

# The Swiss Militia System and the Second Amendment

By Richard Maybury

Please Return To:  
Mrs. Mary Mueller / 4930 – 138th Circle / Apple Valley, MN 55124

## Guerrilla War

Dear Chris,

To reiterate, the ideas and events that led to World War I are much more important than events during the war. This is why it is essential for you to understand the Spanish-American War and other events between that war and World War I.

However, before we get further into those events, you need to know something about military strategy and tactics, so we will divert to that for a while.

In this and several of my next letters, I will review a concept that I discussed in my previous set of letters to you on *THE THOUSAND YEAR WAR IN THE MIDEAST*.<sup>52</sup> At that time, I introduced you to a concept few Americans understand, guerrilla war. This is even more important today than it was during the Spanish-American War or during the World Wars. Most wars today are guerrilla wars, including the one that began with the destruction of the World Trade Center.

When historians examine wars, they rarely look at the people who found ways to stay out of them. To me this is strange. I think one of the most important lessons that history should teach is how to stay out of wars. What skill could be more valuable?

So we will look at the nation that has the best track record at staying out of wars, Switzerland.

The Swiss have always had the deck stacked against them. They live right in the heart of Europe, which means right in the heart of the most violent, bloody part of the earth. But, at the time I write this letter, they have not been in a foreign war in two centuries; the Swiss even stayed out of both World Wars despite being entirely surrounded by these wars.

In my opinion, Chris, every parent who cares about his or her children should be clamoring for the USG to switch to what I will call the "Swiss system of defense."

So how have the Swiss stayed out of wars?

You need to understand guerrilla war. Here is the story.

According to the *AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY*, a guerrilla is "a member of an irregular, usually indigenous military or paramilitary unit operating in small bands in occupied territory to harass and undermine the enemy, as by surprise raids."

Guerrillas are not uniformed "regular" troops, they are militia — so-called citizen-soldiers like those required by the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Regulars are sometimes called conventional troops; they are what Americans think of when they think of soldiers.

A guerrilla is a farmer, merchant, or taxi driver by day, and a sniper or saboteur by night. His style is hit-and-run.

A key point is that a guerrilla usually will not attack unless he is sure he can escape cleanly.

In the Mel Gibson movie *THE PATRIOT*, Gibson's character is based on the "Swamp Fox," Francis Marion, from the American Revolutionary War. Marion was one of the most successful guerrillas in history. His troops rarely numbered more than 200 and often just a few dozen, but, using guerrilla tactics, this handful of part-time warriors kept thousands of the enemy tied down. They prevented the successful **occupation** of the whole state of South Carolina.

The main problem regular troops have in fighting guerrillas is that they cannot shoot what they cannot find. How do you tell the difference between people who are just ordinary farmers, merchants, and taxi drivers, and those who are secretly planting booby traps and sniping at you?

Because a single guerrilla can keep a whole **battalion**<sup>53</sup> tied up for weeks, the rule of thumb among military experts is that conventional troops need at least a six-to-one numerical superiority over guerrillas. If guerrillas number 1,000, the regulars fighting them will need to number at least 6,000.

This is an optimistic estimate. In 1998, the Turkish government had 200,000 conventional troops committed to fighting just 1,200 Kurdish guerrillas. This was a ratio of 166 to one. You cannot shoot what you cannot find.

In an interview on January 1, 1959, Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista said, "A government needs one hundred soldiers for every guerrilla it faces."<sup>54</sup> A few days later Batista's troops were beaten by the guerrillas. Batista fled and was replaced by Fidel Castro.

This is why the Second Amendment is in the Constitution. When a militia is well-armed and trained to fight an invader by using guerrilla tactics, as the American militia was during the Revolution — and the Swiss militia has been for hundreds of years — an invader needs a force so large that no one is likely to try it.

In my next letter, Chris, I will tell you more about guerrilla warfare.

Uncle Eric



<sup>52</sup> Uncle Eric is referring to Chapter 15, "The Invincible Secret Weapon" in the book *THE THOUSAND YEAR WAR IN THE MIDEAST: HOW IT AFFECTS YOU TODAY* by Richard J. Maybury, published by Bluestocking Press, web site: [www.BluestockingPress.com](http://www.BluestockingPress.com)

<sup>53</sup> Battalion: in the infantry, about 800 troops. Typically, but not always, there are nine troops in a squad, three squads to a platoon, four platoons to a company, six companies to a battalion, two battalions to a brigade, and six brigades to a division.

<sup>54</sup> *POWER QUOTES*, by Daniel B. Baker, Visible Ink Press, Detroit, MI, 1992, p.337.



## Guerrilla War Examples

Dear Chris,

### Switzerland in the World Wars

■ In war    □ Not in war



Europe in World War I



Europe in World War II

Despite living in the exact center of the most bloodsoaked part of the world — Europe — the Swiss have not been in a foreign war in almost two centuries. Yet, few historians or military analysts bother to ask, how do the Swiss do it?

Switzerland stayed out of the World Wars; yet Switzerland is smaller than Ohio in both population and area. How did the Swiss do it?

Their story is very enlightening, but not usually revealed in school textbooks. Consequently, many people today are unaware that Switzerland has a crucially important lesson to teach.

In Switzerland, a man joins the militia at age 20 and remains until age 50 (officers remain until age 55). A militia is all the able-bodied adult males of good character<sup>55</sup> in the country. They are trained, equipped, and ready at all times to turn out for guerrilla operations.

Contrary to the unflattering picture of militias often painted by the news media, a militia is a military version of the volunteer firemen who are always trained and ready to turn out to fight fires.

Each Swiss militiaman trains regularly, much like the National Guard in the U.S. He keeps his battle rifle and ammunition in his home ready for immediate use.

Militia-guerrillas are trained to ambush privates and corporals only when a more valuable target is not available. They prefer colonels and generals.

Marksmanship is the Swiss national sport, and all Swiss militiamen are required to be expert marksmen. This means they are all qualified to be snipers, and the colonels and generals of surrounding nations know it.

There is an old saying, Switzerland does not have an army; Switzerland *is* an army. It is an entire nation of Minutemen.

In World War II, the Swiss militia numbered 850,000, a fifth of the population. These were more troops than the U.S. Army had when the World Trade Center was destroyed. Not bad for such a small country.

Under the six-to-one ratio, the Germans and Italians would have needed five million troops to successfully occupy that tiny nation. Facing 850,000 snipers, the German generals decided they could invade, but they would never get out of Switzerland alive.

Thousands of Swiss women also acquired rifles and practiced their marksmanship. As I write this today, on any weekend, you can go to a rifle range in Switzerland and see women practicing to earn their sharpshooting medals.

The Swiss also had aircraft and other heavy weapons, but the backbone of the defense was the militiaman, the sniper who was always fully trained and ready to hunt down the enemy's leaders.

Any European nation could have used the militia-guerrilla system, and a few did make a halfhearted attempt, but none came close to doing it as well as the Swiss, so the other countries were easier targets.

Chris, Switzerland has long been famous for the effectiveness of its militia and for its heavily armed neutrality. If you will read *FEDERALIST PAPERS* number 20, 42, and 43 by James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, you will find that in creating the American system, the Founders studied Switzerland. The Second Amendment and Tenth Amendment to the Constitution especially bear the imprint of Swiss thinking.

Nothing strikes terror into the heart of a general like the prospect of invading a country infested with snipers.

This is not to say the Swiss are perfect. They are human and they make mistakes.

As I said earlier, Chris, at the time I write this letter, neutral Switzerland has not been in a war in two centuries. When other nations gave a war and sent out the invitations, the Swiss sent back a polite but firm, no thank you.

However, pressure on the Swiss to abandon their neutrality has been growing for decades. In February 2002, the Swiss caved in and voted to join the United Nations. At the time I write this letter, the Vatican is the only nation voluntarily outside the UN. The Swiss model of heavily armed neutrality is fading away. I suggest you study it to learn all you can, before it is gone.

I'll try to answer the question I anticipate you might ask in your next letter: why don't all countries use this system? My guess: a militia-guerrilla force cannot be used to invade other people's homelands. Militiamen are only part-time soldiers. Because they have civilian jobs and families to take care of, a militia is strictly defensive, not offensive.

Also, most governments have so much power that their subjects (their citizens) hate them, and I am sure these rulers do not want their subjects to have weapons.

Today, if we used the militia-guerrilla system of defense required by the Second Amendment, the U.S. could field 50 million able-bodied males. This means an invader would need, at a minimum, 300 million troops.

<sup>55</sup> In this context, good character usually means no criminal record.



All the armed forces of the rest of the world combined total less than 40 million.<sup>56</sup>

Try to imagine invading a country infested with 50 million snipers.

Incidentally, Chris, let me point out the exact wording of the Second Amendment:

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

The right "to keep and bear arms" clause gets most of the press, but notice that the militia clause comes first.

Also, notice that the militia clause does not say, "A well regulated militia, being optional for the security of a free State." It says "necessary."

In other words, the amendment does not give *permission* for a well-regulated militia; it *requires* one. The American Founders were no fools.

After all, it was the Pennsylvania flintlock rifle (invented by immigrant gunsmiths from Germany, incidentally) used as a sniper rifle that enabled Minutemen to keep the Redcoats from controlling America. British officers had a terrible fear of that rifle. Sniper Timothy Murphy is credited with winning the battle of Saratoga by killing both British commanders. With their leaders dead, the battle turned against the British.<sup>57</sup>

The psychological effects of a militia are even more powerful than mere numbers would suggest. We get a hint of one effect from the Swiss sniper incident in World War II. It grew out of the legend of William Tell.

Chris, in case you have not heard the legend of William Tell, it takes place in 1307.

Here's how the story goes.

Switzerland has been invaded and conquered by the Austrians, and the Swiss are in revolt against Austrian rule.

The Swiss are fanatics about liberty (every bit as much as Americans).

Having trouble putting down the Swiss rebellion, the Austrians try to make examples of Swiss rebels who are caught.

In a Swiss village, the Austrians place an Austrian hat on a pole and command all the Swiss to salute it whenever they pass by, as if it is an Austrian army officer.

Tell is walking through the village one day and refuses to salute. As punishment, an Austrian official orders him to shoot an apple off his son's head.

If Tell is a bad shot, his son will die.

Chris, the only conclusion to this story that most Americans know is that Tell proves to be a good shot. He hits the apple without harming his son. But there's more to the legend.

After Tell hits the apple without harming his son, an arrow falls from Tell's shirt, and Tell says to the Austrian official, if my son had been harmed, this arrow would have been for you.

Here's the rest of the story that few American's know, but the Swiss take very seriously.

Tell is a guerrilla who plans to kill the emperor, and after the apple incident, his plan is discovered; he is captured and thrown aboard a ship as a prisoner.

However, Tell escapes, then hunts down the official who made him shoot the apple off his son's head, and kills him.

Tell then leads a general uprising in which the emperor is killed, and the Austrians withdraw, leaving Switzerland a free country.

As I write this letter, Switzerland remains one of the freest countries in the world.

No one knows how much of the William Tell story is true, but, as I said, the Swiss take it very seriously.

*The point to them is that the military objective is not to kill the enemy's troops. It is to kill enemy leaders.*

Every Swiss grows up with this lesson drilled into his or her head. It is the reason for the Swiss emphasis on marksmanship. The Swiss tradition is to be a guerrilla marksman who goes after the highest ranking officers he can find.

This is a good generalization about all guerrillas. They prefer to go after colonels and generals or someone higher — not privates or corporals.

In 1938, a Swiss marksman named Maurice Bavaud sneaked into Germany. A theology student, Bavaud knew that Hitler's plans violated all ethical laws, especially the one that says, do not encroach on other persons or their property.

Bavaud stalked Hitler and fired at him on three separate occasions that we know of.

It is highly unlikely that a Swiss soldier would miss three times. All Swiss militiamen are required to be marksmen so that they can act as snipers if needed, and they are always equipped with superb rifles. It may be that, since the war had not yet begun, Bavaud was firing warning shots.

In any case, we can safely assume that the near misses made Hitler wonder how many more Swiss marksmen might be stalking him.

In 1941, Bavaud was caught and executed. Hitler personally forbade the play WILLIAM TELL from being performed or read in German schools, and he never tried to invade Switzerland.<sup>58</sup>

Note that Bavaud managed to stay hidden for three years. Were other Swiss snipers, hiding in Germany and Italy, pledged to kill the leaders if Switzerland was invaded?

We will probably never know. But if you were Hitler or Mussolini, what would you have thought?

The one thing we can be sure about is that in both World Wars tiny Switzerland was surrounded by warring powers but was not invaded. They had the deck stacked against them more completely than any other nation in history, but they stayed out of the war.

Incidentally, Chris, besides being the most heavily armed population in the world, the Swiss also have one of the lowest crime rates. In a country where a well-trained soldier with a battle rifle resides in almost every home, criminals know that their careers will likely be short and painful.

Firearm deaths are rare, too. These people take guns seriously. The whole country is trained in their safe and proper use.

Summarizing the Swiss experience in World War II, the Swiss essentially delivered a message to Axis rulers, the same one they had been delivering to foreign rulers for centuries: yes, you can probably beat us eventually, but by that time we will have hunted down and killed your officers, your henchmen, and you.

<sup>56</sup> THE STATE OF WAR AND PEACE ATLAS by Dan Smith, Penguin Reference, London, 1997, p.64.

<sup>57</sup> "The Ten Most Important Guns in History," TALES OF THE GUN, History Channel Documentary.

<sup>58</sup> TARGET SWITZERLAND by Stephen P. Halbrook, Sarpidon Publishing, Rockville Center, NY, 1998, p.58 & 159.



## Never Surrender

Dear Chris,

Perhaps the most important characteristic of guerrillas is that they are independent. They have no commander-in-chief, no central leader; they almost always operate on their own personal initiative.

This gives the attacker no central authority on which he can focus his forces. It does him no good to capture the capitol and force the government to surrender. The guerrillas will fight on.

The invader must conquer his victims, city by city, town by town, village by village, and house by house. And, all the while, the country will be infested with snipers trying to shoot his officers.

If each house contains a well-trained, well-armed member of the militia who has taken an oath to never surrender, then the enemy is likely to run out of officers long before the militia runs out of snipers.

The reason the Afghans were able to beat the mighty Soviet army during the 1980s was because they had no government, and each guerrilla had sworn never to surrender.

In other words, a central authority is a convenience to the enemy; it gives him the ability to force surrender onto the whole country — just by conquering the government.

In World War II, Swiss militiamen took an oath never to surrender no matter what their government might be forced to say or do.<sup>60</sup>

Chris, criminals and powerseekers consider peaceful Switzerland, where the whole population is armed against them, a bad example. The Swiss are often victims of smear campaigns. When you hear a condemnation of the Swiss, or any other group, do not form an opinion until you have all the facts; learn both sides of the story.

Uncle Eric

A superb book about how the Swiss militia held the mighty German and Italian armies at bay in World War II is *TARGET SWITZERLAND* by Stephen P. Halbrook. I recommend this book highly. It will give you a far deeper understanding of the World Wars. In fact, all wars. It is one of the few cases of anyone asking, how did the Swiss do it?

Always remember, little Switzerland occupied the most dangerous location in the world — the exact center of Europe — entirely surrounded by enemies, but stayed out of both World Wars and stayed free.

The Swiss avoided the carnage so common all over the globe by doing what America's Second Amendment requires. They know a well-regulated militia is not optional, it is *necessary*. When it comes to achieving the peace and liberty we all want, I challenge you to find a system of military defense that has worked better than that of the Swiss. All countries can use it. I urge you again to study it while it is still there.

Chris, earlier I said it would be fair to say these are anti-war letters written by an extreme militarist. I hope you now understand what I mean.

Uncle Eric

P.S. In case you are wondering, Chris, as I write this, U.S. law prohibits the killing of foreign rulers. No one seems to be sure why this prohibition exists, but a common theory is that it is a way of protecting the U.S. President — it helps prevent tit-for-tat assassinations.

<sup>59</sup> U.S. Navy official web site, and "Presidents Have A History...", by L. Gordon Crovitz, WALL STREET JOURNAL, January 15, 1987, p.24.

<sup>60</sup> *TARGET SWITZERLAND* by Stephen P. Halbrook, Sarpedon Publishing, Rockville Center, NY, 1998, p.58 & 172.

Axis rulers left the Swiss porcupine alone. So did the Russians and the other Allies.

And so did the Allies and the Central Powers in World War I.

One small insight: If you were Hitler and you were surrounded by officers who knew they would die if you attacked Switzerland, how much would you trust these officers?

How could you plan an invasion knowing that one of the officers might kill you if you so much as mentioned the idea of invading Switzerland?

Chris, if you will look at a map of every European war during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries — the CENTENNIA® program is a good way to do this — you will find that in each case, in the center of all the bloodshed, is a little island of peace and freedom, Switzerland. The Swiss have had a few internal struggles, but foreign powers have left them alone.

Switzerland is not only a country, it is a citadel. Every village and every mountain pass is fortified. Every new house is built with a bomb shelter in the basement. The long, straight stretches of the expressways have been designed to do double-duty as military airstrips. The highway tunnels are bombproof hangars. Mountain caves are packed with enough food and ammunition for the whole population to conduct guerrilla operations for years.

To a tyrant, there is no place in the world as scary as Switzerland.

America has never had anything remotely resembling the Swiss system of protection. The American armed forces are not defensive, they are offensive. They are designed not to defend our homeland, but to get into other people's wars, and they do this very well. As I said in an earlier letter, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, U.S. forces were sent abroad into other people's battles no less than 188 times.<sup>59</sup>

Nearly every book and movie about the World Wars omits Switzerland. The attitude of the writers seems to be, the Swiss were not in the wars, so they are not important; they are not part of the story.

To me, no country in the World Wars is more important than Switzerland. It is the example the others should be copying.

Chris, who do you think I would say was the most significant person in the World Wars? I would say Maurice Bavaud. He showed how to stay out of the wars and how to stay free. What lesson could be more important?



## Killing Women

Dear Chris,

Before leaving the subject of guerrilla warfare, I must explain the psychological effect of fighting a guerrilla war. Commonly, in a guerrilla war the regular troops take casualties without ever seeing the enemy, which means without being able to shoot back. Frustrated and enraged, the regulars eventually snap and begin killing anyone they think might be a guerrilla — or might be helping the guerrillas.

In other words, they begin to commit murder. Young men, who only a few months before were living ordinary lives at home with their families, begin to behave like serial killers.

Chris, try to imagine how the troops feel after the heat of the moment when they begin to think about what they have done.

Each such incident further destroys morale, which is a polite way of saying it increases pressure for troops to desert and mutiny.

It gets worse. In every guerrilla war there is a moment when a regular troop gets lucky, kills a guerrilla before the guerrilla can kill him, then turns over the body to find that it is a woman. From that moment on, the regulars know they must kill women, including mothers and teen-age girls.

There is nothing more demoralizing to a male soldier. Once the need to kill women becomes known, morale plunges further, and the army is in serious danger of losing the war.

The Vietnam War was mostly a guerrilla war. U.S. regulars were fighting Vietnamese guerrillas.

You might remember reading about the My Lai massacre in Vietnam. Lt. Calley's platoon had been taking casualties for weeks without being able to retaliate. They finally went crazy and tried to wipe out the whole village of My Lai, every man, woman and child.

Calley and several others were court-martialed and found guilty of murdering 500 innocent people.

The governments of Europe, armed with cannons against bows and arrows, conquered nearly the whole world using the procedure of "kill them all and let God sort them out." This suggestion, which was followed by the Calley group, was heard often in Vietnam.

In Vietnam, many Americans learned the hard way that even a small child can hand you a Coke can with a grenade inside. In 1967, a journalist from Life Magazine asked an army sergeant if there was a way to win the war. The sergeant said, "Kill everyone over five years old."

Again, guerrilla war is mostly about morale. Once a regular troop realizes his job is to be a murderer, he loses the desire to fight and begins to think about desertion and mutiny.

Chris, as I mentioned in an earlier letter, in nearly all cases, guerrillas are entirely defensive, not offensive. They do not invade other countries because they are only part-time soldiers who have civilian jobs and families to take care of.

So it is not a bad generalization to say that if you find yourself fighting a guerrilla, you are on the wrong side. He is not on your territory, you are on his; he is not the invader, you are.

When regular troops figure this out, thoughts of desertion and mutiny sweep through the ranks. No one likes to discover that he is risking his life for purposes that are dishonorable.

The soldier begins to see the officer giving him his orders as the real enemy.

So every knowledgeable officer knows that if he goes into a guerrilla war he runs a high risk of being shot by one of his own soldiers.

Regulars often lose guerrilla wars due to exhaustion. A whole battalion can spend weeks trying to find one sniper. But my guess is that they more often lose because it takes only one angry private to kill a general; the smart generals take early retirements.

The amazing effectiveness of guerrillas can be seen in the Afghan war against the Russians during the 1980s. Early on, the primitive Afghans were armed only with pre-World War I bolt-action rifles. They had to melt lead to make their own bullets, and they ground up old celluloid movie film to use as gunpowder. Yet they made life awful for the Russians and prevented Russian occupation of most of the country.

Later, the Afghans acquired modern weapons including shoulder-launched guided missiles. These enabled them to drive the Russians all the way out of Afghanistan.

That is the key, modern weapons. If the guerrillas can acquire a supply of high quality light weapons, the invader will be in deep trouble.

Think about it, in Afghanistan, guerrilla tactics and modern weapons enabled small bands of primitive tribesmen to defeat the second most powerful nation ever seen on earth.<sup>61</sup>

A militia/guerrilla defense is a porcupine defense. A porcupine is a quiet, peaceful animal, but woe unto anyone who attacks him.

In November 1939, Russia attacked Finland. Russia's population was 190 million; Finland's, four million. The Russians were also superior in every type of weapon: tanks, artillery, planes, and warships.<sup>62</sup>

The Finns had only two advantages. They were fighting on their own territory, which they knew intimately, and they were using guerrilla tactics.

The Finns fought the Russians to a standstill. They did not succeed in ejecting the Russians completely, but they did save most of their country, and the Russians will never forget the horrors they suffered in the Finnish campaign.

For a century or so after the Industrial Revolution, European powers were able to conquer most of the world because they had battleships against bows and arrows, but that window of opportunity is closed now. Most of the world is industrialized, and guerrillas can usually get the modern weapons they need.

They can also travel easily all over the world and strike back in places and ways least expected. They do not like to leave home and family, but, if driven to desperate measures, they will do it. The war that grew out of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack on the United States became the world's first global guerrilla war.

Chris, in my next letter we will go back to the Philippines, where Filipinos decided to fight for their independence and began a guerrilla war. The U.S. conquest of the Philippines was a crucial step toward the World Wars.

Uncle Eric

<sup>61</sup> The U.S. was the most powerful.

<sup>62</sup> STALIN, by Albert Marrin, Puffin Books, a division of the Penguin Group, NY, 1988, p.161-169.