# DEAR MISS EM

## General Eichelberger's War in the Pacific, 1942–1945

Jay Luvaas

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# *Dear Miss Em*

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Miss Em and General Eichelberger

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## General Eichelberger's War in the Pacific, 1942–1945

*Jay Luvaas, Editor*

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# *Preface*

Although I could not realize it at the time, this book was conceived during the summer of 1954, when I was courting General Robert L. Eichelberger's papers for the Duke University Library. I was engaged in developing an already impressive collection of printed and manuscript materials in Southern history, and, given my own military interests, it was inevitable that sooner or later my gaze would fall upon the former commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, then living in retirement in Asheville. If his career did not properly belong to Southern history, the normal parameters of my "search and preserve" mission, I had no difficulty in rationalizing any efforts to acquire his papers. His wife, after all, came from a prominent North Carolina family, he was living comfortably south of the Mason-Dixon line, and his father (I later learned) had even fought in the Civil War.

Through the good offices of Daniel K. Edwards, his former aide and more recently the mayor of Durham, I made contact with the General. He had indeed saved everything from his long and varied career and a hasty reconnaissance to Asheville uncovered all sorts of treasures — diaries, official reports, newspaper clippings, photographs, and personal correspondence — tucked away in trunks and boxes in his attic.

By far the most intriguing portion of his papers was the letters to Miss Em, for as his friend and classmate, General George S. Patton, Jr., Eichelberger wrote at least once a day to his wife whenever they were separated. These were conversational, candid letters that revealed his hopes and frustrations, experiences and opinions during his years in Siberia and the Pacific. Although aware that one day his letters would have historical value, Eichelberger did not write with the notion that historians would peer over Miss Em's shoulder. "History is still in the

making right here," he explained at the close of the war, "and I want you to see all sides of it."

General Eichelberger placed many of these letters at the disposal of the writer who collaborated in producing *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo,* which was published in 1949 and serialized in the *Saturday Evening Post.* His main interest then, however, was to see that history took notice of the accomplishments of his Eighth Army, which had operated throughout the Pacific war in the heavy shadow of General Walter Krueger's Sixth Army. Only about twenty percent of the present volume duplicates passages quoted in *Jungle Road.*

After the emotional binge that accompanied General Douglas MacArthur's abrupt dismissal in 1951, Eichelberger became increasingly annoyed with attempts to deify his old chief. He was conspicuously absent from the coterie of dedicated followers who surrounded MacArthur upon his dramatic return from Korea and he bristled at some of the assumptions in the rhapsodic biographies by Frazier Hunt and Major General Charles A. Willoughby. Hunt, declared Eichelberger, "tried to be very friendly to me in his book" but "Willoughby indulged in some half truths which I didn't like." Both volumes were "far too one-sided to have any historical value," a judgment echoed by some disinterested critics far removed from the MacArthur circle. Hanson Baldwin, for example, warned that historians "will have to sift carefully through a mass of subject chaff" to get much of value out of Willoughby's *MacArthur 1941-1951,* and General S. L. A. Marshall described Hunt's *The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur* as "strictly the front view, seen by a friend through the eyes of the advocate," of a figure who "comes out like implacable Mars garmented as Uncle Sam."[1]

For a while Eichelberger was tempted to write a second volume that would adjust reputations a little, but as the years passed and his golf game improved he lost any desire he once had to refight the war. He continued to read and react to literature on the war and to assemble source materials for his memoirs — or rather for some interested historian after he himself had "gone on to his reward."

At first I had no plans to do anything with the collection myself. My interests were concentrated on the Civil War, and when I left this overworked field it was to study military thought abroad. During my frequent trips to Asheville, however, I did become intrigued by what I learned of MacArthur and his lieutenants as we searched Eichelberger's attic and his prodigious memory. When the time came for me to remove the papers to Duke University, the General tried to reread each letter, not for fear that something would get out that should remain private, but because each letter seemed to revive suggestive memories. He would

1. *The New York Times Book Review,* October 3, 24, 1954.

set aside a pile of letters retrieved recently from a trunk and explain: "I get a kick out of reading these old letters. I'll see that you get them next time." And then characteristically he would add: "How much do you need to take back today to make it look good with your bosses?"

Usually at this point Miss Em would intervene, whispering to me: "If you and Bobby don't go through these things any faster you will never finish. No matter what he says, he will never take time to read them. You distract him with a few letters and we'll just take the rest to the car." In this unceremonious way the Eichelberger papers, by detachments, were marched off for the library.

The best part of this characteristic procedure was that there was always need for another trip, and every few months I returned for additional treasures. Our conversation during these visits usually centered on sports or military events, topics which I gather did not greatly interest many of General Eichelberger's retired friends. On those frequent occasions when I did not know enough about operations in the Pacific to converse intelligently, I fell back upon the simple expedient of pretending I was interviewing Stonewall Jackson and framing my questions accordingly. What was it like to lead a corps in battle? What books or men had influenced him during his career? How would he rate his subordinate commanders? How would he compare the American and Japanese soldier? How good was the generalship on the other side? Did his own superiors ever intervene in tactical decisions?

His staunchly loyal secretary, Mrs. Virginia Westall, frequently came to my aid. "Get Sir Robert to tell you about the time MacArthur offered him Sutherland's job," she would suggest in her distinctive Oklahoma twang. On the next trip she might volunteer: "The General has Fred Irving on his mind a lot these days." And after each visit, General Eichelberger would dictate his aroused recollections and impressions, a habit he had formed shortly before my first trip to Asheville. Ultimately there were some five hundred typed pages of his panoramic and often pungent commentary on all sorts of matters touching his career and public figures he had known.

In 1957 I left Duke for a teaching position, but at General Eichelberger's request I remained in command of his papers to protect them from being exploited by anyone with an eye for the sensational. I still had no intention of using the collection myself and it was not until 1961, when I was in England working on another book, that General Eichelberger brought up the subject. Could I visit him upon my return in the fall? Sensing some urgency and of course delighted at the prospect of seeing him again, I rearranged my home journey to include a side trip to Asheville. After the usual polite preliminaries between friends, he took me aside and came straight to the point. Had I given any thought to using his papers for a book? I had not. Would I be interested?

He had continued to dictate his thoughts on MacArthur, George Catlett Marshall, Eisenhower, and other "great men" he had known. "Some of these historical data are controversial," he admitted, and he was anxious that someone with historical training would make use of the material, disregarding those passages that were based on insufficient or faulty evidence or were manifestly inaccurate or unfair.

Although inundated with other work and aware of my own limitations in what for me would be virtually a new field, on the spur of the moment I promised him that as soon as present obligations were fulfilled I would do something with his papers. I asked him if he would object to my editing his personal letters to Miss Em. Not at all, he replied, although Miss Em would probably insist that her letters would be too personal to be made public. He would want me to honor her wishes in the matter. (Thus when she insisted that her own letters be destroyed because they would have no historical value, I felt obliged to comply.) That settled, we rejoined the ladies and the rest of our brief visit was purely social. He seemed a little pensive when we left the next day, but I assumed that this was because he knew he had to face major surgery the following week.

I had only one more communication from him. "With luck," he wrote from the hospital, "it should prove to be more or less minor but it is nothing I would cry for. Virginia has been busy as a bee getting her Marshall data together and other things. I have made some dictations about General Richardson who backed out of his Australian detail and who changed my life very radically. Have also dictated about my life in China and important people I knew there including Sun Yat Sen. Send the questions along and we shall get on them with life." Four days later General Eichelberger was dead.

That Christmas, when I visited Asheville to arrange for the dispatch of the stray papers to the library, I assured Miss Em that I would do everything within my power to see that General Eichelberger's views, as well as his accomplishments, would one day become a matter of historical record. This book is the result of that promise. I did not find time to commence work on it until 1965, when I spent the better part of a sabbatical wading through the two hundred and fifty odd boxes of correspondence, documents, and pictures that comprise the Eichelberger Papers. I emerged with some four hundred single-spaced typed pages of excerpts from General Eichelberger's daily letters to Miss Em, selected because of what they revealed of the personalities, the campaigns, and the atmosphere of the Pacific war.

I next asked three friends to mark those passages that to them had some special interest. General Clovis E. Byers, Eichelberger's gifted Chief of Staff, indicated the material that in his judgment would be essential

for a proper understanding of the story. Colonel Thomas E. Griess, who fought with the Sixth Army in the Philippines and is currently Professor and Head of the History Department at West Point, drew my attention to episodes which he thought would merit inclusion or further investigation. And Miss Karin Arentzen (Mrs. William K. Stahl), my capable student assistant for two years, marked those passages that she was convinced would interest the general reader. Once I had made my own selections I weighed the recommendations of these good people and it was astonishing the degree to which our interests had overlapped. They are in no way responsible for any errors of judgment on my part, but each, viewing the story from a special vantage point, powerfully reinforced my own feelings about the kind of material that should be included.

I have tried throughout to be impartial in investigating General Eichelberger's opinions and the "facts" as he communicated them to Miss Em. Wherever I have found his views in conflict with others or his facts subject to change in light of information not known to him at the time, I have so indicated.

In order to provide continuity and maintain a lively and trim literary style, I have resorted to several unconventional editorial practices. Because General Eichelberger rarely had time to write a complete letter at one sitting, but was forced to dictate snatches at slack moments throughout his busy day, his letters to Miss Em rarely were compact and carefully composed. I have therefore redeployed passages within each letter to avoid excessive redundancies, to give his full thoughts on an important subject, and to maintain some continuity of thought. I have also deleted entire paragraphs and inserted his marginal comments and postscripts into the regular text. I can assure the reader that none of the sentences thus transplanted are in an environment where the context has been changed, which obviously would lead to distortion, and that I have not tampered with the wording except to expand abbreviations into words familiar to the general reader, like changing CP to command post. On the rare occasions when I have combined elements from two letters I have designated the hybrid passage.

To avoid overloading the text with excess impedimenta I have made only limited use of ellipses. Where words have been deleted or a sentence cut short I have so indicated, but I did not think it necessary to insert ellipses when entire passages (or pages), or even complete sentences that belong to paragraphs quoted, have been omitted. Nor have I denoted which paragraphs have been rebuilt from sentences scattered throughout a rambling letter. The reader should understand that only a small portion — perhaps fifteen percent — of General Eichelberger's daily letters to Miss Em have been included and that most entries are distilled from one, two, and sometimes even three letters written on

any given day. And because most of these were dictated in haste and under conditions where concern for consistency in spelling and punctuation was second to other considerations, I have simply made the changes necessary to please the copy editor without activating the overworked *sic.*

As editor I had one other function. Although his letters were subject to military censorship, General Eichelberger felt at liberty to comment upon personalities (never upon operations until they had been completed) by the simple expedient of inventing nicknames for the major characters. Consequently his letters are filled with terms such as Sarah, Old Heart of Gold, your Leavenworth friend, your old Palsy Walsy, and the Kemper football coach. Miss Em of course knew the identity of each, and thanks to General Eichelberger's diary and General Clovis Byers' memory, the reader too can share the secret. Otherwise this book would contain as many blank spaces as the most scurrilous of eighteenth-century political tracts.

My friendship with General Eichelberger did cause one difficulty that I had not anticipated: his personality kept getting in the way! I found myself responding to a desire to resurrect one of the most colorful and attractive individuals it has been my good fortune to meet. General Eichelberger had a rare way with people. I have seen him captivate a class of sophomores, charm aristocratic ladies at a United Fund luncheon into inviting a black worker to share their table, admonish a student who griped about the eggs in a cafeteria line, and entertain a two-year-old (who called him Bobby) while enjoying meatballs in our all-purpose kitchen. He used to delight in introducing me to friends who held political views opposite from mine and then walking away, after giving them the target and the range. While generally conservative he made a point of trying to understand all points of view. He enjoyed people — all kinds of people — and because of his lively curiosity, vitality, and basic optimism, he never became an old man. Above all he was honest. He possessed a magnetic sense of humor, sturdy integrity, and a lofty concept of duty and patriotism. So without any conscious effort on my part, what began as a book giving General Eichelberger's view of the war and the men who fought it became also a testament to his own vigorous character and personality.

Many have been indispensable in preparing this volume. Colonel Thomas E. Griess introduced me to several officers who had served with General Eichelberger; Miss Arentzen compiled a subject index to the sprawling dictations, which enabled me to work with this important source without excessive loss of time. Dr. Mattie Russell, Curator of Manuscripts, The Perkins Library, Duke University, went far beyond the call of duty to enable me to make the best possible use of the limited

time I could spend with the Eichelberger Papers, while other good friends, Dr. Richard Pearse, Professor Theodore Ropp, and "Colonel" Charles S. Sullivan generously provided quarters during my visits to Durham. General Clyde Eddleman was kind enough to lend this stranger his copy of General Krueger's book and Dr. Forrest Pogue provided helpful information on General Marshall's views of Eichelberger and the Pacific war. The Hon. Tracy S. Voorhees placed at my disposal his correspondence with General Eichelberger while Under Secretary of the Army.

I am particularly indebted to a number of former associates of General Eichelberger, each of whom has added a dimension to my own understanding. From General Jacob L. Devers, a classmate, and Colonel Russell P. (Red) Reeder, Jr., who knew him later at West Point, I was able to broaden my perspective about Eichelberger in the pre-war days. General George H. Decker, Chief of Staff, Sixth Army, and Dr. Roger Egeberg and Brigadier General Paul W. Johnston of MacArthur's staff helped me to fathom the sensitive relationships between Eichelberger and his superiors — they would not necessarily agree with all of the comments to Miss Em about their respective chiefs, but they would recognize and respect the man who emerges from these letters. Brigadier General John R. Jannarone, Assistant Engineer, Eighth Army Headquarters Staff, and presently Dean of the Academic Board at West Point, Major General F. S. Bowen, Jr., the dedicated and energetic "Billy" who was Eichelberger's indispensable G-3, and Major Generals Frederick A. Irving and Clarence A. Martin, two of Eichelberger's favorite division commanders, shared freely their recollections. They showed me how the commander of I Corps and Eighth Army appeared at the time to his subordinates.

No man, it is said, is a hero to his valet. Perhaps this is true of military aides as well, but not so with Colonel William H. (Tommy) Tomlinson, who served Eichelberger as an aide during the closing months of the war and afterwards in Japan. His respect and affection for "the Old Man" prompted him to bring several points to my attention and, despite heavy family responsibilities of his own, moved him to continue to attend Miss Em throughout her long, final illness. More than any words could convey, his unselfish actions give meaning to what I heard so often in my interviews: Eichelberger treated his staff as his family. Obviously they reciprocated.

By far my greatest debt is to the "kid brother" of this military family, General Clovis E. Byers, who was indispensable in many ways. His reactions to my original notes, his helpful suggestions during memorable conversations, his candid and patient answers to questions that lesser men would have considered impertinent, his unrivalled understanding of the man Eichelberger and of the General's problems, his detailed

letters that made history of fleeting references in the Eichelberger correspondence, and his gentle criticisms — which were free of any intention to influence what I might want to write — have added immeasurably to this volume. General and Mrs. Byers opened their home to me whenever I was in Washington, and the conversations that went long into the night — and often far afield from the subject of these letters — greatly broadened my outlook in things military. I now know why Eichelberger placed such a high value upon his services.

And almost in the same breath, I would like to acknowledge the availing help of Virginia Westall, the General's friend and secretary. By making order of his dictations, providing assistance in locating missing papers and former subordinates, and answering cheerfully all cries for assistance, she too has been indispensable. Like Tommy Tomlinson, she continued to serve Miss Em long after General Eichelberger had died.

I am indebted (and without generous financial support from Allegheny College, it would be in more than one sense) to Mrs. K. K. Robertson who typed the final manuscript with unerring accuracy and something more than a professional interest; to Mr. Edward J. Krasnoborski, Cartographer, Department of History, West Point, for preparing the fine maps that are indispensable in a book of this kind; and especially to Mr. Roy E. Larson, Vice Chairman of *Life,* who made it possible for me to include the superb Strock pictures that speak even louder than Eichelberger's words of the terrible conditions at Buna.

Finally I would express my thanks to two unusual ladies. My wife, who suffers sometimes from the illusion that she is a Civil War widow, encouraged me to set aside domestic chores in the hope that the finished product might be in Miss Em's hands while she was still able to enjoy it. She was as fond of the General as I and we both regret that Miss Em died before the book was published. For her part, I would thank Miss Em for her trust. Never once did she ask that anything be deleted or censored: it was enough for her to know that I was at work on the book and obviously enjoying it.

It is fitting that this volume, like the letters themselves and the life of the man who wrote them, be dedicated to Dear Miss Em.

Jay Luvaas

# *Dear Miss Em*

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CHAPTER ONE

# *Introduction*

> We have difficulty in following the satellites of MacArthur, for like those of Jupiter, we cannot see the moons on account of the brilliance of the planet. . . . Many of us would like to know who the agents are that execute the well laid plans of the boss. Even the Gods were alleged to have their weaknesses.[1]

The recipient of this letter, written toward the end of World War II by a retired American general, was one of many unknown soldiers who served under MacArthur. General Robert L. Eichelberger successfully led the I Corps and later the U.S. Eighth Army throughout the war in the Southwest Pacific. After the surrender he remained in Japan as head of the Army of Occupation until the summer of 1948, when he retired from active service to write his memoirs, *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo.* Except for a brief period as Consultant to the Secretary of the Army on Far Eastern affairs during the Korean War, when his knowledge of "the MacArthur personality and of the idiosyncrasies of his principal staff members" came into play,[2] General Eichelberger spent his last years in comparative retirement in his wife's hometown of Asheville, North Carolina. "Retirement" is perhaps a misleading word, for he was perpetually active in civic and educational affairs, he wrote and lectured widely on current political and military issues, and his lively interest in the world about him kept him from ever becoming an "old" soldier. He died in Asheville on September 27, 1961. He was seventy-five.

To General MacArthur, Eichelberger was always "one of the army's most brilliant commanders." Other high-ranking officers knew him as

an outstanding commander, leader, and administrator, and one prominent member of his military family spoke for many whose careers had touched his when he observed, "it was through his rare human understanding that he attained his greatest stature."

This was apparent even to those who were not privileged to know him closely. When news of his death reached Yokohama, a retired ricksha-man solemnly presented the United States Consulate there with 3,000 yen in order to send flowers to the family. "If I only had one million yen," he explained, "I would go to Asheville." He could not forget the tall, friendly man who had given him permission to keep his ricksha in front of Eighth Army Headquarters, and who after leaving Japan had never failed to send a package at Christmas time.[3]

Robert Lawrence Eichelberger was born in Urbana, Ohio, on March 9, 1886.[4] His father was a prominent lawyer who had served for a time in the Union army; his mother was a Southern girl who could remember the ravages of war when the armies had clashed near her family home in Port Gibson, Mississippi. The youngest of five surviving children, Robert Eichelberger spent a happy boyhood on the farm built by his grandfather before the Civil War. Upon graduation from Urbana High School, he attended Ohio State University for two years before entering the Military Academy at West Point in 1905. He graduated in 1909, sixty-eighth in a class of one hundred and three.

There were twenty-eight members from this class who would become general officers, including two Chinese students who later served in their own army. Several attained supreme distinction during World War II. General Jacob Devers commanded the United States Forces in North Africa and later the Sixth Army Group in southern France and Germany. General George Patton won undying fame with his Third Army and another less-heralded classmate, General William Simpson, earned respect as commander of the Ninth Army. Major General Edwin Forrest Harding took the Thirty-second Division to New Guinea, and Major General Horace Fuller led the Forty-first Division until it got bogged down on Biak; both were replaced by Eichelberger when he commanded I Corps, acts that caused him considerable pain and embarrassment and led to some bitter feelings on the part of other classmates.

Lieutenant Eichelberger's first assignment after leaving West Point was with the Tenth Infantry at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. I Company, he later recalled, "had everything from quiet, nice chaps to jail birds and drunks." The only man in the outfit with so much as a high school education was the company clerk who had served a hitch in the penitentiary after absconding with funds from the bank where he had

worked. The men gambled and drank away their money on payday and often were worthless for several days afterwards, but they could shoot, they had developed a rough kind of pride "which made them march to exhaustion rather than fall out on long hikes or night forced marches," and, in Eichelberger's later judgment, if properly commanded they "would have been valuable in combat."

He was quick to learn a basic lesson in leadership. "About my first experience with these men was a long annual 200-mile practice march. My uniform shoes were new and I was soon walking on blisters. If I had fallen out I do not believe I would ever have gained the respect of these men. One officer who rode in an ambulance after his feet began to hurt never had any standing... after that." The officers who did stand high in the estimation of the troops were those who looked after the men and paid strict attention to duty, providing an example which Eichelberger claimed had assisted him throughout his career.

In March 1911, when the situation in Mexico threatened to involve units of the United States Army stationed on the border, the Tenth Infantry was sent to San Antonio, Texas, to join the so-called Maneuver Division. (There were no regular divisions in the army at this time, and the 11,000 troops assembled near San Antonio for maneuvers represented the largest concentration since the Philippine Insurrection.)[5] For six months the regiment lived in tents. "There were maneuvers, long practice marches and many of the dull things that made up camp life in those days," Eichelberger later recalled. Many of the older officers had seen fighting in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, and much of their conversation was taken up with stories of life in Cebu, Malabang, Zamboanga, Jolo, and Davao. The young lieutenant who listened wide-eyed to stories of Moro attacks could little dream that one day he would command an army that would liberate these far-off places from the Japanese: it seemed remarkable enough at the time that he would end his tour in command of I Company.

In September the regiment was sent to Panama, where Eichelberger first encountered the jungle. This time, however, it was the jungle itself that had to be conquered, for during his stay in Panama the canal was completed. The camp where Eichelberger was stationed was on the edge of the great cut, and so he had "intimate and daily knowledge of this gigantic engineering feat." Lieutenant Franklin Sibert, who would later command a corps on Mindanao, was one of his friends in the Tenth; Sibert's father, Colonel William Sibert, was in charge of the construction of the Gatun Locks, and gave Eichelberger a marvelous opportunity to satisfy his curiosity and follow the progressive construction of these great locks. "Those were interesting and exciting days," he wrote later. When the first ship steamed through the canal, Lieutenant Eichelberger was aboard.

It was in Panama also that he met Emma Gudger, the lovely and cultivated daughter of Judge H. A. Gudger, Chief Justice of the Canal Zone. She appeared one day as Eichelberger and a number of other interested bachelors of the Tenth were calling on the daughter of Colonel William C. Gorgas, the conquerer of yellow fever in the Canal Zone. What followed can only be described as a whirlwind courtship. The competition was fierce, but with typical zest and determination, and making the most of his infectious charm, the lieutenant pursued "Miss Em" to the altar. They were married on April 3, 1913, and during their years together no couple could have been happier and more devoted. Eichelberger's admiration and affection are expressed in every letter and were evident in each gesture. Emma's staunch loyalty and agonizing concern for her husband's welfare were no less apparent, constituting throughout his career an unusual source of strength, and occasionally of worry. She was always his companion, confidante, and ardent champion, while he never outgrew his need for her, or his boyish desire to please his "dear old doll."

In 1915 Eichelberger was assigned to duty with the Twenty-second Infantry, then stationed on the Mexican Border. He enjoyed border patrol duty: the varied and almost limitless terrain in Arizona was a welcome contrast to the jungle, and it was here that he first witnessed live combat. When the Mexican insurgent leader, Francisco "Pancho" Villa, attacked government troops at Agua Prieta, just across the border from Douglas, Arizona, Eichelberger viewed the fight from the doorway of an old slaughterhouse about a thousand yards distant. "Men were wounded and men died and we had been ordered not to give any water to the Villa forces, but many a canteen was filled at our spigot near the doorway. It is hard to deny water to wounded men." Among the men who passed by the doorway was Rodriguez, one of Villa's principal leaders. "He looked like a Hollywood soldier, with his wide silver-embroidered sombrero, his bolero and pearl handled pistols. He looked us over with hatred such as I never saw again until I tried to give water to a wounded Japanese boy in a jungle at Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea."

Eichelberger remembered the occasion as "a fine fight," and he never got over the fact that some of his fellow officers had elected to remain in the Officers' Club to play cards. "Wouldn't one think that any officer who had taken up the military as a career would have wanted to see the Mexican Army at close hand? To hear the crack of a bullet fired in anger? And yet for several days, the officers crowded around a poker table when permission had been granted for them to go up to the front and see what was going on." Even when the regiment was in reserve, one had only to go three-quarters of a mile to reach the slaughterhouse, where it was possible to stand in perfect safety "and see the effect of fire coming out of Agua Prieta and gauge the enthusiasm of Villa's men

for combat." He would witness a similar indifference several years later in Vladivostok, when fierce fighting broke out near the American headquarters and 1,100 men were massacred in a nearby railroad station. "Many didn't bother even to look out of the window."

To Eichelberger, whose lively curiosity has been likened to that of an energetic cat upon entering a strange room, it was incomprehensible that any officer should fail to take advantage of an opportunity to learn something more about his profession. Had they been studying for the ministry, he snorted, no one would have given the matter any thought. But the soldier's profession was apt to involve fighting, and to his way of thinking, preparation for combat of any kind was a necessary part of the job.

In September 1916 Eichelberger was named professor of Military Science and Tactics at Kemper Military School in Boonville, Missouri. Upon the completion of that academic year he joined the Twentieth Infantry at Fort Douglas, Utah, and, with the expansion of the army made possible by the National Defense Act of 1916, he soon found himself a captain, in command of a battalion of the Forty-third Infantry. After a brief stint as instructor at the Third Officers' Training Camp in Camp Pike, Arkansas, he went to the War Department General Staff in Washington.

Here he served in the office of Major General William S. Graves, executive assistant to the Chief of Staff. When General Graves left the War Department to command the Eighth Division at Camp Fremont, California, in July 1918, Eichelberger went along as his G-3 (Operations). Although the division originally had been slated for service in Europe, Graves instead was ordered to select a few officers and 5,000 enlisted men — "strong, hardy, [and] fit for service intended" — to form a part of the expeditionary force that was about to sail for Siberia. After months of pressure from allies, the United States government had agreed to joint military action in Siberia, ostensibly to help save some 70,000 Czech soldiers, former Russian prisoners of war and deserters from the Austrian army who had worked their way across Siberia after the Bolshevik revolution. Lacking the necessary transportation to leave Vladivostok for France, where they hoped to continue the fight, the Czechs expanded their control of Eastern Siberia, and so the original purpose of the American intervention had been achieved before any of the allied contingents had landed. There were of course other motives, ranging from an official suspicion of Japanese intentions in the area to a rather hazy hope of stabilizing "any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance." America's allies unfortunately pursued more ambitious policies, and in the ensuing months Major Eichelberger received an advanced education in geography, politics, and the capricious behavior of his fellow man.

As Assistant Chief of Staff and later as Chief Intelligence Officer, Eichelberger enjoyed a panoramic view of life in Siberia. Vladivostok was a virtual Babel, with Czech, Cossack, Japanese, American and other allied troops mingling with Chinese coolies, displaced Koreans, German and Turkish prisoners of war, and all sorts of "ungodly looking people." Eichelberger's principal amusement was to sit in a cafe drinking tea, listening to the music and observing the various types of vaudeville characters that drifted by. "I haven't seen a decent looking woman in the town," he assured Miss Em. "The Bolshevikis must have scared them away. All the inhabitants are dirty and smell like Billy Goats." There was certainly here the makings of a good comic opera.[6]

During working hours things were not always so amusing. Eichelberger got caught in a cross fire involving Graves' Chief of Staff, whom he identified in his letters to Miss Em as the "Great I." "As popular as the itch to an armless beggar," this unfortunate officer intrigued unsuccessfully to have Eichelberger sent home, and he so bullied the rest of the staff that ultimately Graves had to relieve him and reduce his rank. Eichelberger was not involved directly in this row, a "rotten thing in every way"; when everyone "took a crack" at the Great I, Eichelberger sadly wrote Miss Em that he had grown "tired of the whole darn bunch."[7]

He became even more disgusted with many of the allied officials he met, particularly after he began work in intelligence. While his descriptions of unusual characters were as colorful as the Cossacks themselves, underlying most of his comments to Miss Em was growing distaste for intrigue and the battle of personalities that he saw being waged at every level. "It is a great life for a poker player."[8]

Eichelberger was particularly incensed by the attitude and actions of the Japanese, who were conducting an aggressive anti-American campaign. Many of the White Russian leaders were puppets of the Japanese or at least were openly supported by them, and it became increasingly evident that the Japanese army intended to gain control of Eastern Siberia and the Chinese Eastern Railway. Numerous incidents revealed a deep-seated hostility toward the Americans. Japanese soldiers often failed to show respect to American officers (Eichelberger was treated rudely on a number of occasions) and even Japanese school children would jeer at their allies. The effect on Eichelberger was pronounced. "This is the best school in Americanism I have ever seen," he informed Miss Em. "Nearly any half-American coming over here would be turned into a real patriot because some of the biggest liars and crooks in the world are assembled here and they are all knocking us."[9]

In later life Eichelberger frequently mentioned that it was in Siberia that he had learned to hate Japanese militarism. There is ample contemporary evidence that this was so, for his letters in 1919 betray almost

as strong a dislike for "the monkeys" as any written from New Guinea twenty-five years later.

Eichelberger's daily letters to Miss Em would fill a separate book. Perhaps his description of the attack by General Sergei Rozanoff and his White Russians against troops representing the Siberian National Directorate on 17 November 1919 will convey some sense of the frustrations experienced by Graves and his staff. The action occurred at the railroad station in Vladivostok.

> The big fight . . . continued through the night. We had everything from a bombardment by torpedo boats to a lot of artillery fire. Grenades were banging but the worst thing was a machine gun in the corner by our back garden. . . . There were 21 bodies around it this morning.
>
> Things got too hot for General Gaida [commanding the troops of the National Directorate] — he had his headquarters at the railroad station. They were surrounded and towards morning his men began to surrender. When I went down . . . the prisoners (hundreds of them) were being marched away. . . . When I reached the railway station the last batch of prisoners were lined up against the wall to be shot. . . . It was a sad blow to democracy as these murderous cutthroats backed by the Japanese are in full control. . . .
>
> From a military standpoint, the Russian student officers and noncoms trained in a British School on Russian Island were the determining factor for Rozanoff. They had discipline, training and equipment while Gaida's men . . . were without organization. . . . I hope this is another step in our early withdrawal."[10]

> November 19, 1919
>
> Everything is very quiet here now — the debris of the fight is being cleaned up and the bodies recovered. Wild rumors of all kinds are flying around, most of them hinging on the word that the Japanese joined in the fighting against the Gaida troops after dark. I rather doubt this but the Japanese contended that in the interests of humanity the fight should be limited to the railway yards and vicinity, and as the monarchists had machine guns on all the high points the democrats were cooped up and couldn't get out. In addition the . . . line of Japanese troops put behind the Rozanoff crowd undoubtedly gave them encouragement. At any rate the Japanese scored a victory over America because Democracy is killed in Eastern Siberia and the Rozanoff crowd being only a small group with all the arms can be controlled by the Japanese, giving them unlimited economic control. . . .
>
> I have collected evidence of Rozanoff troops shooting *wounded prisoners some time after they had surrendered, and then the little minds claim that that bunch should be supported by America because they are anti-Bolsheviki.*
>
> *Women come here pleading to save them and their husbands but we can do nothing. It is a dirty place for Americans to be.*[11]

Eichelberger found himself in many dirty places before he left Siberia. As chief intelligence officer he made frequent and extended trips into

the field to keep his outstretched fingers on the pulse of the Japanese as well as the rival Russian factions. He also witnessed most of the fighting in which American soldiers were engaged. Once he was captured by the White Russians and for a few long hours his life appeared to be in jeopardy. On another occasion he led a company in an expedition to root out the partisans on the Suchan plain. A Russian newspaper described what happened when Eichelberger's flanking detachment was discovered. "The bullets begin to whistle in quick succession. The soldiers lie down on the ground. Only Colonel Eichelberger and Major Graves remain standing. After a while, the left flank of our line occupies a hill, from whence it keeps up a fire upon the Partisans.... In this battle, the Americans and Japanese fought side by side for the first time."[12]

"Now that my trip up in the hills is over," Eichelberger reported to Miss Em, "I realize that I had a wonderful time — I also proved to myself that I could stand up and laugh while bullets were passing and other men, old enough to know better, had eyes as big as full moons.... I enjoyed our little engagement thoroughly."[13] He would react similarly at Buna, the first battle the Americans carried to the Japanese in New Guinea. "You will be glad to know that... my nerves are not shot in any way," he wrote to Miss Em soon after assuming command at Buna. "Some of the boys were having a hard time lighting a cigarette and... my hands are steady."[14]

The experience was instructive in another sense, for Eichelberger quickly learned to respect the rugged qualities of the Japanese soldiers. "Their patrolling was meticulous and all points within rifle fire of the main body were carefully covered," he later recalled. "In that fight it was the Japanese rear elements advancing down the ridge who cleared the Reds... and permitted us to resume our advance." Compared to American troops, he found the Japanese "decidedly better trained and certainly better disciplined." Given "equally good leadership... the Japanese would defeat us in battle."[15]

The Siberian experience proved also to be a hard-boiled school in leadership. General Graves had been instructed not to meddle in the civil war, but British and French officials desired to support the anti-Bolshevik forces even after the Armistice was signed in Europe. In their view, Graves was an obstacle as long as he adhered to orders. Even members of the State Department criticized Graves' attitude and occasionally his actions, accusing him of being sympathetic to the Bolsheviks. The Ambassador to Japan contended that he was not friendly enough to the Japanese.[16]

Eichelberger always admired Graves for his tireless efforts to walk a straight path in the midst of intrigue, suspicions, misunderstandings, and growing hostility, with allies that could not always be trusted and with

the State Department and the War Department occasionally working at cross-purposes. Graves was a shining example of integrity, courage, and honesty, "a big man in every way." "How he can settle so many questions day after day without having it get on his nerves is more than I can see — he sleeps all night, gets his exercise and gains weight. Even at this critical time, he is cheerful as you please."[17]

Eichelberger's own staff might have posed the same question throughout the Pacific war, and there can be no doubt that the future army commander learned much from Graves not only by the example he set, but from the long and frank discussions that animated their daily walks in the nearby hills. At such times the General would analyze the situation "from every angle," much in the same way that Eichelberger would later confide his most intimate thoughts to his own chief of staff, General Clovis Byers. The only part of his experience in 1919 that he had to learn over again concerned the inevitable "play of personalities." He should have seen and heard enough in Siberia to have learned not to expect too much of his fellow man and yet, to judge from his later reactions, he was surprised to find that "the Great I" — or his equivalent — was apt to show up in any organization.

In March 1920, Miss Em arrived in Vladivostok and soon afterward the couple departed for Japan, where he served on temporary duty until assigned as Assistant Chief of Staff, Military Intelligence, Philippine Department. In October of that year Eichelberger was sent to report on the unsettled conditions in China, and while his specific concern was the Tientsin area, where a United States infantry regiment was stationed, he was free to travel pretty much where he wished. The Eichelbergers found life in China pleasant, varied, and intensely interesting. "No young officer," he later reflected, "ever had a better job or one under more interesting conditions." Among the many fascinating people that Eichelberger encountered in China was Joe Stilwell, whose career was inextricably tied up with that turbulent country; the two would be thrown together again briefly during the closing days of World War II.

Eichelberger's next job was with the Military Intelligence Division in the old War Department. Here his responsibilities continued to be China, the Philippines, and Siberia, and when the conference on the limitations of armaments was held in Washington during 1921 and 1922, his knowledge of the Far East probably won him the assignment as liaison officer with the Chinese delegation. In 1924, primarily because the chances of eventual promotion to general rank seemed brighter, he transferred to the Adjutant General's Department.

The next year he went back to school. In 1926 Eichelberger was at the top of a list of "Distinguished Graduates" of the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth (Dwight D. Eisenhower stood number one in the class), where he remained for three more years as

Adjutant General and instructor. He then attended the Army War College in Washington, earning a superior rating, and in August 1931 he returned to West Point as Adjutant and Secretary of the Academic Board.

In July 1935, Lieutenant Colonel Eichelberger became Secretary to the War Department General Staff. The Chief of Staff at that time was already a household word, Major General Douglas MacArthur, and in later days Eichelberger reminisced frequently about his associations with the most publicized and controversial American soldier in modern times.

His first memory of MacArthur was in 1911, when both were in San Antonio as part of the Maneuver Division. "A handsome young captain of Engineers," MacArthur impressed Eichelberger as "a fine looking, upstanding officer" whose reputation as a coming leader was enhanced by his ability to "strike attitudes to impress the spectators." Eichelberger's most vivid recollection was seeing MacArthur in front of a drugstore one night, "standing a bit aloof from the rest of us and looking off in the distance with what I have always considered in other people to be a Napoleonic stance."

In 1933 MacArthur delivered the commencement address at West Point, and Eichelberger was impressed by the impassioned attack he launched on that occasion against pacifist organizations and other politicians who would sacrifice national defense in the name of economy. He remembered in particular MacArthur's eloquent plea not to break faith with those who had met death on top of a trench, "gentlemen unafraid." The Chief of Staff spoke to a national audience on the radio. "It took courage to face facts as he did that day," and Eichelberger had only praise for this fellow officer and distinguished spokesman for the Military Academy. "Those who criticized him that day spoke of his theatrical attitude in the way he let his voice quiver . . . during the impressive parts of his talk. This made no impression on me at the time."[18]

In his new position Eichelberger found MacArthur "very friendly and extremely courteous. His mind was scintillating. At times he would show great dramatic ability." He was bothered somewhat by MacArthur's unconventional hours, which made it difficult to maintain a regular work schedule, but his impressions of MacArthur during this period were distinctly favorable. "He told me many of his troubles as Chief of Staff so that I could carry over this information to the new regime that might arrive. Many times he talked to me at length about what he called the conspiracy between the Navy and the National Guard to reduce the army to nothing but a bunch of inspectors. He mentioned individuals by name and I am sure in his own heart he felt it was the truth." There would be similar conversations when he joined MacArthur in the Pacific.

For his part, MacArthur was "particularly impressed" with Eichel-

berger's "comprehensive grasp of the Army's major problems, and of the War Department functioning." Two days after he was officially named Military Adviser of the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines, MacArthur paid tribute to Eichelberger's "tact, loyalty, intelligence and initiative. I shall watch your future career," he promised, "with keen interest."[19]

MacArthur's successor was General Malin Craig, "a wise and understanding mentor." With Craig, Eichelberger enjoyed the same kind of association that had characterized his years with Graves, except that instead of the long walks that he had shared with Graves, he now listened to the troubles of his chief over the lunch table. "I always sat facing a large portrait of William Tecumseh Sherman, and soon I felt I knew what made the grim-faced Sherman grim."[20]

As the war clouds began to darken over Europe, Eichelberger thought increasingly of transferring back to the infantry. His efficiency reports from his tour at West Point indicated that he was considered qualified for command of an infantry division, and Craig from time to time would volunteer the comment, "You ought to be with troops in case of war." Finally, in the summer of 1937, Eichelberger submitted a one-line letter: "I request that I be transferred to the infantry." He continued as Secretary to the General Staff for another year, when he attended the Infantry School at Fort Benning, and then assumed command of the Thirtieth Infantry, which was stationed at the Presidio of San Francisco.

This was "one of the proud moments" of Eichelberger's life. It also provided the kind of experience necessary for higher command, for at maneuvers, which at one time involved three divisions, Eichelberger "served as just about everything" from division commander to chief of staff. (Two of these divisions, the Fortieth and the Forty-first, were National Guard units that later came under his command in the Pacific.) And as Assistant Division Commander of the Third Division he acquired valuable experience during the amphibious exercises in Monterey Bay.

Obviously the years spent behind a desk had not impaired Eichelberger's effectiveness as a leader. He inherited a serious morale problem in the Thirtieth, but an improved atmosphere in the Officers' Club and careful attention to the needs of the enlisted men paid big dividends. Eichelberger worked hard to improve the barracks, supported every regimental athletic team, and insisted that his officers place the interests of the soldier ahead of their own comforts. "I found it helped if I turned out in the rain every morning to show that the plight of the men was known to me." Before long, most junior officers joined the "Dawn Patrol."

Like many officers who went on to achieve high rank, Eichelberger probably enjoyed his days as regimental commander as much as any

subsequent service. It brought him into close touch with the men, and his record with the Thirtieth caught the attention of his superiors. One of his fondest memories was the farewell review: the tears of the old noncommissioned officers as they shook hands after the ceremony "was perhaps the greatest reward that I ever have attained in the army."

Fortunately there were other and more tangible rewards. In October 1940 Eichelberger was promoted to brigadier general and soon afterwards he was appointed Superintendent of the Military Academy. He always had a special place in his heart for West Point and during his years in the Pacific he used to dream occasionally of the possibilities of returning there in some capacity when the fighting was over. From the Philippines, the beauty and sheltered atmosphere of West Point must have tugged hard at cherished memories.

To hear Eichelberger talk in later years, one could easily come away with the impression that his most important accomplishment at West Point had been to recruit Earl Blaik to rebuild Army's football fortunes. His main mission, however, was to produce officers fit to command in modern war, and to accomplish this Eichelberger introduced a series of reforms to bring both the training and the education in line with what the times demanded. He introduced fatigue uniforms, expanded the time devoted to military training and instruction, and arranged for the cadets to maneuver with National Guard units in New Jersey. He also cut back drastically on horseback riding so that the cadets could devote more time to developing skills relevant to the "gasoline age." He made a special effort to make the cadets air-minded, even to the extent of devising a plan that would permit those who were interested to obtain their wings upon graduation.

Replacing the horse with the airplane antagonized a few old sabers in the cavalry, but none could deny that Eichelberger "left behind him a West Point that was far better prepared to cope with the challenge of total war than the Academy of 1917–18." Not the least of his accomplishments was his vigorous fight to preserve the four-year course of instruction in the face of pressures to accelerate the program in order to produce more officers. This had been done with harmful effects in World War I, and although the course ultimately was cut back to three years, the educational program was not seriously impaired. Thanks to Eichelberger, it was merely put on a war footing.[21]

When Japan struck at Pearl Harbor, it was time for Eichelberger himself to go on a war footing. Upon request for a command in the field, he was assigned in January 1942 to command of the Seventy-seventh Division, which was then being organized at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. While the principal officers of the new division attended brief courses at the appropriate military schools (for Eichelberger and certain of his staff this meant a return to Fort Leavenworth for several weeks),

a cadre of experienced officers and enlisted men was taken from an active division to organize and train the recruits. The Seventy-seventh was activated in March 1942, and applying the same techniques that had worked so well with the Thirtieth Infantry, Eichelberger and his staff soon had the division whipped into such good shape that in June he was asked to stage a demonstration calculated to convince Sir Winston Churchill and his military advisers of the ability of the United States to raise an army capable of fighting alongside the experienced British in Europe. It was "a stirring show," a "competent, professional performance" in the judgment of Churchill's Chief of Staff, who also "ventured the opinion that it would be murder to pit them against continental soldiery." But Churchill was impressed with the ability of his American allies to mass-produce an army as well as the necessary materiel.[22]

Even before this demonstration, Eichelberger was a marked man. Early in June, he had been ordered to form the XI Corps in Chicago. Within two weeks, he was in Washington, where plans were afoot to give him command of a proposed amphibious corps for use in the forthcoming North African landings. On 22 June, he was named commander of I Corps, and early in August, while observing amphibious exercises of the Ninth Division in the Chesapeake Bay, he received a sudden summons to the office of General George Catlett Marshall.

There had been an abrupt change of plans. The officer originally designated for a corps command in the Southwest Pacific Area, Major General Robert C. Richardson, objected to serving under Australians. Eichelberger and his staff were available; they had some acquaintance with amphibious forces; and Eichelberger had got on well with MacArthur when the latter was Chief of Staff. Accordingly Eichelberger and I Corps headquarters were ordered to proceed to Australia without delay. After ten days of preparation and briefing, General Eichelberger and a few of his staff boarded a B-24 bomber bound for Australia, where General MacArthur was organizing his forces for a counteroffensive against the Japanese in New Guinea.

"When there is a war," Miss Em observed quietly, "you always seem to go to the queerest places." This time she had special reason for feeling apprehensive: General Malin Craig had already communicated his fears for the career of a friend and protégé now sent to serve under a man considered by many in the old army as selfish and at times vindictive. As the next four years — and the following letters — would testify, these were no idle worries, but if such thoughts preyed upon the mind of General Eichelberger as he and the excited members of his staff flew to Sydney, he kept them to himself.

There is no need here to tell the story of what happened to General Eichelberger during the war; that was, after all, the original intent of

his letters to Miss Em. But the significance of his accomplishments does require brief comment, if only to place his activities in some sort of historical perspective.

At Buna, to put it bluntly, he pulled MacArthur's chestnuts out of the fire. Prior to his intervention, the American forces had become bogged down in the swamps and were rapidly falling victim to the mosquitoes as well as the Japanese. The American soldiers were not adequately trained and equipped for this kind of warfare; their morale was shot, their leaders were at wit's end, and lateral contact among the units on separate fronts was extremely difficult. On the other hand, the Japanese were well fortified, easily reinforced, and they enjoyed good lateral communications. Their soldiers, to quote Eichelberger, "were a commander's dream. They never exposed themselves unnecessarily, they never fired until they had a good target, and they obeyed the orders of their officers while taking perfect cover."[23] One might add that thus far in the war they had not been driven from their own positions.

Eichelberger's arrival is described by his immediate superior, General Sir E. F. Herring, as "a very pure breath of fresh air" that "blew away a great deal of the impurities that were stopping us getting on with the job."[24] He analyzed the situation quickly, reorganized and regrouped the badly intermixed forces, improved the supply problem, strengthened the chain of command, and provided the dynamic leadership necessary to infuse new life and spirit into the operation at every level. The capture of Buna only a month after assuming command gave Eichelberger the first victory won over Japanese forces fighting to hold a fortified position since the allies first began their offensive at Guadalcanal.[25] And the possession of Buna and Sanananda gave MacArthur the necessary sites for airstrips so vital to any further advance along the New Guinea axis. Finally, Buna has given subsequent generations of soldiers a convincing demonstration of vigorous and efficient leadership. Normally for the tide of victory to be changed some new element must be inserted — more troops, better equipment, or a change in command.[26] There were no reinforcements to speak of even after Eichelberger took over at Buna and he never had what he needed by way of artillery or air support; the difference between victory and defeat on this occasion was simply Eichelberger. It is for this reason that Buna remains as a case study of the corps commander in modern battle in the leadership course at the United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth.

Eichelberger's next battle was Hollandia, the largest amphibious landing up to that time in the Southwest Pacific. Because this was the first operation where MacArthur dared to reach out beyond range of land-based fighter cover, the Japanese were caught completely by surprise. Consequently, logistics rather than tactics became the main con-

sideration, and in the quick and efficient way that Eichelberger established his forces ashore and constructed the bases and airfields necessary to support forthcoming operations at Wakde-Sarmi and Biak, he performed what his Chief of Staff later styled "a logistical miracle."[27] This is not the kind of work that wins headlines, but failure to maintain a rigorous schedule, and in the face of unforeseen difficulties, would have meant a severe setback for MacArthur's further plans.

Scarcely was the situation in hand at Hollandia when Eichelberger was sent, again at the eleventh hour, to accelerate operations that were behind schedule at Biak. Again, as at Buna, it was necessary to reorganize the forces, devise new tactical plans, and put life into a sagging offensive. A week after his arrival the main objectives had been captured and the critical phase of the battle was over, giving MacArthur a vital site for the construction of heavy bomber fields.

Known widely for his administrative abilities even before the war, Eichelberger's next achievement was to prepare the new Eighth Army staff, most of which he inherited, for the complex and demanding operations that lay ahead. It was a first-rate staff — in his estimation the best — and throughout the Philippine campaign it astonished Pacific veterans with its versatility and the tempo of the operations it planned and staged. In one span of forty-four days, for example, the Eighth Army conducted fourteen major landings and twenty-four smaller operations; by 1 May 1945, it was involved in operations simultaneously on all of the major and numerous of the smaller islands in the central and southern Philippines. The new staff "worked out, intelligently and with mathematical accuracy, the hazards and supply realities of our landings. Never once were its calculations seriously in error. Never once were we forced to resort to the airdrop of supplies because of the failure, or congestion, of seaborne transport."[28] Eichelberger freely gave the credit to the "pick and shovel boys" who accomplished such marvels, but it was "the old man" himself who provided the leadership, the example, and the atmosphere of mutual confidence which inspired loyalty in all of his subordinates. In dealing with MacArthur, Eichelberger could never be sure exactly how much his own difficulties may have been due to the actions of MacArthur's chief of staff. No such confusion existed among Eichelberger's subordinates. Even though General Byers enjoyed his complete confidence and support, he never inserted himself as a third force between the commander and another officer.

Byers remembers the staff as a happy military family and in this sense, at least in the Pacific war, it was unique. Eichelberger treated Byers as a kid brother and the rest of the immediate family as favorite sons. He took a personal interest in them and their problems, he trusted them as one would members of his own family, and there was never any "generation gap" in communications. He always asked opinions and backed

the decisions of his subordinates. Each man knew where he stood and had confidence in "Uncle Bob's" ability to make the right decision. "He had the happy faculty of looking over your shoulder without making it appear that he was doing so," General Frank E. Bowen has stated. "He could get along with everybody and his brother." Consequently there were few who served under Eichelberger who did not have the highest regard for him, and his staff was fiercely loyal. It probably would not have surprised them to learn that after the war, when General Eichelberger was offered an opportunity to become Assistant Chief of Staff at the Pentagon, he remained in Japan because he wished to protect and advance the careers of "his boys."[29]

Eichelberger's crowning achievement in World War II was the part his Eighth Army played in the liberation of the Philippines. General MacArthur described the Visayan operations as "a model of what a light but aggressive command can accomplish in rapid exploitation." General Marshall wrote of the "lightning speed" of Eichelberger's amphibious thrusts at Panay, Cebu, and Mindanao. MacArthur used Eichelberger to accelerate the drive for Manila and he planned a leading role for the Eighth Army in the projected invasion of Japan. "No army of this war," he proclaimed, "has achieved greater glory and distinction. . . ."[30]

This much can be deduced from the published histories, even though the Eighth Army runs a poor second to General Walter Krueger's Sixth Army in the attention it has received. To publicize the achievements of the men he commanded, "the ordinary, muddy, malarial, embattled," and overburdened GIs, Eichelberger in 1949 collaborated with a professional journalist to produce *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo,* which was also serialized in *The Saturday Evening Post.* Although his own feelings are frequently revealed, the tone of his criticisms is subdued even though he had left Japan in order to write without MacArthur peering over his shoulder. Had Eichelberger been intent on telling his own story, there would have been little justification for publishing *Dear Miss Em.* One did not have to be around him very long to appreciate his restraint in print.

He unburdened himself to Miss Em, whom he wrote faithfully every day and sometimes as often as four times a day, depending upon the amount of time he could spare. "I don't know how often you have been separated from Marie for long periods of time," he remarked to his chief of staff as they were about to depart for Austrialia, "but the matter of writing is most important! When I went to Siberia Miss Em and I realized that if you wrote every couple of weeks there was nothing you dare tell because of censorship. If you wrote every week it was a little better, but if you wrote every day there was so much of interest to tell

that it was hard to find time to tell it. Then when we got back together, we had shared so much that the gap in our lives did not appear to be so great as it otherwise would have been."[31]

And in trying to plug this gap General Eichelberger made his letters "as interesting as possible" without violating the rules of the military censor. "Everything I see or do brings the thought, 'I wonder how Miss Em would like that,' or 'I wish Miss Em could see that'."[32] For a few minutes each day he could share his emotions and experiences with Miss Em. Her letters, which unfortunately have been destroyed, searched for his hopes and fears and occasionally sounded warnings of some real or imagined threat to his career. In turn he explained what he could about his campaigns, revealing an almost boyish pride in his growing accomplishments, and kept her well posted throughout on the shifting personal relations with MacArthur and the others at General Headquarters. Sometimes to clarify a previous statement or to put at rest some rumor, he wrote trenchantly about his colleagues, and to focus on this aspect of his letters would suggest that Eichelberger spent much of his time sulking in his tent.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Although his personal letters during the dark days of 1943 reveal hurt feelings, occasional bitterness, and a growing frustration at the thought that the war was moving away from him, along the New Guinea coast, while he administered a training command in Australia and was denied several opportunities to command armies elsewhere, to anyone outside of his intimate military family he exuded optimism and good cheer. Indeed, one of the themes that jumps out of his letters was the striking way in which Eichelberger overcame discouragement and set aside bitterness to triumph in every sense of the word. To show him as he usually appeared to his subordinate commanders, as a man whose own mental outlook seemed always optimistic and good-natured, would be to deny one of his great strengths, his ability to "cultivate the habit of happiness." "It is hard to get a fellow down who has a grin on his face."[33]

At the risk of making Eichelberger appear at times a vain and dissatisfied man, which most assuredly he was not, his criticisms of the other generals are included because of their unusual historical interest. Anything about General MacArthur is apt to be significant, and he so dominated the scene that the general public to this day has only a hazy impression of the other "satellites." In fairness to Eichelberger, it should be noted that his comments do not always reflect full knowledge of the facts in a given situation, nor is it to be assumed that they represent his final verdict as he reflected about the war in later years. Sometimes he merely repeated a story for Miss Em's amusement; most of the high-ranking officers were people she had known long before the war, and any incident that might have contributed to her insight into the behavior of MacArthur and the others was apt to be included in the letters.

To avoid passing such juicy tidbits to the censor, Eichelberger used