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TWINING

TWINING, NATHAN F.

(OH-274)

250 pages

PRCQ

Officer, U.S. Air Force, South Pacific, 1942-43; Commander, 15th Air Force, Italy, 1944-45; Commander, 20th Air Force, Guam, 1945; Deputy Chief of Staff and Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, 1950-53; Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, 1953-57; chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1957-60.

[Note: Pages 12, 17, 56-61 and 97-102 are closed]

DESCRIPTION: Interview #1. [June 5, 1967; pp 1-61] Family background; war service of Quaker ancestors. Early military career: Oregon National Guard; appointment to West Point; early graduation due to World War I, 1918; infantry school at Fort Benning; Camp Travis at San Antonio, Texas; football teams; transfer to air corps; subsequent training. South Pacific, 1942-43: Gen. Millard Harmon; Gen. Ghormley; Guadalcanal; use of Air Cobras. 15th Air Force in Italy, 1944-45: organization; relations with 8th Air Force; bombing of Messerschmidt factory at Regensburg; bombing of Ploesti oil refinery; bombing of synthetic oil plants in East Germany; losses of planes; relief of pilots; night bombing by British units; relations with higher headquarters; accidental bombing of Gen. Leise's headquarters near Cassino; aid to Yugoslavia, Tito and Mihailovitch; cooperation from Italian people; Col. Davis and colored troops; bombing of Berlin; German jets and rockets.

Interview #2. [June 26, 1967; pp 62-125] Summary of early World War II action in South Pacific; Guadalcanal; island hopping; bombing of Bougainville and Rabaul; Admiral Halsey. Extensive account of Twining's airplane crash in Coral Sea and survival on a life raft. Succeeds Curtis LeMay at 20th Air Force on Guam, 1945; dropping the atomic bomb; possibility of invading Japan; surrender on USS Missouri. Air Materiel Command, Wright Field: force reductions after World War II; support for Air Force in Congress; development of Mojave Base, California, and Cape Canaveral; disposal of surplus equipment. Alaska Air Command.

Interview #3. [August 17, 1967; pp 126-191] Deputy Chief of Staff and Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, 1950-53: Gen. Hoyt Vandenberg; Robert Lovett; approval by Truman of flights over Russia; CIA taking over flights after DDE becomes president; Congressional support for strengthening Air Force; missile program; JFK and LBJ's interest in missiles and disarmament. Air Force Chief of Staff under DDE: military recommendations on "New Look" policy; lack of Army support for New Look; Maxwell Taylor's encouragement of involvement in Vietnam; Air Force budget. ICBM program: Van Neumann committee; Benny Shriever; methods for handing out contracts; support from Congress and White House. Formosa: military support for Nationalist Chinese. John Foster Dulles; DDE's lack of support for Nixon in 1960 campaign; detection of nuclear

explosions by testing the air; development of new airplanes; problems with the B-47; U.S. nuclear testing; Charles E. Wilson; Harold Talbott.

Interview #4. [September 12, 1967; pp 192-250] Major decisions by Truman: dropping atomic bomb; start of Marshall Plan; intervention in Korea; development of H-bomb; SAC as delivery system for H-bomb; need for keeping U.S. policy a secret. Twining's appointment as JCS Chairman, 1957. Charles E. Wilson. John Foster Dulles doctrine of massive retaliation; role of atomic weapons; complaints by Maxwell Taylor. Lebanon crisis, 1958. Dien Bien Phu. Suez crisis, 1956. Baghdad Pact. Maxwell Taylor's encouragement of U.S. intervention in Vietnam. Impact of Sputnik; Air Force concern over Soviet scientific progress while U.S. cutting back; space program. Nuclear test ban; need for inspection; U.S. loss of initiative during periods of non-testing; disarmament. NATO. Berlin. Twining's early retirement. Comments on Lyman Lemnitzer, Neil McElroy, Thomas Gates. Twining's post-retirement career: publishing field; writing his memoirs; DDE's reaction after being quoted in Maxwell Taylor's book.

A name index is located at the end of the transcript.

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interview by John T. Mason, Jr., 1967]