



THE Stilwell Papers

By JOSEPH W. STILWELL

Arranged and Edited by
THEODORE H. WHITE

WILLIAM SLOANE ASSOCIATES, INC.
Publishers *New York*



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By The Haddon Craftsmen, Inc.,
Scranton, Pa.



TO MADAME SUN YAT-SEN



FOREWORD

IT IS with deep feeling and pride that I present these words of my husband, General Joseph W. Stilwell. Because of the many controversies concerning his services in the China-Burma-India theater and his recall in November, 1944, and because he was never allowed to present for himself the true facts of the case, I am giving him this opportunity to speak.

General Stilwell was descended from Nicholas Stillwell (sic) who came to New Amsterdam in 1638. Records and family documents carry the name back to 1456. Among those Stilwells who followed Nicholas, there were many who served this country as soldiers, so it was perhaps natural that my husband chose a military career.

General Stilwell's army life began in 1900, when he entered the United States Military Academy at the age of seventeen. After his graduation in 1904, he saw service in the Philippine Islands with the 12th Infantry. Many interesting years followed and during World War I, he became G-2 of the 4th Corps, under General Briant H. Wells. Between the two World Wars, he was stationed in China three times, for a total of ten years.

In 1921, during his first tour of duty in China as an army language student in Peking, he served in Shansi province as construction engineer on a road being built by the American Red Cross for famine relief. In Shansi, he spent months working and living with Chinese laborers and peasants. In 1927, while stationed in Tientsin, he spent several months as an observer with the Chinese armies, then engaged in Civil War. Because of his intense desire for factual information, he moved continuously on foot within the battle areas. During a later assignment as Military Attaché to the American Embassy in Peking, he learned to know Chinese officials and military leaders of the highest rank. During those years of contact with both the common citizens of China and leaders of wealth and position, General Stilwell developed an intimate understanding of the basic and underlying psychology of China.

Few people realize that General Stilwell, throughout the greatest years of his career, was almost blind. The explosion of an ammunition dump, during World War I at Belrupt, caused a severe injury to the left eye. There was a deformity of the pupil and the growth of a cataract of the lens. The vision of this eye was so impaired that he could not distinguish the fingers on a hand at three feet. The vision of the right eye required heavy correction and constant use of glasses. During the trying days in Chungking, as well as during the jungle campaigns in Burma, where lighting facilities were inadequate, it was often necessary to work by candlelight. His indomitable urge to do his job and do it well forced him to strain the remaining eye. His great hope was that it would last long enough to see him through his mission.

General Stilwell's war journals were written so that he might have a true and factual account of those years. They

were put down for his own use. But to me his gallant spirit lives on, encouraging me to bring his journals to publication.

The major problems that confronted General Stilwell during the war are those that essentially confront the representatives of our country in China today. Since a free and great democracy can function successfully only upon the basis of true information, it is my hope that these journals will bring a clearer understanding of the problems America faces in China. We shall then stand much closer to a careful and proper solution.

Winifred A. Stilwell



INTRODUCTION

THE COMMANDER of a war theater of the United States Army is the most important and most lonesome of all men in whatever area he serves. He can have no intimates or friends to share his fears and worries. The pressures and strains that bear upon him are unrelenting; he must resolve them all in the clarity of decisions upon which the lives of men and the security of the Republic depends.

The quality of introversion that such terrible responsibility brings found its only release in General Stilwell in a series of papers, letters, and journal jottings which were found after his death among his effects. *THE STILWELL PAPERS* is a collection of these papers covering three years in the history of the last war—from the attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, to the final relief of General Stilwell from command in China in October, 1944.

These papers were written for himself alone—they are presented in this book raw and unformed, torn from the privacy of his emotions. They were written in the sharp, hard language of command and bitterness; they present only one

facet of his many-sided character. There is little reflection in them of the generosity, the kindliness, the warmth of love that won him so enduring a loyalty among those who knew him best. It would have been alien to his nature to record those many tendernesses that so naturally complemented his vigor and directness in action.

In this book, his thoughts and reflections are presented as he phrased them in his own words, at whatever penalty the book may suffer by peacetime canons of taste and convention. No change has been made in his text except for certain minor liberties clearly detailed below. Such editorial matter as is added for purposes of background and explanation is clearly marked as such and distinguished from the text proper by this type face.

The papers brought together here come from three sources, each reflecting a lifelong personal habit of General Stilwell.

The first source is his personal command journal, which was kept faithfully throughout the war. The journal entries are usually short, clipped telegraphic entries, serving more as personal symbols of memory than a narrative of events. Frequently they are technical military notes. Only as much of the journals is used in this book as is needed to stitch the sequence of the story together where other sources fail.

The second source consists of longer essays and analyses usually written during periods of reflection when Stilwell, for his own satisfaction, attempted to summarize a situation, sharpen his perception of character, or think through a particularly vexing problem.

The editor has taken the liberty of weaving both diaries and reflective papers together into a single pattern, setting down both diary entry and reflective paper as a single section when they fall under the same date. When the reflec-

tive paper is undated, the editor has inserted it where, by the logic of text and events, he believes it properly falls.

The third source of material for this book is General Stilwell's letters to Mrs. Stilwell. These are clearly marked with the name of their recipient.

Wherever the name of a Chinese friend of General Stilwell has appeared, and whenever, in the opinion of the editor or Mrs. Stilwell, such a name exposes that friend to danger of reprisal at the hands of the Chinese government, the name has been deleted. Wherever Stilwell, as commanding general, records the shortcomings of United States officers, Mrs. Stilwell has requested that the names of such officers be deleted unless the history of the war makes it essential that the name be retained. The editor has taken it upon himself to fill out the abbreviations of names, or translations of code that Stilwell frequently used. The parentheses in the text are those of Stilwell; but whenever a bracket has been used, the bracketed material is an explanation or translation supplied by the editor. Footnotes also are worded by the editor. Occasionally, writing for his own eyes alone, Stilwell used the harsh descriptive expletives of the soldier. Knowing General Stilwell's reluctance to use such language publicly, the editor has at times cut or softened various easily recognized phrases. Less than half of General Stilwell's wartime writings are embodied in this book; but what has been published is Stilwell's alone, and the liberties mentioned above are the only brief alterations of his original script.

But I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat, trimly dressed,
Fresh as a bridegroom . . .

. . . he smiled and talked;
And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
He called them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse,
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
With many holiday and lady terms
He questioned me; among the rest demanded
My prisoners in your majesty's behalf.
I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
To be so pestered with a popinjay,
Out of my grief and my impatience,
Answered neglectingly I know not what;
He should, or he should not;—for he made me mad
To see him shine so brisk, and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman
Of guns, and drums, and wounds,—God save the mark!—

Hotspur to Henry IV

Henry IV (Part I), Act I, Scene 3

[General Stilwell often declared that this was his
favorite passage in Shakespeare.]



Contents

<i>Foreword by Winifred A. Stilwell</i>	ix
<i>Introduction by Theodore H. White</i>	xi
CHAPTER 1 The Old Sinking Feeling: December, 1941	1
CHAPTER 2 This Was Washington: January-February, 1942	13
CHAPTER 3 Disaster in Burma: March-May, 1942	43
CHAPTER 4 Let's Go Back to Burma: Summer, 1942	107
CHAPTER 5 As You Were: Autumn, 1942	160
CHAPTER 6 The Battle of the Mud: Spring and Summer, 1943	187
CHAPTER 7 The Ladies Lend a Hand: Autumn, 1943	223
CHAPTER 8 Mr. Roosevelt Clears Things up: Cairo, 1943	242
CHAPTER 9 "Up the River, over the Hogback" Victory in Burma, 1944	268
CHAPTER 10 Chiang K'ai-shek and His Government	315
CHAPTER 11 Relief from Command: October, 1944	323
<i>Afterword by Winifred A. Stilwell</i>	350
<i>Index</i>	355



Chapter 1

ON THE DAY the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor, the United States Army was scattered thin along the Pacific Coast of our country. Four Army and one Marine Corps divisions—in all, some 100,000 men—were spread from Puget Sound, south almost two thousand miles to San Diego, responsible for defending the homeland from an enemy whose first assault was expected anywhere, any time, in any force. These units, in various states of organization and confusion, some half trained, all ill equipped, ungirt and scattered on a peaceful Sunday morning, were under the over-all command of Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, commander of the Fourth Army.

Major General Joseph Warren Stilwell as senior tactical commander in California was directly responsible to DeWitt. Stilwell's command was the Third Corps with headquarters at Monterey—and his responsibility was the defense of the sea frontier of America from San Luis Obispo through Los Angeles to San Diego. This was an area of some five million people, containing more than 75 per cent of the heavy bomber plants of the United States, some of its most

significant oil production, a major naval base, and cut off from the rest of the country by desert and mountain.

On the morning of Pearl Harbor Sunday, General and Mrs. Stilwell were entertaining the officers of the Third Corps staff at their Carmel home. It was the last "at home," the General promised his wife, that she would have to give for his staff. A telephone rang, and Mrs. Stilwell answered it. It was a friend calling—"Turn on your radio," the friend said, "the Japs are attacking Pearl Harbor." Mrs. Stilwell blurted the news to her husband; the party converged on the nearest radio. There was a pause as they listened to the next flash; and then the party dissolved.

Sometime that afternoon or evening, General Stilwell found time to scribble the first entry in his wartime diaries. For the next three weeks his total preoccupation was to be the organization of the defense of the South Pacific Coast. Traveling by plane and road, he inspected the outposts of his command, sorting his units, posting them for action.



DECEMBER 7, 1941 Japs attack Hawaii. [Plan] Rainbow 5 in effect. Three p.m. Goode phoned. Jap fleet 20 miles south, 10 miles out [of Monterey]. Sent Dorn ¹ to [Ft.] Ord to call off show and alert garrison. Phoned Hearn ² to start reconnaissance. Phoned Hearn to have Dorn call enlisted men back to camp.

3:30 phoned White at Ord. White to send reconnaissance troop down Highway No. 1. 3:35 Guam being attacked.

DECEMBER 8 Office in a.m. No further news. Rumors begin. Went to San Francisco and saw DeWitt. Disaster at Honolulu.

Phone from Washington about ammunition. Almost a hatful. Sunday night "air raid" at San Francisco. Two blackouts in San Francisco. Second on account of Navy patrol. Fourth Army kind of jittery. Back at six. Much depressed. Blackout on. Calmed 'em down.

DECEMBER 9 At office in a.m. Arranged to shove off [on inspection trip]. Fleet of thirty-four [Japanese] ships between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Later—not authentic. (Sinking feeling is growing.) More threats of raids and landings. DeWitt getting four regiments from East. Dorn and I off at 3:45.

DECEMBER 10 Rain all way down. Went by Camp Cooke at 4:00 p.m. Hicks at [Ft.] MacArthur jittery. [Captain] Kaufman, United States Navy, also jittery. News of two British battleships sunk. My God—worse and worse.

On to San Bernardino in heavy rain. All arrangements made. Good job. Had chow at 12:15 a.m. In at one.

DECEMBER 11 Up at 6:30. Saw Moon. No bombers here. Out in desert. But eighty to a hundred B-17s on coast. Navy—no ships, no planes, or very few.

I had just gotten to Mittelstadt's command post in Balboa Park, San Diego, when the phone rang and Dorn was told there was an urgent call for me. He took it down and

¹ Major Frank "Pinky" Dorn, at the time Stilwell's personal aide. Dorn was to follow Stilwell to China, later to become Brigadier General Dorn, and remained throughout the war closer personally to Stilwell than any other individual in the Army.

² Colonel Thomas Hearn, chief of staff of III Corps. Hearn accompanied Stilwell to China, and later became Major General Hearn, chief of staff of the CBI theater.

handed it to me. "The main Japanese battle fleet is 164 miles off San Francisco. General alert of all units." I believed it, like a damn fool, and walked around the room trying to figure what to do. I imagined a wild rush up to Frisco with all available troops, and the first thing to do seemed to be to inform the Marines at Camp Elliott. So we dashed out and barged in, and saw General Vogel, a calm, solid citizen who, although under forty-eight hours' notice, agreed at once to play ball and do anything I told him. Then we phoned Army to check on the language and the position, which by latitude was 460 miles out, instead of 160. Then Colonel Howard, Vogel's chief of staff, came in with Navy's estimate of Jap force in Hawaiian waters. (Four heavy ships, two to four aircraft carriers, eight destroyers, some subs.) They guessed it might be this force, in for a raid, and they calmed me down some, enough to get to Dawley's command post without going nuts. The first reaction to that news was like a kick in the stomach—the unthinkable realization that our defenses were down, the enemy at hand, and that we not only had nothing to defend ourselves with, but that Time was against us. We could not ship the ammunition in time, nor could we evacuate the three million people in this area. Had the Japs only known, they could have landed anywhere on the coast, and after our handful of ammunition was gone, they could have shot us like pigs in a pen. (We had about ten million caliber 30 [rifle bullets], a few hundred 75s, and 266 155s. No trench mortars at all. The Coast Artillery Command at Rosecrans and [Ft.] MacArthur had about 180 rds. per [155 mm. gun] and sufficient stuff for their other guns.)

Of course [the 4th] Army passed the buck on this report. They had it from a "usually absolutely reliable source,"

but they should never have put it out without check. They added that the Fourth Air Force had gone after the Japs, but they did not report results, which of course were negative. Then, when a Navy patrol scoured the area and found nothing, they had to admit the report was not dependable. (I stopped at Encinitas to phone Hearn, and he said then that the Navy had already reported negatively.)

DECEMBER 13 Not content with the above blah, [the 4th] Army pulled another at ten-thirty today. "Reliable information that attack on Los Angeles is imminent. A general alarm being considered." The old sinking feeling again. Ammunition a little better, the 125th [Regiment] due in twenty-four hours, and a division coming in *ten days*. Got what hope I could from that, and then decided to disbelieve the report. Of course, the attack never materialized, but a "general alarm" would have been just as serious. The plain truth is that it is not possible to evacuate three million people east, over waterless desert, and there would have been frightful casualties if a general exodus had started. What jackass would sound a "general alarm" under the circumstances? The [Fourth] Army G-2 is just another amateur, like all the rest of the staff. RULE: the higher the headquarters, the more important is *calm*. Nothing should go out unconfirmed. Nothing is ever as bad as it seems at first.

But twelve million 30 caliber [bullets] in hands of troops and three million in reserve. The 125th [Regiment] due tonight. We have two battalions along the coast. Two battalions radioed for Coast Artillery Command defense and two battalions in reserve. For 175 miles of coast. (The old sinking feeling.) Six tanks coming from Ord. (The others won't run.)

Lingayen landing repulsed.

DECEMBER 14 One week gone. What have we done? Reputations blasted and the U.S. united and set for a long hard pull.

Philippine Islands doing fine. Wake and Midway holding. [Secretary of Navy] Knox back in Washington. Still silence from Navy. What a black eye they got. A Coast Artillery Command rookie shot and killed a woman yesterday. DeWitt now in full command on coast.

The Philippine divisions shot 'em up at Lingayen. Caught the Japs coming ashore in launches. Sank 150 boats and contents. Good job. In fact, most of the *despised people* (Chinese, Russians, Greeks, and Filipinos) are doing the best work for civilization.

DECEMBER 15 Dubby day—no scares. Various dopes in to talk. Royse wants to resign—just can't bear it. Told him to wait till tomorrow. The 125th Infantry in. Third Cavalry Battalion arrived at Phoenix and Tucson.

[Secretary of the Navy] Knox back from Hawaii. Statement looks queer. He says *Arizona* and three destroyers and one mine sweeper sunk. *Oklahoma* capsized. *Utah* lost. Others damaged. Whatever that means. Maintains that the Pacific Fleet has gone after the Japs.

The Italians have worked it out. They say the Japs may be considered to be "yellow Aryans."

DECEMBER 16 Admiral Yamamoto, several years back, wrote in a letter that when the Jap war with the U.S. occurred, he did not want to merely take Guam and Wake, and occupy Hawaii and San Francisco. His real ambition was to dictate peace in Washington, D.C.

DECEMBER 17 Off to Santa Monica. Saw Branshaw,³ all jitters. (One-half our aircraft production localized here in