

Source says general wanted village leveled

SAIGON — U.S. Army Gen. William C. Westmoreland once ordered the destruction of a South Vietnamese village whose residents were aiding the Viet Cong but was subsequently talked out of the plan by one of his field commanders, high-ranking U.S. military source said.

The source said Westmoreland, then commander of all U.S. forces in Vietnam and now Army Chief of Staff in

Washington, ordered the U.S. 9th Infantry Division to "level" the village complex in the Mekong Delta area in 1968 after the Communist Tet offensive.

Westmoreland dropped the plan after the divisions, commander, Maj. Gen. Julian Ewell, persuaded him to wait a few weeks to see if less destructive tactics could remove the threat posed by the village's civilian residents, the source said.

According to U.S. officials, the village complex was later brought under government control and is now considered a pacified area.

In Washington, a Defense Department spokesman declined comment Sunday on the report. Westmoreland was not available for comment himself.

Ewell has since been promoted to lieutenant general and is now military adviser to the U.S. negotiating team at the Vietnam peace talks in Paris.

The source said Westmoreland issued the order in the weeks following Tet of 1968 when heavy Communist attacks had virtually destroyed the pacification program and wiped out government control of rural areas.

Intelligence information indicated that the Viet Cong was using civilians from the village hamlets to plant vehicle mines in and along the sides of the roads.

Ewell received permission to try a plan using his troops in night ambushes along the highway, the source said.

The source said that support for the Viet Cong began to waver in the area after about two weeks of the ambush tactics, and the threat was reduced to a point where it was no longer necessary to destroy the village.

N.C. fires contained

The North Carolina Forest Service Sunday estimated more than 30,000 acres of woodlands had been destroyed by fires during the weekend, but reported all of them contained.

The service continued its appeal for extreme caution by all persons in the state, however, saying that increasing winds Sunday had further increased the hazard.

A forest service spokesman in Raleigh said a total of 78 new fires had been reported Saturday, but that most of these had not caused any major damage. "Mopping-up operations" were

continuing Sunday as four large fires which had started Friday continued to burn.

Strong winds fanned a total of 336 fires Friday, and the Forest Service termed Saturday's figure of 78 fires as "very few."

The National Weather Service Forecast Office at the Raleigh-Durham Airport Sunday predicted dry conditions would last at least through Tuesday. Most sections of the state reported winds of at least 15 miles per hour, with some sections gusting up to 35 m.p.h. Sunday afternoon.

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FBI hunts oil refinery saboteurs

LINDEN, N.J. — The FBI sought saboteurs, possibly leftist revolutionaries, Sunday in the wake of a fiery explosion that caused millions of dollars worth of damage at the Humble Oil Refinery and touched off looting in two cities.

The 11:01 p.m. EST Saturday blast injured 36 of the 200 employees on duty at the giant refinery, sent a fireball 1,000 feet into the air, and rocked the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area for a radius of 40 miles. Looting of stores ensued in Linden and nearby Elizabeth, resulting in the arrest of about 20.

Linden police said they received a

phone call at 9:21 p.m. Saturday from an anonymous male who said: "Now listen good. I'm going to tell you once. Get it right the first time. Esso was lucky last week. This time it's going to burn, baby, burn. That's it." Humble Oil is a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey ESSO.

Radio cars were dispatched to the huge bayway refinery opposite Staten Island, and local police and Humble security personnel searched in vain for bombs. Some security men were still searching when the blast knocked them off their feet.

Draft law violations increasing

WASHINGTON — Draft law violations are running higher than ever despite a Supreme Court ruling that outlawed reclassification and prompt induction of antiwar protesters interfering with Selective Service operations, a Justice Department prosecutor reported Sunday.

Five years ago, the government prosecuted between 325 and 350 cases a year of refusal to obey induction orders.

"Right now they are running at a rate of 325 or 350 a month or more," said Judson W. Bowles, a criminal division lawyer specializing in Selective Service violations.

"If they are properly ordered for induction and they don't go, we prosecute," he said.

Bowles had no easy explanation for the steady increase, except for a link to draft calls. "The higher the draft calls, the more boys refuse," he said.

Last Jan. 19, the Supreme Court held in two cases that local draft boards overstepped their authority when they declared defendants delinquent because of antiwar activities and put them on the priority list for induction.

The penalties for draft evasion are stiff. The maximum punishment on conviction, not only of refusing induction but of aiding, abetting or counseling, is five year in prison and a \$10,000 fine.



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