

Surviving in a World of Super-soldiers

I don't know about you, but I'm a fan of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). I've enjoyed the movies, and I'm enjoying the series they've been running on Disney +.

I even enjoy reading the blog posts that some of those who follow comics closer than I do, showing details that I might have missed in the shows. A while back, I wrote an article about "[Surviving Thanos](#)."

Marvel is now in the midst of their series "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier," in which Sam Wilson and Bucky Barnes deal with the retirement of the actual Captain America, his replacement, and fighting crime in a post-blip world.

Amidst all the other things happening in the series, Sam and Bucky are chasing a group of supersoldiers called "the Flag Smashers." Their tentative alliance with the notorious Baron Zemo is based upon Zemo's desire to rid the world of these beings, along with all super-powered beings, because of the danger they present to the rest of the world.

That's not a survival scenario that you and I are going to face. There's no Thanos and no Infinity Stones for him to use to snap half of all life out of existence. But the concept of supersoldiers isn't so far-fetched. This is something that military organizations around the world would like to make real. China, for one, is reportedly working on a supersoldier program. Russia has fielded fighting robot tanks, and our own Department of Defense is working on exoskeleton technology to make some version of an Iron Man suit.

Two things about this should be of concern. The first is that if we are ever in a situation where we are up against armed soldiers, such as martial law, there's a chance that they may

have capabilities we are unaware of and can't replicate. The second is that if our government can do it, others can too. I've seen enough videos on YouTube about one group or another coming up with a way to make something that works, which used to be fiction.

Facing regular soldiers would be an enormous challenge, even for the best equipped of us. The military so far outguns us that fighting against a foreign threat would require the absolute best in guerrilla warfare, with them having equipment that we could only dream of. Even then, the losses to the civilian army would be enormous. How much worse would it be if we were fighting some enhanced soldiers?



All would not be lost in such a circumstance. If there is any lesson to be learned from the Vietnam war, it's that even the best trained and equipped army can be defeated by guerilla warriors who are willing to give their all for the cause. The same lesson can be seen from our own Revolutionary War, where sharpshooters, shooting from the cover of the woods, were one of the most effective weapons that George Washington wielded against the British.

So, how could we defeat some version of a supersoldier,

soldiers, or even roving bands of marauders, who are better equipped, better trained, and in better physical condition than we are, should we ever be faced with the necessity to do so?

Study Your Enemy

Perhaps one of the most significant military aphorisms came from the Chinese general and philosopher Sun Tsu in the fifth century BC. In his famous book, "The Art of War," he states: "Know thy enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles, you will not be defeated." This basic martial truth has been forgotten and relearned over and over throughout history.

The importance of this quote is so apparent as to be easily misunderstood. But it is impossible to develop a winning strategy against any enemy without knowing its capabilities and intentions. Intentions are important because part of defeating any enemy is in denying them that which they want.

Taking that idea into a survival situation, one in which your home or survival retreat is being attacked, it would be evident that what the attackers want is what you have: supplies. So not only is it essential to protect your family, but it's also important to protect your stockpile. Allowing them to get even a part of that stockpile would encourage them, spurring them on returning and attacking you again.

The tricky part here is in knowing their capabilities. Countries spend billions of dollars spying on other countries' military capabilities to understand how to defeat them. Even during wartime, a vast amount of effort is put into reconnaissance, trying to find the enemy's location, strength, and capabilities.

You and I don't have anywhere near the resources of a nation-state, but we do have eyes and ears. Part of our survival strategy has to be keeping an eye on what's going on around

us. That could mean having a guard on duty or keeping your ear to the ground to hear about what gangs are forming in the area and what they're doing, and what they're capable of.

Understanding their capabilities is the crucial element in determining how to defeat any enemy. Knights of old, with their plate armor, couldn't fight effectively in the water. So ordinary peasants, armed with nothing more than tools, could defeat those heavily armed and armored troops if they could get them in the swamp.

Find Their Weakness

Everyone and everything has a weakness, even if it's not apparent. Often, a part of defeating an enemy is finding that weakness so that it can be exploited. Military forces put a lot of effort into that and hide their shortcomings from any potential enemy.

A few years back, there was concern about the militarization of local police forces. Surplus military equipment, including wheeled armored personnel carriers, were being sold to these law-enforcement agencies by the Pentagon. Some saw that as a weapon used against the population in martial law times rather than a tool against terrorism.



Regardless of how much actual danger there was in the militarization of our law enforcement agencies, the risk potential was there. Putting that into survival, some thought we needed a means for neutralizing those vehicles, should they ever be used against the civilian population.

As formidable as those vehicles were, they had a weak point, as all such systems do. In this case, the weakness was that they used air brakes. As with all other heavy vehicles that use air brakes, the air cylinder to actuate the brakes was visible in the undercarriage. Putting a hole in that actuator with a scoped rifle would allow the air to escape, locking up the brakes and immobilizing the vehicle.

Even main battle tanks have such weaknesses. I've heard of tanks that could be stopped by shooting out the fuel line, which wrapped around the turret's base. Others had the ammo storage rack nestled into the fuel tank so that a hit would cause a catastrophic explosion. Another tank, built by the Soviet Union, used an automatic loader, which was so slow that opposing tanks had an easy time taking them out.

Supersoldiers, of whatever sort, would have a fatal flaw as well. It might be hard to find, but it would be there. Like

Superman has his kryptonite, every other supersoldier has some vulnerability, which can be used against them.

Fight on Your Terms, Not Theirs

One of the biggest mistakes in war is letting the enemy choose the terms of the fight. This includes selecting the battleground. Warfare, of any sort, is about winning, not about fighting fair. You aren't going into the boxing ring, and you're fighting for your life.

Eagles and hawks sit at the top of the food chain, at least as far as birds are concerned. They hunt other birds, as well as rodents and even snakes. While we humans tend to be afraid of snakes, some species of eagles regularly kill snakes.

The eagle has a distinct advantage over the snake. That is, the eagle can fly. The eagle takes it flying to defeat the snake, taking it out of its turf and into the eagle's turf. That puts the snake at a distinct disadvantage, unable to use its strengths. But if it were to fight the snake in the ground, the eagle would probably lose.

It doesn't matter if we're talking about where you fight, how you fight, or what you fight with. As long as you allow the enemy to determine the terms of the fight, you've given them the advantage. You're much better off picking the terms so that you can take their advantage away.

There are countless examples of military victories that were brought about by taking away the enemy's advantage. Perhaps the most famous of these is the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC. In that battle, which has been memorialized in the movie "300," a force of 300 Spartan soldiers held off a far superior power of 300,000 Persians. They did so, at least in part, because they chose to meet the Persian invaders in a narrow corridor of land, where the Persians couldn't bring their forces to bear and where the superior training of the Spartans

gave them an advantage.

I don't care if you're fighting Persians or supersoldiers. There's always a way to take away their advantage. Finding what that advantage is and then denying them the ability to use it can be the most significant step towards a victory.

Know When to Withdraw

Another tremendous military aphorism came from Tacitus, a Roman historian, and politician. He wrote: "He who rights and away, may turn and fight another day. But he that is in battle slain will never rise to fight again."

Dying in battle might seem glorious, but it's a false glory. It's not our job to do that. Instead, it's our job to make sure we don't fall in battle so that we can be there to protect our families. That might mean running away from the war if it doesn't look like you're going to win.



Remember, we're talking about fighting others who have greater abilities than you do. So there's a good chance that whatever strategy you come up with to defeat them will not work the first time around. Should that happen, you've got to have an

escape plan in place so that you can get out of there, surviving to figure out a better way and try again.

That even includes a battle that happens at your home or survival retreat. Always have an escape route where the attackers can't see you. Maybe you'll lose a lot of your bug out, but you'll save your life. There are ways of replacing those other things, but outside the magic of Hollywood and the MCU, there's no way of bringing you back to life.

Appropriate the Enemy's Arms and Armament

I have yet to see this in the MCU, but throughout history, armies have gained from appropriating the arms and armament of their vanquished foes. Picking up weapons and other gear off the field of battle can only improve your chances of surviving the next engagement, something we all need.

Soldiers even do this with members of their army, especially grabbing the ammunition of those who can no longer fight. While the primary load of ammo for an infantryman is supposed to be enough for a day's fighting, it doesn't always work out that way. So when someone falls in battle, it only makes sense to grab their ammo before they're evacuated to the rear. They're not going to need it, but you might.

Granted, you're probably going to be better armed and armored than any gang which attacks your home. But that wouldn't be the same in a case where government troops attacked you as a subversive. While I wouldn't want to be in such a situation, I'll guarantee you that if I ever am and I survive it, I'll be stripping every piece of gear I can off of the bodies left behind.

Of course, if one of those soldiers happens to have the US Army's version of Tony Stark's Iron Man suit, I'd be sure to

grab it, gaining that extra ability. Likewise, with anything else that I could get off a supersoldier. That is if I could manage to make all this work and beat one of them.