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The Evolution of Military Tactics

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## Outline

Thesis: Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) must be able to take lessons learned from past battles and implement new doctrine to ensure our success on the battlefield.

### **I. Introduction**

A. History, theory, and doctrine can be connected in the evolution of military tactics on the battlefield. History is the record of the past, theory is the assumption of what happened in the past, and the reason of the effects. Today, we find ourselves in the most complex combat environment ever. We are fighting a dangerous and diverse enemy who is completely bent on our destruction. The only way we can defeat this enemy, is by properly matching our success on the battlefield with successful adaptation of the Army at home in our training of soldiers on what we have learn in combat.

### **II. Military Tactics:**

- A. The Evolution of Military Tactics
- B. American Civil War
- C. Philippine War
- D. Military History

### **III. Conclusion**

### Abstract

The touchstone of America's way of war is combined arms warfare. Each of our armed services excels in combining a wide array of technologies and tools in each dimension land, air, sea, and space to generate a synergy of efforts that create overwhelming dilemmas for our opponents. Whether fighting a civil war or a war on terrorism we have been able to adapt to a changing battlefield. We must know our enemy and their tactics. No war is fought in the same manner. In order to be successful, Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) must study past history and doctrine. NCOs in today's army will play a larger role in the decision making process during war. As an NCO, in order to remain technically and tactically proficient, we must study history and educate our Soldiers on the Army's past failures and successes.

## Military Tactics

*The Evolution of Military Tactics.* During this essay I will discuss the evolution of military tactics on the battlefield. I will discuss the different tactics used during the American Civil War and the Philippine War. History has shown us that, no two battles are the same. We must be able to take lessons learned from each and implement new doctrine to ensure our success on the battlefield. Leaders today are more aware of past mistakes and better prepared for future conflicts, when armed with the knowledge of military doctrine and past events that shaped the Armies current doctrine, leaders today will be aware of past mistakes and more prepared for future conflicts. If we understand the relationship between history and the theory that was used to develop past military doctrine, leaders today can apply lessons learned to develop current and future military doctrine.

*American Civil War.* At the start of the United States (U.S.) Civil war the existing doctrine of military warfare was about to become archaic. The previous lessons of warfare would have to be re-written by the American generals serving in the U.S. Civil war. War tactics took a new turn during the Civil war. Old world tactics and training were ineffective due to current weaponry. The U.S. Civil war was an occurrence that was incomparable in the account of military history. It was a transformation of warfare in itself. U.S. military minds re-wrote military tactics to cover all aspects of modern technology developed in the private sector. We can compare these same tactics today in Iraq. The military leadership rewrote Field Manual 3-0 in order to give leaders and Soldiers a better understanding of today's war in Iraq. The conflict hosted the first ever use of rail and waterways and armored ships over a large area of military operations and redefined previous lessons of battlefield deployment.

Previously learned infantry tactics rapidly proved to be unsuccessful. American generals were required to change and even throw out the lessons of antebellum military thought. The railway made armies mobile to a degree that was previously inconceivable. Their growth completely altered the total concept and strategy of managing armies. Along with lessons and tactics came the new emphasis on newer and modern units and an increased importance assigned to battlefield preparation and geography. During the Civil War the battlefield was looked upon as a linear battlefield. Together each side would line up and fight one another force on force. Although it gave the impression that there were no tactics involved, there was. Commanders indistinctly studied their opposing commander(s) to outline their next move on the battlefield. The objective was to manage when and where to attack or protect. Every commander had to think about what would give them and their men the advantage on the battlefield.

During the Battle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bull Run/ 2<sup>nd</sup> Manassas, in order to draw General Pope's army into battle, General Jackson ordered an attack on a Federal column that was passing across his front on the Warrenton Turnpike on August 28. The fighting at Brawner Farm lasted several hours and resulted in a stalemate. Pope became convinced that he had trapped Jackson and concentrated the bulk of his army against him. On August 29, Pope launched a series of assaults against Jackson's position along an unfinished railroad grade. The attacks were repulsed with heavy casualties on both sides.

At noon, General Longstreet arrived on the field from Thoroughfare Gap and took position on Jackson's right flank. On August 30, Pope renewed his attacks; seemingly unaware that Longstreet was on the field. When massed Confederate artillery devastated a Union assault by General Fitz John Porter's command, Longstreet's wing of 28,000 men counterattacked in the largest, simultaneous mass assault of the war. The Union left flank was crushed and the army

driven back to Bull Run. Only an effective Union rearguard action prevented a replay of the First Manassas disaster. Pope's retreat to Centreville was precipitous, nonetheless. The next day, Lee ordered his army in pursuit. This was the decisive battle of the Northern Virginia Campaign.

The doctrine or principles that can be seen in this part was Jackson's deceiving Pope into believing that he was on the run. The battle was indeed one that the South had good reason to be proud. It would be hard to find a better instance of masterful comprehension of the actual condition of things that mark a great general than was exhibited in allowing a formidable attack, in which more than half the Federal army was taking part, to be fully developed and to burst upon the exhausted troops of Jackson, while General Lee, relying upon the ability of that able Soldier to maintain his position, was maturing and arranging for the great attack on our left flank by the powerful corps of Longstreet. In this battle, the strategy Jackson used proved to be effective. One's doctrine is the prototype of a battle. It will be the base of the army to be solid in their actions.

The problem here is does Jackson win against Pope following his doctrine? Is his doctrine effective? In this case, the doctrine was effective. He used different strategies in order to win this battle. The doctrine will be the pattern of the battle. It will be the base of the army to be firm with their actions. Once a doctrine is done in a worst case scenario, it can be a deal or no deal situation. However, during my readings I did not find where the Confederate Generals used Jackson's strategy again.

*Philippine War.* The US Army conducted its counterinsurgency in the Philippines using some techniques that were similar to techniques it had employed successfully in the American West against its irregular opponents during the Indian Wars. There were, 26 of the 30 US generals serving in the Philippines during the insurgency between 1898 and 1902 who had also

served in the Indian Wars. The need for mobility and knowledge about the terrain and enemy led the Army to establish special detachments of mounted scouts and infantry.

These detachments were handpicked elite units that performed the preponderance of reconnaissance and strike operations in the counterinsurgency war. Veterans of the Indian Wars appreciated the value of indigenous Soldiers, who possessed a threefold advantage in their knowledge of the people, terrain, and language of the region. They comprehended, as Crook and others had in the Indian Wars before them, that the employment of indigenous forces as auxiliaries or scouts would also contribute to a "divide-and-conquer" operational campaign. Filipino insurgents also suffered from the devastating psychological blow of learning their own people were helping to hunt them down.

Recruiting Macabebes and similarly distinct indigenous groups accrued the additional advantage of undermining the unity of the population by exploiting the extant seams in Filipino society. The more knowledgeable officers also realized early on it would be imperative to eliminate the guerrillas' infrastructure. Toward the end of the war, the Army increasingly employed Philippine Scouts, spies, and informants to gather intelligence and attack the insurgent infrastructure. The Philippine Scouts originated from irregular fighters raised from the Macabebes for employment against the guerrillas in the swamps of central Luzon. In particular, the Army recruited the Macabebes because the tribe had harbored a long-standing animosity for the Tagalogs, who constituted the majority of the insurgents. On Samar, the Americans organized a scout force with volunteers from hemp merchant families who opposed the guerrillas because they were losing influence as a result of insurgent actions.

In western Mindinao, local Muslim leaders performed so well in suppressing the Catholic guerrillas that the Americans confronted very little resistance there. A combination of religious zeal and self-preservation impelled the sectarian members of the Guardia de Honor to join the US cause against the anti-clerical insurgents in the La Union province. Finally, in some instances the town police forces also proved themselves effective in countering guerrillas.

One bold example of employing the Macabebe Scouts effectively to capture guerrilla leaders was Brigadier General Fred Funston's raid to capture the rebel leader Aguinaldo. Funston learned from intercepted dispatches of an Aguinaldo request for 400 guerrilla reinforcements at his jungle headquarters. Funston quickly devised a deceptive raid on the headquarters: the Macabebe Scouts posed as insurgent reinforcements with five American officers as prisoners, with Funston among them. The raiding force consisted of a Spanish intelligence officer on the American payroll, four renegade rebels, five US officers, and 79 Macabebe Scouts posing in captured insurgent uniforms, totaling 89 men. After the force infiltrated through 100 miles of dense jungle, the ruse was so convincing that Aguinaldo's honor guard welcomed the party, just before the Macabebe Scouts surrounded Aguinaldo and the Spanish intelligence officer announced that they were Americans.

The problem here is the United States did not look back on history for the Iraqi war. The historical record demonstrates counterinsurgencies, and the complementary intelligence operations that support them, are manpower-intensive. Failure to recognize this or attempting to correct the problem too late, greatly increases the likelihood of failure. The shortage of coalition and indigenous troops, police, and civil servants has been a problem for the United States Army in Iraq. It became very clear within weeks after the declared end to major combat operations that the United States Soldier presence was insufficient to maintain order.



This was exacerbated by the fact that the native military and police forces were dismantled in the wake of their defeat and were formally disbanded May 2003. There cannot be a successful counterinsurgency campaigns without joint police and intelligence organization, focused on the exploitation of human intelligence data and the full integration of functioning, well-trained, indigenous police and intelligence forces.. Counterinsurgencies are manpower-intensive by nature. There is no substitute for the forceful presence of local police and military Soldiers on the ground; preferably doing something to ensure the security of the people. If history is a reliable indicator, in the wake of a conflict resulting in regime change local forces offer the most logical and appropriate source of additional manpower because the occupying force will be undermanned, lacking in cultural awareness, and short of native linguists.

*Military History.* History, theory, and doctrine can be connected in the evolution of military tactics on the battlefield. History is the record of the past, theory is the assumption of what happened in the past, the reason of the effects, which until now we continue to understand and study. Doctrine became the basis of the army in order to win the battle between each other and the reason in experiencing the present situation.

The Army has always changed and always will. In peacetime, armies change slowly and deliberately. Modern warfare is immensely complex. The vast array of capabilities, skills, techniques, and organizations of war is a recipe for chaos without thoughtful planning to assure interoperability, synchronization, and synergy amongst its units. Second- and third-order effects of a change in any part of this intricate mechanism are difficult to forecast, and the consequences of misjudgment can be catastrophic.

Peacetime also tends to subordinate effectiveness to economy, and joint collaboration to the inevitable competition for budgets and programs. Institutional energies tend to focus on

preserving force structure and budgetary programs of record. Resource risk is spread across budget years and programs, including forces in the field.

Today, that measured approach to change will not suffice. Our current force is engaged, in ways we could not perfectly forecast. Our immediate demands are urgent, and fielding capabilities in the near term may outweigh protection of the program of record. We will shift resource risk away from fighting Soldiers.

To be sure, this urgency does not excuse us from the obligation to prepare for the future, we must understand that the prolongation of this conflict as well as the possible outbreak of others we cannot predict. However, it does significantly blur the usual dichotomy between the Current and Future Force. We must ensure that we apply lessons learned from today's fight to Future Force programs, even if that means adjusting their direction and timing. In short, change in a time of war must deal simultaneously with both current and future needs.

It must also pervade our entire institution. The Army cannot restrict change solely to its operating forces. The same Soldiers and leaders who adapt, learn, and innovate on our battlefields also drive our institutional Army. We must match our success on the battlefield with successful adaptation of the Army at home. Such adaptation is already under way in the expansion and retailoring of our combat training centers, the establishment of a Futures Center in Training and Doctrine Command, reformulation of the Army Campaign Plan, and a wide range of consolidation and reorganization initiatives in Army major commands. (General Peter J. Schoomaker)

The Soldier Creed speaks to why the United States Army will always adapt and overcome any issue or enemy it faces.

I am an American Soldier.

I am a Warrior and member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.

I will always place the mission first.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never quit.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills. I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.

#### In Conclusion

Our learning process can never stop. NCOs must use their knowledge and understanding of the past to anticipate the needs of the future by seeing the past as a pattern to shape the out come of the future. Leaders are expected to study the history of pass conflicts to incorporate necessary revision of plans based on what happened. NCOs live by the Army values and set the example for all Soldiers. They understand, embody, and execute leadership and training based on these values. Because of these values, there are accounts throughout military history of just how important the role of NCO is on and off of the battlefield

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