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CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN

LIEUTENANT GENERAL ANDREW J. BOYLE

AND

LIEUTENANT COLONEL FRANK WALTON

VOLUME I

CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA

INTERVIEW WITH LTG ANDREW J. BOYLE

Col Walton: The following interview was conducted with Lieutenant General Andrew J. Boyle, U. S. Army Retired, at his home in Allaway Farms, Virginia, on Saturday, 13 February 1971, from 1300-1500 on that date. The interviewer is Lieutenant Colonel Frank Walton, a student at the US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Lieutenant General Boyle, the subject of the interview, was born in Braddock, Pennsylvania, on 11 December in 1911. He gained a competitive appointment to West Point from the Maryland National Guard; and as the subsequent interview will show, he had an unusual introduction into service life entering the National Guard because of his athletic prowess. The interview is essentially chronological in nature. It begins with his entrance into the U. S. Military Academy at West Point. It goes through and dwells primarily on his service in the Army during World War II, before World War II, and immediately thereafter. General Boyle now occupies a farm of approximately 300 acres, located ten miles south of Culpepper, Virginia, near Brandy Station, in the finest farming country in the area. He is currently adding an addition, himself, to a building that was originally built in 1730. He is a remarkable craftsman and cabinet maker. He does his own farming and eventually hopes to have a herd of some Angus cattle. General Boyle has owned this land since before World War II. The house and the building were occupied by his wife during the time that General Boyle was overseas in World War II. General Boyle is a remarkably young appearing and physically vigorous man, apparently in the prime of life. He is enjoying his retirement immensely and having

Col Walton: You also went to a British school; did you not?

GEN Boyle: Yes, I went to the British Staff College. When I first went over, I was with the Canadian 1st Armored Division. In fact I was hoping that I would be making the invasion with them. That division was a good division. I got pulled out and went to the British Staff College.

Col Walton: Were you a liaison also when you were with the Canadians?

GEN Boyle: Yes, in effect.

Col Walton: If my information is right, you spent most of your time in headquarters units during World War II.

GEN Boyle: That is right. Then I stayed on after the war over there and we continued this kind of work with an outfit called FIAT.

Col Walton: Was this still the T-type of operations that you were doing?

GEN Boyle: Yes. What it was that as soon as the war was over our government made a basic decision that we would exploit the Germans for all their scientific, technical, and industrial knowledge. It was recognized that during the Hitler regime--during the Hitler period--the exchange of information had been cut off. Under normal conditions there was an exchange of scientific magazines, exchange of technical knowledge, exchange of patents. This all ceased so there was a void as far as we were concerned. There was a void of what we knew of German progress during these years. So we were given the mission of combing Germany and gathering all of this knowledge. The military was given the job and we drew up most of our technicians through the Department of Commerce. The Department of Commerce had the job of distributing this material to American industry. They did this with catalogs and so forth. They did a great deal with microfilm. We had about--the people in our operation--35 mobile microfilm teams. We

would go into a plant like the I. G. Farbin plant and microfilm. Our experts were furnished from industries and universities and so forth. For instance, if we are going into an I. G. Farbin plant that dealt with dyes, we would have somebody from DuPont. If we were dealing with what the Germans had been doing with aluminum, we would have somebody from an aluminum company on our team.

Col Walton: You must have been in somewhat of a race then with the Soviets?

GEN Boyle: Yes, we were. There are a number of interesting aspects to that. Back in the T-Force days we had recognized that Berlin was a prime target with a tremendous amount of intelligence in Berlin. We had organized a parachute operation for Berlin purely for intelligence. We had T-Forces with targets in Berlin. We had hoped to jump into Berlin as a part of a larger operation. Obviously, of course, with our agreement with the Russians it never came off. As a consequence, we didn't get into Berlin for some time after the Russians had gotten in there. However, as you know, the American column sat at Helmstedt waiting for days to be allowed to move into Berlin. We had our people in that column. We thought that when we finally got to Berlin that it would just be a waste of time. It was very interesting that the Russians had not organized any such intelligence effort like this at all. All the prime targets that we wanted were still in Berlin. For example, the German patent office which was in what was later the Russian sector of Berlin. They hadn't even touched that. We just put a mass of microfilm teams in there. Later when we were dealing with the Russians, they knew we had gotten this and we exchanged some of this microfilm to the Russians. We just gave them a lot more credit

than they deserved. They actually didn't organized which is kind of interesting.

Col Walton: Did you have much contact with the Soviet Army at all?

GEN Boyle: Yes, we had some. We had a rather interesting experience. One of our prime targets during the FIAT era was the I. G. Farbin industry. In the early studies of it, it became pretty obvious that you had to look at it as a whole. You had to look at the plant that they had in what is now western Germany. They had some down in the French zone; they had some in the Russian zone; and they had some in the British zone. So we decided that the best way to do this was on the quadripartite basis to get together. So through our officials in Berlin we wrote to the Russians and gave them an outline of what we wanted to do. We never heard from them. Of course, we followed this up numerous times with no answer from them at all. So we went ahead and did it on a tripartite basis. We were pretty well along on this when one day we got word that there was a Russian team headed by a Russian general that was on its way to Frankfurt. Our headquarters at that time was out at Hurks which is near Frankfurt. This Russian was a little one and they were headed towards Hurks. They decided that they wanted to get into this operation. When they arrived, we told them that we were sorry and hadn't heard from them. In the meantime we had asked on numerous occasions to go into the Russian zone and look at the I. G. plants, I. G. Farbin plants, on our own. We had never gotten an answer from them. In fact it amounted to a turn-down. This general finally said, "Well, to come all this way do you mind if we look at some of these plants in your zones." We responded by saying that we were sorry

but on such and such a day, and such and such a day we had asked to go into your zone and you hadn't given us permission so we are sorry but we can't give you permission. With that he reached down in his briefcase and pulled out his passes. I think Marshall Sokolosky was commanding at the time. He had passes for all the requests we had asked for. Passes all signed, sealed, and delivered. I am convinced that if we hadn't put it on the line he would have gone through and we never would have gotten in. We got some of our people into the Russian zone and they went in there and looked in those plants and everything. I would say that we saw some of the--we were the first to break the barrier and get in there. Of course, the barrier became even stronger later.

Col Walton: Yes, it may have been some of the first and the last.

GEN Boyle: We had a number of teams that went through there.

Col Walton: Did you have anything to do with Von Braun, the rocket scientist in there?

GEN Boyle: Yes, they did. They came under what was known as the Paperclip Operation. This was part of the "T" Forces and this was part of the transition stages, too. Going from "T" Forces to FIAT. We had a list of thousands of German scientists. We had them all cataloged. This was done mostly from the German records. They were so meticulous in these things and all the records were captured. We had a personnel file of industrialists, scientists, technicians. You name it. All were civilian. We were in that area. Of course, Von Braun and his people were in this group. They were actually handled by a specific group. You have to give a tremendous amount of credit to later General Toftoy of Ordnance. He worked with us pretty closely and he pretty much picked these fellows for

us. They came over to the United States under the Paperclip Operation. This took as I recall an Executive Order. It permitted us at any one time a thousand of these people. It is very interesting because at that time there was a tremendous amount of opposition to bringing these people over. There was a ceiling of one thousand put on this. Here we had all these wonderful doctors. The American Medical Association didn't want us to bring any doctors. The Society of Engineers didn't want us to bring any engineers, you know. This is the way it went and it took a lot of doing to get it so that we could bring these people over. As I say we handled that and all the shipping for those people.

Col Walton: Did you have any intimations of the German nuclear effort at that time?

GEN Boyle: Of course, this was one of our great targets. This was from the very beginning. A few of us knew that we were doing something in this area. We were told only as much as that there was such a thing. I guess it was Buoda who actually developed the first cyclotron. We were very concerned about what the Germans were doing. We could just picture a V-2 with one of these things on the end of it.

Col Walton: Was SHAPE concerned that the Germans would attain some kind of nuclear capability?

GEN Boyle: As I say from the day we went into Europe we were very concerned and we knew that they had a couple of prime targets, heavy water, that were on the top of our list. Of course, we had the ALSOP mission, a U. S. mission that was organized specifically for this. They worked under part of our "T" Forces. In this "T" Force thing we had everybody and their brother in it--the ALSOP mission for example. The British had

the same thing. They had a comparable unit plus a lot of other services.

Col Walton: The strategic bombing survey people must have also had a great interest in the "T" Forces.

GEN Boyle: They were also part of the T-Forces. They were among the ones in SHAPE and we were responsible for coordinating it all.

Col Walton: It had very high powered people involved.

GEN Boyle: They certainly did. Everybody wanted priority.

Col Walton: Did you have any role in apprehending the Nazi war criminals?

GEN Boyle: Yes, we picked up Speer and people like that. In fact we had a jug outside of Frankfurt which we called--you know the one outside of

for Goering and all the military guys was called the garbage pail-- we called our dustpan. Our dustpan was outside of Frankfurt. We put these fellows in there--like Speer who I think was probably the most prominent. We furnished a lot of the information used at the trials.

Col Walton: It is amazing how some of the men did manage to get out of Germany into South America. Sir, you stayed in Europe after the war for a considerable period.

GEN Boyle: Until 1947.

Col Walton: Was your wife, Mrs. Boyle, able to join you eventually?

GEN Boyle: She was on the first boat of the dependents that came over.

Col Walton: Sir, your next assignment then was to the Armored School, but I wonder if you felt any lack of confidence--that might not be the right phrase--not having had command during the war at the staff level.

GEN Boyle: Yes, I wondered why they were sending me. Really, the reason I think they were is because before the war I had taken a communications course at Riley. So I went to the communications department at Knox.

would describe it. That was the time when France, Italy, and possibly even Great Britain could have gone communist overnight, if the economic and political conditions were just right. It must have been very interesting from your viewpoint to have seen that.

GEN Boyle: Yes, it was. There was no question about it. From the German point of view--living in Germany right after the war--was a very impressionistic sort of thing. A pack of cigarettes was a medium of exchange. The calorie reduction was such that it was truly subsistence. The Germans wouldn't eat meals. They would piece all day. This way they would be killing their appetite. They would munch all day. I would see a coal truck driving through the streets and if a piece fell off they were on the pieces that fell like a pack of vultures. This is very, very depressing to have to live under those conditions. I think that the great salvation was the Marshall Plan for all of Europe. I think it very, very doubtful that Europe could have survived communism or some kind of ism if it hadn't been for the Marshall Plan.

Col Walton: There is debate today as to whether the Red Army ever really had any intention of going to the English Channel after World War II. Did you ever have any feel for that, particularly since you had an extensive intelligence background?

GEN Boyle: Yes, my feeling was that they weren't able to go to the Channel. The Red Army that I saw was fully extended. They were at the absolute end of their supply line. Their vehicles--there were more broken down vehicles than vehicles running. In fact it was a great joke and I spent a great deal of time at the Berlin office going back and forth along

the road. I would drive up the highway from Helmstedt and I'm telling you that those people had a tough time keeping anything running. I don't think that they would have gone anywhere against us.

Col Walton: How about after our withdrawal?

GEN Boyle: I guess that after probably a period of time they licked their wounds, built their supplies up in back of them, got their lines of communications straightened out, and were probably all right. At that time when we were facing them along the Elbe and the Danube and the rest of Berlin and all along that area, I don't think that they would have been any match for us. We had our supplies up in back of us. I think that we had the greatest war machine that the world had ever seen. I just don't think that the Russians would have had a chance.

Col Walton: You really feel that we reached the pinnacle of professionalism.

GEN Boyle: I really have no question about it.

Col Walton: Perhaps better than you have seen since?

GEN Boyle: Oh, yes. I mean we have never put the effort forth since.

We have only had Korea and Vietnam since and they are very small comparatively speaking. We had a tremendous war machine. We had a tremendous amount of experience and equipment.

Col Walton: Then you say it was very quickly dissipated. Did you find any good results from the demobilization that followed? Did the Army return to good training for the young officer? Did it return to any of the previous values that you enjoyed--post World War II and pre-Korea? Or was the period too short?

GEN Boyle: I don't follow you too well.