

## **"WHAT GOOD CAN A HANDGUN DO AGAINST AN ARMY.....?"**

A friend of mine recently forwarded me a question a friend of his had posed:

"If/when our Federal Government comes to pilfer, pillage, plunder our property and destroy our lives, what good can a handgun do against an army with advanced weaponry, tanks, missiles, planes, or whatever else they might have at their disposal to achieve their nefarious goals? (I'm not being facetious: I accept the possibility that what happened in Germany, or similar, could happen here; I'm just not sure that the potential good from an armed citizenry in such a situation outweighs the day-to-day problems caused by masses of idiots who own guns.)"

If I may, I'd like to try to answer that question. I certainly do not think the writer facetious for asking it. The subject is a serious one to which I have given much research and considerable thought. I believe that upon the answer to this question depends the future of our Constitutional republic, our liberty and perhaps our lives. My friend Aaron Zelman, one of the founders of Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership told me once:

"If every Jewish and anti-nazi family in Germany had owned a Mauser rifle and twenty rounds of ammunition AND THE WILL TO USE IT (emphasis supplied, MV), Adolf Hitler would be a little-known footnote to the history of the Weimar Republic."

Note well that phrase: "and the will to use it," for the simply-stated question, "What good can a handgun do against an army?", is in fact a complex one and must be answered at length and carefully. It is a military question. It is also a political question. But above all it is a moral question which strikes to the heart of what makes men free, and what makes them slaves.

First, let's answer the military question.

Most military questions have both a strategic and a tactical component. Let's consider the tactical.

A friend of mine owns an instructive piece of history. It is a small, crude pistol, made out of sheet-metal stampings by the U.S. during World War II. While it fits in the palm of your hand and is a slowly-operated, single-shot arm, it's powerful .45 caliber projectile will kill a man with brutal efficiency. With a short, smooth-bore barrel it can reliably kill only at point blank ranges, so its use requires the will (brave or foolhardy) to get in close before firing. It is less a soldier's weapon than an

assassin's tool. The U.S. manufactured them by the millions during the war, not for our own forces but rather to be air-dropped behind German lines to resistance units in occupied Europe. Crude and slow (the fired case had to be knocked out of the breech by means of a little wooden dowel, a fresh round procured from the storage area in the grip and then manually reloaded and cocked) and so wildly inaccurate it couldn't hit the broad side of a French barn at 50 meters, to the Resistance man or woman who had no firearm it still looked pretty darn good.

The theory and practice of it was this: First, you approach a German sentry with your little pistol hidden in your coat pocket and, with Academy-award sincerity, ask him for a light for your cigarette (or the time the train leaves for Paris, or if he wants to buy some non-army-issue food or a half-hour with your "sister"). When he smiles and casts a nervous glance down the street to see where his Sergeant is, you blow his brains out with your first and only shot, then take his rifle and ammunition. Your next few minutes are occupied with "getting out of Dodge," for such critters generally go around in packs. After that (assuming you evade your late benefactor's friends) you keep the rifle and hand your little pistol to a fellow Resistance fighter so he can go get his own rifle.

Or maybe you then use your rifle to get a submachine gun from the Sergeant when he comes running. Perhaps you get very lucky and pickup a light machine gun, two boxes of ammunition and a haversack of hand grenades. With two of the grenades and the expenditure of a half-a-box of ammunition at a hasty roadblock the next night, you and your friends get a truck full of arms and ammunition. (Some of the cargo is sticky with "Boche" blood, but you don't mind terribly.)

Pretty soon you've got the best armed little maquis unit in your part of France, all from that cheap little pistol and the guts to use it. (One wonders if the current political elite's opposition to so-called "Saturday Night Specials" doesn't come from some adopted racial memory of previous failed tyrants. Even cheap little pistols are a threat to oppressive regimes.)

They called the pistol the "Liberator." Not a bad name, all in all.

Now let's consider the strategic aspect of the question, "What good can a handgun do against an army....?" We have seen that even a poor pistol can make a great deal of difference to the military career and postwar plans of one enemy soldier. That's tactical. But consider what a million pistols, or a hundred million pistols (which may approach the actual number of handguns in the U.S. today), can mean to the military planner who seeks to carry out operations against a populace so armed. Mention "Afghanistan" or "Chechnya" to a member of the current Russian military hierarchy and watch them shudder at the bloody memories. Then you begin to get the idea that

modern munitions, air superiority and overwhelming, precision-guided violence still are not enough to make victory certain when the targets are not sitting Christmas-present fashion out in the middle of the desert.

I forget the name of the Senator who observed, "You know, a million here and a million there, and pretty soon you're talking about serious money." Consider that there are at least as many firearms-- handguns, rifles and shotguns-- as there are citizens of the United States. Consider that last year there were more than 14 million Americans who bought licenses to hunt deer in the country. 14 million-- that's a number greater than the largest five professional armies in the world combined. Consider also that those deer hunters are not only armed, but they own items of military utility-- everything from camouflage clothing to infrared "game finders", Global Positioning System devices and night vision scopes.

Consider also that quite a few of these hunters are military veterans. Just as moving around in the woods and stalking game are second nature, military operations are no mystery to them, especially those who were on the receiving end of guerrilla war in Southeast Asia. Indeed, such men, aging though they may be, may be more psychologically prepared for the exigencies of civil war (for this is what we are talking about) than their younger active-duty brother-soldiers whose only military experience involved neatly defined enemies and fronts in the Grand Campaign against Saddam. Not since 1861-1865 has the American military attempted to wage a war athwart its own logistical tail (nor indeed has it ever had to use modern conventional munitions on the Main Streets of its own hometowns and through its' relatives backyards, nor has it tested the obedience of soldiers who took a very different oath with orders to kill their "rebellious" neighbors, but that touches on the political aspect of the question).

But forget the psychological and political for a moment, and consider just the numbers. To paraphrase the Senator, "A million pistols here, a million rifles there, pretty soon you're talking serious firepower." No one, repeat, no one, will conquer America, from within or without, until its citizenry is disarmed. We remain, as a British officer had reason to complain at the start of our Revolution, "a people numerous and armed."

The Second Amendment is a political issue today only because of the military reality that underlies it. Politicians who fear the people seek to disarm them. People who fear their government's intentions refuse to be disarmed. The Founders understood this. So, too, does every tyrant who ever lived. Liberty-loving Americans forget it at their peril. Until they do, American gunowners in the aggregate represent a strategic military fact and an impediment to foreign tyranny. They also represent the greatest political challenge to home-grown would-be tyrants. If the people cannot be

forcibly disarmed against their will, then they must be persuaded to give up their arms voluntarily. This is the siren song of "gun control," which is to say "government control of all guns," although few self-respecting gun-grabbers would be quite so bold as to phrase it so honestly.

Joseph Stalin, when informed after World War II that the Pope disapproved of Russian troops occupying Trieste, turned to his advisors and asked, "The Pope? How many divisions does he have?" Dictators are unmoved by moral suasion. Fortunately, our Founders saw the wisdom of backing the First Amendment up with the Second. The "divisions" of the army of American constitutional liberty get into their cars and drive to work in this country every day to jobs that are hardly military in nature. Most of them are unmindful of the service they provide. Their arms depots may be found in innumerable closets, gunracks and gunsafes. They have no appointed officers, nor will they need any until they are mobilized by events. Such guardians of our liberty perform this service merely by existing. And although they may be an ever-diminishing minority within their own country, as gun ownership is demonized and discouraged by the ruling elites, still they are as yet more than enough to perform their vital task. And if they are unaware of the impediment they present to their would-be rulers, their would-be rulers are painfully aware of these "divisions of liberty," as evidenced by their incessant calls for individual disarmament. They understand moral versus military force just as clearly as Stalin, but they would not be so indelicate as to quote him.

The Roman Republic failed because they could not successfully answer the question, "Who Shall Guard the Guards?" The Founders of this Republic answered that question with both the First and Second Amendments. Like Stalin, the Clintonistas could care less what common folk say about them, but the concept of the armed citizenry as guarantors of their own liberties sets their teeth on edge and disturbs their statist sleep.

Governments, some great men once avowed, derive their legitimacy from "the consent of the governed." In the country that these men founded, it should not be required to remind anyone that the people do not obtain their natural, God-given liberties by "the consent of the Government." Yet in this century, our once great constitutional republic has been so profaned in the pursuit of power and social engineering by corrupt leaders as to be unrecognizable to the Founders. And in large measure we have ourselves to blame because at each crucial step along the way the usurpers of our liberties have obtained the consent of a majority of the governed to do what they have done, often in the name of "democracy"-- a political system rejected by the Founders. Another good friend of mine gave the best description of pure democracy I have ever heard. "Democracy," he concluded, "is three wolves and a

sheep sitting down to vote on what to have for dinner." The rights of the sheep in this system are by no means guaranteed.

Now it is true that our present wolf-like, would-be rulers do not as yet seek to eat that sheep and its peaceable woolly cousins (We, the people). They are, however, most desirous that the sheep be shorn of taxes, and if possible and when necessary, be reminded of their rightful place in society as "good citizen sheep" whose safety from the big bad wolves outside their barn doors is only guaranteed by the omni-presence in the barn of the "good wolves" of the government. Indeed, they do not present themselves as wolves at all, but rather these lupines parade around in sheep's clothing, bleating insistently in falsetto about the welfare of the flock and the necessity to surrender liberty and property "for the children", er, ah, I mean "the lambs." In order to ensure future generations of compliant sheep, they are careful to educate the lambs in the way of "political correctness," tutoring them in the totalitarian faiths that "it takes a barnyard to raise a lamb" and "all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

Every now and then, some tough old independent-minded ram refuses to be shorn and tries to remind the flock that they once decided affairs themselves according to the rule of law of their ancestors, and without the help of their "betters." When that happens, the fangs become apparent and the conspicuously unwilling are shunned, cowed, driven off or (occasionally) killed. But flashing teeth or not, the majority of the flock has learned over time not to resist the Lupine-Mandarin class which herds it. Their Founders, who were fiercely independent rams, would have long ago chased off such usurpers. Any present members of the flock who think like that are denounced as antediluvian or mentally deranged.

There are some of these dissidents the lupines would like to punish, but they dare not-- for their teeth are every bit as long as their "betters." Indeed, this is the reason the wolves haven't eaten any sheep in generations. To the wolves chagrin, this portion of the flock is armed and they outnumber the wolves by a considerable margin. For now the wolves are content to watch the numbers of these "armed sheep" diminish, as long teeth are no longer fashionable in polite society. (Indeed, they are considered by the literati to be an anachronism best forgotten and such sheep are dismissed by the Mandarins as "Tooth Nuts" or "Right Leg Fanatics".) When the numbers of armed sheep fall below a level that wolves can feel safe to do so, the eating will begin. The wolves are patient, and proceed by infinitesimal degrees like the slowly-boiling frog. It took them generations to lull the sheep into accepting them as rulers instead of elected representatives. If it takes another generation or two of sheep to complete the process, the wolves can wait. This is our "Animal Farm," without apology to George Orwell.

Even so, the truth is that one man with a pistol CAN defeat an army, given a righteous cause for which to fight, enough determination to risk death for that cause, and enough brains, luck and friends to win the struggle. This is true in war but also in politics, and it is not necessary to be a Prussian militarist to see it. The dirty little secret of today's ruling elite as represented by the Clintonistas is that they want people of conscience and principle to be divided in as many ways as possible ("wedge issues" the consultants call them) so that they may be more easily manipulated. No issue of race, religion, class or economics is left unexploited. Lost in the din of jostling special interests are the few voices who point out that if we refuse to be divided from what truly unites us as a people, we cannot be defeated on the large issues of principle, faith, the constitutional republic and the rule of law. More importantly, woe and ridicule will be heaped upon anyone who points out that like the blustering Wizard of Oz, the federal tax and regulation machine is not as omniscient, omnipotent or fearsome as they would have us believe. Like the Wizard, they fan the scary flames higher and shout, "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!"

For the truth is, they are frightened that we will find out how pitifully few they are compared to the mass of the citizenry they seek to frighten into compliance with their tax collections, property seizures and bureaucratic, unconstitutional power-shifting. I strongly recommend everyone see the new animated movie "A Bug's Life". Simple truths may often be found sheltering beneath unlikely overhangs, there protected by the pelting storm of lies that soak us everyday. "A Bug's Life", a children's movie of all things, is just such a place.

The plot revolves around an ant hill on an unnamed island, where the ants placate predatory grasshoppers by offering them each year one-half of the food they gather (sounds a lot like the IRS, right?). Driven to desperation by the insatiable tax demands of the large, fearsome grasshoppers, one enterprising ant goes abroad seeking bug mercenaries who will return with him and defend the anthill when the grasshoppers return. (If this sounds a lot like an animated "Magnificent Seven", you're right.)

The grasshoppers (who roar about like some biker gang or perhaps the ATF in black helicopters, take your pick) are, at one point in the movie, lounging around in a bug cantina down in Mexico, living off the bounty of the land. The harvest seeds they eat are dispensed one at a time from an upturned bar bottle. Two grasshoppers suggest to their leader, a menacing fellow named "Hopper" (whose voice characterization by Kevin Spacey is suitably evil personified), that they should forget about the poor ants on the island. Here, they say, we can live off the fat of the land, why worry about some upstart ants? Hopper turns on them instantly. "Would you like a seed?" he quietly asks one. "Sure," answers the skeptical grasshopper thug. "Would you like one?" Hopper asks the other. "Yeah," says he. Hopper manipulates the spigot on the bar bottle twice, and distributes the seeds to them.

"So, you want to know why we have to go back to the island, do you?" Hopper asks menacingly as the thugs munch on their seeds. "I'll show you why!" he shouts, removing the cap from the bottle entirely with one quick blow. The seeds, no longer restrained by the cap, respond to gravity and rush out all at once, inundating the two grasshoppers and crushing them. Hopper turns to his remaining fellow grasshoppers and shrieks, "That's why!"

I'm paraphrasing from memory here, for I've only seen the movie once. But Hopper then explains, "Don't you remember the upstart ant on that island? They outnumber us a hundred to one. How long do you think we'll last if they ever figure that out?"

"If the ants are not frightened of us," Hopper tells them, "our game is finished. We're finished."

Of course it comes as no surprise that in the end the ants figure that out. Would that liberty-loving Americans were as smart as animated ants.

Courage to stand against tyranny, fortunately, is not only found on videotape. Courage flowers from the heart, from the twin roots of deeply-held principle and faith in God. There are American heroes living today who have not yet performed the deeds of principled courage that future history books will record. They have not yet had to stand in the gap, to plug it with their own fragile bodies and lives against the evil that portends. Not yet have they been required to pledge "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor." Yet they will have to. I believe with all my heart the lesson that history teaches: That each and every generation of Americans is given, along with the liberty and opportunity that is their heritage, the duty to defend America against the tyrannies of their day. Our father's father's fathers fought this same fight. Our mother's mother's mothers fought it as well. From the Revolution through the world wars, from the Cold War through to the Gulf, they fought to secure their liberty in conflicts great and small, within and without.

They stood faithful to the oath that our Founders gave us: To bear true faith and allegiance-- not to a man; not to the land; not to a political party, but to an idea. The idea is liberty, as codified in the Constitution of the United States. We swear, as did they, an oath to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic. And throughout the years they paid in blood and treasure the terrible price of that oath. That was their day. This is ours. The clouds we can see on the horizon may be a simple rain or a vast hurricane, but there is a storm coming. Make no mistake.

Lincoln said that this nation cannot long exist half slave and half free. I say, if I may humbly paraphrase, that this nation cannot long exist one-third slave, one-third

uncommitted, and one-third free. The slavery today is of the mind and soul not the body, but it is slavery without a doubt that the Clintons and their toadies are pushing.

It is slavery to worship our nominally-elected representatives as our rulers instead of requiring their trustworthiness as our servants. It is slavery of the mind and soul that demands that God-given rights that our Forefathers secured with their blood and sacrifice be traded for false security of a nanny-state which will tend to our "legitimate needs" as they are perceived by that government.

It is slavery to worship humanism as religion and slavery to deny life and liberty to unborn Americans. As people of faith in God, whatever our denomination, we are in bondage to a plantation system that steals our money; history, supplanting it with sanitized and politicized "correctness"; denies our children a real public education; denies them even the mention of God in school; denies, in fact, the very existence of God.

So finally we are faced with, and we must return to, the moral component of the question: "What good can a handgun do against an army?" The answer is "Nothing," or "Everything." The outcome depends upon the mind and heart and soul of the man or woman who holds it. One may also ask, "What good can a sling in the hands of a boy do against a marauding giant?" If your cause is just and righteous much can be done, not only if you are willing to risk the consequences of failure and to bear the burdens of eternal vigilance.

A new friend of mine gave me a plaque the other day. Upon it is written these words by Winston Churchill, a man who knew much about fighting tyranny:

"Still, if you will not fight for the right when you can easily win without bloodshed; if you will not fight when your victory will be sure and not too costly; you may come to the moment when you will have to fight with all the odds against you and only a precarious chance of survival. There may be a worse case. You may have to fight when there is no hope of victory, because it is better to perish than to live as slaves."

The Spartans at Thermopolae knew this. The fighting Jews of Masada knew this, when every man, woman and child died rather than submit to Roman tyranny. The Texans who died at the Alamo knew this. The frozen patriots of Valley Forge knew this. The "expendable men" of Bataan and Corregidor knew this. If there is one lesson of Hitlerism and the Holocaust, it is that free men, if they wish to remain free, must resist would-be tyrants at the first opportunity and at every opportunity. Remember that whether they come as conquerors or elected officials, the men who secretly wish to be your murderers must first convince you that you must accept them as your masters. Free men and women must not wait until they are "selected," divided and

herded into Warsaw Ghettos, there to finally fight desperately, almost without weapons, and die outnumbered.

The tyrant must be met at the door when he appears. At your door, or mine, wherever he shows his bloody appetite. He must be met by the pistol which can defeat an army. He must be met at every door, for in truth we outnumber him and his henchmen. It matters not whether they call themselves Communists or Nazis or something else. It matters not what flag they fly, nor what uniform they wear. It matters not what excuses they give for stealing your liberty, your property or your life. "By their works ye shall know them." The time is late. Those who once had trouble reading the hour on their watches have no trouble seeing by the glare of the fire at Waco. Few of us realized at the time that the Constitution was burning right along with the Davidians. Now we know better.

We have had the advantage of that horrible illumination for more than five years now-- five years in which the rule of law and the battered old parchment of our beloved Constitution have been smashed, shredded and besmirched by the Clintonistas. In this process they have been aided and abetted by the cowardly incompetence of the "opposition" Republican leadership, a fact made crystal clear by the Waco hearings. They have forgotten Daniel Webster's warning: "Miracles do not cluster. Hold on to the Constitution of the United States of America and the Republic for which it stands-- what has happened once in six thousand years may never happen again. Hold on to your Constitution, for if the American Constitution shall fail there will be anarchy throughout the world."

Yet being able to see what has happened has not helped us reverse, or even slow, the process. The sad fact is that we may have to resign ourselves to the prospect of having to maintain our principles and our liberty in the face of becoming a disenfranchised minority within our own country.

The middle third of the populace, it seems, will continue to waffle in favor of the enemies of the Constitution until their comfort level with the economy is endangered. They've got theirs, Jack. The Republicans, who we thought could represent our interests and protect the Constitution and the rule of law, have been demonstrated to be political eunuchs. Alan Keyes was dead right when he characterized the last election as one between "the lawless Democrats and the gutless Republicans." The spectacular political failures of our current leaders are unrivaled in our history unless you recall the unprincipled jockeying for position and tragi-comedy of misunderstanding and miscommunication which lead to our first Civil War.

And make no mistake, it is civil war which may be the most horrible corollary of the Law of Unintended Consequences as it applies to the Clintonistas and their

destruction of the rule of law. Because such people have no cause for which they are willing to die (all morality being relativistic to them, and all principles compromisable), they cannot fathom the motives or behavior of people who believe that there are some principles worth fighting and dying for. Out of such failures of understanding come wars. Particularly because although such elitists would not risk their own necks in a fight, they have no compunction about ordering others in their pay to fight for them. It is not the deaths of others, but their own deaths, that they fear. As a Christian, I cannot fear my own death, but rather I am commanded by my God to live in such a way as to make my death a homecoming. That this makes me incomprehensible and threatening to those who wish to be my masters is something I can do little about. I would suggest to them that they not poke their godless, tyrannical noses down my alley. As the coiled rattlesnake flag of the Revolution bluntly stated: "Don't Tread on Me!" Or, as our state motto here in Alabama declares: "We Dare Defend Our Rights."

But can a handgun defeat an army? Yes. It remains to be seen whether the struggle of our generation against the tyrants of our day in the first decade of the 21st Century will bring a restoration of liberty and the rule of law or a dark and bloody descent into chaos and slavery.

If it is to be the former, I will meet you at the new Yorktown. If it is to be the latter, I will meet you at Masada. But I will not be a slave. And I know that whether we succeed or fail, if we should fall along the way our graves will one day be visited by other free Americans, thanking us that we did not forget that, with the help of Almighty God, in the hands of a free man a handgun CAN defeat a tyrant's army.

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