

IMPORTANCE OF INDUSTRIAL MOBILIZATION TO THE GROUND FORCES  
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IMPORTANCE OF INDUSTRIAL MOBILIZATION TO THE  
GROUND FORCES.

GENERAL ARMSTRONG:

Gentlemen, the Industrial College is making every effort to break down the barriers between the Army and the Navy and between groups within the Army. That concept has even gone so far as to hope and expect, and with considerable justification, that the Ground Forces will take an interest in our work and in our destiny. I think that the reason for that is certainly obvious. After all, what all of us are doing here is to try to do a job so that the Ground Forces and the Air Forces will get the equipment that they need with which to fight.

The speaker this morning has had such a distinguished career that there is no need of my reminding you of his contribution to winning the war in Europe. But I can tell you that long before that happened, General Devers was an outstanding authority on armor and tank warfare in the United States. In that capacity he worked very closely with the Ordnance Department. We tried to do everything he wanted. We designed weapons that would meet his tactical requirements.

Gentlemen, I have the honor and the privilege to present to you General J. L. Devers, Commanding the Ground Forces of the United States Army. General Devers.

GENERAL DEVERS:

General Armstrong, members of the staff, and student body: It is a great privilege for me to be here this morning to talk to you. I am not going to read a speech. I am just going to talk.

First I will talk a little bit about the Industrial College; then I am going to tell you a few of my experiences that I think may interest you; finally, I will tell you what we are thinking about in the Ground Forces, in an effort to enlist your help, for we do indeed need help.

Now, about the Industrial College--when I was on duty in the Office of the Chief of Field Artillery, and as a student at the War College, I attended some lectures with the students of the Army Industrial College. I did not realize at that time, however, the magnificent work that would be accomplished by your school. I have heard it said that the Army and the production men did not get together before the war, but I know that in this College all the groundwork for industrial mobilization and planning was coordinated. That is a matter of record. There was great ignorance in the United States concerning production, procurement and delivery of materials. When all the confusion was going on in Washington--and, believe me, it was confusion--the smart ones came up here, dug into these records, and got the stuff they needed as a basis on which to work.

I am not criticizing anybody nor anything that was done. I do believe, however, in pointing out some of the mistakes that were made, for we learn by making mistakes. I have made plenty of them, myself.

The Industrial College is an important institution. It is important that we send men of vision to this school and not all old men, either. We must bring young men in here who have a bent for this line, so that they can develop for any crisis that which may come in the future.

As for my experience--I was thrown into the tank game by a telephone call from General Marshall. I was thrown into the building game by a telephone call from General Marshall. I was thrown into selecting air and naval bases by a telephone call from General Marshall.

In the fall of 1940, a Joint Army-Navy Board, known as the President's Board of Naval Experts, was appointed for the purpose of locating Army and Navy bases in Bermuda, Newfoundland, the West Indies and British Guiana. Admiral Greenslade was the President of the Board, and whoever selected him selected the right man. The group consisted of two Army officers and seven Navy officers--so we were outnumbered seven to two to start with. The other Army officer was Harry Maloney. He knew logistics and artillery, too, by the way. So they had two artillerymen there. Maybe it was a good thing they selected me, because I had been fighting with the Navy, if you want to call it that, in a friendly way in athletics. In 1936 we were scrapping before every game we had. Andy McFall, who later became a rear admiral, was Graduate Manager of Athletics at the Naval Academy and I held the same position at West Point. He and I were both baseball players, not football players. We got together and decided that we would not scrap anymore, and we never have from that day to this. We got together in Philadelphia, New York, Annapolis, or West Point, wherever it was necessary, and settled our problems. We never took them higher up than we had to, until we were thoroughly in agreement; and we had no trouble in arriving at our conclusions. So I knew just how to go over there and sit down with the Navy on that Board without any qualms.

We were called up and told to be prepared to take off in two hours to select our air and naval bases in the Caribbean, and that the first place to which we were going was called Bermuda. I was sent to see a staff officer in the Munitions Building--and here is one of the things I want to get across--I was given very definite instructions at that time that I could not agree to anything; that I had better look out; that they were going to do this and they were going to do that. The instructions I received were full of suspicion. From there I went to the first board meeting. Nobody there had ever been to Bermuda. After that, I went to see General Marshall.

One of the finest things about the Army during this war was that we had a Chief of Staff like General Marshall. General Marshall had no suspicions about anybody. He called a man in and gave him a job; if the man did not do it, he was fired. And that is the way it ought to be.

When I went into General Marshall's office, I said, "Do you know what kind of board you put me on?"

He said, "No". So I told him.

He said, "That's the President's Board".

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I said, "I will have to know three things. First, are we permanent members of this Board. The Navy wants to know that."

He said, "Well, you are the President's Board. You will have to get that from the President. So far as I am concerned--yes".

"Second", I said, "I have got to be able to talk just as I think, and lay the cards on the table with the Navy or we are not going to get any air and naval bases. This is a real job".

General Marshall said, "That is easy to answer. You will be able to do that. Won't you need an Air officer?"

I said, "I certainly will, and I'll need an engineer, too". And that took care of my third point.

It just happened that I had read an article in Reader's Digest concerning Bermuda two weeks before I went there. From that article I had learned that there is no water on the island; that it all comes from the skies. The rain falls on the roofs, runs off the roofs and flows into the cisterns which are made of coral dug out for that purpose. I said, "How in the world are you going to put two divisions on this island?" I remembered it was twenty-two miles long and half a mile wide. I had to get a runway a mile long. I mention this because problems of this nature are not easy.

Later I had to get two members on that board. They were not voting members. I did not care about the voting. I bring that up because we had to have not only cooperation but also coordination. We have to believe in each other and remove suspicion and get down to work.

Admiral Greenslade's group was a wonderful group, and we really accomplished a lot in the selection of every one of those air and naval bases.

Later the board went to Guantanamo, Cuba. We Army representatives were not confident, and the Navy did not know too much about naval bases either, and certainly very few of us knew about air bases. I really knew something about the latter, because I had to build an airfield at West Point. I did know something about wind and flying. I knew that one day the runways were 3500 feet long, the next day 4500 feet, and the next day they were a mile long. I said, "We had better make them two miles long to start with".

So much for that.

Then I got into the building game. I went down to Bragg, and because of congested traffic it took me an hour and a half to get into the post. My football experience came into play, for I had been in all the big stadiums and I knew something about handling traffic. I knew you had to have lots of roads.

The first day I was there we started building roads to facilitate travel to and from work. The first problem was to widen those roads.

I got involved with 11-foot, 22-foot, and 33-foot roads; and I had just enough knowledge to be a terrific headache to the people up in Washington who were telling me what to do on a job on which I was the boss.

That brings me to this point: Another good thing that happened during this war was that we got Bill Somervell as G-4 of the War Department. Bill Somervell can make decisions and he can cut red tape. It took me five hours to get him one Saturday to talk to me over the phone. I just stayed on the phone and finally got him. Then he practically called me a moron over the phone.

I said, "Bill, you can't call me a moron from Washington. You have to come down here on the ground; and if I am wrong, then you can call me a moron, if you please, and I will take it".

I am putting it that way because his attitude changed like that (snapping fingers). He said, "I will have four men down there Monday morning". That was Saturday.

I said, "I don't want any of those pen-pushers. I want men who can make decisions on the ground".

Believe me, he did not send pen-pushers. He sent road men down there that could make decisions, and I not only got my roads--if you go down to Fort Bragg and look at them, they are there--but I got 26 miles more road than I expected to get.

From there on I was thrown into the armored game. And that brings me to the real subject, the thing in which you are interested.

I got into a liaison plane and flew to Fort Knox five hours after I received that telephone call, and I did not find things too good. The post was there. The enthusiasm was there. There was part of an organization, but there was a lot of bickering. They had no tanks whatsoever. I did not know a thing about tanks except that they could cause you a lot of damage if they were good tanks in the hands of the other fellow.

I had learned--and it was a good thing to know this--the reason the French could not stop the German tanks. I said; "I would like to be in command of their artillery. I would stop those German tanks". I made that boast to General Voorhees in Panama in 1939. He was a great tank man, a very serious tank man and very sound in organization. What I learned was that we did not have a projectile. We had high explosive shrapnel, but we did not have a projectile that could puncture anything, and the Ordnance didn't have one either. They had not been thinking about that requirement.

I found a light tank with a power plant that would push it along and get the great speed that George Patton wanted. They had a little popgun up in the turret that they called a 37. Then I looked at the medium tank. They had a popgun up in the turret, and below they had a 75, that somebody had cut the end off because it hit the trees. That is a fact. And the power plant in that tank could not move a medium tank anywhere. It was a radial engine which did not have the horsepower. I think it had

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250 horse power, if it had that much. So we did not have anything.

The first thing I did was to fly up to Aberdeen. The whole Ordnance Department met me there. That conversation was very interesting. I had with me two men. One knew engines and the other knew radio. The latter also knew tanks. All I knew was that I was going to get fire power in the turret or throw the tank in the river.

They had a tank there with a turret, but they still had a 37 in it. They were putting machine guns everywhere. The influence there was that of cavalry trying to run like horses at a great gallop without thinking what it took to do the job.

The first thing we insisted on was a proper directive to the Ordnance Department so they could go ahead and develop a tank. I said, "Get the biggest 75 you can and get it in that turret. I don't want a 37. I want machine guns. That tank is no good. It won't do".

They had already gone into production on the tank with the 37, and I learned that it took a year to stop production; that it was going to take a year to develop a power plant; that somebody developed the engine, somebody else developed the rear end, somebody developed the thing that went between; and when you got the horsepower, you broke what was between. When you fixed that, you burst out the rear end, and by that time you needed more horsepower.

Then we got into the numbers racket. The President said, "We are going to have 25,000 tanks". All the Ordnance thought was, "How are we going to get 25,000 tanks?" Of course, they used the argument with me, "Well, we are going to give them to Lend-Lease". I said, "I am the guy that will suffer. If Lend-Lease gets the best stuff, I will get what is left". Actually, that is what happened. Lend-Lease got the good tanks. It took me a year to get production stopped and get a new tank on the line.

When Lev Campbell came into this game in Ordnance, I came up to a conference with General Marshall. In that conference I said to him, "Before you do one thing you have to get all this motor equipment in one department--Quartermaster or Ordnance".

He said, "Where would you put it?"

I said, "I am not playing favorites. All I want to do is to go to one party. I don't want to go to two. I already have been chased all over Washington to get papers approved from basket to basket".

He said, "If you had my job, what would you do?"

I said, "I would put it in Ordnance, because I think they have the organization that can do it. The Quartermaster has a big job and he can't handle both".

Then the next thing we had to do was to move to Detroit. Bill Somervell did that. He also stopped the numbers racket. Because what would we get? We would get engines here that are makeshifts, piecemeal stuff. Chrysler

built one. They had five carburetors in five different places.

If we learned one thing in the last war we learned the spare parts trouble. I made a speech in Detroit, that I think is a matter of record, in which I told them that the war was going to be won or lost on spare parts. Within twenty-four hours industry was on the spare parts job.

Now, Lev Campbell came with Barnes and his group to Detroit, and I met him there. The Ground Forces tried to put a blanket on me. I am bringing these things out because you have to fight these damn resistances that tend to hold you back. I was not ambitious nor was I trying to build a separate army. I told him so. I was merely trying to get a team that would work with another team. I was first trying to get my own team together, but I was not going to be stopped by any red tape.

We sat down in an office in Detroit and we could call in any engineer in the city of Detroit. We could have called them all together. I cannot tell you all the things that happened there, but we got to know industry. We were the using group. And industry immediately said, "You are our customers. You are the people we are going to please". And when we got that spirit, we got the team work. Then we went places. Lev was always a great leader. He was always willing to do anything.

One thing we had was British influence outside. We had not fought anybody, but our stuff was being used or going to be used, and the British were getting licked out on the desert. Every time they started something, first one thing and then another went wrong. Actually it was the lack of fire power that did it. They had no gun. All through this war, we suffered from a thing called an 88, an obsolescent German gun, a darn good one, with a good projectile. However, the Germans really lost the war because they were inflexible. They could not get a better gun. So everything they developed carried that one gun. They could not get even the 88 later.

We had to put compasses on tanks for the British. We had to get a compass that the metal did not affect one way or another, because one could get lost in the desert.

Then we went to work on that cowl board. It was worse than an airplane cowl board. It had all this tin-panny stuff and was always out of order.

So I made a comment one day, "If you put more effort into getting running gear and not so much on the cowl board, you would get somewhere". That weekend when I arrived at Detroit, the Chrysler Corporation had an engineer working on it, and he showed me a big box full of stuff that he had taken off that cowl board. He took the cowl board and fixed it up the way he thought it ought to be, and I took one look. I didn't need a board to tell me. I said, "I will approve that. Now we will go into production". I have always had a good fellow with me to check me, because I needed somebody. He said, "Now, wait a minute, General. Let us check this thing". We had to put one more light on the cowl board, that is all.

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Then we could not get production started. Everything we had to do took us a year. We had to go up to Canada to find out why we could not get our engines started in cold weather. Everything we took up there was tin-panny. It all broke down. It all had to be redesigned and re-made; it took a year to do it. They did a wonderful job in getting us by the critical points.

We never did get an engine for a tank until the very last part of the war. Ford started to design a tank engine. I wanted eight hundred horsepower; I told Wilson of Chrysler that if he could get twelve hundred, he had better start on twelve hundred. He did start on it.

When we got the Ford engine, I insisted that we get ten of them--not one or two--and do all the testing we wanted to do.

We were having clutch trouble about that time. We were getting more weight than we needed. We prescribed the biggest gun that we could get in a tank with the highest muzzle velocity, and a lightened upper turret, with a shorter recoil, giving us more room, and a cross-country mobility of 30 to 35 miles an hour. Cross-country mobility does not mean a thing to me any more.

We prescribed as much armor protection as we could get just so the weight would not go over thirty tons. With that decision made, immediately we had to compromise on thirty-five. Actually the weight was thirty-six and a half on some of them.

What happened when we got the ten motors? I had to set up a battalion of troops at Fort Knox, and I did not have to test only one motor. I had to test fifty tanks--three mediums and two light, as I remember; one had a Diesel engine, and one had the Chrysler engine and one had a Ford engine. I guess we had to test the radial motor, a Wright. Then we took the Cadillac. I guess we had six.

We ran those tanks twenty-four hours a day, three shifts, with one hour of maintenance out for each shift. At night we ran on the hard road from Louisville down to the next town. It was a big, wide highway. There was not much traffic on it so we blocked it off. In the daytime we went on a cross-country course. Some days the mud was two feet deep and other days the dust was equally as deep.

If something happened to one of those motors, nobody touched it. I was not going to have any expert mechanic fixing it up and fooling me with one tank. I had seen that before. That whole motor was taken out and shipped to Detroit by truck. You would be surprised how we developed that 400-hour, 800 horsepower engine. I think it is 750-odd horsepower, but it does its job.

Then we got involved in tracks. We were fighting traction. First we could not get them on the railroad trains. They were too wide.

What is ground pressure? They told me that to get ground pressure, you take the width of the track, multiply that by the length, then divide that by something and you get the ground pressure. Being a poor mathematician,

I could not figure that out.

Why were the Russian tanks that wide? It must have been to get through mud. Well, we had bridges. We got involved with bridges, and we had to redesign them. The Treadway bridge is the greatest thing that happened in the war. The only thing that stops a real army is water--ditches, culverts, and things like that. That Treadway bridge got us across in a hurry. Otherwise we would have been stopped every time we came to one of those obstacles.

What I am trying to emphasize here is this: We in the field must tell you people on the industrial end what we want. We have to be able to tell you what we want. We cannot have fifteen different things coming in to you. There must be one final thing.

Down at Camp Polk I saw a battalion crossing a ravine. All of them got stuck except two. Those two followed the contours. I was sitting under a tree watching and studying it, and I said, "No wonder. We have to have wide tracks. The length doesn't make any difference. You never get stuck on the level. The only time you get stuck is when you have only a few plates on the ground, and the only way you can solve that is to get width in the tracks". We did not get them until toward the end of the war. The Germans had them and the Russians had them.

Just one word on mobility. The Germans took the 88 gun and put it in a tank and put a lot of armor on it and could not move it anywhere. Baldwin and all that crowd criticized us. I will take them to town any time. We had to make decisions a year ahead of time. We could very easily have gone wrong. But we were not wrong on the tank. We were right on the tank, because we had fire power and mobility, and with them we had pretty good protection. With a good, trained crew we did not suffer too many losses either. You count the number of tanks we lost and then the number of casualties in those tanks and you would be surprised.

Where were those great German tanks? Every one I saw--and I saw at least three hundred of them--was backed up in a town, shooting one way or trying to get around hills. All we had to do was to go around those things.

Hitler, when he tried to get me in the Alsatian Plain a year and two months ago, had plenty of those tanks with his forces. He was trying to get them against us but he could not get them there. We knocked them all out before they could get there, because they could not get across the culverts.

We have many problems to think about. We won the war because we had fire power and mobility, and with all that, protection and training, all balanced in a team. But we have to think those things out ahead of time, and that is where you come in--in the planning stage. It takes men of executive ability and vision to be able to make decisions that will get things done.

We have boards. They are necessary. I had all the "know" men I could get on those boards--efficient men, too--men who will stand up and

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pound the desk to get their point. The way I handled my board at Knox, in order to get results, was to meet with them once a week. I crossed off many of the projects with red pencil and said, "Forget them". Details can bog you down. We concentrated on the necessary things and I fixed priorities. I let them all have their say. After that, I became the supreme court judge and said, "This is the way it will be done. You, Bill, are responsible. Get on a train tonight and go to Detroit and start these things rolling. Get working with this man and that man". One man carried the papers through.

Actually when the first Sherman tanks were made, the blueprints were fixed up at Aberdeen and brought to Washington and carried from desk to desk here until we got the O.K. on them and got them out. I tried to get them started, because we were making too many Grant tanks. They were a shell. The fire power was in the wrong places. They helped out in the interim period, but they certainly slowed us up.

The point I want to make clear is that we have to keep in close touch with industry. There must be coordination between Army, Navy, and Air Forces. The plan has to come from a central organization. You can be realistic if the people in the field, on the water, or in the air who are going to use the equipment can tell you what they need.

What are we going to do in the Ground Forces? Well, we are in this atomic age. We have to do something. We have to get our teeth into something, something that we can give to the public.

The Navy comes out and says they are going to carry the atomic bomb on carriers, and they are going to go over and drop these bombs all over the place. But whom are they going to fight today? There is no other navy in the world to fight except the British Navy. What are they going to do?

Then we have the great Air Forces over here. They are going to carry these five thousand miles and they are going to drop atomic energy bombs. They are going to destroy people. What happens after all this? We poor Ground Forces are between these two high-powered lobbies, if you want to call them that, being squeezed together. We do not have much to say except this: "If you don't keep us in the team, you are certainly not going to get anywhere, because whom do the Air Forces have to fight?" They talk about 35,000 planes in the Russian Army, but what kind of planes are they? They have no range. They cannot go anywhere. I am not saying we are going to fight the Russians. I am just trying to cite an example of the greatest strength.

What is happening? I say you Air, Army, and Navy people are for one purpose--I am selfish about this--and that is to carry us over to take over the ground and hold it after you do the job for which you are there. So do not forget, we still belong to that team. We may not be running backs, but we are surely going to be tackles and guards and centers. We must have a team.

Now, what is this atomic bomb going to do? No one knows. They talk about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I see pictures and talk to people who have

been there and I find that, if you are behind a concrete wall on the right side, you will live. Windows are torn out or pushed out. If you are underground, apparently nothing happens. I am not too worried about this thing, after we know what it is about. Do not be selfish in this game. Let us work it out. What can we do now that will have to do with the security of our country? That is what we are interested in. I am not interested in the Army, Navy, or Air Forces except in that team relationship.

The only thing I know that we can do is what we are doing in the Ground Forces. We are taking the experience of the last war, as you are doing here. You men have all had experience, you are recording it. I hope you are recording it on one sheet of paper and not in books, because nobody will read your books. Just get your conclusions, if you can, on one sheet of paper. If you are going to get a stack of books, the research boys will have some fun; but they are in the minority when it comes to fighting. They do not even do research until the war is over. So let us get it, where we can, in usable form. That is where your experience comes in; and that is why it is important for you men to record your experiences.

That is what we are doing. We are having conferences to recommend necessary developments. We started at Fort Sill with the Artillery. We are bringing all the Artillery together there. We are getting rid of this branch business. That was nothing but rigid organization that stopped progress. We are removing barriers. We are crossing the lines at will.

We brought in the civilian research and development people to discuss electronics and guided missiles. We got them interested in our problems. We are going to keep them interested in our problems. We are going to get into the universities and interest them in our problems. This is not going to be selfish, but we are going to take everything we can get to help us out. Maybe guided missiles will do away with all this expensive equipment and save the world.

Then we are going down to Fort Knox and do the same thing with armor. We are going to have the conclusions recorded. We are going to do the same with the Infantry.

Under the Simpson Board plan, which we think will come out in a week or so, Ground Forces will have six armies sitting on nine service commands, but there will be a straight command. The Ground Forces Headquarters will command the Army and the Army will command the service commands. The services of supply and administration, however, need not come through the Ground Forces Headquarters. They can go direct to Washington. However, if something goes wrong, then my people step in.

What we are trying to do has nothing new about it. First--there can be only one command. The commander does not need to be concerned with things that are not in his bailiwick. There is no reason why he should keep extra cards on personnel at his headquarters. In all the commands I have had--and I have had them all, theater command and all--I have kept my staff small. It has always been half of another kind of staff--half of it because I believe in quality rather than quantity. I always believe that the only way to cut down on paper work and get

anywhere is to keep people working so they do not write so much bunk. They think they have to produce something that takes a long time to read, instead of getting it down to one sentence or two sentences. Most of the problems have answers.

My headquarters will be simply a coordinating headquarters for all the six armies in this country, and the school command.

We are taking the equipment which came out of this war, and the stuff that is on the drawing boards, pushing it forward, and trying to keep abreast of research and development on which we are going to spend a great deal of time and money. But we are not going to spend all the money on equipment alone. We have much equipment and we think there ought to be an interval of five years in which to pursue our research and development. Maybe we should equip a few units until we are sure of what we need and how we are going into production. Right now, particularly, we do not know where we are going, and we have a lot of things to test out. Therefore we are going to equip the units we have with what we have, and equip enough units with later developments so that we can get experience to carry on from there. I think we are sound in that.

I am concentrating on my school command and replacements. If we fell down in this war, we fell down on replacements. Not that we did not train them, because we had a very highly developed system of training. We know it takes seventeen weeks, not eight weeks. We do not think we are going to shorten that time.

That eight weeks' business is simply an emergency solution for some of our problems. It has been the cause of a lot of grief because trainees are not soldiers at the end of eight weeks. They know very little. They know how to take care of themselves, but they do not know much else; and, unless they get additional training, which is hard to give them overseas because of the fact that they must go immediately on guard duty, they are not fully trained.

We are going to concentrate on the schools, which are in grand shape. We are not going to call them schools, either. We are going to try some psychology and call them "universities" and "colleges".

Our schools have learned a lot about pedagogy. We have profited by the experience of all the best instructors and educators in this country and in England. Industry taught us much and, in turn, learned a lot from us.

Our schools are well set up. We have the staffs and we know where to get the instructors. The ROTC will become a real course. History is important. I do not think for one minute that an Army officer ought to go into a college and teach history when the greatest historian in the country may be in that college. We need that historian to put across the military side of the history that we want. That will be much better-- to tie the colleges into our team.

If the president of the college should object to one of our courses on the basis that it is not up to the standard of his college, we are

going to knuckle down and change that course.

Furthermore, we are going to try to make the National Guard and the Organized Reserves into going organizations with modern equipment. With a forty-hour week and nothing to do on Saturdays and Sundays, there is a great possibility of having some real training in these units.

Another thing we must do is make staff officers more flexible--and this brings me to the subject of leadership. Leadership, to me, means just one thing--getting the job done today that ought to be done, even if it is wrong. You can certainly start tomorrow to correct it. But if you sit and wonder what you are going to do--you will be doing that for a week.

I object to boards that take two weeks to make up their minds and to bring me a plan. They should have been thinking about what I wanted two weeks before and had it ready. A decision arrived at in forty-eight hours is generally better than one that is mulled over too long.

We need flexibility of mind and flexibility of organization. When you analyze many of the weaknesses of this war, they can be traced to faulty organization.

One of the greatest examples of flexibility and coordination in this war had to do with George Patton's Third Army and Patch's Seventh Army. I had command of the Sixth Army Group and the Seventh Army. The Third Army was on my north and was under Bradley. There was ample opportunity for complications, for there were two great generals commanding those armies--Patch and Patton--both having great integrity and singleness of purpose, but of widely differing personalities. They could have been at each other's throats all the time. Then, too, you could have had Devers and Bradley fighting as to whose prerogative it was to do this and do that. But that was not the way we handled the job. Bradley told Patton that he could do anything as long as he reported what it was; and I told Patch the same thing. We crossed boundary lines frequently.

If there was inflexibility in divisions, you did not get anywhere. But if a division commander said, "I want to pass this division across to your rear", and the other division commander said, "Go ahead--Certain hours are free", but did not ask, "How many trucks are you going to put there?" and then start counting them--you got somewhere.

When we went through the Siegfried Line out of the Alsatian Plain across the Rhine River there was no doubt in my mind and I am sure there was none in Patch's or Patton's or Bradley's minds--that we were going to bounce across that river and get our job done. That job was to destroy the German armies west of the Rhine.

Capturing cities is a lot of bunk. What you are after is the individual soldier that is causing the trouble in the world. It is not airplanes, nor ships, nor weapons. It is the individual.

But what happened? Patton made his break. He got all the way to Cologne, came across the Moselle, and cut down the Rhine. When he did it,

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he spread out his front. He was immediately followed by the forces of the Eleventh Armored. Then he had a big gap, and he asked me for the Twelfth Armored Division, which was sitting down in my bailiwick waiting for the break-through. He thought he was going to have trouble getting it. He called me on the phone. I said, "George, it will be on its way in an hour". It went up there and it went into the gap.

Out of that you had the Tenth Armored. I will not begin to tell you how many infantry divisions were involved on my front. I had two armored divisions and a French army facing the Rhine. I had the Fourteenth, the Twelfth, and the Sixth Armored Divisions. When Patton came in there and crossed, they crossed boundaries everywhere. I gave him the Sixth Armored Division and he gave me back the Twelfth and the Tenth. That is the way we straightened that mess out. And in twenty-four hours Patton bounced across the river and Patch followed one day later with his troops and bounced across. That is the reason we were able to take advantage of our great opportunity there. I think the same thing happened in the Remagen Bridgehead...flexibility of mind and flexibility of organization.

I have talked a little longer than I intended to, but I did want to get across those points. I am going to stop right now. I will answer any questions in what time is left if anyone wants to ask any, and if I can answer them.

GENERAL ARMSTRONG:

General Devers, so far as I can see, Sir, at the present time, the armament that you anticipate for the Ground Forces is approximately what was being used at the end of the war, with slight developments. Is that right?

GENERAL DEVERS:

Not slight developments. Big developments.

GENERAL ARMSTRONG:

Possibly. But I am thinking about manufacturing problems and raw materials. It would take about the same type of production, would it not? I mean, there would not be much change.

GENERAL DEVERS:

As you know, we had an equipment board which turned in a record. Stilwell came to talk to the equipment board, and he turned in all the evidence. The board's report has not been approved. It shows in detail the line along which we are going to progress. But my idea is not to spend money on a lot of stuff that we already have. We can train with what we have at the moment until we know exactly which way we are going to go.

I asked Dr. McNair, who is a great Bell Laboratory electronics man, "Are we going to have guided missiles? Are we going to be able to use the atomic bomb?"

He said the same thing. He knows nothing about it. So we have not given away any secrets. We do not know the weight of the thing. We do not know just how to work it. We have ideas from what we read about it.

We do not believe in all this bunk about aerial defense. There is no defense against a rifle bullet, no defense against a projectile of any kind, unless you kill the guy at the source. There is no defense against a missile unless we go to the source. We can wear armor that a bullet will not pierce, but I hate to wear armor. But if you kill the guy before he shoots you, then you are not going to get hit. So let us not permit those people to mislead us on atomic energy.

They keep talking about defense. There is no defense. There never will be any. We have to go to the source and remove it. That is fundamental, and that is the way we ought to do our planning. I have heard the damndest arguments on that business, by intelligent people, too. They amuse me, because the only answer is to get to the source; and to get to the source, you have to know where to go. That requires intelligence.

Now, what are we going to do? They tell me that in five or ten years, through electronics, we will be able to shoot these guided missiles and direct them without getting aboard the plane or ship that carries them, and that that will help us to get closer. We do not know that. I am one of those fellows who believe that that is what is going to happen. I think we are going to get it to a simpler form than we have now.

We know what gas tanks are. We know our limitations in weight. We are after lighter weight and greater protection. The Quartermaster Corps is trying a protective device. It has a cloth now that will stop a bullet. It is trying to get lighter weight materials for protection. We are going to protect the doughboys. Eighty percent of the casualties of this war came from the Infantry. Eighty percent of the casualties were committed by other than Infantry weapons. So we have something there that we have to balance.

We have to take the individual, the human being, and protect him. One way to do that is with cloth. That will help. We did it for personnel in airplanes. The medical officers of the Eighth Air Force sat down and figured out a flak suit that prevented innumerable casualties in the Air Forces. You would be surprised to know the number of men the medical officers saved because they went after preventive medicine and did not just stick to their onions and give pills.

That is the policy under which we are working. I am a great believer in that. We have these new tanks. We ought to get enough of them to try out. We have wider tracks. We need better bridges.

We are practicing all that and thinking about it and pushing it on the drawing board. But we do not want to waste our money on a lot of equipment that is obsolescent. I can tell you now that nearly every bit of the equipment we have now is going to be obsolescent or obsolete in five years. Why waste money and energy trying to take care of it? I am for getting rid of it now. That is the only way I know to answer that.

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GENERAL ARMSTRONG:

Thank you very much. Are there any questions?

General Devers, I want to thank you on behalf of the students and the faculty of the College for giving us so much to think about. It is a very striking talk you have given us, and I am sure that the work of the Industrial College will be far more effectively directed as a result. I am very grateful to you, Sir. Thank you.

(10 May 1946--200.)S