

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: General O. B. Johnson

COLLECTION: 4700.0821

IDENTIFICATION: [1920-1999] General with the US Army Air Corps, pilot in World War II

INTERVIEWER: Adele Foster

SERIES: Military

INTERVIEW DATES: May 23, 1997; May 28, 1997.

FOCUS DATES: 1930s-1940s

ABSTRACT:

Tape 1176

Major General O. B. Johnson's family information and early childhood; family moves to Natchitoches to ensure college education of children; early school memories; brief account of the lives of his siblings; early flying in Civil Pilot Training program; joining the Army Air Corps; dating his wife in college; teaching high school; going to flying school at Spartan School of Aeronautics; active duty in the National Guard assigned to Indiana National Guard in charge of a squadron as an engineering officer; volunteered to join the night fighters squadron; where he was at when he heard the news about Pearl Harbor; flying submarine patrol out of McDeal Field and out of New Orleans; training pilots in Orlando; flying with British; providing defense for Paris; Paris after liberation; flying night patrols against Germans; flying in bad weather during the daytime for which they received a citation and the Presidential Unit Citation for flying; a reading of the success of the squadron which had the best record of any night fighter unit squadron; marriage after the war; assignments after the war; what the attitude was toward the returning G. I.'s; assigned to Pentagon to work in fighter requirements; the start of the cold war; working and living in post-war Japan; commanding fighter group at O'Hare; reassigned to Pentagon to command the Washington Air Defense Sector; going to the Imperial Defense College in London;

Tape 1177

Attending the Imperial Defense College in London; political and military discussion held at the Imperial Defense College; a month long trip to Africa as part of his Imperial Defense College education; meeting with African leaders and natives; assistant D.O. at the U.S. Air Forces Europe during the cold war and Berlin Crisis; becoming a Brigadier General; commanding the Washington Air Defense Sector at Fort Lee, Virginia; commanding the 14th Aerospace Force; moving to Okinawa during the Vietnam War; his son joining the Air Force and participating in Vietnam; retiring from the Air Force and working in the civilian sector; moving to Shreveport and becoming treasurer of the city; working as the assistant to the administrative officer in charge of city planning and construction; moving to Baton Rouge and becoming active in the Methodist church; his involvement with LSU ROTC.

Tape 1178

Supplies for making jam; working around the family farm; teaching school and the lack of discipline problems; other duties while working at the high school; the depression having little effect on the country people; the role of an officers wife; the contribution of his wife to his career; Johnson's ideas regarding women in the military; the P-61; close calls while flying; requirements for recruits passing the initial physical; working with the British; seeing the remains of a concentration camps after the end of the war; what the average German knew; the Marshall Plan; warheads in Russia; Chennault's Flying Tigers; training experiences; Morse code; plans that the Germans flew at night; ways to identify planes at night; the Battle of the Bulge; war targets by the British and the American air forces; attitude of soldiers; involvement with Korea and Vietnam; places to watch as possible future threats; American global involvement; the foresight of his parents.

TAPES: 3 (T1176, T1177, T1178)**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 3 hours, 20 minutes**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 140 pages**RESTRICTIONS:** Joint copyright is retained by the interviewee and interviewer and their heirs