HISTORY

OF

WORLD WAR II

REMINISCENCES OF ADMIRAL RAYMOND A. SPRUANCE

BY

CHARLES F. BARBER

Flag Secretary to Raymond A. Spruance, 1943-45

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

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Preface

Charles F. Barber served in the U.S. Navy from 1941 to 1945 and was flag secretary to Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, 1943-1945. Barber graduated from Northwestern University in 1939 and attended Harvard Law School until he was called to active duty in February 1941. He served for two years as Navy secretary of the U.S. Joint War Plans Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before joining Spruance's staff in the USS Indianapolis.

Barber recounts Spruance's comments on wartime leaders in the Pacific and gives his own comments on the admiral's personality, habits, wartime issues he faced, and his strengths and weaknesses. He admired Spruance for his leadership abilities and his conduct and character. Finally, Barber gives an assessment of his own naval career and its significance.

This reminiscence of Spruance by an officer who worked closely with him during the war is an important contribution to World War II history.

The oral history was conducted in the Naval Historical Collection at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, on March 1, 1996. Mr. Barber edited and retyped the original transcript and added a table of contents.

Evelyn M. Cherpak
Head, Naval Historical Collection

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Interviewee: Charles F. Barber

Interviewer: Evelyn M. Cherpak

Subject: Reminiscences of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance

Date: March 1, 1996

C: This is the first oral history interview with Mr. Charles Barber of Greenwich, CT. He was Admiral Spruance's flag secretary from 1943 - 1945. Today's date is March 1, 1996. The interview is being conducted by Evelyn Cherpak at the Naval War College Historical Collection.

Mr. Barber, I'm happy that you were able to come today a little bit early prior to the dinner honoring Spruance to conduct this interview with me on your experiences with him in the war in the Pacific. I'd like to begin by asking you a few personal questions. When and where were you born?

Personal background of Charles F. Barber prior to World War II

B: I was born in Chicago, Illinois, on February 26, 1917.

C: Where did you go to college?

B: I went to Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. I entered in September 1935. I joined the Naval ROTC at Northwestern. At the time it was one of six units in the country. The others were at Harvard, Yale, Georgia Tech, the University of Washington at Seattle and the University of California at Los Angeles.

C: That's interesting. Very limited then, the Naval ROTC program in the U.S.

B: Yes, it was in those days.

C. Why did the Navy appeal to you? What was there about it that appealed to you?

B: One of my much admired friends had been at Northwestern. He had been the Assistant Scoutmaster of my Boy Scout troop at the time I joined the Scouts. He told me about the Naval ROTC. He added that if I wanted to join the Naval ROTC I should apply the first day because it had a very limited complement. So I did. I had been in the Army ROTC program in high school. I had visited the Great Lakes Naval Station a number of times. My friend told me about the midshipman cruises in the summer. This was in the middle of the Depression. The cruises were an important attraction.

C. Where did you go on these cruises?

B: My first summer, the summer of 1936, I was on the destroyer HERBERT, one of six World War I four-stackers in the group. We went to Puerto Rico, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and the Canal Zone. We went through the locks on the Gulf side and anchored in Gatun Lake. We had shore leave on two or three days and visited both the locks: Colon on the Gulf, and Panama City on the Pacific side. Then we returned to the Gulf. We went through a big blow coming back, particularly heavy as we passed through the strait between Haiti and Cuba. We had the experience of a real, tough destroyer cruise.

C: Did you do different jobs on the cruise or were you assigned to one?

B: On the cruise we were moved to a different assignment every few days. We were to be exposed to the major tasks, including the engine room and drills firing the 5-inch guns.

C. Did you go on cruises the successive two summers?

B: Yes I did. Three summers.

C: Oh, three summers in total?

B: The second, in 1937, was on the World War I battleship ARKANSAS. We visited Kingston, Jamaica and Havana, Cuba. The program was similar to the destroyer cruises. We had time in the engine room, time on the bridge, and so on. After the cruise, I could say I had conned a battleship, albeit on the open ocean. Men from the four eastern Naval ROTC units were on the ship. So we had some inter-university matches in various deck athletics. I represented Northwestern University in my weight class in wrestling.

C: Where did you go on the third summer cruise?

B: In 1938, it was another destroyer cruise. We boarded in Norfolk and spent the full time training at sea. We made no foreign calls. We had firing drills with the five inch guns, handling and loading the ammunition, shooting at towed targets almost every day. This was a serious cruise. It was July 1938 and the build up of our armed forces was urgent, given events in Europe.

C: I assume you graduated in 1939 from Northwestern?

B: I did, and at that time I was commissioned an ensign in the Naval Reserve. After graduation, I went on two naval reserve cruises on sub-chasers on Lake Michigan. I had some very interesting experiences.

C: Fascinating. What were you doing for an occupation during this two-year period before the war?

B: I had planned to go to England. I had been awarded a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University and had been accepted by Balliol College. On September 1, 1939, Sunday morning, I received a call from one of my teachers in the Economics Department at Northwestern. I had majored in economics. The Nazis had bombed Warsaw. She said: "Charles, Mr. Diebler (Chairman of the Economics Department) and I have decided you will not be able to go to Oxford. This war in Europe is very serious. We think you should go to Harvard. Let us know this afternoon whether you would like to go to law school as we know you had planned to study jurisprudence at Oxford, or whether you would like to get a PhD in economics." Offers like that don't happen these days.

C: No, they certainly don't.

B: I called her back in the afternoon and said I would like to go to law school. Later that week I received a telegram from the Dean of Harvard Law School, inviting me to come along. He added that if I needed money, that would be dealt with after I arrived. So I took the train to Boston and entered law school. I was there through the first year and well along in the second year; in February 1941 I received orders to report for duty. I responded requesting deferral until June so as to complete my second year of law school. My request was granted and I finished the year and started a summer job with a New York City law firm, Root, Clark, Buckner and Ballantine. I received orders before the end of my first week on the job to report for duty in Washington on July 1.

On active duty

Navy Secretary of the Joint U. S. Strategic Committee, later the Joint War Plans Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (July 1, 1941 - June 30, 1943.)

C. So that ended your law school for the moment. What was your first assignment in the Navy?

B: My orders directed me to report to OP-12, Admiral R.K. Turner. Six of us, all recent NROTC ensigns, reported that day to replace line officers who had secretarial duties in the War Plans Division. I was assigned as secretary of the navy section of the Joint U.S. Strategic Committee. This was the working committee for the Joint Board which at the time, I believe, was the only standing committee for war planning consisting of both army and navy officers.

C: Which we're doing a lot of at this point in time.

B: I'm sure that Admiral Stark, then Chief of Naval Operations, was in contact with his opposite number in the army, the Chief of Staff.

C: There's an emphasis now, of course, on joint planning.

B: Yes indeed. I was with Admiral Boorda the night before last.

C: Oh for heavens sake, where was that?

B: It was at the Council of Foreign Relations in New York City. The four service heads were there. It was an interesting evening. Their real message was that at this time, jointness was total.

C: Oh yes. It's been the focus here at the college.

B: They were persuasive on that point. Admiral Boorda spoke for the Navy. I had a good visit with him prior to the meeting. He was interested when I told him that I had been flag secretary to Admiral Spruance in the Pacific.

C: What exactly did you do as Secretary of this Joint U.S. Strategic Committee?

B: My first job was to read and comment on the operation plans for the movement of a marine detachment to Iceland. This was entirely new territory for me. I assumed I was to review it both to learn of the operation and see an example of the prescribed form of operation plans. A few weeks later, Commodore Barbey who had been selected to command the task force, came to Washington for consultations and to review plans. He was given a desk with the Joint U.S. Strategic Committee and I was assigned as his gopher, to help him or get papers for him as he requested.

C. How long did this assignment last?

B. Two or three weeks, as I remember.

C. How long did you stay with this position with the Joint U.S. Strategic Committee?

B: I was there through the end of the year and beyond.

C: Through 1941?

B. Yes, including Christmas week. The last week in December a group of British officers came to Washington, headed by Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, to meet with the senior officers of the U.S. armed forces. Captain Yates, then Navy head of the Joint U.S. Strategic Committee, took me with him. The meetings were held in the Public Health Building, across Constitution Avenue from the Navy department. I sat at a small table in the hall outside the meeting room and acted as gopher for Admiral Turner and Captain Yates. This meeting provided

the ground work for the organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the U.S. side and the Combined Chiefs of Staff to facilitate coordination of U.S. - British operations in pursuit of the War. In due course, I think it was in February 1942, the Joint U.S. Strategic Committee moved across the street to offices in the Public Health Building.

C: Expanded a little bit. Were you there through the rest of 1942?

B: I was there with the Committee through all of 1942 and until July 1943. In the late spring of 1943 it became the War Plans Committee.

C: Did you ever have an opportunity to meet Spruance before you were assigned as his flag secretary?

B. Yes. I can give you a little background. Once the members of the Strategic Committee were together in the Public Health Building the Committee began to function as a Committee. Most mornings the members of the Committee worked on papers dealing with issues of interest to the branch of the services they represented. Most afternoons the members met in a room with a large map of the world on the wall opposite the windows. Frequently I sat at the end of the table to take notes for reference in drafting of papers, especially where there were important differences among the several branches of the services represented on the Committee.

The big issues of 1942 at the level of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were first the allocation of forces between the Atlantic and the Pacific, and then the prosecution of the war in Europe.

In the spring of 1943 the Chiefs turned their attention to the war in the Pacific and the planners to developing what became the strategic plan for the defeat of Japan.

In March 1943, the Chiefs brought General Southerland, General MacArthur's Chief of Staff, and Admiral Spruance, then Admiral Nimitz' Chief of Staff, to Washington for planning sessions with respect to the respective roles of the Army and the Navy in the further prosecution of the war in the Pacific.

The meetings took place in the conference room of the Joint Chiefs of Staff not far down the hall from the rooms of the War Plans Committee. The planners had been working on drafts of what

became the strategic plan for the defeat of Japan and served as a secretarial for the conference. The planners included Captain Charles J. Moore, ("Carl Moore"), a close personal friend of Admiral Spruance. They had been together in destroyers on the Asia station early in their careers and had been together later at the Naval War College in the 1930's.

That is when I met Admiral Spruance. Captain Moore invited me to meet him and we had a short visit.

C: What was your initial impression of him?

B: As a classic naval officer - reserved, twinkling blue eyes which spoke more than he did. Very straight. That was my first impression.

Appointed Flag Secretary, Staff of Adm. Spruance, Commander Central Pacific Force, August 1943

C: How were you chosen and why were you chosen as Spruance's Flag Secretary in August 1943? Do you know how that came about?

B: Yes. One afternoon in May, Captain Moore, then head of the Navy side of the Joint War Plans Committee called me to his office. He told me that Admiral Spruance had been named Commander Central Pacific Force and had invited him to serve as his Chief of Staff. He showed me the list of ships which had been designated for the Central Pacific Force. "I will be going," he said. He added that he had been asked by Admiral Spruance to select the members of his staff, with a few exceptions. "How would you like to come as the Admiral's flag secretary?" he said. This sounded exciting to me, but I did not know what a flag secretary did.

C: I was going to ask you, what did a flag secretary do? What were your duties?

B: Captain Moore told me my duties would involve handling the paper work, much as I did in Washington. I did not press the point because I felt this would be a wonderful opportunity.

C: What did you say?

B: Yes, after I had a day to sleep on the idea. But then, Admiral Bieri, to whom Captain Moore reported in the Navy Department, told Captain Moore that Barber could go if he could find a replacement. I had seen Admiral Bieri a few times when he sat in on afternoon discussions of the War Plans Committee.

C: So you had to look for your replacement?

B: That's the way it turned out and I succeeded in doing so. A Naval Reserve Officer who had been a year ahead of me at Harvard Law School whom I admired was then in the Bureau of Personnel. His name was Daniel Gribbon. I asked Dan if he would be interested in replacing me. He said yes. He had been a top student at Harvard Law School and had proved himself as a fine administrator as case editor for the Harvard Law Review. He was offered and accepted the assignment. That released me. In due course I received orders to report to CinCPac in Pearl Harbor, August 1, 1943 for assignment as flag secretary on the staff of Admiral Spruance.

C: When you reported, how large was the staff that you reported to, of Spruance?

B: I was one of the first on the staff to arrive. I reported to someone on Admiral Nimitz's staff. Captain Moore had already arrived. I met Admiral Spruance a week or so later. The space where Admiral Spruance and the staff were to have offices had been cleared. I was assigned a desk in an open area near the office which Admiral Spruance was to occupy. I then set about assisting in getting the offices ready for work. I got well acquainted with the flag secretary of the Commander, Service Forces in another building that first month. He was very helpful in seeing that requested equipment and supplies were promptly delivered. For me, those first weeks were a getting acquainted type of experience. It wasn't long before I was walking with the Admiral up the hill to the Navy hospital at Aiea or on the beach at Kailua, across the Pali on the other side of the island from Waikiki.

C: Is that where he lived?

B: No. He lived near the headquarters offices at Makalapa, as I did later on. For the first month or so, I was billeted in single officer quarters near Honolulu.

C: But anyway, you began to walk with him at this time.

B: Yes, and to swim with him. Once a week or so we went over to the beach house at Kailua that had been made available to Admiral Nimitz by the Damon family. The nearby beach was in the shape of a crescent. Admiral Spruance liked to walk on the beach out to the point and swim across the bay back to the point of beginning.

C: He was quite physically fit, wasn't he?

B: He certainly was. Shortly after I arrived I had been asked if I could swim. My answer was "yes" and I was asked always to swim with him. I was a fair swimmer, but this looked like a long swim to me. However I soon developed the endurance to complete the swim comfortably. When there was an onshore breeze, a challenge was to avoid any Portuguese man-of-war, a marine creature with a bluish bubble and a long dark streamer that burned like a hot wire if it touched you. Admiral Spruance swam with his head up and eyes ahead. I swam with my head in the water doing what they then called the Australian crawl. We developed a plan where I swam off the Admiral's starboard quarter and he maintained a lookout for any man-of-war. If we saw a number of them stranded on the beach as we walked to the point, sometimes we gave up the swim and walked back. Some days, when the Admiral wanted to talk to Admiral Lockwood, the submarine force commander, we would walk along the path near the ocean at Waikiki.

C: Were these daily events?

B: Almost daily. Unless the weather was very bad, he would go out for an hour or two in the afternoon.

C: What did he talk to you about during these walks?

B: It was as if you and I were walking. Initially, I was just learning the ropes and he would talk some about the Navy. More often it was about a book he was reading, or he would ask me about my background, my hobbies, what I thought of Harvard, that sort of thing, and personalities. He felt his staff should know one another. We did, because he took an interest in most of us.

C: A personal interest.

B: A personal interest. There were a number of us he relied on for his walks.

C. Do you know what he liked to read? You mentioned books. Did you know what he was reading?

B. I knew at the time, but I do not remember now. Many is the evening I saw him in his big chair in his quarters on the INDIANAPOLIS reading.

C: So he was an active person?

B: While we were in Pearl Harbor, I had very little personal contact with him except when we were walking together in the afternoon. When I did see him in his office, it was at his stand-up desk or by the large map on the wall. I seldom saw him sitting at his office desk. The only time I saw him sitting down was at mess or when he was visiting with someone that required that kind of hostmanship. I remember when other officers came to see him, including General Holland Smith, commander of the amphibious forces, they would stand up in his office. I'm not sure he had a second chair in the office. Once he commented to me: "They don't stay long."

C: That's one way to cut short a visit.

B: My talks with Admiral Spruance occurred mostly on our walks and later, walking the deck aboard ship. Aboard ship, the Admiral would be out on the foredeck promptly at 6:30 am walking briskly fore and aft until 7 am when he came in for breakfast in the staff mess. On most days, he would be out again for an hour or more in the afternoon. Perhaps I should tell you an anecdote. One day after I received my orders to Pearl Harbor, Colonel Merwin Silverthorn, the Marine on the War Plans Committee (later he led the Marine forces on the drive north to the Yalu River in Korea) said: "Barber, if you're going to sea, you're going to have to learn how to walk the deck." He pointed to two lines on the concrete pavement in front of the Public Health Building and drilled me in walking fast, straight, in step, and courteously with the officer next to me. You always turn toward the officer you are walking with and keep step on the turns. That training came in very handy during my first days on the INDIANAPOLIS.

C: Very good. I imagine it would be kind of difficult to walk on the deck of a moving ship. Was there much vibration?

B: Not much on the big ships, except when we were in heavy seas.

En route Tarawa in INDIANAPOLIS, November 1943

C: When did you finally put to sea from Hawaii?

B: That was when we left Pearl Harbor for Tarawa in November 1943. That was my first time at sea as a flag secretary.

C: How did your duties evolve at sea as a flag secretary?

B: I remember learning with great anticipation and excitement that my general quarters position was on the flag bridge. On the way to Tarawa, Admiral Spruance and his operations staff stood around the chart table for a period each day discussing the problems that might arise during the landings on Tarawa and Makin Islands, the positioning of the carrier task force and the projected screen against submarines--and getting acquainted with one another. I was invited to join the crowded circle around the table. This was all new to me. I had been used to the large maps on the wall in the war rooms in Washington, but these were discussions of tactics in enemy waters.

When we were in cruising mode, I stood regular watches on the flag bridge, assisted in keeping the plotting chart up to the moment, watching the horizon in all directions, glancing on the radar scopes, reading all dispatches brought to the bridge by the communications staff and the like. During general quarters, my responsibility was to keep informed and be immediately available to the Admiral. Occasionally Admiral Spruance would ask me for something or explain to me what was going on.

C: Did he ever ask your opinion on any plan or any course of action at all during the war?

B: Not in the sense of looking for a professional opinion. But he would often when we were walking the deck or passing time on the bridge think out loud and if I had any comment, he would listen. I suspect that I was very careful not to get into that territory because I hadn't been trained for operations and I'd be a nuisance if I intruded.

C: Would you say that his staff was a contented and happy staff?

B: Yes, I think so. My impression was that for the most part we worked well together.

C: How did the staff react to Spruance?

B: He was the boss.

C: Was it a large staff?

B: Compared to the staff of Admiral Halsey when he commanded the Third Fleet later during the war, we had a small staff, less than half the size of Admiral Halsey's. Admiral Spruance limited the officers on his staff to the number that could fit into the flag quarters on the INDIANAPOLIS. During the planned island landings, he wanted to be close to the landing sites so he could watch what was going on. Also, he said that he did not want to bring the fast battleships within range of the expected shore batteries and submarines operating to defend the islands. Later during the war, when we operated with the fast carriers in support of the South Pacific landing on Palau or raids on Japan, we transferred to the NEW JERSEY.

Kamikaze of the INDIANAPOLIS, Okinawa, April 1945

C: Did you ever transfer to the NEW MEXICO?

B: Yes. That was at Okinawa [after a kamikaze struck the INDIANAPOLIS]. On D-1, a kamikaze closed in on the INDIANAPOLIS first thing in the morning. I was out on the focsle at the time. I saw it coming and turn down to dive on the ship. The only gun that fired was the 5" gun on the focsle manned by a Native American. At the last moment, I took cover in the flag mess and heard and felt the plane crash on the port side aft. The plane bounced off the ship but its bomb went through the condenser room and exploded under the ship, damaging the two port propellers and bending the shaft of a third. We lost eight men, including one of my yeomen. The INDIANAPOLIS was crippled, however, and we moved slowly on the outboard starboard propeller to Kerama Retto, a nearby atoll with a deep lagoon which had been secured a few days earlier.

C: How did he react to this damaged ship?

B: I did not observe any reaction except that he was very disappointed that the INDIANAPOLIS was lost to the bombardment prior to the landing and would not be in place where he could observe the operations. I do remember that sometime after the ship was moored in Kerama Retto, Admiral Spruance and perhaps Captain Forrestel, the operations officer, left the INDIANAPOLIS to observe the continuing operations from another ship. It may have been on D+1 or D+2. Those of us left on the flagship felt like sitting ducks. That was a most uncomfortable time. Almost every morning and every evening, Japanese planes came in overhead. The flagship was a large target in a small anchorage. I have to say though there were a good many large ships out in the bay, so we were not a prime target.

C: Did Spruance ever praise his staff at all, overtly?

B: He did not express emotions.

C: So he wasn't forthcoming in praising people for what they did?

B: No. He expected everybody to do their job and they all did. I would have felt it was out of character if he did. He was very supportive. He said little, but there was no nitpicking, no pushing.

C: What would you say his leadership style was like? What kind of a leader was he in wartime?

B: He did his job thinking through the planned operations and getting officers in whom he had confidence to lead the assigned task forces. I saw this dramatically at Tarawa, where the staff was all new. The INDIANAPOLIS was in the lagoon. We could see the operations. They did not go well. There was a low, low tide. In the principal landing site, the landing craft grounded far from the shore. The Marines had to wade in with their guns held over their heads. The first few days were very difficult. Various of our line officers pressed the Admiral to tell Admiral Turner, the officer in charge of the landings, this or that or to get a message to General Holland Smith. They thought we could see something that those who were more closely involved could not see. The Admiral would say, "No, he is in charge, he knows what to do." The Admiral would listen to what his staff member wanted to say, but I do not recall his ever authorizing a message in the heat of operations at Tarawa.

C: He would definitely make his own decisions?

B. Yes, but in the heat of battle, he would not interfere with the commander in charge so long as their actions were consistent with the operations plan and his orders. His discipline in that respect became a much remarked difference as compared to Admiral Halsey who was said to be everywhere all the time.

C: Making his presence known.

B: Yes, making his presence known. I can make a very personal comment. I came to think of Admiral Halsey as the great admiral of the South Pacific war when the available U. S. forces were inadequate to the task assigned. He was out there as the leader and a great cheerleader, aggressively praising his units and his people in the press. Every sailor must have felt he had the strength of three. And if Admiral Halsey kept his own team confused, he certainly kept the enemy confused as well. On the other hand, when we had superior forces, Admiral Spruance was the leader who did his thinking ahead of time and formulated his operations plans accordingly. He was called the admirals' admiral because when he gave one an assignment he expected performance. And when a change was required, he stepped up to it promptly and issued clear orders.

C: Could you describe his personality and character?

B: I admired him very much. He had an immense influence on me.

C: On you and your life?

B: Yes. I was a young man. This was my first experience in the real world out there. Admiral Spruance was quiet, thoughtful, very strong, very direct. I don't know that I can say more.

Comments by Admiral Spruance on leaders of U.S. Navy—War in the Pacific

C: I have a laundry list here of some of the leaders of World War II. I wonder if he ever expressed an opinion of these people or have you any knowledge of his relationship with them. I'm going to go through the list one by one.

B: I do know some of them.

Adm. Chester W. Nimitz

C: I'm sure. I'm going to go through the list and you can comment on these individuals and his relationship and opinion of them if you know it. First, Chester Nimitz.

B: He thought Chester Nimitz was great. I can tell you an anecdote. After Tarawa, the strategic plan called for capture and occupation of the Marshall islands. There were differences of opinion whether the first objective should be to attack the eastern islands where the Japanese had airfields, Mille, Maloelap and Wotje, or should go directly to the major Japanese bases on Kwajelein and Roy. Captain Moore, our chief of staff, thought it would be most imprudent for the main forces to by-pass these "unsinkable" airfields on atolls at the eastern end of the Marshalls. I think Admiral Spruance was at least tentatively of that view.

Admiral Spruance told me sometime later of the decision from the meeting on this issue convened by Admiral Nimitz. As he told the story, I pictured this as in a court martial, where, after full review of the issues, the most junior officer is polled first. I'm sure Admiral Turner was there and I assume Admiral McMorris, Nimitz's chief of staff, was also there. After a full discussion during which every one of us favored taking the barrier islands first, Admiral Nimitz directed that the main forces proceed directly to the main islands while assigned ships and aircraft neutralize the airfields on the outer islands and occupy Majuro as well. I think Captain Moore had a role in including Majuro in the operation. From the war gaming at the Naval War College, he was well aware of the fact there was a deep lagoon at Majuro which could provide a protected anchorage for the fleet ships including the fast carriers after Kwajalein was secured.

Admiral Spruance had nothing but the finest opinion of Admiral Nimitz. I have to add, I did too. He was a great man.

Adm. Richmond K. Turner

C: R.K. Turner

B: Of course I knew Admiral Turner very well. He used me in ways other than as secretary of the Strategic Committee. When I heard of the attack on Pearl Harbor – it was Sunday afternoon – I phoned in and I was not wanted that day. I was there Monday and the dispatches were coming in from Honolulu, very confusing as to the amount of damage, the readiness of the ships that were left. One of the things I heard talked about was whether the fleet units, the carriers, that were not in Pearl Harbor at the time should be brought back east toward the coast in the case that the Japanese had a follow-on operation. This of course was a super secret concern, and Admiral Turner had me in - I could type – helping in the typing of various versions of the estimate of the situation that they were trying to do. This was in the front office where the CNO's work room was. I thought that was very unusual because they had chief yeomen who could type a lot better than me. I was just a young man brought from Harvard which was a hotbed of introspection on the rights and wrongs of everything that was going on.

Then Admiral Turner as OP-12 was the planning officer on Guadalcanal and he had me again up in that front office because I could draw -mechanical drawing - like an architect. Drawing the charts in ink of red and blue and so on, and he would tell me what he wanted and I produced the charts for him. It was the kind of thing where they really weren't prepared for this kind of security and since I had this assignment, he used me a lot. So we knew each other pretty well.

I'd like to give another anecdote about Admiral Turner. At Ulithi there was this meeting. We had 30-40 flag officers aboard before Okinawa. It was a very important meeting. I was in fresh uniform greeting all the flag officers coming aboard. Quite a number of them I had known from my months in Washington and in Pearl. All of a sudden - you know, I was very serious as a young aide greeting officers at the deck and saluting - somebody came behind me and put his knees into my knees - that was Admiral Turner. I hadn't seen him for quite awhile, really since the Tarawa operation when he would come aboard from time to time. I tell that anecdote because it is so out of what the public thinks of Admiral Turner. He was a great friend of Admiral Spruance. We saw him when he had things to discuss. I knew his flag secretary very well because we were the ones that communicated. I know Admiral Spruance felt very, very highly of Admiral Turner's capabilities, particularly at Okinawa. Admiral Turner had great difficulty with liquor.

C: I didn't know that.

B: It is well reported in Tom Buell's book and in the naval histories. And yet he had a great capacity to be inoperative at night and fully operational in the morning. This was particularly when he was stationary in a ship. But Admiral Spruance stayed with him and valued his services.

Adm. William F. Halsey

C: Halsey.

B: Halsey I didn't really know. I met him a few times. I knew him by reputation. I knew he and Admiral Spruance were good friends. Halsey had proposed that he take his place when he had to be hospitalized at the time of Midway. So Admiral Spruance, I'm sure, returned that respect. We didn't talk about Halsey with me.

Adm. Mark A. Mitscher

C: Mitscher?

B: I met Mitscher only when he came aboard at Ulithi. I do not remember meeting him at other times.

There may have been some tension after the Battle of the Philippine Sea west of Saipan when Admiral Mitscher was free with the newspeople to comment on the fact that Admiral Spruance had not accepted his recommendation to seek a fleet engagement with the oncoming Japanese fleet.

At the time, Admiral Spruance was clear in his own mind that he had made the correct decision, that is, that if we did not have reliable information as to where the main units of the Japanese fleet were, Task Force 58 should turn around at midnight in order to be in position to support the landing forces at Saipan the next day.

After the decision had been made and his order passed to Admiral Mitscher, Admiral Spruance retired. The door to the large room outside his bedroom was open. I noticed Commander Gilven Slonim, our Japanese language radio intelligence officer, was there at the admiral's large plotting board, and joined him. It was about nine p.m.

He told me nothing new had been learned by his radiomen. To our surprise, Admiral Spruance came out of his bedroom and visited with us. Reflecting on his decision, he commented that if he were the Japanese admiral in this situation he would say that if I could take out the transports landing troops and supplies, his forces on Saipan could do the rest. I'd split my forces and send some of my fast ships to deal with the transports.

Then he retired once again. He had made his decision. That was very Spruance.

C: Did he ever comment on Fletcher?

B: Not that I know. I didn't know Frank Fletcher.

Adm. Richard Connolly

C: Or Connolly?

B: I knew Connolly very well. He had been a commander in OP-12 when I was there. One of the reasons I knew Connolly and Hill, who were not on the U.S. Strategic Committee, was that I had custody of copy no. 19 of the Rainbow Five--the then current war plan for the defeat of Japan. You may remember that the first week of December, before December 7th, the summary of Rainbow Five, with direct quotations, was published on the front page of the Chicago Tribune. I was from Chicago. I had many relationships in Chicago because of Northwestern where I was an active student. The President instructed the FBI to find out where that leak was. So I had the honor of visiting with the FBI people, just like in the movies with one of them with a big cigar walking back and forth over there, somebody else asking me questions under a big light, in the Navy Department. And that went on for a couple of months. We all got well acquainted because everybody else that had access to Rainbow Five had the same experience.

The FBI was around OP-12 until shortly before the Strategic Committee moved over across the street to the Public Health Building. I was told later that it came out of the Treasury. But it did bring us together in an area of common concern.

C: Did Spruance ever comment on Connolly?

B: I had known Admiral Connolly personally in OP-12 at the Navy Department in 1941-42. He commanded the Task Force which landed the Marines at Roi-Namur. He came aboard the flagship later with Admiral Turner and Holland Smith. I believe it was at Kwajalein, to discuss the idea of proceeding directly to Eniwetok. The floating reserve had not been committed in the Marshalls and the advantage of taking Eniwetok before it could be further fortified by the Japanese was obvious. Spruance never commented on him directly. However the fact that he had been assigned to lead the Task Force at Roi tells me that the Admiral thought he was absolutely first rate.

Adm. Forrest P. Sherman

C: Forrest Sherman?

B: I knew Forrest Sherman very well. He was also in OP-12 and later was assigned as an aviation officer on the Joint War Plans Committee. He was one of the officers with ideas, always willing to express them and we became good friends. We had a lot to talk about. He was very good to me. I have in my scrapbook a souvenir from the goodbye party we gave him when he went off to take command of the WASP. Spruance never commented on him to me.

C: McMorris?

B: I had personal contacts with Admiral McMorris when he was Chief of Staff to Adm. Nimitz. Spruance never commented on him to me.

C: Ghormley?

B: I had no contact with Ghormley. I do not recall any comments from Spruance on Ghormley.

Adm. John H. Towers

C: John Towers?

B: I served John Towers as his Flag Secretary when he replaced Spruance in November 1945 as Commander Naval Forces Japan. He was not on Admiral Spruance's list of men he admired and trusted. I'm not aware that he ever expressed any unkind views, but there was some tension. Towers headed the Navy air forces in the Pacific. It was no secret that the aviators thought that flying officers should

be in command of the naval task forces in the Pacific, which included Carriers.

C: John Clark?

B: I just knew of him as one of the Task Force commanders.

Lieut. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC

C: Holland Smith?

B: Holland Smith was a bulldog and a fighter. Admiral Spruance had to like him. He certainly made his character known during my first months in Pearl Harbor when the staff was planning the Tarawa operation. Holland Smith was in the office frequently. Always with shoulders. I never heard Admiral Spruance raise his voice, but it seemed obvious to me that Admiral Spruance felt that General Smith was the man to head the amphibious landings.

C: Willis Lee?

B: Admiral Lee was in command of the old battleships, which provided firepower for the support forces.

C: John McCain?

B: I knew of no great warmth. McCain relieved Mitscher as commander of the fast carriers when Halsey relieved Spruance at Okinawa.

C: Jesse Oldendorf?

B: I do not remember him.

Adm. Harry W. Hill

C: Hill?

B: I knew Hill personally because he was at OP-12 when I was there. I do remember Hill coming aboard. Hill went on to command the landing at Eniwetok; he surely had the support of Spruance.

C: Kinkaid?

B: I knew of Admiral Kinkaid because I knew his Flag Secretary. He was in the Philippines. We never had any personal contact that I remember.

C: Wilson Brown?

B: I did not know him.

Miles Browning and Michael LeFanu

C: Miles Browning?

B: Miles Browning was Admiral Halsey's chief of staff. I met him twice, once when I relieved Harold Stassen at Ulithi. The second time was when Halsey relieved Spruance off Okinawa. Your mention of Miles Browning gives me opportunity to speak of Michael LeFanu. We had on our staff a British liaison officer, Michael LeFanu, then a commander, R.N. He was a wonderfully warm, capable officer and we became great friends. Then when I was in England at Oxford after the war, his family provided my home away from home and his oldest son is my godson. LeFanu transferred to Halsey's staff when Halsey relieved Spruance at Ulithi. He and Miles Browning became warm friends. LeFanu went on to become head of the British Navy and First Sea Lord. He was in due course selected as Chief of the Combined Staff. However his physical examination for that position revealed that he had leukemia. He then retired from the British Navy and died three years later. We traded visits every few years after the war and when he could find the time. LeFanu would also visit the Brownings then in Norfolk, I believe, and the Barbers. My positive impression on Miles Browning really reflects the views of Michael LeFanu.

Adm. Ernest J. King

C: E. J. King?

B: Admiral King was the boss. I saw him from time to time, always at a distance, at the Navy Department and later at the Public Health Building when he came over for meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I never had personal contact with him other than to salute and hand him papers from time to time. He was very much admired in the Navy Department of my day. He fought for the Navy in a uniquely powerful way. Some years after the war I read Tom Buell's book on Admiral

King and learned of his meetings with the group of press people whom he trusted.

C: Of yes, we have some of those interviews here.

B: I was surprised because I did not believe that this stern, private man would want to . . .

C: Open up to the press.

B: Yes, open up to the press.

C: Exactly. He did. What was the relationship between King and Spruance? Was there ever any glimmerings of that?

B: I'm not aware of any glimmerings except in the case of Captain Moore. I was then Navy secretary of the Committee which became the Joint War Plans Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1943. I mention this because I know that Admiral King knew of Captain Moore's competence as an organizer, a planner, a thinker. After the Gilberts operation, Admiral Spruance recommended that Captain Moore be appointed Rear Admiral. Admiral Nimitz endorsed that recommendation. Captain Moore assumed that King had vetoed the promotion. Captain Moore had been Captain of the cruiser Philadelphia when it went aground off Nova Scotia. I was told that it had been an axiom within the Navy that there is no redemption. The result was a disappointment to Admiral Spruance. However, I never heard him comment on King directly.

C: Ben Moreell

B: I really didn't know him. He was head of the Bureau of Ships wasn't he?

C: He was Seabees.

B: Seabees, yes. Admiral Spruance expressed great admiration for the work of the Seabees. We always went ashore very shortly after the landing.

Shore visits with Spruance

C: Oh, I was going to ask you that question. If you did go ashore with him, and what his reactions were - to shore visits.

B: I have a humorous anecdote and some serious ones. Admiral Spruance almost always took either the flag lieutenant or me ashore with him. In thinking through the operations, I realized that I had been ashore with him at the most interesting times, from Tarawa, on except at Iwo Jima. I do not recall that the Admiral himself went ashore there. Admiral Spruance always wanted to go ashore to meet with the officer in command ashore just as soon as the general ashore felt he could receive him.

Admiral Spruance wanted to see everything. He chose the INDIANAPOLIS as his flagship because he wanted to be in close for the landings. At Iwo Jima, for example, he had the INDIANAPOLIS and another cruiser and two destroyers, marking the lanes of departure for the landing boats between the transports and the beaches.

In January 1944, on our way to join the carrier task force for the Marshall's operations, we stopped at Tarawa to confer with Admiral John Hoover, a friend of Spruance, who commanded the PBY's, the Navy's long range search forces. While there we went down to see Abemama, a small island south of Tarawa. There were only eight or ten Japanese defenders on the Island. We were told that when they saw U.S. forces coming they dug a trench and all of them committed suicide. There were some natives on this small Pacific island of coral and palm trees who lived as you and I would have imagined when we were young. So Admiral Spruance had to go and pay his respects to the young women in grass skirts and bare breasts. I brought a picture of Carl Moore with two of these lovelies in case you wanted to see it.

C: That's a riot.

B: And I have a panel of two pictures of Jack Breed, Admiral Hoover's flag lieutenant, with a lovely on each arm, one taken at Pearl Harbor in dress whites and the second at Abemama in Navy khakis. He titled the panel "Progress in the Navy."'

At Majuro Atoll, after the Kwajalein operations, the Admiral went ashore at the island to which the natives were relocated. I'll never forget being greeted by the head man who met us on the beach. He

was called the king. We traveled in the Admiral's gig or it may have been a service boat close to the shore and then stepped into a canoe with an outrigger to go the rest of the way. There was this erect man of advanced age in a white linen suit, clean and perfectly pressed, a shirt and bare feet there to welcome us. He greeted us and the Admiral visited with him for a few minutes and then we looked about. The visit had no strategic importance except for the Admiral's concern that the Navy protect the local people in their own ways. He was stern on that point. Of course this was in line with the orders of the base commander who did not report to Admiral Spruance, but he made his views known and we had an interesting walk around.

The only time we were individually armed was when we went ashore on Saipan. That was rather scary for me. I was not a pistol fan, though on my reserve cruises I had had pistol practice off the stern. The shore commander had insisted we be armed, so we were. I do not remember whether the Admiral was armed as well.

At Guam when we went ashore, I experienced another of the harsh realities of war. We went through an exchange of forces, with a file of Marines returning to base from the front on one side of the road and a file moving in to replace them on the other side of the road. This was my first close contact with what goes on ashore in terms of its effect on the men involved. They had been fighting on the front for several days living on K-rations, sleeping in foxholes and so on and looked the part. It made me realize how different life aboard ship was.

Adm. Arthur C. Davis

C: It certainly was. Shipboard life was a little more luxurious than a foxhole. I've got a few more names here. Arthur Davis?

B: Admiral Davis replaced Captain Moore as Chief of Staff in late 1944 after the Marianas operations. He was with us for the planning of the Iwo Jima and Okinawa operations. We got along great. That was one of my great surprises.

C: Why were you surprised?

B: Because he was an aviator, a black and white sort of officer and he wanted answers quickly. He came with some advance billing from

other staff officers who knew him. That, of course, accounts for what I say, not my own observations. In fact we worked very well together. I have in my kit a picture of Admiral Davis endorsed "For Chuck Barber - The Navy's best Flag Secretary." You can see the endorsement on the picture of Admiral Davis included in Tom Buell's "The Quiet Warrior."

We went through the operations at Iwo Jima and Okinawa together. He was on the Flag Bridge with me when the kamikaze struck the NEW MEXICO. Admiral Spruance was not yet on the bridge. We had all been at mess, on the starboard side at the rear of the ship. When general quarters sounded, Davis and I headed for the flag bridge. I missed my baked Alaska that night. Admiral Spruance, as he often did, took his time and finished what he was doing.

I was able to give Admiral Davis what he wanted when he wanted it. By that time I was well informed about the Navy and staff practices, the personalities involved, the performance of the various units in the Task Force and the like.

We became friends and that friendship lasted after the war. He married a second time and purchased a house in Chevy Chase, MD., a nearby suburb of Washington, D.C., only a few blocks from the Barbers. He and Admiral Spruance also were good friends. We kept in touch with one another. On one occasion when Admiral Spruance was in Washington, I think it was in early 1952, he and Admiral Davis came over to see the Barbers. We had two children and one on the way at the time. We had a great afternoon.

Adm. Charles A. Pownall

C: Another individual, Pownall.

B: I remember Admiral Pownall. He was in command of the fast carriers at the Gilberts operation. Admiral Spruance thought he had performed well in the operations. However I was told he had been relieved by Admiral Nimitz after the operation and replaced by Admiral Mitscher. Mitscher was a great admiral but there was not the close relationship with Spruance that there was with some of the other task force commanders.

Adm. Arthur. S. Carpender

C: Now I've got a name that Frank Uhlig, former editor of the *Review*, gave me. People whom he said disappeared from the scene. I wonder if you ever ran across him - A. S. Carpender.

B: I knew him very well. I owe my naval career to Arthur Carpender. He was professor of Naval Science and Tactics at Northwestern University during my junior and senior years. I was a member of the Naval ROTC Unit at Northwestern. I called on him after the war in the Navy Department in Washington. At the time he was a Vice Admiral and in charge of public relations for the Navy. He told me how I received the assignment to the War Plans Division when I was ordered to active duty in July 1941. He told me that in 1941 he was officer Detail Officer at the Bureau of Personnel. That was two years after I graduated from Northwestern. He said that there came across his desk an order from the CNO to provide six reserve officers to replace six line officers who were handling paper work in Op-12, the War Plans Division. The request said they must be selected carefully, character was most important and the ability to handle administrative matters. Admiral Carpender said to me, I'll never forget it, "I knew one man that was going to be on that list." That was me.

C: That's great. Another individual, Herbert F. Leary?

B: Don't you mean the HERBERT and the LEARY. They were two World War I four stack destroyers. I had two NROTC summer cruises on one or the other of them.

C: No, this is an individual that he gave me.

B: That is a curious coincidence. No, that is not a name I know.

C: John Newton?

B: That's not a name I recognize.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur, USA

C: Okay. These people disappeared from the scene. What was Spruance's relationship with General MacArthur?

B: I have two relevant anecdotes.

In mid-February 1944 we were sailing toward Truk in the NEW JERSEY with the IOWA, and a screen. A fast carrier task group was following nearby. The Marshall's operations had been successfully completed. The floating reserve had not been committed. A decision was made to proceed promptly to capture Eniwetok. Important units of the Japanese fleet had been photographed at Truk a few days earlier. The move was in support of the Eniwetok operation. It combined a strike on Truk and the mission to deal with any Japanese combat ships that might head for Eniwetok. We were some two days out of Majuro walking on the focsle when the Admiral was handed a message. It was the daily news summery broadcast clear to all ships and stations. One item had been marked. It reported that forces under MacArthur had captured Green Island.

Admiral Spruance handed the message to me. He was disturbed. He explained: "That's typical MacArthur." His orders from Washington were to support the Fifth Fleet's Eniwetok operation. Instead he took advantage of the situation to advance on Green Island, not far from the important Japanese base at Rabaul. He likely assumed that if his landing force got into trouble, Fifth Fleet units would be sent to support the landing.

C: Not positive.

B: That was act one. Act two. Manila Bay. The war had ended. Admiral Spruance was ordered to proceed to Manila Bay and report to General MacArthur. It was late morning. I joined him as he paced the deck of the NEW JERSEY steeling himself to go and meet this man who had embarrassed the Navy a number of times. He was uncharacteristically candid as he shared his concerns with me.

I was among the officers on deck to meet him when he returned. When he saw me he stepped aside: "it wasn't so bad," he said, or words to that effect.

C: Oh, that's good. It wasn't so bad.

B: Yes. And in Japan he admired MacArthur's showing of respect for the Japanese people and the way he worked to rebuild a functioning government. As Commander Naval Forces Japan, he called on MacArthur a number of times for reporting purposes. I was not aware of any friction. His point of view of MacArthur changed completely.

While in Tokyo Bay, he went ashore at Yokosuka many afternoons to walk in the farming countryside nearby. Usually there were only two or three of us, no guards and never a problem. I think he gave some credit to MacArthur for these conditions.

C: That's interesting.

B: On the other hand, I never knew anyone that had to deal with MacArthur across command lines who had friendly comments about him.

Capt. Charles J. Moore

C: What did Spruance think of the Sound Military Decision book that was produced here at the college?

B: He thought it was a jungle of words. He and Captain Moore did not have a meeting of minds on that subject.

C: And Captain Moore was in favor of this document?

B. Yes. Captain Moore was very much involved in its development. He was an academic at heart, in Navy uniform. He was very good at thinking problems through - what Admiral Kalbfus called the scientific method. He felt you had to put your concept down in writing to be sure you were thinking straight. Captain Moore wrote a great deal. This is reflected, I believe, in his oral history.

C: We've got that.

B: Yes. Captain Moore wrote a great deal. He gave me a copy of what he called "the Green Book," shortly after he was assigned to the War Plans Committee. He came to me and said, "Barber, I want you to read this, and then lets talk about it." I did and we did. In the process I learned about the importance of structure and content in preparing an estimate of the situation or an operations plan. He told me about the extensive revising process and his role with Admiral Kalbfus in its development. He admired Admiral Kalbfus very much. But that was not Admiral Spruance's style.

C: That's not his style?

B: Yes. Most of the planning on the Fifth Fleet Staff was oral until the officers got right down to drafting their portions of the plan. Those involved did not have time to read each others papers as they were developed. I was involved in the process because my office yeoman typed the papers and I was sometimes asked by the author to review his draft. This I would do in any event if time were available to be sure that my yeoman had not garbled some of the language. Captain Moore was the officer who reviewed the fleet plan in its entirety before it left the office or the ship.

Sometimes Admiral Spruance would get out of patience with Captain Moore, because Captain Moore would press him insistently to read something he had written.

This became a real problem at the time of planning for the operations to follow the Marianas. Captain Moore felt strongly that the next operation should be Truk and then the Philippines, Formosa, and China. He wrote extensively, but felt that he couldn't get Spruance to listen to him. Spruance favored the capture of Iwo Jima and Okinawa during this period. This occurred while we were in Majoru and while the Eniwetok operation was going on.

C: Did you ever have any contact with Admiral Pye?

B: No.

Adm. William Leahy

C: Admiral Leahy?

B: Yes. I knew Admiral Leahy as Chairman of the Joint Strategic Services Committee. The Committee had offices near the offices of the Joint War Plans Committee in the Public Health building. I had no personal contact with him other than to deliver papers to his office in his presence and the like. I knew the Navy members of his staff. One of them was a former professor of mine at Northwestern University, Prof. William McGovern, who was, I'm confident, a useful member of Leahy's staff.

Reminiscences – comments, events, policies

Naval War College

C: I have a question about the War College. I wonder if Spruance ever mentioned the value of the War College education to you. Did the War College and its significance to him in his career ever surface?

B: Yes. He felt it was an important part of his career. We talked about it a number of times. After all, it was the one job he wanted after the war. His comments on Sound Military Decision sound contrary to that, but that was only one item. I visited him at the War College after the war. He took great pleasure in taking me to the war room and telling me about the war games and how they had changed since he was at the War College before the war.

C: Were you here in 1946-1947?

B: I was here in September 1946.

Spruance's family

C: That was shortly after he took over. Did Spruance ever comment on his family? Did he ever mention them to you? Did you ever get a feeling for what his relations were with his family members?

B: Yes, they were very close. He was particularly concerned about his daughter Margaret. She had tuberculosis. He could not be with her and that concerned him.

C: Did he ever talk about his son, Edward?

B: Less. But he took me with him at Pearl Harbor in early 1946 to meet Edward when he inspected the Japanese submarine Edward had brought over from Japan. I say "inspected," because he wore white gloves. At one point where pipes were overhead he reached up and rubbed his index finger along the top of a pipe. His gloved finger was blackened. He said nothing, but showed it to Edward and to me. I know it was important to him when Edward established his retirement home near Monterey after the war

C: Right. To live nearby.

B: And his death in an auto accident was tragic.

Japanese Admirals

C: What did Admiral Spruance think of the Japanese as a foe?

B: He thought they were great fighters, even through Okinawa. We never saw Japanese soldiers hoisting a white flag or surrendering voluntarily. We saw them, including family members, going off the cliff at the north end of the island, committing suicide. It was awful. He did not share the words we heard from some Navy people. I will not repeat them. He felt they were brave people and would fight to the end. That was part of his concern about the plan from Washington of going directly to Kyushu.

C: He wanted to go to China first?

B: Yes to establish a base. He hoped to cause the Japanese to surrender, to realize that they could not win. He explained this to me a number of times. I do not remember him using the word surrender. He wanted them to want to make peace.

The atom bomb

C: Jumping ahead a little bit with regard to your previous statements. Were you briefed on the dropping of the bomb to begin with and then what was his attitude toward dropping the bomb after that?

B: Yes, we were briefed. Admiral Spruance gathered a number of his officers together out of doors. I think it was on a porch outside his office on Guam. I was included. He had a copy of a dispatch in his hand which he read to us. It described the atom bomb in physical terms – a force equivalent to so many thousands of tons of dynamite. Only two were available. They would be delivered to targets in Japan by B-29's from Saipan.

Shortly after reading the dispatch, Admiral Spruance returned to his office.

A few of us exchanged views. It was early in August. The staff had been working under pressure to complete the Fleet Plan for the invasion of Kyushu. My yeoman, in an office some distance away, were working overtime dealing with the required paper work. Our deadline for delivering the Fifth Fleet Plan to Task Force Commanders was the first week in September.

I, and I suspect the others, could not comprehend what the atom bomb was. But we all knew it had to be a very important development.

C: Even being thought of or developed at all?

B: Yes. And the second thing - none of us could comprehend what the dispatch was telling us. The impact of the new weapon was equivalent to so many thousand tons of TNT. Does that mean anything to you?

C: No.

B: We were not told of the targets but we were told that the bomb would be dropped. There were only two of them and they would be dropped on Japan a few days apart. It was important that the key staff members be informed because we were about to get orders to prepare plans for the invasion of Kyushu with a target date in November 1945, just a few months off. Maybe I should speak personally. I didn't comprehend what the atomic bomb was. After the meeting several of us exchanged views. I did not get the impression that the others had any better concept of it than I did, except that this was a very important development. In December, the plane I was on on my way to China flew low over Hiroshima so that those aboard could see the damage. Commodore Willcutts who was the Fleet Surgeon had earlier visited the area.

C: Oh yes, he did his reminiscences.

B: He was a wonderfully warm man. He was on the ground at Hiroshima as I'm sure he told you. I had talked to him before my flight. I flew over after a light snow. The extent of the damage was clear. The plane then landed at the airport at Nagasaki. I did not see a great deal of the damage there either from the air or on the ground. It was not as obvious.

I am not aware whether Admiral Spruance ever entered into the debate with respect to the justification for dropping the bomb. I do think he would have felt that any action that could cause the Japanese to make peace without the further loss of life of Americans and our allies as well as the Japanese would be justified.

C: Did he ever comment at all on any of the Japanese commanders, like Toyada, Ozawa, or Kurita?

B: Not in a way that I remember their names. He did talk about the commander at Midway, but I do not remember the officer by name.

Logistics

C. Right. General comments. Did Spruance ever express himself on the importance of logistics in the winning of the war?

B: Oh yes, indeed. This was one of his number one topics. The Navy cannot win the war far from its home base without adequate support. He had a great interest in logistics and had instructed Captain Moore to find the very best logistics officer available for the staff. This had not been such a problem in the past for the Navy. Operations had not required battleships and fast carriers to operate at sea for months at a time without replenishing supplies at an established base. Yes, refueling at sea had been practiced. But not refueling battleships at sea. They were the ones that refueled the destroyers.

C: Who was the logistics officer, by the way?

B: Commander Barton B. Biggs, who signed his name "B^3." Biggs was very proud of his work as logistics officer. In the planning, Admiral Spruance placed a high priority on assuring that the supply and re-supply of the fleets' requirements would be available. For example, before the Iwo and Okinawa operations, he insisted that procedures be developed for transferring ammunition to capital ships at sea. That had not previously been done. Procedures for this were in fact developed and practiced in time.

Submarine force

C: Did he ever comment at all on the submarine force and the use of torpedoes and the problems with them?

B: He certainly commented on the submarine force. He thought they were the greatest. One reason was that they were the source of important intelligence. They watched the Japanese at the critical points. He was concerned by the reports of failures of torpedoes but I am not aware that he ever got involved personally in the problem.

When in Pearl Harbor, I do know that he met with Admiral Lockwood from time to time. On one occasion after the Tarawa operation, I was with him when we walked with Admiral Lockwood along the shore in Honolulu. As we passed the Royal Hawaiian Hotel where the submariners were billeted between cruises, Admiral Spruance noticed laundry hanging outside a number of the windows. He turned to Admiral Lockwood and said, "Can't you do better for your men than making them wash their own underwear and uniforms when they are in Honolulu?" As he said it, his eyes twinkled.

Royal Navy

C: What were Admiral Spruance's relations with the Royal Navy like? How would you characterize them? There was a task force he was dealing with.

B: I am not aware that there ever was a problem. A Royal Navy carrier task force was assigned to cover a sector between Formosa and a group of islands between Formosa and Okinawa. It's mission was to neutralize Japanese airfields on the island group and to make frequent strikes on Formosa.

Admiral Spruance could not have been more appreciative about the performance of the British task force. In 1946 he made an important speech to a prestigious military institution in London where he described the splendid performance of the group. I'm sure you have a copy.

C: I'm sure we do. There is interest occasionally among historians in writing a history of the Royal Navy in the Pacific During World War II.

C: Did Spruance ever express any opinion on the performance of the regular Navy officers versus the Reserves?

B: None whatsoever. He looked for people who could do their assigned work. I never heard him make any comments on the reserves.

The media

C: What was his attitude toward the media or the press?

B: That is interesting. As Flag Secretary, I was the buffer between the news people and the Admiral until Paul Smith was assigned to the

staff prior to the Iwo Jima-Okinawa operations. Smith had been managing editor, I believe, of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and was well regarded by the Navy in Washington. It was Admiral Spruance's practice to send press people to see Admirals Turner or Mitscher, the tactical commanders. Since Washington regarded the Flag Secretary as responsible for accommodating newsmen, I felt some obligation to encourage the Admiral to receive them. But his view was firm. The officers directing the fighting on the ground or in the air were the ones the newsmen should see.

C: Did he ever grant an interview?

B: Only once, and that was at Ulithi. Paul Smith had recently reported for duty with the staff. We must have had fifty or more newsmen aboard. At Ulithi the principal units assigned for the strikes on Japan and the Iwo Jima and Okinawa operations were gathering - it was a great sight. Admiral Spruance's principle message was that there would be no news reports until the Navy had a secure base and then the news people could talk to people at the base. He would not break radio silence at sea. There was some grumbling, but Spruance's message was clear.

The Navy Department had given attention to getting news reports off ships operating in radio silence at sea and had developed a procedure for doing so which I had in my files. I discussed this in the first instance with Commander Barton Biggs, the logistics officer. He felt we should give it a try after the forthcoming carrier task force raid on Tokyo. Admiral Spruance agreed, I think reluctantly. The procedure called for a line to be strung between the midship structure of the ship and high on a pole erected at the stern. A bag containing the news reports was to be attached to the line and picked up by a B-29 flying from Saipan which would lower a grappling hook to pick up the bag. I had the responsibility of seeing that all concerned were notified.

It was February 1945, just prior to the landing at Iwo Jima. After the raid on Tokyo a destroyer went round and picked up envelopes from ships with reporters aboard and brought them to the INDIANAPOLIS where they were assembled for the pick up. After the contact was made with the assigned B-29, I was handed the phone on the flag bridge in contact with the plane. As the huge plane bore down on the flagship I realized that this was beyond my experience and handed the phone to one of our operations officers. The pilot

successfully engaged the line with the bag of press reports, but a few seconds later as the plane crew was recovering the line, we saw the bag fall into the sea. I never learned the cause of the failure.

Admiral Spruance was consistent. Despite pressure from Washington, he would not break radio silence for the press. On the other hand, we did have reporters on board from time to time during operations. I think particularly of Bill Worden of the Associated Press who was with us on the INDIANAPOLIS at Majuro and Saipan. He had the run of the ship and was included in the Flag mess.

And at Iwo Jima, we had Prof. Samuel Eliot Morison of Harvard with us during the landing operations. It was a tense time as Spruance had positioned the ship for close in support between the line of departure of the landing craft from the transports and the beach.

After the war Admiral Spruance commented that if a fighting officer got interested in publicity, it could divert him from his responsibilities

Role of battleships

C: Do you know what his thinking was and how it evolved regarding the use of battleships? Did he ever express himself on that?

B: We talked about the battleships, because the issue was continually in the news nourished by the aviation officers. During the war Admiral Spruance regarded the battleships as valuable anti-aircraft platforms in the carrier task forces and essential for their fire power should a fleet engagement occur. I recall only once that the battleships were used for pre-landing bombardment - that was at Roi Namur.

The more pressing issue was whether a battleship admiral should be in charge of a task force which included fast carriers. Admiral King finally settled the issue after the Marianas operations by ordering that if a fleet or task force commander was an aviation officer he must have a surface force officer as his chief of staff, and vice versa. That meant that Carl Moore could not continue as Spruance's chief of staff.

On food and alcohol

C: Can you tell me what Spruance's likes and dislikes were regarding food? Was there anything he particularly liked? What was the food on the ship like? Was it excellent?

B: The food in the flag mess was excellent, but very disciplined. Breakfast was modest. Admiral Spruance always made his own coffee. It was a ceremony, like the Japanese tea ceremony almost. He selected his own coffee beans and had them delivered to the ship in sacks. His favorite was Kona coffee from Hawaii. He had it roasted aboard ship, very dark. He made the coffee at the table; I think it was in a small percolator. He poured it himself, about three small cups - demitasse size. If he had a guest aboard, he would always be offered a cup. From time to time I was offered a cup. This very strong coffee was not to my taste. I avoided it when I could. He had a few pieces of toast, grapefruit if we had it. Lunch was a bowl of soup and an ample salad. I often warned guests before lunch that that was all they would get.

C: Not to expect anything more.

B: No entree, no desert. Dinner was hearty. No one left hungry. I mentioned before that when general quarters sounded I would leave a meal promptly and head for the flag bridge. The night the kamikaze struck the NEW MEXICO off Okinawa, I left just as baked Alaska was being served. That hurt.

C: What was his attitude toward alcohol? Did he drink at all or allow it?

B. I never saw him drink aboard ship. If he drank ashore, it was discrete. I know he tolerated Admiral Turner's severe drinking problem. I was told that Admiral Halsey had his fruit cup and those of his guests laced with whiskey at meals. I do not know if that was true.

The INDIANAPOLIS had beer aboard locked up. At Majuro and again at Ulithi where the ship was anchored after weeks at sea, shore parties of enlisted men were taken ashore to a beach with a case of beer, soft drinks and assorted crunches for some R & R. When it came the turn of the flag complement, either the Flag Lieutenant or I with one other junior staff officer would accompany the group. That's where I learned the saying: "thirty two cans of beer and thirty two sailors, peace and contentment. Thirty two sailors and thirty five cans of beer, war and revolution." As long as everyone was equal,

there were no problems. But if there was extra beer to auction off on one of these two or three palm tree islands like those you see in the cartoons, there could be harsh words.

On prostitution

C: What was Spruance's attitude toward prostitution?

B: That's an interesting story. I heard a lot about it. When we got to Tokyo Bay after the war, the men had been at sea for months without shore leave. Prostitution was legal in Japan and practiced. We were told the Army supervised certain houses in Japan.

C: Supervised in what way? Health-wise?

B: Cleaned up, with medical corpsmen examining the ladies and making certain that the men washed up afterwards. Admiral Spruance confronted the problem very shortly after we anchored in Tokyo Bay in mid-September 1945. We were told of a house operating not far from the Naval base in Yokoska. The Admiral, Commodore Willcuts, the Fleet Surgeon, and Cy Huie, then his Flag Lieutenant, went to see the house. They saw a line of American sailors outside waiting to get in. I do not know whether supervision had already been established by the U.S. base commander or was established later. In any event Admiral Spruance did not interfere. Commodore Willcuts explained to me that this had been the practice at Bremerton Naval Base in Washington State. Men will be men and the Navy had to protect them as best they could.

Then one day not long after that, Admiral Spruance received a dispatch signed by SecNav saying that the Navy involvement had been reported. Then I was told that the word got around that the Army supervised houses were still available.

On FDR's death

C: Do you remember if Spruance had any reaction to FDR's death in April 1945?

B: I certainly did. The Admiral seldom expressed emotions. It simply was a fact that we had to deal with. None of us knew Vice President Truman at the time and there was concern whether the transition

would be healthy. We were at Okinawa at the time. For most of the ships conditions were the toughest they had seen during the war.

C: What was your personal reaction to FDR's death?

B: FDR had been a very important leader in preparing for and supporting the Navy and other American forces during the war. I felt it very important that the war in Europe be won. I think my Navy training had something to do with that. I was committed when the war began. The support of our Government and the American people had been total. So the word of his death was a shock. Did it make a difference? No, we went right on about our business.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt

C: Did you ever have an opportunity to meet Eleanor Roosevelt?

B. Yes, I met her, but only as one of a group. She was very prominent around Washington in 1941-43 and before - especially with young people. That is when I first reported for active duty in the Navy. I dated a young lady who was in one of Mrs. Roosevelt's coteries of young persons and saw Mrs. Roosevelt quite regularly. She was devoted to Mrs. Roosevelt. My views reflect her experience.

On WAVES and Navy nurses

C. Did Spruance ever comment on the contributions of the WAVES or the Navy nurses during the war?

B: I mentioned the nurses earlier in connection with the evacuation of the prisoners from the southern part of Japan after the war. Admiral Spruance had the highest regard for them. He felt they were real heroines. They exposed themselves doing their job.

We did not have any direct contact with the WAVES. I had worked with them in Washington in the Navy Department. I do not recall Admiral Spruance making any comment about them. My feeling is that if a WAVE could do a job, he would have welcomed her. The question of women on combat ships had not arisen at the time.

On Adm. Spruance's stamina

C: Did he ever feel weary of the war and his responsibilities?

B: Not to my knowledge. I never saw him tired. He was a very disciplined man. He went to bed. He exercised. He delegated. He must have felt that one of his greatest responsibilities was to keep himself in shape.

I was worn out by the time we left Okinawa. As we sailed from Okinawa, I felt a relief that I could not describe. I'm not aware that it made any difference to Spruance. But of course it did. I think Admiral Spruance would have liked to see Okinawa secured before he was relieved by Admiral Halsey.

C: Did he ever regret a war time decision he had made?

B: We know from the books that have been written that he reflected on some of the events of the war after he retired. He never expressed any regrets to me during the war. I never heard him second-guess anyone. He did note some of the events currently - like his decision to return to support Saipan during the battle of the Philippine Sea or Admiral Halsey's taking the bait off Luzon. If something did not go just right, that was simply a fact we had to deal with. Like the losses at Tarawa. We learned a lot at Tarawa.

There was no wringing of hands when the kamikazes appeared at Okinawa. This was a new factor we would have to deal with. And the situation of the picket ships on the perimeter off Okinawa. The PC's and the DE's took a terrible beating from the kamikazes. Spruance was very concerned. But these smaller ships had a duty to perform. His contribution was to see that they were rotated regularly as conditions permitted.

Policy on awards of medals

C: How did you influence his medals policy? I guess he was very strict on that.

B: I'm not sure I influenced his medals policy. My problem was that the Navy Department had sent me a box of medals but they came with no written instructions or statement of policy. Without written criteria, I could do little more than pass recommendations received to the Admiral for consideration or put them into a hold file.

Admiral Spruance was very strict about medals. He felt that every man should do his duty and approved very few recommendations which reached his desk, notwithstanding, in some instances, personal pleas from officers he respected.

After Okinawa his attitude changed and we processed quite a few recommendations. He even had a medals ceremony for members of his staff aboard the NEW JERSEY in Tokyo Bay in November 1945 before he left the ship. That is when a few members of his staff, including ratings, were recognized.

C: Did you get any medals at that point?

B: I received a Legion of Merit with combat clasp. The Navy Department, however, did not like the restrained language of my citation. Some months after I was back home, I received a boomed up citation using the language of heroism in action, whereas I was just doing my duty aboard ship where we were all equally exposed.

On security of secret papers

B: Security at the level in which we functioned in the Pacific was a very important issue. A draconian directive came out from the Chief of Naval Operations or COMINCH and was forwarded to all ships and stations. There was no way we could comply with signatures on moving every document, and yet it was a direct violation of these orders. I wasn't satisfied with just going to the Chief of Staff with my concerns. I took a directive and asked Admiral Spruance to hear me out. I said that there is no way we could comply on the ship given the pace at which we were dealing with the papers. He replied, "Don't worry, we have ship security and if anyone gives you a problem, I'll testify at your court martial." And then his eyes sparkled. I mentioned before that he communicates so well with his eyes.

On evacuation of POWs

C: What was Spruance's response to the American POWs that he evacuated from Japan?

B: Very concerned, very interested. A group of us went ashore very shortly after we arrived at Wakayama where the processing of former prisoners of war for transfer to a hospital ship and some transports was already underway. I was with Admiral Spruance only briefly

ashore as he went off with the officer in charge. I was surprised to see conditions so orderly, with the former prisoners in a line waiting to enter the processing area and Japanese civilians moving about selling trinkets and souvenirs to visitors. I talked with men on the line for some time. Most looked clean, but oh so gaunt. Most welcomed conversation, but I heard little comment as to what they had been through.

It was an emotional time when the hospital ship sailed away a day or two later. The crew manned the rail, as they do coming into a harbor - not in whites, they did not have whites, but in khakis and dungarees. When the hospital ship was opposite there was a full throated shout: "hip, hip, hooray." That's not Navy style, but that is what happened. It reflected how we all felt toward these men, realizing they had been prisoners of war for up to five years.

On expression of anger

C: You mentioned he lost his temper a number of times.

B: I would rather say, he expressed his displeasure to me on two occasions. First, when he noted that the operations plan supporting the Roi-Namur landing did not provide for bombardment of Roi on D-2 and D-3 by the old battleships prior to the landing as had been directed by the Fifth Fleet Plan.

The second occasion, as I mentioned earlier, was when he read the news dispatch that forces under General MacArthur had landed at Green Island, near Raboul.

On the Fifth Fleet war diary

C: You were responsible for keeping the Fifth Fleet War Diary, I understand. What were the problems in keeping it?

B: The Navy Department required that each ship or unit keep a War Diary on a daily basis and forward a copy to the Navy Department periodically. Captain Moore assigned that job to me, I think on our way to Tarawa. It was a chore, but I handled it. By the time of the Marianas operations, however, it became more than a chore, even though I had some help from others. Each day we were at sea a bundle of dispatches landed on my desk and with my other duties I

fell behind. When I completed my draft for a period, I submitted it to Captain Moore. I do not believe it went over the Admiral's desk.

C: But you had to be accurate.

B: Yes. A problem was that in later operations much was going on at once and there were conflicts among the daily sources of information. Preparing the Fifth Fleet war diary then presented a special challenge. Captain Moore realized this and when Commander Jack Carmichael relieved Russell Smith as junior operations officer on the staff at Ulithi, he assigned the preparation of the War Diary to Carmichael. That was a happy day for me.

On Adm. Spruance's strengths and weaknesses

C: Can you tell me if you thought Admiral Spruance had any weaknesses?

B: I was not aware of any. That's not something I worried about.

C: I wondered what his personal strengths or weaknesses were.

B: He was a strong, disciplined, honorable and generous man, generous in the sense that if he gave one an assignment, he let him do the job. Informally, he was warm in relation to the members of his staff, for example, at the Admiral's mess.

After the war

C: How long did you stay in the Navy after the war?

B: I applied for discharge in February 1946 and was discharged at the Great Lakes Naval Station, my point of origin. I continued in the Navy Reserves for several years. I took the annual physical examinations but did not join a reserve unit or take the required annual tours of duty. I was busy as a young lawyer in Washington. Then in October 1946 I went to England for two years. A few years later, I received a routine notice of discharge from the Naval Reserve.

Visits with Adm. and Mrs. Spruance

C: Did you ever see Spruance after the war and on what occasions if you did see him?

B: Yes. I saw him a number of times. As I said earlier, the first time was in September 1945. I visited him here at the Naval War College. The second time was in Chevy Chase, Maryland in early 1952. Admiral Spruance was in Washington for briefing prior to taking up his appointment as Ambassador to the Philippines. He and Admiral Davis came over to our house on Cummings Lane for a visit with me and my family. We had two little tots at the time and a third on the way. We later had some correspondence, mostly of the Christmas card sort. Then he invited Carl Moore and me with our wives to visit him over a long weekend, I believe it was in the spring of 1968. He and his wife Margaret were in Newport for a visit with daughter Margaret and her husband. At the time Mr. Bogart was headmaster of a private school in Newport. We had a wonderful visit, including a long walk along the beach. The war in Viet Nam was a major topic of conversation. The theme - U. S. military forces should not be committed to operations they will not be allowed to do the necessary to win. I did not see him again. As you know, he died in December 1969. I called on his wife once after he died and then Lois and I visited her again when she was a very senior lady in a Nursing Home. Daughter Margaret was with us on that occasion.

On selection of Bora Bora as a refueling station

C: Now we're going to double back a bit and ask you a few questions on some aspects of your service before joining Admiral Spruance. You mentioned that you were assigned to the Joint U.S. Strategic Committee when you were called to active duty and that shortly after Pearl Harbor the Committee was directed to identify an island suitable for a refueling station between Panama and Samoa. Can you tell me why and how the Committee selected Bora Bora as the refueling station?

B: Yes. About ten days or so after Pearl Harbor the Committee was asked to identify an island between Panama and Samoa which could serve as a safe refueling station protected from submarines for ships en route to Australia. How did the Committee go about this? We looked at a large globe of the Pacific, guided by a string between the Panama Canal and Samoa. We asked the Navy Hydrographic Office for charts of islands in the Marqueses group and some further west

toward Samoa which could provide a protected anchorage for ships up to the size of destroyers.

On a secure basis, we then sought information from Navy intelligence and the Hydrographic office on the Marqueses group and islands further west toward Samoa. Tahiti was ruled out because it was not known at the time with certainty whether the French authorities on Tahiti were aligned with Vichy or the Free French. The Hydrographic Office promptly supplied a chart of Bora Bora dated in the mid 1880's with beautiful engravings around the border showing profiles of the island approaching it from the North, South, East and West, and the chart showed a substantial lagoon. I made an appointment with Gilbert Grosvenor, the head of National Geographic magazine, and requested all information the magazine had on three islands, Bora Bora, Funafuti and one other. Relevant materials were also requested from the Army.

In two days a package of papers came over from the National Geographic and the Army reported that a non-commissioned officer currently assigned to an anti-aircraft group in the Canal Zone had listed Bora Bora on his enlistment questionnaire. He was ordered to come to Washington and report to the Chief of Naval Operations. I went to the Anacostia Naval Air Station to meet him early on the Sunday before Christmas. When I saw a young man in Army uniform get off the plane, I walked out to meet him. "Wow," he said, "my orders sure impressed the general. What's it all about?" He said he was a geologist, a PhD, and had written his thesis on the geology of Bora Bora. He had spent two recent summers on the atoll, knew the local people and could comment on the ships which had come into the lagoon. At the request of the Navy, he was detached from the Army for temporary duty with the Navy. Bora Bora was occupied without opposition in mid-January 1942. After introducing the leaders of the occupying force to the key people ashore, he returned to his Army unit in the Canal Zone. The refueling station was established and served the Navy throughout the war.

C: Isn't that interesting. That's fascinating.

B: The story showed me how pragmatically and directly the services could work together in wartime.

On visiting China

C: You mentioned in our private conversation that you went to China in December 1945. Can you tell me what this trip was all about?

B: In mid December, Admiral Spruance, who had by then relieved Admiral Nimitz as CINCPAC, came to Japan to confer with Admiral Towers, Commander Naval Forces Japan, and Admiral Daniel E. Barbey, Commander Naval Forces China based in Shanghai. The meeting was held on the NEW JERSEY. At dinner that evening, the three Admirals were at the head of the table. I sat down the table a ways on the side opposite Admiral Barbey. At one point during dinner our eyes met in a communicating sort of way. After dinner, I reminded Barbey that I had been his gopher at the Navy Department in July 1942 as he was completing plans for moving U.S. Marines to Iceland to relieve the British forces there. We visited a bit and he said, "Barber, why don't you come over and visit me in China?" I replied, "I'd love to. Say it louder." He then turned to Spruance, "Barber here is a good friend. He has worked hard during the war. Why don't you send him over to see me?"

Spruance replied as his eyes sparkled, "Barber doesn't work for me anymore, you had better direct your question to Admiral Towers." Barbey turned to Towers who was standing next to Spruance and had heard the conversation. A moment later Towers nodded. I was given two weeks leave with priority 2 orders for military air travel to Shanghai and return.

In China, I reported to Admiral Barbey aboard his Flagship and worked out my itinerary with his Flag Secretary, who was a personal friend. I called on Marine General DeWitt Peck in Tsingtao whom I had known in OP-12 in the Navy Department, visited Tientsin and took the train to Peking, now Beijing. General Peck had told me that I would see Japanese soldiers under arms along the railroad tracks to Peking. I did. He said they were there to guard the tracks from bombing by raiding parties from Mao's communist forces. He explained that Chiang's army forces could not be relied on to operate in small units.

I had a good tourism visit in Peking over Christmas, flew back to Shanghai where I called on General Albert Wedemeyer, a good friend as he had been a member of the Joint War Plans Committee in Washington in 1942 and 43. He was livid over the prospect of the forthcoming U.S. mission led by General Marshall to negotiate an

agreement with Chiang to form a coalition government with Mao. "It won't work," he insisted, "it will only assist Mao in taking over China."

After New Year's day I returned to Tokyo with a stopover at Buckner Bay, Okinawa, while waiting for onward air transportation to Tokyo. The trip proved to be a wonderful capstone to my career in the Navy.

A short time later I was on my way to Pearl Harbor for several weeks and then home.

C: Did you ever hear of Admiral Milton Miles who was in China at the time? He was head of SACO, Sino-American Cooperative Organization.

B: No, I did not hear of him.

On VJ Day

C: We have their papers in the Archives. Do you remember what your reaction was on VJ Day and how you celebrated that event?

B: I remember vividly the moment I learned that the war was over. I was up the hill on Guam where the secretarial office, yeomen, files, typewriters and mimeograph machines were located. This was some distance from Admiral Spruance and the Fifth Fleet Staff Office which was near the field office of Admiral Nimitz.

We were working under pressure, as we had been all week, to complete the copying, checking and distribution of the Fleet plans for the invasion of Kyushu. The date of the landing had been set for early November. The deadline for the distribution of the Fleet Plan to Task Force commanders was just a few days off. We had learned of the sinking of the INDIANAPOLIS but had no details yet.

I first learned that the war was over when a Red Cross volunteer, whom I had known at Pearl Harbor, walked up the hill and knocked on the door. I was surprised to see her and stepped outside. She told me the signal had come, the war was over. We sat on the board stairs in the sunshine for maybe ten minutes. I did not have much to say. I was thinking - what next? Then I re-entered the office and told the chief yeoman that he could stop the machines. At that time or shortly thereafter I received word that we were to pack up and transfer to the NEW JERSEY the next day. Admiral Spruance had

been ordered to proceed to Manilla, confer with General MacArthur and then continue on to Japan. For me, I felt a deep inner satisfaction. We had no time for celebration. We had work to do.

Significance of naval career

C: Can you tell me what the significance of your naval career was for your life?

B: I think it was very significant. I was given important personal responsibilities and the privilege in Washington of working closely with men responsible for thinking through and discussing at the conceptual level alternative military strategies for the prosecution of the war. Until decisions on the over-arching issues were made at the level of the Joint and Combined Chief of Staff, significant differences of opinion as to priorities and courses of action between the leadership of the Army and the Navy had to be dealt with. These were candidly discussed among chosen representatives of the services appointed to the War Plans Committee who in turn kept in touch with their superiors. After dealing first with the allocation of forces between the Atlantic and the Pacific and then with issues concerning the prosecution of the war in Europe, the War Plans Committee turned to the strategic plan for the defeat of Japan. I admired the men I was working with and their principals in the Navy Department. I felt that I was experiencing the process by which military decisions were being made at the highest level in Washington under the multiple pressures of war. Decisions had to be made in a timely manner and generally were.

Then I had the privilege of serving with Admiral Spruance in the prosecution of the war across the Pacific. I admired him immensely, as an effective leader and handler of major responsibility with character and restraint. He became one of my personal heroes who has had a permanent place in my mind ever since. As I look back, I have no doubt of the positive significance of my years in the Navy.

C: Thank you for your reminiscences of Admiral Spruance during World War II and your own experience in the Navy from July 1941 through 1945. We'll have this transcribed. You can edit your remarks and I will edit as well. Thank you very much for coming Mr. Barber.

B: Thank you. I've enjoyed being here.