Excerpts of a Gen. Westmoreland speech in 1969

ITOR'S NOTE

Following are excerpts from a ech made by General William stmoreland to the Annual Lunch- of the Association of the U S my in October, 1969. The Gen- was on campus yesterday to ak to a class in military hist- , and will speak again to that s this afternoon.

This evening he will participate the Bridges House Forum which be broadcast by CHSR.

This year, I take special satis- tion in addressing this audience – I know you are dedicated to maintenance of a strong, dern Army through military-industrial-labor academic-scientific co-operation. This team provides the Armed Forces with the best equipment science and technology can produce. This co-operative effort is an element of national power that must never be eroded.

For this reason, I will focus now on purely military matters . . . on developments that are of special interest to this audience.

I will proceed on the assumption that neither the Congress nor the Nation wants us to lay down our shield of armed readiness. On the contrary, our citizens continue to demand from us the best military forces possible within the resources made available to us. This is a fair and demanding challenge which we accept.

In meeting this challenge, the Army has undergone in Vietnam a quiet revolution in ground warfare–tactics, techniques, and technology. This revolution is not fully understood by many. To date it has received only limited attention. Analysis of the lessons from this revolution will influence the future direction of our Army both in fundamental concepts of organization and development of equipment.

When the first American units were committed in Vietnam, they were to a large extent a reflection of the organization, tactics, techniques, and technology of World War II, with one noteworthy exception. That exception, of course, was best demonstrated by the 1st Air Cavalry Division. For the first time, an Army unit of division size had been organized and equipped to free itself from the constrictions of terrain through the use of battlefield air mobility. The concept and resultant organization were logical outgrowths of the development of sturdy, reliable helicopters for troops carriers, weapons platforms, command and control, aerial ambulances, and reconnaissance vehicles and larger helicopters for carrying artillery, ammunition, and supplies. Even before the arrival of American combat troops, the effective use of the helicopter had been demonstrated in the support of the Vietnamese. I am confident that the vitality of air mobility is recognized and understood by this informed audience.

We learned that Vietnam posed a problem even more difficult than mobility. The enemy we face in Vietnam is naturally elusive and cunning in his use of the dense jungle for concealment. As a result, in the early days of the American commitment we found ourselves with an abundance of firepower and mobility. But we were limited in our ability to locate the enemy. We were not quite a giant without eyes, but that allusion had some validity. Whenever we engaged the enemy, we won the battle. Too often those battles were at enemy initiative and not our own. Too often battles were not fought because, the enemy could not be found or because, after initial contact, he had slipped elusively into the jungle or across borders politically beyond our reach . . . or had literally gone underground.

Since 1965 a principal thrust of our experimentation, adaptation and development in tactics, techniques, and technology has been toward improvement of our capability to find the enemy. Each year of the war witnessed substantial improvement. In 1965, 1966, 1967, and early 1968 we increased the number of both air and ground cavalry units. We added a second airmobile division. As our troops arrived, we progressively organized special reconnaissance elements of all kinds, including long-range patrol companies and special forces teams. We found ourselves more and more using the infantry for the purpose of finding the enemy. When the enemy broke down into small units, we did likewise. We learned to operate skillfully at night. We mastered the enemy's ambush techniques. Technical means were reinforced and improved. Intelligence organizations were expanded and refined.

During this period, the Director of Defense Research and Engineering urged the scientific community to develop a new family of sensors and associated communications equipment to help locate enemy forces on infiltration routes. After proving these devices workable in test, we developed plans in 1967 to use them throughout the battlefield. In mid 1968, our field experiments began. Since then, we have integrated these new devices with the more conventional surveillance equipment and other intelligence collection means. As a result, our ability to find the enemy has improved materially.

Comparing the past few years of progress with a forecast of the future produces one conclusion: we are on the threshold of an entirely new battlefield concept.

Now let me briefly examine the past and relate it to the future.

The Napoleonic Wars are well documented in history texts. Firepower was limited. Mobility was limited essentially to the foot soldier. Support services were provided by contact or foraging. Cavalry, scouts and pickets provided intelligence. This chapter of military history is replete with numerous examples of battles that might have been . . . had the opposing forces known of each other's presence. But when forces made contact, they massed to do battle. At Waterloo, for example, over 140,000 troops crowded into less than three miles of front line contact.

A little over a century later, World War I brought trench warfare. The advent of the machine gun and massed artillery introduced sizable increases in the firepower capabilities available to ground forces. Mobility and support efforts experienced little change. Maneuver on the battlefield was

Continued to page 14

Westmoreland's biography

Here's a brief biography of neral Westmoreland:

He was born in Spartanburg nty, South Carolina, on March 1914, and graduated from rtanburg High School in 1931. attended the Military College South Carolina for one year then appointed to U.S. Mili- Academy, West Point, where was first Captain, and then gimental Commander. He was mmissioned as a Second Lieu- ant in Field Artillery upon duation on June 12, 1936.

During the Second World War served in Morocco, Tunisia Sicily: he commanded a bat- ion in the latter two places. In rch 1944 he was named execu- officer of the Ninth Infantry ision artillery and after D-Day fought with that division in nce, Belgium, and into Ger- ny. In October of 1944 he was med Divisions Chief of Staff. was later transferred to and mmanded two other divisions il he arrived home in 1946.

After getting his parachutist glider badges, he assumed mmand of the 504th Parachute fantry at Fort Bragg, North rolina in July, 1946. In August that year he became Chief of ff of the 82nd, keeping that for three years.

He taught at military colleges m August, 1950 until July 52, when he went to Korea with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. During this time in Korea, he was promoted to Brigadier General. He was 38.

In November, 1953, he became Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for manpower control and in 1954 he attended the advanced management program of the Harvard Business School. He was named Secretary of Army General Staff in July, 1955.

He was made the second youngest Major General on December 1, 1956.

He commanded the 101st Airborne Division – "Screaming Eagles" – from April 1958 to July 1960, when he was appointed the Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He was transferred to Fort Bragg North Carolina in July, 1963 and became commanding General of STRAC and XVIII Airborne Corps.

In January 1964, he went to Vietnam where he went from Deputy Commander to Commander U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, in August 1964. He was made Chief of Staff of the Army in July, 1968.

He is married, and has three children.

He holds four honorary Doctor of Law degrees, and has two citations – one from Tunisia and the other from Korea. He has 37 decorations, nine of which are from Vietnam.