Air Corps; Lee's social activities (including evenings on the town; playing golf with Eisenhower; parties); Eisenhower's flight training (including Eisenhower as a student; anecdote regarding landing problems with a BT-1 when he soloed; anecdote regarding Eisenhower and Paulino Santos; Eisenhower's ability to relax; Eisenhower as a pilot); Mamie and John Eisenhower's arrival (1936); a very general allusion to European developments; flying in parade marking first anniversary of the Commonwealth of the Philippines; landing strips; comments about a Stinson Reliant (including a flight with Eisenhower as pilot; comments about the Reliant's capabilities; problems with vacuum flaps; purpose for and use of the Reliant; anecdote regarding Eisenhower's inspection of barracks at Tuguegarao and displeasure with a young lieutenant); flight to Baguio, 1937 (including Eisenhower and son John as passengers; problems of return take-off; near-disaster); comments about getting Lt. Colonels Eisenhower and

James Ord to help Lee acquire necessary items; Lee's position (training Filipino flyers and serving as air liaison and transport service for the military mission); 1st Lt. Lee's relationship with Lt. Colonels Eisenhower and Ord; Lee's nicknames; comments about Lt. Paha Cruz and Jimmy Ord's death; plan for aircraft purchases for Philippine Air Force (including time span; costs; rationale; types of planes); speeches; flights to Baguio (both Eisenhowers in hospital); new aircraft announcement; problems with Gen. Francisco, commander of Camp Murphy; difficulties of driving to Baguio from Manila (including traffic conditions; threats from Huks); anecdote regarding Eisenhower and Lee's sleeping on bejuca beds; Cadet Zosa; inspection flights; training Filipino line crews; dangers of flying in Philippines; celebrating first anniversary of flying program; first students sent to Randolph Field for further training; levels of pilot training given cadets; Philippine Air Force insignia; testing new aircraft.

PART II: Leaving the Philippines, 1938 (including reason for transfer; MacArthur's problems); assignment to Kelly Field (including duties; disappointments; correspondence with Eisenhower; acquiring captaincy; training at Maxwell Field in the tactical school); assignment to the Brooks Field training school (including problems with the commander; attempts to transfer; anecdote involving Captain [William H., II] Bill Maverick and the Philippines; comments about Stanton T. "Alibi" Smith as a commander); Mrs. Lee's comments regarding assignments; transfer to Langley Field, 1940 (including comments about the B-18; make-up of 2nd Bomb Group); service testing the Martin B-26 at Wright Patterson AFB, 1941; transfer to Jackson, Mississippi (including assignment to 38th Bomb Group; comments about B-25's and B-26's; promotions; assignment as commanding officer of the 69th Bomb Squadron); general comments about promotions (including timing; specific individuals as examples); the Air Force and West Point graduates (including Lee's theories about discrimination in pilot training and ROTC vs. service academies' programs; moving Army and Navy officer-pilots into the Army Air Corps); the role of Texas A & M ROTC officers in the military service; the Martin B-26 (including evaluation of plane; problems with plane; anecdote regarding [Lt. Col. Westside T.] "Swede" Larson and the evaluation review board; runway difficulties; retractable landing gear problems; pilot errors; speed and design of plane; power problems; fatalities; anecdote regarding pilots' fear of plane at MacDill Field; anecdote regarding death of Mark K. Lewis and crew; writing to Eisenhower about plane's problems; keeping in touch with the Eisenhowers; solving the propeller problem; final evaluation of plane); orders for the 38th Group to the Pacific; various assignments between 1942-1944; anecdote concerning reprimand in regard to the 104th Article of War (including cause of censure; communication with Eisenhower; results); Eisenhower's request for Lee to go with him overseas (including Lee's acceptance; results of request; Lee's comments about possible military vindictiveness; retention as training officer); reforming a B-25 outfit into a B-26 group (including comments about rank and experience; Jimmy Doolittle; building a training cadre; training combat groups); overseas command (including changing the 49th and 55th Operational Training Wings to bombardment wings; assignment to Italy with B-24 bombers; promotion; staff arrival; flying route to Europe; setting up wing headquarters; make-up of wing); flying the B-24 (including Lee's lack of experience; limiting the wing commanders' flying time; problems with B-24's; flying formations); Benjamin Davis, Jr.; bombardment theory and practice (including Lee's lack of expertise; experts in area; General Curtis E. LeMay and daylight bombing; learning by doing); comments about [Nathan F.] "Nate" Twining as a commander; Jimmy Doolittle, Jr.; comments about

commanders (including comparison of Twining and [Walter H.] "Tony" Frank; Eisenhower; [Stanton T.] "Alibi" Smith; Jimmy Doolittle); the Allied Commission in Rome (including Admiral Ellery Wheeler Stone; Lee's assignment to the Commission; make-up of the Allied Commission; Lee's reasons for accepting the job; purpose of the Commission; Lee's staff; make-up of the Air Force Subcommission); plans to move 49th Bomb Wing to the Far East; comments about Thomas S. Power; the Air Force Subcommission (including comments about Air Vice Marshall Ian Brodie; Lee's feelings about effectiveness of the Commission generally); anecdote regarding the Russians and the Allied Commission; Lee's French military decorations; the John Maragon affair (including Maragon's acquaintance with Truman; Truman's military aide, Harry Vaughan; Maragon's appointment as special assistant to the Ambassador to Greece; Maragon's arrival in Rome; Lee's version of the events leading up to the slapping incident and the subsequent results; Maragon's behavior in Greece; Lee's reprimand and loss of rank; later details of the case; restoration of rank; Harry Vaughan's role in the affair).

PART III: Return to the United States and assignment to SAC (Strategic Air Command), 1946; assuming base command at [Smoky Hill AFB] Salina, Kansas (including size of command; staff structure; training in B-29's; limitations of plane); US strategy regarding SAC bases; SAC leadership; comments about reduced rank and reprimand over Maragon affair; transfer to Tactical Air Command (including assuming command at Turner AF Base, Georgia; commanding a tactical fighter outfit; first flight in a fighter attack plane; the P-51); Air Force method for reassignment of officers; assignment to National War College (including initial surprise at assignment; selection for and make-up of college; Lee's lack of background in advanced training; Mrs. Lee's comments on Maragon affair; writing to Eisenhower; Eisenhower, Lee, and "Lefty" Parker; Lee as a student at the college; course work in problem solving; mix of students); Lee's attitude toward the Pentagon; Lee's educational background; Eisenhower's interest in officers who demonstrated ability; acquaintance with Curtis LeMay; the Pentagon mentality; Lee's comments on differences between staff officers and line officers; relationship with Maj. General Emmett "Rosie" O'Donnell; assignment to Ellington AFB (including command of navigation training school; B-47 crew training; attitudes of pilots toward training; problems with a student officer); assignment to the Philippines (including reluctance to accept assignment; commanding the 13th Air Force; Lee's problems with Ambassador Homer Ferguson and subsequent events; Lee's popularity with the Filipino people; Mrs. Lee's role and responsibilities; structure of the 13th Air Force); attitude of Filipinos toward American presence; Lee's criticism of U.S. government's releasing of American property to Philippine government; Lee's comments on Philippine independence; Lee's observations about Vice-President Nixon; Lee's views of strategic importance of U.S. presence in the Far East.

[Dwight D. Eisenhower Library Oral History, interviews by Alan Thompson, Maclyn Burg, and William Jones, December 9, 1970; May 12, 1971; and January 12, 1972]