

TRANSCRIPT OF
ADDRESS BY
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GENERAL PRENTISS, COLONEL KOWALSKI, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I am very happy to be allowed to come down to Belvoir today and get a "good conduct pass" from the Pentagon for a half day to revisit this Post. I am happy not only because it marks the occasion of graduation -- graduation is always pleasant for all parties concerned -- but I wanted to come down to Belvoir while General Prentiss was still in command. Unfortunately, I leave for Europe in a couple of days and so will not be here when that rather unhappy occasion comes -- the day on which General Prentiss retires from active service. I did want to come and personally present to him today my appreciation and the appreciation of the Army for his long and distinguished career in the Corps of Engineers. We're going to miss him very much, but we are quite sure that he will not cease to contribute to the Nation in one way or another -- always, I am sure, in a conspicuously successful manner.

Driving down from Washington today, I was reflecting upon the time when, as a Second Lieutenant of Engineers, I used to make the trip between Washington and the then-Camp Humphreys very frequently and usually at night. I also reflected on the fact that at that time I was not retaining very much of what I received as a student at the Engineer School. I attribute that to no lack of energy but perhaps to other-directed energy, for I was very busily courting

Mrs. Taylor at the time. I am sure that activity contributed to the general detriment of my class standing as an Engineer student officer.

I feel, however, that I am treading on solid ground when I reflect upon the many distinguished Engineers who here either started their careers or received some of the vital instruction which has allowed them to continue in fruitful careers in that great corps of officers.

In any event, I know that our purpose today is somewhat different from talking in terms of the Corps of Engineers, but is rather to greet the graduates of the Command Management School. I recall very well when this school was founded, and I followed with interest its early days. I remember General Ridgway's statement of its over-all purpose, namely: "to bring the Army's standards for internal management more into line with its fighting standards." I think that was a very fine statement, because it suggests a fundamental proposition -- namely, there is no room in the Army for two standards. There can only be one standard, and that must be of the highest. This statement also suggests that most of us in uniform are perhaps more adept at using our resources properly on the fighting side of the ledger than we are on the management side. Certainly, as I have grown older in the Service, I have become aware of my own personal weaknesses in this field, and I came to feel that generally we have not raised in our midst a qualified specialist who can see to it on the management side -- the business side, so to speak -- that we are equally skillful, that we derive the maximum from the assets which are placed at our disposition.

I remember that, in the Army I grew up in, each Post was different from place to place; the standard of administration was different; the obvious efficiency was different, depending upon the character of the man in command.

The Army represented many little islands in which there were almost as many standards of management as there were posts, camps, and stations of that day. There is no longer any room in our military experience for that kind of scatter-type, checker-board operation. We must have uniformity, uniformity built around -- as I said at the outset -- the highest possible standards.

I always like to start off my comments on an occasion like this, however, by reminding us of the unity of our mission. Everything we do, we who are parts of the Army, must contribute directly or indirectly to the successful discharge of our military mission. And that mission is the destruction of hostile ground forces. Every paper we sign, every action we take, every professional thought we think should be directed, in one way or another, to forward that fundamental mission.

It's difficult, sometimes, to keep that mission in view when we regard the heterogeneous functions which fall to the Army. Ours is indeed a most complicated career and profession. We have an Army now of over a million men and over 440,000 civilians directly associated with it. Forty percent of our Army is distributed overseas. We have financial assets worth over \$52 billion. Ours is indeed a great fighting organization, and it's a great business and administrative organization. I would say that the two cannot be distinguished, because they must be an entity, a union of effort, a union of successful results, accomplished both as a fighting organization and as a business structure.

I also say that we must test our activities by the principle that everything we do must be capable in one way or another of "putting blood on the enemy's shirt." I often try to check my own activities to see if I could actually verify that such is the case, and I must say that sometimes the connection is rather remote. I like to tell the story on myself about my command, the Eighth Army --

... decided to inspect the Quartermaster depot in Seoul. I had had a very impressive tour, while the Commanding Officer proudly showed me the very extensive stocks of supplies which he had on hand to support the fighting men on the front. As I was about to leave, I found over in one corner of the warehouse a pile of sacks, and I asked, "What's in there, Colonel?" "Oh," he said, "they're tobacco stems." "Tobacco stems; and what are they for?" "Oh, they're for the homing pigeons." "Homing pigeons? Do they smoke?" "Oh, no, it's not that. But our research and development has established the fact that at the mating time the homing pigeon is most happy if he and she can have access to a supply of tobacco stems, because they line their nests with them. And you know next week the mating season for pigeons begins." Well, I was really impressed by that!! I could see the logisticians and the management people in the Pentagon -- General Magruder's boys -- with their slide rules figuring the lead time to order the tobacco stems, getting the shipping space, and making all the other arrangements with that great foresight and paternal solicitude for the happiness of the homing pigeon that got those tobacco stems to Seoul on a rainy day just one week in advance of the requirement.

But while that's a tribute to management, I must say I could not discover the direct relationship between the morale of the pigeons and the combat effectiveness of the Eighth Army. I am sure it was there, but I didn't perceive it. Nor do I sometimes perceive the direct application of many of our other activities here in the Army. The point I am making is that we constantly must screen in our daily lives, in the areas for which we are responsible, to verify that we

not engaged in a tobacco-stem operation, but in one which really puts blood on the enemy's shirt.

I'm aware of the extent to which this school very properly calls upon civilian experience and civilian techniques. It is indeed most important that we reach out on all sides and try to capture those methods and approaches which have application to our problem. Of course, I don't feel that this is just a one-way street; I have dealt enough now with some of our senior industrialists in the United States to know how much they have studied our own experience, so that there has been a reciprocal interchange. But I view it as a very wholesome development that we in the Army have, as I say, wisely turned in all directions, trying to find ways and means of improving our operations.

I believe that your future, as you go ahead in the management field, is extremely important because of your many civilian contacts. Necessarily, because the range of interests which you already have or which is represented by the curriculum of this school, you reach out into all ramifications of civilian life. Those of you who lead these operations are necessarily very closely associated with civilian leaders. Hence, it is most important that you fairly represent the Army's thinking and show that the Army is indeed forward-looking and progressive, preparing itself by improving equipment, by improvement of techniques, to do a better job as the years go by. This public-relations aspect of our contacts with civilian leaders is indeed a most important one, and I feel that the area which you gentlemen represent is one in which there is a great deal of work to be done.

While it's our objective to run an economical and effective Army, we can never lose sight of the fact that it's the military end which is the ultimate

purpose. We might well have an extravagant Department of Defense which won a war, in which case it justified its existence; whereas an economic, efficient Department which succeeded in losing a war would be a national disaster. Economy and efficiency, in themselves, can never justify defeat. They can richly justify themselves, however, in reaching out and extending the effectiveness of the resources which have been made available to us.

I am always impressed, in the last analysis, with the degree of our effectiveness in any area in the matter of leadership. Certainly, the good commander must be the good manager; but by the same token, the good manager must be a good commander. In many senses of the word, it is more difficult to obtain effective leadership in influencing, guiding, stimulating, and driving one's subordinates in the management field than it is in the military command field. I would urge, however, my feeling that this kind of "office leadership" -- for want of a better term -- is highly important and must not be ignored.

I am always complaining about the office management in my own Staff at the Pentagon. The fact is that some of our best officers who, as regimental or battalion commanders look after their men, are interested in their families, and do everything to show solicitude for their welfare, once translated into an office seem to lose that feeling of personal responsibility for subordinates. I can assure you that in my judgment that is wrong; there is just as great a need for personal leadership in the office as there is on the drill field, or, for that matter, on the battlefield. I want all you military and civilian executives who return to an office-type of assignment to carry that word into your establishment, that realization that giving your subordinates the feeling

of concern for them, your concern that they are not serial numbers, but people, is the only way to get the best out of the men and women who work for us.

Now in closing, I would say that the school system, as I know it, is an excellent place to teach you techniques, new methods, and common-sense ways of getting the most out of the means which we have. However, techniques in themselves are no sure-fire formula for success. As I said a moment ago, it's leadership and your ability to stimulate and energize the people about you which, in the long run, are the devices that attain success.

The Command Management tools being taught here are not substitutes, or replacements, for command supervision. But they are indeed useful aids in conducting the affairs of your organization. These techniques will aid the Army as a whole in improving the Department of the Army's ability to conduct the affairs of the Army. And finally, by using these tools skilfully, the Army will be in a better position to justify the annual Budget effectively, and to discharge our responsibility in giving a full accounting for the great resources entrusted to us.

Now, it's one of the leader's jobs everywhere -- regardless of the type of work in which he is engaged, it is his job -- to keep an open mind, and to seek better methods by which his organization can accomplish the results for which it is intended. Many of the individual management techniques which you have learned here are familiar, but I doubt that the package approach is anything but new. It is certainly up to date; it is certainly required. We do not believe, however, that this Command Management Course in its present form can be the last word. There must always be something better ahead, and I encourage all of you who have been through the Course to show us by constructive criticism the ways to improve it.

In closing, I would simply say that the tools of management are simply tools, records, and techniques. It takes leadership to see that these tools are properly applied. Whether as executives we deal with rosters or rockets, business contacts or battle concepts, finance or firepower, our success eventually rests in some way upon leadership of others. The final purpose of all of our individual and organizational efforts is nothing less than the development of a strong, mobile, combat-ready Army that can deter aggression, and that if the worst befalls and war occurs, can preserve our freedom.

I am happy indeed to come down to have this talk with you gentlemen, and now to have the pleasure of presenting you with your diplomas.