

**ARE
YOU
A
GUNG
HO
SOLDIER
?**

by: Judah Hill



YER DAM
STRAIGHT!
I'M GUNG HO...
NOW LET ME
TURN YER BRAIN
TO CHEESE!

THAT'S WHAT YOU
THINK; PORKER...

BEFORE ANY OF THE
REST OF YOU ANSWER....

CHECK THIS OUT →

THE ORIGINS OF "GUNG HO"

As you probably know the term "Gung Ho" is from China and was introduced to the Marine Corps by Colonel E.F. Carlson when he formed the 2nd Raider Battalion during World War II. Maybe you remember the movie about the battalion and the Makin Raid. But what you probably don't know is the true history of Carlson, the Raider, and Gung Ho concept.

First off, the idea of Gung Ho originated with the Communist Chinese Red Army during pre-World War II days. The Red Army was led by Chu Teh, Mao Tse-Tung, and Chou En-Lai, all of whom were personal friends of Carlson. He met them when he was U.S. military observer in China in the late 1930's. Carlson spent months marching, studying and fighting with the Red Army, and while doing so, he learned an entirely new (for him) method of running a military. And he saw how effective the method proved to be against the Japanese invaders. When he returned to the U.S. he tried to tell the American people that it was the Communist Red Army that was leading the struggle against Japanese Imperialism and that they had a new and better way of organizing their military. Carlson called this style of military organization "Gung Ho" from the Chinese slogan "work together". Soon after he returned to the states the Navy Department ordered Carlson to stop talking about China, the Red Army and Gung Ho. He refused to do this and resigned from the Marine Corps, so that he could continue to speak.

BIRTH OF THE SECOND RAIDERS

When it became obvious in early 1941 that war with Japan was inevitable, he rejoined the Corps and fought for the chance to form a guerilla battalion, organized on the basis of the Gung Ho principles he learned from Mao Tse-Tung and Chu Teh. After Pearl Harbor and the following defeats of the Philippines, Malaya and Wake, he was given permission to form the new type of unit, christened the "2nd Raider Battalion".





ABSOLUTE EQUALITY

The Gung Ho idea meant many things to the men in the Raiders, but two of them stand out as most important. The first is absolute equality between officers and enlisted men. Raider officers ate the same food, slept in the same bunks, wore the same uniform, dug their own latrines and carried their own packs. Officers did not order their men to do anything that they (the officers) were not willing and able to do first. There were weekly "Gung Ho" meetings between all the officers and men, where the privates were encouraged to speak their minds freely and to criticize the NCO's and officers if they deserved it. Officers and NCO's had to earn the respect of the men that they led. If they failed to do so, if they were chickenshit blowhards who hid behind their rank, if they felt that they were better than the men they were to lead, they were kicked out of the Raiders. The enlisted men were treated with respect. Their ideas were solicited and considered. Because of this the men trusted their officers. They obeyed commands in battle because they knew their officers were competent and would not send them into danger needlessly. They respected their officers because they knew that their officers respected them.

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

The second major element of Gung Ho was knowledge about why and how they were fighting. They repeatedly discussed why they were fighting, and what the war was about. Carlson believed that the war was against fascism, that growing out of the war would be a new era of democracy and freedom, that the purpose of the war was to ensure a better and more democratic life for all. Since this was the purpose of the war, it was only logical to begin living what they were fighting for. Thus, for the Raiders, the war aims were not mere propaganda because they were carried out in daily life. They could see democracy, respect, human dignity and a better life being built in their battalion. Carlson had nothing to fear from free and open discussion with the troops because he practiced what he preached.

The "Gung Ho" meetings, of course, covered much more than criticism of officers and what the war was about. Before each mission, and whenever possible in the field, a full discussion was held with the men, explaining why the mission was necessary, what was hoped to be accomplished, the tactics to be used, how it fit into the overall picture, etc. New ideas were solicited from the ranks — for example, the idea of the 3-man fire team which has become widely accepted was developed by the Raiders. The Raiders went into battle knowing exactly what they were going to do, why they were doing it, what they were fighting for, and that the ideals for which they were fighting had been made real in their own lives. This was what Gung Ho was all about. Working together, officers and men, for a common cause — democracy, justice, equality and a better life.

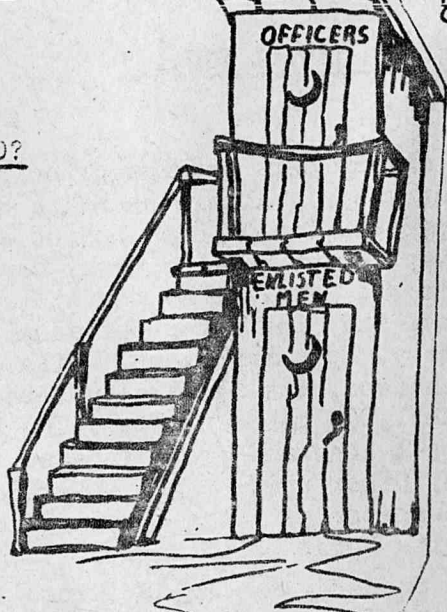
"DO AS I TELL YOU..."

The Raiders and the principles of Gung Ho were very successful. After the Makin Raid, the Raider Battalion operated for 31 days behind enemy lines on Guadalcanal. They fought battles every day. They fought the jungle and the fever, they ate stolen rice and slept in the mud. They inflicted between 500-700 casualties on the enemy. Most important, while accomplishing all of these missions, the Raiders suffered on 17 casualties out of the 1,000 man battalion. The Raiders attributed their small loss and great success to the principles of Gung Ho. Other units began to write and ask about Gung Ho. Newspaper articles were written, Enlisted men in other units began to talk about Gung Ho.

Suddenly the Brass "promoted" Carlson to the job of Plans Officer for the 4th Marine Division. He was never allowed to command troops again. A new CO was appointed for the 2nd Raider Battalion, Col. Alan Shapley. His first orders: no more Gung Ho meetings, all enlisted men will start saluting, etc., etc. Very quickly all the Gung Ho reforms were dead.

There's an old legend about a king and how everything he touched turned to gold. The Marine Brass is almost as talented. Everything they touch turns to shit. The Brass kept the label "Gung Ho", but they changed its meaning. Instead of meaning work together, now it means "do as I tell you." Instead of democracy, it meant the opposite. Today it means kissing ass and mindless obedience to orders. Obedience to the insignia of rank and not to the man for what he is. In essence, the Brass touched a Gung Ho made of gold, and turned it into a Gung Ho made of shit. And they feed it to us everyday.

WHY WAS GUNG HO DESTROYED?



The Brass destroyed the true Gung Ho for two reasons. First, because many of them knew that they could not lead their men on the basis of their wisdom, courage and ideals, and that they did not want to give up the privileges of rank. So to keep their rank and the soft beds that went with it, they attacked Gung Ho. But there is a second and more important reason for the destruction of the real Gung Ho.

Gung Ho will only work when the military is fighting a just war. A war that is supported, voluntarily, by the people, GI's and civilians. A war where what the leaders say is based on truth, and thus can stand up to questions and comparisons with reality. This was the great lesson that the People's Liberation Army of China taught Carlson. When a war is just, and when the military practices what it preaches, it will win no matter how great the odds against it.

GUNG HO IN PRACTICE

Think about the Vietnam war. A true Gung Ho outfit would have discussed the reasons for the war, and would have decided that to fight to maintain a corrupt dictatorship over the Vietnamese people so that Standard Oil, Inc. could make another \$100 million wasn't a good enough reason to die for. They wouldn't have gone. And if a true Gung Ho outfit had been tricked into going to Vietnam by lies and deceit, they would have quickly compared the reality of what they saw with the bullshit they were being fed. Eventually, this happened anyway, and the enlisted men said "take your war and shove it. But if there had been a real Gung Ho spirit it would have happened a lot quicker and a lot of Vietnamese and Americans would still be alive today.

Hundreds of marines were killed at Khe Sanh so that Johnson could prove his manhood. Thousands of GI's died taking useless objectives like Hamburger Hill so that some brass-hat could stick another star on his collar and run up another score on his "body count". A Gung Ho outfit wouldn't have stood for it.

A Gung Ho outfit would have asked: "If we are fighting to help the Vietnamese, why do they hate our guts? If we are fighting for freedom, why don't we have it ourselves?" The U.S. military can't afford to have a true Gung Ho because so much of what the U.S. military does is UNjust, UNdemocratic, because so much of it is based on lies and trickery, and because so much of it is only for the benefit of a few rich businessmen, generals, admirals, presidents, and dictators, and against the welfare of the average GI, the average American, or the average Asian.

The truth is that all over Asia the U.S. military is being used to prop up corrupt fascist dictators who oppress and exploit the people. The only true friends these dictators have are the big U.S. corporations who make millions out of the misery of the Asian people. Except for Japan, there isn't a single country in Asia where the U.S. military has bases that is a democracy, and Japan is following the same big money game as the U.S. Think about the Philippines, Korea or Taiwan. Have you gone anywhere in Asia where you were welcomed?? (You, not your dollars) Where you were liked because the people thought you were there to help them?? Why is this? Think about it.

FURTHER READING

If you are interested in the complete history of Gung Ho, Carlson and the Raiders, there is a book about it called Big Yankee by Blankfort. Unfortunately, it's not sold anymore and only a few big libraries have it, but try of look it up anyway. If you want to know more about how the Chinese Army is run, or about China in general, or true facts about why the U.S. military is in Asia, there are plenty of good books, newspapers and pamphlets available, for sale or for lending. Come around to one of the locations on the back page and check them out.

Oh yeah, and the next time you hear the term "Gung Ho", remember the real Gung Ho spirit and what it had meant to the men of the 2nd Raider Battalion before the brass stomped on it, and them.

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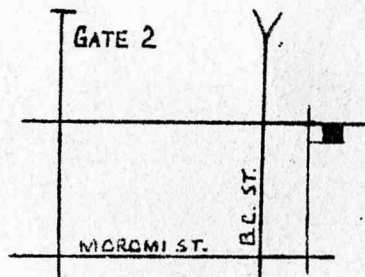
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