

Military Preparedness: Prairie Conflict

NOTE: No Bible class on Thursday, 16 January 1997 due to weather.

5. Disorganization under pressure: “*Broken ramrods, split caps, no powder, and choked guns.*”

During the crisis is no time to go through the process and procedure of getting prepared to do battle when action is the requirement. The principle of military preparedness indicates prior training, proven expertise, and readiness for action.

Whenever a nation is caught in a military crisis, it means that it did not take necessary measures in times of peace to prepare for times of war. Those who are left vulnerable are its citizens, many of whom are capable of defending themselves against the power of an invading hostile army.

6. In such a case the nation—or in this case a nomadic community of pioneers—is faced with the task of defending itself with “*greenhorns.*”

The Oxford English Dictionary provides us with an etymology of this term:

Greenhorn, 1. An appellation given to an animal, originally to an ox with ‘green’ or young horns. 2. A recently- enlisted soldier; a raw recruit. 3. A raw, inexperienced person, especially a novice in a trade; an ignoramus; hence, one easily imposed upon, a simpleton. Hence the character or condition of inexperience.

The greenhorns of the prairie were not raw recruits, they were of the latter category—inexperienced persons, hence easily imposed upon, thus vulnerable to any hostile action. These are equal to adult males of today who have had no military training.

In times of peace, a man with military training is capable of defending home and hearth against the intrusions of the criminal element.

7. The more daring, we are told, bolted off in a mad frontal assault against a superior force.

This is false courage based on emotional arrogance. Arrogance and emotionalism never lead to reasoned and organized problem solving. Therefore, false courage plus disorganization equals defeat.

8. On the other hand, the timid and cautious took a stand behind wagons. “*Timid and cautious*” is Gregg’s way of saying, “*afraid and self-centered.*”

Fear causes a person to place an over-emphasis on self in a time of crisis. Over-emphasis on self occurs when there is fear for one’s safety and results in a lack of confidence. Fear plus self-centeredness plus a lack of confidence equals defeat.

The survival of physically and mentally unprepared people is always dependent upon those who are prepared and preferably have experience under pressure.

9. We are told that the backwoodsmen directed unerring rifles upon the intruders with deadly aim. These men are an example of the military pivot.

Establishment demands that client nations prepare men to defend its citizens from outside aggression. This preparation includes training in the arts of war including deadly accuracy with weapons.

Battle-tested veterans of the present and past generation are invaluable in times of national crisis. They form a body of trained personnel who can be mobilized for an emergency.

However, there is a time for war and a time for peace and war is the last resort. In this case more prudent traders convinced the backwoods marksmen to hold their fire for the moment.