

Case Study Of The Battle Of Red Cliff In The Late Han Dynasty Era

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Abstract

The Battle of Red Cliff, also known as the Battle of Chibi, was a decisive naval battle in the winter of 208-209 AD during the late Han Dynasty, about twelve years before the beginning of the Three Kingdoms Period in Chinese history, the battle was fought between the allied forces of Sun Quan, Liu Bei and Liu Qi against the superior forces of the Northern Warlord Premier Cao Cao. Liu Bei and Sun Quan thwarted Cao Cao's attempt to conquer the southern Yangtze River and reunite the Eastern Han Dynasty Kingdom. In this river warfare, the superiority of weather, wind direction, knowledge of the seasons, and war strategy using ships became dominant compared to the number of troops, knowledge of the terrain was the key to the victory of Liu Bei and Sun Quan's alliance. From this story we can learn that the superior power was defeated by the weaker Imperior Power but had the right Strategy at the right time and the Red Cliff was a witness to the battle of the two warring parties, where the Liu Bei and Sun Quan alliance became the Winner.

Keywords: *Sea Battle, Red Cliff Battle, Battle of Chibi*

INTRODUCTION

The Battle of Chibi (researchers speculate that it took place from July to December 7, 208 AD) was a decisive battle shaped by the confrontation of the Three Kingdoms, and it was also one of the classic battles in Chinese history where the Lesser Power won against the strong. The war ended when the weak Sun Quan and Liu Bei Alliance won against the strong Cao Cao. The historical background of the war is that in 207 AD, after 8 years of war between military commanders, Cao Cao finally defeated the Yuan Shao Group which was then dominant in the northern region of Hebei, and unified the northern part of the capital. At that time Sun Quan had just taken power from his father and brother as his successor, and he was quite capable in leading the army.

Cao Cao was very ambitious to expand his territory and he directed his troops to invade the Southern Region. The South was ruled by two warlords, Liu Biao and Sun Quan. At the same time, Liu Bei and his troops fled to Liu Bei's territory because they were pushed out by Cao Cao after losing the battle against Cao Cao, After Liu Biao died, his two heirs had a dispute, which was exploited by Cao Cao to attack Liu Biao's capital in Xiangyang without a fight Liu Gong, Liu Biao's heir, surrendered, at the same time Liu Qi, Liu Biao's other son, and Liu Bei built an alliance to counterattack. Liu Bei then sent his war advisor Zhuge Liang (kong ming) to lobby Sun Quan to join forces against Cao Cao and form an alliance.



Red Clifft
(source : Wikipedia English, 2022)

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a library research that uses books and other literatures as the main object. The type of research used is qualitative, which is research that produces information in the form of notes and descriptive data contained in the text under study. This research uses Clousewitz's theory. Strategy, according to him in war there are two actions that are essentially different. The first action is the execution of each battle, while the second action is the combination or combination of each battle so that the war objectives are achieved. The first action is called Tactics, and the second action is called Strategy. This sentence implies that military strategy is the use of battles to achieve war objectives. The elements of strategy are: Moral, physical, mathematical, geographical, and statistical. Moral includes; intellectual, psychological qualities and influences, physical includes; the size of the army's strength, composition, weaponry and so on, mathematical contains calculations such as lines and angles of attack, formation movements etc., geographical, regarding the influence of terrain, mountains, rivers, forests, roads etc., statistical includes support and maintenance.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION



Pemukiman kapal perang Cao Wei di Chibi, kota Nanyang Zhuge di Kabupaten Man, Provinsi Shaanxi.

(Source : Academy of Chinese Studies, 2022)

The Course of the Battle

Jing fell to Cao Cao, Liu Bei quickly fled south and accompanied by civilian troops and his army fled. The disorganized exodus was pursued by Cao Cao's elite cavalry and repulsed at the battle of Changban. Liu Bei and his followers fled to the east of Xiakou, where he met with Sun Quan's envoy Advisor Lu Su to form a joint front alliance against Cao Cao, when Zhuge Liang arrived at Sun Quan's palace, when Cao Cao had previously sent a letter to Sun Quan stating that he was bringing 800,000 troops to attack Sun Quan and ask him to surrender.

There was a debate between Sun Quan's advisors, Zhang Zhao advocated surrendering due to Cao Cao's overwhelming numerical advantage while Lu Su, Zhuge Liang, and Force Commander Zhou Yu persuaded Sun Quan to agree to an alliance against the Northerners (Cao Cao). Sun Quan finally decided on war by cutting a corner of his desk during the meeting, and he said: "whoever still dares to argue for surrender will meet the same fate as this table". He then commissioned Zhou Yu, Cheng Pu, and Lu Su with 30,000 troops to move to help Liu Bei against Cao Cao.

Although Cao Cao had an army of 800,000 men, Zhou Yu estimated Cao Cao's actual troop strength to be closer to 230,000, which included the 80,000 remaining surrendered Liu Biao troops of questionable morale and loyalty. Liu Bei, on the other hand, had 20,000 troops and combined with Sun Quan's 30,000 troops, this amounted to around 50,000 trained marines prepared for battle.

Sun-Liu's troops sailed upstream from Xiakou to the Red Cliffs, where they encountered Cao Cao's frontline troops, who at that time were plagued by disease and low morale because they had been forced into a prolonged southward war campaign and were exhausted, in a skirmish and he retreated to Wulin, north of the Yangtze River town, and the allies retreated southward.

Cao Cao had chained his ships, this was so that his troops who were northerners who were not used to living on ships and were seasick, saw an opportunity for one of the Sun Quan generals Huang Gai and his troops to pretend to surrender and side with Cao Cao. He prepared a "mengchong Doujian," a type of fire boat by filling it with bundles of firewood, dried reeds and fish fat oil. As Huang Gai's "defector" squadron approached the midpoint of the river, the sailors fired on the ships before they boarded the small boats. Unmanned fire ships, carried by the southeast wind, raced towards Cao Cao's fleet and set it ablaze. Many troops and horses were burned to death or drowned.

After the initial surprise, Zhou Yu and allies led lightly armed troops to capitalize on the attack. The northern army was thrown into confusion and completely defeated. Seeing the hopeless situation, Cao Cao then issued a general order to retreat and destroyed the remaining number of ships before he retreated.

Cao Cao's army attempted to retreat along the Huarong Road, including a long march through the swamps north of Dongting Lake. Heavy rains had made the road so treacherous that many sick soldiers had to carry bundles of grass on their backs and use them to fill in the road for the horsemen to cross.

Many of these soldiers drowned in the mud or were trampled to death in the attempt. The allies, led by Zhou Yu and Liu Bei, pursued over land and water until they reached Southern Command. Combined with hunger and disease, it decimated the rest of Cao Cao's army. Cao Cao then retreated north to his base at Ye and left Cao Ren and Xu Huang to guard Jiangling, Yue Jind placed at Xiangyang, and Man Chong at Dangyang. The allied counterattack may have defeated Cao Cao and his army completely. However, the Yangtze River crossing had dissolved into chaos as the allied armies gathered on the riverbank and fought over the limited number of Ships. To restore order, a detachment led by Sun Quan's general Gan Ning established a bridgehead at Yiling in the north.

The combination of Cao Cao's strategic errors and the effectiveness of Huang Gai's wives had resulted in the allied victory at the Battle of Red Cliffs. Zhou Yu had observed that Cao Cao's generals and soldiers were mostly cavalry and infantry, and few had experience in naval warfare. Cao Cao also had little support among the people of Jing Province and therefore lacked a secure base of operations. Despite the strategic intelligence Cao Cao had shown in previous campaigns and battles, he simply assumed in this case that numerical superiority would eventually defeat Sun and Liu's navy. Cao's first tactical mistake was to convert his large infantry



and cavalry forces into marine and naval corps. With only a few days of training before the battle, Cao Cao's army was ravaged by sea sickness and inexperience on the water.

Map Battle of Red cliffs
(Source :Wikipedia English, 2022)

Tropical diseases to which most southerners were immune were also rampant in Cao Cao's camp. Although numerous, Cao Cao's men were already exhausted by the unfamiliar environment and the widespread southern campaign, as Zhuge Liang observed: "Even the powerful arrow at the tip of its quiver cannot pierce the silk cloth.

Cao Cao's advisor, Jia Xu, had recommended after Liu Cong's surrender that the exhausted soldiers be given time to rest and replenish supplies before they attacked Sun Quan and Liu Bei's forces. Cao Cao showed that he considered his failure to be his own fault for ignoring Jia Xu's advice, on the other hand, the strategy used by the Allies during the battle was due to disease, and ship firewood and Sun Quan and Liu Bei won the victory.

Red Cliff Battle	
<i>Date</i>	: <i>Winter 208 AD (Northern Hemisphere)</i>
<i>Location</i>	: <i>Near the south bank of the Yangtze River, the cliffs of Chibi</i>
<i>Results</i>	: <i>Southern Alliance Victory</i>
<i>Belligerents</i>	
Prime Minister of Han Dynasty (Emperor Xiandi), Wei Dynasty	Feudal Military Ruler of the Southern Region, Southern Alliance, Wu Dynasty
<i>Commander and Leader</i>	
<u>Wei:</u> Cao Cao	<u>Wu :</u> Sun Quan

Cao Ren Xu Huang Yue Jin Man Chong	Zhou Yu Lu Su Gan Ning Cheng Pu Huang Gai (gugur) <u>Shu</u> : Liu Bei Zhuge Liang Guan Yu Zhang Fei Zhao Yun
<i>Strength</i>	
800.000,- (Cao Cao claim) 220.000-240.000 (Zhou Yu's estimate)	50.000 Troop
<i>Casualties and losses</i>	
Heavy	Unknown

(Sources : WikipediaEnglish, 2022)

Territory after the defeat of Cao Cao's army at Chibi

At the end of 209, the post Cao Cao had established in Jiangling fell to Zhou Yu. The frontier land under Cao Cao's control shrank by about 160 kilometers (99 miles) to the area around Xiangyang. But for the victors of the battle, the question arose of how to divide the spoils. Initially, Liu Bei and Liu Qi both expected rewards, having participated in the victory at Red Cliff, and both had taken up positions in Jing Province. Afterwards, Liu Qi was appointed Inspector of Jing Province with his command center in Jiangxia, but within a few months he died of illness and his territory was taken over by Sun Quan, after Liu Qi's death, Liu Bei claimed the title of Inspector of Jing Province and began to control most of the areas of Wuling, Changsha, Lingling, and Guiyang south of the Yangtze River.

Sun Quan's forces had suffered far greater casualties than Liu Bei in the prolonged conflict against Cao Ren after the Battle of Red Cliff, and Zhou Yu's death in 210 resulted in a drastic weakening of Sun Quan's power in Jing Province.

When Liu Bei occupied Jing Province, which Cao Cao had just lost, he gained a strategic and naturally fortified area on the Yangtze River that Sun Quan still wanted for himself. Control of Jing Province gave Liu Bei almost unlimited access to the entrance to Yi Province and the vital waterway to Wu (southeast China) and the power south of the Yangtze River. Cao Cao would never again command such a large fleet as he did at Jiangling, and he never had the same opportunity to crush his southern rival. The Battle of Red Cliffs and Liu Bei's seizure of Jing Province confirmed the separation of southern China from the northern heartland of the Yellow River Valley and signaled a north-south axis of hostility that would continue for centuries.

CONCLUSION

From the case study above, in warfare in the sea not only the large number of winners, in sea warfare must also be supported by morale, readiness, logistics, excellent health, ability to recognize the terrain, have the skill to read natural geography and others, which in this battle was ignored by Cao Cao's troops.

In terms of quantity, Cao Cao's troops were very superior and faced Liubei-SunQuan, and do

not always assume that the large number of troops is absolutely the winner in war. In today's modern era we find that global superior forces can be defeated by weaker forces such as the American War against Vietnam, America Against the Taliban, the Soviet Union Against Afghanistan, and our own country Indonesia can win against the Netherlands whose combat equipment is more complete and modern.

This is a piece of the story that is also quoted from the novel Romance Threekingdom by Luo Guanzhong (Ming Dynasty Era Writer). Where it can be a future study for policy makers in the field of Defense, and can be taken as a scientific lesson.

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