

MODERN HISTORY

DVD VIDEO

BATTLEPLAN

New Digital Format



This series provides an in-depth history and analysis of the development of warfare. It looks at how wars are fought and the major strategies and tactics which commanders have used over centuries to defeat an enemy.

Each Battleplan is dissected to reveal the factors which are essential for success, and the inherent weaknesses which might lead to failure. These are then examined in relation to two or three outstanding modern examples of the military art

Deception

Even before the Greeks used the Wooden Horse to capture Troy, deception was a critical part of warfare. Key to any Battleplan is not simply working out what your enemy is going to do and planning against it, but trying to convince him that you are going to do one thing – while planning to do something totally different. Deception can take many forms. Intelligence can manipulate your enemy's idea of what you are going to do, by using double agents, false radio traffic or media distortion. Physical effects, like camouflage, can make armies disappear, while dummy weapons and other tricks can make them appear to be where they aren't.

This program looks at the historical background to Deception and the ways it was used in two outstanding modern examples: Operation 'Fortitude' – the D-Day Landings and Operation 'Desert Storm' in Iraq. (50 minutes)

- DVD Format \$44.00 PED229
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Counterstrike

Counterstrike can take many forms: the sudden inspirational seizing of an unexpected opportunity at a critical moment in a battle, or a carefully-planned reaction as the battle develops and the enemy's intentions can be predicted and planned for.

History is full of examples where a numerically inferior army has turned the tide of battle by a brilliant execution of its Battleplan for counterstrike and equally, where a numerically superior force has failed to react properly and been defeated.

This program looks at three occasions when different types of counterstrike worked superbly and examines why they were so effective. Tannenberg in 1914 where the German army shattered two massive Russian armies; the Russian counterstrike against Hitler's Operation Barbarossa which saved Moscow in winter 1941; and Israel's second counterattack against Egypt in 1973. (50 minutes)

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6 x 50 minute programs
Written and directed by Gordon Stevens
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Siege

Siege warfare is almost as old as history itself – as Homer's epic of the 10-year siege of Troy shows. This Battleplan can have several aims: To frustrate an enemy's offensive Battleplan by successfully holding a critical fortress or city, to seize victory by capturing a key position, or to help achieve a victory by tying down a critical element of the enemy's forces.

Three examples of siege are profiled: The German siege of Leningrad from 1941 to 1943, where Hitler simply wanted to cut off the city and starve into surrender; the Viet Minh victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1953, when the French deliberately landed deep in hostile territory and totally underestimated the strength and resourcefulness of their enemy; and the Viet Cong siege of the U.S. base at Khe Sanh in 1968 when US commanders deliberately drew their enemy into an exhausting confrontation and used their air power to win. (50 minutes)

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Pre-emptive Strike

Winning a swift victory by catching the enemy unawares, is one of any commander's great dreams. Sometimes it can be a dramatic reaction to an opportunity, or it can be designed to remove a potential threat from the enemy's arsenal. On a broader strategic level, Pre-emptive Strike can be a deliberate Battleplan used by a numerically inferior power to head off a situation in which ultimate defeat would be inevitable. Whatever the reason, it is ruthless and brutal and carries enormous risks.

This program sets out the parameters for the Battleplan for

pre-emptive strike and examines why leaders – often political rather than military – decide on this particular course of action.

These fundamentals are then applied to two notorious examples: The bombing of Pearl Harbour on December 6th, 1941, the most infamous pre-emptive strike of all; and the Israeli pre-emptive strike which began the Six Day War of June 1967. (50 minutes)

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Guerilla Warfare

From the earliest days of organised warfare, it has been apparent that a numerically and technologically superior force can be ground down by irregular tactics. But it is rare that this Battleplan alone can win unless there is either a failure of political will on the other side, or eventually defeat by a conventional force.

The principles and history of guerrilla warfare



are examined in this program and the requirements of this Battleplan are analysed from two perspectives: those waging guerrilla warfare, and those opposing it. These are then applied to two modern examples: Afghanistan 1979-88 where guerrilla warfare won the military campaign and then went on to political victory – only to be followed by massive post war complications; and Vietnam 1961-73 where the Vietcong guerrillas were steadily ground down by superior American firepower and mobility, but were able to recoup the situation politically. (50 minutes)

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Urban Warfare

Urban Warfare is the most vicious form of fighting. In an era dominated by technology, it takes a soldier back to the most primitive type of warfare: hand to hand, eyeball to eyeball, knife against knife. There is the constant threat of ambush or booby trap, and the casualties which can be sustained while moving from street to street or house to house against an unseen enemy, are horrific.

Most soldiers are desperate to avoid this type of Battleplan, but there are occasions when it becomes unavoidable. Then commanders must be particularly clear about the special requirements and the dangers to which their forces will be exposed.

This program assesses these requirements with regard to three very costly battles:

Stalingrad, Winter 1942-43 Hitler's forces were utterly defeated; Berlin, April 1945 the Red Army was determined to be the first into Hitler's capital and the Tet Offensive, 1968, the desperate last throw by the Vietcong to win the political initiative against the United States. (50 minutes)

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