

November 18, 1991

MEMO FOR THE FILE

From: Claudia Anderson, Archivist

Re: Processing Note

In his book, Douglas MacArthur: The Far Eastern General, Michael Schaller attributed this report to Robert Sherrod. In a phone conversation, November 18, 1991, Mr. Sherrod told me that he wrote the report for his Washington editors, although it was not for publication. Johnson agreed to carry it back to the states and give it to the editors, thus avoiding the censors. Sherrod stayed up all night writing the report the night before Johnson originally was scheduled to leave. Johnson later told Sherrod that he had destroyed the report because it was so "hot."

Sherrod said that the report in our files is one that Johnson retyped from Sherrod's report, eliminating any references to Sherrod and to Johnson. The first and last pages are missing.

the powers have decided to send nothing more than piddling quantities to Australia until the European war has ended. I flew back to Melbourne from Townsville with General Brett yesterday and he was way down in the mouth. He's not even getting replacements for the planes that are being lost in the peashooter contests over Moresby and Darwin. He's tired of sending out bombing missions of three and four planes. Apparently they don't understand in Washington, he says, that you're lucky if you can keep one-third of your planes in operation at any given time. And he's tired of sending up inferior equipment.

The Allison engine is simply a failure. Our P39's and P40's are taking a long chance when they go up against the Zero. The odds against them are terrific. When you read in the communiques that we shot down four enemy planes and lost four of our own, the chances are that we shot down three Jap bombers and one Zero while losing four (or more) P39's. "We've asked for P47's time and again," says General Brett, "but we haven't got them." The high altitude bombings of Darwin these past few days have been pitiful -- they flew in at 26,000 or 28,000 feet, and we haven't got a pursuit plane that can go after them at that level. The Allison's vaunted 1150 horsepower pans out actually at about 850. Colonel Diller admitted (not for publication) at press conference today that the Japs had simply put together a better pursuit plane than we can muster -- over here anyway. The only way our P39's and P40's can outperform the Zero is to run away from it -- they can outdive the Zero. Psychologically, that's deleterious. Our fliers don't like to be forced to run away.

I haven't heard of the P47 being in combat yet -- in fact, we're frightened stiff over here that so many bugs have been found in it that they've quit making them -- but I don't know what we'll do if

it doesn't pan out. The P38 is a ghastly failure. Its electric system is so full of bugs that pilots are convinced it can never be made to work. There were four P38's in Australia, doing photographic reconnaissance. (Their cameras can take a picture 10 miles by 80 miles). They can climb to 40,000 feet in eight minutes, but they rarely come back with more than one engine working. I don't know how many P38's are left. I know one was shot down over New Guinea. The pilot had become quite friendly with us in Townsville. We still have his collection of symphonic records.

Speaking of planes, the B26 is probably the biggest success. These fast Martins have borne the brunt of our bombing operations for the past two months or more. They are hot ships -- and they have killed probably a third of the original group that came out -- but they can carry a terrific load at a terrific speed. Not more than three or four have been shot down in combat, but 15 or 20 have crashed on the takeoff or in forced landings after being damaged. One was shot down into the sea last week. An observer, Colonel Stevens, who was to go back to Washington tomorrow was in it. Remember that story I sent you about Correspondents Harold Guard and Pat Robinson? Harold was in Plane No. 3 and Pat in No. 5. On the take-off No. 4 crashed, carrying two one-thousand pound bombs.

The B25's have performed quite well, although their losses have been on a higher percentage scale. We lost five B25's in one raid a couple of weeks ago (the communiques rarely reveal our own losses). The advantage of B25's over B26's: they can be flown from the California coast to Hawaii. B26's must be crated, shipped, then uncrated.

B17's are, of course, the finest ships of them all. Only three have been shot down in combat since the war began. The newer models (we get a dribble here and there of new planes) a bottom turret gun that works. B17 pilots are cocky enough to believe -- falsely, of course--that we could



lick the Japs all the way into Japan with 300 B17's. The Fortresses don't have much more than half the range Boeing claims for them--my God, how many illusions we are having dispelled for us! - or did claim for them before the war. But they are still just what their name implies: Fortresses. Only trouble with the Fortresses over here now is the pilots and crews. Nearly all of them are jaded and somewhat more careful than they should be--most of them fought through the Phillipines and/or Java and some of them figure they've done enough in this war. Air Corps people spoil easily. The 19th Group (into which has been consolidated the two groups that came out of the Phillipines and Java) is going to be jarred considerably within the next two weeks. The whole group is being moved up North of Townsville into the war zone -- why they were ever stationed at long-range bases almost in the heart of the continent I don't know. Last week orders went out that every qualified pilot must start flying missions -- the best pilots had been given desk jobs or made squadron commanders, and had quit flying. I can name six of the best pilots in the lot who were sitting at desks.

On the subject of this group, I must refer to one officer who commanded the group until Major Jim Connally (Tom's cousin) took it over last month. His name is Eugene L. Eubank, and he flew back to the States a fortnight ago so he could be made a Brigadier General (MacArthur, I hear, refused to promote him). Eubank, then a Colonel, is the most hated man I've ever known. He personally killed about fifteen men and destroyed nine planes in Java. He sent men on missions without enough gasoline to return. The pilot of one such ship refused to continue, returned to the base with only twenty gallons of fuel. Eubank went up to him yelling that he was yellow and not fit to wear the uniform. The pilot went into the operations office and shot his brains out. His name was Donald Strother of Winfield, Kansas.

I am not sure whether he was a Captain or a Lieutenant when he killed himself. I have heard more than one officer say he would shoot Eubank if he ever found the opportunity. That may have had something to do with sending Eubank back to the States and making him a General.

This dissertation rambles more and more. I'll try to organize it into subject matter better:

AUSTRALIA:

The country in which we are building our last ditch in the Pacific is disappointing. It not only lacks resources. It lacks leaders and it lacks intelligence. Australia has no ideology. It's only heroes are Ned Kelly, the bandit, and Don Bradman, the cricketeer -- crime and cricket. The national motto, so far as I have been able to determine is "fuckall."

I can't imagine America without it's Washington, it's Lincoln and it's Lee. But here, actually, is a country without a hero. Most Australians suffer from inferiority complexes, especially since the Americans arrived-- and I must say that the hundred thousand or more Americans over here contain an astonishingly high proportion of gentlemen. The Austrailians continually refer to "the flower of American manhood" in apologizing for the Australian troops by comparison, but I like to believe that the Americans who are over here are just average--they certainly weren't selected except by rather strict draft board physicians.

Sir Herbert Gepp, who returned recently from America, took me with him the other day to hear him make a speech (which he dearly loves to do). He told a crowd of 400 AIF women rather bluntly that he had seen more drunkenness in the streets of Melbourne in the two weeks since he returned than he saw in five months in America. Of course, Sir Herbert didn't know where to look in America, and he probably didn't know that we have some very tough MP's throughout Australia who throw our boys in the clink when they get drunk.



(Australians usually don't dare put a soldier in jail--the term "returned soldier" is license for almost anything--consequently, one sees a large number of them in the gutter.)

Australians have always treated their women a little worse than their dogs. Therefore, the Americans, who have usually been taught to respect women and have displayed some tenderness toward Australian women, have stolen most of the pretty girls. The Australian Army is quite anti-American by and large. Incidentally, the average of beauty among Australian women is very high--probably higher than in America, though the gals don't have many pretty clothes. They seem to be utterly without morals, but that doesn't worry the Americans. That point about the high average of beauty applies only to the inhabitants of the Southern Cities. Up North the women are all scrawny and flat-chested.

I'll spoil one more illusion of yours about the Australian Army: They are not good soldiers. I don't know that you can blame them. They have been given the suicide jobs of the war: Crete, Greece, Libya, and little equipment to fight with. Naturally, they are a cynical lot. But in Malaya they were disgraceful. Correspondents who covered the Malayan campaign say the English were bravest, the Indians next, and the Australians ran away. Incidentally, you probably know that the Japanese took Malaya when they were considerably outnumbered. The Japanese simply outgeneraled the British all the way down--air superiority wasn't the only discrepancy.

Australian politics amaze me, and I've seen some pretty poor representatives of the people in my time. I suppose nothing can be done about strikes in the coal mines and the munitions plants--"you must understand that the Australian considers the right to strike a God-given right," an Australian

friend told me as I was trying to tell him I thought no one could get away with a strike in our country if the Japanese were in Canada. (Incidentally, Australian coal miners strike if they are not transported to the very mouth of the mine, and not 100 yards away from it, or if they don't like the color of the foreman's pants, or if they are not given numerous time-outs during the day for "tea-o" or smoke-o.") I can even see why uneducated miners would still think they had a right to strike. And I can understand how Parliament might be unable to do something about it without upsetting the whole, miniscule war effort. But I cannot understand how any politician could vote against sending the Militia outside the country, with the knowledge that many thousands of Americans have come 8,000 miles or more to defend the politicians' country. Yet, the motion to make the Militia liable for duty outside Australia was defeated in the House, 39 to 36, I believe. Incidentally, there is a wide gulf between the AIF and the Militia. The latter are conscripted, and therefore looked down upon. AIF are all voluntary. The more I think about it, the more I think we've got the finest draft system in the world--where the slectee is on a par with the volunteer.

Reverting to the Labor situation: we have had fantastic troubles in getting our ships unloaded. In many cases US soldiers have been ordered to run the wharfside workers (stevedores) off the job and have unloaded the ships themselves. In other cases, I've seen American officers tear their hair while awaiting wharfside workers to finish their tea-o or smoke-o. I never dreamed that Labor unions could grab a country and choke it to death. ~~I tell myself that it simply couldn't happen in America.~~ At home Labor union leaders wouldn't do the same things to us--they couldn't get away with it, even if they wanted to. (This is written without any knowledge of the Labor situation back home, but I feel that way, anyhow.).



Many of Australians' troubles are due to the woes of Empire.

I asked a well-informed Australian correspondent why the Australians didn't start building Spitfires back in 1939--by now they'd have something to fight with. He was intensely bitter. "We tried to get the English to let us do just that. The answer came back: 'the patents couldn't be obtained.'" The English were simply afraid to let this pastoral country start manufacturing anything. They were afraid of the consequences after the war." Permission was finally obtained to manufacture Wirraways, which are nothing more than trainer planes outfitted as bombers and fighters, with a speed of about 140 mph. A grand total of 500 Wirraways have now been manufactured in Australia. They were shot down like flies the first time they went into battle. Incidentally, Brett says the new Australian Beaufort Bomber, highly vaunted in the Department of Information newsreels, isn't worth a damn.

#### NEGROES:

One of the biggest stories of the war which can't be written--and which shouldn't be written, of course--is the mutiny among American Negro troops which took place near Townsville on May 22. A company of Negroes got their rifles and determined that they would kill their commanding officer, a Captain Francis Williams of Columbus, Ga. They fired several hundred rounds of ammunition at his tent (he was in a slit trench, later escaped without facing the almost certain death which it was his duty to face as an officer.) When other officers tried to escape the camp to obtain help, they were fired upon (in a half track) with a fifty-caliber machine gun. A complete report on this affair is enclosed. No better illustration of the barrier between the races could be found than this: investigating officers must depend upon a private investigation by a Negro Sergeant (whose pipe was shot out of his mouth) named Rufus James, if they ever hope to uncover the culprits. Several members of the



company and the captain are under court martial, but the company (including all possible witnesses) is being sent to New Guinea and it is possible that nothing more will ever be heard of it. "Those Negroes got away with something," said Major General Ralph Royce yesterday.

Opinion over here is almost unanimous: Those Negroes--there are probably 10,000 Of them now--should never have been sent to Australia. There are no women here for them, and some ugly situations have resulted. In Townsville Sunday a Negor's leg was amputated. The records list him as having accidentally discharged his gun. But he was shot by a white man who caught him in bed with his wife. On the night of the mutiny there was another big rumpus, when it was reported that a Negro had raped a white woman. Investigation proved that she had made a date to meet him, and a possible riot or lynching was avoided. The only answer that distracted officers have been able to find is the opening of whore houses for Negroes, such as has been done in Brisbane, where some white women were found who would accept them. In Townsville whites and Negroes line up all together in front of whore houses where Negroes are accepted, and thus far I haven't heard of any riots (a Negro struck a white officer up there a couple of months ago but was never apprehended.) Everybody here feels that some black women would solve the problem. Neither the aborigine women nor the New Ginea women (there are about four companies of black engineers in New Guinea) will have anything to do with American Negroes. Incidentally, many Negroes have been able to get away with the story-told to lower class white women--that they are American Indians.

I have never seen the racial problem brought home so forcibly as it is over here. Sometimes I think we have been as lax in teaching the lessons of democracy as the British have been in India--and look where the British in India and Burma are now!

These American Negroes, by and large, have no idea what they are fighting for. Oddly, the better educated Negroes are the most rebellious--the mutiny of that company of Southern Negroes was led by two or three Chicagoans. A letter from my wife quotes my maid's husband as saying he'll never be taken into the Army, because so far as he knows the Japanese are just as good as anybody else. It's a problem that we won't solve tomorrow or next day.

MacARTHUR:

I can sincerely say that I don't know one damned thing about MacArthur. I saw him today for the first time since he was in Canberra more than two months ago--the left side of his chest was covered by ribbons. If he has done anything since he has been in Australia it is well-covered. He rarely sees anyone except his chief of staff, General Sutherland. He sits in his office and dreams or broods or reminisces, and nobody knows what he is thinking unless it is Sutherland. I've talked to every ranking officer in Australia except MacArthur, I believe. They are as much in the dark as I am. General Brett doesn't know anything. Wasserman knew very little about the life and habits of MacArthur--he used to take suggestions to MacArthur but he never seemed to get any answers. There are grounds for supposing that MacArthur resents that the war is being fought on other fronts--I know that two or three of his staff officers have spoken bitterly against Roosevelt because they felt Roosevelt was trying to dampen the MacArthur political boom; I do not know that MacArthur himself thinks that. I do know this: Officers who escaped from Bataan hated MacArthur almost beyond description. General George was probably the bitterest about "that posing son-of-a-bitch." The stories we hear about MacArthur's overwhelming heroic elevation in the U.S. are amazing--they prove only that the U.S. is hungry for a hero, I suppose. "Well, we put him there, knowing better," says one correspondent who managed to get out of Bataan.



Tonight at dinner I saw Major General Horace Fuller, who is commanding one of the National Guard Divisions over here. Fuller (the Luces, to whom he asks that his regards be sent, will remember him as military attache in the Paris Embassy) takes MacArthur's side. He says he'd rather serve under MacArthur than anyone he knows. He says simply that MacArthur is heartbroken because he has nothing over here to fight with. Fuller has seen MacArthur once. He doesn't know what MacArthur does, either. Despite Fuller's remark, and the remarks of many other officers who have absorbed the MacArthur legend, it is significant that no one has heard a general staff officer under MacArthur (excepting Col. Willoughby, his G2, and Sutherland) say a kind word about him. They will all say "I don't doubt his courage. He must have been good in the last war," but they consider that the defense of Bataan was something long since mapped out for MacArthur, and give him no special credit. MacArthur is no hero to his men of Bataan. Their real hero was Wainwright.

"I know he is a poser, and an extreme egoist, but I believe in him," says Horace Fuller. This afternoon Army Minister Forde came out of a War Council meeting with his head in the skies. "What a wonderful man, what a wonderful man," Forde was saying. Although Forde is quite a dope, we all feel the same way when we hear MacArthur make a speech. You have gathered that that from my dispatches upon his arrival and upon his speechmaking before Parliament. He talks the best war I have ever heard. He has a greater sense of drama--ham acting, his officers call it--than Churchill or Roosevelt. But nobody can point to anything he has done, any decision he has made, since he arrived in Australia. He has given Brett a free hand in the Air Corps, Blamey in the ground forces, and Barnes in USAFIA. No order ever comes from MacArthur--or, if it does nobody ever hears of it. He simply sits and broods and dreams.



Fuller is inclined to blame MacArthur's inaction on frustration. Greatest cause of the frustration is the failure of Roosevelt to include New Zealand and New Caledonia in the MacArthur command. Lack of fighting weapons is certainly cause enough for more frustration.

But we mustn't try to destroy the MacArthur legend. We Americans need a hero, and MacArthur is the only candidate in sight.

I learned today that Major General Robert R. "Nellie" Richardson has arrived, and has gone to the Melbourne Hospital with a slight case of jaundice (which is quite prevalent over here, presumably because of a bad lot of yellow fever vaccine.) I shall try to see Richardson tomorrow, but probably will be unable to do so before this despatch goes. He is on a special mission for General Marshall. That's a good sign--in fact, the first sign of interest in Australia we have detected for some time. You will remember that Richardson preceded Day Surles as Chief of the Bureau of Public Relations (incidentally, we are all wondering whether Stimson ever let Surles go to assume command of his armored division?) The grapevine allows that Richardson was fairly well disgusted with the Hawaiian set-up. Unity of command in Hawaii, he says, is just a term. Unity of command in Australia, so devoutly desired for so long, is certainly a myth. In the Air Force, which has the only Allied command--MacArthur and Barnes have only Americans on their staffs and Blamey has only Australians--the right hand never knows what the left is doing. I'll make that stronger. The right hand of the fighter sector of the Allied Air Force never knows what the left hand of the fighter sector is doing. Lt. Col. Fred Smith (he's Admiral King's son-in-law) received orders the other day to relinquish his group command at Brisbane and report to Sydney as Senior Staff Officer. He reported. The Australian Air Vice Marshal commanding the Sydney area said, "No, thank you, he had a senior staff officer who was quite satisfactory."

Poor Fred had to come to Melbourne for clarification of orders, then go back to Sydney to report to a man who didn't want him. The various branches of the fighter sector had got their signals mixed.

From all this, you might judge that I think we can't win a war, what with the blundering and stupidity of our officers. Well, frankly, I don't know. One officer in speaking of the British blundering in Libya mused today: "I wonder if there will be that last battle for the British to win." The democracies learn so slowly. Next time, if there is a next time, we'll know to start training capable officers years in advance of any possible war.

I don't know whether we can win a war, but I do know this: Curtin's ominous speech of today, in which he warned that Australia might be taken, was read by MacArthur before its delivery.

OTHER OFFICERS:

Because this piece is highly critical, please don't get this idea that everything is gloomy over here. I write the hero stories and the brighter side of the war in my dispatches. This is the first time I have had an opportunity to write something about the darker portions as well.

The plain truth is that we have some extremely incompetent Generals over here. I don't think I have met a more indecisive man, or a more stupid man, in as high a position as Major General Julian Barnes, commander of USAFIA. The younger officers around him try to be good soliders but they can't suppress their laughter at Barnes. MacArthur had been warned against Barnes (who was Brett's Chief of Staff when MacArthur arrived.)

Then there is George Brett. He's a rather likeable, kindly old cuss, and he tries hard. He has the offensive spirit more than any other General I have met. But Brett hasn't got the stuff. He is floundering around, issuing orders, then countermanding them. I don't know why he has been allowed to remain. You may remember the story Bob Lovett told me about Brett the day I left Washington, Feb. 6. Brett had been sent out of Washington to Libya last fall to get rid of him, one third of the Brett-Emmons-Arnold triangle. He happened to turn up in the Far East when an American was needed as Wavell's Deputy. Yet, he remains here in the most responsible job outside MacArthur's.

Biggest furors of the Australian war was caused by Barnes' relieving Brig. General Arthur Wilson, supply chief for USAFIA. I'm sure that story has been told in some detail in the US by now. Wasserman and his crowd were burned up about it. So was most of the non-old-line Army crowd. Wilson has returned to the US now. His crime was cutting red tape. He brought over a dozen or more highpowered civilians--transportations experts, supply experts, technical brainmen--and got them commissioned. But he stepped out of bounds when he sent a group of investigators to New Zealand, where they found several supply items which had hitherto been imported from the US. But New Zealand was outside the MacArthur command. Barnes got MacArthur to relieve Wilson on this touchy point. Truth was that anyone wanting to get something accomplished went to Wilson, not to stuffy General Barnes. Before he left Wilson was the recipient of several big farewell dinners. The Australians, the American Lend-Lease crowd, and most of the Army regretted to see General Wilson go. Horace Fuller was one of those giving a farewell party for Wilson. "If I ever wanted to get a ship unloaded or to get some supplies for my troops, I had to go to Art Wilson," says Fuller. But Wilson was too direct. He didn't do things the age-old Army way, and he had to go.



General Fuller is aghast when he learns he must take orders from Australian Generals (Blamey is in command of ground forces, you know). He says he hasn't met one who is competent to give orders. The Australians revere Blamey. Australian Army officers point to him as "our one real general". But the Americans point to Blamey as a buffoon. I don't know whether he is good or not. The only times I have ever seen him in action was when he was pinching pretty girls' bottoms, which is his favorite sport. Brett had worked up a fine plan for establishing more bases on New Guinea preparatory to retaking Lae, but Blamey has been stepping on it. No decision had been reached last time I looked into the situation, but Blamey seemed to be prevailing, and I don't know whether it's worth while for me to go back North around the end of the month or not.

Incidentally, Harold Guard of the UP says he has seen more red tape, brass-hattism and incompetent generalship in Australia than he ever saw in Malaya. Harold is a pessimist, but that's his sincere belief.

#### SHIPPING:

Roosevelt mentioned the other day that the problem of distribution had not yet been solved. I assume he meant we are short of shipping. Well, shipping men over here claim that 15% to 20% of shipping sent out here could be saved if it were done intelligently back home. I have watched perhaps a dozen ship unloaded. Every one of them had been loaded badly. What was needed at the first port of call was always at the bottom of the ship, which meant unloading the ship, getting something off the bottom, then reloading the rest of the cargo. I've seen this happen not once, but many times.

Some of the things being sent over here are ridiculous. Horace Fuller found seventy tons of bottled Coca Cola in one of his ships. If the extract had been sent, and the water and bottles omitted, probably 69 tons could have been saved for badly needed ammunition—there is, incidentally,

a Coca Cola bottling plant in Australia. American troops are bringing over tons and tons of sugar, yet Australia has one of the largest sugar surpluses in the world.

The classic example of bungling is related by General Fuller. Regiment A was rushed from Washington State to New York Feb. 19. It sailed through the Canal on the Sao Paolo. Rest of the Division sailed from San Francisco a month later and beat Regiment A to Australia by two days. Regiment B from another division left St. Louis (or another midwestern city) and sailed from San Francisco with Fuller's Division. At Melbourne Regiment B transships to two Dutch ships and sails for New Caledonia. Regiment C of Field Artillery, which had come over in the Uruguay the same convoy from New York with Regiment A, transships to the Sao Paolo in Melbourne and goes also to New Caledonia. Add it all up and you've got a couple of regiments traveling about 8,000 miles unnecessarily, with a couple of unnecessary loadings and unloadings thrown in.

The maddest man I've seen in Australia was Capt. Thomas Gray of one of the Grace Liners. He had been through so much of this bad loading and unloading, shipping and transshipping he was ready to cut throats. "If they'd let old Captain Burke of the Grace Line load these ships instead of leaving it to an upstart Army major, all these things wouldn't happen. Captain Burke has been loading ships all his life," he said.

There is some hope that the shipping situation will improve. Sir Herbert Gepp, who has been given charge of such matters in Australia,