

Project White Horse: The Website

Angels Twenty

Combat Spread...

Push it out

Fight's on

The evolution of the horse from pulling the chariot, to the mount of barebacked archers to the saddled and stirrured lancer of feudal times, from light to heavy cavalry, was truly a revolution of military affairs. Attila's shift of strategic center of effort from eastern France to Northern Italy in successive campaigning seasons was strategic maneuver and freedom of movement that had never been attempted or been possible in warfare. All in one, the mounted warrior provided speed, maneuverability, power and capability to rapidly adapt to changing situations. The enduring legacy can be seen today in fast assault "air cavalry" helicopter units and in the iconic language of any military or emergency response in "holding on until the cavalry arrives."

Since the earliest days of that "cavalry revolution," as the horse people of the steppe attacked eastward at the Roman Empire, craftsmen and artists have depicted kings, generals, all great captains of war astride the warhorse, and more often than not that horse was white. Paintings of significant battles throughout history are most often inclusive of white horse riding cavalry commanders from Waterloo to Gettysburg to Balaclava. Great captains from Bonaparte, Washington, Lee, Jackson, Custer to Patton adorn museum walls on their white chargers.

Project White Horse began as a quest, first, for understanding the elements of time critical decision making in worst case disasters (those defined as inconceivable, potentially uncontrollable and with extreme aspects of uncertainty and chaos), and second, for further knowledge necessary to support readiness of the people who will be called upon to make those decisions when time is their enemy.

The analogy of the war captain astride the white stallion leading cavalry to the rescue seemed most appropriate in light of decision making and leadership issues arising from the emerging events of this century, and therefore, Project White Horse 084640. White Horse is about decisions, decisions that must be made for better or worse, decisions that if delayed looking for more information or direction from higher authority, are decisions made - for better or worse. The final piece of the title, numbers zero, eight, four, six, four, zero are key to White Horse thinking and its focus on time criticality. "084640" denotes the time - 8 hours, 46 minutes, 40 seconds into Tuesday, September 11, 2001 when Mohammed Atta flew American Airlines Flight 11 into the World Trade Center.

If you're going to lead a cavalry charge, you better believe you look good on a white horse.

Believing you look good enough on a white horse to lead a cavalry charge in the 21st Century, I believe, means not only preparing yourself through current training and education practices, but also taking on "worst case thinking," going beyond probability in analysis to look at possible events, thinking about the response to the unthinkable, and

engaging in training focused on how you think, not just on getting the right answer. Author Alvin Toffler's words resound: "The illiterate of the twenty-first century will not be those who can neither read nor write, but rather those who will not learn, unlearn, relearn."

The initial effort, discussed more specifically in the article below, suggests the following as necessary "new" areas for learning within the context of decision making in all hazards, worst case, time critical, uncertain and chaotic events:

1. *Adaptability* - critical 21st Century skill
2. *Worst Case Thinking* – considering Probability vs. Possibility
3. *Uncertainty and cognitive traps*- why we don't learn that we don't learn
4. *Prepared but not ready* - current training implications
5. *Orientation* – Understanding in crisis decision making the first requirement
6. *Civil – Military response*... hang together or assuredly hang separately
7. *Understanding decision making and terrorism*...one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter?!?!?
8. *Fantasy contingency plans* - – planning issues for taming "high-end disasters" with documents
9. *Counter Factual Tools* – Disciplined approach to "what-ifying"
10. *4th Generation Warfare*...implications to first responders

When I began the effort, the focus was on command control at the upper side of the tactical level and organizational response for public safety AND civil-military first responders and leadership AND most particularly focused at response to acts of terrorism. While the intended end result is still on learning in "how we think" rather than "what we think" (i.e., following the playbook) in critical time sensitive worst cases, I have expanded exploration into all hazards decision making and other levels response during serious crisis events. This shift emerges from researching examples such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Mayaguez incident, Air Florida Flight 82, and Alaska Flight 261.

The problems of this century, arguably through 1) results and application of scientific progress, 2) Globalization, 3) Mother Nature's defense of her turf in response to man's progression, and 4) actions of the non-state fighters of fourth generation warfare emerging from Thomas P.M. Barnett's world of the "Gap," create a dynamic possibly unfaced by civilization to date. How to respond?

When things go badly, leaders get blamed. People have expectations that their leaders (Federal, Military, State, and Local) are thinking about worst cases and preparing.

But what if nothing leaders have ever been taught or experienced is sufficient to the problem?

The impact of the juxtaposition of globalism, information availability (truth or distortion), crisis within the Islamic religion, immigration, radical concept driven non-

state player warfare, and the resulting possibility of what Carl von Clausewitz labeled *total war*, creates a problem set unto itself, in addition to the individual element's impact. This would seem to call for need for enlightened research and approach, indeed, re-orientation.

The initial and ongoing Project White Horse 084640 is about time critical team decision making in a multi-jurisdictional response as would be required in a worst case disaster such as occurred on September 11, 2001 or in New Orleans created by Katrina.

This website expands the field of view as follows:

In the face of terrorism/non-state warfare, radicalism, globalization, implications of possible global warming(or at minimum, recognition of the world wide impact of major disasters), corporate corruption, information age capability (good news, bad news, wrong news, biased news, corrupt news), and an emerging requirement increase for protection of citizens and infrastructure...

A forum for exchange of ideas on decision making and leadership in the 21st Century