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Just as the Tet offensive came to symbolize America's stinging loss in Vietnam, the withdrawal of General William C. Westmoreland as commander of American forces there cast him as the scapegoat for the failures of the war. Yet Westmoreland's brilliant career before Vietnam had promised a command that would quickly establish American superiority. The story of why this did not happen is only an important and compelling chapter in the rich career of one of our most important warriors of modern times. In its ranks, Westmoreland was one of the brightest military prospects of the century. From his family's roots in South Carolina - a family with centuries of tradition in soldiering and service - Westmoreland was born to lead. Author Samuel Zaffiri looks at his schooling, his friends and his social life and discovers a boy who was striking in his abilities, his dynamism and his leadership. A small town boy, he returned from a Scout trip to Europe with a clear vision of his future, and as an adult he was a man who faced the difficult decision of buck family tradition by attending West Point instead of the Citadel. Zaffiri explores with wonderful passion and clarity Westmoreland's rapid rise to fame during World War II, its service under General Maxwell Taylor and alongside some of the greatest military of the time, and its push across North Africa and across Europe. After the war, Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy saw that he was being cared for, with appointments to various schools and as head of West Point, where he was responsible for rotating several classes of today's military leaders. With his ultimate promotion to commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, Westmoreland entered his own. Zaffiri offers a significant review of his tenure in Asia, offering a unique view of the war as seen by the man who led it - sometimes with support, often with his hands tied. And when politics and an impossible situation forced him to resign, Westmoreland continued to contribute to the army to which he had devoted his life in his attempts to modernize the army as Chief of Staff. Finally, there is the last part of Westmoreland's life, which is often forgotten in the attempt to encapsulate history. Upon his retirement, Westmoreland ran for governor of North Carolina, and later took CBS in a defamation lawsuit - a lawsuit that nearly brought down the network. Throughout, Zaffiri offers readers a complete look at Westmoreland - the man, his life, and the war that is synonymous with his name. 25th Chief of the Army Staff William Westmoreland25th Chief of Staff of the United States ArmyIn office July, 3 1968 - June 30, 1972PresidentLyndon B. JohnsonRichard NixonPreced byHarold K. JohnsonSucceed byBruce Palmer Jr. (Acting)Creighton W. Abrams2nd Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, VietnamIn officeJune 1, 1964 - June 30, 1968Preced byPaul D. D. byCreighton W. Abrams Personal detailsBorn (1914-03-26)26 March 1914Saxon, South Carolina, United States DiedJuly 18, 2005 (2005-07-18) (91)Charleston, South Carolina, U.S.AwardsArmy Distinguished Service Medal (4)Legion of Merit (3)Military ServiceNickname(s)WestyAllegiance United StatesBranch/service United States ArmyYears of service1936-1972RankGeneralCommands, U.S. Army Staff Officer Regimental Combat Team504th Parachute Infantry Regiment34th Field Artillery BattalionBattles/warsWorld War IIKorean WarVietnam War William Childs Westmoreland (March 26, 1914-July 18, 2005) was a general in the U.S. Army, including commander of U.S. forces during the Vietnam War from 1964 to 1968. He was Chief of Staff of the United States Army from 1968 to 1972. Westmoreland adopted an attrition strategy against the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese army, attempting to drain them of manpower and supplies. He also used the U.S. advantage in artillery and air power, both in tactical confrontations and in the relentless strategic bombardment of North Vietnam. Many of the battles in Vietnam were technically U.S. victories, with the U.S. Army in control of the field thereafter; detention territory gained in this way proved difficult, however. Public support for the war eventually declined, especially after the Battle of Khe Sanh and the Tet Offensive in 1968. By the time he was reassigned as chief of staff of the army, U.S. military forces in Vietnam had reached a peak of 535,000 people. Westmoreland's strategy was ultimately politically unsuccessful. The increased U.S. casualties and the project undermined U.S. support for the war, while large-scale losses among non-combatants weakened South Vietnamese support. Nor has it weakened North Vietnam's will to fight, and the government of South Vietnam, a factor largely beyond Westmoreland's control, has never managed to establish sufficient legitimacy to quell defections to the Viet Cong. William Childs Westmoreland was born in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, on March 26, 1914, to Eugenia Talley Childs and James Ripley Westmoreland. His upper middle-class family was involved in the local banking and textile industries. At the age of 15, William became an eagle scout in the 1 Boy Scouts troop, and received the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award and Silver Buffalo from the Boy Scouts of America as a young adult. After spending a year at the Citadel in 1932,[1] he was appointed to attend the United States Military Academy on the appointment of Senator James F. Byrnes, a family friend. His motive for entering West Point was to see the world. He was a member of a distinguished West Point class that Creighton Abrams and Benjamin O. Davis Jr. Westmoreland graduated as the first captain — the highest cadet rank — and received the Pershing Sword, which is presented to cadets with the highest level of military proficiency. [3] [4] Westmoreland was also superintendent of Protestant Sunday school teachers. Military career After graduating from West Point in 1936, Westmoreland became an artillery officer and served in several missions with the 18th Field Artillery at Fort Sill. In 1939 he was promoted to first lieutenant, after which he was battery commander and battalion staff officer with the 8th Field Artillery at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. World War II During World War II, Westmoreland was fighting with the 34th Field Artillery Battalion, 9th Infantry Division, Tunisia, Sicily, France and Germany; he commanded the 34th Battalion in Tunisia and Sicily. He attained the temporary rank of colonel in wartime, and on 13 October 1944 he was appointed Chief of Staff of the 9th Infantry Division. After the war, Westmoreland completed his airborne training at the infantry school in 1946. He then commanded the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division. From 1947 to 1950, he was Chief of Staff of the 82nd Airborne Division. He was an instructor at the Army Command and General Staff College from 1950 to 1951. He then completed The Army War College as a student in 1951, and remained as an instructor from 1951 to 1952. The Westmoreland Korean War was promoted to brigadier general in November 1952 at the age of 38, making him one of the youngest generals in the U.S. Army in the post-World War II era. He commanded the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in operations in Korea from 1952 to 1953. From 1953 to 1955, Westmoreland was Deputy Chief of Staff for The Control of the Army Staff. In 1954, he completed a three-month management program at Harvard Business School. As Stanley Karnow noted, Westy was an executive of the company in uniform. After the war, Westmoreland ed as U.S. Army Secretary of Staff from 1955 to 1958. He then commanded the 101st Airborne Division from 1958 to 1960. He was superintendent of the United States Military Academy from 1960 to 1963. In 1962, Westmoreland was admitted as an honorary member of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati. He was promoted to lieutenant general in July 1963 and was commander general of the 18th Airborne Corps from 1963 to 1964. Background and overview of the Vietnam War The war philosopher Karl von Clausewitz pointed out nearly a century and a half earlier that because the war is controlled by his political, the value of this object must determine the sacrifices to be made for him both in magnitude and also in the long term. He went on to say that once the expenditure of effort exceeds the of the political object, the object must be waived.— Harry G. Summers General William Westmoreland and President Lyndon B. Johnson at cam Ranh Air Base, December 23, 1967. The French attempt to re-colonize Vietnam after World War II resulted in a decisive French defeat at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. [11] [12] The Geneva Conference (April 26-July 20, 1954) discussed the possibility of restoring peace in Indochina, and temporarily separated Vietnam into two zones, a northern area to be ruled by the Vit Minh, and a southern area to be ruled by the State of Vietnam, then led by the former emperor B.O. A final declaration of the Conference, issued by the British President of the Conference, called for a general election to be held by July 1956 to create a unified Vietnamese state. Although presented as a consensual view, this document was not accepted by delegates from the State of Vietnam or the United States. In addition, China, the Soviet Union and other communist nations recognized the North while the United States and other non-communist states recognized the South as the legitimate government. By the time Westmoreland became army commander in South Vietnam, the option of a Korea-type colony with a large demilitarized zone separating north and south, favored by military and diplomatic figures, had been rejected by the US government, whose objectives were to achieve a decisive victory, and not to use much greater resources. The infiltration of regular forces from North Vietnam to the South could not be dealt with by aggressive action against the northern state because China's intervention was something that the U.S. government was concerned about avoiding, but President Lyndon B. Johnson had given commitments to support South Vietnam against communist North Vietnam. [13] [14] [15] General Westmoreland with Lyndon B. Johnson decorating a soldier in Vietnam, October 1966. The Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, General Harold Keith Johnson, and later historians such as Harry G. Summers, Jr. came to view American goals as mutually incoherent, because defeating the Communists would require declaring a national emergency and fully mobilizing U.S. resources. President Johnson criticized Westmoreland's defused corporate style as too sensitive to what officials wanted to hear. Nevertheless, Westmoreland operated under long-standing protocols of the army's subordination to civilian decision-makers. The most important constraint was to remain on the strategic defensive for fear of Chinese intervention, but at the same time the Lyndon B. Johnson had made it clear that there was a higher commitment to defending Vietnam. [16] [17] Much of the defence thinking has been by academics turned government advisers who have focused on nuclear weapons, seen as doing obsolete war. The fashion of counter-insurgency thinking has also denigrated the role of conventional warfare. Despite the inconclusive outcome of the Korean War, the Americans expected their wars to end with the unconditional surrender of the enemy. The Gulf of Tonkin incident of August 2, 1964 led to a dramatic increase in direct U.S. participation in the war, with nearly 200,000 troops deployed by the end of the year. The strategy, organization and structure of Viet Cong and PAVN faced a double threat. Regular units of the North Vietnamese army infiltrating across the remote border were apparently concentrating on launching an offensive, and Westmoreland considered that it was the danger that needed to be addressed immediately. There was also guerrilla subversion rooted in coastal areas heavily populated by the Viet Cong. In keeping with Robert McNamara's enthusiasm for statistics, Westmoreland focused on the number of bodies and cited the Battle of Ia Drang as evidence that the Communists were losing. However, the government wanted to win at low cost, and policymakers received McNamara's interpretation of huge U.S. losses in perspective, prompting a reassessment of what could be achieved. Moreover, the battle of Ia Drang was unusual in that American troops brought great enemy training to the battle. After speaking to junior officers, General Westmoreland became skeptical of localized concentrated searches and the destruction of short-lived bases, because Communist forces controlled whether there were military engagements, giving the possibility of simply avoiding the battle with American forces if the situation warranted it. The alternative of sustained pacification operations across the country, which would require massive use of the U.S. workforce, was never available to Westmoreland because it was considered politically unacceptable. [16] [17] [18] In public at least, he continued to be optimistic about the progress made throughout his time in Vietnam, although supporting journalist James Reston thought Westmoreland's characterization of the conflict as the war of attrition presented its generality in misleading light. [19] Critics of Westmoreland say that his successor, General Creighton Abrams, deliberately changed his accent from what Westmoreland dubbed attrition. Revisionists point out that Abrams' first major operation was a tactical success that disrupted the North Vietnamese build-up, but resulted in the Battle of Hamburger Hill, a political disaster that effectively reduced Abrams to continue such operations. [16] [17] [18] Commander general Westmoreland in South Vietnam with Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House, November 1967.Westmoreland was sent to Vietnam in 1963. In January 1964, he became deputy commander of the Vietnam Military Assistance Command (MACV), eventually succeeding Paul D. Harkins as commander in Viet. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara McNamara President Lyndon B. Johnson said in April that Westmoreland was the best we have, without a doubt. As head of THE MACV, he was known for his high-profile and positive assessments of the U.S. military prospects in Vietnam. However, over time, the strengthening of communist combat forces in the South led to regular demands for an increase in the strength of American troops, from 16,000 when it reached its peak of 535,000 in 1968 when he was promoted to Chief of Staff of the Army, General Westmoreland, President Lyndon B. Johnson, The President of South Vietnam, Nguyễn Đun Thiệu, and the Prime Minister of South Vietnam, Nguyễn Cao Kỳ (far right) in October 1966.On April 28, 1967, Westmoreland addressed a joint session of the Congress. N assessing the enemy's strategy, he says, it is obvious to me that he believes that our Achilles heel is our determination. ... Your continued support is essential to the success of our mission. ... Supported at home by determination, trust, patience, determination and continued support, we will prevail in Vietnam over the Communist aggressor! Westmoreland said that under his leadership, U.S. forces have won every battle. The turning point of the war was the 1968 Tet offensive, in which communist forces attacked towns and cities in South Vietnam. At the time, Westmoreland was focused on the Battle of Khe Sanh and saw the Tet offensive as a diversionary action. It is not clear whether Khe Sanh was supposed to be a distraction for the tet offensive or vice versa; [22] sometimes this is called the enigma of Khe Sanh. In any event, American and South Vietnamese troops managed to repel attacks during the Tet offensive, and communist forces took heavy losses, but the ferocity of the assault shook public confidence in Westmoreland's previous assurances about the state of war. Political debate and public opinion led the Johnson administration to limit further increases in the number of American troops in Vietnam. Nine months later, when reports of the My Lai massacre began to break, Westmoreland resisted pressure from the Nixon administration for a cover-up and pressed for a full and impartial investigation by Lieutenant-General William R. Peers. However, a few days after the tragedy, he had praised the same unit involved in exceptional war because the American infantrymen had killed 28 communists [sic] in a bloody one-day battle. After 1969, Westmoreland also worked to investigate the massacre of Phong Nhì and Phong Nhìt one year after the event. Press conference [23] The White House in April 1968 was convinced that the Vietnamese Communists could be destroyed by fighting a war of attrition that would theoretically render the Vietnam People's Army incapable of fighting. Its war strategy has been marked by the intensive use of artillery and air power and by repeated attempts communists in the great battles, and thus exploit the vastly superior firepower and technology of the United States. Westmoreland's response to the Americans who criticized the high rate of casualties of Vietnamese civilians was: It deprives the enemy of the population, isn't it? However, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and the South Vietnam National Liberation Front (NLF) were able to dictate the pace of wear and tear to their own objectives: by continuing to wage a guerrilla war and avoiding battles of great unity, they denied the Americans the chance to fight the kind of war they were best at, and they ensured that the attrition diminished the American public's support for the war more quickly than they did. Westmoreland repeatedly rebuffed or suppressed attempts by John Paul Vann and Lew Walt to move to a pacification strategy. Westmoreland did not appreciate the american public's patience for his schedule, and struggled to persuade President Johnson to approve the expansion of the war in Cambodia and Laos to ban the Ho Chi Minh trail. He was unable to use the absolutist position that we cannot win if we do not expand the war. Instead, he focused on the positive indicators, which eventually turned out of value when the Tet offensive occurred, since all his positive indicators statements did not portend the possibility of such a last-minute dramatic event. Tet died all of Westmoreland's statements about positive indicators in the minds of the American public. Although the Communists were severely impoverished by the fierce fighting in Khe Sanh when their conventional assaults were defeated by American firepower, as well as tens of thousands of deaths in the Tet offensive, American political opinion and the panic generated by the communist surprise undermined U.S. support for the war, even though the events of early 1968 put the United States and South Vietnam in a much more military position. [26] [citation needed] At one point in 1968, Westmoreland considered the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam in an emergency plan called Fracture Jaw, which was abandoned when it became known to the White House. [27] Chief of the Army Staff General William Westmoreland with House Speaker Carl Albert and Deputy Chief of the Air Staff of the United States Air Force, General John C. Meyer at Flag Day ceremonies on June 14, 1971. Chief of the Army Staff William Wei Moran visited Taiwan on July 16, 1970, upon his arrival at Songshan Air Base, he was greeted by Yu Haozhong, Commander-in-Chief of the ROC Army, and shook hands with several Taiwanese military officers. General Wei Moran visits the taichung Tank Repair Base, General Wei Moran, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, travelled to Taichung to visit the special tank repair base on July 18, 1970, accompanied by officers and soldiers of the Republic of China Army. China. United States Army Forces Taiwan. In June 1968, Westmoreland was replaced by General Creighton Abrams, the decision being announced shortly after the Tet offensive. Although the decision was taken in late 1967, it was widely seen in the media as a punishment for being caught off guard by the communist onslaught. He was mentioned in a Time magazine article as a potential candidate for the 1968 Republican presidential nomination. Westmoreland was Chief of Staff of the United States Army from 1968 to 1972. In 1970, as Chief of Staff, in response to the Massacre of My Lai by the U.S. Army Forces (and the subsequent cover-up by the Army Chain of Command), he commissioned an army investigation that compiled a comprehensive and seminal study of military leadership during the Vietnam War demonstrating a serious erosion of adherence to the Army Officer Code, Honor, Country. The report, Study on Military Professionalism,[29] had a profound influence on military policy, beginning with Westmoreland's decision to end the policy that officers serving in Vietnam would be transformed into a different position after only six months. However, to mitigate the impact of this damaging report, Westmoreland ordered that the document be kept on close hold throughout the military for a period of two years and not disseminated to War College participants. The report was not publicly known until after Westmoreland's retirement in 1972. Many military historians have pointed out that Westmoreland became Chief of Staff at the worst time in history with respect to the military. Guiding the army as it moved to a fully voluntary force, he issued numerous guidelines to try to make the life of the Army better and more enjoyable for the youth of the United States, for example, allowing soldiers to wear favorites and drink beer in the mess. However, many hard-liners have scorned these supporters as too liberal. [citation needed] Westmoreland later ran unsuccessfully for governor of South Carolina as a Republican in the 1974 election. He published his autobiography the following year. Westmoreland was then part of a task force to improve educational standards in the state of South Carolina. In 1986, Westmoreland served as Grand Marshal of the Chicago Vietnam Veterans Parade. The parade, which involved 200,000 Vietnam veterans and more than half a million spectators, did much to bridge the gap between Vietnam's veterans and the American public. [31] Westmoreland versus CBS: The Uncounted Enemy Wallace interviewed Westmoreland for THE Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception on CBS. The documentary, presented on January 23, 1982 and prepared largely by CBS producer George Crile III, alleged that Westmoreland and others had deliberately underestimated the strength of Viet Cong troops in 1967 in order to maintain the morale of American troops and domestic support for the war. Westmoreland has taken legal action Cbs. In Westmoreland v. CBS, Westmoreland sued Wallace and CBS for defamation, and a lengthy legal process began. A few days before the trial was put before the jury, Westmoreland suddenly reached an agreement with CBS, and they issued a joint statement of agreement. Some argue that Leval J's instructions to the jury regarding what constituted real malice to prove defamation convinced Westmoreland's lawyers that he was certain to lose. [33] [34] Others point out that the settlement occurred after two of Westmoreland's former intelligence officers, Major-General Joseph McChristian and Colonel Gains Hawkins, testified to the accuracy of the program's substantive allegations that Westmoreland had ordered changes in intelligence reports on Viet Cong troop forces for political reasons. Disagreements persist over the appropriateness of some of the methods of CBS editors. [35] McChristian's statement indicates that his organization developed improved information on the number of irregular Viet Cong fighters shortly before he left Vietnam on a regular rotation. The numbers trouble Westmoreland, who fears the press won't understand them. He did not order that they be amended, but he did not include the information in the reports to Washington, which he felt was not appropriate to report. From the subsequent analysis of the information of all parties, it seems clear that Westmoreland could not support a defamation suit because CBS' main allegation was that it had led intelligence officers to suppress facts. Westmoreland's anger was caused by the show's involvement that his intention was fraudulent and that he ordered others to lie. During the acrimonious trial, Mike Wallace was hospitalized for depression, and despite the legal dispute between the two, Westmoreland and his wife sent him flowers. Wallace's memoirs were generally sympathetic to Westmoreland, although he made it clear that he did not agree with him on the issues surrounding the Vietnam War and the Nixon administration's policies in Southeast Asia. Views on the Vietnam War Herbert Elmer Abrams portrait of General Westmoreland In a 1998 interview for George magazine, Westmoreland criticized the battlefield prowess of his direct opponent, the North Vietnamese general V. Nguyễn Giép. Sure, he [Giap] was a formidable adversary, Westmoreland told correspondent W. Thomas Smith Jr. erse I also say that Giap was trained in the small unit, guerrilla tactics, but he persisted in leading war of great unity with terrible losses to his own men. By his own admission, in early 1969, I think he had lost, what, half a million soldiers? He reported it. Now, such contempt for human life can make a formidable adversary, but it does not make a military genius. An American commander losing men like that would have lasted little more than a few weeks. In the 1974 film Hearts and Minds, 1974, opined that The Oriental does not put the same high price on life as does a Westerner. Life is plentiful, life is cheap in the East. And as the philosophy of the East expresses: life is not important. Westmoreland's view was strongly criticized by Nick Turse, the author of Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam. Turse said many of the Vietnamese killed were in fact innocent civilians, and the Vietnamese casualties were not only caused by military crossfire, but were a direct result of U.S. policy and tactics, such as the kill everything else policy that allowed U.S. soldiers to shoot civilians for suspicious behavior. He concluded that after speaking to the survivors of the massacres perpetrated by American forces in Phi Phu, Trieu Ai, My Luoc and so many other hamlets, I can say with certainty that Westmoreland's assessment was wrong. He also accused Westmoreland of concealing evidence of atrocities from the American public when he was chief of staff of the army. [37] In more than a decade of analysis of long-filed military criminal investigation files, court-martial transcripts, congressional studies, contemporary journalism and the testimony of American soldiers and Vietnamese civilians, I found that General William C. Westmoreland, his subordinates, superiors and successors also engaged in a profligate disregard for human life.— Nick Turse[37] Historian Derek Frisby also criticized Westmoreland's views in an interview with Deutsche Welle: General William Westmoreland, who commanded American military operations during the Vietnam War, believed without hesitation that Giap was a butcher for having sacrificed his soldiers relentlessly in instagable battles. Yet this assessment in itself is essential to understanding the West's failure to defeat it. Giap understood that prolonged war would cost many lives, but this did not always translate into victory or loss of war. In the final analysis, Giap won the war despite losing many battles, and as long as the army survived to fight another day, the idea of Vietnam lived in the hearts of the people who would support it, and that is the essence of the revolutionary war. — Derek Frisby[38] For the rest of his life, Westmoreland argued that the United States did not lose the war in Vietnam; on the contrary, he stated that the country has not fulfilled its commitment to South Vietnam. Under Vietnam, the United States held the line for 10 years and prevented the dominoes from falling. Westmoreland's personal life met his future wife for the first time. (Kitsy) Stevens Van Deusen, who was stationed at Fort Sill; she was nine years old at the time and was the daughter of the Director General, Colonel Edwin R. Van Deusen. Westmoreland met her again in North Carolina when she was nineteen and a student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The couple may 1947 and had three children: a daughter, Katherine Stevens; one son, James Ripley II, and another daughter, Margaret Childs. [39] [40] Just hours after Westmoreland was sworn in as Army Chief of Staff on July 7, 1968, his brother-in-law, Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Van Deusen (commander of the 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment), was killed when his helicopter was shot down in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam. Westmoreland died on July 18, 2005, at the age of 91, at the Bishop Gadsden retirement home in Charleston, South Carolina. He had suffered from Alzheimer's disease during the last years of his life. He was buried on July 23, 2005 at West Point Cemetery, United States Military Academy. General William C. Westmoreland Bridge in Charleston, South Carolina, was named in his honor. In 1996, the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution awarded the General William C. Westmoreland Award. The award is presented annually in recognition of an excellent SAR veteran volunteer. [45] Westmoreland was inducted into the Lincoln Academy of Illinois and was awarded the Order of Lincoln (the state's highest honor) by the governor of Illinois in 1970 in the government region. [46] Major Military Assignment Commander, 34th Field Artillery Battalion, 9th Infantry Division; 1943-1944 Chief of Staff of the 9th Infantry Division; October 13, 1944 to 1946 Commander, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division; 1946 to 1947 Chief of Staff, 82d Airborne Division; 1947-1950 Instructor, Army Command and General Staff College; 1950-1951 Student, Army War College; 1951 Instructor, Army War College; 1951 to November 1952 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team; From November 1952 to 1953, Deputy Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, for Manpower; 1953 to 1955 Secretary of Staff; 1955 to 1958 Major General, 101st Airborne Division; 1958 to 1960 Superintendent, United States Military Academy; July 1, 1960 to June 27, 1963 Major General, 18th Airborne Corps; July 1963 to December 1963 Deputy Commander, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam; From January 1964 to June 1964 Commander, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam; June 1964 to June 1968 Chief of Staff, United States Army; July 3, 1968 to June 30, 1972 Westmoreland Military Awards include: [47] Army Base Aviator Badge [47] Army Base Aviator Badge Insignia Insignia Insignia Identification Badge 16 Overseas Service Bars Army Distinguished Service Medal with three bronze oak leaf clusters[48] of Legion with two Oak Leaf Clusters Bronze Star Air Medal with nine Oak Leaf Clusters Presidential Unit Citation American Defense Service Medal with one bronze service star American Campaign Medal European-African-Middle Campaign Eastern Medal with seven-star World War II service Victory Occupation Army Medal with National Defense Service Medal Germany with Korean Oak Leaf Service Medal with two bronze stars of 3/16 Vietnam Service Medal with six 3/16 bronze stars Foreign Decorations and Knight Great Cross Awards of the Order of the Holy Trinity (post-nominal: GCHT) (Ethiopia)[49] Legion of Honour, Knight (France) War Cross with Bronze Palm (France) Order of National Security , Tong-II Medal with Gold Star (Republic of Korea) Order of National Security Merit, Gukseon Medal (Republic of Korea) National Order of Vietnam, Grand Cross Knight (South Vietnam) Republic of Vietnam Distinguished Order of Service, First Class (Army) Republic of Vietnam Distinguished Order of Service, First Class , First Class (Marine) Republic of Vietnam Galaxy Cross with Palm Republic of Vietnam Honor Force, Medal of Civil Actions of the Republic of Vietnam First Class, First Class Republic of Vietnam Chung My Medal, Order of first class of Sikatuna, rank of Lakan (Commander) (Philippines) Most exalted Order of the White Elephant, Knight Grand Cross (First Class) Grand Officer (Brazil) Condecoracion al Mérito Sun Militar Precer de la Libertad General de Division José Miguel Lanza, Grand Officer (Bolivia) Order of the Rise, Unknown Class (Japan) Order of the Cloud and Banner, Grand Cordon (Republic of China) Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation Vietnam Galaxy Cross Unit Citation Vietnam Civil Actions Unit , USMA's highest military effectiveness as a cadet at West Point, 1936. Grade Dates United States Military Academy Class of 1936 Second Lieutenant (Regular Army) First Lieutenant (Regular Army) Major (Army of the United States) Colonel (Army of the United States) O-1 O-2 O-4 O-5 O-6 June 12 1936 June 12 12 939 February 1, 1942 (temporary) September 25, 1942 (temporary) July 28, 1944 (temporary) Captain (Regular Army) Major (Regular Army) Brigadier General (United States Army) Lieutenant-Colonel (Regular Army) Major General (Army) of the United States O-3 O-4 O-4 7 O-5 O-8 12 June 1946 15 July 1948 7 November 1952 (temporary) 7 July 1953 (temporary) Colonel (Regular Army) Brigadier General (Regular Army) Major General (Regular Army) Lieutenant General (Army) United States General (United States Army) O-6 O-7 O-8 O-9 O-10 June 1961 14 July 1962 20 May 1963 31 July 1963 (temporary) 1 August 1964 (temporary) Retired from active service in July 1972. [51] William Westmoreland. Biography.com. Archived from the original on 2017-10-08. Preview 2017-10-07. 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