



Forlorn Hope

During the Napoleonic era, the British Army stormed many fortresses. Always leading the doomed charge into the breach was a unit known as the Forlorn Hope. Modern conventional troops are treated as a Forlorn Hope. They are sacrificed on the altar of political correctness. Beware the revenge of the crusaders.



QuikManeuvers Digs Deeper to Get the Truth

Armed Forces Journal - A Failure in Generalship by

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Yingling: [Colonel Yingling is](#)

only partially correct and is himself infected by the virus of nation-building, read the following excerpt and [QuikManeuvers' response](#).

For the second time in a generation, the United States faces the prospect of defeat at the hands of an insurgency. In April 1975, the U.S. fled the Republic of Vietnam, abandoning our allies to their fate at the hands of North Vietnamese communists. In 2007, Iraq's grave and deteriorating condition offers diminishing hope for an American victory and portends risk of an even wider and more destructive regional war.

You officers amuse yourselves with God knows what buffooneries and never dream in the least of serious service. This is a source of stupidity which would become most dangerous in case of a serious conflict."-
Frederick the Great

These debacles are not attributable to individual failures, but rather to a crisis in an entire institution: America's general officer corps. America's generals have failed to

prepare our armed forces for war and advise civilian authorities on the application of force to achieve the aims of policy...

The Responsibilities of Generalship

...Augustine counsels us that the only purpose of war is to achieve a better peace. The choice of making war to achieve a better peace is inherently a value judgment in which the statesman must decide those interests and beliefs worth killing and dying for. The military man is no better qualified than the common citizen to make such judgments. He must therefore confine his input to his area of expertise — the estimation of strategic probabilities. (Generals are not “peace diplomats,” they are supposed to be able to win wars. By encouraging generals to whine about peace, the system destroys what it most needs, strong warriors.)

...To prepare forces for war, the general must visualize the conditions of future combat. To raise military forces properly, the general must visualize the quality and quantity of forces needed in the next war. To arm and equip military forces properly, the general must visualize the materiel requirements of future engagements. To train military forces properly, the general must visualize the human demands on future battlefields, and replicate those conditions in peacetime exercises...

The most tragic error a general can make is to assume without much reflection that wars of the future will look much like wars of the past. Following World War I, French generals committed this error, assuming that the next war would involve static battles dominated by firepower and fixed fortifications. ...the stalemate created by firepower and fortifications... The German Army did not get this new form of warfare precisely right. After the 1939 conquest of Poland, the German Army undertook a critical self-examination of its operations... However, German generals did not get it too far wrong either, and in less than a year had adapted their tactics for the invasion of France. (This entire paragraph is nothing more than yet another repetition of outworn clichés. Such writing indicates that the author is a “player” in the same camp inhabited by incompetent generals.)

After visualizing the conditions of future combat, the general is responsible for explaining to civilian policymakers the demands of future combat and the risks entailed in failing to meet those demands. Civilian policymakers have neither the expertise nor the inclination to think deeply about strategic probabilities in the distant future. Policymakers, especially elected representatives, face powerful incentives to focus on near-term challenges that are of immediate concern to the public... The general who speaks too loudly of preparing for war while the nation is at peace places at risk his position and status. However, the general who speaks too softly places at risk the security of his country. **(American generals only whine loudly about peace and nation building. They are pampered effete mandarins who only bluster about being "real soldiers who pine for peace." They are scoundrels and weaklings.)**

Failing to visualize future battlefields represents a lapse in professional competence, but seeing those fields clearly and saying nothing is an even more serious lapse in professional character. **(Note how the author emphasizes bombast over true military professionalism?)** ...The history of military innovation is littered with the truncated careers of reformers who saw gathering threats clearly and advocated change boldly. A military professional must possess both the physical courage to face the hazards of battle and the moral courage to withstand the barbs of public scorn. On and off the battlefield, courage is the first characteristic of generalship. **(America has very few courageous military officers and almost no courageous generals.)**

Failures of Generalship in Vietnam

America's defeat in Vietnam is the most egregious failure in the history of American arms. **(No! Iraq is!)** America's general officer corps refused to prepare the Army to fight unconventional wars, despite ample indications that such preparations were in order. Having failed to prepare for such wars, America's generals sent our forces into battle without a coherent plan for victory. Unprepared for war and lacking a coherent strategy, America lost the war and the lives of more than 58,000 service members. **(Yingling overlooks the constant sabotage of America's warfighting effort by leftist**

media and leftist democrat politicians. He does not even mention the mobilization of leftist traitors by the thousands who screamed vehemently for the victory of Vietnamese communists just as the same leftist scum today scream for the victory of muslim imperialism. The author is earmarked by what factors he ignores.)

Following World War II, there were ample indicators that America's enemies would turn to insurgency to negate our advantages in firepower and mobility. The French experiences in Indochina and Algeria offered object lessons to Western armies facing unconventional foes. These lessons were not lost on the more astute (?) members of America's political class.

Despite the experience of their allies and the urging of their president, America's generals failed to prepare their forces for counterinsurgency. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Decker assured his young president, "Any good soldier can handle guerrillas." ...As late as 1964, Gen. Earle Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated flatly that "the essence of the problem in Vietnam is military." While the Army made minor organizational adjustments at the urging of the president, the generals clung to what Andrew Krepinevich has called "the Army concept," a vision of warfare focused on the destruction of the enemy's forces. (The destruction of enemy forces always works. Multicultural butt-licking always fails.)

Having failed to visualize accurately the conditions of combat in Vietnam, America's generals prosecuted the war in conventional terms. The U.S. military embarked on a graduated attrition strategy intended to compel North Vietnam to accept a negotiated peace. (The leftist US government spearheaded by neo-marxist Secretary of Defense Robert MacNamara imposed the graduated attrition response on the military. The military fought hard against it, behind closed doors. Yingling is either totally misinformed or has a hidden agenda.) The U.S. undertook modest efforts at innovation in Vietnam. Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), spearheaded by the State Department's "Blowtorch" Bob Kromer, was a serious effort to address the political and economic causes of the insurgency. The Marine Corps' Combined

Action Program (CAP) was an innovative approach to population security. **(The Marine Corps CAP failed from the time it began until it was phased out. Read the research and focus on measures of effectiveness, not Marine Corps propaganda.)** ...The U.S. military grudgingly accepted these innovations late in the war, after the American public's commitment to the conflict began to wane. **(Leftist US media conditioned parts of the public to adopt this "waning." The Silent Majority supported the Second Indochina War.)**

America's generals not only failed to develop a strategy for victory in Vietnam, but also remained largely silent while the strategy developed by civilian politicians led to defeat. As H.R. McMaster noted in "Dereliction of Duty," the Joint Chiefs of Staff were divided by service parochialism and failed to develop a unified and coherent recommendation to the president for prosecuting the war to a successful conclusion... President Johnson made a concerted effort to conceal the costs and consequences of Vietnam from the public, but such duplicity required the passive consent of America's generals...

Having participated in the deception of the American people during the war, the Army chose after the war to deceive itself. In "Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife," John Nagl argued that instead of learning from defeat, the Army after Vietnam focused its energies on the kind of wars it knew how to win — high-technology conventional wars. **(The US Army has won only the Persian Gulf War since World War II and there is some evidence that the Persian Gulf War was fixed by secret agreements between Sadaam and Bush Senior.)** An essential contribution to this strategy of denial was the publication of "On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War," by Col. Harry Summers. Summers, a faculty member of the U.S. Army War College, argued that the Army had erred by not focusing enough on conventional warfare in Vietnam, a lesson the Army was happy to hear. Despite having been recently defeated by an insurgency, the Army slashed training and resources devoted to counterinsurgency. **(US Army officers who wrote dissenting opinions were frequently prevented from publishing them. Many**

books were published that accurately described the incompetence of US generals during and after the Vietnam war but the author has ignored them. Strategy for Defeat: Vietnam in Retrospect by U.S. Grant Sharp. See also: Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War*. William S. Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*; Paul Savage and Richard A. Gabriel, *Military Incompetence: Why the American Military Doesn't Win* Edward N. Luttwak's *The Pentagon and the Art of War: The Question of Military Reform* Richard A. Gabriel and Paul L. Savage, *Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army*. *Some of the above authors are alive today and are showing how the US armed forces are as incompetent now as when they first wrote about it.*)

By the early 1990s, the Army's focus on conventional war-fighting appeared to have been vindicated. **(There is no evidence to support this contention.)** During the 1980s, the U.S. military benefited from the largest peacetime military buildup in the nation's history. High-technology equipment dramatically increased the mobility and lethality of our ground forces. The Army's National Training Center honed the Army's conventional war-fighting skills to a razor's edge. **(The National Training Center taught the US Army to fight conventionally in deserts with billiard board flat terrain where nothing can be hidden. The NTC ignored forests, urban areas and other awkward places.)** ...the U.S. military gave little thought to counterinsurgency throughout the 1990s. America's generals assumed without much reflection that the wars of the future would look much like the wars of the past — state-on-state conflicts against conventional forces. America's swift defeat of the Iraqi Army, the world's fourth-largest, in 1991 seemed to confirm the wisdom of the U.S. military's post-Vietnam reforms. But the military learned the wrong lessons from Operation Desert Storm. It continued to prepare for the last war, while its future enemies prepared for a new kind of war. **(This appraisal is too simplistic. The US military prepares to fight open conventional wars in deserts where they can mass conventional armies much stronger than their opponents. In such situations they utilize World War I leadership methods glazed over with some**

high tech hardware. They shy away from any stand up battles and are very timid in their offensive attempts. See QuikManeuvers' [Thunder on the Euphrates](#) .)

Failures of Generalship in Iraq

America's generals have repeated the mistakes of Vietnam in Iraq. First, throughout the 1990s our generals failed to envision the conditions of future combat and prepare their forces accordingly. Second, America's generals failed to estimate correctly both the means and the ways necessary to achieve the aims of policy prior to beginning the war in Iraq...

Despite paying lip service to "transformation" throughout the 1990s, America's armed forces failed to change in significant ways after the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. (However, they did adapt the leftist scheme for transforming the US Army into a motorized lightly armored police force. They began to mothball all US Abrams tanks and sent most American troops to war in Iraq mounted on very vulnerable thin skinned Humvees.) In "The Sling and the Stone," T.X. Hammes argues that the Defense Department's transformation strategy focuses almost exclusively on high-technology conventional wars. The doctrine, organizations, equipment and training of the U.S. military confirm this observation. The armed forces fought the global war on terrorism for the first five years with a counterinsurgency doctrine last revised in the Reagan administration. (Conventional US armed forces have no counter insurgency doctrine. That fact has been admitted frequently by US generals and real experts too.) Despite engaging in numerous stability operations (Politically correct police operations furthering international leftist goals teach soldiers nothing about fighting real wars. If they utilize the methods of stability operations, which they have tried to do in Iraq, they will inevitably be defeated.) ...throughout the 1990s, the armed forces did little to bolster their capabilities for civic reconstruction and security force development. (Civic reconstruction, nation building enemy states is not a tactic that wins wars. It loses two wars at once, the present war and future wars. The author is wrong. America's bureaucrat generals are very adept at civic reconstruction and

prefer it to combat. The fact that they are nation-building bureaucrats, not warfighting generals is a root cause of continuous US defeats. See [QuikManeuvers' Bureaucrat Generals and Generals Gone Bad](#))

Having spent a decade preparing to fight the wrong war, (They spent a decade wasting time without thinking.) America's generals then miscalculated both the means and ways necessary to succeed in Iraq. The most fundamental military miscalculation in Iraq has been the failure to commit sufficient forces to provide security to Iraq's population. (That is patently untrue. The forces sent easily defeated the Iraqis. It was the fact that there were no reasonable plans for after the victory that caused the enemy to re-emerge. The army and marine corps disbanded the huge Iraqi Army but did not disarm it. They refused to pacify Iraq because they thought stringent measures politically incorrect. Most US generals ignored warfighting in favor of behaving like peacenik diplomats or nation building ward healers. US generals depended too much on leftist journalists for advice. Incompetent US generals mothballed tanks and insisted that US troops fight in Iraq cities while riding in unarmored Humvees. There are many other stupid mistakes made by US generals. Read [QuikManeuvers' books.](#))

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) estimated in its 1998 war plan that 380,000 troops would be necessary for an invasion of Iraq. Using operations in Bosnia and Kosovo as a model for predicting troop requirements, one Army study estimated a need for 470,000 troops. (These estimates were incorrect estimates by incompetent generals.) Alone among America's generals, Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki (A totally incompetent leftist buffoon who is directly responsible for mothballing US Abrams tanks, demanding that US troops fight in urban areas without armored vehicles and continuing to push the Stryker concept wherein the US Army will be forced to depend on lightly armored trucks (armored cars) as combat platforms now and in the future) publicly stated that "several hundred thousand soldiers" would be necessary to stabilize post-Saddam Iraq. ...

Given the lack of troop strength, not even the most brilliant general could have devised the ways necessary to stabilize post-Saddam Iraq. However, inept planning for postwar Iraq took the crisis caused by a lack of troops and quickly transformed it into a debacle. (Yingling demonstrates here that he is a totally inflexible and dogmatic high tech conventional war officer himself. By emphasizing the frauds and corrupt thinking outlined above and by only giving slight lip service to command ineptitude, Yingling marks himself as far in the dark as America's incompetent generals. He has not addressed the issues of proper equipment, organization training and combat leadership. His reasoning is either very simplistic or indirect support of the very thing he purports to attack.)

...America's generals failed to adapt to the demands of counterinsurgency. .. However, for most of the war American forces in Iraq have been concentrated on large forward-operating bases, isolated from ...capturing or killing insurgents. ...

...America's general officer corps did not accurately portray the intensity of the insurgency to the American public... For more than three years, America's generals continued to insist that the U.S. was making progress in Iraq. However, for Iraqi civilians, each year from 2003 onward was more deadly than the one preceding it...America's general officer corps underestimated the strength of the enemy, overestimated the capabilities of Iraq's government and security forces and failed to provide Congress with an accurate assessment of security conditions in Iraq.. Moreover, America's generals have not explained clearly the larger strategic risks of committing so large a portion of the nation's deployable land power to a single theater of operations...

The intellectual and moral failures common to America's general officer corps in Vietnam and Iraq constitute a crisis in American generalship. ..In both conflicts, the general officer corps designed to advise policymakers, prepare forces and conduct operations failed to perform its intended functions. To understand how the U.S. could face defeat at the hands of a weaker insurgent enemy for the second time in a

generation, we must look at the structural influences that produce our general officer corps.

The Generals We Need

The most insightful examination of failed generalship comes from J.F.C. Fuller's "Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure." Fuller was a British major general who saw action in the first attempts at armored warfare in World War I. He found three common characteristics in great generals — courage, creative intelligence and physical fitness.

The need for intelligent, creative and courageous general officers is self-evident. An understanding of the larger aspects of war is essential to great generalship. However, a survey of Army three- and four-star generals shows that only 25 percent hold advanced degrees from civilian institutions in the social sciences or humanities. Counterinsurgency theory holds that proficiency in foreign languages is essential to success, yet only one in four of the Army's senior generals speak another language. (There is no evidence that college degrees or proficiency in foreign language leads to victory on the battlefield. In fact most US universities are nothing more than politically correct leftist indoctrination centers, Attendance at such schools is an impediment to clear thinking. Well-trained combat generals with a combat ethos are needed.) ...In almost surreal language, professional military men blame their recent lack of candor on the intimidating management style of their civilian masters...Neither the executive branch nor the services themselves are likely to remedy the shortcomings in America's general officer corps. Indeed, the tendency of the executive branch to seek out mild-mannered team players to serve as senior generals is part of the problem (The tendency of the high command establishment of the US armed forces is to see out mild mannered, politically minded bureaucrats...who is the author kidding?). The services themselves are equally to blame. The system that produces our generals does little to reward creativity and moral courage. Officers rise to flag rank by following remarkably similar career patterns. Senior generals, both active and retired, are the most important figures in determining an officer's potential for flag rank. The views of subordinates and peers

play no role in an officer's advancement; to move up he must only please his superiors. In a system in which senior officers select for promotion those like themselves, there are powerful incentives for conformity. It is unreasonable to expect that an officer who spends 25 years conforming to institutional expectations will emerge as an innovator in his late forties...

Mortal Danger

...Iraq is America's Valmy. America's generals have been checked by a form of war that they did not prepare for and do not understand. They spent the years following the 1991 Gulf War mastering a system of war without thinking deeply about the ever changing nature of war...

(In the Pentagon)... the problem is seen purely in terms of building a better mousetrap--er--database and processing capability. Army officials are quoted as saying the Pentagon needs an "unprecedented data enterprise" that would be accessed to "test hypotheses" so that commanders could make better decisions. The article ends with a warning that analysts need to "enlighten" decision makers on the need to gather such data and create such a capability before our adversaries do.

Even if we were to invest in such databases and capabilities, I doubt whether this could keep up with adversarial adaptability if the idea is to pre-empt their "unrestricted warfare" tactics. Our [\(Yingling identifies with the mandarin generals caste.\)](#) bureaucratic OODA loop will not keep up with those of nonstate "unrestricted warfare" adversaries. So it's hard to see how such an investment would pay off in this regard. It's also difficult to see which adversaries would want to make a similar investment and why. Applying "unrestricted warfare" techniques in the real world is so much cheaper.

...Most attempts in the commercial world have been in simulating non-lethal means of coercion at the strategic level (e.g., diplomatic carrots and sticks, economic levers, etc.). But nothing really stands out in simulating the operational and tactical level problems "unrestricted warfare" poses for a state military force."

Only by digging deeper is the real truth about Yingling found in his article. The only part of it worth agreeing to is that US armed forces generals have generally been incompetent for the past sixty-two years.

Breaker McCoy