

1974

Thompson Document 10: Henrietta Thompson's "Addenda" to Jack Belden File

Henrietta Thompson

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Recommended Citation

Thompson, Henrietta, "Thompson Document 10: Henrietta Thompson's "Addenda" to Jack Belden File" (1974). *Henrietta Thompson Papers*. 3.
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Jack Belden

Addenda ~~2 letters~~

I JB original hostility to seeing me based on his thinking I wanted to probe political implications of the proposed splitting up of the party, the conference of Majors and Colonels discussing this while JWS was sleeping. The plan was to divide up the Americans only, two to each jeep and abandon the nurses and everybody else. It was the nurses' own country, they could make their own way; the Ams. didn't feel they had any responsibility for the Brit. and Ch. who were along too. Grindlay was there, but not in sympathy and Chesley added that he got royally drunk that night in protest. Tuchman told Eva that this episode must be what I was doing my research about and that she had never had the time to follow up on what became of the proposal or the people, for that matter.

Anyway, JWS indignantly vetoed the whole thing when he learned of it. McCabe had been in on it too whether disapproving or not I don't know. Also Merrill, and he was the one who later had to be cared for by the nurses.

JWS On JWS, JB said there was an episode when the whole column was passing with their mules, etc. along a narrow 3' path and some Limey came up to him and said the British would do it differently, first the Officers would pass then the "other ranks", not all mixed indiscriminately as it was being done, and JWS quite mildly replied "Well, this is the way WE will do it."

It was described as a "March of Conviction" because JWS didn't have to do it.

JWS comment to JB's mother "Jack would have been famous if he hadn't made one mistake." JB was a correspondent and should not have made known his judgments and opinions. Later the parallel arose when JWS reports about Chinese etc. were not believed.

B JB never knew his father; left home because of step-father, not his mother; Mrs. Howland, Summit, N.J. 84, been ill. HWT not to quote UP as who fired him for his opinions.

He has always identified with the underprivileged, been anti-establishment, and anti-military.

The Walkout stands out as a romantic relief- the moonlight, the scenery, the innocence and prettiness of the girls. It was a contrast of the lousy vs. the innocent. Everyone was equal on the Walkout then came the return to reality at Imphal, rank, status, position all that.

On parting JB to HWT "I hope it was a success for you" (coming to see him) HWT "You're a great success, in my book."