

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 3, Lecture 67

Alma 48–49

Clausewitz's Rules of War

We ask why dwell on the savagery of ancient wars, of all things, in this enlightened age? The answer is because we haven't changed one bit. It's exactly as it was before. I came out by the same door wherein I went. This is one of the great lessons of the Book of Mormon—that we don't improve, we don't get any better at all. Today most men are as dense as they have ever been, and no matter how far back you go in time, you'll find people just as enlightened as any alive today. The picture never changes; the balance never changes. That's a sweeping statement, but it's true. It's especially illustrated here in the case of war. We are talking about this, and we're using Clausewitz whose work was published in 1833. He died in 1831, but he was in all the Napoleonic wars. He was important. During the last decade of his life, he was the head of the *Kriegsschule*, the great Prussian war school in Berlin that built up the tremendous Prussian war machine. He wrote this classic work which was in three volumes when it came out, *On War*, and he talks about it. It's as if Joseph Smith had studied it very carefully, but, as I said, 1833 was too late for him to get hold of it. So we can't accuse him of that. This happens again and again, that Joseph is saved by the bell. You might say, "Well, he got it from this, he got it from that." Mrs. Brodie insists that he got some things from the *View of the Hebrews* [Brother Nibley said Indians], although it was written two years after the Book of Mormon came out. Joseph Smith stole it from that. The resemblances are so close that we can't deny it, even though it came out after the Book of Mormon.

Well, anyway, let's go back to our friend Clausewitz now and we're quoting him, just as if he were quoting from our present chapter, Alma 48. "In the lower ranks the spirit of self-sacrifice is more required than in others." You regulate the policy. The general is at a distance, and we expect others to sacrifice. Alma 49:10–11 Amalickiah did not come down out of the land of Nephi at the head of his army; "he did not care for the blood of his people." He managed things back there like the modern major general. Such an attitude so shocks Moroni. When he writes to Pahoran [Alma 60:7], "Can you think to sit upon your thrones in a state of thoughtless stupor, while your enemies are spreading the work of death around you?" Yes, we can think of it; that's the way we do things. We don't care for the lives of those on the front—that's true. After all, only 8 percent of the armed forces saw action in World War II, but the other 92 percent were necessary. All they were was a backup for the whole thing. The whole purpose of the army is that cutting edge—search and destroy. Everything else is a backup for that, so they're all in it together. But they don't consider the ones at the front.

One of the most striking things happened at about 2:00 o'clock in the morning. I had a little tent over a foxhole on a Dutch canal. I was marking a map in it. There was a terrific racket on the canal down the way. All these British guns were just blasting away. I wondered what that was—somebody trying to cross the canal, obviously. The so-called enemy were on the other side. In a few minutes into our tent burst some kid dressed like a Dutch worker, all soaking wet. He had just swum the canal with all those guns blazing at him, and he got across. He flopped down on the straw in the tent. For a minute or two all

he could do was say, "I know there's a God. I know there's a God. I know there's a God." Yes, we know there's a God. Well, he'd just swum the canal. He had been in the medics and had been captured and been on the other side. The Germans had shifted them around with groups—they had the upper hand all around. He pretended to be deaf and dumb; he'd point to his mouth wherever he went. But he observed very carefully wherever he went. They had marched them [the prisoners] all over the place. He got away and swam the canal. He came back loaded with this information. So I trotted right over to Major Danahay and said, "Now look, this kid knows everything." And so they immediately got him out. I said, "This is going to get you a promotion. You'll get a three-week furlough for this. They'll really reward you for this." So he went with his information. They took him clear back to Brussels. I think a lot of intelligence officers got promoted on the strength of his discoveries.

I saw him about four or five months later in Namur. I said "Did you ever get your three weeks' pass?" He said, "I didn't get one pass at all. I had to go right back the next day." See, they didn't care about him. He provided them with all this information, which was invaluable, and got nothing for it. Well, why should he? He had to go back again. This goes on again and again. This is notorious in armies. As [Clausewitz] says, "In the lower ranks, the spirit of self-sacrifice is more required." And with Amalickiah it was the same thing.

Then he goes on with the third rule, good old Clausewitz: "We can never introduce a modifying principle into the philosophy of war without committing an absurdity." War is war, you see. The point is, war is an act of force. There is no limit to the application of force. To talk about civilized warfare and rules of warfare is ridiculous. If you're civilized, you don't start swinging, scratching, biting, and gouging eyes and all that sort of thing. [In war] you do everything you can to hurt the other person—that's the idea. You're no longer discussing things. You're no longer civilized at all, instead of continuing the discussion. And you try to kill the other person. There's no limit to that. So he says, to introduce a modifying principle is an absurdity. You can't modify it. There's no limit to the application of force once that's the policy.

Alma puts it very well when he says they had exhausted all resources and he says, "Whatever evil we cannot resist with our words, then let us resist them with our swords." If words won't cut it, then swords will cut it. Then when you start swinging swords, you're not particular. You're not careful not to hurt anybody. You're all out. But he says hold out with the words as long as you can. "Whatever evil we cannot resist with our words, then let us resist them with our swords." There are no more rules, and the Lord says the frequent expression, "Cursed shall be the land unto destruction." (Alma 45:16.) It goes on and doesn't stop until that.

So brushfire wars are out of the question. At the end of World War II, the generals were very discouraged. There was a gloom. Right at the end I was transferred to the 6th Army Group under General Devers, in Heidelberg. That was the big army group headquarters. I had to make out the daily intelligence reports there. That was a busy job. You could cut the gloom with a knife. The war was winding down too fast. It meant the end of quick promotions. It meant the slowing down of careers. They thought some of them would have to be out of the army altogether and go back to selling washing machines. They were colonels, etc. And it had been a lark for most of them. Then they discovered the concept of brushfire wars. It was General Taylor, more than anyone else, back at division, when he burst in one day in high glee. He had been over to Washington. He was back, and he was

so excited he could hardly contain himself because they had discovered the concept of brushfire wars. And he was more responsible for taking up the wars in Korea and Vietnam than anyone else, because he was chief of staff at the time of Korea. But at this time he was only a major general, head of the division.

[They felt] we could always have these little wars where we can go in and mop up and get our promotions. We can get our practice. We can keep in drill. We can always keep pressure on Congress for more money because these are going on. It's ideal. We could have these little wars going on, no great risk. We couldn't lose very much. It's good practice to send out officers to get practice, etc. But it doesn't work that way, and Clausewitz says why it doesn't work that way. This is a quotation and it's a very good one. He says, "War and peace are ideas which fundamentally can have no gradations." You can't say there's a little war and a bigger war and a bigger war. Once it starts, it's all out. And he goes on, "We must never lose sight of the absolute form of war." War is an absolute. See, you don't have it in degrees. You can't have a little one, just as you can't slightly murder a person, or a person can't be slightly pregnant or something like that. It doesn't go that way. You go all the way in these things. He says, "Rather the image of absolute war must constantly hover in the background." It's going to be absolute. And this is the Book of Mormon. After one of their great victories, in fact their greatest victory, Alma announced to the people [Alma 45:10-11], "I perceive that this very people, the Nephites . . . shall become extinct." That's putting it pretty strong. This sort of thing goes all the way.

So good old Clausewitz continues, "In pursuing the aim of war, there is only one means, combat." As I said, it's search and destroy; 92 percent are all backing it up. The whole effort is what happens on the front, the zone of contact there. "And all effects that are manifested in war have their origin in combat." Well, that's what it is, naturally. Moroni in combat returned the sword to Zerahemnah, who didn't want to discuss it. Zerahemnah had surrendered but he was still defiant, so Moroni said, if you're not going to talk, here's your sword back; let's continue to fight. That's the only solution unless you choose to make the covenant. He invited him to take it back and continue, but Zerahemnah was doing it only as a trick, as we shall presently see. Unless you choose to make a covenant of peace, you just have to go on fighting. Military combat is the only effective way, the pursuance of only one means. "All effects," says good old Clausewitz, "manifested in war have their origin in combat." As Moroni handed Zerahemnah his sword back again in Alma 44:10-11, he said, "Behold, we will end the conflict." If you don't want to discuss it, we'll end it, so we will fight it out. He invites him to do that.

Quoting Clausewitz, "The only reason for suspension of military action is to wait for a more favorable moment to attack." Things aren't going your way, so you want to stop fighting for a while and recoup your gains. When Zerahemnah put up his sword, he was merely waiting for a favorable time to strike back. He told Moroni quite frankly to hand him back his sword, and then he added, "We will not suffer ourselves to take an oath unto you, which we know that we shall break." Zerahemnah was at least that honest. He said, I'm not going to take an oath because you know I'll break it and I know I'll break it. And then he got his sword back. As soon as he got it back, he made a surprise lunge for [Moroni] before anybody was expecting it. He suspended action for a more favorable moment for attack. He held it up and they were discussing things. He took his sword back and wheeeft. He took a pass at Moroni, and instantly Moroni's bodyguard took a swab at him and cut off the top of his skull. And he went off and lived the rest of his life missing his roof. We don't hear of him again. He may not have lived very long, I don't know. He

could have had a brass plate or something put in there. They did in those days. That happens in Alma 44:12. So the lull in the battle is the time to be scared.

There was a fatal mistake when they landed at Anzio. They were going to do this in January 1944. They were going to leapfrog, so they landed at Anzio under General Scott, the 32nd Texas Division. They didn't find any opposition. There were just two German battalions there. Germany never expected that. They were caught completely by surprise, and it was marvelous. But what did Scott do? The most foolish thing in the world. He said, well, it's calm now. I'm going to wait here for a few weeks, build up my forces until I have real strength and then lunge inland. That's what they were going to do. Well, the minute Hitler heard about that, he sent everything he had down to Anzio. They built up and just pushed them back into the sea again, nearly wiped them out completely, because he waited and waited. He said, well, more fatal action. When things are quiet, that's the time to be scared. And that was the fatal mistake.

And again from Clausewitz: "The destruction of the enemy's armed forces is the foundation stone of all actions in war, the ultimate support of all combinations." As I say, your 92 percent is your backup. The ultimate support of all combinations is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces. Well, that's what it comes down to. That's why military careers run in families. That's almost invariably the rule as they reach high command. And they have no illusions, either. The best sermons you'll ever hear against war and the cruelty and brutality of it come from generals. Taylor, after every operation, would deplore what had happened and would say it was a ghastly thing. Why do we have to be into this? But this thing is passed down in the family, so it gets to be quite a respectable, taken-for-granted sort of thing. It doesn't turn their stomachs anymore. It's just the way you live. For a civilian to come in cold out of something else and suddenly see people gouging eyes out and things like that, it's pretty horrifying. That's the Vietnam experience, because they were brought in so suddenly.

The theme is destruction, and the armed forces today extend to everybody. [France became] a nation in arms with Napoleon in 1850. That's why he said Napoleon is the real war master. He's the one who gave us war in its purity, he says. The gentlemen's wars were still fought in Napoleon's day, but now everybody gets wiped out. The words *destruction* and *destroy* appear 534 times in the Book of Mormon. Destruction is a theme, and nearly always it's in connection with the word *war*. But why with war? We're told that war and plagues and pestilence and famine all go together. But wars are the part you bring on yourself. You can't plead innocent victim, as you can with famine and plague—they just happen. You invite war. The army is always told that our mission is to search and destroy. So Clausewitz says, "The soldier is levied, clothed, armed, trained. He sleeps, eats, drinks, and marches for one purpose only, merely to fight at the right place and the right time." That's the only reason for his existence, just to fight at a particular time and place. He has the idea that's his only purpose anyway. So you can see why the higher brass don't care much. They live in considerable luxury, but the rest of them don't.

There's a famous poem about Frederick the Great at one of the worst battles. They were getting hit very hot and heavy. His guard of which he was so proud started falling back under a terrific hail of pressure. And Frederick rode up in front of them and said, "This is treason; you're running away." Whereupon one of them said, (they called him "little Fritz," an affectionate term) "Fritz, this is not treason. I've had enough today for fourteen cents." Fourteen pennies a day is what they got paid. He'd had his fourteen pennies worth, so he was running away. Of course it's an enormous difference [between the ranks]. I

don't know whether I should tell you this. Well, there are too many stories I shouldn't tell, but this is a good one. I won't tell it though.

Quoting Clausewitz again, "If we speak of destruction of the enemy's forces, we must expressly point out that nothing obliges us to confine this idea to physical forces." The whole thing is to break his will. If he's willing to surrender, then the war's over. That's all you want, to have him do what you want him to do. Your will dominates over his. In the Prussian *Kriegsschule* and the German *Generalstab* the whole theory is will. It's the German philosophy. The philosopher who took them to that more than anyone else was Treitscke (again, it's one of those things I'll think of in a second). But the Germans are always talking about will—the iron will, the will that dominates everything. Hitler was obsessed with that idea. It's the German will, *der deutsche Wille* that wins through in everything. The title of Schopenhauer's great work is *The World as Will and Representation*. The will is everything. He says the whole thing is to dominate the enemy's will, and once you've done that, you've won. So the psychological part is very necessary. We try to break the enemy down psychologically as well, but of course it was Clausewitz who introduced the doctrine of *Schrecklichkeit*. This is marvelous in the Book of Mormon. This comes out beautifully. Remember how the Lamanites would get themselves up and paint their faces red, wear lambskins around their loins, shave their heads, and make themselves as ferocious as possible? He introduced *Schrecklichkeit*, which means making yourself as terrible as possible. Hitler's saying used to be: Better a terrible ending than to live in a terror without ending. So he plunged into it. This was the excuse. But *Schrecklichkeit* is to be terrible. Make yourself as terrible as possible. Intimidate the enemy. Do everything you can. This became an important German technique, important in the blitzkrieg. When it breaks out you have to be absolutely overpowering, show yourself to be unmerciful, just wipe them out, etc. And look terrible. Make yourself look as impressive and terrible as possible. So you get all these bells jingling and drums and all this chanting together—the old Germanic tradition. That's a tradition to keep things alive. And it's profit, because it's for loot, and that's the push behind it in the modern world too. But they had that war spirit; they loved it. Some people just love that sort of thing. It is "fun." This is a thing that's terrible to admit, but it is exhilarating. Compared with other things, there's nothing like it. It's a terrible thing to say, but it's true. There must be another form of exhilaration. Of course, there is. Remember, "to be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life eternal." This is being carnal-minded at its peak. Everything is physical, raw, and violent.

But there's the mental side of it. This is an interesting phenomenon. I've never talked about war in this class before, but this one thing I have told: I had the privilege of entering certain villages where I had tracted. I took my bicycle out. President Tadge was very indulgent. All along the Rhine in those villages on the Rhine plain, I took my trusty bicycle to go out and tract in the villages all alone. It was hard. It was grim. The Calvinist villages were the toughest. The Catholics were next. The Lutherans were rather kind. But it was rough. It was a clash of minds, you see, because immediately these people were tremendously hostile. I went through the same village with a carbine, dashing from door to door, and it was so much easier. I would think time and again, this is so much easier than trying to confront these people eye to eye. Shooting at a distance was much nicer and much safer.

That reminds me of something that happened in Karlsruhe. We haven't gotten over this, you see. For a short time during a conference in Karlsruhe, I went and tracted along right by the big church where there's a main street. It parts there and leads right out to the

Odenwald forest. There was this butcher shop there. I went to the butcher shop, and I started giving my voice of warning. A gigantic Hessian woman had a fit. She ran to the back of the shop and came out with a huge cleaver. She said, "Don't you tell me we'll ever be destroyed," because I had told her on impulse what Brother Ballard told me when he set me apart for the mission. He said, "Tell these people that they will be destroyed by fire from heaven," of all the strange things to tell them. And I told her that. Well, year later I was driving by late at night. An officer—I think Van Patten—was with me. Officers couldn't drive jeeps, but I could. I had my own jeep, and that was great. I was driving down the same street in Karlsruhe, in the bright moonlight, and it was all in ruins. It had all just been wiped out by fire bombs from the English planes. They just wiped it out. Fire from heaven destroying it. Suddenly I ground to a halt and jammed on the brakes. He said, "What's wrong?" We were right in front of that shop. That was the butcher shop where the woman came out raving, waving the cleaver and yelling, "Don't you tell us we'll ever be destroyed by fire from heaven!" And all you could see was the framework of the door there. But it was the old butcher shop in complete ruin. It had been burnt out totally. So these things are fulfilled. We're not living a million miles away from the Book of Mormon. It's disturbing. Of course, our weapons are more efficient now. We wouldn't have left the doorframe standing today.

This *Schrecklichkeit* is a big thing. Making yourself an object of utter terror is beautifully described in the Book of Mormon on various occasions: Enos 1:20, Mosiah 10:8, Alma 3:4–5; and also the Gadiantons in their various trappings make themselves look very ferocious. They make themselves and their uniforms as hideous as possible, like the trappings of the barons of the Middle Ages, when they wanted to keep the peasants in their place. Like the Ku Klux Klan, they make themselves look hideous and mysterious. The German word for enemy is *Feind*, which is our word for *fiend*. And it's the same thing with our word *hostile*. *Hos* is the same as host and ghost. A *ghost* is an alien being from elsewhere. A *host* is someone who receives someone. And guest is the same word as ghost—these are all cognate. The guest comes in, and he is a stranger from abroad. And he's also hostile, because there's this alienation. So *Feind*, the German word for enemy, is the same word for fiend. It's someone of an alien spirit, someone out of your world. It's the satanic host. In the Middle Ages they'd get themselves up in these tremendous outfits and cover themselves completely with these enormous antlers or horns or wings—mostly antlers and horns. They would make themselves look absolutely hideous and were objects of terror when they'd ride through the land—to each other and everybody else. [They had] chivalric trappings because they were [members of] orders and mysteries. To wear that outfit you had to belong to a mystery, and that was your sign. The Teutonic order began with the temple—the Templars, the Hospitalers, the Knights of Rhodes, the Knights of Malta. Finally, up in the Baltic there's the Jomsburg. They were all secret organizations, and they were all exceedingly rich. They all plundered, and they did all this sort of thing. They made a mystery and a cult of war. This is the point. But this part of it is still there, because they're the only people that still wear special uniforms. They don't dress like anybody else. They set themselves apart from the rest of society, and they don't think like other people either. You don't expect them to. Those things you expect of them.

Well, these shows we put on are not very impressive. On July 4 to celebrate in 1944, they had over 5,000 planes fly over Normandy all in one bunch. They flew right over us. The peasants looked up for a minute or two and that was all. They weren't impressed. Those things aren't impressive at all. Special effects just won't cut it; that's all there is to it. The real thing is what counts, and that's to be spiritual minded. That's when you know what's real.

Well, anyway, as Tolstoy tells us, war is a crashing bore. All night long you pray for it to be day; all day long you pray for it to be night. And that's the whole thing. But you can use *Schrecklichkeit* to make soldiers an object of terror. We mentioned that. It didn't work. The Nephites went down on their knees and started praying, and the Lamanites thought—ha. It's our terrible appearance. It has absolutely paralyzed them—we look so terrible. But it wasn't that. They said, you must be kidding; we were just praying. This is the positive action, not defensive. The armies of Giddianhi, with red on their foreheads, lambskins on their loins and all that nonsense thought they were praying because their fierce appearance paralyzed the Nephites, but it was only because they were supplicating the Lord for his protection. That's in 3 Nephi 4:7–10. We'll get to that yet.

There's a fourth point, one on which Clausewitz lays a very heavy emphasis, namely this: "There is no other human activity that stands in such constant and universal contact with chance as does war." That's his main principle. "He who undertakes war must renounce every absolute certainty of result." You never know how any operation is going to turn out. I was briefed up to the eyebrows for months on what the Operation Overlord would be in Normandy. I had to go down and brief every company just before it, when they were all in the marshalling area and nothing could leak out. My business was to tell each company what they were supposed to do and what they would be running into—what they could expect. I wouldn't tell them the time and the place exactly, but I did what the general told me to do. It was a painful assignment, going down to all of them. The idea was that I should know what was going to happen. But I can say that nothing happened as it was planned or expected on D-Day. And that's the only thing that saved us, when the whole company of the 52nd was dropped 55 miles away from their targets. Well, that was absurd, but it was the one thing that won the day, because the Germans wondered—what in the devil are those people doing? What is their plan?

They had our plan absolutely down cold. The first person [from the other side] came out from behind a hedge with his hands up, happily smiling. He said "Why didn't you come yesterday? We were expecting you yesterday." And then I very quickly got a mimeographed order that had come from the 109th, a holding division on the coast, the coastal defense division. There was the plan all laid out exactly as we were going to do it, but it was for the day before, June 5. But it was the weather that forced us to change. It wrecked our plans, but it wrecked their plans too. But when you start landing whole companies 55 miles away, they don't know what you're up to. They don't know where to concentrate their forces to counterattack. They don't know what you're doing. The whole thing was that way. Everything was a mistake. Nothing turned out. And, as I say, that's what saved us. It was Hitler who won in Normandy, of course. He had all the armored forces he needed. He was holding panzer divisions back in Paris because he was absolutely determined that we were going to invade on the Le Havre Peninsula. We had an awful plan for invading there. The original one was Operation Rheinchen. It was to invade Le Havre on March 15, and it was absolute suicide. Everybody heaved an enormous sigh of relief when it was called off. The general, of course, had to put on an act, though. He turned over the sand table. He threw down his hat and stamped on it to show his indignation. He was so gung ho he had to go through with this operation, which, as I say, was absolute suicide. But when it did go off, Hitler thought we were going to land in Le Havre, so he kept everything back. No, we're going to send it to Le Havre—you just wait 'til it happens [he said]. That gave us a chance to get a hold; otherwise, with the greatest of ease they could have pushed us back in the sea with no problem at all, because for a whole week after landing we got no supplies at all because of the awful weather. It was horrible.

We have some good examples in Alma 49. Notice the Lamanites were very clever. They had the Zoramite commanders. They knew everything that was going on. But they supposed they would be an easy prey for them. Notice [Alma 49:3–4]: “. . . they supposed that it [the city of Ammonihah] would again become an easy prey for them, But behold, how great was their disappointment.” It didn’t turn out that way at all. “Behold, the Nephites had dug up a ridge of earth . . .” Verse 5: “Now at this time the chief captains of the Lamanites were astonished exceedingly . . .” Things weren’t going their way at all. Napoleon said, “A general must never be surprised.” Well, our generals are always being surprised, and so was Napoleon. Surprise is the main element. That’s what strategy is, to achieve surprise with overwhelming strength at a particular time and place when you’re not expected. There you have your chance. So they were exceedingly surprised at the greatness of their numbers.

Verse 6: “. . . they had also prepared themselves with shields, and with breastplates.” Notice in the eighth verse: “But behold, to their utter astonishment, they were prepared for them, in a manner which never had been known among the children of Lehi.” There’s the genius of Moroni. He did something new. He did something surprising, and that’s what makes a great commander, to have ideas of his own and to think of something new. And that’s what makes the army such a drag, because they always fight the last war. I told you about Colonel Coles who insisted on a bayonet charge on the bridge at Carentan, because that’s the kind they had in World War I. That was the same Colonel Coles that went off to take S’Hertogenbus singlehanded. He insisted in fighting the first world war. Well, they all did, as a matter of fact, because it was the only war they knew. That was the textbook they had to follow. You like to talk about it and correct your errors. Give us another chance. Then you regard the next war as giving you another chance, but it isn’t. It’s a totally different ball game technically, geographically, and everything else. So here we have it.

This is a good example of it in Helaman 1. Coriantumr marched right into the center of Zarahemla, the capital city of Bountiful, and took it, catching the Nephites off guard. He surprised the Nephites. But in the end, he caught himself in a trap. They had been expecting him on the outside, and they had a protective curtain around the city on the outside. So he was trapped once he got in there. He had to surrender; he had been surrounded. Everybody surprises everybody else. When he tried to get out of the land, he found that the Nephites had pulled all their defenses on the periphery, and he couldn’t get out. Everybody surprises everybody else in war; nobody is sure of anything. So he made this famous statement—these are all famous statements of Clausewitz: “Warfare is therefore a chameleon, a strange trinity [three things make it up]. It’s composed of first, the original violence of its essence; secondly, the hate and enmity which are to be regarded as blind natural impulse [see how important it was for Amalickiah to take a few months stirring up hate and natural passion for a war, because the people couldn’t get it otherwise]; and thirdly, the play of probabilities and chance which make a free activity of emotions.” In other words, war is a madhouse.

Everything on the land [during the Normandy invasion] was based on the windmill near St. Mère-Eglise, which was the first town taken. That was by the headquarters company, the one I was in. Of course you know what happened. They went over and bombed the daylight out of it before we came, and there was no windmill. It had absolutely disappeared, of course. Yet everything was to be judged by the windmill. There was no windmill. This, as I say, is absolutely typical, as he says here, “the strange trinity.”

Those climactic pages of Mormon describe the final windup. Mormon prays for God to destroy his own people if they don't change their ways. They're so hopeless. "I saw that the day of grace was passed with them," he says. The Nephites had reached the point of no return. Mormon simply wished them to get it over with. There's nothing more terrifying or more vivid or to the point. Like today's wars in Lebanon and in Central America. They're madhouses. They're crazy scenes. Quoting Clausewitz again: "War, of all branches of activity, is most like a game of cards." Again, only in Hollywood are we absolutely sure that the good guys will win. That's the quintessential plot of the John Wayne [movie]—it's vengeance, and he always catches up with the bad guys, and of the Green Berets and all those things. This is the theme. The second most famous phrase from Clausewitz (next to the one that "war is politics by other means") is: "Three-fourths of the things upon which the action of war is calculated lie hidden in a fog of uncertainty."

This is the famous fog of battle. You never know what's going to happen. It's like Marshall Saxe. Getting prepared for one operation, General Max Taylor gathered us around in a ring. He said, "You want to know where you're going? Well, once Marshall Saxe . . ." He was the great general who won the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745. In wars of succession in the mid-eighteenth century, they were professional armies and generals there, but it was just shifting sides back and forth. They were like a lot of mercenaries. But Marshall Saxe was going to lead this great thing into Fontenoy. He was briefing the officers before the battle. One of them said, rather amused, "Marshall, your knees are knocking together." And he said "Yes, and they'd knock a lot harder if they knew where I was taking them." But by a coincidence I found out later on after Taylor told us that story, that the very place he was taking them was where Taylor was taking us. I don't know whether he knew that or not. That's the very place we were going in the lowlands, right down in Zon there, right in Brabant. That's where we were going to land, on the sand there. His knees were knocking together, because you don't know what's going to happen, you see.

When the battle begins, nobody knows anything. Did you see the front page today, for example? To show how our technical advantages change everything—they don't change anything. The Atlanta shuttle has been delayed again, indefinitely delayed. Why? Well, they've spent hundreds of millions of dollars. They have a huge staff of well-trained scientists working on it. They've been months planning this takeoff, and now they have to call it off for a while because the computer isn't working. Now, if you don't think that could happen in a war, you're very much mistaken. Computers don't always work. But after all that, the computer isn't working so they can't send it yet. And it's the same thing here.

I was attached to the British Second Army in this thing they called the Operation Market Garden when they went up to Arnheim. Within ten days at the most they threw away all their automatic weapons. They were no good at all. They were all full of mud and sand. The barrels were all jammed, so they just threw them away. They went back to sticks, stones, and rifles, the usual thing. No more automatic weapons. Nothing would work. So we always go back to primitive war.

There was a very bad night at a place called the Operation Market Garden where there was a castle, a 14th-century castle that Louis XIV had refurbished as a rest home for his officers up in the Netherlands. Everybody was always trying to take the Netherlands. See the Netherlands is the cockpit of Europe, and this is where all the battles take place. These are

the plains [from which] you roll into Germany, into France, depending on which way you go—into Holland, into Belgium. It's always the Netherlands. It always has been. And this was there. What was I going to say? Well, I can quote some Shakespeare at this point. [Laughter] Look, he gives the best account of war of anyone, far better than anyone else. When Green says Shakespeare is the best historian, he's quite correct. This is before the great battle of Agincourt in *Henry V*. That was a tremendous thing because they won against the most appalling odds. It was in 1415, which was a long time ago, but the picture hasn't changed at all. So here you are in the lowlands of northern France and the Netherlands—they go together of course. The Netherlands were France at one time. Henry V came over with his army.

Now entertain conjecture of a time
When creeping murmur and the poring dark
Fills the wide vessel of the universe.

[Isn't that good? There's this flat countryside, the heavy trees and the farms.]

From camp to camp, through the foul womb of night [smoke and stench]
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fix'd sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's watch:

[See, it's so still you can hear the hum of either army, all subdued at night. You can almost hear the passwords on the other side, they're so close.]

Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames
Each battle [that's battalion] sees the other's umber'd face:

[I told you that armies look exactly alike, and they do. And in the stilly fires their camps are so much alike, the other army's your own.]

Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs
Piercing the night's dull ear; and from the tents
The armourers, accomplishing the knights,

[That means they're outfitting the lords, because they're going to be in it the next day. Boy, are they going to lose that battle. Ten to one superiority, too]

With busy hammers, closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation:

[What's going to happen tomorrow with all this clank, clank, clanking?]

Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act III, Scene 6

We didn't hear the neigh of horses, but you could hear the roar of motors. We were so close. We would lie there on the damp flat land with a ground fog over it. On the one side was the Waal, this huge extensive river, a vast sheet of water as it goes toward the sea. There was British artillery all on the other side. And on the other was the Rhine; we were caught between them, and all these canals and the ground fogs. The sound would carry miraculously at night, so you could lie there and listen. You could hear the Germans moving in. You couldn't hear the armorers clanking with their hammers, but you could hear very clearly the armor of the tanks moving in, their clanking into position. And the Germans made phonograph disks which they would amplify and beam in our direction. We'd get the impression that whole armies were moving in. You could hear all this yelling and all these trucks. Some of it was real and some of it was fake, but you could hear it very

plainly. So you could hear the clank of armor just as you could hear the clank of armor then. And you could hear even coughs sometimes when it was very still, but most of the time it was terribly noisy. Then what happens? Oh yes, then there's a homely touch, because there was a farm. Where I was stuck for so long right next door. They had turkeys and chickens, and it was very homely. They carried on life as usual, you see. This is an interesting thing. And so [Shakespeare] says,

The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll,
And the third hour of drowsy morning name.

[It's getting along. It's homely. You'd never guess where you were. You hear the country cocks crowing and the clocks tolling. Now here are the French:]

Proud of their numbers and secure in soul,
The confident and over-lusty French
Do the low-rated English play at dice.

You notice Shakespeare introduced terms that were never used before, and we've used ever since. He has done more for the language than any other—he and the English Bible. Notice, he's talking about "low-rated" and things that sound so very modern. The French were overconfident and the English were rated too low, just like teams in a league. They were taking bets on how the battle would go on the next morning and trying to pass the night—nobody was sleeping, you see.

And chide the cripple tardy-gaited night,
Who, like a foul and ugly witch, doth limp
So tediously away. [Will it never be morning?]
The poor condemned English,
Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires
Sit patiently, and inly ruminate
The morning's danger; and their gesture sad

[You can bet they would, outnumbered, hopelessly, the way they were.]

Investing lank-lean cheeks and war-worn coats

[They've had a long campaign, and they're just bushed, you see—had nothing to eat]

Presenteth them unto the gazing moon
So many horrid ghosts.

[That's what they look like. Now we have an essay on leadership. The great leader was Henry V. They say he would have been England's greatest king if he had lived, but he died quite young, just six years after this happened.]

O, now, who will behold
The royal captain of this ruin'd band
Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent
Let him cry, Praise and glory on his head!
For forth he goes and visits all his host;
Bids them good-morrow with a modest smile,
And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.
Upon his royal face there is no note
How dread an army hath enrounded him.

[He doesn't indicate fear at all. That's what he has to do. He keeps up the morale of

everybody.]

Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour
Unto the weary and all-watched night.

[He hasn't slept. He's been up all night, but he doesn't dedicate one jot of color to that. He's still cheerful.]

But freshly looks, and over-bears attain
[That would need some explanation. It means by sheer will power he overcomes all temptation to yield and go to sleep or relax. He just holds himself in with an iron will.]

With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty; semblance.
[He's putting it on, of course. It's semblance. He has to keep everybody's morale up.]

That every wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks:
A largess universal, like the sun,
His liberal eye doth give to every one,
Thawing cold fear. Then, mean and gentle all,
Behold, as may unworthiness define,
A little touch of Harry in the night.

[See, I'm unworthy of displaying this. And then he points, and then there's a dumb scene showing Henry going around visiting the troops and seeing this sort of thing.]

. . . Yet sit and see;
Minding true things by what their mockeries be.

Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act III, Scene 6

He was a true leader. He went around everywhere cheering everybody up, never letting on, etc., and it did pay off. And then at the end, the only one who pays off is the Duke of Burgundy. The Duke of Burgundy is the constable of France, and he's the peacemaker. He brings Henry and Charles VI of France together. In a marvelous speech he tells them [Act V, Scene 2]: I brought you together "face to face and royal eye to eye." In that case should I be disgraced to suggest that peace might be a good idea?

Why that naked, poor, and mangled Peace,
Dear nurse of arts, plenties, and joyful births,
Should not, in this best garden of the world,
Our fertile France, put up her lovely visage?

Why shouldn't we have gentle peace again in this garden of the earth, our fertile France? Why do we just tear it up? Well, Henry took things over, but he soon died. Charles VI went mad the same year. The one who was in charge of everything was the Duke of Burgundy. So it was the peaceful man that won after all. Burgundy got enormous gain by that.

Well, so it goes. Oh my land, the time is up. Too much time groping for lost words. That's what happens with old age. "So from day to day we ripe and ripe and then from day to day we rot and rot."