



## How to Lose a Battle: Foolish Plans and Great Military Blunders (How to Lose Series)

By Bill Fawcett

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### How to Lose a Battle: Foolish Plans and Great Military Blunders (How to Lose Series) By Bill Fawcett

A remarkable compendium of the worst military decisions and the men who made them

The annals of history are littered with horribly bad military leaders. These combat incompetents found amazing ways to ensure their army's defeat. Whether it was a lack of proper planning, miscalculation, ego, bad luck, or just plain stupidity, certain wartime stratagems should never have left the drawing board. Written with wit, intelligence, and eminent readability, *How to Lose a Battle* pays dubious homage to these momentous and bloody blunders, including:

- **Cannae, 216 B.C.:** the bumbling Romans lose 80,000 troops to Hannibal's forces.
- **The Second Crusade:** an entire Christian army is slaughtered when it stops for a drink of water.
- **The Battle of Britain:** Hitler's dreaded Luftwaffe blows it big-time.
- **Pearl Harbor:** more than one warning of the impending attack is there, but nobody listens.

*How to Lose a Battle* includes more than thirty-five chapters worth of astonishing (and avoidable) disasters, both infamous and obscure -- a treasure trove of trivia, history, and jaw-dropping facts about the most costly military missteps ever taken.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The publisher bills this effort as a "tongue-in-cheek" and "humorous" analysis of the world's worst military disasters. But aside from wry chapter titles (e.g., "Austerlitz: They Fell for It? Austria, 1805"), these are generally straightforward accounts of some of the deadliest carnage in human history. That includes the Civil War's Battle of Antietam—the bloodiest single day in American history, during which some 6,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed and more than 16,000 were wounded—and the three-day Battle of Gettysburg, which resulted in 51,000 casualties on both sides. There's also the WWII Battle of Okinawa, during which more than 12,000 Americans were killed and nearly 32,000 wounded, along with 142,000 estimated Japanese casualties (military and civilian). Fawcett (*You Did What? Mad Plans and Great Historical Disasters*) gathers 37 concise, analytical, finger-pointing accounts of these and other battles from ancient times to the late 1960s. He and contributors Brian Thomsen, William R. Forstchen, Douglas Niles and Edward E. Kramer readably and insightfully convey a wide knowledge of military history, but more in-depth and well-annotated analyses of these battles are readily available elsewhere. (July 1)

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From [Booklist](#)

This surprisingly amusing anthology could be subtitled *Monuments to Stupidity*. Fawcett is the editor of *Hunters and Shooters* (1995) and has also written science-fiction and mystery novels. He and several other writers have written a series of essays dissecting some of the greatest military disasters, from antiquity to the twentieth century. Some of these fiascos are probably well known even to laypersons, including Lee's blunders at Gettysburg and Hitler's insistence on fighting to the death at Stalingrad. But some of the more obscure episodes are particularly informative and enjoyable (if one allows the passage of time to soften the horror of human carnage). At Arbela, the Persian emperor Darius allowed his personal cowardice to deliver a victory to the vastly outnumbered forces of Alexander the Great. At San Jacinto, the Mexican Santa Anna (the self-styled Napoleon of the West) saw his sleeping army slaughtered, guaranteeing the loss of Texas. The writers approach their subjects with a healthy dose of sarcasm and even humor. This book will appeal to both general readers and amateur military historians. Jay Freeman

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About the Author

Bill Fawcett is the author and editor of more than a dozen books, including *You Did What?*, *It Seemed Like a Good Idea . . .*, *How to Lose a Battle*, and *You Said What?* He lives in Illinois.

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