

Clausewitz's Guerillas:

The Evolution of Guerilla War in the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom

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All warfare is based on deception.

– Sun Tzu, *the Art of War*

War is a mere continuation of policy by other means.

– Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

Warfare evolves in a circular motion. Musketeers in a firing line once replaced massed column of pike-men only to be themselves replaced by Napoleon's flying massed columns of bayonet-wielding lightly-armed musketeers. Similarly, all warfare began as what we now know as guerilla conflict. Now, guerilla warriors have returned to the fore, toppling empires, and testing superpowers across the globe. Military theorists, those favoring large conventional troop formations and sweeping field maneuvers, have stated that guerilla warfare is anathema to modern maneuver strategy; and that with the rise of transnational threats, the viability of the strategies espoused in Carl von Clausewitz's masterpiece, *On War*, are fading. However, as a careful analysis of both Clausewitz and the history of guerilla warfare will show, that is simply a fallacy. Guerilla warfare theory, though seen by many in the western world as a strategy of the weak, in fact has a far longer history than modern maneuver warfare doctrine. Guerilla warfare not only draws its inspiration from Clausewitzian thought, it has been steadily adapted by various practitioners and today has successfully become part of and complimentary to maneuver warfare as the strategy for modern and near-future conflict.

This paper will delve into the development of specialized guerilla units by western forces and their use to create effective and cohesive fighting element to focus against the will of the enemy's people, government, and military to obtain victory. Specifically, this paper examines the origin and development of guerillas within the armed forces of the United Kingdom, which were selected primarily because they have the longest history of endorsing and codifying the use of guerillas of any western state. While the United States has historically used guerilla tactics quite often, America's armed forces have been slower to accept their use into the mainstream since World War Two, despite the successful employment of guerilla-style warfare in every American conflict since the French and Indian War.

The primary focus of this paper will be through the Second World War, when American capabilities in guerrilla warfare were first standardized. In addition, given Britain's immense experience in colonial policing, constabulary operations, and training through World War Two, the British make a natural subject for this work. Additionally, the preeminent examples of guerilla fighters during this period were mostly British: Arthur Wellesley, known as the Duke of Wellington, Colonel T.E. Lawrence, and Colonel Orde Wingate. Lastly, the United Kingdom's armed forces have successfully integrated the use of guerilla forces into a strategy based on the principles of Clausewitz's trinity, defined by him as violence, chance, and subordination to policy, rather than a wide-ranging brute force assault against the enemy's armed forces alone.¹

Terminology

In this paper, the term "conventional" shall be representative of the regular forces used to engage in interstate conflict. Furthermore, the term "asymmetric warfare" in relation to guerilla warfare is misleading and will not be used herein, as the aim of any military force involved in

conflict is to gain an asymmetric edge over its opponent. Partisan warfare is also misleading as it implies that only the guerillas are politically motivated; in truth, all combatants are. Nor does irregular warfare really convey the notion, as many of the world's best guerillas are in fact professionalized military warriors such as the United States Army Special Forces or United Kingdom's Special Air Service (SAS).

What is War? Furthermore, what is Guerilla Warfare?

What is war? Given the wide variety of terms available to describe conflict, as has just been demonstrated, this definition is necessary. Perhaps, foremost, war is the act of one group enforcing its will on another, through the means of violence. War, at its most basic, is an imposition of the will of one party on another.² War is the attempt of one entity to force an opposing entity to bend to its desires and need. What is dynamic, however, is the manner in which each war is fought and the form of the belligerents.

The tenets of war are universal. The parties that engage in war and their motivations are not. There are various forms of conflict ranging from Western shock warfare and *blitzkrieg* to internal civil war. Guerillas seek to avoid the strength of the enemy through improvisation, speed, skill, deception, and stealth. While warfare takes many forms, the one that most Americans are familiar with is the maneuver doctrine that evolved out of the Age of Napoleon and reached its zenith during World War Two. It is based on the maneuver of large forces in an attempt to envelop, or get around the flank, of their opponent. Guerilla warfare, disregards the lines, the large units, and maneuver of any recognizable sort. Guerilla warfare, the focus of this paper as described above, is merely a strategy used by one body of arms against another that

seeks to avoid an opponent's strength by attacking where he does not expect it. In the West, it is often associated with special operations forces.³

Rather than seek a single decisive clash, guerillas get behind and amongst the enemy, wreak havoc on supply, command and general support nodes and forces, and generally serve to weaken the enemy by destroying its ability to sustain itself when fighting a conventional enemy. When fighting another guerilla force, guerillas will launch search and destroy patrols to intercept or ambush the enemy or maneuver to cut the opposing force off from its bases. Even guerillas have a focal node that they emanate from. This will be discussed in more detail later; however, it is important for the reader to realize the difference between conventional forces and guerilla warriors, who may be local proxy forces but are exemplified by many different special operations units in the West.

More important is the understanding of the guerilla's means of warfare that avoids the enemy's strength. Guerilla forces seek to bypass the enemy's combat power and strike directly at the enemy's center of gravity, as Clausewitz would say. Their emphasis is on small, highly trained, tight knit groups that can maneuver amongst and behind the enemy to destroy the enemy's combat power, without ever directly confronting it. -Often this is and has been done in conjunction with conventional operations.

Original Evolution

Guerilla tactics evolved out of ancient tribal and inter-village warfare. Tactically, guerilla warfare received its first theoretical conceptualization from the ancient strategist Sun Tzu. As recorded at the beginning of this paper, Sun Tzu wrote, "All warfare is based on deception."⁴ An entire book could be written discussing the tenets of guerilla tactics present in *The Art of War*,

and this author will not attempt to do the subject justice in a few lines. However, the reader should be aware that Sun Tzu's principles of attacking where the enemy is weak, night movements, and surprise attacks would be at home in any guerilla's manual.

In Europe, the Vikings came first. In the eighth century they struck out from their Scandinavian homelands and hit Western Europe. They intentionally avoided ritualized medieval warfare by landing their specially--designed longboats along coasts and internal waterways. After landing, they would conduct quick raids and then return to their vessels, never giving their opponents time to mobilize a defense. They toppled kingdoms and empires without mercy, even directly dominating the British Isles at one point.⁵

Close on the heels of the Vikings were the Mongols. These steppe horsemen were thorns in the side of the Chinese dynasties for centuries. Mostly, they conducted lightning raids like the Vikings, avoiding the enemy's close combat capabilities. However, once they were organized under the charismatic and powerful Genghis Khan, the Mongols truly became a force to be reckoned with. They were perhaps the first guerilla force in history to translate their tactics into major, decisive victories over conventional armies. By using fast moving cavalry units, they were able to encircle, swarm, and annihilate the enemies they faced. Their operational and tactical speed also made it nearly impossible for their slow moving opponents in Asia to defend against them, never knowing when they would appear.⁶ In the thirteenth century, the Mongols charged into Eastern Europe. They attacked and conquered parts of modern-day Hungary and Romania before the eventual breakdown of their empire.⁷

For centuries following the Mongol hordes, guerilla warfare was disdained and reviled in Europe (though it continued its development elsewhere). Several combatant groups used it on a

large scale during the American Revolution. However, it was mostly viewed as a form of warfare reserved for the colonies, either against indigenous forces, or for use as a force multiplier against the colonial forces of another great power. This was where the British truly began to develop guerilla strategies and integrate these tactics into their colonial constabulary forces. One of their most famous developers was Major Robert Rogers, who is today idolized as the prime ancestor of the US Army Rangers. Although during the American Revolution he fought for the British as a Loyalist against the Colonial Americans, during the French and Indian War he fought as a British guerilla against the French. Rogers founded Rogers Rangers, a group of colonial militiamen who tracked and fought the Native American tribes and their French “advisors” and counterparts on their own terms; they used small unit guerilla tactics to attack settlements, slip into and out of the woods and avoid open clashes with French-Indian forces, preferring surprise night-time raids.⁸ This style of combat later became a common training point amongst the constabulary forces of Britain’s colonies. However, its practitioners still lacked a consolidated theoretical system to implement their strategies with any form of coordination with conventional forces.

The Arrival of Clausewitz’s Theory

Following the Napoleonic Wars of the early 1800’s, several leading officers came forward to develop their theories on the nature of conflict. The Prussian officer Carl von Clausewitz took a different view of conflict. Whereas many theorists such as the Baron Jomini saw war through a western lens, with massed maneuver, stacked lines of infantry and linear combined arms advances, Clausewitz stripped war to its most basic elements, and therefore successfully put forth a theory that explained the motivation behind all forms of warfare.

Clausewitz argued that war is essentially a political act; “War is a mere continuation of politics by other means.” – an “act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will.”⁹ This is the basis of Clausewitzian thought. While based on the Prussian’s experience of the global interaction of states on the battlefield, it applies equally to the guerilla. In fact, it is the ultimate goal of the guerilla to defeat his opponent, not by direct battle, but by maneuvering in the political realm, causing enough casualties and havoc, much like the Vikings or Mongols, that the opponent accepts defeat or withdraws. In a larger conflict, the guerilla serves to tie down an opposing force, often many times the size of his own forces, thereby opening the enemy to a decisive military and political blow elsewhere. In fact, the effectiveness of the guerilla is based on the political nature of Clausewitz’s most famous clause, the “trinity.”

If directly read, Clausewitz’s three branches of the trinity could be labeled as emotion, chance and reason to reflect his following descriptions; “primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force...the play of chance and probability, within which the creative spirit is free to roam...its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to pure reason.”¹⁰ Often, scholars propose a secondary trinity for simplification purposes, which defines these excerpts as representing the people, the army and the government.¹¹ These terms must be defined as they apply to the discussion here.

The first is the will of state, or in some cases, the leadership of a group. This is the rationality of group action: the coordination of resources and the strategic arm. The second is the will of the people. In interstate conflict, this is the will of the people of a state to form a tax base and capital resource for the war effort and their means and determination to continue the conflict. In guerilla conflicts, or insurgencies, this is both the people in-theater who can swing their support to either side and affect the outcome of the action by supplying aid, and the outside supporters of various

armed parties that can fund or supply said parties. The third arm of the trinity is the army itself: its will to fight, the ability of its commander, and the results of chance and the “friction,” A concept referred to by other scholars as the “fog of war.”¹²

Obviously, this is the striking arm of the trinity, and the most vulnerable to annihilation as it is intentionally put at risk. However, it is also the easiest to regenerate, especially in a guerilla conflict if one’s forces control the will of the people. During the Napoleonic Wars, at the height of Napoleon’s power, the United Kingdom employed guerilla tactics in conjunction with conventional maneuver to subvert French forces in the Iberian Peninsula in what has become known as the Peninsular War.

The First Stage of Integration: The Peninsular War

When Napoleon invaded Spain and Portugal, he expected an easy victory. Instead, not only did he spark a conflict he could not win by his famed maneuvers, the war literally took a different form than the other conflicts raging throughout the period. *Guerilla* is a Spanish term that at its root means “little war.” In this sense, perhaps Clausewitz’s theory of political motivation saw past the surface that obstructed Napoleon’s view and encouraged him to sink ever greater numbers of troops into the Iberian Peninsula. Napoleon made frequent attempts to defeat the coalition armies opposing him by force. Often the French won the battles they fought, but the guerillas quickly returned to the fight.¹³

The French armies should have taken to heart the first sign of trouble: the siege of Saragossa over the summer of 1808. Initially, the French assault had breached the city, but then the populace of the city rose up to assist the 1,500 strong Spanish garrison. Residents, fighting as guerillas, fought in the streets, with locals even dragging cavalrymen off their horses to beat

them to death. Under normal conditions of the time, the defeat or surrender of the garrison would have meant the surrender of the city, but at Saragossa, the line between civilian and combatant blurred for the first time in the West.¹⁴ In light of this, Parliament sent Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, along with several regiments of British Royal Guards and regular, battle-hardened infantry to assist the Iberians.¹⁵

Eventually, the British under Wellington drove the French from Portugal, and once the Portuguese Army reentered the fray, Wellington began making forays into Spain to assist the guerillas. There are several excellent works such as *The Spanish Ulcer* by David Gates and *The Peninsular War: A New History* by Charles Edsaile that break down and analyze the Peninsular War strategy as executed by the guerillas and Wellington. For the purposes of this study, there are several key points to take from the conflict. First, by giving ground, shifting, and refusing to meet the French head-on, the guerillas successfully bypassed the major French advantages in technology and mass.

Second, for the first time in the West, a state made it a national policy to supply and encourage the use of guerilla warfare as the British did. Lastly, the British made a key realization: it was the weakening of the French forces by the guerillas that opened them to a major blow by a smaller force of professionalized conventional soldiers, both British and Portuguese. The guerillas, always harrying some patrol or outpost, precluded the French from being able to mass forces large enough to stop British attacks and raids into Spain.¹⁶ It was a lesson reinforced by the fact that the British themselves had just finished 12 years of fighting American guerillas in the backwoods of their former colonies.

The Second Stage of Integration: T. E. Lawrence and the Arab Campaign

During the First World War, the Western Front saw unspeakable devastation. The British not only hoped to avoid that tragic outcome in the Middle East throughout their campaign in that theatre, they also had minimal forces to work with, as the war against the Ottomans was seen as a sideshow. Therefore, in an effort to maximize the efficiency of their resources, the British turned to a lowly Colonel in their intelligence section. Colonel Thomas Edward Lawrence had spent years in the Middle East and his pre-war training as an archaeologist, along with his language capabilities, gave him immense insight into the Arab culture.

Famed as the great “Lawrence of Arabia,” Lawrence’s actions to rally and train the Arab tribesmen in the region were seen as a minor matter to many in the British high command.¹⁷ Many conventional officers found Arab skill and motivation lacking. However, Lawrence never intended to defeat the Ottomans and Germans in the Middle East with his force. Rather, he fully understood that he could use his force of tribesmen as a general force multiplier for the Allies in their drive against the Central Powers.¹⁸ In crafting his strategy, Lawrence authored his “seven pillars,” which were essentially lessons which any Western guerilla commander could use to recruit and train indigenous forces to fight as proxies.

Following the close of World War One, Lawrence was lionized in the press, which often makes it difficult to discern fact from fiction in his campaign and legacy.¹⁹ However, what is more easily seen is a stepping stone in the integration of guerilla warfare into the doctrine of the United Kingdom. Lawrence fully embraced the Arab way of life in order to make common cause with them. Then he intentionally set realistic goals for his Arab forces, knowing that they would never survive direct attacks against German and Ottoman positions, but would rather be useful in a raiding and harassing role, serving to tie down immense numbers of enemy troops -- thus making them susceptible to attacks by more-heavily-armed Western conventional forces.²⁰

Lawrence's forces kept the Central Powers from properly massing their own forces for a large attack against the allies; the use of guerillas can and will stop the enemy from achieving the "mass" necessary to defeat their opponent's army, thereby eliminating their ability to properly affect that portion of the Clausewitzian trinity. By forcing the enemy to divide his forces, the guerilla serves as a force multiplier for his own side. Also, notably, Lawrence successfully began the codifying of the use of guerilla warfare in Western Armies by authoring his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.²¹ Although, often seen as an attempt by Lawrence to "trump" his reputation up after the war, it remains a model in use to this day.²²

The Third Stage of Integration: Orde Wingate, the Peripheries, and SAS

During the opening days of World War Two in the West, the British forces were facing near-certain capitulation. - After initially sustaining large defeats on all fronts and theaters, including the disastrous attempts to counterattack that led to the evacuation of all British Expeditionary Force (BEF) soldiers at Dunkirk and the Fall of Tunis, the British switched to the defensive. However, to preserve the conventional mass would normally entail abandoning offensives against the enemy and thereby conceding the initiative to the Axis, meaning the British would have to defend everywhere while the Axis could mass in a few key locations and smash through thin defenses. Therefore, the British high command turned to an unique individual and an equally unique organization in order to create chaos amongst the enemy planners and to slow the build-up of enemy supply depots.

To accomplish this in North Africa the British gave an inordinate amount of responsibility to one of its oddest and most eccentric officers, Orde Wingate, a character that would seem straight out a comedic-action movie, and who could possibly provide enough

material for a post-doctoral psychology dissertation.²³ However, Wingate was an experienced and successful guerilla. Wingate had spent several years in Palestine after the close of World War One working with Zionist settlers in the British Mandate to fend off attacks by native Berber and Bedouin tribesmen. It was during this time that Wingate really refined his practice of guerilla warfare, using the historical lessons of Lawrence in Arabia and Wellington in Spain in addition to numerous American and worldwide examples. He trained and formed special “night squads” which fought to defend Zionist settlements and attack their Arab enemies where they thought they were safe. One of the members of these squads was the famous and controversial future Minister of Defense for Israel, Moshe Dayan, who famously said that Wingate taught them “all they knew.”²⁴

Therefore, when the Second World War began in the West in September 1939, Wingate was ideally suited for a mission to stem the Axis tide in North Africa. He was ordered to recruit and train Ethiopian guerillas in order to harass and drive the Italians from the small country. Simultaneously, guerilla tactics came to be adopted by several British units in order to give the high command a light-strike capability that provided more reliability than stereotypically-undependable indigenous guerillas. Among these were the British Commandoes, a unit that would raid along the European coastlines, and the Special Air Service (SAS) that would work through Egypt, Libya and more to undermine the German front by hitting supply lines and ammunition depots. Often they crossed vast tracts of desert on American-made Jeeps to strike the Germans deep in the rear, where they had no defenses, thus finally integrating the Clausewitzian tactical maxim of using force at the enemy’s most vulnerable point – in this case, Germany’s habitually weak logistical system.²⁵

After America entered the war, and the invasion of North Africa began, Wingate's Ethiopian guerillas continued to harass the enemy's rear, preventing them from massing properly to face the Allied invasion forces. After the North African liberation, Wingate was transferred to Burma. Wingate formed the "Chindits," specially-trained Burmese guerillas who went deep behind enemy lines to tear up Japanese-controlled railways and logistical systems. -While many historians such as Douglas Porch would argue over the contributions of the Chindits they pioneered aerial resupply and long-term operations, a forerunner of tactics used today.²⁶ They were also successful in tying down large numbers of Japanese defenders, again preventing them from massing to defend against the slow but inexorable American advance across the Pacific.²⁷

Final Analysis and Conclusion

The evolution of guerilla warfare has been a long one, and its use has had ebbs and flows. However, no matter what tactical or strategic development seems to eliminate it, it always returns and usually does so with a greater ferocity than before. Just when post World War Two society thought nuclear weapons had wiped out small arms conflict forever, guerillas entered the picture, shattering the hopes of many proving that while no weapon is absolute, some strategies seem to be eternal. The weapons used by guerillas have changed, but they never disappear. This realization has led the states of the West to develop their own guerilla capabilities as a counter to this rising threat.

This development has its longest history in the United Kingdom, although many within the UK armed forces have historically resisted the development for various reasons. At its most basic level, the conflict between special guerilla and conventional forces is often over concerns regarding funding. Also, some notable military historians have challenged the efficacy of guerilla

warfare and special units using guerilla-style tactics in historical case studies. Among them is Douglas Porch, who has argued that Lawrence and Wingate had little effect on their enemies in their respective campaigns as they did not capture and hold terrain nor cause mass casualties amongst the enemy.²⁸

However, using these metrics as a measure of a guerillas' success is not only misunderstanding and incorrectly analyzing the nature of guerillas, but also demonstrates a large misunderstanding of the true nature of warfare: the political nature. Instead, it is judging warfare based solely upon a metric of body counts and massed formations. As seen at the beginning of this paper, Carl von Clausewitz asserted that the political object is the final "end."²⁹

Warfare is but the means by which the end is accomplished. The political objective is inseparable from the military action, no matter how many people try to claim or argue otherwise. This is the core of the guerilla's strength. Large, conventional forces justify their use by destroying large enemy formations and facilities; guerillas possess neither. They are fluid and extremely adaptable; their small size belies their striking power and their ability to attack a political objective (like Wingate's night squads did in Palestine) or intensify the fog of war for the enemy by denying them a clear operating picture (such as the guerillas did in the Peninsular War, Lawrence's campaigns in Arabia, the SAS in North Africa, and the missions of Wingate throughout Ethiopia and Burma).

This is what, in fact, has led to the large-scale development of Special Operations and guerilla abilities throughout the militaries of the West. These small units, such as the SAS and its sister unit, the Special Boat Service (SBS), give the UK the ability to use small, highly capable and disciplined units in places where conventional units would be incapable of affecting the

reality of the situation in the field (the “ground truth”), as opposed to a theoretical planning bay.

In many of these trouble areas, the well-defined bureaucracy of conventional forces would render them impotent to a varied and highly adaptable foe utilizing guerilla warfare. By contrast, small specialized guerilla units trained by and loyal to a state give that state the ability to use guerilla tactics and gain the strength of those strategies while avoiding all the problems that come along with using proxy, indigenous forces such as poor discipline, unreliability, divergent interest with the sponsor state, and shoddy training and logistics.

In closing, guerilla warfare fits perfectly within the pantheon of tools available to the practitioner of warfare in the mold of Clausewitz. Despite military theorists who argue that the two are incompatible, guerillas provide a state or any group the means for attacking the political objective of the enemy while pursuing a commander’s own purpose. When used alongside conventional forces, they are able to dramatically increase the enemy’s confusion while reducing that of their own command. They can also disrupt enemy movements and force enemy troops to track them down, preventing those troops from massing for an attack or defending their own vulnerabilities. This allows the guerillas’ allies to mass for their own in-depth offensive, all while the guerillas provide a precision strike capability – allowing a commander to target an enemy’s political center of gravity. Guerilla tactics and units have evolved into true weapons for the adherents of Clausewitz’s philosophy.

¹ Clausewitz, B1, Ch 1, Art. 28, Many historians and analysts refer to these three parts of the trinity as the army, the commander and his ability to counter poor luck and the will of the people to sustain the conflict.

² Clausewitz, B 1, Ch1.

³ This is the definition of the author of this paper, based on a thorough study of the subject, and the argument presented here

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- ⁴ Sun Tzu, Line 18.
- ⁵ Boot, Max, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present*, 30-40.
- ⁶ Boot, 40
- ⁷ Boot, 351
- ⁸ Boot, 142.
- ⁹ Clausewitz, B1, Ch. 1. The lines quoted here appear at Articles 24 and 2 respectively
- ¹⁰ Clausewitz, B1, Ch.1, Art. 28.
- ¹¹ Bassford, Christopher, *Teaching the Clausewitzian Trinity*, 3
- ¹² Clausewitz, B1, Ch. 1, Art. 28.
- ¹³ Boot, 85.
- ¹⁴ Boot, 80.
- ¹⁵ Boot, 83.
- ¹⁶ Boot, 98
- ¹⁷ Porch, "Irregular Warfare: Strength or Weakness," *Military History Quarterly*, 32
- ¹⁸ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Introduction.
- ¹⁹ Porch, 33.
- ²⁰ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Book Two.
- ²¹ Porch, 34.
- ²² Porch, 36.
- ²³ Boot, 346. Among Wingate's more extreme eccentricities: Meeting journalists, completely in the nude, while "grooming." For a full run down and insight into his mind, read either *Invisible Armies* by Max Boot, or Douglas Porch's article in *MHQ* as featured in this paper's bibliography.
- ²⁴ Boot, 296.
- ²⁵ Boot, 301.
- ²⁶ Porch, 37
- ²⁷ Boot, 303. Wingate would die in a plane crash in March 1944.
- ²⁸ Porch, 36-38
- ²⁸ Clausewitz, B.1, Ch.1, Art. 7, 11 and 24.

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Clausewitz's Guerillas: The Evolution of Guerilla War in the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom. Warfare evolves in a circular motion. Musketeers in a firing line once replaced massed column of pike-men only to be themselves replaced by Napoleon's flying massed columns of bayonet-wielding lightly-armed musketeers. Guerilla warfare theory, though seen by many in the western world as a strategy of the weak, in fact has a far longer history than modern maneuver warfare doctrine. Guerilla warfare not only draws its inspiration from Clausewitzian thought, it has been steadily adapted by various practitioners and today has successfully become part of and complimentary to maneuver warfare as the strategy for modern and near-future conflict. Save to Library. Download. Clausewitz did allow for the amplifying factor of genius in war - he fought repeatedly against Napoleon. But he conceded that human frailties made the identification and nurturing of genius problematic. Winning World War IV. Beyerchen's idea is that the human and social sciences will change Clausewitz's perception of the constancy of the human influence in war. In effect, he argues that we are beginning the tectonic shift into World War IV, the epoch when the controlling amplifier will be human and biological rather than organizational or technological. Clausewitz is often quoted but more often misunderstood. On Clausewitz presents his central ideas about war and politics - such as war as an instrument of policy, the concept of Absolute War, friction and the fog of war - in a clear and systematic fashion. It also presents the man, his life and the military and intellectual environment in which he produced his great work On War. The article offers explanations for the poor performance of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF): A late perception that it was war; adherence to post-heroic warfare under circumstances that rather required a different approach; the erosion of the IDF's fighting standards due to policing missions which had become its main task since the outbreak of the first Intifada in 1987