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Military Government with the Airborne Command.

Strom Thurmond

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MILITARY GOVERNMENT
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ZONE FRENCH LINE
ITALY JUGOSLAVIA

REHABILITATION IN ITALY
CAN ERP SOLVE ITALY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEM?

MILITARY GOVERNMENT WITH THE AIRBORNE COMMAND
By J. STROM THURMOND

JAPANESE TRADE PROSPECTS
The Opportunity

"Never before in the history of the world has a group of men been offered a greater opportunity for service which promises so much for world peace," Dr. James R. Newman, Hesse MG Director, told a graduating class of 34 Military Government officers at the OMG-US MG School at Oberammergau.

In the principal address of the day, Newman went on to say, "In earlier wars, Military Government played a minor part and was important only insofar as it aided the successful military commander in imposing his will upon a conquered people for an indefinite, but usually short, period of time. Today, however, it plays an important and vital part in our war planning and has taken its place as an important military function equal to that played by any branch of the armed forces. It is designed to play its part after the din of battle ceases and is designed for a type of conquest, just as real but more subtle than that made by a successful fighting force: it is designed for the conquest of chaos, the conquest of fear held by a conquered people of riot, want, starvation, and further disaster, and the conquest of militaristic and totalitarian thought in a people abandoned by their leaders."

In closing, Newman said, "In my opinion, the hope of the world as to its future peace and freedom from the horrors of war lies in the accomplishment of a good job by Military Government and the forces in support thereof. With your help Military Government will guide the people of Germany to democracy and freedom, and through these things will give to the world the hope of eternal and universal peace which has ever been the dream of all mankind."

There are, throughout the country, many thousands of these Americans who, like Dr. Newman, have had their feet in the mud of occupied areas and who are in a singular position to understand what the United States has at stake in the realm of present international affairs. The Military Government Association is designed to afford Military Government personnel—officers and men of the Army and Navy, as well as civilians, an opportunity to make a genuine contribution to the realization of these objectives.—The Editors.
MILITARY GOVERNMENT
with the
AIRBORNE COMMAND

By J. Strom Thurmond

To prepare an adequate treatise on Military Government within an airborne command, would unquestionably require the combined talents of numerous experts in the highly refined phases of air and ground logistics, as well as in all branches of government. In light of the kaleidoscopic rapidity with which tactical, strategic and other changes are taking place in the concept of warfare throughout the world, the task would obviously be well-nigh impossible.

The writer has as his guide, only his experience as the Chief Military Government officer with the famed 82nd Airborne Division for about thirty eventful days in the summer of 1944 during the invasion of Europe, and two years with the G-5 Section of the First Army during the entirety of the North-European campaign and later in the Pacific theater. But, that experience did furnish a most comprehensive and realistic guide. The field in Europe included a highly organized economy and with a dense population which was in difficult circumstances.

That there is, and will continue to be an increasing need for Military Government staffs and units with airborne tactical units, hardly needs demonstration at this late date. The experience in Europe sufficiently justifies that conclusion. It renders the further conclusion inevitable, that airborne forces must not only embrace self-contained Military Government staff sections, but must be accompanied, on their missions, by teams prepared to take over Military Government functions at once, within areas under occupation by the tactical commands. This is so because it seems probable and indeed, more than likely, that the airborne forces of the future will play an ever-expanding part in the warfare which world statesmen today are seeking to avoid, perhaps in vain. Thus I suggest that airborne operations will undoubtedly require Military Government of occupied areas similar to that performed by units with yesterday’s ground forces.

The training of airborne Military Government personnel must not overemphasize the technical aspects of government. Such technical things as giving men ballots to wave neither feeds them nor gives them the intelligence or the character to be competent and devoted supporters of a democracy. The training of Military Government personnel, first of all, must be directed toward attaining combat proficiency. The Military Government officer or enlisted man who cannot take an active part in establishing and expanding a foothold in the tactical offensive, and defend himself and his position has no place in an airborne operation. If he is not prepared for those duties he will find himself eliminated from it very quickly after the landing. Next the personnel must be able to completely understand the immediate tactical objectives of the command so that they will render the greatest possible assistance. For instance, they must have this ability in order to plan for the proper handling of refugees, the civilian supplies, local and otherwise, and to obtain the general restoration of law and order out of the chaos which is inherent in the area while the tactical objectives are being attained. The necessity for this understanding of the tactical objectives exists in perhaps an even greater degree, in the wider fields of the higher command. Also, unless the airborne Military Government personnel understand the objectives so they may properly prepare to render the full constructive service for the forces which will later join or follow the airborne troops.

To give a more realistic picture, I am adding excerpts from the records of those CA/MG officers who went airborne in the invasion of Normandy in 1944. It is hoped that they may prove interesting.

These are the experiences of three officers who landed in France with the 82nd Airborne Division on D-Day; Lt. Col., Thurmond, Major Deutsch and Captain Knecht. These officers, on 23 May 1944, had been assigned for TD with the 82nd Airborne Division, then at Leicester. On 29 May they left with several units of the division for the Marshaling Area, Greenham’s Common, an airfield near Newbury. There they were given further briefing, final instructions, and assigned to various gliders.

“About 2100 the column crossed the coast line of France over the Utah Beach, and headed westward. At approximately 2120 hours the gliders were subjected to heavy antiaircraft fire, and almost immediately thereafter were released from the towing planes.

“The experience of each of the three gliders in landing was almost identical. It was the result of antiaircraft fire. All three crashed in small adjoining fields within the German lines.

“Enemy fire on the occupants of the gliders took place the moment the landing
had been effected and continued thereafter. Captain Knecht, who was in the personnel CP and who was the occupant of that glider, immediately took to a ditch on one side of the field. Colonel Thurmond and Major Deutsch, in gliders No. 32 and 34 respectively, despite injuries sustained in the landings, assisted at once in the release of the vehicles from the gliders. All three gliders had been practically demolished in the landings. Colonel Thurmond and Major Deutsch managed to get together. Colonel Thurmond thereupon headed a reconnaissance party with personnel of the glider to locate a CP to which an effort was being made to effect a rendezvous. A vehicle was borrowed from an officer of the 4th Infantry Division and a reconnaissance made of other nearby gliders, assisting their injured personnel in getting to the rendezvous.

"In the meantime, Major Deutsch gathered as much of the nearby personnel which had come in his and other gliders, and under cover of ditches, ditches and other natural obstructions, made their way to a nearby farmyard. There, a patrol was established to protect the area, and to bring in the wounded and injured, pending selection of the final rendezvous.

"At the same time, Captain Knecht proceeded on a reconnaissance from his position and under fire, managed to locate the farmyard just mentioned. He then returned to the ditch where the remaining personnel of his glider were waiting, and brought them back to the farmyard.

"Shortly thereafter, word came from Colonel Thurmond that a tentative rendezvous had been established near the CP of a Battalion of the 4th Infantry Division, at a crossroads a short distance from Bloisville. The group in the farmyard thereupon proceeded by jeep and on foot, under guide of friendly civilians, to the rendezvous established. The enemy fire had remained continuous, but was somewhat less intense. The wounded were carried in the vehicles taken from the gliders.

"Thereafter efforts were made to consolidate the group, and a temporary bivouac was established, foxholes being dug in ditches, under hedges and trees. Shells were falling in the immediate vicinity, and there was small-arms firing from apparently all directions. Patrols were set up around the fields, and the undergound participated in the defense of the position throughout the night.

"On the next morning it was found that the bivouac in question was still surrounded by the enemy, within range of small arms, and efforts were made to reach division headquarters by radio. Division Headquarters, which were also surrounded, sent out reconnaissance, and the entire day was consumed in moving from one position to another in an effort to consolidate the positions. The detachment moved into no less than six positions during the day, constantly under fire and constantly seeking the protection of ditches, hedges and foxholes. That evening it was determined that the detachment could only be saved by getting it through to division headquarters somehow. A reconnaissance group was sent across to lead the detachment by secondary roads. A part of it was along a main road in the vicinity of Chef du Pont, which was under intense small-arms fire. The detachment was loaded into some six vehicles, which started across the area in question. On three occasions within not more than a quarter of a mile, machine-gun fire from both sides of the road was so intense that the column had to stop, dismount, take cover in the ditches and return the fire. On each occasion the firing was finally lessened or eliminated, and the column remounted and dashed on. The movement through this portion of the enemy line was finally successful, and the column reached division headquarters shortly after 2100 hours that night, having twice crossed the enemy line within less than 24 hours.

"The division headquarters area was better secured, surrounded by friendly troops but with the enemy still on all sides, and sniper-abundant.

"Contact was made immediately upon arrival with the Police Chief who was in the square. It was discovered that the mayor, M. le Dr. Caillard, had been killed during an air raid several days before, and that his successor would be his first 'adjoint.' He was sent for and a general meeting arranged for 1300 hours.

"General conditions were determined to be reasonably good. There were only a few wounded civilians and the hospital was still functioning with three doctors, all nurses and adequate medicine, dressings, etc. There were also ten policemen on duty. Few civilians had as yet appeared, but arrangements were made for several to remove enemy dead from the streets. A meeting was held about 1300 hours at the Hotel de Ville with the second 'adjoint,' the first being laid up temporarily, the town secretary, Police Chief were present, during which our mission was explained and our curfew and anti-cattle movement restriction advised. The detachment was put in charge of the town and set up in the Hotel de Ville.

"We reported to Corps signal officer the location of the junction box of the enemy military communication system to Cherbourg, as we were informed of this by a civilian, and the circuits were later interrupted.

"An inspection was also made of some lesser wounded cattle and attempts continued to arrange for use of the available meat not required by civilians in the division area due to the weekly distribution having been made the day before the bombing. Instructions to bury the dead animals were also given to all mayors.

"Heavy artillery fire by the enemy directed at Carentan on D & 7 caused most of the civilians to go into hiding. Considerable damage to the town also resulted.

"Lt. Critchley went into Carentan, however, and remained for some hours to assist the detachment in the worst phase of the bombardment.

"In the remaining division area everything was relatively quiet and plans for a meeting of mayors of all freed towns were made to consider the bread shortage.

"The town of St. Martin de Vareville in the northern sector of the corps area having developed a meat shortage due to slaughter of livestock during the first phase of shell fire, we arranged to make the surplus at Ste. Marie du Mont available through commercial channels.

"We had to refer to Corps for action a proposal by M.I.I. to arrest the mayor of Hiesville, which we opposed vigorously. Corps upheld us as no definite proof of harmful action was presented. This mayor has been of considerable assistance to us and our saving him from arrest has been most beneficial.

"The first really important group of evacuees in the division area arrived at Hiesville from Le Ham and foxholes were made available to them.

"K rations were issued to the evacuees the morning of D & 8. One returned voluntarily to Le Ham to check conditions. He reported twenty tons of wheat and five tons of flour at the mill which he also said appeared to be undamaged, though without electricity or adequate water to operate. This information was relayed to Col. Hardin at Corps as Le Ham is outside of the division area. We postponed our meeting with the mayors pending check of the situation.

"One of the staff of enlisted men, Pvt. Fred Schnabel was used to guard two women, arrested as probable enemy agents, and he acquired valuable information for CIC through overhearing their conversations in French and German.

"During the afternoon General Taylor held a meeting of Carentan town officials, with part of his staff, the detachment and division Civil Affairs officers present.

"D & 9 Lt. Critchley went to Corps to attempt to arrange for running the flour mill at Le Ham, but as the enemy was still just across the river, within small-arms range, nothing could be done for the moment. Accordingly, we contacted all mayors in the division area, re-setting time for general flour conference the next day.

"Carentan was visited and conditions found to be relatively quiet, with population as yet not returned in large numbers as they had done the first day. During the visit, some 88mm fire was directed at the town with soldier but no civilian casualties.

"The Military Government, conducted in and following the military operations of (Continued on page 10)
of such control that the central government's Board of Information was abolished outright by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers early in the occupation.

There remained the very serious problem of how a people born to obey could be expected overnight to embrace the new idea of freedom without some means of knowing what their new democratic government was doing and trying to do—and why.

From the beginning of the occupation, the Civil Information and Education Section of SCAP has given much thought and attention to that problem. This reporter recently had the privilege of participating with C I & E officials in further studies of government information in Japan and in trying to work out an information program that would be acceptable to the Japanese people and press.

One suggestion that may fill the gap, at least until the new voters—male and female alike—have built up confidence in the highly unpopular bureaucrats of Tokyo, is for a decentralized operation in which the bulk of the government information will be distributed by the nation's 46 prefectures.

That will allow for closer contact between the individual and his local representatives of governmental authority. It will provide a means of tailoring information to the needs of the community, of emphasizing farm aids, for instance, in rural areas, and stressing labor programs in industrial prefectures. It will keep the whole idea of government information geared to a lower speed than that of Tokyo. It should, if successful, protect the newfound freedom of the Japanese unless the bulk of the people, through neglect or desperation, decide to give up democracy and embrace the slavery of communism.

There is, then, a possibility that enough to eat, an honest government, some basis for expecting a brighter future and adequate information about those fundamental things may keep alive the democratic infant that was born in Japan with the arrival of the American conquerors.

Education is the ultimate hope, but education generally is a long-time thing. For right now, the need is for information—straightforward, simple, understandable information. The people of Japan need to know more than how a democracy works. They need to know how a Japanese democracy works—how it is working today.

The responsible press appears to be eager to do its part in telling the story. The radio and motion pictures are ready to translate abstractions into concrete terms. All the media of information are waiting for the raw material that should be much more compelling than whatever it is the communists have to offer.

With such a prospect, we may yet be given time to launch a program of democratic education in Japan. To be effective, such a program will have to extend at least over a generation. The taxpayers of the United States must be ready to support for an additional twenty-five or thirty years a token occupation that may be shrunk to nothing more than educational supervision.

Unless we are willing to go along financially with such a program, it is probable that the entire investment in victory in the Pacific—the costly expenditure of life and resources—will have been wasted. The people of Japan have a good chance for freedom, but the people of the United States will have to be both generous and patient if that chance is to be realized.

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With The Airborne Command

(Continued from page 8)

World War II, was largely a feel-and-deploy-your-way-as-you-go-operation. The studies which are presently going on, as distinguished from the actual supervision of units still functioning in occupied areas in Europe and the Far East, are undoubtedly being directed toward removing Military Government from the experimental field. I feel certain that any comprehensive study of the Army's operations during the war in Europe will show that a military commander cannot competently solve the logistic phase of his missions, unless he understands the political as well as the tactical objective assigned to him. He must be as well prepared to accomplish the one as the other. His training should include that type of instruction. Too often inexperienced persons have thought of wars being fought on maneuver grounds from which the civilian has been completely and conveniently removed. As for the chief of the Military Government Section, he is responsible for the preparation of detailed plans for Military Government in each area to be occupied, including the determination of the number and types of Military Government Detachments needed in an area. He must, obviously, make Military Government planning a part of the over-all plan integrating it with other plans to meet all possible developments.

World War II was largely a war of movement. Consideration of the civilian populations became one of the Army Commander's great responsibilities. It is entirely conceivable that conditions may arise where providing for the civilian populations will far outweigh the military problems which confront him. Such was actually the case in the closing days of the European Operations.

To accomplish its purpose, the Military Government staff must be as much of an inherent part of his staff as the other general staff divisions. It must be realized that it deals with the engineer, signal, medical, quartermaster, transportation, Provost Marshal and legal sections of the Commander's staff in a coordinating role. It must do so in order to obtain an efficient administration of the operational areas which will come within the Commander's control. The integration of the Military Government plans with those for the tactical operations can best be handled at General Staff levels, with the Military Government Section participating as a General Staff Section. This must be done because many Military Government proposals are specialties themselves and are actually well outside the normal sphere of training formerly given the four General Staff Divisions. Moreover, many of the problems of Civil Administration which devolve upon the Military Government Staff Section are of such importance that they require the prerogatives and authority enjoyed by other coordinating staff sections. As warfare is now carried on, Military Government cuts across all other technical and administrative operations. It must either be given the power to coordinate or have a parallel organization of its own. This last method of duplication has been tried and has not proven successful for obvious reasons. Coordinating powers are given G-1, G-2, G-3 and G-4 sections so that they are able to serve their Commander more effectively. It is submitted that the responsibility for keeping an organized economy within a Commander's area of responsibility should be recognized. The Military Government staff should be able to meet the Commander's responsibilities and permit him to be a military commander and not a political dictator. Military Government should be accomplished through effective coordination. It is a staff type of activity. If this concept were developed and a feeling of cooperative sovereignty in the people were encouraged, our field commanders would serve their country and democracy much better.

But to return to more easily explained problems, both the staff and operating personnel might well be self-contained to a greater degree. They should have control over certain mobile equipment and be able to coordinate satisfactory supply arrangements. In my experience these were never available in the late war. It was only by the ready genius of American personnel to find and utilize indigenous rolling stock that transportation was obtained. The latter, always a deficiency, was overcome only by the never-failing readiness of American units to use irregular means to meet the critical needs. The success of the Military Government was due in large measure to the experience and knowledge of Colonel D. M. Gunn, 1st Army, G-5, whose service in the Italian and African campaigns made him one of the best informed officers on Military Government affairs in the European Theater.

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