From the Editor

LESSONS WORTH REMEMBERING

Success in the profession of arms often lies upon an understanding—and application—of the lessons of history. This application can be as simple as recognizing others' mistakes and not repeating them, or as complex as assimilating the strategy, tactics, and techniques of successful commanders and applying them to the problem or campaign at hand. In the coming months, *Infantry* will run a series of articles, each discussing one of the lessons we have seen repeated throughout history. Some may focus on one or more of the principles of war, while others will illustrate commonsense tactics that bear reiteration. These will include examples of the results that will follow from either the ignorance or application of the principle.

For example, three years after the deaths of Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer and his 211 men at Little Big Horn, only 55 soldiers survived out of a British regiment of 1,800 men when they were surrounded and attacked by the Zulus at Isandhlwana. In the first instance—long before we had even codified the principles of war—the chiefs Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Gall effectively employed mass and surprise—among others—to achieve victory, while the Zulu king Cetewayo later applied them to even greater effect. (These warriors may not have had the tacticians' terminology to help them, but they knew what did and did not work in battle.) On the negative side, Custer's lack of accurate intelligence on the enemy forces' intent and disposition—and his own overconfidence—contributed to the U.S. Army's worst defeat in Indian warfare, while Lord Chelmsford's underestimation of Cetewayo and his Zulu impis (regiments) cost the British close to 2,000 of their finest soldiers. Such losses have been repeated throughout history—often avoidably and to an even greater degree.

But we have learned. Prior to Operation DESERT STORM, Coalition commanders and staffs reviewed the desert operations of past wars, paying close attention to the logistical and tactical problems that had plagued Eisenhower, Rommel, and Montgomery. Even the debilitating effects of poor field sanitation by Afrika Korps units did not go unnoticed, and as a result Coalition forces were spared the outbreaks of disease that had stripped Rommel's command of much of its essential combat power.

Today, the U.S. Army is closely engaged in stability and support operations around the world, and the potential for treachery, ambush, and betrayal accompanies the often humdrum routine of our soldiers' daily duties. We cannot afford to let our guard down for a moment, however, and that is why we will be running the series I have mentioned. The first article will be based upon the diary of a Private in the 9th Infantry who saw action in China during the Boxer rebellion and later in the Philippines during the Philippine Insurrection. It makes good reading, and the lessons are there for those who wish to include them in their own professional development.

As always, we welcome reader input. If you have a good lesson you want to share with the combined arms force, this is the time. It may seem too short, and you may not think it's significant enough for the rest of us, but if you've remembered it this long it's probably worth sharing. Meanwhile, keep up the good work, and watch your lane!

RAE

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