**On Guerrilla Warfare,**
**PWAD 50, Oct. 14, 2000**

***Before beginning, give handouts. Students should copy and pass them on.***

A month ago, during and after Professor Mlyn's excellent lecture on the Vietnam War, most of your questions and comments seemed based on the general American bewilderment that the US lost the war although it won all the battles. Much of that amazement is due to what Professor Mlyn called the "conservative analyses." That is, a lot of right-wing postwar thinking has decided that if only we'd used more of this weapon, or attacked that place, the United States would have won the war.

Well, today your misunderstanding is going to end: the answer is at hand.

Please don't think that, although my analysis is historical, guerrilla warfare is something in the deep past. If the next big conflicts are going to be along cultural lines, as you read in Huntington a few days ago, they may be guerrilla wars. Americans have fought against Somalian guerrillas in recent years, and we didn't do well. The Irish Republican Army fought a highly successful guerrilla war against the Protestant regime in North Ireland which is not yet over. And right now the Israelis are turning a promising peace process into a real guerrilla war. So, guerrilla war is today.

I have to start this off with the story that tells you how I first became interested in this topic. My first year in graduate school, 1967-68, was also my first year out of the U. S. Navy. I was the right-winger in the History Department at Stanford University. Like General William Westmoreland, who was still in Vietnam, I was loudly proclaiming to all and sundry that victory over there was right around the corner. Saying such things in the vehement way I said them so angered my undergraduate room-mate, that he has not spoken to me since. I wish he knew how well I now know he was right.

My learning started when the Viet Cong launched the "Tet Offensive" in the cities of South Vietnam in January 1968. Like Westy, I was bamboozled. A few days later another graduate student, Charles McClain, pointed out what I hadn't realized in my watching the unfolding of events. He asked me if I thought that in 1863 -- 105 years earlier -- 3000 Confederates could have been infiltrated into Washington DC over a few months without the Lincoln Administration's hearing about them.

I eyed him quizzically, not getting the point, until he went on to say that that was closely proportionate to the 34,000 VC who were infitrated into Saigon in the last several months. Surely, Chuck argued, there would have been some loyal Americans in Lincoln's capital who would have seen all the strangers hiding out and being fed by Confederate sympathizers. Certainly some of them would have told the Union authorities about what they saw.

But, McClain pointed out, it was clear that no one had told the South Vietnamese Government about what was going on under its nose. That that government did not

know about all those Viet Cong infiltrated into its capital was proven by the fact that it had let its army go on leave for the Tet holiday!

Then Chuck asked if I knew that eleven North Korean commando-assassins had recently been infiltrated by different means and different routes into South Korea. I mean that other country in Asia, now, Korea.

They had orders to get to and assassinate the President of South Korea, that tyrant Chung Hee Park. Those eleven men were all taken within a few days of their landing, because South Koreans reported them, despite the widespread unpopularity of the Seoul government.

And yet no one reported 34,000 VC in Saigon to the Saigon government.

We were told that Americans were fighting in Vietnam to ensure that democracy had a chance there. We were supposed to be defending the peace-loving and democratically-leaning South Vietnamese people from the horrible Communist regime of the North which had invaded their peaceful country.

Chuck asked rhetorically, "How democratic is the Saigon government?" The answer was pretty clearly, "Not at all." That regime had so few friends in the population of Saigon that no one had told it the VC were coming in massive numbers, although the infiltrators must have arrived in small batches, and therefore needed housing and food for weeks and months before the outbreak. If the government had been informed by any of its own people, surely it would not have let its own army go off on leave for the massive holiday that Tet is in that country.

Chuck McLain's analysis set me to thinking that guerrilla war was not at all about combat. I've spent a good bit of time since then trying to find out what it is. You won't be surprised if I tell you that I've discovered that Clausewitz was right: guerrilla warfare is all about politics.

Let me say that by "guerrilla" I mean a political minority or majority that is out of power or is unable to participate in the political process because of the power of the regime that is against it. For any of a number of reasons, this out-of-power group decides to take up arms to press its demands.

The goverment that opposes guerrillas is called the "counter-insurgency."

The first guerrillas are lost in the mists of pre-history. We know about the Viets versus the Chinese almost three thousand years ago. We know about the Israelites in some of their struggles against some of their invaders. There are many others both earlier and later.

But the term itself -- *guerrilla* or "little war" -- was coined during the Napoleonic Era. In 1812, the superpower French Empire invaded Spain and easily defeated the

main forces of the crumbling Spanish kingdom. But Bonaparte's army was resisted the length and breadth of the Iberian peninsular by small groups of men and women who fought a "little war," ***guerrilla.***

What I think guerrillas must do to win is on the handouts going around the room.

Let's look at some guerrillas who have won since the end of World War II.

## China, 1927-1949

If it can be said that the 1811 Spanish created guerrilla war, then Mao Zedung, an intellectual in a society that reveres learning, codified it in the 1930s and 1940s. His theories have become the working plans of almost all later guerrillas, and are identical with my theory. As one of the most successful guerrilla war leaders, Mao is in fact the paradigm of that theory.

I'm happy to tell you that I read Mao only after I had already drawn up my own theory. I'm no Maoist, and I hope none of you are, but I beg that you respect his achievement, as I do.

After the overthrow of the monarchy in 1911, the Communist Party of China (CPC), intended only to expand its influence within Sun Yat-Sen's Kuomintang (KMT). By 1925 it was firmly allied with the peasants but had unsuccessfully tried to infiltrate the army. It remained, then, in an uneasy coalition with the KMT.

But Chiang Kai-Shek took over the KMT after Sun Yat-Sen's death in 1925. One of the first things Chiang tried to do was to crush the CPC. He nearly succeeded in 1927. Mao, formerly a librarian at Beijing University, who had been hugely successful in training the peasants in revolutionary tactics, led the weakened survivors away from the cities where the KMT held control. Out in the countryside, he developed the idea of guerrilla warfare that led to the ultimate Communist success.

His theory was simple. According to Douglas S. Blaufarb in *The Counter-insurgency Era* (1977), the struggle would be in three phases:

> Phase I, cadre agitation and propaganda among the peasantry.
> Phase II, establishment of base areas usually in remote places, where the Communists would become the government, plus the outbreak of violence and true guerrilla war.
> Phase III, climactic offensive by large, regular military units.

Only Phase III involves major combat. The other two phases were primarily political, and the only combat would be hit-and-run, ambushes, and so on.

Mao's thinking was different from earlier guerrilla theorists because he thought that peasants could win a war by themselves without the assistance of a regular army. Earlier successful guerrillas were allied with a conventional army.

But, in a way perfectly compatible with the first point of my theory, Mao put his trust in the peasants who made up the bulk of the Chinese people. Even during the disaster of 1927, he proclaimed, "We can carry out the war ... by moblizing the masses and relying on them.... [and taking] a deep interest in the living conditions of the masses." Notice the second part: "taking a deep interest in the living conditions of the masses."

Mao's forces showed real respect for the peasants. Edgar Snow, a western observer of Mao's struggle, wrote that the Chinese leader gave his soldiers strict rules for behavior among the population. They had to be courteous and polite, return borrowed and replace damaged items, be honest in all transactions, pay for everything purchased, and even "establish latrines at a safe distance from people's houses."

Mao insisted that the CPC's fighting men treat the enemy well, too, on the grounds that the enemy were Chinese and would soon be friends. Standard procedure was to feed prisoners, give them a political lecture, and release them. Mao thought that the return of prisoners unharmed to their comrades would teach the latter that they need not fear capture and hence need not fight to the death. This would cut guerrilla casualties, of course, and entice desertions.

The People's Army (PA), as the communist forces were known, had wonderful sources of outside hardware, again as in my theory. Whenever KMT troops deserted or fled, the PA captured the weapons. It did likewise when the Japanese invaded China. And after World War II was over, first the Russians gave the CPC large stores of captured Japanese arms, and then entire divisions of the KMT's army changed sides, thus providing the PA with enormous quantities of American hardware.

Mao's theories coincide with my third point, as well. Mao wrote, "We must not fight any campaign for which we are unprepared, or which we cannot win." Finally, Mao's followers carried out "selective terrorism" when they assassinated KMT officials, an easy task since the targets were public figures.

Mao expressed my fourth point exactly when he decided in 1948, after the Communists had clearly won the political struggle against the KMT, that "the present situation demands that we do our utmost to ... facilitate the transition from the guerrilla form of war to regular war."

Mao Zedung's Chinese Revolution was a great success. My theory is the same as his, and it worked.

## VietMinh, 1946-1954

Despite the general Vietnamese distrust of the Chinese, Ho Chi Minh and his Viet Minh openly admitted their adoption of Mao's methods in their own fight against French imperlialism in this, The First IndoChina War. Of course, their practices were therefore in complete agreement with my theory.

Depending on the people was at the heart of the Viet Minh struggle to throw the foreigners out of the country. In the 1971 book by Vo Nguyen Giap, Ho's chief military commander, one chapter is called

"THE ENTIRE PEOPLE FIGHT THE ENEMY"

In other parts of his book, Giap spelled out exactly what he meant. Among other things, he wrote "Every citizen [is] a soldier," and "Our army is an army of the people, sprung from the people and fighting for the people."

Just one example of how that worked, out of zillions in the literature is Ngo Van Chieu's autobiographical "The Journal of a Vietminh Combatant." Chieu's unit was once housed by a wealthy family. The mother told him she had two sons in the guerrilla army and that she would become his mother, too, for the duration of the war. She promised that if he needed a place to hide, her home would be his shelter. Countless other Viet Minh troops were similarly protected by the general population.

Ho Chi Minh decided early on that because the Viet Minh depended on and was supported by the vast majority of the people, a guerrilla war would be better than a general uprising or a conventional, large-scale war.

The Viet Minh actually erred in 1949 by prematurely going over to conventional warfare. Ho mistakenly thought that the political struggle had been won, and that his forces could take the risk. They suffered such setbacks in conventional fighting that they had to resume guerrilla tactics until the French stupidity at Dien Bien Phu gave them another chance to come out of the jungle. By that time, of course, the political victory had long been won. As Geoffrey Fairbairn put it in *Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare,* by 1954 "most of the Vietnamese strong points are political. Most of the French strong points are military."

The Viet Minh openly acknowledged how much it owed to the Chinese and the Russians for their support. For example, the heavy artillery that played such an important role at Dien Bien Phu was provided by the Chinese, from the stocks they had captured from the Americans in the Korean War!

Giap had learned his military tactics from Mao while in exile in China in the 1930s. He and his schoolboy chum Ho followed those tactics precisely, avoiding

combat except where locally superior, and hiding out when they had to. The one mistake was the 1949 campaign, mentioned before, an error not repeated.

## Summary

In sum, then, these great victories were won because the guerrillas followed the my theory: they actually depended on the people, they got outside political and hardware support, they avoided combat except where locally superior, and they went over to conventional warfare only after the political struggle was won.

An army officer who took a course with me last year wanted to add to the theory: a guerrilla force cannot win unless it also has the support of an outside superpower. I don't think that's so, as events in China and Ireland seem to prove. Nor does the support lent the Viet Minh by the Russians and the Chinese seem to have been decisive. But you can decide.

Let's look at some counter-insurgents who won to see if they followed my theory.

## Greece, 1944-51

Like most post-war guerrilla struggles, the civil war in Greece was rooted in World War II. The government and the King fled to London as the Germans invaded in 1941. Later that year, when Hitler invaded Russia, the Greek Communists, the KKE, began the anti-German resistance. When the Nazis withdrew in 1944, the Communists got a lot of popular credit for their courage. But when the pro-Western royal government returned it didn't acknowledge the Communists. The KKE therefore refused to surrender its arms and instead continued its guerrilla war, this time against the Greek government.

But the KKE did not follow good guerrilla doctrine. Its forces committed atrocities that frightened and antagonized the Greek people. They could do so because they didn't need popular support. Most of the food and other supplies they needed came from Russia, through the Yugoslav border, not from the people.

The counterinsurgents, though, were at first unable to take advantage of the KKE's problems. The government originally tried to police the countryside with the National Guard. But that group was drawn too much from right-wingers and even men who had once collaborated with the Nazis. Its members had scores to settle, so it too was guilty of atrocities. The Greek army was supposed to support the National Guard, but it was poorly led and trained, and often retreated when the guerrillas attacked, thus leaving the population to the mercy of the KKE.

The turning point came in 1948, when two things happened. First was that General Alexander Papagos became President that year. He enjoyed great popularity as a national hero of the 1940 war against Italy, and brought into office a high degree of integrity and competence.

Second was that, under Papagos, Athens began to provide the first element of good government in the rural areas, "protection." The National Guard withdrew and was replaced by local home guardsmen. Since the KKE was still committing crimes in these areas, such local troops were regarded as saviors by most of the people.

Papagos carefully sculpted military action against the KKE to take advantage of the population's growing disenchantment with the guerrillas. He instituted better training programs, created more mobile units and issued better equipment, thus raising the morale and effectiveness of the regular army. These new policies were paid for by the United States, which in the "Truman Doctrine" of April 1947 had taken over from the British the role of chief backer of the Greek government.

Meanwhile, the KKE changed its strategy, for the worse. The guerrillas decided to shift to conventional, large-unit warfare, perhaps following the lead of Mao who was doing the same thing at that time in China. This decision turned out to be a major mistake in Greece, though, because the Greek army under Papagos was now much better, and better supported by the people. The army started clearing the KKE out of one region after another. Because the people feared the KKE, they eagerly supported the counterinsurgents once the army proved it was going to stay and protect them permanently.

Isolating the guerrilla was a stroke of luck. In 1948, Yugoslav dictator Josep Tito was bickering with Soviet leader Josef Stalin over the theoretical question of whether communism could vary from country to country. Tito showed his displeasure with the Soviets by refusing to allow Russian aid to travel through his country to the KKE. The only way the USSR could continue to help the Greeks was by invading Yugoslavia, something it was unwilling to do.

In Greece, then, the guerrillas did nothing about the first and most important part of my theory on guerrilla doctrine. They did not depend on the people, nor even treat the people well. They also went over to conventional fighting too early. They did have good outside support but it ended up a curse in that it made the support of the people unnecessary. In any case, they lost it in the Tito-Stalin split.

After a slow start, the government did everything right. It provided good government, isolated the guerrilla thanks to the Soviet-Yugoslav split, and then crushed the recalcitrants.

## The Philippines, 1946-57

Here again, we see the successful employment of the items mentioned in my theory on counterinsurgency doctrine. In fact, it was my study of the Philippines that led to my originally hypothesizing this "counterinsurgency doctrine."

Japan's World War II occupation of the Philippines, at the time a possession of the United States, was horrible. The Hukbalahap insurgency in central Luzon, led

by an able patriot, Luis Taruc, began as a resistance movement against the Japanese. After the war, some Huk heroes of that resistance were freely elected. But when they were refused their seats in the Congress by the anti-communist party, the Huks re-started their armed rebellion, this time against the Filipino government.

Guerrilla warfare has a long tradition in the Philippines. For nearly 500 years, Filipino guerrillas have made life miserable for the Spanish, the Americans in the early 20th Century, and the Japanese. There was plenty of experience on the guerrilla side in this war.

In the early going, the Huks actually maintained a headquarters in Manila, and had as many troops in the field as the Philippine Army and constabulary. They won a lot of points in rural Luzon by campaigning against absentee landlordism.

That was a big issue, since far too much of the land was owned by wealthy landlords who lived in Manila, and never set foot on the farmland they owned, although they scrupulously collected rents from the hardpressed peasants out there in the countryside.

The government's first efforts against the Huks were unsuccessful partly because of its lack of manpower. But the most important shortcoming of the counterinsurgency was its failure to provide good government. The villagers identified the government with those absentee landlords, and in fact there was a lot of connection between the two.

Moreoever, people in rural areas came to fear the government's constabulary more than the Huks. The police treated the people worse, demanding bribes, extorting them and even shelling villages that were suspected of being Huk refuges.

The government then made things worse in 1949. The repudiation of the election results in 1946 had started things, but the elections in 1949 were even more corrupt, as the government arrested opposing candidates and stuffed ballot boxes. Not surprisingly, the Huks gained even more popular upport.

Fortunately, a great man was on hand to save the day. A "knight in shining armor," if you remember my medieval lecture.

The chairman of the House Committee on National Defense had been critical of the Army's performance. Honest, intelligent, energetic and unpretentious, Ramon Magsaysay was a wartime guerrilla hero himself, who understood the needs and problems of the people in the rural hinterland. Following the debacle of the election of 1949, Magsaysay was named Secretary of National Defense.

Almost magically, he turned the struggle around. He did so by providing good government, the essential element of my theory. One of the first reforms he

introduced required the army and the constabulary to treat the people well. According to Blaufarb in *The Counterinsurgency Era,* in Magsaysay's army,

> every soldier had two duties: first, to act as an ambassador of good will from the government to the people; second, to kill or capture Huk.

Notice the order of the items. First, a soldier had to "act as an abassador of good will ... to the people." Only after that, was he supposed to kill Huks.

Magsaysay saw that the troops had candy and chewing gum to distribute to children, and extra food to give to villagers. He would fly in unannounced to ensure that the officers and men were indeed behaving well. Officers who did not were dismissed, so nearly all learned to behave. Any citizen with a grievance about the army could send Magsaysay himself a telegram for only 5¢, and Magsaysay would report back within 24 hours on what action had been taken.

Magsaysay enlisted the press in his effort. He allowed reporters to go anywhere in the country to observe and then write freely about the army and the war. The press thus became the watchdog over soldiers and officers who might otherwise misbehave. The press also was the instrument by which the government assured the people that their interests were being cared for.

Magsaysay next implemented land reform. As a first step, he required some of the more notorious absentee landlords to surrender enough acreage so that poor families could take ownership of the land they worked. How popular do you suppose that piece of "good government" was?

He then developed a system that was the amnesty idea in my theory. His program resettled surrendered Huks on land in virgin territory far from the war. The government helped in the building of roads, wells, electricity, community facilities and housing. Land was assigned to families who would clear and cultivate it, and the government provided them with food, working animals and tools until they were on their feet. The program was paid for by a "peace fund" from voluntary donations and American aid.

Magsaysay solved the Huk political grievance, too. All knew that the elections of 1946 and 1949 were corrupt, so he made sure that the regional and Congressional voting in 1951 was scrupulously honest. The army ensured that no ballot-rigging occurred, and he invited the press to cover all aspects of the elections. The people rewarded Magsaysay by electing him President in the next election, in 1953.

Isolating the Huks was easy once the economic and political reforms were in place. Because the Philippines is an island republic, and the navy controlled the surrounding seas, materials could not be smuggled in to the insurgents from outside. The Huks were distanced from even the peasants they claimed to represent by the

combination of Magsaysay's reforms, and things such as tight but courteous roadblocks and other obstacles to Huk mobility.

When his social and political reforms were firmly in place and the Huks had been significantly isolated from the people and outside support, Magsaysay went out to crush the recalcitrants. In a brilliant coup, almost the entire national leadership of the Hukbalahap was captured in a raid on a secret meeting in Manila. The government's intelligence for the raid came from former Huks who had changed sides because of Magsaysay's reforms.

By 1957, when Ramon Magsaysay was killed in a plane crash, the Philippine government had stifled the Huk rebellion. The achievement was remarkable in that it was done with an army not much bigger than the guerrilla armed forces it faced, and with only minimal help from the United States. Its focus was political, which is why it succeeded.

## Malaya, 1947-60

The counterinsurgents won in Greece and the Philippines because of their skill and good luck. But no one in postwar history has been better at counterinsurgency than the British colonial government in Malaya. If Mao is the model for successful guerrillas, Malaya is the paradigm for successful counterinsurgents.

I learned about this after my "doctrine" was in place. But Malaya is perfect proof.

Yet again, the roots of the rebellion lay in World War II. The British Empire lost its aura of invincibility when it surrendered Malaya to Japan in 1942. Asians who resented the imperialists took heart. So, postwar opposition to Britain at first took two forms:

> (1) local Malays who sought independence, and
> (2) local Chinese who wanted to end the bigotry they suffered at the hands of both the British and the Malays.

The challenge was daunting. The population was about 60% Malay and about 35% Chinese with a smattering of Indians and others. The British adopted a political solution because, as High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney wisely said, "the nature of the war in Malaya [is] political and ideological rather than military."

Happily for the counterinsurgents, this wisdom was widespread throughout the army, too. As two British generals serving in Malaya wrote later:

> The lawful government of a country, in addition to operating its ... army, air force, and police with intelligence and efficiency, must at the same time govern in a way demonstrably superior to that offered by the insurgents. If this is not done, no amount of force will ensure victory.

In 1949, the British removed the Malay grievance by announcing that independence would be granted as soon as the uprising was stopped. The British worried most about the Chinese, you see, many of whom were Communists and connected to Mao, at that time just winding up his own successful civil war.

To cope with these Chinese rebels, the British enlisted the Malay majority, who were similarly afraid of Mao. Malays were appointed to and trained in civil government, so they could see they had a stake in the outcome of the war. The British supervised open and free elections, so Malays and Chinese alike could see that the promise of independence was an honest one.

Mistakes were made. One was that the British declared the death penalty for anyone who "consorted" with the guerrillas. This was a major error, since many could not avoid consorting with the rebels until the authorities had isolated them. Once the British realized the mistake, though, they rescinded the policy.

Having won over the Malay majority, the authorities then set out to isolate the Chinese rebels from the people they relied on. One British general later wrote,

> Isolating the guerrilla from food, information, and recruits is a most effective way of reducing insurgency.... If he must make food his primary concern, his combat efficiency suffers accordingly. Much of his time must be devoted to raising, or procuring, or transporting food.

In 1950, the Imperial Government gave Sir Harold Briggs authority over all civilian and military activity. He promoted what became known as the "Briggs Plan." According to Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Morrison Taw, two scholars at RAND, the California think-tank, the primary goal of the Briggs plan was to

> prove to the general population, including the Chinese, that the government could and would provide for their security, so that they would not succumb either to the blandishments or to the threats of the communists.

Historian Anthony James Joes in his book *Guerrilla Warfare* wrote that the Briggs Plan had four parts. It would

1) clear the country of guerrillas methodically from south to north,
2) resettle Chinese squatters from the edge of jungle into secure villages,
3) uproot the guerrilla infrastructure inside the cleared areas, and
4) coordinate civil and military activities.

Its centerpiece was the resettlement of the Chinese on whom the guerrillas relied for food and shelter. These Chinese were farming land close to the northern jungles. Within a year, more than 400,000 of them were relocated into some 410 secure "New Villages" elsewhere in the country. There they lived inside protective barriers,

and were supervised by police drawn from all the races who were specially trained in courteous but effective counter-infiltration.

These were the "strategic hamlets" later wrongly used in South Vietnam. The Malayan version worked. The Chinese ex-squatters received title to the new land, thus improving their situation. But moving them severely hurt the guerrillas who now had to spend their main energy on that tedious process of getting food.

The resettlement was done with speed, efficiency, and compassion.

- The troops were trained beforehand in being decent to the people they were moving.
- Adequate numbers of trucks were employed. Medical teams were present and active.
- What could not be moved was generously paid for on the spot.
- Police screened everyone to weed out the guerrillas.
- Soldiers showed every sort of kindness like carrying babies and parcels, or helping the old and providing refreshments.

The resettlement was paid for by an increase in the price of tin, made possible by the rising demand caused by the Korean War.

Relocation was a great success. It served both to deliver good government and to isolate the guerrilla. Most Chinese who were moved became supporters of the government which had treated them so well. Many enlisted in the Home Guard and took responsibility for protecting their new communities. They stood the test of loyalty: very few of their weapons ever turned up in the hands of the guerrillas.

British authorities undertook economic reforms, too, by delivering resources to both Malay and Chinese villages. For example, the "Rural Industrial Development Authority" carried out small-scale development projects in the countryside, such as electricity, water and roads, in both Malay and Chinese locales.

The political effort continued, too. Every step towards independence was highly publicized to maintain the loyalty of the Malayan people. No discrimination was allowed, which of course appealed to the Chinese minority.

For example, in February 1952, it was announced that when Malaya became independent, there would be a common citizenship for Malays and Chinese. In May 1952, elections for village councils were held, and both races were eligible to win. Four months later, 1.1 million Chinese were given full citizenship, leaving out only those 800,000 still in the rebellious areas. In July 1955 came the first general election with universal franchise. And so on until Malaysian independence was declared in 1957.

As their political, economic and social programs bore fruit, the British and their allies began the final step, crushing the recalcitrants. The counterinsurgent forces

now outnumbered the guerrillas by about 40:1. They operated endlessly in the jungle or wherever there was guerrilla activity, and they became quite skilled.

Incidentally, they used mainly light weapons so they had much less firepower than the Americans were to use in Vietnam. As a result, the army did much less damage to the Malayan countryside and people, and it made far fewer enemies than the Americans did later. This fact, too, shows how important were the political goals of the counterinsurgency.

Out-theorized, out-manned, cut off from supplies, and ultimately with nothing to complain about, the guerrilla uprising had faded away to nearly nothing by the time of independence in 1957. In 1960, the insurgency was declared ended by the three-year-old Malaysian government.

Communism was stopped dead in its tracks in Malaya, although it did win later in nearby Vietnam when the Americans and their Vietnamese allies forgot everything the British and Malays had learned a few years earlier.

Before we go to the Vietnam War, let's look at one strange anomaly in the history of guerrilla warfare, which nevertheless supports my theory. That event was

## Cuba, 1956-59

It's better to talk of Castro's Cuban rebellion here with the counterinsurgents than with the guerrillas because Castro won not so much because of his correct application of guerrilla doctrine but because the government failed to do anything even resembling correct counterinsurgency doctrine. Castro won by default.

The Cuban peasants had few grievances against the existing economic system. The staple of Cuban agriculture is sugar, which must be grown on huge plantations by large gangs of laborers. The giant corporations that controlled the land, although allied with the tyrranical regime led by Fulgencio Batista, actually paid the workers livable wages.

On the other hand, Castro preached a platform of generalities to the peasants:

(1) democracy,
(2) land reform with compensation for the original owners and
(3) moderate nationalization of utilities.

These platitudes were uttered so often that the peasants came to believe that if implemented they would solve the dissatisfaction most Cubans had with the Batista gang itself.

That unhappiness was mainly due to the hedonism of the regime. Batista and his cronies were playboys, gamblers, whore-mongers. It was their personal behavior that shocked common Cubans. Only a few months from the end of the struggle,

even Che Guevara admitted that the peasants had not "fully identified" themselves with the guerrilla program, such as it was.

So, Castro's guerrillas did not follow my point about depending on the people. But Batista was so far from "providing good government," that his regime actually defaulted the support of the common folk.

Castro did succeed in gaining hardware support, although little came from "outside" Cuba. Most of it came from the Batista forces, in captured weapons.

Nor did the Castro forces ever grow in size. At the moment of victory, when Batista simply fled, pretty much without a fight of any sort, there were probably only a few hundred fighting men in Castro's "army." It was certainly the smallest guerrilla force ever to win a war. Nothing proves better than this that Batista lost more than Castro won. Castro's troops were good at "selective terror." Their assassinations and other disruptions lured the Batista regime into counter-terror, and it was this that finally turned most of people against the government.

So in Cuba, where the guerrillas did not achieve a political bond with the people, they took advantage of the fact that the government didn't do so, either. That should give pause to any government that finds itself facing a guerrilla.

## Viet Cong, 1958-1975

OK, so what did happen in the American Vietnam War, 1958-75.

The "Viet Cong" was created by southern Vietnamese who were frantically afraid of the Saigon government and simultaneously disappointed with Hanoi's leadership. There's a wonderfully persuasive account of the creation of the rebellion both in the "Pentagon Papers" and in Frances Fitzgerald's *Fire in the Lake*.

Many of the leaders of the National Liberation Front (NLF), the name the Viet Cong preferred for themselves, were former Viet Minh who had been left behind to prepare for the national elections which were promised in the 1954 Geneva Accords that ended the first war.

According to the secret history prepared by the American Defense Department in 1967, the "Pentagon Papers," the South Vietnamese government headed by Ngo Diem Dinh and backed by the United States was so corrupt and tyrannical that its repression created the NLF which in turn enjoyed mammoth growth over the first few years of its existence. The insurgents gained the support of the rural people, about 85% of the South Vietnamese population, helped by the fact that the Diem regime was interested mainly in establishing its power base in the cities.

In doing so, of course, Diem cut himself off from the vast majority of the people, whom he regarded as obstacles to his quest for power. When he adopted the

"strategic hamlet," an idea borrowed from the British in Malaysia by his American advisers, it bit him on his butt. Diem thought of the strategic hamlet mainly as a way to contain and intimidate the peasants whom he perceived as his enemies. This hostility cost him rural support and drove the peasants into the arms of the guerrillas, who had treated them well.

Almost everywhere in rural Vietnam, the VC won over the peasantry. Much later, in the 1970s, the Saigon government did a better job of placating the population of South Vietnam than it had at first, but by then it was too late.

The Viet Cong's outside support was better than the Viet Minh's. In the first war, the Viet Minh had to rely only on the Russians and Chinese. In the second war, the NLF could depend on the same communist powers. But even closer, the insurgents got massive help from the Communist regime in Hanoi. The guerrillas controlled most rural areas of the country, where that aid could be safely delivered. Even better in some ways, the Viet Cong enjoyed enormous support from the United States, by capturing weapons in the field and taking from the ships in the harbors arms and equipment that were intended for Saigon's army.

For ten years, the insurgents fought only as guerrillas, as the Viet Cong "eschewed combat except where locally superior." It was very good at "selective terrorism," as western complaints showed. Hardly a week went by that we didn't read about some atrocity the VC pulled here or there. Such events were carefully planned

assassinations of local leaders who worked with Saigon, or
a grenade attack on bus full of defense ministry workers, etc.

Such incidents hurt the South Vietnamese government, since they showed that it could not even protect its own people.

The NLF did create its own disaster in 1968, when it nearly wiped itself out during the Tet Offensive. Thereafter the war was taken over primarily by mainstream North Vietnamese Army units as the war changed from a guerrilla struggle to a more conventional fight. But by that time, and to a large degree because of the Tet Offensive, the Viet Cong had won the political battle. What the Northerners fought thereafter was perceived by the vast majority of the South Vietnamese people as a great patriotic struggle against the foreign Americans and their puppets in Saigon.

The biggest mistake the US made in its Vietnam War was to make it a "war." If we had put our emphasis on political wisdom and forced the Saigon regime to do the same or lose our support, we'd have at least saved all that treasure and all those lives, and we might have achieved the goal of maintaining a non-Communist south.

As it was, there was no military way to achieve our goal there, if the political problems weren't resolved. Instead, we threw our incredible military might into the

fray on the side of a horrible Saigon government that none of us would support if it governed in Washington. Of course, the Vietnamese people rejected that government and us, too.

**Sum**

There may be some among you who disagree with me because you think that warfare is what one does in war, even in a guerrilla war. To those folks, it may seem too simple to say that a government facing a guerrilla has to "treat its people" well, particularly when we're talking about some Third World country.

But that was the big mistake we made in Vietnam. Americans would frequently excuse the barbarity of the pro-US Saigon government, saying that the Vietnamese people didn't know any better, or that they needed a "strong" government.

Nonsense. It doesn't take a UNC degree to know when your government is abusive. Vietnamese peasants can figure that out for themselves.

Think about the United States. Why are we all loyal to the U.S. Government? Not because there are troops everywhere. Few American citizens have ever seen an American soldier fully equipped for war.

Nope, we're loyal to the U. S. Government because it treats us well. When it stops doing that, many of us will give some thought to armed rebellion, as happened too often in the late 60s and early 70s.

Thus it is nearly everywhere. If a government mistreats its people, there may be a rebellion and it may take the form of a guerrilla war. When that happens, the government had better change and quickly begin to treat its people well.

If it doesn't but the guerrillas do, they will probably win.

ANY QUESTIONS?

**48 minutes.**

## Israel Today?

Israel is the best hope for democracy in the Middle East. For that reason, it's correct that the United States guarantee to protect Israel from a viable threat to its existence. But there is no such thing today.

The great irony is that the second best chance for democracy in the Middle East is the Palestinian Arab state, but Israel's repression of those people makes that outcome highly unlikely in the foreseeable future.

Since 1967, the Israelis have squandered every chance to be the "godfather" of the Palestinian state, in such a way as to make the Arabs grateful to Tel Aviv. Here, I'm merely echoing the sentiments of Moshe Dayan, the great Israeli soldier who won independence for his country and then captured the Arab lands in the 1967 War. He thought the captured land should be used as a bargaining chip for peace, an idea that was grasped by the American-born Israeli Premier Golda Meir and forced on Menachem Begin, the Likud Premier who followed her, by Jimmy Carter, who was far brighter than the fool Saturday Night Live portrayed.

That sort of wisdom has been rare in Israel recently. The armed demonstration Begin's successor Ariel Sharon pulled at the Al Aksa mosque about a month ago was calculated to irritate Jerusalem's Arabs, who were already frustrated by the failure of the peace process at Camp David a week earlier. Sharon wanted to foment an Arab uprising to kill that wounded peace process, and he did exactly that.

But horror of horrors for Israel, unlike most of the time since 1967 there is now within Palestine a leadership cadre that can and probably already is leading a guerrilla war. So far the guerrillas have mainly rocks to fight with, but the terrorism that we see every couple of days is what guerrillas do. Israel responds with military action, angering more people who join the guerrillas, and the cycle expands upward, in a direction unfavorable to democratic but repressive Israel.

It's not a pretty picture to see the Israeli Defense Forces killing unarmed citizens, including children, in scenes reminiscent of nothing more than the Warsaw Ghetto of 1943.

The guerrillas now enjoy the popular support of almost all the Arabs in the area, including for the first time those who enjoy Israeli citizenship. Of course, neighboring Arab states are wholly in agreement with the Palestinians about such questions as Israeli settlement in the captive territories and sovereignty over Jerusalem. When these countries begin to deliver outside support in the form of hardware, too, then Israel will have itself a guerrilla war.

It can win all the fights, of course. Like the Americans in Vietnam. No one doubts that the Israeli warmakers can kill any guerrillas the Palestinians put up. But what will be the gain? Unless Israel wipes out all the Palestinians, perhaps the goal

of such right-wingers as Sharon, there will always be Arabs in and around Israel, and they will keep fighting until they win the political struggle. If Israel does wipe out the Arab population, then the world will have to make a judgment about genocide committed by a democratic country.

I don't want this to happen to Israel. I want its government to listen to the words of its own hero, Moshe Dayan. He said Israel should withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, and turn it over to any Palestinian authority that could govern there. He said Israel should do it graciously and generously. And he argued that the Israeli government should never say, "Now, you behave correctly, or we can come back."

Because, of course, it isn't necessary to say so.

**53 minutes**

| Concepts | Events | Artifacts | People |
|---|---|---|---|
| Historiography | Jerusalem (1099) | *USS Reuben James* | Clausewitz 1780-1831 |
| courtly love | Crécy (1346) | "Gunfight at the OK Corral" | Ivanhoe |
| Private wars | Poitiers (1356) | Hadrian's Wall | Basil Rathbone |
| Public wars | Agincourt (1415) | The Antonine Wall | Guy de Gisborne |
| *Guerre mortel,* | Azincourt | Offa's Dike | Lancelot |
| infantry | Orleans (1428) | Danevirke | Guenevere |
| narrow front | Breda (1637) | fief | Geoffrey of Monmouth |
| Cap the T | Dien Bien Phu (1954) | Ken Follett, *Pillars of the Earth* | troubador |
| | Sluys (1340) | pike | Bernard S. Bachrach |
| | Spanish Armada (1588) | halberd | Henry II "The Navigator" |
| | Lepanto (1571) | Shakespeare, *Henry V* | |
| | | onager | |
| | | bombard | |
| | | bastion | |
| | | "Ben Hur" | |

## PWAD 50 Medieval Warfare, October 9, 2000

1. Organize into foursomes, please.
   a) most interesting thing from Howard,
   b) most confusing thing from Howard,
   c) most incorrect thing from Howard
2. One quiz form per foursome. Write the best choices.
3. Number of those who actually read, top right, encircled.
4. We'll vote: a)
   b)
   c)
5. Keep your ears open. We may take the same vote on my lecture.

## Introduction

Today I'm going to try to show you how an historian may deal with the questions of war and peace. You've seen how anthropologists, psychologists, soldiers, and political scientists deal. Today, one historian will do it.

The first thing is to be curious, to have fun with the material, to try to feel what the people of the time were feeling. Think of yourself as a "voyeur," a Peeping Tom.

A second point is to be sure to recognize that historians who write about certain periods rarely agree with each other. Historiography is the study of what historians have written about history. The First Law of Historiography is that historians are influenced by the world from which they view the past. That is, a Soviet historian of the 1920s would write about warfare in the Middle Ages very differently from an American of the 1990s. Distinctions also exist between historians not so far apart as those two,

A third characteristic is that historians frequently relate one concept to another, or take theories and try to apply them or show they are invalid. I'll use Clausewitz, which you've all read, and also Howard, which not enough of you have read.

Be careful to be historical, now. Don't think that Clausewitz and the Middle Ages were about the same time. They weren't. Clausewitz was not much closer to the Middle Ages than you are. The Middle Ages are usually dated from 1150 to 1500. Clausewitz lived from 1780 to 1831. So the period was 300-600 years older than he was. But he was only 200 years older than you.

## The Myth of the Knight

There are important disagreements among historians about medieval warfare, as there is about everything else in history. Howard's slick little overview is pretty much the standard wisdom: that it was the era of the knight, a mounted and heavily armed cavalryman who sought hand-to-hand combat against other knights.

What does the word "knight" mean to you? Do you think of a man like Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe,* the brilliant, all-good defender of the unprotected, the promoter of Christian morality? Or do you think of Basil Rathbone's *Guy de Gisborne* of "The Adventures of Robin Hood," that greedy, corrupt, unscrupulously evil man who was taking advantage of legitimate king's absence to conspire with a usurper so as to enrich himself?

Incidentally, please note that I have just referred to a character from an 1832 novel and a Hollywood actor and character in a 1938 film as examples of an historical point. That's another thing historians do, too: they take multi-disciplinary approaches to the history, something you do a little in this course.

The Ivanhoe picture is what endures in common culture. As another example of mythic knights, the men at King Arthur's Round Table worked for chivalrous goals. See? Now it's a 900-year-old legend I'm using.

Arthur's knights were honest, virtuous, and guided by a relentless sense of personal honor. Remember how shocked they were by Lancelot's stealing the king's queen? And worse: how shocked they were by Guenevere's infidelity to Arthur? Worst of all: how shocked even today's people are by the disloyalty of the two lovers.

That's the myth: no knight could deceive his king and violate his own honor without being condemned by contemporaries and legend alike.

Of course, King Arthur and his Round Table were myths themselves. They were created by Geoffrey of Monmouth in about 1100, roughly 600 years after

the historical Arthur -- who himself is uncertain -- actually lived. In Monmouth's portrayal, these guys weren't the Romanized Celts they may actually have been, but knights like the ones living at Geoffrey's time.

Even the legend itself was mythical. How was that possible?

For four or five centuries after the fall of Rome, the German successor states in France, England, italy, etc., were mostly illiterate. Their culture was necessarily mainly oral. Songs and poems were handed down by generations of 'troubadors," guys pretty much like modern folk signers and modern movie-makers in their extending into public awareness the trails, failures and successes of past peoples.

Here I go again into multi-disciplinary analysis. Have you ever heard the song "Reuben James," about a destroyer sunk in peacetime by a Nazi U-boat? Or have you ever seen the Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas film "Gunfight at the OK Corral?" They're modern examples of myths.

They're based in truth, but they exaggerate the achievements and/or tragedies of the good guys. You can imagine how much the medieval troubadors may have exaggerated in an illiterate period when there was no evidence to check on what they were singing.

Let's look for a minute at one of Clausewitz' principles: warfare is always based in imperfect knowledge. He was probably talking about tactics, in that commanders on the field can never hope to know perfectly everything about the battle they about to enter into.

But in the case of the knights who made war in the Middle Ages, their imperfect knowledge was even more profound than that. A good share of their baggage was how imperfectly they knew themselves and what they did for society.

In the mythology of the medieval oral tradition, the knights ~~became~~ were holier than holy, more honorable than any human could be. Even in our modern language we have an expression for such a person: a "knight in shining armor" means someone who is perfect, right?

In the troubadors' stories, the sex lives of the knights included more "courtly love" than anything else. One of the main reasons why Lancelot and Guenevere were condemned was that they went beyond the boundaries of courtly love, you see?

Courtly love began when a knight and a lady would approvingly eyeball each other across a crowded room, the cold stone chamber of the royal court. They would thereafter sneak furtive glances and even brief conversations with each

other, as their hearts burst with love and anxiety. They had to be careful, because one or the other was married, usually the woman, so they could never be lovers in the physical sense.

And that was tragedy, of course. Listeners to these songs and tales would see that the passion the star-crossed lover shared was "true," and since it couldn't and wouldn't be consummated, the audience would feel the pain. But the audience would also admire and respect the frustrated would-be lovers because of their loyalty to their marriage vows or whatever it was that kept them apart.

Courtly love may or may not have existed in fact. It probably did. But it did make the knights and even their entire era seem elevated beyond real life. The stories were always set in the past, of course, where they couldn't be checked out. These knights and ladies always seemed a lot better than the ones who were alive at the time. But the legends made everyone think that knighthood and court life was special. And thus it continued for hundreds of years.

Any Questions?

## The Reality

in fact, the knights and their life's work were much more like humans and their activities that we know. Even Howard shows that while there were limits in the "private wars" of the Middle Ages, those limits were entirely for self-interest. You could kill the enemy in one of these feuds.

Hmm, feud. I'm sorry to admit that that word doesn't come from the same roots as "feudalism." But it should. That's what these guys did: they feuded.

In a private war, according to Howard, you could kill the enemy but not despoil his property. Of course not -- his property would be yours when the feud was over if you won, so of course you didn't ruin it. No chivalry there, although the knights thought there was.

"Public" wars involved the kingdom, or the principality, or dukedom or whatever passed for the "state." In public wars, as Howard wrote,

> Prisoners could be taken and held to ransom; the property of the enemy was lawful booty; contributions could be levied on the population. In principle not only ecclesiastics and their possessions but the tillers of the soil were exempt from looting and pillage. But that exemption did not apply if they were suspected of giving 'aid and countenance' to the war, which they usually were.

These were horrible wars, even for those theoretically exempt. No chivalry there, either, although again the knights thought they was.

And look at *"guerre mortel,"* when it was even worse. If a city or fortress didn't surrender, there would usually be a fight without quarter. The inhabitants and all their property were at the mercy of the conqueror if the attackers won.

That's an attitude not unlike the one of strategic bombing in World War II. If the British won't surrender, the Nazis thought in 1940, then we'll bomb the hell out of London and all its civilians. The Allies did the same thing in 1945, saying if the Nazis won't surrender, we'll bomb the hell out of Hamburg, Berlin, and Dresden and all their civilians. Let me not even mention the fire bombing of Tokyo or the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Warfare was pretty much like that in the Middle Ages. It was not about holy knights doing holy things. It was bloody awful. To cite only one example, what happened in Jerusalem in 1099 was one of the worst ~~days~~ events in European history. The Crusaders, all knights off to find the Holy Grail or do some other good Christian deed, were furious when the defenders didn't surrender the Holy City. So, after a stiff fight which the Europeans won, they slaughtered every single inhabitant, Arab men, women, children who were not even the same people as those who had defended the city.

and it's one that persists today in the Arab world, with important consequences for U.S. policy.

This maybe the same . . . Al Aksa

Many of these poor people fled into the mosque, hoping the Christians -- men of "the Book," after all -- would respect the holy site. Not those knights. Eyewitnesses reported that as the Crusaders slaughtered the refugees in that place of worship, the blood ran so deep that Christian feet in stirrups were submerged in Muslim blood.

No chivalry there, either, right? What could be more imperfect than the self-knowledge the knights had of themselves. Clausewitz may not have meant exactly the way I apply his theory of "imperfect knowledge," but he was perfectly right, nevertheless.

Any comments?

## Other Views

There are other views of medieval military history. Howard, recall, calls it the "Wars of the Knights." But if you know historiography you know that there must be varying views.

It's interesting that the textbook used in this very course only a year ago called the same period of warfare, "The Age of Stone Fortifications." The chapter by Bernard S. Bachrach in that book is called "On Roman Ramparts,

300-1300." Bachrach argued that medieval warfare was very similar to the way the late Empire Romans fought, in their use of fortresses and walls to protect cities and ports. He emphasized that the seige, not the cavalry charge by the mounted knight, was the typical event of the medieval age.

That analysis points to the wars that were fought around the surviving city walls at places like Paris and London, and around the forts originally built by the Romans and modified into castles by the successor states at places like Aachen, Vienna, Salisbury. Nor did Bachrach forget such great Roman barriers as Hadrian's and the Antoninus' Walls in Britain, or the fact that Germans copied them, as in Offa's Dike which even now divides England from Wales, or the Danevirke which still separates the Jutland peninsula from mainland Germany.

This is such a different view of medieval warfare from the one Howard gave you that you should be sure to realize that even in a time so long ago, the first principle of history is still valid: there is no certain truth about the past. New evidence may be discovered, or new evaluations or interpretations of long-known evidence can be, and usually are, presented. If you're interested in medieval history, the military side of things is still a rich field for research and analysis.

## My View

In case you're interested, here's what I think of the knights. They were grown-up men playing boys' games. Ride horses, throw spears, thrust lances, swing swords, a permanent rape and pillage party, oh my, what fun!

This life's game descended from when the ancestors of these guys were warriors, in the days of the Visigoths, the Franks, Saxons, Vandals, Lombards. Listen to the names: Visigoths, Vandals. These were forces of sheer destruction, because with few exceptions, they didn't understand the beauties of the Classical World they invaded. So they wrecked it.

But that was in the 5th and 6th centuries. The Middles Ages were 400, 500, 600 years later, and noblemen who should have known better still perceived themselves as mounted warriors fighting against enemies that were sometimes real, sometimes imagined. They were in fact still semi-barbarous, and they were awful.

Comments?

No one should think that today's America with a population armed to the teeth with assault rifles and handguns and innocent men, women and children killed every day -- thanks, Mr. Heston -- no one should think that that

dangerous America is a new phenomenon in western history. The Era of the Knight was similar.

## Marriage of Economics and Military

Howard has an important point that the economic and the military sytem in medieval Europe was feudalism. Isn't that the same as Clausewitz' saying that War is never an isolated act, but must be tied to policy?

Most historians agree with Howard and Clausewitz and and also with the fact that both the economic and the military systems were made necessary by the collapse of the earlier central systems.

That is, the Roman Empire used to have an economy that was much wider than local. Archaeology has discovered Syrian jewelry in English graves, and Danubian pottery in African ruins. A few now uncovered Roman shipwrecks have things like Spanish wine in Italian containers alongside a London wharf. The Roman economy included a great deal of trade across broad areas because the central imperial government made it possible.

The economics of trade was protected by the military system. For more than 500 years, the Mediterranean was a Roman lake, safe from pirates because the Roman navy had exterminated them and prevented their rebirth. Trade across the land mass of the Empire was protected because the imperial government built wonderful roads and its legions kept invaders outside the perimeter.

But with the collapse of Rome, all such traffic became dangerous, on land or sea. So trade practically stopped. Food, shelter and clothing had to be produced near at hand as a result. Money became almost non-existent, because money is created by the central government, so some other means of exchange was needed.

The answer for all these economic and military problems was the "fief." A landlord would rent part of his holdings to tenants, who would produce the food and fiber needed for human life. That's an economic exchange no less than your giving a dollar to some guy who gives you a hot dog back. But the key here is that the medieval economy was intensely localized.

At the same time, local defense became essential. There was no imperial army to keep invaders out, so raiders of every sort showed up all the time. They might be only the knights from the next province, off on a rape and pillage expedition to shake off the boredom, remember? For a good fictional account of this phenomenon, read Ken Follett's *Pillars of the Earth* about a medievel mason whose family is repeatedly attacked by the nasty knight. The local people defended themselves by, first, running to the landlord's fortress or

castle. But the lord would provide shelter for them only if they had earlier provided food and clothing for him, and would now serve as the manpower in his castle's defense force. So, the military was localized, too.

That's perfectly Clausewitzian. The military action of those medieval societies was exactly the continuation of their socio-economic life. Warfare was policy.

Howard is wonderfully correct, then, in saying that medieval warfare was based precisely on the contemporary social and economic system of feudalism.

Comments?

## The Weapons of the Knights

Let's look at the weapons used by and against knights.

the sword could be long or short and was used usually to swing and hack at an enemy;

the spear was a thrown sharpened pole;

the lance was a *carried* sharpened pole for thrusting;

the pike was a sharpened pole, usually stuck in the ground and pointed upward so attackers or their horses would be impaled;

the halberd was both a battle ax and a pike mounted on a ~~six-foot~~ long handle. It could chop or stab and often had a hook to pull a knight off his horse;

the club was anything blunt used to swing at the enemy's head or body; a club made out of metal was sometimes called a mace;

the ax was a sharpened edge fixed on a handle and used to swing at enemy's head or body;

There was ~~of course~~ the longbow which was cheap and popular. For those reasons, it was actually considered too lowly for a knight to use, so it shouldn't be listed as a knight's weapon. It was fired vertically, and it had greater range than the earlier and horizontal shortbow. It was also much faster to reload and enjoyed much greater range than the contemporary crossbow

The knights would fight hand-to-hand, charging on their horses to get at each other with lances, clubs, axes, swords.

Give this a little thought. If you were in an army in those days, and nearly every man was from 14 or so older, you'd fight with and *against* weapons like these. You could stab or be stabbed, spear or be speared, chop or be chopped, slash or be slashed, smash or be smashed. And the guy you were fighting was usually close enough so you could smell his breath, feel his body, and taste his blood which spurted all over you if you killed him.

Does this give you an idea of what Clausewitz meant when he said war is brutal, the application of maximum force? Don't dare think that because these guys didn't have automatic weapons or jet propulsion or nuclear arsenals, they weren't bringing maximum force to bear on their enemies.

Comments?

## Archery

Infantry -- soldiers on foot -- had been at the center of Roman warfare, but it dwindled in the days of the knight. When they faced the low-class infantry, knights had all the advantages of mounted height, greater speed and momentum at contact, superior weaponry, and a lifetime of special training.

Infantry, however, was brought back into common use in the 1300s by the longbow. This was one of the greatest weapon systems in all history, because

(1) it returned the foot soldier to prominence, and

(2) it made the small, underpopulated half-island of England the equal of any continental power in Europe.

It's incorrect to call it the "English" longbow. It was really Welsh. It was borrowed by Edward I after he saw how effective it was at long range against his knights in the late 1200's when Welsh guerrillas used it and then fled before the English could come to grips with them.

As Howard says, the longbow was a social weapon. The lower classes recruited to use it were thrilled to be killing aristocratic knights. But part of the success of the longbow in the 100 Years War was due to the stupidity of the French knights who clung to the illusions engendered by their silly myths.

Crécy in 1346 and Poitiers in 1356 were such fights. At both, French knights were slaughtered by English archers because the longbow was so good. It had range, lethality and reloading speed.

And yet, the French knights contributed to the massacres themselves by being arrogantly stupid.

Crécy was awful. The French army comprised entirely mounted knights who pranced across a field towards the badly outnumbered English under King Edward III. But in about five minutes, English archers slaughtered five thousand Genoese crossbowmen fighting for France, and then a similar number of French knights who came out to push the surviving crossbowmen closer to the English lines. When that effort failed, the French knights charged, but the field was so strewn with bodies of men and horses that they couldn't get up much speed and became easy targets for the longbows.

Poitiers was more humiliating because the French king was captured. Here the Black Prince, Edward, son of King Edward III, arrayed his troops the same way his father had at Crécy. This time the French advanced on foot, trying to avoid cluttering the field with dead horses as had happened at Crécy. Seeing that, the Black Prince remounted his knights. His archers gunned down many of the marching French knights, and a cavalry charge by the English knights slaughtered the dismounted survivors.

Even worse, though, was Agincourt in 1415, because it led to the loss of the entire country, albeit temporarily. Two generations after Poitiers, the French had learned nothing of value. Angry mounted aristocrats attacked a much smaller force -- maybe three-to-one smaller -- but into a narrow front. Here the lower-class archers had historical memories of what their grandfathers had done at Crécy or Poitiers.

Shakespeare suggests that such war stories were common in English pubs before Agincourt. His Henry V reminds his officers that after Agincourt,

> He that shall live this day and see old age
> Will yearly on the vigil *feast* his neighbors
> And say, "Tomorrow is Sa'nt Crispian."
> Then he will strip his sleeve and show his scars,
> And say "These wounds I had on Crispin's Day."
> Old men forget, ...
> But he'll remember with advantages
> What feats he did that day....
> And gentlemen in England now abed
> Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
> And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
> That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's Day.

The archers at Agincourt had heard stories from veterans of the earlier battles, and as the French came across the field, we know that they spoke about doing their ancestors better. They practically foamed at the mouth and giggled about their exploits.

The field is about the same today as it was then, although it's now spelled Azincourt. The English were on a little knoll with a very muddy field in front of them. The French attack came into a narrowing space because of a hill to one side and a forest to the other.

While the English archers recalled the stories of Crécy and Poitiers, the French nobility remembered only their hatred of English archers and knights.

The flower of French knighthood charged headlong across a field soggy from a long rainstorm. As they approached the English front, they became more packed in, so that no arrow could miss hitting a man or a horse. As the horses went down, men were trampled, and later riders found their mounts tripping

over men and beasts already on the ground. All the while the arrows rained down on the haughty, unfortunate French. Even those who made it to the English lines found that they were only as numerous as the English at the point of contact, and packed in as they were, they didn't have room to swing their weapons.

For their part, the English archers vied to outdo each other. First it was just in shooting but later it was in atrocities. Each boasted that his arrow had hit this or that noble, and the others boasted back. All along the hill below them, where their arrows had killed many horses, the fallen riders were unable to get up. After a while, this or that gutsy archer scooted down and stabbed some helpless knight, usually through the armpit where there was no armor, and ran back to brag to his buddies.

Another would say, "Oh, yeah, wait'll you see this," and would scurry down to slice off a French nose through the face plate before killing him with a knife in the eyes. He too came back to boast. A third might then say, "You ain't see nothin' yet," and would fly down to get himself some genitals. And so it went.

When Howard calls the longbow a social weapon, that's what he means.

## The Seige

Some of the weapons used in siege warfare were

the onager, a machine which catapulted stones or fire from a sort of spoon pulled back and tensed, using twisted rope or hair to supply power.

the ram, some kind of long blunt pole used to push through a wooden door or gate by the force of many men who carried it running into the target. It often had a "house" over it to protect the men from whatever the defenders would throw down from the tops of the walls.

fire could be propelled into the defenses by the onager or by archery. Could be used by the defenders, too.

rocks. Anything ten pounds or more could be easily thrown over or just dropped from the top of the defensive walls with lethal force onto the attackers below. They could also be catapulted by onager into the defense.

gunfire. We'll get to this.

The defense often featured a cavalry "sally" against the beseigers, who were themselves often defended by cavalry. The defense was sometimes assisted by an attack on the besiegers' rear from outside the fortress. At Orleans in 1428, the French used both. Joan came from the rear and the defenders sallied forth, thus catching the English in between and beating them outside the walls.

Comments?

## Gunpowder

The first record of its use in combat is in a picture from 1128, a naval fight in China. Its first use in Europe seems to have been in 1327.

The "bombard" was the first European cannon. Very much like a church bell, it fired a granite ball. Of course, it could knock down walls, and at first it seemed to be the ultimate answer to the problems faced by attackers who ran into a castle or other fortification.

Nonsense. Here's an axiom of military history: when one side develops the ULTIMATE weapon, the other side will develop a counter very quickly. In the case of the "bombard," you had to get it close enough. Defenders would come out to defend the space in front of the fort. For most of the 14th century, 100 yards was too close to be safe, and 300 yards was too far to be effective.

Improvements in technology increased gunnery ranges. Ultimately, by 1430 the gun did outrange the archer. But guns with that range were so heavy they frequently damaged their own carriages, and could be carried usefully only by ship. Many forts were away from navigable water, and therefore safe.

Defenders adopted guns, too, of course. And since defensive guns didn't have to be mobile, that gave the defense in a castle a major advantage.

Moreover, construction of forts changed to contend with attacking gunfire. Defenders built bastions, which stuck out from the walls at sharp angles. That made it possible for the defenders with their heavier guns to fire into the flanks of the attackers, no matter what direction the assault came from.

Attackers then turned to tunneling to avoid such flanking fire. The battle of Breda in 1637 was an example of tunneling, although it was way beyond the Middle Ages. Tunneling is not ~~such~~ only an old idea, by the way. In the First Indochina War, the Viet Minh tunneled enormously at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 to approach the French defenses while avoiding the massive French firepower. And the Viet Cong did the same thing in innumerable cases against the heavily armed Americans in the Vietnam War.

## Seapower

Focusing exclusively on the knights and/or their forts misses a large part of medieval warfare. Throught the period there were plenty of fights at sea, too.

I have no doubt that the greatest battle of the 100 Years War was Sluys in 1340, a naval battle. The French lost nearly 20,000 dead. It was the first battle in that war, and without the English victory there the invasion of France would have been quite impossible.

At Sluys, the English used revolutionary tactics. They did not depend on infantry attacks across open decks, which had been standard naval procedure since ancient days. Instead, at Sluys, the English ships stood off from the enemy and fired arrows, bolts, stones, and various forms of fire until the French ships, crews and embarked troops were flaming and battered. The French responded weakly because they had only knights' weapons which had to be used hand-to-hand, and almost no projectiles.

Incidentally, the English did the same thing again, just after the close of the Middle Ages, in 1588 against the Spanish Armada. Even at that late date, the Spanish still relied on infantry tactics in sea warfare. They intended either to defeat the English fleet by an infantry assault across the open decks, or to defeat the English army by the same tactics after landing in England.

Continental Europeans were slow to learn about seapower.

So, it was a sophisticated adoption of the longbow that helped the English fight vastly strongly France during the medieval wars on land. And it was a sophisticated understanding of seapower that allowed England to bring war to the continent. Later, of course, that seapower made England the greatest world power.

In the Middle Ages, galleys, that is, rowed warships, were still valuable. In ancient times oarsmen would drive them to ram enemy ships, and then the rowers and/or the embarked troops would leap over the sides for an infantry battle on the other ship's deck. There's a wonderful scene of galley warfare in the movie "Ben Hur," starring that modern gun-totin' tough guy, Charlton Heston.

In the 14th century, when galleys mounted guns, the cannon pointed forward. The ships attacked as they had during the Ben Hur days of ramming, bows headed towards the enemy, preferably his sides. But now when they got close the galleys would fire their guns, light pieces called culverins.

Why would they have to be light? [Weight for rowers. Recoil would stop the ship.]

At Lepanto 1571, the greatest battle of the 16th Century and maybe the most important, the Spanish galleys fought the Turks that way. The Europeans had about 280 ships, 1815 guns, 95,000 men. The Turks, about 215 ships, 750 guns, and 75,000 men.

Because the Spanish had much heavier weight of metal, they badly damaged the Turkish fleet from a few hundred yards away. Although the battle did end up with hand-to-hand fighting, the decision was clear long before the infantry combat began. The Turks lost about 200 ships and 30,000 dead at Lepanto!

But guns made galleys so heavy they couldn't be rowed very far. So galley battles had to be near naval bases, as Lepanto was. By the end of the medieval period, the Europeans were able to go much farther than that, so galleys began to fade.

Sail made such distant power possible. And broadsides made bows-on attacks nearly always fatal if both sides were equally handy. [Show "Cap the T."] By 1500 the English, Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish all had the "full-rigged ship" -- four masts each with a variety of square sails for motive power and triangular sails to assist in lateral movement.

Such ships had huge holds and worldwide range, so they were wonderful for commerce. And commercial ships were easily converted into warships, because they could carry guns.

Navies were so expensive, though, that only a state could afford them. That fact explains why kings who were backed by nation-states got a fast start in the exploration that began in the 15th Century with Dutch and Portuguese sailing expeditions to Asia. Henry II of Portugal was called "Henry the Navigator," for his contribution to this movement. His unified country could afford to build the ships, and to design and craft the navigating devices needed to sail those ships halfway around the world.

Remember that Columbus went to Isabella and Ferdinand, who were just completing the unification of Spain in 1492 when he arrived in their court. Columbus was from Genoa in Italy, but no Italian prince could afford to fund the ships and equipment he needed. The Spanish monarchs could.

## Sum

So, do you see? Even in an arcane area like medieval warfare, there is historiographic dispute, multidisciplinary study, and comparison between theory and actuality. I hope you got something out of what I've brought here, today.

OK. Pass out Quiz Forms. Please give me two out of three of the following:

a) most interesting thing from this lecture,
b) most confusing thing from this lecture,
c) most incorrect thing from this lecture.