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BENNETT

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BENNETT, CHARLES I. (OH-509) 50 pgs. OPEN

Air Force officer; pilot for General Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1945-48

DESCRIPTION: Biographical information; World War II military service; story of how he got his commission; family military history; first association with General Eisenhower; [Laurence J.] Larry Hansen; becoming Eisenhower's pilot; anecdotes regarding Eisenhower and General [George] Patton; the modified plane; the crews; responsibilities as pilot; relationship with Eisenhower; anecdote regarding Eisenhower and rank; aircraft used; Sunflowers I and II; modified interiors; Mrs. Eisenhower's fear of flying; anecdote regarding General Hoyt Vandenburg; anecdote regarding Biloxi, Mississippi, "surrender" to Eisenhower; Eisenhower's advice to Bennett on being a good officer; security precautions; anecdote regarding flight to Mexico City and a fighter escort; Bennett's responsibilities for Eisenhower's plane and for Eisenhower; Eisenhower as a pilot; meeting the man who taught Eisenhower to fly; anecdote regarding Bennett's authority as pilot of the plane; end-of-war homecoming flight to Washington; flights to Abilene and Denver; comments about the C-54; anecdote regarding a flight with General [Henry] "Hap" Arnold; difficulties of flight planning (need for details, adverse weather conditions, language barriers, etc.); anecdote regarding a flight to Moscow (security, the Metropole Hotel, reactions of Russians on the street to an American, the Kremlin Museum, meeting Marshall Zhukov); transfer to the Air Force, 1947; anecdote regarding military tradition of asking commanding officer's permission to marry; anecdote regarding Eisenhower, General [Carl] "Tooey" Spaatz, Bennett, and the Air Command & Staff School; Bennett's career following Eisenhower's retirement (including military career; further education; further relationship with Eisenhower at White House and Gettysburg; anecdote regarding [General John P.] J.P. McConnell and [Robert L.] Bob Shultz; personal friends and experiences; retirement); Bennett's comments on his family's warm relationship with the Eisenhowers, a visit to Culzean Castle, and Eisenhower's funeral in Washington.

[Dwight D. Eisenhower Library Oral History, interview by Martin M. Teasley, March 22, 1990]