FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
BEFORE CHIEF EXAMINER'S DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF

WILLYS-OVERLAND MOTORS, INC.,

TOLEDO, OHIO.

File No. 28-2-4096

MINUTES OF CONFERENCE

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FEBRUARY 8, 1943.

Present:

Major General George A. Lynch, Retired,
812 Lake Formosa Drive,
Orlando, Florida,
(Formerly Chief of Infantry, War Department).

Mr. M. R. Bevington, representing
Federal Trade Commission.

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(Off record discussion.)

Mr. Bevington: General, for the record, might I ask that you indicate your rank and that you follow this with a statement covering your service in the U. S. Army?

General Lynch: Major General, Retired. I was commissioned in 1903 and served from 1903 to 1905, inclusive, in the Philippine Islands; served four years as modern language teacher at West Point; served from 1909 to 1913 with the 29th Infantry; on duty with National Guard 1913-1916; went to the Philippine Islands for three months' service in 1917; returned in June 1917 and served during the World War on general staff. Came back to the United States from France

in 1919, and served on the War Department general staff until 1923; then served as battalion commander in the 2d Infantry for two years; from 1926 to 1930, again served on the general staff in charge of schools and the R.O.T.C. In 1931 again served in the Philippine Islands and China. In 1933 I returned to the United States and served on the general staff of the 2d Corps Area at Governors Island, for approximately a year; then came on duty with the N.R.A. as Executive Officer and Acting Administrator over a period of six months. In 1935 I went to China and commanded the United States troops in China for two years. I was appointed Chief of Infantry in 1937 and served four years, until date of my retirement in May 1941.

Mr. Bevington: General, there is at this time before the Federal Trade Commission an application for complaint which alleges that Willys-Overland Motors, Inc., at Toledo, Ohio, has been advertising in the Saturday Evening Post, Colliers, and Look, among others, that it, in close collaboration with the Quartermaster Department of the United States Army, created and perfected the 1/4 ton reconnaissance car of the Army, popularly known as the "Jeep". Would you favor us with a statement, based on your personal knowledge, that will cover the origin and development of this vehicle, and particularly will give credit to those to whom credit is due for the creation of such vehicle?

General Lynch: When I came in office as Chief of Infantry in 1937, we had a large number of weapons known as heavy

weapons, which included the 81 mm. mortar, 30 caliber machine gun and a 50 caliber machine gun, and later there was developed a 37 mm. gun. All of these weapons required special transportation, with battlefield mobility, that is, able to move across country over rough ground and get as close to front lines as possible. We had a series of tests, lasting six months, of all available vehicles, with a view to adopting the one most suitable for infantry combat.

At the same time the Howie carrier was brought to the consideration of the Infantry Board. As a result of all the tests, the one-ton Marmon Herrington was recommended to the Board, for weapon and ammunition carrier, and the War Department approved the procurement of a certain number of vehicles conforming to the Marmon Herrington specifications. Unfortunately, the procurement resulted in obtaining from another concern a vehicle not having the characteristics of low silhouette and high mobility and light weight of the Marmon Herrington, with wholly unsatisfactory results. Following this we continued working for a lighter vehicle with low silhouette. The Howie carrier considered by the Board had no relation to this problem. It had been developed by Major Howie and General Short, and, I believe, was patented by them. It was sometimes popularly called the "Kiddy car". It had a platform not over a foot above ground, mounting a machine gun lying flat on the bottom and carried two men lying prone. It was designed as an assault vehicle and had no relation in design or function to the weapons and ammunition carrier. It was our unanimous conclusion, both

of the Infantry Board and my office, that an unarmored vehicle of that kind could not well be used on the front line and would be entirely impracticable, and we rejected it.

The Howie cart was again brought to the attention of the War Department in the spring of 1940, and I think impressed the Department with the fact that it had great possibilities; at all events, my office was ordered to go into the merits of this machine with which we were already thoroughly familiar and had rejected.

At the same time an effort was being made to replace the motorcycle with a vehicle more efficient for cross country movement. The motorcycle which was essentially the same as the one in use in the Army from 1917 to 1940, was of very little use for cross country movement. It was all right on the roads, on good hard-surfaced roads. We were then considering a tricycle with an idea of determining whether it could not be effectively substituted for the motorcycle. The practicability of a light four-wheeled vehicle for the same missions was also entertained. At that moment the question of the Howie carrier came into the picture, and Mr. Payne presented himself at the office of the Chief of Infantry.

(Off record discussion, General Lynch continuing)

Mr. Payne was informed that the Infantry Office was not interested in the Howie vehicle, but that we were decidedly interested in getting a liaison vehicle and weapons carrier of lighter weight, with a lower silhouette and better tractive qualities than the half-ton truck then in service. Development of a vehicle to meet this desire of the Infantry Office was

then undertaken by Mr. Payne, in constant collaboration with Col. William F. Lee, the Chief of the Matériel Section of the Infantry Office.

The characteristics initially fixed were as follows:

(a) Maximum height: 36 inches;

(b) Maximum weight, without payload, 1000 lbs.;

(c) Cross-country ability and grade ability - equal to that of standard cargo vehicles;

(d) Caliber 30 machine gun mount either integral with the body of the vehicle or detachable;

(e) Capacity: A crew of at least two men, one machine gun with accessories, and three thousand rounds of ammunition or equivalent weight;

(f) Armored face shield for driver;

(g) Four wheel drive, and

(h) Ground clearance: Maximum possible consistent with desired silhouette.

Later, requirements for all wheel drive and amphibious characteristics were added. These characteristics were communicated in a letter to the Adjutant General by the Chief of Infantry under date of June 6, 1940, of which I have no doubt you have a copy. As the development of the vehicle proceeded it became evident that in order to obtain the sturdiness to perform the cross country functions, and especially to provide the four-wheeled drive, large size tires and increased power to handle these, the weight and silhouette had to be increased somewhat beyond the initial limits proposed. A pilot vehicle was built by the American

Bantam Company of Butler, Pa., which concern was for various reasons able to construct the vehicle as asked for by the Infantry and concurred in by other interested departments. The finished vehicle was found to weigh fully equipped, but without its payload, about 2025 lbs. Its performance fully met the expectations of the Infantry Office. While weighing heavier than originally contemplated, it was still susceptible of manhandling, but it was evident that any increase in weight would decrease its efficiency. Since the pilot vehicle possessed all the necessary performance characteristics at that weight, it was evident that any increase would be unnecessary and would reduce facility for manhandling.

Based on tests made at Holabird and in order to save time, the Bantam pilot model was accepted as an experimental replacement for the motorcycle with sidecar, while serving many other purposes not originally contemplated. Procurement for more extended tests of 70 replicas of this pilot vehicle was decided upon.

In the meantime, as a result of the performance of the original pilot model and to develop an adequate source, it was decided an additional 1500 should be procured. The Ford Company and Willys-Overland had secured plans and specifications of the Bantam, and were manufacturing their own copies of it. Representatives of my office through conversations with representatives of these two concerns discovered that they both contemplated constructing vehicles weighing several hundred pounds more than the pilot Bantam.

The addition of certain features which after the initial tests had been agreed upon as really necessary had raised the probable weight of the Bantam to an estimate of 2160 pounds, and this was agreed upon by all "Using Arms" as being the final limit.

On October 29, 1940, the War Department directed the procurement of the 1500 vehicles from the American Bantam Company.

Pilot models produced by Ford satisfactorily met the prescribed tests. Their first vehicle manufactured under their contract came well within the prescribed limits on silhouette and weight, and appeared to be acceptable. Willys-Overland, on the other hand, appeared unable to meet the weight limits. However, they were awarded a contract for a number of vehicles weighing several hundred pounds more than the Austin Bantam and in excess of the weight limitations fixed by War Department instructions.

It is my belief that the vehicle produced by Willys-Overland weighing several hundred pounds more than considered necessary is not as efficient a vehicle as the quarter-ton truck produced by the American Bantam Company. No gain has resulted from the increased weight and facility for manhandling the vehicle out of trouble has been reduced. Attention is especially invited to the fact that the quarter ton liaison vehicle, popularly known as the "Jeep", was a completely developed vehicle before Willys-Overland entered the field of procurement, and that Willys-Overland neither created nor perfected the vehicle popularly known as the

"Jeep," nor are they entitled to any credit whatever for having developed a pilot model for all command reconnaissance cars of this type.

Principal credit for the development of this vehicle is due to Col. William F. Lee who was the initiating force in the War Department, and Mr. C. H. Payne who prosecuted the engineering development.

(Off record discussion.)

Mr. Bevington: In a hearing before the Truman Committee of the United States Senate dealing with the "Jeep" question, I notice that the Chairman repeatedly volunteered the statement that the American Bantam Company had done all the pioneer work on the "Jeep". Is that within your knowledge?

General Lynch: The American Bantam succeeded the Austin Company.

(Off record discussion, Gen. Lynch continuing)

I had retired from active service (April 30, 1941) before Willys-Overland developed any contract cars.

Mr. Bevington: General, according to information given me at Holabird, the sample pilot model made by the American Bantam Company, delivered to the Quartermaster Depot at that point on September 24, 1940, was, on the following Sunday, under order of the War Department, sent to Ft. Myer, Virginia, for demonstration. May I ask whether you were present at such demonstration, and whether the demonstration was considered by the officers then present as successful?

General Lynch: I was present at this demonstration and I, as well as the other General officers present, was deeply impressed with the efficiency and capabilities of the

vehicle.

Mr. Bevington: Are you familiar with the names of some of the higher ranking officers, and others, who were so present?

General Lynch: These included Major General John K. Herr, Chief of Cavalry, Major General Richard C. Moore, Deputy Chief of Staff, Major General Gregory, Quartermaster General, and I believe Major General Danford, Chief of Field Artillery, Colonel Lawes, Q.M.C., and Mr. Charles H. Payne.

Mr. Bevington: Did you yourself participate in this demonstration of the car?

General Lynch: Yes, I rode over an obstacle course, very difficult terrain. I rode in the same car with General Herr and General Moore.

Mr. Bevington: After this demonstration was there any doubt in your mind as to whether the Army had found the light reconnaissance car it had been trying to secure?

General Lynch: I was convinced the car was now a practical vehicle for numerous purposes, though it would have to be subjected for further tests to determine any weakness.

Mr. Bevington: Was the judgment of your colleagues the same as your own?

General Lynch: I think they were all impressed that a very important development in the domain of motor transportation had taken place and that an efficient vehicle for battlefield purposes was now available.

Mr. Bevington: General, from your own knowledge, can you say just when the term "Jeep" began to be applied to this vehicle?

General Lynch: I regret that I cannot be sure.

Mr. Bevington: Can you say then that the term was associated with the car very soon after the Ft. Myer demonstration?

General Lynch: Yes, shortly after. I think there are other people who could answer that question more precisely than I can.

Mr. Bevington: General, the reason I have persisted in this line of questioning is that you have been credited with having yourself given the name "Jeep" to this car at that time.

(Off record discussion.)

Mr. Bevington: General, was any thought ever given by the Army to this car, or any feature thereof, being subject to patent?

General Lynch: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Bevington: General, by way of recapitulation, will you please state to whom you individually give credit for the creation of the "Jeep", taking up in the order of sequence those who are so entitled to that credit?

General Lynch: With regard to the tactical conception I would assign most credit to Colonel William F. Lee who fixed on the initial tactical specifications and their subsequent modification. He was my personal representative and was in constant conferences with me in this matter.

On the engineering side I think there is no question

that 100 per cent credit, to all intents and purposes, belongs to Mr. C. H. Payne who translated the tactical specifications into the engineering design that we see in the "Jeep" today.

(Off record discussion.)

Respectfully submitted,

A. H. Sisson

A. H. Sisson,
Reporter.

February 10, 1943.