

To Gain All We Must Risk All: The Imperial German Contribution to 4GW

October 17, 2012

(The following article was contributed by Disciple of Night, a regular commenter on many blogs in the Liberty blogosphere. He emailed me a few weeks ago, asking my opinion on the impact General von Lettow-Vorbeck had on the development of what we today call unconventional warfare. I answered him, but rather than give specifics, I suggested he use what he's learned in his study of the subject, to determine the answers himself. The following article is the result. Other than some minor editing for clarity and format, any of my personal additions to the article content are in the typical parenthetical form.—J.M.)

(Disclaimer: My favorite Clint Eastwood quote is from Magnum Force: “A man’s got to know his limitations.” I am certainly aware of mine. I am a graduate student with no military experience whatsoever. I believe in the power of history, which is why I feel compelled to examine this story. Everything presented in this essay is strictly based on what I have read and been taught by professionals. I would like to thank John Mosby for giving me the opportunity to write for his blog. Considering his vast wealth of knowledge and first-hand experience, it’s a huge leap of faith on his part. This means more to me than you realize. It’s an honor.)

Introduction

I’ve come to believe a simple truth. “The Germans of the 20th century did more to advance modern warfare than any other nation (in **technology, administration and tactics**) but they just couldn’t win.” (*I don’t know that I agree with this, but it may have some validity as a basis of argument. The problem is, the German contributions have focused on the typically Prussian banality and unquestioning obedience to the leadership, rather than intuitiveness and initiation—J.M.*) Ask a military historian who the greatest German commander was and you’ll probably hear names like Rommel, or Hindenburg, or Manstein. The trenches of the First World War’s Western Front captured the horror of mechanized slaughter in ways that hadn’t been seen since 1861 (*Well, actually, that the world had arguably NEVER seen. The carnage of the War for Southern Independence was certainly devastating to the populace of the USA, it really wasn’t much on the scale of horror when compared to the rest of the world, especially the World Wars—J.M.*). Yet, there existed men whose talents and abilities wouldn’t be fully appreciated in their own time.

The Germans had such a man: General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. Fighting the British in a remote corner of the world, his story has often been overlooked for the sake of Flanders, the Somme and Verdun. Even when taking a graduate-level military history class (**taught by a man who loved World War I more than any other subject**) his name was never mentioned. Like an elite few before him, Vorbeck’s brilliance is now taught as gospel, and rightfully so. They called him the “Bush Ghost” for a reason. Author Karen Blixen (*The Danish author of “Out of Africa,” her memoirs of living in Kenya—J.M.*) wrote, “He belonged to the olden days, and I have never met a German who gave me such an impression of what Imperial Germany was and stood for.”

For those who know his exploits, Vorbeck’s career has been ranked as the most successful guerilla campaign of all time (*I’ve heard history professors and military experts call it “one of the most effective” —J.M.*). With a force that never exceeded more than 14,000 men, the German general managed to consistently defeat a combined British, Belgian and Portuguese army of over 300,000 for almost five years. His main objective was to divert as many Allied soldiers to German East Africa as possible, thus relieving pressure from the Fatherland. He finally surrendered in 1918 after being informed of the Armistice. The British alone spent over £75 million pounds trying to stop him.

Terminal Learning Objective

This essay is designed to help fellow like-minded individuals glean from the past a list of easy-to-remember concepts that may come in handy if the worst happens to our beloved nation. I hope this contribution proves beneficial. I pray to God nightly that such a struggle can be averted. But as always, si vis pacem parabellum. (**For more information, I highly recommend Vorbeck’s memoirs, which you can read for free on Google Books**) I will first offer a basic summary of the campaign and then provide some detailed lessons I gleaned while reading.

The Setting

German East Africa (**GEA, for our purposes**) was a large swatch of land that included parts of modern day Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, and the Congo. It offered every possible terrain feature and climate: tropical jungles, rolling grasslands, towering mountains, murky swamps and parched deserts. Populated mainly by the Swahili people and Arab traders, it was in the process of economic development when war broke out in 1914 (**like all the European colonies**). GEA governor Heinrich Schnee and British East Africa (**BEA**) governor Henry Belfield had determined previously that the Congo Act of 1885 would stand: colonial possessions were forbidden from fighting in the event of war between their respective motherlands (**Ironically, as Vorbeck describes in his memoirs, there was a technicality: war on the colony was prohibited only if a third party had offered to mediate; since this never happened, Vorbeck took the initiative**). But the Europeans had been fighting each other over the rights to Africa for decades. They called it a “magnificent cake.” The chance to secure even more economic resources was too tempting for the British.

The Man

Vorbeck was assigned to command a GEA unit called the Schutztruppe (**protection group**). He arrived for duty in April, 1914. Headquartered in the capitol city of Dar-es-Salaam, only 2500 of the 14,000 Askari (**Arabic word for soldier, applied universally to all colonial natives of Africa fighting for a European power**) were under arms. The rest were tradesmen and laborers. He brought experience to the table, having fought against the Boxers in 1900 and Namibian rebels in 1904. Vorbeck discovered that his men were a constabulary force, not a professional army. They were poorly equipped, scattered all over the place, and the network of railways and roads connecting them was in bad shape. Vorbeck tried to solve these problems to the best of his ability, but war was declared in July.

The War Years

1914: The British hastily drew a plan to invade GEA with a two pronged assault. “C” group of the Indian Expeditionary Force **(4000 strong)** would attack Kilimanjaro where the largest concentration of white settlers lived. “B” group **(8000 strong)** would take the port city of Tanga. In August, the Kilimanjaro attack was repulsed by 1500 Germans and the Tanga landing would end with even higher casualties for the British. They were recorded as the most dismal defeats to that day. Morale among the Germans was high **(Washington would have been proud)**. After Tanga, Vorbeck received word that another enemy force was attacking from the north: local tribes centered around Lake Victoria were revolting. No rest for the weary. 1914 soon ended. The next year saw the Germans’ only naval vessel, the Koingsberg, duking it out with a squadron of British warships. After months of fighting, the ship was eventually scuttled. Vorbeck and his men arrived and cannibalized the main guns, converting them into field artillery **(emphasis added by me. They utilized battlefield recovery to improve their ability to kill the enemy, instead of bitching and whining about how out-gunned they were? Hmmm.....–J.M.)**. On land, numerous skirmishes were taking place all over the border with BEA. 1915 ended up being a rather quiet year with only minor engagements. Another major land offensive wouldn’t take place until 1916.

1916: A new British force under the command of General Smuts invaded from the north, reinforced by Belgians from the west. Vorbeck’s men fought battle after battle, but were eventually forced to withdraw further south in the face of superior numbers and equipment. From now until Armistice, his force would be on the move. The British coastal blockade was firmly tightened and all communication with the outside world was cut, save for captured English newspapers **(which were often considered biased and unreliable)**. By the middle of the year, the Portuguese would also be attacking from their colony in the south.

1917: Facing increasingly difficult problems and his army slowing to a crawl, Vorbeck divided his force into three main columns. Most of his forces were now concentrated in Portuguese East Africa, surviving only on what they could find. After gaining considerable distance ahead of the British, the columns regrouped. Several local native chiefs had defected years earlier, due to the legendary cruelty of their Portuguese masters. This provided the Germans with valuable intelligence on the terrain. Despite winning skirmish after skirmish, Vorbeck is still forced to keep his men in small groups of as little as 100 **(considerably different than the common misconception of guerrilla elements not being able to function in groups larger than 10-20, huh? Remember...unconventional warfare is nothing more than conventional small-unit tactics applied in unconventional environments–J.M.)**. Five companies had to share two machine guns and one field gun. Smuts was relieved of the British force and replaced by General Hoskins, who was then replaced by General Deventer, a Boer. A new unit comprised the bulk of the British force: the King’s African Rifles.

1918: In March, news of the Spring Offensive greatly increased moral. Vorbeck’s men had learned to build makeshift boats and bridges from trees, so even in flood, the rivers wouldn’t stop their movement. The capture of large supply dumps at Namacurra in July allowed the Germans to discard all of their black powder 1871 rifles **(there’s that battlefield recovery thing again –J.M.)**. Their perseverance had paid off. Unfortunately, they had reached the southernmost part of PEA, and the British were landing in force at Quelimane, a nearby port. Vorbeck turned his army back to the north, towards GEA **(It is amusing to note that the Portuguese seemed the least competent of all involved parties in this campaign)**. Met with strong enemy forces advancing from the north, Vorbeck turned west into British Rhodesia **(now Zimbabwe –J.M.)**. In November, the British informed him of the armistice. Vorbeck’s men surrendered on the 28th, and returned to Germany to a hero’s welcome. His beloved German East Africa was divided between the British, Belgians and Portuguese. The loyal Askari who survived would not be paid until the collapse of the Third Reich **(To spot imposters, the Germans required each to demonstrate the manual of arms with a broom. None failed.)**.

Lessons to Be Learned

1) Plan NOW: “....during the past ten years the universal war had more than once seemed so imminent I was obliged to consider whether the small force under my command would be called upon....”p.1

You’ve heard the phrase “no Fort Sumpters.” How about no Pearl Harbor? No Unsang? No Chancellorsville? No Ardenne? Recognize reality for what it is **(which many of you have, you’re reading Mosby and other authors after all)** and make peace with it. Many Southern states, like Virginia, did not secede from the Union until Lincoln called for 75,000 troops, thereby making his intentions of armed conflict undeniable.

Vorbeck realized during his time abroad that the European empires were destined for war. The system of rival alliances and radical nationalism guaranteed that decades before the first shots were fired. Now consider how politicians in our own country have been stirring up hatred on every side. Blacks, whites, Latinos, Republicans, Democrats, men, women, seniors and young people all are continuously fed the line that the world is against them by a media-induced culture of fear and polarization.

Plan even if it’s just you and a few others- “*The ruling opinion was that we were on exceptionally good terms with the English, and that if a war, if it came at all, was in the distant future.*”p.10

I don’t have to elaborate much on this point. The media calls us domestic terrorists. Friends think we’re paranoid. Doctors question our sanity. Just look at the nearest graveyard and keep working.

Know your importance- “*I knew the fate of the colonies, as all German possessions, would only be decided on the battlefields of Europe*”p.3

Where do you stand in the big picture? Do you live near the seat of state government, or in a rural town of barley 200 that isn’t even on Google Maps? A popular catchphrase is going around the liberty blogs: tribe. Would your area be a priority target or can you focus on maintaining the home front **(this is critically important for people to consider the logistics implications of. Do you need to stockpile 18 different AR variants, or would you be better off with 2-3 for your local family defense, with the rest of the money being spent on non-perishable supplies such as ammunition and medical supplies that could be used locally to build support within the local civilian populace, or smuggled to another area where they can be more actively utilized? –J.M.)?**

Make yourself a nuisance- “*It was further to be considered that hostile troops would allow themselves to be held only if we attacked, or at least threatened them at some very sensitive point.... with the means available, the defense of the Colony could not been sure simply by defensive tactics, since the total length of the frontier and coastline was equal to that of Germany.*”p.4

You enemy will move based on what is immediately valuable. Vorbeck knew that the fighting in GEA would only be sideshow unless he became such a threat the British decided otherwise. He did so because his comrades in Germany needed such support. Wild bears most often attack when they unexpectedly encounter humans. Is it wise to let him sniff the air, hoping he'll lose interest or lash out and confirm he is not welcome?

Identify likely methods of approach- *“[when considering] threat of such an attack, one thought of at once the frontier between German and British East Africa.”* p.5

In a recent article discussing secession, the author said that Texas would have a hard time pulling it off due to the large number of military bases. Look for springboards that could be used launch attacks. This includes major interstate hubs. There is a small regional airport barely 20 minutes from my current residence that would allow an army to launch drone strikes throughout the county (*a terrain analysis should cover more than simply your homestead or even your town. It needs to consider the tactical import of all of the surrounding area, as far out as you will be capable of projecting force* –J.M.).

Standardize equipment- *“The armament was also in a bad way. Although almost every European possessed a useful sporting rifle, the variety of patterns and difficulty of ammunition supply had not been remedied. The proposals for arming these rifle clubs [volunteers] with uniform military weapons were still pending and remained so until the outbreak of war.”* p.6

Get an AR-15 and plenty of magazines. End of story. A Phased Plasma Rifle with a 40 watt range is fine and dandy until you run out of batteries. AK owners are completely dependent on foreign imported surplus ammo for cheap, bulk purchases. Other calibers, like .38 Special, 30-06 and 7mm haven't been military standards for over 50 years (*or ever....*) and are climbing in price. Of course, .223 isn't cheap either due to the endless wars overseas, but you can find it anywhere. Furthermore, every gun store in America has an AR-15 internal parts kit. I once broke the safety lever of my AK clean off because, like an idiot, I racked the charging handle without disengaging it. The Shepherd's Hook, a spring that makes the safety work, wasn't broken, so I was able to fix it. Don't be like me.

Later in the book, Vorbeck states that most of the Akaris were armed with 1871 Mausers (**single-shot, bolt action rifles that fired 11x60mmR black powder cartridge; remember The Last Samurai?**). In so many words, they said “Well, these Africans have only fought their tribal rivals, so these guns are good enough.” This idea changed quickly, and modern rifles became coveted trophies. Vorbeck also talks about the obvious stupidity of black powder in a jungle environment when the enemies are barely “paces” from one another, and smoke easily betrays your position.

Don't die like the rest. Get the best. The United States spends more money on our military than any other nation because we want to win (**in theory**). If you expect to go to war with a Mosin-Nagant, despite all of its qualities, you'd better have a VERY good reason. That goes doubly if you're planning on buying such rifles in bulk for your friends. If that's the case, at least put down some more money for quality Springfields. You'll avoid having to zero the guns properly (**wasting ammo**) because the Soviets screwed up basic weapons training. In my opinion, a .22 Marlin model 60 would be preferable. This is a perfect segway into. . . . (*Without getting into the always popular stupidity of arguing platforms and cartridges, load up on AR-variants in 5.56. Don't whine about the cost. You can get into a quality M4 variant, for less than \$1000, and a high-end M4 for less than \$1500.* –J.M.)

Scavenge: *“The booty in arms enabled us to rearm more than three companies with modern weapons, among which sixteen machineguns were especially welcome.... besides 600,000 rounds of ammunition, the enemy had left the whole of his telephone equipment and enough clothing and equipment that we could meet all of our requirements for at least a year.”* p.45

If you need a reason to get an AR, this is it. I find the point about machine guns especially useful. Vorbeck attributes one of his earliest victories, Tanga, to the use of machine guns. These days, you can learn the basic theory operation and the manual of arms of any weapon on Earth via Youtube, especially in the form of declassified military training films. It's a wise investment of your time. Vorbeck's entire book mentions scavenging enemy supplies in almost every chapter.

Your comrades are human beings. Treat them as such. Seek professionals who are like minded: *“Short after Arusha, we came to the coffee plantation of my older brother.... where I met the charming retired Lieutenant Colonel von Bock.... I did not dream that in a few months, this gentleman of over sixty would be one of our toughest patrol leaders on the east side of Kilimanjaro.... his true chivalry and fatherly care soon won him the hearts of his black comrades, and he was soon in their eyes the bravest of all Germans, and they clung to him with touching loyalty.”* p.8

Marshal Zhukov was hailed as a great Soviet commander after his victory at Stalingrad. Now the soldiers spit on his grave because he used his men like cattle. Go watch Russian-made documentaries about WWII on Youtube. Leaders throughout history have made the fatal mistake of abusing their men. Publius Varus lost three entire Legions in the Teutoburg Forrest because of his prideful stupidity (**36,000men**)....Caligula insulted his own bodyguards, mocking them and raping their wives until they killed him in 44 AD....Braxton Bragg courtmartialled his own officers after winning at Chickamauga, rather than chase the General Rosecrans' routed Union army and maximizing the victory; He then ignored pleas to resupply his men with warm clothing during the downpour at Chattanooga; When Hooker's men stormed Lookout Mountain, the Confederate troops had no reason to stand and fight...Hitler lost the 6th Army because he wouldn't let them withdraw from a blatantly suicidal situation.

Mosby's promised an article on combat's hellish nature and the stress it causes (**I did? WTF,O?**). If your men need something, get it for them, if it is at all possible to do so. They're giving up their lives for you and a cause.

Look for monetary support from all possible sources: *“At Bomala Ngombe.... the people not only told me enthusiastically of Germans under who they had previously served, but.... placed a large sum of money at our disposal to help the force.”* p.10

Small business are being regulated out of existence. If war breaks out, the economy will tank and take many good people to bankruptcy with it. Win their trust and protect them. Do this with a strong word of caution: The Agitator has recently forwarded a story from Scott Meiner who reports that the ATF has been authorized, as of February 2013, the power to seize all bulk cash found in all places suspected of drug involvement. No drugs have to be found for them to seize it. This is something that, in the past, only the DEA could do (**but honestly, it happens all the time, they're just now getting around to justifying it**). All they have to do is assume the cash was made for the purchase of controlled substances. In this game of leapfrog, how far can you jump?

(Do not assume that because you think that too many people aren't concerned about the demise of the Republic, that they are not. The fact that someone is fucking retarded enough to think Romney is the sainted savior of the Republic doesn't mean they are not sincere in their concern, it just means they're frustrated about finding a real way to solve the issues....or they're just fucking retarded. -J.M.)

By the way, all of these lessons are in Vorbeck's pre-war recollection....

Every person is a source of information: *"On the march through Pori, I learned to my astonishment that, even in the interior of Africa, it's no easy task to disappear without a trace. I had marched off without leaving word of which road I intended to take. Suddenly, in the bush, a native met us and handed me the overseas mail. The fact is that in their interchange of information the inhabitants tell each other everything happening in their vicinity."*p.13

People don't stay locked up in their houses during a war all the time. They need stuff and they have to go out to get it. When they go out, they see things. One person represents a vast spider web of potential channels of intel. Some might give it away for free in casual small talk with friends. Others might be compelled to talk because of your unfettered generosity (**Think "Enemy at the Gates"; chocolate is a powerful bargaining chip**). In the example quoted, Vorbeck got lucky that the previous administrator before him was a good man who treated the Africans like humans. The Africans were lucky that Vorbeck was a good man determined to follow his example.

MacArthur knew he couldn't rebuild Japan unless he had the people's love. They wept by the thousands as he boarded the plane to fight in Korea. On that note. . . .

Don't force the local people: *"Very difficult were the positions of the coastal towns.... which were exposed to bombardment by Englishmen-at-war at any minute."*p.21

Soviet partisans were hated and despised by the locals because they stole the only sustenance they had and called it "support." The Germans were hated and despised because they didn't understand (**or care. -J.M.**) that the local people had no say in the matter, and shot dozens of them in a failed attempt to counter the snipers who followed the Wehrmacht all the way from Moscow to Berlin. The same thing could be said of every army that ever entered Vietnam and Afghanistan. Some people really don't care who's going to win.

LOGISTICS: *"All matters of organization, which are usually and carefully considered in a time of peace, now had to be decided on the spur of the moment. One of them was the extraordinarily one of establishing a service of subsistence and a complete system of supply from the rear. The main point was to consider the roads.... the provisional organization of the supply system having been fixed and generally outlined, the details could not work themselves out at Headquarters. Someone had to be found who's past military career rendered him capable of working the system.... Major General Whael.... at once placed himself at the disposal of the Force. His task was particularly difficult, since there were no railways the bulk of the work had to be done by carriers. I do not have at my disposal any figures.... but I am sure I do not exaggerate in saying that hundreds of thousands of carriers worked for the troops, and all had to be fed and medically looked after."*p.24

Good generals study tactics, great generals study logistics. General Sherman knew he could capture Atlanta in 1864, but was terrified of Nathan Bedford Forrest. One destroyed depot, one cut rail line, one interruption in the flow of materials could stall him for weeks at a time. He was wise to detach himself from the rail system when pressing to Savannah. The SAS ran operations in Desert Storm with vehicles that were heavily packed with water and ammunition. It allowed them to move in enemy territory with some impunity, since resupply wasn't an issue (**this method was pioneered by the Desert Rats in WWII**). Many Regiment veterans have since wondered if the failed Bravo-Two-Zero mission may have succeeded if Andy MacNab's unit had taken the same approach instead of going on foot (**the issue with this, as American SF ODA 555 realized, as well as B20, was the fact that the parts of Iraq where they were operating had the topography of a fucking billiards table. The METT-TC considerations had to balance. The apparent lies of every single fucking survivor of that mission notwithstanding—since none of the stories match, either the other stories, OR the original AAR debriefings—B20 got fucked by Lady Luck, exacerbated by juvenile leadership. Triple Nickel, on the other hand, under Chief Balwanz, had a leader with his head on straight, who didn't panic and go apeshit. -J.M.**).

If you don't know a trucker, go meet one. Trucks are the lifeblood of the American system. If every commercial airplane and barge boat quit running today we'd get along just fine, despite the hissy fit thrown by the stock market. This might apply more to urban dwellers than us rural folk. Their most important asset is information, having access to HAM radios and traveling hundreds of miles routinely. They might also need a place to rest during their journey into neighboring states. When times get bad, that cargo (**which represents their paycheck and their family's well-being**) will be worth its weight in gold. A little protection and warm bed would be nice.

Consider also: I was once part of a bread delivery business. We had to go to the same store at least three times a week just to replenish the "staled" product. Most bread is triple wrapped and will last much longer than three weeks, especially is kept in a freezer or air sealed. Once we replaced the "bad" bread on the shelves, the staled product was ours to keep. Our schedule usually had us at stores at all hours of the day. These delivery people are easy to spot. Talk to them and become their best friends. It's not a good paying job and they're often working alone. Company policy may differ depending on what the product is and what can be done with it, but the possibilities are obvious.

A lot of theories have already been forwarded about how to stay supplied during troubles. PVC tubes buried outside, stuff hidden in plain sight, etc. There are many ways to get what you need. A lot of us live near huge farms, while others have neighbors with tiny gardens. Farmers take great pride in what they do and would probably entertain the notion of a friend in need. Network.

Luxury is your enemy: *"Of our many difficulties one of a special nature may be mentioned. The peace-time existence of the Europeans in tropical colonies had, even for health reasons, accustomed them to a level of comfort. When on safari, is it impossible to buy European food, but few Europeans had learned to live by the vegetable products supplied by the natives and Nature. Shelter can rarely be had....against mosquitoes, however, one must protect oneself."*p.24

Can you live without cable TV? Air conditioning? Controlled humidity? How about going for months at a time without pizza or ice cream? Not because you're moving around in the woods, but because Papa John's has decided your area is too dangerous to invest their time and money, and have closed shop.

How long do you wait between meals? P90x is a great way to curb over half of your appetite in just six weeks. I know. I've gone from eating four servings at a buffet to just one. It's also possible to cut soda cold turkey. You develop a love for water like never before, and it eliminates 99% of all headaches regularly induced by the normal hum drum routine at the office. Can you stand the smell of your own body due to lack of bathing? Some of these problems can be solved by advanced planning. Others will come along anyway when the plan gets blown sky high (**another reason to have multiple caches**). Does someone in your family have a cell phone addiction? You know those towers are going to be blown up by someone, whether on purpose or not. Can you stand to wait for days at a time to get word from another state (**A lot of these issues can be dealt with through proper, prior training, to help avoid some of the stresses that will arise as these issues rear up in reality—J.M.**)?

A woman named Patriot Nurse has dedicated herself to the medical side of things. Forget anthrax! Vorbeck's biggest enemy was malaria. His men were required to sleep on the ground with bug netting. Even then he got infected ten times. Yours might be trench foot after torrential rain like the one coming down as I type these words (**you know how to prevent that, right?**). It could be hypothermia, hyperthermia (**60% of the continental US was in a drought with recordbreaking heat in multiple states for almost three months. I think this is a bigger danger for most unless you live near Canada**) (**I wholeheartedly disagree with DoN on this, despite having been a heat casualty on more than one occasion. It is easy as shit to go down with hypothermia in even warm weather, if you get wet from rain, snow, even sweat, and the wind picks up or the sun goes down, hypothermia is right around the corner. Hyperthermia? The only times I ever dealt with it was when I didn't do the right thing and hydrate adequately, or left myself exposed to the sun in hot weather while busting my ass. Can you end up with heat exhaustion, heat stroke, or dehydration? Absolutely, but hypothermia is going to be the more common ailment, in my experience. —J.M.**) or something else. Even West Nile is becoming more problematic!

Alright, ready for first contact? The time is now August 1914.

To be continued.

(I've got the rest of the article, I just needed to take a break from editing and commenting. —J.M.)

23 Comments

[☞ California Midwesterner](#)

Very interesting. Had a little trouble finding the General's memoir online, but eventually found one via Internet Archive—downloadable in several formats. Cheers.

[☞ robroysimmons](#)

High tension electric wires are the lifeblood of urban America, just saying. Should we know the story of B20?

[☞ robroysimmons](#)

"Group size" meets air assets, see Max Velocity's latest. And as AM wrote in a response to a query about insurgent infiltration he mentions that air assets in AfPak routinely devastate pack trains. Vorbeck never met a drone or an Apache. From what I gather the Haj in AfPak are pretty much beaten by air if any battle is joined, so much so their old tactic of drawing air assets into a valley fight to shoot down on them like they did to the soviets pre-Stinger days is not even contemplated.

So it might be hard for the ground pounders to stomach, but the geeks with soft hands and feet behind joysticks can at the very least enforce a stalemate. This can be seen in Israel, its army basically withering away into an army of occupation both soft and cruel while its air assets maintain the viability of the state. An AAR of Hezbollah's tactics might be in order, since with what little info I have gleaned they thought out the air dimension as best as anybody has done (of course I could be very wrong).

[☞ Disciple of Night](#)

The British DID send air assets into GEA, but it wasn't a significant factor in the campaign for either side.

[☞ Dombro](#)

Fuel logistics has many weak links. Learn the infrastructure in your AO now.

[☞ robroysimmons](#)

Not trying to thread jack here but IMO if you are not thinking about OPFOR air assets I'll bet they are thinking of you. I understand the squishiness of dealing with this since basically air assets means US.gov, but if the eye in the sky is not accounted for then you will be counted. Matt Bracken touched on it slightly in his last book of the trilogy.

[☞ Arctic Patriot](#)

I trained against US air assets as ground OPFOR for years -mounted and dismounted- against Kiowas and A-10s, mostly.

Sucks to not own the sky, but it is what it is.

They are hell on unsupported ground troops, but you do what you can and CM.

CM.

AP

[☞ Phill Revere](#)

Unbelievable, thought-provoking info. Looking forward to the second half.

[☞ Ed Foster](#)

Improvise, Adapt, Overcome. Find a way to win, forget the rules, be mean and nasty.

This is a great example of hit and run tactics, but with modern communication, and air travel using the same tactics will not work in the same way. We have to adjust to a modern guerrilla warfare. Use what is useful, and adapt what it needed for today. These are things we need to learn about today. We can't just live off scavenged supplies, we will need to manufacture our own weapons. We will need to reload, as well as scavenge ammo. We will need to manufacture explosives, and powder for reloading. Get a lathe and learn to make things on it, get a mill and learn to use it. Learn to weld. Get the glassware needed to make chemicals on ebay today, so you are ready to make needed things when it goes hot. Learn Chemistry, and get books like "The

Black Book Vol-I, Vol-II and Vol-III today. Learn to make Rocket Candy and make rockets, so you can make RPGs, or something like it when needed. Can you take Drawn Over Pipe and make a mortar? Can you take Drawn Over Pipe and make a RPG/Panzerfaust? Do you know how to make a Molotov Cocktail that ignites on contact without a fire source? Knowledge will be key, learn today to be ready when needed. Don't break the Law to do that today. We need each and every one of us in the fight, not in jail.

> Disciple of Night

Your observations are correct. Part II will clear up some of the questions on supplies.

> Ed Foster

Thanks. I have been preaching this for a couple of years now. It seems too many are still caught in the "Red Dawn" mindset. You will have to make some of your own equipment and weapons, along with ammo. I see more of a Civil War type of position of supplies than a guerrilla with no supply chain approach. If weapons can be made in bike shops during WWII, weapons can be made in machine, welding, and some garages in a pinch. I am trying to get some of this set up. Others need to be doing this also.

> Bill Buppert

John,

I highly respect your recommendations and thank you for posting this about Earth's only undefeated German general during WWI in 1918. I also recommend the fictional account by William Stevenson (yes, his brother is Ralph) called Ghosts of Africa. Not only did he evade approx 650k (more than 300k) Allied troops but managed to outfox more than 125 Allied generals over the course of almost five years arrayed against him. He also established an early notion that absolutely no assistance whatsoever would be forthcoming from Germany and started his self-sufficiency preps to meet this shortcoming. I take exception to your ahistorical statement that "[JM] know[s] that I agree with this, but it may have some validity as a basis of argument. The problem is, the German contributions have focused on the typically Prussian banality and unquestioning obedience to the leadership, rather than intuitiveness and initiation-J.M.)"

Leetow-Vorbeck showed that one can be a keen guerrilla and a gentleman in one package.

This is a false meme generated by the West since WWI to give an intellectual black eye to the Germans. Nothing could be further from the truth, even during the formation of Germany's forces under Frederick the Great, initiative and foresight were always prized. The Germans developed general staff techniques for modernity in the nineteenth century, developed what William Lind calls Third Generation Warfare in the 20th century (in 1918 no less) and had the most adaptive and robust AAR system in any modern army. In the tactical-operational-strategic spectrum, they have always suffered a strategic deficit in war-fighting but excelled in the other end of the conflict spectrum.

I would urge you to read not only the outstanding books by Frank Kurowski about how some other German Crosses were earned but at Baum's excellent site, he has translated a variety of German manuals from WWII that show just how advanced their tactical and operational regime were: <http://www.germanmanuals.com/REmanuals.html>.

The disease of national socialism (whom L-V spat upon with utter disdain) has clouded the thinking of some of the most forward looking historians and defense intellectuals to the point that anything German is poisonous yet barring the inclusion of the German genius for warfare, the West would be significantly impoverished in the effective means of accumulating what Martin van Creveld calls fighting power which is the title of his book, a short tome that can be read in one evening that demonstrates why across the board in WWII, the German officer corps from start to finish was an order of magnitude more effective than their American counterparts. I say this as a retired US Army officer myself.

What a great conversation it would have been to get Leetow-Vorbeck and TE Lawrence to have coffee together in London after the war and chat.

Cordially,

Bill Buppert

> Semper Fi, 0321

Well said Bill. Thanks to Hitler and the Nazis, every German soldier will be seen as a Jew murdering rapist with no honor or integrity. No one cares that not every soldier was a Nazi or Gestapo member, let alone that WWI was a whole different story anyway. I grew up thumbing through my father's copy of the GEA campaign, lots of hand colored photos of Vorbeck and his Askaris. the S.M.S. Königsberg (my father's hometown was Königsberg). It was a fascinating book to me, but I was unable to read any of it, as it was written in the old German script. My father passed away this May in Hawaii, sadly, last month my sisters were unable to locate the book for me in his library.

> [mountainguerrilla](#)

My maternal grandfather was a Wehrmacht fallschirmjäger throughout the war, and neither a Nazi, nor anti-Semitic (or at least no more so than any other European of his generation). I don't see Germans in general as Nazis, nor lacking in honor or integrity. Based on my limited experiences working with the modern Bundeswehr, as well as commentary from several friends who served in the Gebirgsjäger elements (mountain hunters...Bavarians), I have seen a disturbing inability in the German military mindset to let go of the Prussian mindset. Of course, my friends' opinions may be colored by their general bias against anything from the lowlands....

> Semper Fi, 0321

Was your grandfather a Luftwaffe or Wehrmacht (Heer) Fallschirmjäger? The early ones were Wehrmacht, then transitioned over to Luftwaffe control. My father was Luftwaffe Fallschirmjäger, joined in '39. Most of his instructors wore the Wehrmacht Springer abzeichen, showing they were the original core of jumpers from '36-'39. There was also a Bn. of SS Fallschirmjägers late in the war, they wore the Heer insignia I believe.

> [Federale](#)

It wasn't the Desert Rats, the term used for the British Army in North Africa, but the SAS and the Long Range Desert Group that pioneered and used jeeps and chevy trucks loaded with machine guns and supplies as a raiding force.

> [mountainguerrilla](#)

Yeah, actually, you're wrong on the vehicle portion at least. The SAS, under Stirling, actually pioneered the use of Land Rovers, for long-range patrolling in the desert. In the mid-1990s, the Ranger Regiment was still using Land Rovers as Ranger Special Operations Vehicles...and while the term "Desert Rats" is generally applied to the entirety of the British Army in North Africa, I've also heard it used specifically to describe the LRDG. DoN wasn't really wrong, per se, and the technicalities of military trivia don't detract from the overall message he was discussing.

> Semper Fi, 0321

Read up on when the Land Rover came out, 1948 I believe. The LRDG used Jeeps and Chevy trucks in N. Africa, just as Federale pointed out. The pink Land Rovers came later.

☞ [mountainguerrilla](#)

I stand corrected, and apologies around. For some reason, the Pink Land Rovers have always stood out, and I specifically remember once seeing a photo of Sterling, in a Land Rover, garbed in North African headgear, and khakis, ala WW2. Maybe I'm starting to suffer from CRS after all....According to the British Army's own website however, it WAS in fact, Willy's Jeeps initially. Glad I didn't write the original article.....(humor folks, humor....it still doesn't detract from the man's overall message in his article). JM

☞ [Mike Lamb](#)

"To Gain All We Must Risk All" - Sounds like Patrick Cleburne to me! He must've been a really good general... (I haven't read the story of him yet.)
Michael— Deo Vindicabamur

☞ [GoneWithTheWind](#)

"but they just couldn't win." They made some serious mistakes and of course Germany was in the hands of a megalomaniac. Their preoccupation with Russia for example. But they did many things right. Many of their high level officers were Renaissance men and extremely capable. They also would regularly assign scientists and other experts in various fields to officer's staffs. They could have won WW II.

☞ [Seadragonconquerer](#)

Seize Malta to secure the Trans-Med supply line, give Rommel the 10 Divs wasted garrisoning Norway, plus a couple more armored. This thread'd be written in German.

☞ [AM](#)

The leadership lessons are well worth learning, as is the power of poorly trained conscripts/volunteers being effective under that leadership. Using locals for intelligence and communication, and specifically growing your force with captured material. This is a great example of a Regular Force Officer conducting Irregular Warfare. What it is not is an example for an insurgency. Similar to Francis Marion, this is an "irregular force" conducting operations in support of conventional forces. Similarly Chief Joseph's march towards Canada falls into this category of irregulars tying down vastly superior conventional forces.