AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY

A RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

PAUL HERBERT & MICHAEL P. NOONAN, EDITORS
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY WALTER A. MCDOUGALL

AUGUST 2013

American Military History:
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**Edited by Colonel (ret.) Paul H. Herbert, Ph.D.
& Michael P. Noonan, Ph.D.**

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About the Foreign Policy Research Institute

Founded in 1955 by Ambassador Robert Strausz-Hupé, FPRI is a non-partisan, non-profit organization devoted to bringing the insights of scholarship to bear on the development of policies that advance U.S. national interests. In the tradition of Strausz-Hupé, FPRI embraces history and geography to illuminate foreign policy challenges facing the United States. In 1990, FPRI established the Wachman Center, and subsequently the Butcher History Institute, to foster civic and international literacy in the community and in the classroom.

About First Division Museum at Cantigny

Located in Wheaton, Illinois, the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park preserves, interprets and presents the history of the United States Army's 1st Infantry Division from 1917 to the present in the context of American military history. Part of Chicago's Robert R. McCormick Foundation, the museum carries on the educational legacy of Colonel McCormick, who served as a citizen soldier in the First Division in World War I. In addition to its main galleries and rich holdings, the museum hosts many educational programs and events and has published over a dozen books in support of its mission.

FPRI's Madeleine & W.W. Keen Butcher History Institute

Since 1996, the centerpiece of FPRI's educational programming has been our series of weekend-long conferences for teachers, chaired by David Eisenhower and Walter A. McDougall. These weekends, usually three per year, focus on a wide range of topics in U.S. and world history. Teachers from 684 schools across 46 states have participated to date, and FPRI's website offers an extensive archive of texts and video files drawn from the History Institutes. Renamed in 2012, the Madeleine and W. W. Keen Butcher History Institute, the main features are:

- Selecting 40-45 teachers from around the country to participate in each weekend, drawing on private, public, and parochial schools, and including new, as well as more experienced, teachers. In particular, we seek teachers who can be "force multipliers," demonstrated by a record of mentoring or leading other teachers (making presentations at professional conferences, leading the local or regional history or social studies council, or developing curriculum). That said, we also seek to provide enrichment to new and less experienced teachers.
- Featuring as speakers eight top scholars, practitioners, or journalists who are known not only for their scholarship and depth but for their ability to communicate to non-specialists.
- Offering the teachers free room and board, partial travel reimbursement, and, in exchange for a reproducible lesson plan, a stipend.
- Circulating, for the widest possible dissemination of the lectures, to educators across the country (as well as to FPRI's other key lists of policymakers, scholars, military personnel, and media), a 1,500 to 3,000 word write-up of each lecture by e-mail. We also videotape the lectures for posting on our website, with free access for all. The website draws 100,000 visits monthly; the e-mail bulletins are circulated to 35,000 key people in 85 countries weekly, and are invariably reposted on other websites and listservs, and forwarded by third parties.
- Notably, bulletins drawn from our History Institute have been reprinted in *American Educator*, the magazine of the American Federation of Teachers (circulation: 800,000), on the Educational Resource Information Clearinghouse (a project of the U.S. Department of Education), the listserve of H-High, which reaches high school social studies teachers around the country, and the History News Network.
- All participating teachers receive a certificate of instruction that may be used for their professional development record; plus, for a nominal fee, Carthage College grants one graduate credit for participation in each weekend.
- We maintain ongoing contact with the participating teachers through our e-mail list and, where possible, develop individual relationships with them over time.

Supplementary activities include:

- Webcasts designed for use directly in the classroom; a webcast typically features a 45-minute interview with one of our scholars, with an opportunity for students to pose questions via the Internet in real time; the webcasts are also archived on our website.
- A series of mini-history institutes, where we supply two speakers to professional meetings around the country.

PREFACE

Teaching America's military history is an important civic duty because "We the People" are responsible for the common defense and therefore should know something about it. At the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), we encourage teachers to integrate military history into the history that they already teach, and we think they can do so without personal military experience, just as they teach about so many other aspects of American life.

Starting in 2006, FPRI teamed up with the First Division Museum at Cantigny to offer the first Teaching Military History Institute for Teachers. This history institute series built upon and expanded the proven FPRI model that has been in operation since 1992. The concept is simple: assemble an audience of dedicated secondary school teachers, bring in first tier scholars of varied perspectives to address them on substantive military topics, and stimulate their interaction over a weekend at the world class setting of the First Division Museum. Omitted are the pedagogical lessons that can be learned back at one's school. Teachers earn continuing education credits for attendance and are encouraged to develop lesson plans to incorporate knowledge from these weekends into their teaching. Since 2006, nearly 300 teachers have gone through one or more of these Institutes.

This volume is a selection of materials presented at the eight Teaching Military History Institutes held since 2006. This e-book can be used as a resource by teachers, students, and the public to expand their understanding of how the U.S. military has helped to shape American history—not only on the battlefield but also socially, politically, economically, and technologically. We believe that our common defense will be better if the public is familiar with our military history. We hope that users and readers will enjoy this collection and use it to further that purpose.

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We welcome and encourage feedback on this e-book. Comments and suggestions may be sent to history@fpri.org and info@firstdivisionmuseum.org.

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CHAPTER 1:

War and the Military in American History

By Walter McDougall

At past FPRI history institutes I have praised and thanked the teachers in attendance because I likened them to front-line soldiers in the war to prove the ignorance of America's youth is not invincible. Our subject this weekend makes that simile especially apt, so in my capacity as a college professor and my capacity as a high school parent, I salute your heroic calling.

My task is to offer some general remarks on how to think about war and the military in the broad sweep of American history--remarks I hope will be heuristic but also provocative. Indeed, my first provocation is to open the conference by recalling a certain notorious film clip, General George Patton's famous speech to the Third Army, as delivered by George C. Scott in *Patton* (1970):

> Men, all this stuff you've heard about America not wanting to fight, wanting to stay out of the war, is a lot of horse dung. Americans traditionally love to fight. ALL REAL Americans, love the sting of battle. When you were kids, you all admired the champion marble shooter, the fastest runner, the big league ball players, the toughest boxers . . . Americans love a winner and will not tolerate a loser. Americans play to win all the time. I wouldn't give a hoot in Hell for a man who lost and laughed. That's why Americans have never lost and will never lose a war.

I Googled that speech and learned how thoroughly Hollywood bowdlerized it. The real address contains scarcely a sentence without an obscenity or bloody oath. Of course, Patton was trying to encourage--literally instill courage in--nervous young men about to storm Hitler's West Wall. So the sentiments he expressed were more suited to a football locker room pep talk than a Fourth of July oration.

Nevertheless, Patton had a point when he cried, "Americans love to fight, traditionally." Indeed, the popular author Geoffrey Perret even titled his American history *A Country Made By War* (1989). And if that is so, then Americans simply must affirm their military and their wars because without them the great nation we inhabit today would not exist. The United States was born in an armed revolution. The Union was saved in a great Civil War. The nation realized its Manifest Destiny and achieved unprecedented world power largely through war. Perhaps Americans are not more belligerent than other great nations, but they are certainly not less belligerent. In its brief 230-year history the U.S. has waged at least a dozen major wars and

scores of minor conflicts on the frontier and overseas. The U.S. today spends more on defense than the next six Great Powers combined, and stations armed forces of some variety in over a hundred countries. The United States is a militant republic, the American Creed a fighting faith, and our politics and foreign policy have been driven, as often as not, by the fact or fear of war. Moreover, we teachers cannot even describe the main social, economic, and cultural trends in American history without frequent reference to war and the military. One need only name the abolition of slavery, establishment of the income tax, triumph of women's suffrage, the Civil Rights movement, and the youth rebellion of the 1960s to suggest how great transformations have been partly driven by war. The only comparable influence in U.S. history, I think, has been evangelical religion.

Whether or not Americans really romance war, at least when they like their odds and deem the fruits of victory worth the risk, they certainly love to study it. At Penn the courses in military and diplomatic history attract up to ten times more students than social or cultural history. Cable TV's History Channel obsesses on World War II and the Civil War to the exclusion of almost everything else. Best-selling histories are disproportionately concerned with wars and war leaders: witness the four new biographies of Ulysses S. Grant over the past few years. Blockbuster movies are often about historical battles and wars, or else fantasy fights of the Star Wars, Star Trek, and Lord of the Rings variety. Look at the Game Boy, Nintendo, and Play Station titles and you encounter ubiquitous combat in ghetto streets, outer space, or Bowser's islands.

What does that tell us about ourselves and our country? I don't know. Or at least, I do know the American people are too disparate, complex, perhaps schizophrenic to be caricatured. Looking at their history, Americans are surely proud of the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen who have defended their liberty and national honor. Americans thrill to the victories they won and mourn the trials suffered by servicemen and their families. But at the same time most Americans are loath to glorify war and are quick to imagine military service as somewhat alien to civilian values. Americans worship at the altars of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and cherish equality, civility, and compromise--all of which military discipline, duty, hierarchy, and coercion contradict. Military service, whether performed by professionals, conscripted citizens, or volunteer militia, inevitably strikes Americans as abnormal. If civilians are called to the colors, they deem it an interruption born of an emergency thrust upon the nation by some wicked enemy: an emergency to be gotten over with as quickly as possible and as violently as necessary, so that citizens can return to their hometowns, families, and jobs. If, by contrast, professionals fill the ranks of their armed forces, then Americans tend to view them as a caste apart, a sort of fighting order of monks who sacrifice the blessings of civil society so that others may continue to enjoy them. Thus,

fighting men and women take on a sacred, even sacrificial character in what I call the American Civil Religion.

These thoughts may strike some as vague, speculative generalizations. But I submit they already suggest three enduring themes that are not vague at all. One is the cultural gap between the military and civil society that has waxed and waned since colonial times, but become a growing concern since the draft was abolished in 1973 in favor of an All-Volunteer Force. The military and civil cultures have diverged to the point that they barely intersect anymore, which many observers consider unhealthy for both. A related theme is the hallowed American principle of civil supremacy. General Matthew B. Ridgway voiced the military's proper deference when he said, "The soldier is in the statesman's junior partner." It was statesman Theodore Roosevelt who expressed the heretical view that "The diplomat is the servant, not master, of the soldier." We should take pride in the truly amazing fact that a military coup has never been a serious threat to our republic (even when some civilians urged George Washington and George McClellan to make one) and that insubordination such as Douglas MacArthur's has been very rare. But there is no question that tensions have always existed between politicians and the uniformed brass, especially at times when the armed forces were demoralized because the government starved them of resources or made impossible demands on them.

A third theme is simply that ambivalence about war which is displayed by American citizens. As philosopher George Santayana put it, "To delight in war is meritorious in the soldier, dangerous in the captain, and criminal in the statesman." Throughout most of our history Americans honored their veterans and boasted--until Vietnam--of never having lost a war. Moreover, most Americans liked to believe that their nation's record in war was Providential, a sign of divine favor, and proof that our causes were just. And yet, on the other hand, few Americans wanted to believe their country was eager to fight or was responsible for the outbreak of war. On the contrary, Americans imagined themselves a peace-loving people. Were they just fooling themselves, as Patton would have it? Let's do a quick survey with those popular self-images in mind, and see what it suggests.

We discover at once that a certain duality toward war was present at the creation of the thirteen colonies. I spied it, quite literally, a few years ago when my family took advantage of a warm winter day to promenade along Kelly Drive in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park on the north bank of the Schuylkill River. At one point we passed a series of circular monuments featuring representative colonists who founded America. The central monument included two dominating figures half-facing each other. One was a stereotypical Quaker in his broad-brimmed hat and coat. He held in his hand a book, presumably the Bible. The other was a

stereotypical Puritan in his peaked, buckled hat and Calvinist garb. He held in his hand . . . a musket!

The Puritans hit American soil, not wanting to fight Indians or anyone else, but absolutely ready to do so if necessary for defense or expansion, especially against the hated French Catholics up in Quebec. As we know, the Puritans waged bitter, successful war on the violent Pequot tribe as early as 1637, and a Native American coalition led by Metacom, or King Philip, in 1675. After 1688, when Parliament ousted the Stuart kings and established the Protestant Whig ascendancy, New Englanders cheered John Churchill's crusade to crush the French and Spanish empires and conquer all North America. Thus began the long series of French and Indian Wars that colonists later claimed they were dragged into, but in fact all supported except for the pacifist Quakers.

The so-called Cavalier planters and indentured servants who settled the Chesapeake Bay and Carolinas were just as eager to fight for defense and empire. Indeed, their most famous son, Colonel Washington, would even be blamed for sparking the climactic French and Indian War when he ambushed an enemy column on the frontier in 1754. And as for the hundreds of thousands of Scots-Irish who fanned out across the Appalachians, for them feuding and war were simply their way of life. To be sure, the people who invented America sought economic opportunity and civil and religious liberty. But except for the Quakers and German Mennonites, Americans always reacted with fury against anyone who dared interfere with, or place limits upon, their pursuit of happiness. At such times they instinctively reached for their muskets with a deadly earnestness born of impatience.

Nothing better illustrates the centrality of the military to the American identity than the role played by the Continental Army. From 1775 to 1783 Washington's threadbare, unpaid, often hungry band of volunteers was the United States for all practical purposes, because the Army was the only national institution besides an impotent, feckless committee called Congress. Washington's genius was less as a tactician than as a paragon of a republican general, exhorting reluctant troops, refusing to live off the land despite hardship, deferring to politicians he held in contempt, accepting no pay, and above all resigning his commission after victory rather than succumbing to the temptations of a Caesar or Napoleon. So indispensable was Washington and the sort of army he fashioned that soon after independence the Federalist movement arose to promote a new Constitution in order to make Washington the chief magistrate and forge a strong central government and credible military.

Revolutionary War veterans composed a large bloc of the delegates at Philadelphia, and the first 29 of the 85 Federalist papers argued for ratification of the Constitution on the grounds of defense and foreign policy. John Jay wrote that the United States had proved their existence by

having waged war as a nation, vanquished their enemies as a nation, and made foreign treaties as a nation. He wrote that government's primary responsibility was to protect the people from foreign invasion and influence. He reminded readers of the proximity of the British and Spanish empires, the likelihood of future rivalry with the French, and thus implicitly scorned any notion that the U.S. could fancy itself isolated. Indeed, he insisted nothing would invite war so much as for the 13 states to fall into feeble disunion.

Alexander Hamilton likewise demolished the conceit known today as "Democratic Peace Theory," to wit, that self-governing peoples are by nature peaceful and do not make war on other republics. Hamilton cited the long list of wars waged by republican Sparta, Athens, Carthage, and Rome in ancient times, and Venice, the Dutch Republic, and Parliamentary England in modern times, concluding "There have been, if I may so express it, almost as many popular as royal wars." Hamilton asked by what fallacy Americans believed they were somehow exempt from "the imperfections, weaknesses, and evils incident to society in every shape."

But the fact that Americans were not immune to aggression or folly hardly meant they should dispense with a standing military altogether, as the Anti-Federalists contended. Indeed, wrote Hamilton, a prohibition against raising armed forces in peacetime "would exhibit the most extraordinary spectacle which the world has yet seen--that of a nation incapacitated by its own Constitution to prepare for defense until it was actually invaded!" Federalists were even more adamant about the need for a permanent Navy lest American commerce be made a prey even in peacetime and America's coasts be exposed in wartime. Yes, there was always the danger that a standing military might be used in the manner of Redcoats to oppress the people. But the Framers minimized that risk by checking and balancing the powers to raise and command armed forces, declare wars, and ratify treaties. Above all, Federalists remained adamant that the identity and survival of the Union depended on its power to make war.

In the 1790s their Democratic Republican rivals professed to reject that. But after they captured the presidency in 1801, they quickly learned otherwise. To be sure, Thomas Jefferson slashed military spending, relied on militias, and decommissioned John Adams' proud frigates in favor of gunboats. But Jefferson was enough of a scientist to realize the Army needed an expert corps of engineers. It was he who founded the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1802. And it was Jefferson's protégé James Madison who led the U.S. into its first discretionary war in 1812 and emerged from it a strong proponent of the professional military and federal arsenals.

There followed an era of relative peace. Except for conflicts attending Indian Removal and the Texans' private war for independence, Americans did not wage serious war again until the

Mexican Conflict in 1846. Over those decades Andrew Jackson placed his own ambiguous stamp on the military. As a Scots-Irish frontier chieftain Jackson literally picked fights whenever he could. In 1817 he invaded Spanish Florida in the first of a series of preemptive strikes that have speckled American history. But as a politician Jackson, like Jefferson, claimed that militias sufficed to defend the nation only to learn otherwise in the White House. When his supporters in Congress threatened to close West Point, Jackson called it the finest school in America. Jackson presided over a modest expansion of the frontier army, especially its excellent mounted dragoons and Corps of Topographical Engineers. Not least, Jackson realized that nothing so guarded America's honor abroad than a strong Navy. Finally, when Jackson's protégé James K. Polk waged the Mexican War, the professional Army and Navy distinguished themselves while the citizen militias performed miserably. That war established once and for all the reputations of West Point and the new Naval Academy at Annapolis.

But Mexico did not purge America of the myth of the citizen-soldier. On the contrary, Congress clung to its habit of slashing defense budgets in peacetime, with the result that when the South seceded in 1861, the nation again went to war unready and on the cheap. Again West Point graduates filled most of the top ranks, but otherwise the Civil War replicated the nation-in-arms model of volunteers fighting for hearth and home. After Appomattox, and especially after the Grand Army of the Republic and Sons of the Confederacy burnished their respective myths by the 1880s, Americans forgot the initial amateurishness of Civil War recruits, the panicky flights of whole units, the incompetent campaigns and botched maneuvers, preferring to remember the heroism of their citizen-soldiers and the ultimate glory and tragedy.

Those memories were reinforced by the events of the next hundred years, during which the U.S. became a world power. To be sure, in the late 19th century the federal government grew steadily in size and purview, while commerce and imperialism persuaded Admirals, then Congress, then Presidents to build a modern steel Navy sustained by America's first military-industrial complex. The Army and especially Marines expanded during decades when Teddy Roosevelt, Taft, and Woodrow Wilson intervened repeatedly in the Caribbean and Pacific. But when big wars broke out--the Spanish War in 1898, both world wars, and the Cold War conflicts in Korea and Vietnam--it was once again volunteer and conscripted civilians who filled the ranks of instant armies and navies. Then, during the second half of the 20th century, the pattern was broken--for better or worse--by two paradigm shifts that punctured, probably forever, the realities and the myths of the military and war in America. The first was the transition from a merely industrial era of warfare to the postindustrial era known as the "revolution in military affairs." Industrial age war placed a premium on huge, indifferently trained armies of infantrymen (cannon fodder, if you will), and on mass production of relatively low-tech weapons such as rifles, machine guns, tanks, ships, and airplanes whose

sheer numbers wore down an enemy. Post-industrial war, by contrast, places a premium on relatively small, highly-trained and very mobile strike forces armed with high-tech weapons of unprecedented lethality and accuracy, guided by integrated computer systems linked to orbiting satellites. President Nixon may have abolished the draft in order to drain the passion from anti-war protests, but his shift to fully professional armed forces coincided with the progress of technology.

The second paradigm shift was the simultaneous advent of the protracted conflict and limited war. From 1946 to 1991 the American people were asked to support a long twilight struggle to contain or roll back the Communist menace led by the Soviet Union without triggering a third world war. And when that Cold War turned hot, as in Korea, Americans were asked to fight and die with no expectation of early or total victory. Protracted conflict and limited war made expensive, frustrating demands on our nation to which it was not accustomed. If forced to fight, Americans want to kick maximum butt and come home. The Cold War and War on Terror don't give Americans what they want, while at the same time they require a professional, high-tech military in which the citizen-soldier has no place. The U.S. today is defended by the post-modern equivalents of Roman legionnaires and centurions, which is another reason pundits write of the American Republic giving way to American Empire, and either cheer or deplore that prospect.

This pocket biography suggests three more pregnant themes for the weekend. First, the American way of war, to employ historian Russell Weigley's apt term; second, the changes in the American way of war caused by technological and geopolitical shifts; and third, the difficulty American culture has in accepting reality or adjusting to changes in reality. At heart, we are still a nation of Minuteman Patriots, peaceful until aroused, and then a righteous nation-in-arms. Just recall the spirit we felt on 9/11, weeping, fearing, but rising as one, full of spit and vinegar, ready to sacrifice, and hot for vengeance and justice. But in truth, that Minuteman culture was already rendered partly a myth the moment in 1775 when Washington took command of the militias outside of Boston and started whipping them into an army. That culture remained partly mythical throughout the 19th century, when the pioneer trails west and overseas were blazed by the professional soldiers and sailors. And it became mostly mythical over the course of the 20th century, when the U.S. standing military achieved unparalleled technical sophistication, and the nature and locus of security threats shifted from conventional war to nuclear war to guerilla war to terrorist war. Accordingly, the Pentagon decided it no longer needed or wanted the citizen-soldier. And yet, strangely, the American public has become less tolerant of protracted conflict, and less tolerant of American casualties, than it was during eras when tens of thousands of citizen soldiers became casualties! Indeed, it seems Americans today are even less tolerant of enemy and collateral civilian casualties than ever before. Who mourned at the time for the hundreds of thousands of Japanese and German

civilians incinerated by the Army Air Forces? After all, attrition--the wearing down of enemies by superior firepower--had been the American way of war really ever since the War of 1812. But now, more sensitive, or perhaps less confident, Americans ponder what makes them feel more uncomfortable: a short march to Baghdad in which just 200 Americans die as compared to 20,000 Iraqis, or a long insurgency in which 3,000 Americans die as compared to 300,000 Iraqis?

In conclusion, let me return to the conundrum born of Patton's claim that Americans love a fight and Americans' insistence they are really a peace-loving people. It occurred to me the way to parse that puzzle is through a simple chart that juxtaposes the foreign and domestic sources of America's major wars. (See Table 1.)

What we discover in this breakdown of our nation's wars is not one, but three surprisingly valid generalizations. Yes, just as Americans have liked to believe, the United States has been thrust into conflict by some real or apparent foreign assault. That fact also helps to explain America's tendency to enter wars woefully ill-prepared or else attempt to wage wars on the cheap, a phenomenon my colleague Harvey Sicherman calls "cheap hawkery."[1] But there is also good reason to entertain the observation made by several that Americans' real tendency is less to avoid wars than to reconcile fighting with their peaceful self-image by maneuvering, provoking, or through weakness inviting their opponents into firing the first shot!

Finally, in the run-up to almost every major war the historian discovers that the United States, far from displaying a consensus for peace, contained an overt or covert War Party actively promoting belligerency. Am I suggesting that some conspiracy theory can explain America's wars? Not at all. I simply observe that from the hot-headed Bostonians of the 1770s to the neoconservatives of our era, War Parties have been a staple of American politics and foreign relations.

Do Americans love a fight, as Patton insisted? In the end it does not matter because it seems we are destined to fight whether we like it or not. A certain Ivy Day plaque at the University of Pennsylvania expressed that resignation with pathos. In the years before the structural engineers discovered the ivy was harming the integrity of its buildings' sandstone and brick walls, Penn invited every graduating class to plant a sprig of ivy and affix a plaque to some building on campus. The ivy is gone, but the plaques remain, and one day while walking to class my eye was caught by a plaque on the student union. Its inscription read *Vivere miltari est*–To live is to fight. I immediately checked for the date and sure enough, it was signed "The Class of 1945."

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[1] Harvey Sicherman, "Cheap Hawks, Cheap Doves, and the Pursuit of Strategy," *Orbis*, Fall 2005.

Table 1.

Conflict	Foreign Provocations	American War Party	Dissenters
War of Independence 1775-83	Intolerable Acts, Boston Massacre, Lexington Green	Patriots led by Sam & John Adams, Patrick Henry, John Randolph, Tom Paine, etc.	Quakers, Tories
War of 1812 1812-15	*USS Chesapeake* affair, Impressment of Sailors, Alleged British Incitement of Indian Hostilities	Congressional "War Hawks" led by Clay and Calhoun and cheered by John Adams, et al.	New England, Federalists
Mexican War 1846-48	Santa Anna orders troops across Rio Grande; they allegedly shed "American blood on American soil"	Texans backed by most Jacksonians led by President Polk	Whigs, including Abe Lincoln
War Between the States 1861-65	Southern secession, seizure of Federal property, and assault on Fort Sumter	Abolitionists and Radical New England Republicans, plus Southern Fire-Eaters	Border States, Southern Whigs, Douglas Democrats
Spanish American War 1898	Cuban atrocities, destruction of *U.S.S. Maine*	Jingoist press led by Hearst, naval promoters led by TR; evangelical clergy	Anti-Imperialists incl. Mugwumps, pacifists, labor unions, and moralists
The Great War 1917-18	Unrestricted submarine warfare, Zimmermann telegram	Nationalists led by TR plus Liberal Internationalists and evangelicals led by Wilson	Unilateralists, anti-crusaders, Germans & Irish
World War II 1941-45	Pearl Harbor, German submarine warfare and declaration of war	Liberal Internationalists, Communist sympathizers, Atlanticists, British *Intrepid* propaganda ring	America Firsters backed by 80% of public opinion
Korean Police Action 1950-53	Kim Il-Sung's invasion of South Korea encouraged by Stalin	"Rollback" Cold Warriors allegedly led by Dean Acheson and Paul Nitze & supported by Pentagon	Henry Wallace Progressives and fellow travelers
Vietnam Conflict 1964-75	Hanoi's support of Vietcong insurgents and alleged attack on U.S. ships in Gulf of Tonkin	JFK's "best and brightest," Pentagon avatars of counterinsurgency, LBJ by inertia and Joint Chiefs of Staff by dereliction	Fulbright skeptics and the youth rebellion led by the New Left
First Iraq War 1991	Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, seizure of oil reserves	After the fact, G.H.W. Bush, most Republicans, AIPAC lobby, and the Saudis	Most Democrats and some concerned military analysts
Second Iraq War 2003-??	Al Qaeda assaults on 9/11, triggering war on terrorists and the states that support them	Neoconservatives patronized by Cheney, Rumsfeld, and ultimately G.W. Bush	Paleoconservatives, Realists, old New Leftists, Neo-Liberals, plus Americaphobes

CHAPTER 2:

Why Teach Military History?

By Jeremy Black

The usual criticism against the teaching of military history is that it in some way encourages bellicosity, that it is somehow morally questionable and actually undesirable in the academy at any level. However, war, though undesirable in many of its attributes, and while it involves people killing and being willing or prepared to be killed, can in fact serve purposes which we regard as necessary--for example, liberty, civic patriotism, and international order. Indeed, nobody, including the UN, doubts that just war properly conceived is an appropriate recourse in international law and the maintenance of international order. War cannot be wished away. It has played a major role in the formation of individual states and societies and in maintaining international order.

Historical Undeterminism

Too often history is taught as if it were a clear linear process in which we know what is going to happen, we know the way the world was going to be, and in some respects there is an inevitability about it. But people at the time had no sense of inevitability about it. The Allies who went out in 1917-18 were unsure what the consequences would be for them of the collapse of Russia, the communist revolution, Russia's leaving the war, and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Russia and the Central Powers that permitted the Germans to move all their divisions from the eastern front back to the western front. When two powers start a war, generally both sides think they can win, and at least one of them is usually wrong. Understanding the conditionality of it is very important, that the activities of those who take part in war--civilians on the home front, the troops themselves, commanders trying to plan options and strategies—are all important, because the future is in no way predictable and determined. A very important moral aspect of education is that all of us in any scenario--military or civil society--are part of a process in which what happens is not determined. All of us have a role to play.

Historical Memory

One frequently hears observations such as, for example, "counterinsurgency struggles are bound to fail." Well, some of them do fail. Equally, since 1945, many of them succeeded. There is no deterministic viewpoint that tells you that any given stage is bound to happen. It is

good to introduce students to the uncertainty of the past, because it helps them begin to think about the uncertainty of both the present and the future, an uncertainty that demands their attention, which suggests that history, present politics, the future, are not things one sits back and watches like a spectator, but in which one's own actions or choices not to act can influence the process.

Of course, one can pull out analogies from the past that help people think but also ones that are not carefully thought through. But it is nonetheless important for any society to have some sense of focus on the past. If one has no sense of focus on the past for judgment, then from where are people to get their ideas? The argument could be made that one responds to every circumstance in the immediate present by judging one's interests and concerns at that moment, that there's nothing from the past one needs to conceive of because the past is in some way dead, history cannot be repeated. In terms of war, one might argue that, because all of the weaponry of earlier wars is as outdated as the mammoth or the catapult.

In practical terms, however, no matter how strongly societies believe that they can reject the past, the only way they can do so is by a quasi-genocidal destruction of every attribute of it. In modern times, the only society that has sought to completely reject the past is the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, and it did not work. It was also astonishingly vicious. But the general postulate is more important, that people look to the past when they're trying to understand the present. They have a group of common memories that in part frame national identity, a sense of patriotism. So the way people use remarks about issues from the past in order to discuss policy today may be flawed--for example, the Munich analogy of appeasement of dictators in 1938 applied subsequently in other contexts--but it reflects the sense that there is a possibility, a need, to explain things with reference to a common memory.

In the case of war, this is even more acutely the need. In waging war, one is asking people to do what they understandably do not want to do, which is to endure great sacrifices and even death. It is therefore important to look to some sense of continuity in order to draw on historical memories that help to make people feel that however difficult this is, it is in some way a necessary purpose.

All of us can justifiably deplore the rather crude sort of blood-and-earth patriotism that was seen in, say, Europe in 1914, which was naive, foolish, and atavistic. But in order to exist in a community, you have to have some willingness to give up things for the greater whole. Ordinarily, the social civility and order required for membership in the community does not involve terrible constraints upon people. But of course, military confrontation and war are very different.

How to Teach Military History

There is an extensive body of material one can use in teaching students of every age about military affairs, the conduct of war, the nature of military institutions, and what war means for individual participants, both soldiers and civilians. Museums such as the First Division's have enormous collections of the material culture of war, and for the last 150 years there are extensive photographic archives. We now also have extensive film archives going back for nearly a century of war and extensive interviews, both filmed and taped, more recently. Students can also meet and interview people who lived through World War II, to record living history. All these sources can interact to give the student a vivid sense of what war means.

It is more difficult to look at the other side of the hill, but still a worthwhile exercise for students in the upper high school grades. This means that if you are, for example, talking about the Civil War, look at both the Confederate and Union viewpoints of the war. If you're looking at international conflicts, try to understand the experience of war from the other side, without necessarily sympathizing with that viewpoint. This is particularly useful for students who might end up serving in the military, because one can only know how best to wage war by understanding how one's opponents are likely to perceive one's actions.

Military history encompasses a wide range of sub-subjects. There is the operational history that is understood to be military history on the History Channel, the doings and campaigns and battles of military formation, but there is much more than that. Let's look at a few.

First, there is the relationship between war and the development of states. After all, it is through war that states developed. The U.S. bears the origins it has because it arose as a result of a successful war of independence. Through war again, the U.S. expanded from the Atlantic to the Pacific: conflicts with Native Americans, war with the Mexicans, the occupation of Florida. The development of the American state, finally and most traumatically with the Civil War, would have been totally different without war.

A second major aspect of military history is war and the international order. It is through war that the relationships among states have been molded and influenced. States that do well economically tend to demand a role and place in the international order that accords with their views, and until very recently they have pursued this through violence. It is entirely possible that military preparedness will also play a role in how they pursue it in the future. Some have argued on the obsolescence of war, which may be true at the level of great powers, since no one wants to engage in a nuclear conflict. But it is equally possible that military confrontation short of war will be an important aspect of the military history of the future, and we need to understand what will and will not be achieved through such processes.

A third aspect is what is known as "war and society," what used to be called "new military history." War and society covers an enormous range of topics, such as the experience of women in war and war and environment. One can also look at the military itself as a society. If you think for example of the First Division in World War I, the world it came from, you're talking about large numbers of men taken away or volunteering to leave their home communities and forming a new social order in which one had to rapidly introduce ways of behavior that fulfilled the tasks of the military. All of those are important aspects of war and society, and in order to understand military effectiveness, you have to understand how armies work as societies--what hierarchy, deference, order, independence, and autonomy mean in a military context.

A fourth concerns war and culture. War has had an enormously important impact on culture. The triumphant display of power through conflict was long a major theme of cultural output, and more recently one sees criticism of the horrors of war. Both cultural themes can be seen in the arts. One can juxtapose to upper-level high school students images of the triumphalist account of the culture of war and the critical account. One can contrast Beethoven's *Wellington's Victory*, an astonishing piece written to commemorate Wellington's victory at the Battle of Victoria over the French, with perhaps Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* (1962) or Penderecki's *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960); or Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) with an account from the *Times* of the bombing, then a German propaganda piece claiming that Guernica was never bombed. Doing so makes for an interesting lesson in how war is open to different accounts, and how those different accounts are sometimes heavily propagandist.

As one moves into looking at the experience since World War II, there are some wars of course of which the records are relatively dim. For the war in which the largest number of people-- over 5 million--were killed in the last fifteen years, the Congo war, we have very few reliable sources and very little by way of good film material suitable to show students. But for other wars there is a great amount of material from which teachers can draw to help students understand (a) the experience of war, (b) the purpose of war, and (c) the fact that war means different things around the world. It's tremendously valuable for Western students to understand that most war in the world is not a matter of Western powers; much of the war in the world is in South Asia or subsaharan Africa, and it is often an aspect of conflict that responds to and reflects the natures of those societies. Students need to understand what terms like tribalism and ethnic conflict mean if they are to understand the world in which they live. Through looking at recent war, one is helping to unlock students to understand that the world in which they live involves complex issues, that these issues are divisive, that the divisions involve enormous sacrifices on the part of many of the people involved, and that these pose real questions for the U.S., as for other powers, as to how to respond and whether or not a response will be successful.

Conclusion

Teaching military history is a key element of civic education, which is an important dimension of society. It is a key element of patriotism, encouraging people to understand their own country in the context of a world in which they have their own values, in which their own country is important and central, but their country is not in isolation, it interacts with others. Any healthy society must encourage a mature debate about values and rights and responsibility, especially that responsibility covered by military history--namely, those occasions when citizens must risk their lives for their beliefs.

Teaching about the Military: Some Basics

By Paul H. Herbert

I take the inspiration for this talk from the distinguished military historian Maurice Matloff, who wrote that military history is a combination of general history and military art and science, and that it lies at the intersection of diplomatic, political, social, cultural, economic and intellectual trends in American history with military affairs. If it is not as well presented in secondary schools as it might be, I suspect that one reason is that teachers know that it's *terra incognita*. They approach the military as a sort of foreign world full of jargon. They're unsure how to organize their thinking about war and warfare, and so there's avoidance from lack of confidence.

In fact, one can teach military history without being a soldier just as one can teach politics without being a politician, law without being a lawyer, or any other discipline that is fundamental to our national story. So today I want to suggest methods of approaching military history in the classroom.

First, though, let me address why we should teach American military history.

We should teach American military history in order to understand American history. The story of our nation is intimately and inextricably wound around the issue of war and peace. Wars have had tremendous consequences for the U.S. The defense of the U.S. is a highly problematic political, emotional, cultural and social issue. Our population for generations has included those vulnerable to military service, whether voluntary or conscripted, and veterans, both important dimensions of our society. To leave military history out of the national story is to degrade that story considerably and risks ignorance of who we are as a people.

The second reason to integrate military history is to preserve civilian control of the military. We are a very lucky nation in our relationship between our people, our government, and our military. Unlike many countries in history, our army has not been feared by our people. We ought not take our civil-military inheritance for granted. If we don't educate a rising generation in civilian responsibility for military affairs, we could lose it. We could outsource our own defense in the way that we outsource so many other things today.

The third reason is to foster informed, ethical reasoning with regard to war, defense, and military service. These issues are not going to disappear from the national agenda any time soon. All of our students either face them today or will face them in the future, as policymakers or military leaders or, like ourselves, taxpayers, voters, and people who are concerned about the future. To ignore a subject so fraught with ethical complications and problems is to do young people a disservice.

To know about war is not to advocate war. The relative absence of military history from general history, I believe, reflects distaste for the subject itself. War is a terrible thing to be avoided and so we avoid teaching about it. To teach about military affairs and war is neither to advocate war nor to recruit young people for the military. On the other hand, such teaching should not be to condemn all war nor to discourage military service. Teachers can approach military history very well in class without doing these things, just as they can handle other controversial topics.

TEACHING FRAMEWORK

Foundational Ideas

There are some foundational ideas that permit us to teach military history as part of American history, with all of the themes that compete for our attention and energy.

The first is that *war and conflict are enduring human experiences with profound consequences*. They are likely to remain so. Anything so directly and powerfully part of our experience as human beings ought to be dealt with in the classroom. There's a corollary, one that undergirded the creation of our own country and the military clauses of the Constitution. That is that the ability to defend the country is a requirement of sovereignty. If a government cannot defend its country, territory, people, interests and constitutional order, then perhaps it has no country after all.

Students should know about *the military clauses of the Constitution*. Our Constitution was established in order to provide for the common defense and the secure the blessings of liberty. Importantly, the Constitution separates the powers of government over the military and over war making. It provides a sophisticated and enduring approach to reconciling democracy with defense, war, and the military. It is very important that students appreciate why those clauses were framed, how they have been manifested in our past, what stresses are upon them today, what solutions might be found to those stresses and what the students might anticipate in their lifetimes as citizens.

It's important to know something about *America's military institutions*, principally the armed forces—Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, some would argue the Merchant Marine, the Department of Defense once it was created. In the history of any of our services, one can track its primary purposes and actual roles. Why, for example, did we create an army? What is it for generally and what has it been for specifically in any particular era? What have been its formal and informal roles? A good example is the army's role in the expansion of the U.S. across this continent. The army facilitated that expansion by exploration, engineering, and a host of other auxiliary services that had very little to do with war but instead utilized the competence of military organizations in a whole host of technical fields, as well as in organization, planning, and operations.

American military institutions are primarily instruments of U.S. policy, both foreign and domestic. We can examine U.S. defense policy in each of America's wars and ask whether each service was a useful tool. For example, the Army on the verge of World War I was designed on paper to protect the continent from a foreign invader. However, most regiments, Regular and National Guard, were deployed along the U.S.-Mexican border to stabilize the region from the effects of the Mexican revolution. When President Wilson promised Marshal Joffre in the spring of 1917 that he would send a division to France immediately, Secretary of War Newton Baker might have said, "Mr. President, we have no divisions." So the army we had was inappropriate to the policy we pursued. (The problem was resolved. Four regiments—six including artillery regiments—were sent from Texas *post haste* by train to Hoboken, New Jersey, where the "first division" literally was organized on the docks. Four days later it boarded transports and crossed the Atlantic, landing in France at St. Nazaire, the first of 49 American divisions deployed in that conflict. The First has been on continuous active duty since then; currently some 2,500 young Americans serve with the 1st Division in Afghanistan.)

Our military institutions reflect American culture, its positive aspects and its problems. I became a commissioned officer in 1972 in an army reeling from the Vietnam years, not just the war itself but all the complications of that era. My early years as an officer were spent dealing with absenteeism, race relations, drug abuse, and other aspects of morale and discipline. I've had the experience of teaching an American soldier how to spell his name so he could sign for his pay, a reflection of U.S. culture at that particular time. The idea that we could take that army somewhere, for instance to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, and intervene between two major combatants armed to the teeth, is amazing.

Our military institutions are social institutions. They have their own organization and culture and are to varying degrees closed societies, which can be very problematic in American history. The relationships among the regular, reserve and militia forces, and between those and American society, are important matters to understand.

A profound historical issue is *who serves and why*. We have addressed that question in many different ways, with emphasis alternately on citizen-soldiers, the militia, volunteers, and conscription. There was a time when conscription was executed by the military - uniformed members of the provost marshal's corps in American towns deciding who serves. Conscription has also been carried out by committees of our friends and neighbors. We have sometimes excluded important minority groups, who have had to fight for the right to serve equally in the military just as they pursue equality in society at large. The army in which I was commissioned had very few women, all of them in the Women's Army Corps. Today, women play a prominent role throughout our armed forces and are directly in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan. President Obama recently opened the military to gays and all combat positions to women.

All of this implies that the civil-military relationship is an extremely important matter for all of us, as voters, taxpayers or soldiers. Our students should be introduced to these issues and encouraged to understand them.

America's Wars – What Changes and Why?

We should teach about significant changes in American warfare and military experience over time. From the colonial wars of 1607-1775 to today's conflicts, we can provide vicarious experience to students that enriches their ability to recognize and deal with analogous issues in their own time. In addition to major episodic foreign wars, we have been constantly in a situation of conflict where we have used our armed forces in a variety of ways to carry out national policy short of war.

The Conduct of War

Tracing change in warfare over time requires a general framework of military art and science, the actual conduct of war, a topic that seems to have fallen off the table in the trend toward cultural and social history.

A secondary school teacher can and should be reasonably comfortable with the following terms, and able to integrate them into a general course in U.S. history, identifying change and continuity and their causes.

We identify *three levels of war*: *strategy, operations, and tactics*. Civilians seem to use these interchangeably, but they actually form a hierarchy. The boundaries between them are subjective and vary from era to era and place to place, but in general, strategy, at the top, is

the overall concept for using military power to achieve one or more political ends. (In Western and certainly U.S. culture, but not in all cultures, the purpose of military power is to secure favorable political conditions.) Beneath strategy is the realm of operations, the positioning and movement of major forces—field armies, air forces, fleets--to gain advantages over an enemy. Operations may or may not involve fighting. It's the art of translating strategy into practical activity. Finally, tactics is the art of winning battles and engagements.

Strategy, operations and tactics are manifest in *campaigns and battles*. A campaign is a planned sequence of operations and engagements intended to lead to a strategic goal. A battle is the violent collision of forces, usually in a discrete time and place.

A familiar example from WWII is the western front just prior to the Battle of the Bulge. It illustrates strategy and some strategic considerations. The Allies came ashore at Normandy. After a month of fighting, they broke out and swept at an unanticipated rapid rate across France, liberating Paris, nearly destroying two German armies, with the British and Canadians to the north and the Americans to the south. This was what General Dwight D. Eisenhower at the time and historians since have called the "broad front strategy" - to pursue the Germans toward the western border of Germany with all forces across the entire face of northern France, Belgium, and the Benelux countries. The alternative, strongly favored by the British and especially Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery, was to concentrate all available logistical support behind a single, narrow thrust intended to beat the Germans to the Rhine River, cross it and end the war in 1944.

Hitler decided to counter the Allied advance in the Ardennes as the Allies slowed due to their stretched supply lines in the fall of 1944. Though hard pressed on all fronts, he marshaled a fairly significant group of armies to seize Antwerp. Antwerp was absolutely critical to Allied logistics. It had been liberated by the British, but the mouth of the Rhine River was still in German hands, so the port, which was inland, could not be used. Hitler decided to attack through the Ardennes, turn north, go all the way to Antwerp and seize it, thus denying the port to the Allies entirely and, hopefully, splitting the British forces in the north from the U.S. forces in the south. This might precipitate a political crisis in which he could negotiate a separate peace in the west in time to turn around and take on the Soviets. This plan set up the famous Battle of the Bulge. All this illustrates strategy, both Allied and German – concepts for using military power to achieve a political outcome.

Operations and tactics are seen in the movements of the 1st Infantry Division in December, 1944, as it participated in the Allied response to the German attack. Relieved from heavy fighting in the Hurtgen Forest on December 5, 1944, 1st Division soldiers were resting and recuperating for the first time since D-Day when, on December 16, they were ordered back to

the fight. They were rushed south in hastily assembled truck convoys and foot marches to occupy critical defensive ground on the northern shoulder of the "bulge" created in Allied lines by the German attack – an operational maneuver. Here, the division's 26th Infantry Regiment fought tenaciously against successive German tank attacks, constantly adjusting weapons and positions to hold their ground and deny the Germans use of a key highway. Combined with similar heroic stands by other units across the battlefield, this fatally upset the timetable of the German advance.   The ebb and flow of fighting around the Belgian village of Butgenbach illustrates tactics.

Logistics is the art of sustaining and moving military forces in the field or at sea. There is no military power at all if it cannot be moved to where it is needed and sustained while it is there. For example, in Europe in 1944, to sustain one U.S. division in combat for one day (not attacking, just on the front line) required delivery of 650 tons of fuel, ammunition, repair parts, supplies, replacement vehicles, etc. The plan for liberating Europe assumed that by D+90 (90 days after D-Day, or sometime in early September 1944), the U.S. Army would have 12 divisions in France, 120 miles from the invasion beaches, located generally along the Seine River. At that point, the Allies planned to pause to reorganize logistics for a second push toward Germany. Supplies and transportation were planned accordingly. In actuality, by D+90 there were 16 such divisions, 270 miles from the Normandy beaches. The Normandy ports had not been opened and Antwerp, as we have seen, was still in German hands. One can see the exponential increase in the logistical requirements to keep those divisions and soldiers moving against the enemy. With the Germans retreating across the front, one can appreciate the hope that the Allies could push on into Germany and win the war by Christmas. But a rapid offensive to take advantage of the military opportunity required reserves of supplies that were impossible to deliver. So logistics play a critical role in strategy and operations and constitute an important dimension of military affairs.

Intelligence is the art of determining the enemy's intentions, capabilities, and vulnerabilities in advance. The Ardennes battle is rife with intelligence and counterintelligence successes and failures by both sides. The Germans attacked when no one thought they could. Some historians detect hubris among the Allied high command - the Germans were on the ropes, the Allies safely ashore, Paris liberated. Despite some supply issues, victory was in sight - if we could just get into Germany, we could end the war. Hitler played on that by code-naming the counterattack operation *Wacht am Rhein* (Watch on the Rhine), which has a defensive connotation. The Germans cleverly concealed their preparations for the counter-attack, and the Allies, despite having broken German codes, failed to detect or understand the available indications, with disastrous consequences initially.   Such intelligence failures have been important elsewhere in our history - Pearl Harbor, the 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam, 9/11 and the absence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction are other examples.

Technology and organization, important to many fields, are central to military affairs. Technology in the context of military history is the application of science to the practice of war. We think about technology in terms of constantly improving weapons, but often the most militarily significant advances have been in other arenas, such as industry (steel, computers), transportation (internal combustion engine, heavier-than-air flight), communications (telegraph, radio, radar, internet) and so on. The atomic revolution changed nearly everything in American thought about war and strategy. The 1950s-70s was the era of the civilian strategist, first because the most creative and comprehensive thinking about nuclear strategy was done by civilians, and second because the prospect of such war seemed literally too important to be left to the generals. Technology is integrated into the forces through organization--the arrangement of people, weapons, and supporting technologies by purpose and function to win battles and campaigns efficiently.

Combat Power is the idea that any given military unit has a certain amount of capability to do what it was designed to do. A comparison of two opponents' combat power is a force ratio. The U.S. Army once made a near high religion of analyzing combat power and force ratios, but doing so is intuitive, not unlike comparing sports opponents, and can be highly instructive. In any given battle or campaign, the opponents each have their strengths and weaknesses. To some degree, we can appreciate which one is more likely to be effective, to win. Our government, of course, tries to make judgments of likely effectiveness in advance. Much of the defense budget debate is about how to organize potential power into real military power-- armies, corps, divisions, ships and fleets, aircraft and squadrons, and so on. Numbers are important but insufficient. Combat power and effectiveness are just as much functions of subjective factors such as leadership, training, discipline and morale.

Finally, we should teach about *combat* itself. There is a quotation from Carl von Clausewitz that is very important in this regard. "[A] picture of war as a whole," Clausewitz wrote, "may be formed by imagining a pair of wrestlers. Each tries through physical force to compel the other to do his will." Too often, the history of our wars is a chronological narrative that starts at the beginning and works step by step to a seemingly foreordained conclusion, whether glorious victory or tragic defeat. The enemy appears mostly as a foil. At every step in real war, there is at least one other party trying just as hard to execute his strategy against us, to defeat our purposes, to make us fail. The dynamic of combat so often misunderstood is that the issue is always in doubt until it is decided. When General Eisenhower decided to launch the invasion at Normandy, success was not foreordained. It was a horrific, though calculated, risk. Eisenhower's finest moment as a soldier may have been when he wrote the message to be released to the media in the event the invasion failed, accepting upon himself full, complete,

personal responsibility. Such decisions are made throughout the ranks in every minute of military operations.

This dynamic of struggle between opponents creates compounding difficulties. "Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult…the difficulties accumulate [to] produce a kind of friction…so that one always falls far short of the intended goal," wrote Clausewitz. Therefore, "[no] other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up with chance, [through which] guesswork and luck come to play a great part in war." We can only force chance out to a limited degree through reason and rationality, discipline and order, organization and plans, cunning and cleverness, weapons and supplies.

Such theory should not disguise that war is killing, destruction, death, pain, fear, chaos and extreme suffering. It is not a good human experience, but humans repeatedly conclude that war seems necessary, and war's intensity tends to bring out admirable traits. A warrior who is terrified and exhausted and wants to go home also can be noble, determined, courageous, and unselfish. War provides perhaps the hardest imaginable conditions for leadership, yet extraordinary leaders emerge. Lieutenant Colonel Derrill M. Daniels was one, an entymologist in 1940 who, in 1944, commanded the 451 GIs of the 2d Battalion, 26th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division, at Butgenbach in the Battle of the Bulge. Examples like his can encourage our students to think about leadership, military and non-military, in tough times. They can take inspiration from heroes like Corporal Henry H. Warner, a 21-year old manning an antitank gun at Butgenbach. Attacked by three German tanks closing through the fog at about 200 meters, he and his crew knocked out the first but lost one soldier. They hit the second tank but the rest of the crew except Warner became casualties. As the third tank advanced on Warner's position, his anti-tank gun jammed. He was terrified. He couldn't reload, his buddies were hit, he knew this tank was going to close and kill him. He drew his .45-caliber pistol and fired into the onrushing tank, then dove into a fox hole behind his anti-tank gun, knowing that in seconds the tank would overrun the position and crush him. But nothing happened. Minutes went by. He heard the enemy tank shifting gears. He peered over his antitank gun to see the tank withdrawing, the commander slumped dead from the hatch, struck by one of Warner's pistol shots. Warner was also wounded, but refused medical attention, went back out the next day, and was killed in action hunting another German tank with a bazooka. He received the Medal of Honor.

This is another thing we can talk to students about. There are many military decorations awarded for distinguished service, for performing one's duty. But a soldier's duty is profound. We reserve the Medal of Honor for those things that are "above and beyond the call of duty." Nothing in Henry Warner's duty required him to do all he did. As we raise young citizens, we need to talk about duty, and those who go above and beyond the call of duty to make a

difference, on and off our battlefields.

Military history belongs in our general history courses in secondary school. Teachers can and should master its basics. By doing so, we can prepare future citizens for their responsibilities in providing for the common defense.

THE EARLY REPUBLIC

CHAPTER 4:

The Importance of Early American Military History

By Kyle F. Zelner

Early American military history is too often relegated to just a few early pages of military history textbooks or a few lines of general textbooks about American History, but the subject is vital to our understanding of both fields. The sheer number of wars that occurred in the period should highlight how important conflict was to the development of America. There was either a declared war or a conflict for 79 of the 179 years from just before the founding of Jamestown until 1785, nominally the end of the Revolution. That number grows if we include backcountry skirmishes and frontier raids, to say nothing of the times spent preparing for or recovering from war. In effect, American colonial society was in an almost constant state of conflict.

These conflicts can be broken down into three types. First, there are contact or settlement wars. As soon as the English colonists arrived in 1607, they either attacked or were attacked by Native Americans. We generally think of these contact wars as occurring only in the 17th century, during the earliest years of colonization, but I argue that they continue into the eighteenth century. The second type of colonial American war is imperial war, most often between France and England in the eighteenth century, but also between other European powers with interests in colonial America. The third type of war is revolutionary warfare, or more properly the War for American Independence.

Contact Wars

The very first contact wars, which include conflicts like the Anglo-Powhatan (Tidewater) Wars in Virginia or the Pequot War in New England, were basically cultural clashes owing from misunderstandings, language problems, or general hostility toward "the other." The Native Americans involved in these wars almost always outnumbered the colonists. The first group of settlers that came to Jamestown, numbering only 104 settlers, was quite literally surrounded by the 15,000-20,000 strong Powhatan confederacy, including upwards of 4,000-6,000 trained warriors. While the Natives had the numbers, at Jamestown as well as other earlier settlements, the Europeans had the technological advantage. These early contact wars were not strictly racial in composition (Europeans vs. Natives), as even in the earliest conflicts, some Native American groups allied themselves to the English against traditional native enemies.

A second series of contact wars were perhaps the most deadly of all the colonial wars. These included King Philip's War in New England from 1675-76 and, in the Carolinas in the early 18th century, the Tuscarora and the Yamasee wars. These later contact wars had more to do disputes over land and trade than earlier conflicts. Indians no longer had a numeric advantage, given their decimation by disease and continued European immigration. The European technological advantage had also evaporated. Patrick Malone argues in *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics among the New England Indians* (2000) that by this period Native Americans had not only acquired European weaponry, but also excelled in its use. This made the wars very dangerous affairs.

Both King Philip's War and the Yamasee War were extremely deadly. During King Philip's War in New England, the fighting reached within eight miles of Boston. In proportion to the populations involved, more people died in that war than any other war in all of American history. The New England frontier was ultimately pushed back almost to its 1640s level. In the Yamasee War, North and South Carolina were in such distress that they have to ask for help from England and even Virginia, despite the fact that the Carolinians had very little use for the Virginians otherwise.

The last series of these contact wars stretched into the 18th century and included two conflicts we don't often think of as this type of warfare. Lord Dunmore's War (1774) in the Virginia backcountry and Pontiac's Rebellion at the end of the French and Indian War (1763) are in many ways contact wars, as Europeans moved westward into the trans-Appalachian region and were opposed by newly exposed Native American groups.

Imperial Wars

The next major type of colonial war fought in North America was imperial warfare between European colonizing powers. The colonies of these powers were thrown into the conflicts as well, and European wars came to America. Most of these wars have two names, a European moniker and an American one (e.g., the American "Queens Anne's War" was in Europe the "War of the Spanish Succession"). One of the most important of these is the 17th-century series of Anglo-Dutch Wars. In 1664, the English took the colony of New Amsterdam (New York) away from the Dutch, making the conflict very important to the future history of America.

The better known imperial wars are the conflicts between the French and English through the late 17th and early 18th centuries: King William's War, Queen Anne's War, and King George's War. All of these were basically contests to see who would control the largest empire and its colonies, not only in America but throughout the world. These imperial wars were fought not only in North America, but also in Europe, India, Asia, and at sea. In these earliest imperial

wars, colonial Americans took on most of the fighting chores in the region. There were very few British regulars involved in the American theaters of these wars, and according to some historians, the Americans formed their sense of pride in their association with the British Empire through their war service in these conflicts. However, these wars also created hardships, both economic and social, for colonial Americans.

The best known of the imperial wars is the 1754-63 French and Indian War, the final showdown between these two powers in America. It was the first time massive European--at least English--armies entered the American scene. Americans were relegated to the sidelines as auxiliary troops, which had important consequences later on. As we know, the French and Indian War ultimately led to the American War for Independence.

Revolutionary War

The Revolution was a whole different type of war, on a scale never before seen in America. It was, by its end, a world war. The War for Independence was also an event with mass participation; historians estimate that two out of every five white American men who could serve did so, in either the state militias or the Continental Army.

Our students find it difficult to appreciate the reasoning behind the progress of the war, tending to see only disjointed battles and campaigns. In order to combat this, it helps to outline the conflict for students so they can understand how all of those parts fit together. Years ago, historian John Shy identified the three major phases of the war. These stages are really a product of British strategy, since the British had the upper hand militarily. The British Army was very strong, as evidenced by its defeat of the French years before in the French and Indian War; the British also had one of the world's greatest navies. The Americans had a newly formed, untested Continental Army, thirteen squabbling state militias, and no navy at all.

The first British policy for dealing with the growing resistance movement in America was a police action strategy from approximately 1774-77. At the end of the French and Indian War, when the imperial crisis started with the American reaction to the Stamp Act (1765), the British became convinced that the center of the resistance movement in America was in New England and that in order to ensure that the situation did not get out of control, they needed to police the region. By 1774, the British had moved the vast majority of their American stationed troops (11 battalions) to New England, especially to Boston. In doing so, they stripped soldiers from other vital areas, including recently captured Canada (with a still hostile French-Canadian population) and the frontier. But Boston was the hot spot--the home of the Stamp Act Riots and Boston Tea Party--and needed to be watched.

The British tried to contain the conflict in New England throughout the mid-1770s. In fact, the April 1775 Battles of Lexington and Concord (the first of the actual war) occurred because the British were trying to confiscate arms and ammunition from the region's colonists in a type of police action. The British continued to focus on New England for the first years of the war. There were two attempts, in 1776 and again in 1777, to invade south from Canada to physically separate New England from the rest of the American colonies. The 1777 attempt ended with the famous Saratoga campaign, known to all as the turning point of the war, when the American victory spurred the alliance with France. This police action phase of the war and its focus on New England was questioned among some British military and civilian officials as early as 1776, which is why there were two simultaneous British policies to win the war from 1776-77.

The second British strategy, which began in 1776, has been labeled the classical strategy. In this stage of the war, the British attempted to win the war in a classical European way, first, by bringing the main enemy army under Washington to battle and destroying it, and then by capturing the American capital city. The key campaign associated with the first stage of this plan is the 1776 invasion of New York. General William Howe realized that if he attacked New York City, General Washington would have to respond. Howe planned to use the topography of New York, with its islands and inlets, to trap and completely destroy Washington's force, which he almost did.

While Howe did not destroy the Continental Army in 1776, he severely weakened it and in 1777 he moved on to the second part of the plan, to capture the American "capital" of Philadelphia. The British accomplished this with relative ease. Howe was surprised, however, that the strategy itself was a failure. First, Washington always found a way to escape with at least a part of the Continental Army intact. Second, capturing Philadelphia meant nothing, since the entire government (the Continental Congress) simply left the city, moving westward from town to town.

By the early 1780s, the British realized that they could not fight in America like they fought in Europe. They developed a third strategy: southern Pacification. They attempted to use the loyalists in a way that they had not before. The British could take their army almost anywhere and usually win, but when the main army moved to their next target, the just-conquered territory reverted back to American control. The new British plan was to arm loyalists so they could hold and control an area once the British Army moved off. As loyalist support was strongest in the southern colonies, the British started with an invasion of Georgia and moved into the Carolinas. As the British Army defeated American armies in places like Charleston, they armed loyalists and set them up as provisional governments. However, as soon as the

main British Army left the area, the region broke down into civil war, fueled by old grudges, family feuds, and even class warfare. Wayne Lee has detailed this brutal process in his *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War.*

It became incredibly bloody in the south during the war. As the war dragged on, the British populace grew weary of the conflict and the government in Britain was in serious trouble. In 1781, the Battle of Yorktown was a major British defeat and the British were forced into peace negotiations. In 1783, the Peace Treaty of Paris ended not only the War for Independence, it ended the colonial and revolutionary period as well.

Students need to know about all of these things, both because the military history itself is significant, but more importantly because war was so vital in its effects on the American people and the developing American society and culture.

The Effects of War on Society

As we have seen, conflict was pervasive in early America. If you lived in the backcountry, you were in an almost constant state of either preparing for, fighting, or recovering from a war. And, the frontier was very close. The immediateness and proximity of war in early America meant that conflict made an impact on all aspects of society. Our students need to understand that. One way to ensure that is to move beyond the strictly military side of the equation and explain the myriad ways conflict influenced all the people of colonial America, from soldiers to wives to children to Natives to new immigrants to old planters. A number of possible suggestions for how to do so follow.

Settlement Patterns. One example of the effect of war on colonial Americans can be seen when looking at settlement patterns. Much of the colonial settlement pattern has to do with conflict or the hope of avoiding conflict. A good example can be seen in the New York backcountry. By 1720, the powerful Iroquois Confederacy had come to comprise six nations, not its prior five. The Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and other tribes were joined by the Tuscaroras. Much of the entire remaining tribe, after being badly defeated in the Tuscarora War, was forced to migrate from the Carolinas all the way to upstate New York and settle among the Iroquois for protection, perhaps the largest forced migration in colonial America other than the slave trade.

In another example, at the end of the French and Indian War, the British put in place the Proclamation Line of 1763, west of which white settlement would not be allowed. They did so, angering many colonial Americans, because they wanted to avoid future war with the Indians in the region. The British had had just suffered through Pontiac's Rebellion, and in order to avoid future conflict they set up a series of treaties with Native Americans including the

Proclamation Line. This became a direct cause of the American Revolution in many ways. In *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (1999), Woody Holton argues that the Line did not anger ordinary Americans, because low-class Americans who wanted to farm in the west went anyway. The problem was that many of the elite of Pennsylvania and Virginia had purchased land or land bounties, hoping to sell land, were stopped from doing so. The Proclamation Line, implemented in hopes of avoiding future conflict with Indians, instead caused major friction between American colonial elites, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and British imperial officials in the days just prior to the American Revolution.

Community and war. Another way war affected colonial life has to do with community. For example, Deerfield, Massachusetts, was the northwestern-most settlement in Massachusetts in the 17th century. It was attacked, destroyed and rebuilt time and time again from just before King Philip's War into the 18th century. In *New England Outpost: War and Society in Colonial Deerfield (*1992), Richard Melvoin talks about the impression that made on the town. Its members built a community, saw it destroyed, had to build again--this occurred over and over. The people who moved into the community subsequently changed. Demographically upstanding sons looking for a new start stopped coming and instead the colonial lower sort move in, as they were the only people willing to risk living on such an exposed frontier. Conflict thus changed the very social makeup of frontier settlers in the colonial period.

Another good example is Boston in the 18th century. During the imperial wars of the eighteenth century, because the French were in nearby New France (Canada), the vast majority of colonial soldiers who fought in those wars came from New England. In *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution* (1979), Gary Nash claims that the experience of war transformed Boston into a modern urban landscape. Nash argues that the many returning veterans (some wounded, all poor) and large numbers of war widows and orphaned children so transformed the class structure of that city that it ultimately resulted in a new class consciousness, which in turn helped bring about the Revolution.

Captives and Witches. Colonial warfare also involved extensive captive-taking. Taking captives was a normal practice of Native American warfare, and it became a normal part of warfare in colonial America. In the 17th century, most of the captives were women and young children. Captivity changed family structure in America, making New Englanders think and question religious and even racial ideas. James Axtell has written of a group of Americans known as "White Indians" in his book *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America*, those people who, at the end of a war, decided to

stay with their new Native American families, enjoying that lifestyle more than they did life in their former colonial homes.

Mary Beth Norton's *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (2002) suggests that even the Salem witchcraft episode was in part brought about by contact warfare. Many of the young women who were the chief witnesses in the witchcraft outbreak had lived on the frontier and some were even orphaned because of warfare. Norton traced the language these teenage girls used in witchcraft testimony about those accused of being witches and found that it mirrored descriptions of Indian torture of enemies in battle from the frontier, which the girls would have heard in the dark days of war on the frontier. Perhaps the girls transferred their war experiences to civilian life and started another type of chaos in civil society.

Women at War. Women were affected by war over this period in a number of ways. Many of them fought on the home front. Catherine Schuyler, the wife of one of the commanders of the northern Continental Army, set all of the family's fields afire just as they were about to come to harvest rather than let the British capture them during the 1777 Saratoga campaign. Quite a few such examples of women fighting back survive from the period. Women were also victims of violence during wartime. For example, there was a major problem with rape during the Revolution, occasioning a propaganda war between the Americans and the British.

Perhaps most important, there's the experience of women who stayed home after their husbands went off to fight, having to take on every aspect of running the household. Carol Berkin, in her book *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (2006), has pointed out that women who stayed home during the war even changed in the way they viewed gendered roles of labor. Berkin points out that in their letters to their husbands early in the war, the women would write to say "your farm is doing well." By the middle of the war, they were writing "our farm is doing well" while by the end of the war, they often wrote of "my farm." Such a drastic change in perception shows just how powerful the experience of war truly was for women.

Warriors and Veterans. We still don't know enough about the experience of war for soldiers themselves. Combat obviously changes people. In addition, many soldiers returned home wounded and disabled; there must be an impact from this on families, communities, and society as a whole. We know that some of the earliest social welfare programs came about to help veterans. War service also gave a number of men, including some African Americans, an entree to citizenship and political participation that they wouldn't have had before. We need to let our students know that military service was not only a duty, it was a sacrifice with real costs and effects.

Politics and War. One of the areas we know most about is the effect of war on politics and government. Most teachers focus on the proclamation line, the stamp act, and the Boston tea party as reasons for the coming revolution, but we cannot forget that it was the debt and security problems coming out of the French and Indian war that started the crisis in the first place. We must also talk about how military events and problems like the newburgh conspiracy (an almost military coup) and the veteran uprising of shays' rebellion helped bring about the constitutional convention. Charles Royster, in his masterful book *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (1996), claims that military service was the wellspring of the new "American" character, something that is hard to deny when you look at the military service and subsequent lives of those like George Washington and alexander Hamilton. In our new focus on society and culture, we cannot forget that war and conflict were also political events with political consequences.

Culture and National Character. Lastly, we must remind our students that war and military service helped shape some of the ideas of America. The earliest bloody contact wars fostered a belief in Americans that Indians needed to be eliminated, an ideal which resonated from the Mystic Fort Fight in 1636 to the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890. In his new book on the subject, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (2005), John Grenier argues that killing Indians was the key to America's first way of war. Just because the subject is unpleasant does not mean we can keep from talking about it with our students.

Other American cultural markers also come from our earlier conflicts and are very important to America life. The American reliance on the citizen-soldier is perhaps the best example. Born out of the American militia tradition and early English-American political thought, the idea of military service as widely shared (even if this is, in many ways, a myth in the colonial period) is part of American cultural identity. This seminal American belief began during these early American wars. Where it ends (or if it has) is a matter of debate only highlighted by scenes of National Guard troops flying overseas for duty today.

Thus, for all of these reasons and more, we must not relegate the wars of the colonial period to simply a five-minute discussion of the road to the American Revolution. And we must give the military side of the American Revolution its due as well. War and conflict in this early period has had major ramifications, not just in military history, but in all of American history. We must not only remember this ourselves, but teach it to our students in a way they can understand and appreciate it.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Chapter 5:</h1>

<h2 style="text-align:center">Understanding the Creation of the U.S. Armed Forces</h2>

<p style="text-align:center">By Peter Maslowski</p>

The creation of the United States' military forces was a prolonged, complicated process that unfolded in three distinct periods, beginning with the Revolution but continuing through the Confederation and early Constitutional eras.[1]

The American Revolution

The armed forces date their official birth to 1775. First, on June 14 of that year, the Continental Congress created the Continental Army by accepting national responsibility for the New England militia forces, especially those besieging the British in Boston, and authorizing ten companies of riflemen from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to give the new army a more "national" composition. Then on October 13 Congress authorized the procurement and manning of two armed vessels to capture British ships carrying supplies to North America, and established a Naval Committee to supervise the colonists' seaborne effort. Finally, on November 10 Congress passed a resolution creating two battalions of Continental Marines.

However, identifying any single date as the birth of the Army, Navy, or Marine Corps is arbitrary. In regard to the Army, the United States never had one single army. Instead it always had a dual army that emerged from the colonial background and was solidified during the Revolution. Each of the two armies derived from a distinct strand of British ideology regarding land forces, which the colonists had inherited from the mother country.

So-called Radical Whigs emphasized the domestic political and social reliability of military forces above all else. Drawing lessons supposedly learned from studying the Greek and Roman republics, ancient Goths and Germans, and Machiavelli's writings, they gleaned two important insights. One was that citizen-soldier militias were essential for the preservation of civil liberties and for maintaining constitutional stability. Tyranny, they believed, was impossible when citizens and soldiers were one and same. Because they had nothing to gain from curtailing their own freedoms, citizen-soldiers were incorruptible. The other was that professional armies and despotism went fist-in-mailed glove because ambitious rulers could

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[1] I have previously discussed many of the issues raised in this essay in Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (Free Press, 1994 revised and expanded edition), chapters 3 and 4, and in "To the Edge of Greatness: The United States, 1783-1865," in Williamson Murray, MacGregor Kanox, and Alvin Bernstein, *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

easily manipulate a regular army and use it as a repressive instrument. After all, the hierarchal and authoritarian nature of military life bred a spirit of obedience, and long-serving professionals lost their sensitivity to the freedoms that civilians enjoyed.

Competing in the ideological arena against the Radical Whig perspective were Moderate Whigs, who emphasized military effectiveness against external threats as their foremost goal. They believed that a small professional army rather than citizen-soldiers would best protect the realm against a foreign threat. Indeed, the Moderates argued that the survival of free institutions depended on a professional army. Only a regular army could obtain the military proficiency to preserve freedom from external assault. Historically, citizen-soldiers performed adequately against other militias, but they would not fare well against the regular armies that the Continental powers were deploying. Raw courage alone was no longer sufficient; it had to be honed with intense, prolonged training and discipline. Moreover, Moderate Whigs asserted that having a professional army and being free could co-exist as long as the army was under proper constitutional safeguards, such as those embodied in the British Bill of Rights (1689).

Colonial military affairs combined the Radical and Moderate Whig ideologies. On the one hand, every colony (except Pennsylvania) established a militia system. Collectively the militias performed adequately during the seventeenth century, but they had deteriorated by the early eighteenth century. On the other hand, as the 1700s progressed, Britain increasingly dispatched small numbers of British Regulars to North America. The relationship between those Regulars and the colonists was not altogether pleasant. By the mid-1700s many Americans--especially those who avidly embraced Radical Whig ideology--were convinced that the King was a tyrant, intent on using the Army to quash civil liberties. Nonetheless, those Americans not blinded by Radical Whig anti-army ideology recognized that it was those despised British Regulars, not colonial militiamen, who increasingly carried the combat burden against French forces in America, especially during the French and Indian War, the last of the four colonial wars.

In addition to relying on British Regulars as the common militia declined, colonists often recruited ad hoc, expeditionary forces composed of volunteers to perform garrison duty, patrol the front, and undertake campaigns against either Native American or European foes. Serving for extended enlistments rather than the three months that were normal for a militia unit, these expeditionary forces sometimes took on the attributes of a professional army. Perhaps the foremost example occurred during the French and Indian War, when Colonel George Washington commanded the Virginia Regiment. Washington was so impressed with the British Regular Army's skill, toughness, and persistence that he not only sought a commission in that Army for himself but also tried to have his regiment incorporated into it. Because he was unsuccessful in both endeavors, the Virginia Regiment did not become part of

the standing regular army; instead, as happened with all previous colonial expeditionary forces, the regiment disbanded when the emergency was over.

Considering the contested ideology concerning land forces and the colonial experience with both militias and British Regulars (and American pseudo-regulars), it should come as no surprise that the Revolution embodied both ideological strands. Between 1763 and 1775 the militia underwent a dramatic renaissance. The colonies refurbished their citizen-soldier forces to resist alleged oppression by a professional British army being wielded by a tyrannical king. These revitalized militias not only fought the Revolution's initial battles, but also served in important capacities throughout the war. Representing a reserve force that provided large numbers of partially trained soldiers for short enlistments, the continued reliance on militias reflected the Radical Whig suspicion of a regular army in a free society. But the Moderate Whigs were right: the military expertise needed to defend freedom against a professional army was beyond the capability of citizen-soldiers alone. The Continental Army, reflecting the Moderate Whig insistence on a small regular army, provided the requisite military expertise and staying power during the long and arduous war.

Under the exigencies of war Americans had created a military system that blended both strands of British ideology. The militia system and the Continental Army nicely complemented one another at critical junctures such as the battles at Trenton, Princeton, Saratoga, and Yorktown. True, even in combination they usually did not make a lethal weapon. Yet without both citizen-soldiers and Continental Army regulars, American victory is difficult to envision.

As for the Continental Navy, no one advocated building a fleet to challenge British supremacy on the high seas. In 1775 the British had 270 ships in the three largest categories of warships (ships of line, frigates, and sloops); America had none, which meant that directly challenging the Royal Navy was an impossible task. But an American naval effort could still hurt England by attacking its seaborne commerce and disrupting its military supply and communications lines. So the Americans raised a Continental Navy to match their Continental Army. Ultimately the Continental Navy consisted of approximately fifty ships, though never more than twenty were in service at any one time, and most of the ships were small and of limited usefulness.

Just as the militia and Continental Army worked together, so the Continental Navy was not alone out on the oceans attacking the British. Three other types of naval forces were also afloat. All the colonies except for New Jersey and Delaware organized state navies, which were akin to state militias. For the most part consisting of shallow-draft barges, galleys, and gunboats, their most important contributions were, first, preventing British raiding parties from going ashore, and second, interdicting Loyalists' efforts to supply British ships lying

offshore. Privateers, privately owned armed ships sailing under a commission from the Continental Congress or a state government authorizing them to attack enemy merchant ships, essentially engaged in licensed piracy. The idea of plundering the seaborne wealth of the British Empire was so appealing that approximately 2,000 privateers set sail during the war. And then there was the French Navy, which was vital to American victory. The Yorktown campaign of 1781, which was perhaps the Revolution's most decisive campaign because it broke Parliament's will to continue fighting the Americans, would have been impossible without the French Navy. That navy's "victory" over the British fleet at the Battle of the Virginia Capes insured that Lord Cornwallis' army would not be rescued by sea, and thus would ultimately be compelled to surrender.

The inspiration for the Continental Marines came from British tradition. Ever since 1664 the British periodically mobilized marine regiments during a war, demobilized them when peace came, and then reestablished them during the next war. Following British precedent, on November 10, 1775 the Congress authorized those two Marine battalions, but they were never formed. Naval authorities simply began enlisting small groups of Marines and organizing them into small companies that were never organized into larger units. Ultimately, some Marines served aboard each Continental Navy ship, where perhaps their foremost purpose was serving as a ship's guards. Almost every Navy crew contained its share of criminals, thugs, and malcontents, so shipboard discipline was never strong. On more than one occasion, Marines had to support a ship's officers against a hostile crew. Marines also served as part of "prize crews," boarding captured enemy ships. In addition, Marines provided a ship captain with a landing party that was somewhat better trained for land warfare than the ship's sailors. And finally, during combat at sea, which in the age of smoothbore cannons was invariably fought at close quarters, Marine musketry swept the enemy's decks, adding to their ship's combat effectiveness.

The Confederation Era

As the newly minted nation emerged from the Revolution, it confronted a fundamental question: could a military establishment be created that met both the ideological concerns for liberty and the necessity for internal and external security? For a constellation of reasons, under the Articles of Confederation ratified by the states in 1781, the answer was a resounding "No!" The Confederation faced severe economic problems, in part resulting from war-induced dislocations but made worse because Congress did not have the power to tax. And many people asked why the country needed an expensive peacetime preparedness program. After all, the colonists had very little mobilized military power in 1775 and yet had gone on to victory against the mighty British Empire.

Equally disturbing, in 1783-84 the climate of opinion was hostile toward regular forces because the Revolution ended on three discordant notes for civil-military relations that reanimated Radical Whig ideological fears. One crisis was the so-called Newburgh Conspiracy, with its implied threat by Continental Army officers against the Continental Congress. In this ugly affair, when Congress refused to accede to officers' demands for half-pay for life as a postwar pension, some of the officers appeared to threaten civil supremacy. Also raising civil-military tensions was the Society of the Cincinnati, which was officially founded in the spring of 1783 to bind Continental Army officers together in a fraternal and charitable organization. To those sympathetic to Radical Whig ideology, the Society seemed anti-democratic in several ways. For example, membership was hereditary, passing to the oldest male descendent of a Continental Army officer, and thereby seemingly creating a privileged class based on birth, not merit. Finally, a mutiny occurred among some enlisted men after news of the preliminary peace arrived. Having served honorably for years under often dire conditions, the men demanded immediate discharge and payment. Nearly bankrupt and still not positive that peace was really at hand, Congress promised a financial settlement at some later date and offered the men furloughs, not discharges. Several hundred disgruntled Continental Army soldiers from Pennsylvania mutinied; they held Congress and the Pennsylvania state government hostage with fixed bayonets for several hours before the incident ended, fortunately, without bloodshed.

As a result of all these factors an outburst of antimilitarism swept the country in the Revolution's aftermath. The Confederation government was unable to maintain anything other than a miniscule military establishment. It completely disbanded the Continental Navy and Marines, and disbanded the Continental Army, keeping only eighty men and a handful of officers in service. The military institutions founded in 1775 disappeared completely. Thus no modern regiment directly traces its lineage to the Continental Army, which was not, then, a standing regular army in the sense that the British Army was. The latter had existed in war and peace ever since 1645. On the other hand, the Continental Army was akin to Washington's Virginia Regiment: just another in a long line of ad hoc, volunteer, expeditionary forces that disbanded when the emergency ended.

The only concession the Confederation Congress made to military preparedness came on June 3, 1784, the day after it disbanded the Continental Army, when it created the First American Regiment. At an authorized strength totaling 700 militiamen enlisted for one year, this regiment was the first national peacetime force in American history. The 1st American Regiment was a hybrid, neither a strictly state-based militia unit nor a completely national regular force; instead, its formation depended on the goodwill of four states to provide militiamen, but Congress organized, paid, and disciplined the regiment, which was to serve four times longer than the normal militia enlistment. In addition, the commander, Josiah

Harmar of Pennsylvania, reported both to the Pennsylvania commonwealth government and to the Confederation Congress.

When the regiment's one-year enlistments expired in 1785, the Confederation continued the unit, but made it strictly a regular force by omitting any reference to militiamen and calling for three-year recruits. As the end of this three-year enlistment period approached, the government reauthorized the regiment for another three years. Thus the Confederation created a very small standing army, providing a second possible birth date for the American Army: June 3, 1784, not June 14, 1775.

With no navy or marines and only a miniscule "army," the Confederation was incapable of solving a host of security problems. In the trans-Appalachian west, powerful Indian tribes contested American expansion. The British refused to evacuate their forts in the Old Northwest, from which they conducted a lucrative fur trade; gave aid to the Native Americans, who were hostile to the United States; and threatened to contain American expansion themselves. In the Southwest, Spain exerted similar influences, and kept a stranglehold on the Mississippi River. As long as the Americans had no access to the Mississippi, their sovereignty over the region between the Appalachians and that river would always be tenuous. In the Mediterranean Sea, the Barbary pirates ravaged American commerce, compelling the United States to buy protection by paying tribute. And then there was Shays' Rebellion (1786) of debt-ridden farmers in western Massachusetts, which revealed the government's abject military weakness. The Confederation could raise neither the men nor the money to suppress it, but instead had to rely on Massachusetts volunteers to quell the outbreak.

Americans who favored a stronger central government--collectively known as the nationalists--fumed at the Confederation's ineptitude and feared the country was degenerating into anarchy. Nationalists were especially distraught because they envisioned the United States becoming a great empire. "However unimportant America may be considered at present," wrote George Washington, "there will assuredly come a day when this country will have some weight in the scale of Empires."[2] Perhaps, but not if the United States remained under the Articles of Confederation. That government's weakness provoked nationalists to seek a stronger union.

Asserting that the central government needed more power still left the fundamental question unanswered: how could statesmen infuse that government with enough power to provide

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[2] John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931-44), vol. 2, p. 520.

security against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and yet not transform it into a despotic regime?

The Early Years under the Constitution

The Constitution solved the puzzle of balancing power and liberty through a separation of powers and a complex system of checks and balances that diffused power throughout the governmental structure: between the states and the central government; between the latter's legislative and executive branches; and within the legislative branch's two houses.

At one level, the Constitution divided military power between the federal government and the states. While the Articles of Confederation had also split power along these lines, it had given paramount power to the states. The Constitution reversed this power division, in part by placing significant limitations on state military power. Without Congress' permission, a state could not maintain non-militia troops or warships in peacetime, form alliances with other states or with foreign governments, or engage in war "unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay." In return for the states' accepting these restrictions on their military power, the government pledged to guarantee each state a republican form of government and to protect the states from invasion or domestic insurrection. Perhaps most importantly in regard to state military power, the states implicitly retained their militias because the Constitution gave them the authority to appoint militia officers and to train their militias "according to the discipline prescribed by Congress." The Second Amendment explicitly guaranteed the states' militia authority.

At the national level the Constitution further guarded against despotism by dividing national military power between two masters, Congress and the President. Congress was given the power to "declare war," "provide and maintain a navy," and "raise and support armies." To ensure money for these purposes it could "lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises" and "borrow money." As a major obstacle to despotism, no appropriation for the Army could be for more than two years, a constitutional constraint that kept the Army under tight legislative control. In addition, Congress could "make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces"; "grant letters of marque and reprisal, [and] make rules concerning captures on land and water"; provide for "calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions;" and provide for "organizing, arming, and disciplining" the militia and for governing the militia when it was nationalized.

Despite these vast powers, both explicit and potential, Congressional despotism was unlikely because the president was commander-in-chief of the army and navy and of the militia "when called into the actual service of the United States." He also appointed officers, though only with the Senate's advice and consent.

One of the Constitution's most important aspects relating to military affairs was that it institutionalized the dual-army tradition that had been so important during the colonial and Revolutionary eras. However, it radically departed from tradition in that the militia was no longer strictly a state-based institution. In a major victory for the nationalists, the states and the national government now exercised concurrent control over the militia.

Considered as a whole, the Constitution's military provisions represented a stunning nationalist victory. The new government was potentially far more powerful than the Confederation; the question was whether this potential military power could be converted into flesh and blood institutions. The answer was "yes," although it was not done quickly or without strident controversy.

The first decade under the Constitution represented a new founding for all three services. But Congress first had to create an agency to administer military affairs. The Confederation had a War Department headed by a Secretary at War (Henry Knox since 1785). In August 1789 Congress maintained continuity by creating a Department of War, with Knox remaining as Secretary of War. Then Congress formally adopted the First American Regiment (and an artillery battalion raised during Shays' Rebellion) on September 29th of that year, a date that represents the Army's third birthday--and perhaps this is the one that should really count. The government soon augmented the regiment with four additional companies, and in subsequent years it slowly expanded the Regular Army. By the early 1800s, the United States had made the critical decision to maintain at least a small standing Regular Army in both peace and war, which was a clear-cut victory for the nationalists and for Moderate Whig ideology.

Nationalists hoped to gain another victory by reorganizing the militia into an effective force under federal control, arguing that a well-regulated militia would insure that the nation needed only a modest sized Regular Army. But the militia was an unusually sensitive political issue that struck at the heart of national versus state power. No matter what the Constitution said about the federal government's potential power over the militia, the heirs to Radical Whig ideology struggled to limit that control. Not until 1792 did Congress pass the Uniform Militia Act, which remained the nation's basic militia law until 1903. No law was ever more ironically titled: the Act guaranteed that the United States would in fact not have a uniform militia system. In a virtual abdication of its Constitutional responsibility over the militia, the Congress allowed each state to respond to the Act's "suggestions" as it saw fit. No two states saw fit to respond the same way.

Convinced that preparedness deterred war, nationalists wanted a standing Navy to match the standing Army. But the United States still had no navy in 1793 when trouble loomed on two

fronts. First, the French Revolution exploded into a world war, putting neutral American commerce at risk. Second, with the Europeans preoccupied, the Barbary state pirates, whom the European powers had earlier bottled up in the Mediterranean Sea, were now sending their ships into the Atlantic to prey on American shipping. In response to this dual crisis, Congress passed a Naval Act on March 27, 1794 authorizing the construction of six frigates; each frigate was to have a Marine detachment of one officer and approximately fifty enlisted men. Those six frigates had a tangled history, but a reasonable argument can be made that the 1794 Naval Act marked the real birth date of an American Navy.

Finally, as the Quasi-War with France approached in 1798, Congress passed a spate of military preparedness legislation. Among other things, it dramatically increased the naval forces. Until then the Secretary of War handled both land and naval affairs. To ease the secretary's burgeoning administrative burden, Congress cleaved the Secretary of War's responsibilities in half by creating a separate Department of Navy. Then on July 11, 1798 Congress passed a law organizing the Navy's Marines as a Corps of Marines, thus marking the real birth of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Conclusion

The Constitution initially threw those who embraced Radical Whig ideology into the deepest, most profound depths of despair. They feared that the United States would soon have "a military king, with a standing army devoted to his will," which he would use to suppress civil liberties.[3] Exercising its explicit authority and ample power, the new Constitutional government overrode Radical Whig fears to create a regular standing Army (that is, a permanent army that existed in both war and peace), a regular standing Navy, and a regular standing Marine Corps. But as it has turned out, for more than two centuries and counting, it created neither tyranny nor a despotic government.

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[3] Cecelia M. Kenyon, *The Antifederalists* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1966) pp. 361, 363.

Chapter 6:

"The Army of the Constitution": The Military, American Values, and the Early Republic

By Gregory J. W. Urwin

Any man or woman who enlists in the United States Army must take the following oath: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same." In other words, American soldiers are expected to risk their lives for a piece of paper, but that is not as absurd as it sounds. As we all know, the Constitution serves a high purpose, which its framers took pains to articulate in their Preamble—"to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty." That definition of good government contains a pronounced military component. Governments usually provide for their defense by maintaining armed forces, and those forces are sometimes called upon to keep order at home.[1]

Yet while the men who drafted and ratified the Constitution may have agreed on the general purpose of government, they clashed over the proper means for ensuring national security. The years in which the United States won its independence and attempted to assert its viability as a nation also witnessed a prolonged and abrasive debate over military policy. Americans argued about how much military power they were willing to entrust to the national government, as well as when and against whom that power should be employed.

Although anti-militarism permeated the basic political philosophy of America's Founders, they could not escape the fact that theirs was a nation conceived in war. The more realistic among them acknowledged that the general welfare and blessings of liberty could not be safeguarded without occasional resort to arms. Despite ideological disputes and increasingly bitter partisanship, they managed to construct a military system that would govern America's responses to its enemies, both foreign and domestic, for a century following George Washington's presidency. That system, and the assumptions that supported it, continue to influence our current defense establishment. As America's leaders search for new ways to serve the republic's security interests in an age of uncertainty, they would do well to revisit the country's military roots.[2]

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[1] Robert K. Wright, Jr., and Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Soldier-Statesmen of the Constitution* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1987), 57, 214, 234.

[2] Richard H. Kohn, *Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783-1802* (New York: Free Press, 1975), xii-xiii, 2-3, 6, 73, 75-76, 109-10, 183-86, 277-93.

When Englishmen first began colonizing North America in the late 1500s and early 1600s, the institution that we equate with a modern military establishment—a standing (full-time, professional) army—had not yet taken root in their country. Consequently, colonizing bands met their military needs by importing the English militia system.

The militia rested on the principle of universal military obligation. With the exception of Quaker Pennsylvania, all of the Thirteen Colonies passed legislation that turned their adult male inhabitants into part-time soldiers. Each man aged sixteen to sixty was expected to own a modern weapon, train regularly with his neighbors, and stand ready to repel any attack on his colony. This standard was rarely realized in full, however, and it tended to deteriorate over time.
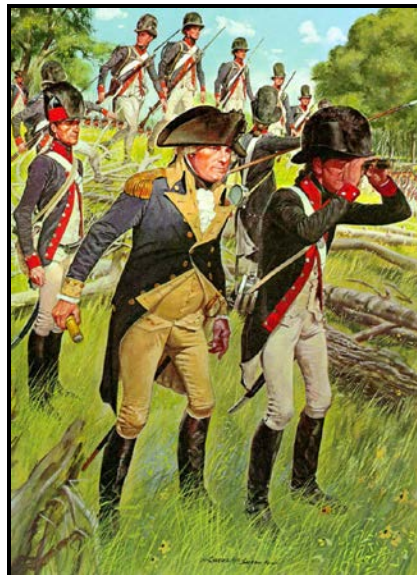
H. Charles McBarron's "The American Soldier, 1794," shows Major General Anthony Wayne and his Legion of the United States (America's regular army) winning the Battle of Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794. (From U.S. Army Center of Military History

The cost of weaponry and emerging social taboos caused the militia to evolve into an association of white, middle-class, propertied males. As the colonies expanded and prospered, moreover, the militia system grew weaker. Militiamen in settled areas became reluctant to answer distant frontier alarms and defend other people's property and families. Drawing solid citizens from their farms and businesses also unsettled colonial economies.

Thus colonial governments took to guarding their frontiers with paid troops raised for set periods of time (a campaign season or a year). Ironically, these semi-regulars or "Provincials" were often the very men barred from militia service—the poor and propertyless—the start of an enduring recruitment pattern in the American military.

Despite this reliance on semi-regulars and the fact that a large infusion of British regulars proved decisive in eliminating the French threat from North America in the French and Indian War, 18th-century Americans tended to fear standing armies. They believed that regulars without a war to keep them busy posed a threat to popular liberty.[3] These words, published under a pseudonym in 1788, summed up what had long been an entrenched attitude in American society:

> It has ever been held that standing armies in times of peace are dangerous to a free country; and no observation seems to contain more reason in it. Besides being useless, as having no object of employment, they are inconvenient and expensive. The soldiery, who are generally composed of the dregs of the people, when disbanded, or unfit for military service, being equally unfit for any other employment, become extremely burthensome. … The severity of discipline necessary to be observed reduces them to a degree of slavery; the unconditional submission to the commands of their superiors, to which they are bound, renders them the fit instruments of tyranny and oppression.— Hence they have in all ages afforded striking examples of contributing, more or less, to enslave mankind.[4]

Americans justified these prejudices by drawing on the history of ancient Greece and Rome, and the more recent excesses of Oliver Cromwell and James II. The use that Great Britain made of a few thousand Redcoats to enforce compliance with parliamentary taxes in the Thirteen Colonies between 1763 and 1775 not only intensified American hostility toward standard armies, but it triggered the War of Independence.

Ironically, the men who led America into revolution discovered they could not win independence without creating a regular force of their own—George Washington's Continental Army. Washington's Continentals were not the middle-class "embattled farmers" of cherished myth—at least not after the war's first year or two. The rank and file consisted largely of vagrants, loafers, the unemployed, indentured servants, debtors, free blacks, slaves, enemy deserters, prisoners of war, ordinary criminals, and Loyalists facing execution, along with a healthy sprinkling of enemy deserters. To induce such men "to serve during the present war," the Continental Congress, the rebellious colonies' *de facto* central government, began offering recruits economic enticements in the fall of 1776 (100-acre land grants and $20 bounties—with bounties eventually soaring to $80).[5]

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[3] Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 7-8; James Kirby Martin and Mark Edward Lender, *A Respectable Army: The Military Origins of the Republic, 1763-1789* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1982), 16-18.

[4] "Essays by the Impartial Examiner," *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, February-June 1788," in Herbert J. Storing, ed., *The Complete Anti-Federalist*, 7 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 5: 181.

[5] Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 5-6; Wright and MacGregor, *Soldier-Statesmen*, 11; Martin and Lender, *Respectable Army*, 1-3, 20-28, 35-36, 40, 67-78, 87-91, 131-33; Robert K. Wright, Jr., *The Continental Army* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1983), 20-25.

Donna Neary's "To Execute the Laws" shows President George Washington (in uniform) and Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton (in civilian clothes) at Carlisle, PA, reviewing the 15,000 federalized militia called out to quell the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794. These troops are what Washington called "the army of the constitution" at the end of the article. (From National Guard Heritage Gallery, National Guard Bureau)

Due to a chronic shortage of Continentals, the Patriots had to lean on the militia for military operations. While the militia compiled a mixed combat record, it played a crucial role as a revolutionary home guard. Militiamen suppressed local Loyalists, defended the Indian frontier, and made it difficult for the British to penetrate and occupy the countryside. Whenever the British tried to hold a lot of ground by spreading their forces thin, they risked defeat in detail. Thus the inextinguishable hostility of the militia—a perpetual insurgency— created a no-win situation for the British, and they finally washed their hands of the Thirteen Colonies after the Yorktown disaster.

During the War of Independence, the Continental Congress legitimized its authority with a written constitution, the Articles of Confederation. The Articles empowered Congress to wage war and make peace, create a navy, and requisition the states for troops for national service. At the same time, each state was expected to "keep up a well regulated militia, sufficiently armed and accoutred [equipped]." Unfortunately, the Articles provided no mechanism that allowed Congress to force any state to do anything against its will, resulting in a weak and easily ignored national government.[6]

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[6] Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 9-13; Wright and MacGregor, *Soldier-Statesmen*, 14, 23, 183-85, 187-88; John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (New York:

With the end of the Revolution, American anti-militarism re-emerged, and Congress quickly disbanded the Continental Army. This action was encouraged by the 1781 mutinies of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Continental Lines and the 1783 Newburgh Conspiracy, an aborted officers' coup. George Washington did his best to persuade his civilian superiors to provide the young United States with at least a rudimentary defensive system. Washington's famous "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment" recommended replacing the Continental Army with a regular force of 2,631 to garrison enough frontier posts to deter Indian attacks and prevent encroachments on American territory by the British in Canada and the Spanish in Florida and Louisiana. Washington also urged revitalizing the militia by classing its members by age and making the youngest (ages eighteen to twenty-five) liable for longer training and the first to respond to military emergencies.

Congress disregarded Washington's counsel and decided to protect the infant republic with a single regiment. Representing the ambiguities inherent in the American military tradition, this 1st American Regiment was initially composed of 700 men drafted for one year from the militias of Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. It was soon converted into a regular force with three-year enlistment terms, but it was never large enough to pacify the frontier, which lay exposed to Indian depredations.

Further proof of America's military vulnerability came in the autumn of 1786, when thousands of debtor farmers rose in revolt in western Massachusetts under Daniel Shays. Although Shays' Rebellion was eventually quelled by the Massachusetts militia, the fact that it lasted more than six months and that Congress made no significant contribution to the outcome convinced what George Washington called "the thinking part of the people of this country" to conclude: "These disorders are evident marks of defective government." Consequently, Washington and fifty-four other delegates gathered in Philadelphia between May and July 1787 to scrap the Articles of Confederates and draft this nation's present constitution.[7]

For the most part, the Founders believed that stable government required a military capacity formidable enough to shield its citizens from outside threats and any lawless elements that might spring up in their midst. As Alexander Hamilton of New York put it: "A certain portion of military force is absolutely necessary in large communities." Thus the Constitutional

Oxford University Press, 1976), 165-79, 193-224; David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 160-203.

[7] Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 17, 23, 25-27, 31-36, 38, 42-53, 74-75; Martin and Lender, *Respectable Army*, 160-65, 186-95; Wright, *Continental Army*, 177-82; Wright and MacGregor, *Soldier-Statesmen*, 29, 32-33, 193-200, 202-7; George Washington to Henry Knox, December 26, 1786, in W. W. Abbott and Dorothy Twohig, eds., *The Papers of George Washington: Confederation Series*, 6 vols. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992-97), 4: 481-82.

Convention granted the proposed national government definite military powers. Congress could declare war, raise and support armies, build and maintain a navy, and approve all regulations governing the armed forces. It could also set standards for organizing, training, and disciplining the militia, and call militiamen into national service "to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections, and repel Invasions." The office of President received the same military powers as a European monarch—"Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy . . ., and of the Militia . . . , when called into the actual Service of the United States."[8]

The publication of the Constitution in October 1787 inspired as much criticism as praise, and nine months of spirited debate preceded the document's ratification. Anti-Federalists hurled many of their strongest objections at the Constitution's military provisions. What distressed them the most was the national government's power to raise a standing army in peacetime, and they warned that this was deliberately intended to trample states' rights and strip the people of their liberties. Some Anti-Federalists claimed that the power to federalize the militia would be utilized to convert that force into a standing army for nefarious purposes. A few even predicted that the President would wield his military powers to crown himself king.

On the Federalist side of the argument, the most effective reply to these dire pronouncements came from Alexander Hamilton, a former Continental Army officer. Hamilton pointed out that an inability to raise troops in peacetime would leave the United States vulnerable to foreign threats and unable to head off Indian troubles by reinforcing frontier garrisons. "The United States would then exhibit the most extraordinary spectacle which the world has yet seen," he insisted, "that of a nation incapacitated by its Constitution to prepare for defense before it was actually invaded. . . . We must receive the blow before we could even prepare to return it. . . . We must expose our property and liberty to the mercy of foreign invaders and invite them by our weakness to seize the naked and defenseless prey, because we are afraid that rulers, created by our choice, dependent on our will, might endanger that liberty by an abuse of the means necessary to its preservation." Hamilton underscored his preparedness argument with a rationale for military professionalism that would pass muster today: "War, like most other things, is a science to be acquired and perfected by diligence, by perseverance, by time and by practice."[9]

As the head of the first administration to take power under the Constitution, George Washington had to demonstrate that the new national government could actually safeguard the American people and their interests. The populace's enduring anti-militarism and the pressures of partisan politics, however, compelled Washington to proceed cautiously. During

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[8] Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 75-76; Wright and MacGregor, *Soldier-Statesmen*, 40, 216-17; Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, 4 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966): 1: 246, 285.
[9] Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 82-83. See also Storing, *Complete Anti-Federalist.* Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (New York: New American Library, 1961), 160-63, 165-68, 178.

the debates over the Constitution, Federalists and Anti-Federalists agreed that the existence of a well-trained and equipped militia would reduce the need for a standing army. Nevertheless, Congress balked at imposing true militia reform on the states. The Uniform Militia Act of 1792 merely empowered the President to call out the militia to execute federal law against "combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings," and limited such service to three months a year. It took a series of military disasters in the Old Northwest to demonstrate the unreliability of the militia in Indian warfare. In March 1792, Washington finally prevailed on Congress to create a 5,000-man regular army, which the imperious Major General Anthony Wayne literally flogged into shape and led to victory over the Ohio tribes at Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794.[10]

Even as Wayne was creating a respectable regular army, President Washington invoked the Uniform Militia Act to send 15,000 federalized citizen-soldiers into western Pennsylvania to suppress the so-called Whisky Rebellion. Historians still argue over whether the provocation justified the Washington Administration's massive response, but that issue is not as important as the precedents Washington attempted to set. Once Washington decided that the tax resisters had crossed the line into treason with "overt acts of levying war against the United States," he followed the advice of Alexander Hamilton, his Secretary of the Treasury, who urged: "The force ought if attainable to be an imposing one, such if practicable, as will deter from opposition, save the effusion of the blood of Citizens and secure the object to be accomplished." As Hamilton predicted, the dispatch of an overpowering army into the Pennsylvania wilderness intimidated the Whiskey rebels, and the uprising fizzled without a fight. Washington then tempered firmness with mercy, pardoning the only two insurrectionists convicted of treason in federal court.[11]

Washington's success in the Whisky Rebellion rested on the moderate use of irresistible force. He recognized that republican government depended on the love and support of the people. It should not unleash the military against a disaffected minority simply to punish, but to enforce majority rule as embodied in laws approved by the people's representatives. This wisdom led most Americans to accept the optimistic spin that Washington himself gave to the outcome of the Whiskey Rebellion:

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[10] Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 92, 96, 102-3, 106, 108-10, 114, 120, 122-23, 125-26, 129-35, 174-75; Wright and MacGregor, *Soldier-Statesmen*, 244-45.

[11] Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 139-40, 170; Wright and MacGregor, *Soldier-Statesmen*, 52; George Washington, "Proclamation," August 7, 1794, in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, 39 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931-44), 33: 458-60; Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, August 2, 1794, in Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 27 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-87), 17: 15-19. See also Steven R. Boyd, ed., *The Whiskey Rebellion: Past and Present Perspectives* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), 3-7, 9-30, 97-100.

It has demonstrated, that our prosperity rests on solid foundations; by furnishing an additional proof, that my fellow citizens understand the true principles of government and liberty: that they feel their inseparable union: that . . . they are now as ready to maintain the authority of the laws against licentious invasions, as they were to defend their rights against usurpation. It has been a spectacle, displaying to the highest advantage, the value of Republican Government, to behold the most and least wealthy of our citizens standing in the same ranks as private soldiers; pre-eminently distinguished by being the army of the constitution.[12]

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[12] George Washington, "Sixth Annual Address to Congress," November 19, 1794, in Fitzpatrick, *Writings of Washington*, 34: 34.

Chapter 7:

The Battles of Plattsburgh and Ending the War of 1812[*]

By Wayne E. Lee

In the spring of 1814 the prospect of peace in Europe was a worrying one for the United States in its ongoing war with Britain. Napoleon abdicated in early April and a war-weary Britain sought a quick, decisive, and honorable end to the war with America. Temporarily flush with unused troops and ships, the ministry dispatched veteran regiments from France and the Mediterranean to North America. Defending the Canadian provinces had always been the priority, and so it remained, but now the balance of forces had shifted and the British could take the offensive. In doing so they hoped to gain and hold the territorial chips necessary to dominate the looming peace talks. The British planned a series of attacks all along the eastern seaboard and in the Gulf of Mexico, but all were fundamentally diversions designed to open the way for the main army based in Montreal. General George Prevost, Governor and commander of British forces in Canada, chose to follow Lake Champlain deep into New York, with the hope to threaten New York City, and thereby force territorial concessions from the Americans. On September 1, 1814, some 12,000 British troops crossed the border south of Montreal and marched along Lake Champlain, shadowed by a newly built frigate, the *Confiance,* and her sister vessels, designed and built with the intent to immediately establish naval dominance on the lake. The U.S. forces at Plattsburgh amounted to a scratch force of 1,700 regular troops, 700 New York militiamen, and 2,500 militiamen (technically volunteers) from Vermont, commanded by Brigadier General Alexander Macomb, and a small, hurriedly expanded squadron of ships under the command of Commodore Thomas Macdonough.

Background

The United States Congress declared war in June 1812 from a strange confusion of motives. In hindsight it makes sense to blame the outbreak of war on two separate arenas of Anglo-American friction. British maritime policy regarding neutral trade and forcibly stopping American vessels and impressing crewmen from them clearly infringed on American sovereignty, while at the same time the western frontier remained a turbulent zone of competition between American settlers and the Indians. Americans blamed the British for stirring up the Indians, most recently the Shawnees, defeated at Tippecanoe in November

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[*] *Note*: This essay exists in a longer form as "Plattsburgh 1814: Warring for Bargaining Chips" in Between War and Peace: How America Ends Its Wars, ed. Mat Moten (New York: Free Press, 2011). It is also available from the U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute as War Termination: Proceedings of the War Termination Conference, USMA, ed. Colonel Matthew Moten (CSI: Ft. Leavenworth, Kan., 2010).

1811. As a minimum the British could be blamed for giving the Indians hope for support in their efforts to hem in the westward expansion of the United States. If it is too much to blame the war on western land hunger and greed, it is not too much to blame it partly on the western states' collective sense of insecurity.

Lacking naval power, the only way for the United States to exert pressure on Britain was to attack her Canadian provinces. Originally a diplomatic strategy that sought to use attacks on Canada to force British concessions, as the war dragged on many people in the United States began to see the war as one for territory, or at least for the freedom to expand westwards. For Britain, preserving Canada remained central, but with the defeat of Napoleon looming in 1814, they were able to commit resources on a new scale. Both sides thus escalated their hopes for the meaning and outcome of the war. Later in 1814, however, as the Americans began to fear the ending of the Napoleonic War, and as the British faced domestic war weariness after two decades of struggle, both sides returned to their initial vision of war as negotiation, something John Lynn has termed for an earlier era "war as process," in which military operations sought not state territorial conquest so much as slices of the other's territory, most often to be used as bargaining chips in a nearly constant ongoing process of diplomacy.

Early American offensives in the far western theater, around Detroit, and in the Niagara peninsula were generally defeated, until Captain Oliver Hazard Perry cleared the British fleet from Lake Erie in September 1813. That victory solidified the American position in the west, but did not prove capable of sustaining a major territorial offensive within Canada (although the killing of the Indian leader Tecumseh during the 1813 campaign here undermined any further role for the Indians in British military campaigns.) In a separate campaign against the Creeks, General Andrew Jackson defeated one of two rival factions there, and then forced the Creek nation to cede 23 million acres of Alabama and Georgia to the United States. In the Niagara peninsula in the summer of 1814 the U.S. regular army troops performed much better, but were unable to convert limited battlefield success into territorial control, and in fact were forced back into Fort Erie and there they endured a long siege into the fall. Meanwhile British naval power, now undistracted by Napoleon, began to exercise a crushing blockade. American export traded dropped from $130 million in 1807 to $25 million in 1813 and then to $7 million in 1814.

Indeed, it was the surrender of Napoleon in April, 1814 that seemed set to change the character of the war, from one characterized by failed American offensives, stalemate in the north, Indian wars in the south, and a strangling blockade, into a war of decisive and destructive British offensives. A whole new array of options emerged that combined Britain's til-now slumbering naval superiority with veteran regiments from the European theater. This new accession of military power led to the most spectacular moments of the war--the burning

of Washington and the American defense of Baltimore at Ft. McHenry. Ironically, as spectacular as they were, they were but diversions within the overall British plan for the summer of 1814.

British Operations—Summer 1814

In June 1814, the Earl of Bathurst, British Secretary for War and the Colonies, wrote to Prevost to outline the summer's campaign plan. He promised Prevost some 3,000 men immediately, with 10,000 more to arrive in waves. He was to use those forces to commence offensive operations, although he was not to risk the loss of his force. His primary mission remained protecting the security of Canada, but its security demanded clearing the American threats on Lakes Erie, Ontario, and Champlain. Prevost could dispose the forces as he chose, but Bathurst expected him to go on the attack, and to support such an attack in the interior he assured him that "it is also in contemplation … to make a more serious attack on some part of the Coast of the United States. … These operations will not fail to effect a powerful diversion in your favor."

This scheme made Prevost's troops and ships gathering in Quebec and Montreal into the British main effort. First they would establish superiority on Lake Champlain and Ontario, and then they could roll down into Lake Erie and re-establish control stage by stage as far as Detroit. British forces to the west, whether around Fort Niagara or as far away as Mackinac in northern Michigan, would have to hold the line until Prevost could reinforce them— something they did successfully. Meanwhile, as Prevost gathered his forces together and constructed his fleet on Lake Champlain, the "diversions" began. Between July and September 1 British forces captured much of eastern Maine and asserted their sovereignty there, and forced the locals to swear allegiance to the British government. The more (in)famous diversion came in the form of British raids along the Chesapeake, to include burning Washington D.C., and attempting to repeat the same at Baltimore. The latter raid failed after the garrison at Ft. McHenry successfully resisted a two day bombardment on September 13 and 14.

In one sense these diversions, as well as other distractions, accomplished their mission. Prevost's force gathering in Montreal in late August faced almost token levels of American forces along Lake Champlain. Prevost's existing forces on the Niagara peninsula had bent, but had not broken, and even now (from August 1 to September 21) they were laying siege to the Americans at Fort Erie. His reinforcements were streaming in, and he successfully deceived the American high command into thinking he intended to attack into Lake Ontario (and especially toward the American naval yard at Sackett's Harbor). The American commander at Plattsburgh, Major General George Izard, doubted those intentions, but his superiors ordered him to march most of his army west, leaving behind the token force under Brigadier General

Alexander Macomb described earlier. Finally, Prevost had pushed through the rapid building of a full-sized frigate on Lake Champlain, the *Confiance* (31 long guns and 6 carronades—the latter were short range, large caliber guns, that were extremely useful in the narrow waters of the lakes). Prevost was confident that it immediately would establish British naval supremacy on the lake, and with it a truly decisive territorial bargaining chip.

He should have been right, but a divided command, rushed construction, a lack of transports, and an inspired American naval defense set the stage for ending the war. The British would be advancing into Clinton County, New York, a region scantily populated at best, home only to about seven people per square mile. A near-contemporary military writer in Europe suggested that an army without pre-positioned supplies could not feed itself from a population less than about ninety-one people per square mile. Clinton County's population produced neither the subsistence nor the roads adequate to the movement of a major force. Burgoyne had foundered in this same wilderness in 1777 with barely 7,000 men; Prevost was bringing 12,000. Although American smugglers in the region had been providing provisions to his smaller army in Montreal for some time, this larger mobile army required waterborne logistics and close cooperation with his naval forces. Unfortunately Prevost and the regional naval commander, Commodore James Lucas Yeo, did not get along, and their commands were literally divided. Yeo answered to the Admiralty in London, not to Prevost, and the Admiralty tasked him to "cooperate with" Prevost. They agreed on the necessity of a frigate to command the lake, but at several other points, especially the last minute change in command of the Lake Champlain fleet from Captain Peter Fisher to Captain George Downie, their inclinations clashed. Fisher had supervised the building of the *Confiance*, and then Yeo appointed Downie to command that ship and the lake fleet mere days prior to its launching. Worse, the *Confiance* was green in timber and crew. Her new captain barely had time to practice his gun crews (many pressed from the infantry) before he and his fleet were tasked to cover Prevost's march into New York. Lacking transports, the British infantry trudged south along the poor roads that paralleled the lake. One British officer reported during their march that the roads were "worse than you can imagine and many of our wagons are broken down—the road through the woods at Beatville [Beekmantown] is impassable therefore our only dependence is upon water communication." This conjoined land and water movement in a narrow corridor followed an entirely predictable path, a path for which the Americans could plan.

On the American side, Major General Izard had long anticipated a summer offensive of some kind, and he assumed that Plattsburgh would be the first stop in a British advance. Most of the town lay north of the Saranac River gorge, and could not be defended, but the river itself presented a fine line of defense, and Plattsburgh Bay was a complex, shoal-filled harbor from which an American naval force could bombard a marching British column while sheltered from the lake's weather. Izard dug in south of the river. Even better, the reports of the

construction of the *Confiance* led the U.S. secretary of the navy to speed carpenters and a shipbuilder to Vermont. There, within a remarkably short span, they built the sloop *Saratoga* (8 long guns, 18 carronades), the *Ticonderoga* (12 long guns, 5 carronades), the *Eagle* (8 long guns, 12 carronades), and rehabilitated 10 gunboats (oared ships with one gun each). Like the British ships, these ships, plus the extant *Preble* (7 long guns), had inexperienced crews, but their commander, Commodore Macdonough had had more time to train them and to consider his defensive position. Izard and Macdonough jointly formed their plans for the defense of the town, and were entirely in agreement on the necessary steps.

Unfortunately the War Department swallowed Prevost's feint and ordered Izard with most of his force to march west. Izard resisted and delayed, but in the end he departed Plattsburgh, leaving Macomb with 1,700 assorted regulars and orders to raise the militia. Macomb raised 700 New York men, and at the last minute 2,500 Vermont men crossed the lake, technically not "militia" (since they had crossed state lines), but volunteers in federal service.

The *Confiance* slipped off the stocks on August 25, and on September 1 Prevost marched across the border into New York. He hoped to win the population to him, and he carefully ordered that there be no plundering and that all provisions be paid for. Such care flew in the face of reports arriving that week about the burning of Washington. Prevost quickly pushed through the one American effort to slow his march north of Plattsburgh, moved into the town, and began seeking a way across the river, while the two sides commenced bombarding each other.

Macomb lacked the forces to defend the town north of the river, but feeling the "eyes of America" upon him, he also felt he could not retreat further south. The river had only two bridges, and Macomb could cooperate more easily with his own naval forces while beside the bay. Meanwhile Macdonough moved his fleet into an anchorage designed to cover the American position at Plattsburgh, while also forcing the longer-gunned British fleet to enter the bay almost already in range of his shorter guns and having to approach him head on—the worst possible position for a ship in the age of sail.

From Prevost's perspective he had the Americans just where he wanted them. He had the main American force in front of him and prepared to do battle, and a presumably inferior American fleet locked up in the bay. Downie coordinated a plan with Prevost to simultaneously attack the American land and lake positions, the navy's guns to signal the start of the mutual attack. Prevost planned to hold the Americans' attention in central Plattsburgh while a flanking column marched three miles upstream to a more lightly guarded ford. Meanwhile Downie was to sail in and dominate the American fleet with his longer ranged broadside.

Instead, the British fleet rounded the Cumberland Head to enter the bay, with their bows facing the Americans' broadsides, and as they came around the head, their wind died, and they slowly drifted toward the American line, absorbing the blows first of the few American long guns, and then of their carronades, all while without being able to answer effectively in return. As the distance closed, the British ships finally turned and a brutal broadside to broadside combat ensued. The Americans fought from an anchored line, blocking the bay, and Downie had sailed in to concentrate the fire of *Confiance* and two other smaller ships first on the *Eagle* and then the *Saratoga*. Within the first fifteen minutes of fighting an American shot dismounted a British cannon, which flew into Downie's chest and killed him. Damaged, but continuing to fight, the *Confiance's* heavier broadsides poured into the *Saratoga*, and nearly evened the game by taking out virtually all of the guns on one side. Macdonough then used his pre-set kedge anchors to spin his ship around in place and bring his other broadside to bear. The *Confiance* attempted the same maneuver, but lacking Macdonough's careful pre-battle preparations, she became fouled, and struck her colors at 10:30 a.m. The smaller British ships either grounded or surrendered, while the gunboats fled.

Without a covering fleet, the British land advance was probably doomed, but matters were made worse by a failure to properly coordinate the timing of the two attacks. Downie commenced the fleet attack between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m., but Prevost's flanking column was under orders not to attack before 10:00 a.m. By that time the British fleet was on the verge of defeat, and as Prevost realized that his fleet was fleeing or captured, he recalled his til-then successfully advancing flank attack. Prevost almost immediately began a wholesale retreat, covered by a heavy rain (Macomb lacked the forces to pursue at any rate). Prevost had been steadily stockpiling stores, especially artillery ammunition, and now he lacked the transport to bring them back to Canada. One artillery officer complained that "Several Wagons & Carts from being Overloaded (in order to remove as much as possible) and the extreme badness of the Roads broke down, leaving no alternative but to destroy them and their Contents." As for the retreat itself, Prevost later explained to Bathurst, "Your Lordship must have been aware . . . that no Offensive Operations could be carried out within the Enemy's Territory for the destruction of his Naval Establishments without Naval Support. … The disastrous and unlooked for result of the Naval Contest … rendered a perserverance in the attack of the Enemy's position highly imprudent as well as hazardous." Prevost also blamed the poor state of the roads and the growing threat of a militia "raising En Masse around me, desertion increasing & the Supply of Provisions Scanty." Without "the advantage of water conveyance" both problems were insoluble.

The Battles of Plattsburgh, on land and lake, generated relatively few casualties, and represented only one campaign among many that summer and fall of 1814. Furthermore, the British had one more major campaign already under way against Mobile and New Orleans.

Plattsburgh, nevertheless, was the key to ending the war. In the competition for territorial bargaining chips the British accession of forces that summer seemed to have given them the advantage. In August, as the British summer offensives were getting under way, the British commissioners offered terms about which the American peace commissioner Henry Clay could only say "the prospect of peace has vanished. … It would be offering an unpardonable insult to our Government to ask of them any instructions [regarding those terms]." Plattsburgh made the difference, although other American defensive efforts contributed—especially the defense of Baltimore. The British had not exactly put all their effort into one roll of the dice at Plattsburgh, but it had been their main effort, and it had been the one *designed* to acquire that territorial bargaining chip needed to tilt the peace talks to their advantage. Henry Goulburn, one of the British peace commissioners, agreed: "If we had either burnt Baltimore or held Plattsburgh, I believe we could have had peace on our terms." Once the British recognized the failure of their main effort, the negotiations began to make real progress, and the two nations' representatives signed the treaty of Ghent on December 24, 1814. The Battle of New Orleans occurred in January 1815, but before the news of the treaty arrived in North America and it had no effect on its terms.

Further Reading

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CRISIS, CONTINENTAL EXPANSION, AND EMPIRE

Chapter 8:

What American Students Need to Know about the Mexican War

By Paul Springer

Perhaps the most important concept of the Mexican War that needs to be communicated to students today is simply that it occurred at all. The Mexican War has long been overshadowed by the American Civil War, which involved many of the same key figures and of course occurred on American soil, with devastating impact upon the entire populace. Even when students are aware that a war was fought between the United States and Mexico, it is often irrevocably linked with the Alamo and the Texas War of Independence, despite the separation of the two conflicts by a decade.

While I would not argue that it should receive equal coverage to the Civil War, the Mexican War is worthy of study in its own right. It represented many key military firsts for the United States, each with long-lasting ramifications. It was the first conflict fought entirely on enemy soil, the first war of open conquest, and it included the first occupation of a subjugated enemy. It was the first American war that included graduates of the United States Military Academy as a major component of the officers' ranks, though they certainly did not hold the highest leadership positions. On a related noted, it was the first significant military action for many of the key leaders of the Civil War, who absorbed its lessons and sought to apply them in the later conflict, often with disastrous results.

For the modern student, or the instructor who likes to draw modern parallels with past events, there are many similarities between the Mexican War and the current war in Iraq. Both conflicts included an invasion of enemy territory, where American expeditionary forces faced a numerically superior enemy. In each war, the United States dispatched mixed forces consisting of regulars already serving in the army and wartime volunteers. In Mexico, militia forces played a substantial role, often in the same function as that performed by National Guard and Army Reserves in Iraq. American forces utilized superior technology in Mexico, in the form of better field artillery and units armed with rifles. Likewise, the 2003 invasion of Iraq involved the most technologically advanced military force ever fielded. Poor logistical planning, particularly for combat in a desert environment, plagued each invasion. Both wars included a campaign to capture the enemy capital, which remained under American occupation for a significant period of time. On each campaign, and during each occupation, American forces faced guerrilla units engaging in harassing attacks on supply convoys and isolated outposts. Each war lasted considerably longer than originally expected, due in part to the dissolution of

the enemy government, which prevented any formal surrender to American forces. Finally, during the period leading up to each conflict, American leaders pursued diplomatic approaches to head off other potential conflicts that otherwise simultaneously occur. In the 1840s, this involved solving the question of ownership of the Oregon Territory before it could provoke the third war with Great Britain in less than a century. In the twenty-first century, this included overtures, some conciliatory, some threatening, to other potential belligerents, including Iran and North Korea.

The Mexican War offers a unique opportunity to present the divisions of American politics in the era preceding the Civil War. It offers many intriguing questions that demonstrate the growing sectionalism within the United States, and offers an interesting way to present the continual dialogue over the expansion, retention, or abolition of slavery. Who proposed declaring war upon Mexico, and what did they hope to gain from the conflict? Who opposed the war, and on what grounds? How did the goals of the conflict change as the war stretched beyond a single campaign season? All of these concepts are complex, yet they are also answerable with careful study. Studying the Mexican War also an excellent way to examine the inherent problems associated with beginning a conflict without having clear national aims, and with radically altering strategy in the middle of a war. From a geopolitical standpoint, the ramifications of the war remain relevant today.

Any study of the Mexican War should begin with a clear understanding of the key concepts of the conflict, and unfortunately, in this regard, most American textbooks do a poor job of examining the events. Most textbooks characterize the Mexican War as a land grab by the United States, driven by greedy Southern slaveholders anxious to expand the territory available for chattel slavery. This oversimplified approach is surprising, given the vital relationship between the two nations in the modern world. It is also unfortunate, in that many of these works discuss the context of the war, but not the actual conflict. In truth, the Mexican War was the deadliest war in American history when measured by casualties as a percentage of combatants. Fully 20 percent of American soldiers who fought in Mexico died there, but only one-tenth of the casualties occurred on the battlefield, and thus this war is often treated as almost bloodless when compared to the Civil War's tremendous cost in lives. The vast majority of American casualties in Mexico involved infectious diseases, many of them treatable or preventable. The horrendous mortality rate stimulated the development of military medical systems, and highlighted the need for discipline and proper hygiene within the military.

The Mexican War should also be considered in the light of the conflict that did not occur, namely, a war with Britain over possession of the Oregon Country. During the 1844 presidential contest, the Democratic Party platform called for territorial expansion to the

Pacific Ocean, following the concept of "Manifest Destiny." This platform also called for the immediate annexation of Texas, an action that had been rejected by the three preceding administrations. When James K. Polk became the first dark-horse candidate to win a presidential election, he dispatched emissaries to Mexico in the hope of purchasing the land between Texas and the Pacific Ocean, but such entreaties were firmly rebuffed by the Mexican government, which skeptically viewed American intentions toward Texas. In settling the Oregon dispute, the Polk administration never seriously considered provoking a war with Great Britain, despite the cries of some partisans that the United States should claim ownership beyond the 54th parallel. The cry of "54º40′ or fight!" called for conquest of the entire disputed zone, but cooler heads prevailed, and the simple solution of extending the Treaty of 1818's line at the 49th parallel presented a fair compromise. If the diplomatic relationship with Great Britain was marked by logic and an equitable outcome, the Polk administration's approach to Mexico was quite the opposite, appearing almost calculated to provoke a war.

Despite repeated warnings that Mexico still considered Texas a renegade province, and would regard any annexation of Texan territory tantamount to an act of war, the Polk administration quickly moved to not only admit Texas as a state, but to defend it against any potential Mexican aggression. Mexico and the Republic of Texas had never formally agreed to the border between their territories, with Mexico insisting that the border was at the Rio Nueces, near San Antonio, and Texas claiming land to the Rio Grande, near Corpus Christi. Naturally, Polk supported the Texan contention, and to back the newly-admitted American territory, he dispatched Major General Zachary Taylor and a small army to the north bank of the Rio Grande. At the same time, Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande, intent upon defending their version of the border at the Nueces. Each side interpreted the other's movement as an invasion of sovereign territory, and when the two forces blundered into one another, each could claim it had shed blood defending its own soil from an invader. For both sides of the war, therefore, it was at least nominally a defensive fight, provoked by the enemy.

American strategists at the beginning of the conflict made a fundamental mistake: assuming that the enemy would see the situation in the same way as American commanders. Specifically, Polk, Taylor, and General-in-Chief Winfield Scott all believed that a victory over Mexico should be fairly simple and would not require a significant investment of time, troops, or treasure. A blockade would strangle Mexican commerce and protect American shipping, while an invasion of Mexican territory south and west of Texas would demonstrate American resolve. Economic factors, coupled with the hopelessness of the military situation, would quickly compel Mexico to surrender to avoid further destruction. Of course, Mexico did not view the situation in the same way. Mexican commanders expected to fight a defensive struggle, using a professional army that outnumbered the American regulars by a factor of

three to one. European observers agreed with the Mexicans, and believed the United States stood little chance of prosecuting a war on Mexican soil.

While the Mexican Army outnumbered the U.S. Regulars at the outset of the war, the American forces were soon augmented by thousands of volunteers. These untrained soldiers tended to be undisciplined and poorly supplied, but the leadership of the American force performed with distinction. Scott and Taylor, the two ranking officers in the U.S. Army had similar experiences, both had fought in the War of 1812, the Black Hawk War, and the Seminole Wars. In temperament and leadership style, they personified the dual nature of the American Army. Taylor, dubbed "Old Rough and Ready" by his soldiers, cared little for drill and polish, but stood ready for combat at a moment's notice. He had adopted many of the habits of the frontier troops under his command, and his campaigns were characterized by extremely aggressive operational maneuvers and a preference for the tactical defensive. In contrast, Winfield Scott, called "Old Fuss and Feathers," was noted for his insistence upon proper discipline and appearance within the ranks. He adopted a more methodical approach to warfare, conducting a traditional siege of Veracruz, and moving directly inland toward the capital, Mexico City.

Taylor's advance onto what was unquestionably Mexican soil commenced in the summer and autumn of 1846. Taylor reasoned that the capture of Monterrey, the second largest city in Mexico, would compel Santa Anna to renounce any claims to the disputed region. Monterrey was defended by 7,500 troops and several dozen artillery pieces, while Taylor commanded a force of only 6,200 and no heavy guns. Rather than settling into a traditional siege, Taylor divided his forces, planning to simultaneously attack from east and west. Had the Mexican commander of the city's garrison, Pedro de Ampudia, been more gifted, Taylor's army might have been defeated in detail. Instead, Ampudia decided that he could not hold the city, and he petitioned for an armistice. Taylor agreed to take possession of the city after allowing the Mexican forces to march out intact, infuriating President Polk, who thought the American general should have somehow captured or destroyed the defending army. He ordered Taylor to renege upon the deal, but Taylor ignored the order and allowed the Mexican garrison to withdraw.

While Taylor marched on Monterrey, small bands of American cavalry began to advance into and through modern New Mexico, Arizona, and California. These units met little resistance, and essentially captured the territories without a fight, primarily by showing the American flag and announcing victory. After these conquests, these groups moved to join Taylor's forces in Northern Mexico, anticipating an advance upon Mexico City. American units had secured the Texas, New Mexico, and California regions, established a successful blockade of the Mexican

coast, and moved an army into Mexico to occupy a major city. The one objective they had not achieved was convincing the Mexican government to sue for peace terms.

Mexico had no intention of giving up half its territory, and in early 1847, Santa Anna embarked upon a plan to drive the invaders out. He learned that Polk had ordered Scott to attack Veracruz from the sea, with the intent of marching directly upon the capital. To avoid the yellow fever season, Scott needed the invasion to begin early in the spring, and thus he could not await new volunteers to be trained and shipped to the theater. Accordingly, he removed more than half of Taylor's force, including most of the battle veterans, in anticipation of the campaign season. To take advantage of Taylor's weakness, Santa Anna marched an army of 15,000 troops through 300 miles of desert, planning to reoccupy Monterrey and destroy the invaders. Since the capture of the city, Taylor had done little to secure his position, and he was quite surprised to receive a surrender demand on February 23, 1847. He refused the demand, and despite being outnumbered more than three to one, took 4,500 green troops into combat against seasoned Mexican regulars.

Rather than remaining on the operational defensive, Taylor moved his unit to Buena Vista and hastily erected fieldworks. This provided the advantage of fighting a defensive battle in very rough terrain. Remarkably, his troops fought like veterans, making up for numbers with superior technology. Taylor's field artillery units moved their guns to within one hundred yards of the enemy, firing canister rounds at point-blank range into densely-packed Mexican infantry. A unit of American sharpshooters armed with rifles devastated the enemy leadership, particularly mounted officers, the superior range of the rifles allowed accurate fire more than 300 yards. The Mexican army, after inflicting heavy casualties but absorbing even more, panicked and fled the field, leaving behind thousands of comrades to be captured. Santa Anna had failed to dislodge Taylor, and had allowed Scott a free hand in preparing to besiege Veracruz.

On March 9, 1847, ten thousand American soldiers and marines conducted an unopposed amphibious landing outside Veracruz. They quickly moved into positions to besiege the city, while the U.S. Navy began to shell the harbor defenses. After three weeks, the city capitulated, allowing Scott control of the port facilities to resupply his army. Knowing that the onset of fever season loomed, Scott ordered his forces to move inland, maintaining a supply line to the coast. Although he was able to move most of his combat troops away from the lowlands, a significant portion of Scott's army remained on garrison duty, and proved extremely susceptible to tropical diseases. Malaria and yellow fever spread through the American army, decimating the forces.

With both Monterrey and Veracruz in American hands, it is possible that Polk expected Santa Anna to capitulate. Instead, the Mexican general marched his army back to Mexico City, and shifted his attention to halting Scott's advance. Knowing that Scott would follow the National Highway into the Mexican interior, Santa Anna established blocking positions at a rocky gap named Cerro Gordo. He hoped to lure Scott into an ambush, attacking the American column as it moved through a narrow defile. However, at Cerro Gordo, Captain Robert E. Lee scouted a route around the enemy positions. By leading troops in a flanking movement across extremely rough terrain, Lee reversed the trap. American soldiers opened enfilading fire upon the Mexican positions, routing their numerically superior army and driving Santa Anna back into the capital.

At almost the moment of Scott's triumph, he faced a new tribulation. Approximately one-third of his volunteers had reached the end of their enlistments, and refused to remain with the invading force. He had no choice but to allow their departure, leaving him dangerously short of troops. To augment his field force, Scott made the precipitous decision to abandon his supply lines and drive directly upon the capital while calling for reinforcements from the continental United States.

In August, 1847, Scott advanced upon Mexico City from the south, leading an army of nearly 11,000. He faced a combined Mexican garrison of more than 25,000 who had moved into fortified positions astride the approaches to the city. However, Scott compensated for his lack of numbers with the skillful use of large artillery pieces, battering holes in the defensive positions at Contreras and Churubusco. In the two battles, Mexican casualties topped 10,000, in contrast, American losses totaled only 1,000 troops. Out of fear that the Americans might assault the city from multiple directions, Santa Anna could not concentrate all of his forces out of a single location. By dividing his units, he opened his army to defeat in detail.

In desperation, Santa Anna offered an armistice, which Scott perceived as the precursor to a peace negotiation. In reality, Santa Anna used the respite to reform his army and renew his defenses. Scott's response was to renew the assault, launching the battles of Molino del Rey on September 11 and Chapultepec on September 12-13. Once again, artillery smashed through the fixed defenses, opening gaps for advancing infantry columns. On September 14, American troops entered Mexico City and commenced an occupation of the capital. Amazingly, this did not provoke a surrender, Mexican forces continued to resist American control, particularly in the countryside.

In the United States, a faction of Polk's cabinet began to push for the complete subjugation and assimilation of Mexico. In April, 1847, Polk had dispatched Nicholas Trist to negotiate with the Mexican government to end the war. Five months later, Trist still awaited a sign that

any national authority was willing to negotiate. By the time Scott captured the capital, there simply was no national government left to capitulate. Scott became the de facto dictator of Mexico, working to restore order and civil services within the capital, while Trist sought any diplomatic overtures. Frustrated with the rising costs of the war, Polk ordered Trist to cease any negotiations and return to the United States.

Fortunately, Trist ignored the president's order and finalized negotiations with the newly-constituted government of Mexico. On February 2, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, ceding the modern southwest to the United States in exchange for approximately $18 million. Virtually no American politician embraced the treaty, some wanted more land, some less, and many thought Trist had no right to negotiate after his recall. Naturally, with nobody truly satisfied, the Senate ratified the document with minimal hindrance, formally ending the state of war.

The war had far-reaching consequences upon the American military. The Navy had successfully blockaded a massive enemy coastline, capturing and holding supply bases upon its length to support operations. The Army had engaged in a war of conquest over more than one million square kilometers, holding the major cities of Mexico and winning every significant engagement. Many of the most prominent American Civil War commanders, Union and Confederate, saw service in the war, and incorporated its lessons into their decision-making in the later conflict. A significant portion of these officers represented a new breed of professional in the American military, the West Point graduate. As Winfield Scott later stated, and thousands of new cadets have subsequently memorized,

> "I give it as my fixed opinion, that but for our graduated cadets, the war between the United States and Mexico might, and probably would have lasted some four or five years, with, in its first half, more defeats than victories falling to our share; whereas, in less than two campaigns, we conquered a great country and a peace, without the loss of a single battle or skirmish."

The war was the first successful war of conquest on foreign soil for the United States, but it was also the deadliest war in American history, as a percentage of forces engaged. Almost 15,000 troops died, though less than 1,500 died in battle or as a result of wounds. The results of the war opened a vast territory for the expansion of slavery, and the California petition for statehood in 1850 created the necessary conditions to overturn the Missouri Compromise, unbalance the Senate, and hasten onset of the Civil War.

The ramifications of the war are still felt today, particularly with the current hot-button political issue of immigration from Mexico. The war's effects are felt on both sides of the border, for decades, the so-called *reconquista* movement has argued that through immigration,

native peoples can reclaim the American southwest from European-descended dominance. For modern students to understand the current geopolitical climate of North America, it is absolutely vital that they understand the causes and results of the Mexican War on its own merits, not solely as a precursor of the American Civil War.

Chapter 9:

The Not So Decisive Battle of Gettysburg

By Mark Grimsley

Practically anyone who ever heard of the battle of Gettysburg, fought on July 1-3, 1863, believes that it was the turning point of the Civil War. There are any number of testaments to this, some serious, some whimsical. At one end of the spectrum is the National Park Service battlefield brochure, for example, states unequivocally, "The Battle of Gettysburg was a turning point in the Civil War, the Union victory that ended General Robert E. Lee's second and most ambitious invasion of the North." At the other end is the Adams County (Pennsylvania) Winery's homage *Turning Point* wine—which is touted as "a smooth red wine is an excellent accompaniment to red meats and other hearty fare."

Another standard description terms Gettysburg the high water mark of the Confederate military effort. A huge bronze tablet at the aiming point of Pickett's Charge lists each unit that the attack or repulse, with "High Water Mark" prominently displayed in the upper left-hand corner. A Google search for "gettysburg high water mark" yields over 200,000 results. Moreover, 51,000 soldiers became casualties at Gettysburg, making it the largest battle ever fought on the North American continent.

Calling Gettysburg a turning point or a high water mark certainly makes it sound like a decisive battle—indeed, a battle so decisive that it ensured eventual Union victory. But it did not. General Ulysses S. Grant's triumphant siege of Vicksburg bagged an entire Confederate army—some 31,000 prisoners—just one day after Gettysburg has a far better claim to that distinction, as does his victory at the battle of Chattanooga in November 1863. Two major Civil War historians—Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones—speak of the "symphony of Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga" as the collective turning point of the Civil War, and most serious students of the war would agree.

In this essay I want to sketch the reasons why we should not be too quick to consider Gettysburg a turning point of the Civil War, yet at the same time to make the case that it *was* decisive, so that if you quaff another product of the Adams County Winery, *Tears of Gettysburg,* you can do so without weeping tears of disillusionment.

The National Park Service is quite correct in asserting that the battle repelled Confederate general Robert E. Lee's second invasion of the North (the first had been the Antietam Campaign in September 1862). Lee had coveted the opportunity to invade the North even before he took command of the Army of Northern Virginia in June 1862, believing as he did that the Confederacy's best chance to win the war was to do so quickly, before the North could maximize its formidable material advantages. Lee also understood that North's Achilles' heel was public opinion, and that a decisive victory on Northern soil would go far toward convincing the Northern population to concede Confederate independence. Moreover, a

campaign on Northern soil would shift the burden of war from Virginia, enabling his army to supply itself from bountiful Northern farms. And finally, Lee simply believed in the offensive. He refused to concede the initiative to the enemy if he could possibly help it.

Lee's victory at Chancellorsville in early May 1863—often considered his greatest triumph—extinguished the Union Army of the Potomac's spring offensive and handed Lee the initiative. It also gave the Confederate government two options. The first was to do as Lee desired and unleash him to invade the North. But the second was to transfer a major portion of his army to repel Grant's army which had just begun its seven-week siege of Vicksburg. After a conference with President Jefferson Davis and other senior leaders, Lee won the day, and on June 3 began shifting his army from the vicinity of Fredericksburg, Virginia, toward the Shenandoah Valley. Twelve days later the first Confederate forces crossed the Potomac River into western Maryland. The entire army—some 65,000 troops—soon followed. They quickly entered Pennsylvania and fanned out over a wide swath of its agriculturally rich Cumberland Valley, politely but thoroughly plundering much of its produce. A few Confederate cavalry units also scooped up several hundred African Americans, on the dubious theory that all of them were escaped slaves, and sent them into captivity.

By June 28 Lee's army stretched from Chambersburg to the gates of Harrisburg, a distance of over fifty miles. Somewhere to the south he knew that the Army of the Potomac must be on its way to engage him, but Major General J.E.B. Stuart, his trusted cavalry chief, had reported nothing and Lee assumed his adversary had not yet crossed its namesake river. In point of fact, Stuart had made a disastrous decision to attempt to reach Pennsylvania by passing east of the Union army, and as that army advanced it blocked Stuart from sending word of the situation to Lee. Only on the 28th did Lee receive the alarming news that Union troops were well into Maryland and nearing the Mason-Dixon Line. That meant he had to concentrate his army, and fast.

Even a cursory examination of a map showed Gettysburg to be the perfect place to unite his army. Eleven roads radiated from the market town like the spokes of a wheel, and several obligingly led to all the locations of the elements of Lee's army. Lee therefore gave orders for everyone to concentrate either at Gettysburg or Cashtown, a tiny hamlet a few miles west of the town.

On the same day that Lee received the unwelcome news of the Union army's location, he learned that that army had a new commander, Major General George Gordon Meade, who was quite suddenly placed in charge of the army when the Lincoln administration became exasperated with his predecessor, Major General Joseph Hooker. The pre-war U.S. Army officer corps was a small fraternity and Lee knew that Meade was a Pennsylvanian and would therefore be familiar with the terrain. He also knew enough of Meade's ability to predict that Meade would prove careful and competent and would make no major mistakes.

Meade's instructions from Washington assigned him two tasks. The first was to use his 90,000 troops to find and fight Lee's army. The second was to shield the national capital. If Lee did not know Meade's exact location, Meade knew Lee's only in general outline, and neither expected a major battle at Gettysburg. Yet like Lee's forces, Meade's were also converging on

that town.

The battle of Gettysburg began at 7 a.m. on July 1, when a rebel infantry division under Major General Harry Heth advanced on the town and encountered what he thought was local militia. It was in fact a tough Union cavalry division under Brigadier General John Buford. Heth was just beginning to realize that fact when the Union First Corps arrived on the scene, commanded by Major General John Reynolds. Reynolds was shot dead within minutes, but not before he had made the fateful decision to hold the Gettysburg road junction. The First Corps deployed facing west, soon joined by the Eleventh Corps under Major General Oliver Howard, which deployed facing north to dispute Confederate Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell's Second Corps, known to be approaching from that direction. From midday through midafternoon the two sides battled it out on the ridges and in the woodlands north and west of Gettysburg, with the Confederates managing to build up strength faster than their Union counterparts.

Eventually both Union corps had to fall back through Gettysburg, with their battered remnants rallying on an eminence just south of town known locally as Cemetery Hill. Howard, in one of the wisest decisions of the battle, had recognized the hill as key terrain and had assigned the better part of a division to defend it. That decision enabled the Union army to make a stand at Gettysburg, a choice confirmed when Major General Winfield Scott Hancock arrived on the scene and agreed that Cemetery Hill offered a strong anchor for defense.

Although irritated that Heth had blundered into a major battle—Lee had specifically forbidden this until the whole army had united—the fortuitous victory on July 1 convinced Lee that Gettysburg was also a good place to fight. The veteran commander of his First Corps, Lieutenant General James Longstreet, was not so sure. Rather than attack the Union army now massing on Culp's Hill east of Cemetery Hill and on Cemetery Ridge that stretched to the south, he urged Lee to maneuver in an attempt to get between Meade's army and Washington, thereby forcing Meade to fight at a disadvantage. With momentum on his side and almost no idea of what might lie south of Gettysburg, however, Lee insisted that the offensive must be renewed on July 2. Longstreet received orders to take two divisions and move them in secret so as to assault the Union left flank.

It took most of July 2 for Longstreet to get into position, and when he did he discovered that the Union left flank was nowhere near where intelligence reports had placed it. Instead, it was rather bizarrely located along the Emmetsburg Road, the main thoroughfare leading south from Gettysburg, and nearly a mile in advance of the remainder of Meade's army. Although Longstreet could not know it, this situation owed itself to Major General Daniel E. Sickles, commander of the Union Third Corps, who disliked his assigned position at the lowest fringe of Cemetery Ridge—indeed, it was barely a ridge at that point—and decided to seize the higher ground along Emmetsburg Road and a rocky eminence called Houck's Ridge.

He did so without consulting Meade, who furiously rode down to find Sickles and demand an explanation. Sickles pointed out the higher ground he now occupied. Meade conceded that it was in some ways a better position than the one he had been assigned, but acidly observed that if Sickles had continued west he would find higher ground all the way to the horizon. Higher

ground in no way trumped the need to remain connected to the rest of the army. Sickles offered to withdraw, but at that moment the boom of artillery announced Longstreet's attack. There was no time to safely retreat. Meade instructed Sickles to hold his ground; Meade would gather reinforcements to shore up Sickles' position.

From roughly 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Longstreet's troops savaged Sickles' Corps and many of the units Meade sent to shore up his left flank, but the Union army managed to hold on. It also repelled an evening attack by Ewell against East Cemetery Hill, leaving Lee with the choice of retreating, maneuvering, or renewing the attack for a third day. Lee unhesitatingly chose the latter course.

Late in the evening Stuart's cavalry finally arrived, having been forced to ride completely around the Union army to at last get into proper position. Lee gave Stuart instructions to try and get into the Union rear and wreak havoc on Meade's supply trains while Confederate infantry launched attacks aimed at pinching off Cemetery Hill, with one attack emanating from the lower slopes of Culp's Hill and the other, larger attack emanating from Seminary Ridge southwest of Gettysburg.

The Culp's Hill attack jumped off early on the morning of July 3 and got exactly nowhere. Stuart fared no better: Union cavalry intercepted his force two miles east of town. That left the Seminary Ridge attack, a frontal assault against Hancock's Union Second Corps which occupied Cemetery Ridge and protected the left flank of Cemetery Hill. Lee gave Longstreet responsibility for the attack, gathered nearly 15,000 troops to carry it out, and preceded it with the heaviest artillery bombardment ever on American soil. But although two and a half divisions participated in the attack, and it could accurately be called Longstreet's Assault, the muse of history bestowed the attack with the name of the officer commanding a single division of Virginians: Major General George E. Pickett.

If Gettysburg was the high water mark of the Civil War, then Pickett's Charge was the high water mark of Gettysburg. It failed, of course, and Lee had no choice but to retreat. In three days of fighting he had lost some 20,000 men, almost a third of his army, but Meade's army was battered almost as badly and when Meade pursued he did so cautiously, prudently, mindful of his own losses and aware that Lee was still a very dangerous opponent.

To cut to the chase, Lee got safely back to Virginia. The war continued for another twenty months, with Lee successfully staving off the Army of the Potomac for that entire time. In the Union owed its victory far more to the western theater troops under Major General William T. Sherman than it did the Army of the Potomac.

So what, then, made Gettysburg decisive? Decisive battles *decide* things. Gettysburg decided nothing.

Except.

Except that decisions can be negative as well as positive, and Gettysburg was decisive in a negative sense. Meade deserves credit for fighting a successful defensive battle, but defense was

about all he did. During Lee's retreat he had a good chance to trap the Army of Northern Virginia against the rain-swollen Potomac River, but a forbidding line of field fortifications gave Meade just enough pause to delay an attack until Lee was able to slip across the river on July 14. Historians are divided about this outcome. Many, like a bitterly disappointed President Lincoln, believe that if Meade had behaved more aggressively he could have destroyed Lee's army and that such a victory, in combination with Grant's triumph at Vicksburg, would have ended the rebellion. A few—myself included—believe that an attack on those fortifications would likely have failed, yielding nothing but casualties.

What most historians overlook is that Meade had an excellent chance of destroying Lee's army on July 3. Amateur opinion has long held that an immediate counterattack by Hancock's corps would have routed the Confederates reeling from Pickett's Charge. This is unlikely. In the summer of 2008, on a staff ride of the battlefield, General John Abizaid forcefully told the participants that this was absurd. Major combat disrupts units and exhausts the survivors, who are furthermore in a state of shock from the peril just endured and the sight of dead and wounded all around them. No, if Meade were to counterattack he would have had to do it with fresh troops.

I was among several staff ride leaders on hand when General Abizaid made his observation, and I was also on hand to hear a bemused French businessman opine that if at Gettysburg Lee's strategic vision became blurred—as we staff ride leaders all insisted had been the case—then the same applied to Meade. The other staff ride leaders demurred. Meade, they said, had achieved his strategic vision. He had defeated Lee's army and he had shielded Washington. But thanks to a foreign businessman largely innocent of any knowledge of the Civil War, I suddenly realized that there was a third mission implicit in Meade's assignment—the destruction of Lee's army—and that Meade in fact had had the instrument of that destruction available.

Although most of his army had been battered in combat, Meade still had thousands of fresh troops on hand, the Sixth Corps under Major General John Sedgwick, one of the largest and most experienced in the Army of the Potomac. Meade could have held that corps intact with the intention of exploiting any opportunity for a counterattack. Moreover, Meade is known to have predicted that Lee would strike his center on July 3, and thus had a very good idea of the nature of the opportunity. Yet instead, Meade chose to disperse the Sixth Corps, sending parts of it to buttress various parts of his line and parking three entire brigades far in the rear, facing south against the vanishingly small chance that Confederates might somewhere materialize from that direction. Visitors to the battlefield will therefore spy monuments bearing the Greek Cross, emblem of the Sixth Corps, scattered through the Union battle line or in out of the way places, one of them so obscure it is surrounded by private property and commonly called "Lost Lane." The monuments silently attest to the sense in which Gettysburg was decisive: it ensured that the war would continue.

Chapter 10:

The Social Dimensions of the U.S. Civil War

By Mark Grimsley

In 1989 an article appeared in the *Journal of American History* that asked rhetorically, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War?" It observed that when historians analyzed social developments within the United States, they tended to focus on pre-Civil War America or the post-Civil War period. The Civil War itself was considered a sort of watershed, vaguely important but not well studied in its own right. Actually this bit of hand wringing was overblown, for historians of Civil War soldiers had been doing social history--much of it of a high order--for decades. In the years since, the social history of the Civil War era has exploded. We have new studies of the war's effects on white Northern women, white Southern women, Northern white laborers, and even children. Of particular importance, we have rich new studies of the social impact of emancipation upon African Americans. The experience of Civil War soldiers, though, still provides an excellent window into many of these social issues.

Manpower

A good place to begin is by looking at the three main manpower pools from which Civil War armies drew most of their strength: white volunteers, African American volunteers, and white conscripts. In 1861-62, both the Union and Confederate forces were almost exclusively of white volunteers. African Americans offered their military services to the North, only to be spurned on the basis that this was "a white man's war." A few African Americans offered their services to the Confederacy, but with the exception of the Louisiana Native Guards, a militia unit composed of well-to-do Blacks living in New Orleans, these offers were also spurned (although for propaganda purposes Southern newspapers sometimes trumpeted the offers themselves). Even the Native Guards were used as window dressing. They could participate in parades but were not allowed to perform any significant military duty, not even the guarding of Union prisoners of war. Small wonder that after the Union capture of New Orleans in April 1862, the Native Guards switched sides, and became a Union regiment for the rest of the war.

Beginning in July 1862, and expanding rapidly after the issuance of the final Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, the North actively began recruiting African American troops. Eventually some 186,000 Blacks served in the Union ranks and by 1865 comprised about 10 percent of the Union army. But with almost no exceptions, these regiments of U.S. Colored Troops were officered by whites. In late 1864 the Confederate government belatedly began

exploring the possibility of recruiting and arming Black troops, but this experiment came to little before the war ended in spring 1865.

Finally, both sides resorted to conscription--the first time in U.S. history this had been done. In the Confederacy, beginning in April 1862, conscription was accomplished more or less directly. In the North, conscription was mainly a threat, a resort to be implemented if Northern communities failed to provide their quota of volunteers. This resulted in such expedients as the payment of bonuses, called bounties, to each recruit who joined the colors. While many of these "bounty men" fought well, as a group they had a poor reputation, and the bounty jumper--a man who enlisted to collect the bounty, then deserted, then enlisted elsewhere to collect another bounty--was a common phenomenon.

Actual recruitment of white troops in 1861-62 took place at the local level. The national government lacked the administrative authority and span of control to do this on its own, so it assigned quotas to the states. Most of the actual recruitment occurred at the community level, with community leaders relying upon a variant of the sort of civic associations that commonly had been used to spearhead reform movements during the antebellum period. Typically a local community leader would announce that he was raising a company of troops; that is, about 100 men. If he had sufficient standing and leadership ability, he soon got them. Because of the liberal use of alcoholic beverages in the process, and because the troops then elected him captain, he was sometimes called the "beer captain." Once companies were raised, the state governor organized ten of them into a regiment and placed it under command of a colonel. At that point, the governor handed control of the regiment over to the federal government. Some colonels were veterans of military service in the Regular Army or the War with Mexico--Ulysses S. Grant, for example, began as a colonel of an Illinois regiment. But many owed their rank purely to political connections and to the widespread assumption that the same qualities of character, patriotism, civic-mindedness, and leadership that made for success in civilian life would also make for success in military life.

This assumption was so widespread that it was common for politicians to become generals. Nathaniel P. Banks had been Speaker of the House before the Civil War broke out. Such "political generals" often displayed limited combat skill and therefore have a poor reputation today, but in fact many served effectively in other ways. They frequently had greater interest and expertise in the issues of emancipation, military occupation, and wartime reconstruction. Banks, for instance, played a pivotal role in Louisiana, and ultimately did more than any single individual to recreate a loyal state government there by 1864.

Why did soldiers enlist? Until a couple of decades ago, most responses emphasized defense of homeland, particularly among Southerners; the call of adventure; and the widespread belief that war was the ultimate test of manhood. Certainly an important factor that motivated

many Civil War soldiers to endure the terrors of combat was the knowledge that they served alongside men from their own community. A man who shirked his duty in battle literally could not go home again. Whatever the emphasis, these interpretations downplayed the importance of political motivations. In *Embattled Courage* (1989), for example, Gerald F. Linderman argues that courage was the preeminent ethos for both Northern and Southern volunteers. To the Civil War generation, courage meant not just bravery but a constellation of values involving "manliness, godliness, duty, honor, and knightliness."

Beginning in the mid-1990s, however, a number of historians began registering a strong dissent from this view. Noting that Civil War soldiers came from one of the most politically active and aware societies then in existence--voter participant rates of 80 percent were common, and newspapers were little more than extended editorial pages--they emphasize the role of political ideology in motivating soldiers both to enlist and to remain in the ranks despite years of hardship, disease, and death. The foremost proponent of this viewpoint is James M. McPherson. In two books--*What They Fought For, 1861-1865* (1994) and *For Cause and Comrades* (which won the Lincoln Prize in 1998)--McPherson reports the result of having studied literally thousands of letters and diaries kept by Union and Confederate soldiers, and notes the frequency with which they express strong political sentiments as validating their military sacrifice. Northern soldiers understood that they were fighting to defend a noble experiment in republican self-government that might perish if the country were permanently disunited. Southern soldiers also fought for a vision of republican government, but one predicated on the assumption that, as in Roman times, slavery must undergird any successful republic.

Black Military Experience

Central to any study of the social dimensions of the Civil War is the impact of emancipation. War has a way of exerting a breaking pressure on long-held societal institutions. The Civil War was no exception. From the outset, Blacks were deeply involved in the conflict. Their efforts buttressed the Confederate war economy and enabled a very high percentage of able-bodied white men to enter the Confederate army. Blacks served the Confederate army in a variety of support roles, among them personal body servants, teamsters, cooks, and laborers. Thousands of slaves helped to construct Confederate field fortifications. Most of this labor was no more volitional than slavery had been, but it was substantial enough to give President Lincoln ample reason eventually to regard the destruction of slavery as a military necessity, a decision that took the form of a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation issued on September 22, 1862, which threatened to liberate slaves in areas still in rebellion on January 1, 1863, and a final Emancipation Proclamation which actually did so.

In recent decades, an increasing number of historians have begun to emphasize the role that Blacks took in propelling Lincoln toward this policy. The initial Union policy of neutrality toward slavery was viable only if slaves remained passive once the war began. They did not. On the contrary, they flocked to Union lines whenever the chance arose. Their actions made neutrality a non-option. Union officers either had to return the slaves, in which case they buttressed slavery, or harbor them, in which case they undercut slavery. The war was scarcely a month old before Union general Benjamin F. Butler, a Massachusetts politician who was a lawyer by training, came up with an ingenious formula that undercut slavery while adroitly sidestepping the thorny political issues involved. To a Confederate major who smugly insisted upon the return of certain runaway slaves under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850), he argued that slaves might be property, but if used in support of the Confederate military effort they became "contraband of war." And once in Union hands, they could not only be kept, but could also be put to work for the Union cause.

Although many Blacks served voluntarily, even eagerly, some were understandably more interested in taking care of their families and friends. Yet the voracious hunger of the Union war effort for labor--to load and unload ships, to drive wagon trains, to build and repair railroads--meant that hundreds of Blacks were forced into service against their will. A common Union tactic was to surround an African American church during Sunday worship service, then seize able-bodied African American men as they emerged. In some instances, Union soldiers entered the sanctuary itself to take the Black laborers required. Once in service, the mortality rate of Black laborers could be as high as on the battlefield. During the construction of a spur rail line from Nashville to the Tennessee River, for example, about 25 percent of the Black labor force perished from illness and exposure.

Experiments with Black troops began as early as mid-1862. They got seriously underway after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863. Free blacks in the North enlisted in disproportionately large numbers. In Ohio, for example, over 5,000 African American men joined the Union army out of a *total* free black population of 36,000. Most African American troops, however, were recruited from Confederate states, particularly in the Mississippi River valley, where from March 1863 onward the U.S. government conducted an intensive, protracted campaign to enlist Black soldiers.

Nearly 40,000 black soldiers died over the course of the war--30,000 of infection or disease. Black soldiers served in artillery, cavalry, and infantry and performed all non-combat support functions that sustain an army, as well. Black carpenters, chaplains, cooks, guards, laborers, steamboat pilots, surgeons, and teamsters also contributed to the war cause. Nearly eighty Blacks became commissioned officers. Black women could not formally join the Army but nonetheless served as nurses, spies, and scouts, the most famous being Harriet Tubman, who scouted for the Second South Carolina Volunteers.

Because of prejudice against them--many whites persisted in believing that African Americans would not make good combat soldiers--black units were not used in combat as extensively as they might have been. Nevertheless, they served with distinction in a number of battles, including the famous battle at Fort Wagner, SC, in July 1863, immortalized in the film *Glory*, and Petersburg, VA.

Black soldiers served despite the fact that initially they were paid $10 per month, from which $3 was automatically deducted for clothing, resulting in a net pay of $7. In contrast, white soldiers received $13 per month from which no clothing allowance was drawn. When Frederick Douglass complained about this to Lincoln in August 1863, Lincoln defended this practice as a necessary concession to white prejudice. Not until June 1864 did Congress grant equal pay to the U.S. Colored Troops and made the action retroactive.

The African American military experience included numerous atrocities at the hands of Confederate forces, most famously in the Battle of Fort Pillow in April 1864, when cavalry under Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest massacred Tennessee loyalists and particularly black soldiers even after their surrender. While it was later claimed that Forrest ordered the massacre, the evidence suggests that he only did nothing to stop it. Most large-scale atrocities are "crimes of obedience." That is to say, they occur only because of orders given. But among Southern whites, the loathing for Blacks who would stand up to whites was so deeply ingrained that most of these actions were spontaneous.

Despite Black cries of "Remember Fort Pillow!" there were almost no instances of African American atrocities against Confederates. In part this was because the psychodynamics were different: the self-image of Black troops emphasized assertion of their own new status as men, not racial hatred against whites. But it was also a function of the way Union commanders tended to employ Black troops. Gen. William T. Sherman, for instance, absolutely refused to allow any Blacks to serve in his field armies. Instead he parceled them out to garrison small posts (like Fort Pillow). This had the unintended effect of making African American troops more vulnerable to massacre while depriving them of the opportunity to do anything similar.

Another common use of Black troops was the performance of fatigue duty. The emphasis on fatigue duty was an extension of the belief that Blacks were not well suited for combat. White observers were constantly amazed when Blacks did perform well. The racist mindset conditioned them to think of this as an aberration rather than the norm, despite numerous instances of superior Black battlefield performance.

The war ended before Black combat troops could fully prove themselves in the eyes of whites. If the war had lasted longer than August 1865, however, the three-year enlistments of the last great wave of white volunteers would have expired. Blacks, who already made up 10 percent of the Union army, would then have become even more important, perhaps vital--and possibly with lasting societal effects.

Conscription

Conscription had been practiced during colonial times, and after U.S. independence militia service was theoretically compulsory. But by 1840s militia service was so heavily derided and so easily avoided that the de facto militia consisted primarily of volunteer companies. The Civil War saw the first real conscription in U.S. history. Its importance is hard to overstate. In a republic based on limited national government, national authority reached right through state and community authority, snatched up individuals, and placed them in lethal danger.

This expedient was made necessary by the limits of volunteering. By early 1862 many white Southerners were already in the Confederate army, while Southern defeats dampened the recruitment of new volunteers. Worse, most Confederate enlistments were for 12 months and on the verge of expiration. The Conscription Act of 1862 effectively told Confederate soldiers that if they reenlisted they could remain in their current units. If they did not, they could be drafted and sent anywhere. It was a strong inducement for soldiers to reenlist so that they could serve with neighbors and kinsmen.

Supplemental legislation permitted men to pay a substitute to serve in their stead. A so-called "Twenty Negro Law" exempted one able-bodied white man for every twenty slaves, in order to maintain stability on plantations. Both measures contributed to the perception that it was "a rich man's war but a poor man's fight." And in 1864, when additional laws tightened exemptions and extended age limits to 16 and 45, the Confederate government was accused of robbing the cradle and the grave.

Confederate conscription was profoundly resented as an intrusion into state authority. Georgia governor Joseph Brown and North Carolina governor Zebulon Vance were both noteworthy for their efforts to resist the draft, for example, by exploiting exemption provisions as aggressively as possible. It was also resented at a community and individual level. Entire areas--for example Jones County, Mississippi, known as the "Free State of Jones"--resisted Confederate authority.

Ultimately, Southern conscription furnished about 11 percent of Confederate army strength, but it also exacerbated strains in Southern society. Indeed, many historians believe that

internal divisions stemming from conscription and other actions by the Confederate government (like bad fiscal policy) fatally undermined the South's will to resist.

Union conscription fared no better. The Militia Act of 1862 gave the president the authority to draft 300,000 men, but it operated chiefly as a spur to greater volunteering, contributing to a successful drive for 300,000 additional three-year volunteers as well as numerous nine-month enlistments.

The Enrollment Act of March 1863, which applied to all men aged 20-35 and to unmarried men between 35-45, was also designed to prompt additional volunteers. Like its Confederate counterpart, it contained a provision for hiring substitutes and permitted a man selected by a draft lottery to avoid service by paying a $300 commutation fee. Both provisions fed resentment. The implementation of the draft in New York in July 1863 prompted the worst riot in U.S. history (about 150 dead), and during the war 38 provost marshals were killed while attempting to enforce the draft. It was also not very effective, yielding only about 6 percent of Union forces plus an indeterminate number of men who enlisted because of bounties and other incentives.

Legacies

The Civil War was and largely continues to be remembered as a contest between valiant white volunteers. This is true enough, but the perception also reflects a memory of the war consciously shaped by Union and Confederate veterans and by proponents of the ideal of the citizen soldier. It created a real tension when the Regular Army in the postwar era tried to expand and professionalize. For example, Illinois congressman and former Union general John A. Logan in *The Volunteer Soldier of America* (1887) argued that citizen soldiers did better than professionals and that good West Point generals like Grant and Sherman were good *despite* their West Point educations. The dual manpower tradition would probably have prevailed in any event, but this memory cemented the view that citizen-soldiers were effective even as the Civil War also gave an impetus to military professionalization.

The contributions of the African American volunteers, for their part, were largely forgotten and did not return to mainstream awareness until the release of the film *Glory* in 1989. This phenomenon illustrates the suppression of what historian David Blight has called the "emancipationist memory" of the conflict in favor of a white supremacist memory that assisted the sectional reconciliation of the North and South at the expense of Blacks.

Civil War conscription was used in World War I as a perfect example of how *not* to conduct a draft. Instead, every effort was made to make the implementation of the draft appear as

equitable as possible. There would be no substitutes or exemptions, no commutation fees, and local draft boards were created to give the appearance that there was local legitimacy, that it was not the national government swooping men up.

A final legacy is that for decades after the war, the sight of men with amputated limbs was common in both the North and South. The war killed 620,000 Americans: 2 percent of the total population and 8 percent of men of military age. Hundreds of thousands more were wounded; many of these were scarred for life. Those maimed by the war were reminded every minute of every day what they had sacrificed to save the republic. But had they saved it? Had they won anything permanent? In the North, Union veterans formed the Grand Army of the Republic. They tried to teach a new generation of Americans that had grown up after the war, to press their interpretation of American values on the public, and above all to convey the message that the veterans, through their self-sacrifice, had saved the republic. Southern veterans attempted to create their own message of a worthy cause gallantly defended.

It is worth closing with the words of Union veteran Jacob C. Switzer, who lost a leg at the battle of Winchester in September 1864. Although disabled and unable to pursue his prewar dreams, he wrote that he was not disheartened. "I came home fully satisfied with the results of my service with regards to its effects upon myself; glad that I could say I served until the cause for which I gave so little, compared with the sacrifice made by so many, was won honorably, the Union saved, slavery dead, and treason made odious."

Chapter 11:

What Students Need to Know about the Frontier Wars

By Vance Skarstedt

For a number of reasons, one can say that the frontier wars are the most complex and difficult of all the nation's wars to teach. The conflict that raged for centuries on the North American continent still touches nerves in contemporary American academic, cultural, and political circles. As the American people continuously debate and struggle to define their history, the frontier wars represent a continuing source of friction in discussing American history, morality, consistency, military conduct, and government policy. Simply put, as the debate over the status and treatment of American Indians goes on and becomes more politicized, so does the discussion of the long years of conflict that comprise the frontier wars.

While there are many schools of thought regarding the frontier wars throughout American scholarship, the predominant view leaves the American Indian as a hapless victim that was swarmed over by a never-ending wave of unscrupulous European and later, American settlers, soldiers and businessmen who, armed with superior technology, stole, infected, massacred and imprisoned the native peoples on their way to building the nation as we know it today.

In a recent edition of John Tebbel and Keith Jennison's *The American Indian Wars*, the summary stated, "The Native nations, living in peace and prosperity for the most part, despite the intermittent but limited intertribal warfare, learned that the white invaders cold not be trusted, and that their object was not the peaceful intercourse of trade, which the Natives offered them, but flagrant conquest." The term "conquest" along with others such as "encroachment," "invasion," "genocide," and "subjugation," appear in many historical discussions of the frontier wars, and while the American Indians lost a way of life they had known for thousands of years, to simply present the history of these wars as one society exterminating another is simplistic, inaccurate, and denies students the different aspects of what were truly fascinating, complex, and relevant wars. I say relevant because the outcome of those wars not only completed the establishment of the United States on the North American continent, but also generated invaluable lessons regarding warfare that are still being taught today.

The complexity involves the identity of the combatants, especially as it relates to the indigenous peoples whom the Europeans and later Americans encountered. To lump these people under one term such as Indians or Native Americans is very misleading. I would begin any course or class on the frontier wars by discussing the indigenous peoples themselves and

who they really were. Historians have estimated that at the time Columbus landed, there existed almost 4 million people in three thousand tribes speaking more than 2,200 different languages. Hollywood images of nomadic tribal units wandering a vast wilderness wearing war bonnets and following bison herds pales when compared to the real history of the North American Indians. Their societies varied from being nomadic, to forest and coastal dwelling, to stationary tradesmen in cities. In teaching undergraduates, I always asked how many of them had ever heard of, let alone visited, Cahokia. I'd usually get one or two that had heard of it. Seldom had anyone who lived outside of a 20-mile radius of St Louis ever been there.

American students should know the diversity and advanced nature of the many pre-Colombian cultures. Cahokia was a thriving economic center and home to as many as 40,000 people. Evidence exists that Cahokian traders, or Mississippians as some refer to them, plied their goods as far away as the Atlantic Coast and as far south Mexico. These people created intricate tools, molded beautiful jewelry, demonstrated advanced agricultural techniques and actually devised ways to change the flow of the Mississippi River to irrigate their crops. They built structures of clay and dirt that rivaled the stone temples of Tenochtitlan, Angkor Wat and Thebes. Little else is known of this culture because, unlike the Egyptians, the Cahokians did not write in Sanskrit or hieroglyphics or some other ancient tongue lent towards translation by a Rosetta Stone. We're sure they were peaceful due to the fact that, unlike the warrior Egyptians who went to their next world armed to the teeth, Cahokian graves included few if any weapons. Cahokia did not stand alone as an advanced culture. The Pueblo Indians of Taos built five-story apartment buildings and successfully irrigated crops in the New Mexico dessert. The cave-dwellers of Mesa Verde carved intricate and multi-storied communal structures in the sides of mountains. Again, little is known of these cultures due to a lack of written records of their time.

Archaeology has determined that most of these advanced cultures were gone 200-300 years before Columbus's arrival and given that at the time Columbus arrived, the former domains of the peaceful Cahokians, Pueblos, and Anasazis were supplanted by the fierce Creek, Navajo, Comanche and Apache tribes. This leads to the next point I believe students should be aware of when studying the frontier wars, which is the war-fighting skills possessed by the tribes that were here when Europeans started to seriously colonize North America in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

My students often asked about the relevance of studying the combat of these wars. Today's students can easily relate some war history to contemporary events, but they often do not see the point in devoting significant study to the frontier wars, as they seem so remote in terms of time as well as methods. Not to mention the fact, the generation we're teaching did not grow up watching the Western genre in movie theaters, or at least Westerns that dealt with Indians.

I always answer by showing them photos of Indian warriors like the famous shot of Geronimo and three of his comrades, which shows a variety of weapons ranging from a muzzle-loading musket to a cavalry carbine to a couple of lever-action repeating rifles. They're armed with some good technology for the time, able to travel fast and given their experience and knowledge of their environment, would prove to be elusive and hard to pin down.

How did the U.S. Army deal with this kind of foe? With horse-mounted cavalry traveling in groups ranging from regimental size to small detachments of perhaps a dozen or fewer soldiers and Indian scouts. While these tactics never achieved the all time decisive victory Americans for some reason see as the only way to end a war, these tactics kept pressure on their Indian targets and eventually, when it became clear the Americans weren't going to go away, the fiercest American Indian warriors, including Geronimo, Crazy Horse, Dull Knife, Red Cloud and Little Wolf, surrendered in the closing years of the frontier wars and represent the last of the American Indian generations that fought the U.S. government.

Fast forward to the 21st century. Again the United States finds itself involved in a fight against lightly yet lethally armed asymmetric fighters who are elusive, possess superior knowledge of the battlefield, and quite creative when it comes to thinking of ways to kill American soldiers. The United States Armed Forces are utilizing a number of ways to combat unconventional foes such as the Taliban and Al Qaeda, utilizing many of the same means and tactics used by the horse soldiers of the nineteenth century. So, the tactics and lessons learned by the U.S. military in the 1870s were either put to good use, or as I suspect, relearned, by the U.S. military of the 21st century. To me, the frontier wars are as clear an example out there that history is always a relevant discipline.

Students should also know that the frontier wars remain America's longest wars. If one includes the period of colonization between the founding of Jamestown in the east and Santa Fe in the west to the American Revolution and goes to what is considered the last frontier battle in 1890, which was not really a battle, the frontier wars were continuously fought for almost four hundred years. The first century of the United States' history was one of continuous warfare on the growing nation's frontier. In one of its first engagements after the end of the Revolution, the American Army suffered what would be its worst defeat until the Civil War when the Miami Indians under the leadership of Michikinikwa, or Little Turtle, destroyed a force of 1,400 militia and regulars killing over 600 officers and men.

To help students understand so much history in a few lessons, I portray the frontier wars in three phases.

The first phase began with the settlements in the first decade of the seventeenth century on the east coast. During this phase the Europeans sought to establish a viable economic support system on the North American continent. Not only was their savage fighting between colonists and Indians; French, English and Spanish Colonists waged bitter wars amongst themselves. This phase came to an end with the American Revolution that ended in 1783.

The second phase involved pushing the Indians west across the Mississippi River. This phase ended in the late 1840s with the Blackhawk War and the pursuit of the Seminoles into the Everglades, where they still live today.

The final phase, which is the shortest phase but took place in the largest theater of all the phases, were the campaigns west of the Mississippi against the Sioux, Cheyenne, Apache, Comanche, Modoc, Nez Pierce and other tribes. This phase ended with the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890, though there were recorded instances of Indian resistance as late as 1911. It's a good idea to break these phases down by significant wars and relate the important political and military events of each.

This different kind of fighting and Indians' skill are some of the important reasons for the length of these wars. There was also the sheer size of the North American continent. These wars were fought in New England, the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast, the Mississippi River Valley, Texas, the Midwest, the Pacific Coast, the Rocky Mountains; virtually every corner of the present-day continental United States saw combat between the Indians and the Europeans and Americans. Thomas Jefferson estimated that it would take 100 generations to settle America. It actually took five, but as the United States expanded westward by building communities, railroads and communications, it also had to pacify the diverse and rugged group of societies that were all very adept at warfare; from the Powhatan Indians of Virginia that almost destroyed Jamestown on more than one occasion to the Nomadic Sioux nation that for a century controlled the upper Great Plains from Minnesota to Wyoming and as far south as the Missouri River, to the Modoc Indians of California who with 51 fighters held off over 1000 U.S. Army cavalry and inflicted over 150 casualties while only losing five of their own in the combat.

When Europeans first arrived and the inevitable conflicts with the Indians began, the Europeans were surprised and shocked by the Indian way of making war. Instead of the lines of infantry on open battlefields the Europeans were used to, the Indians used stealth, camouflage, surprise, deception, and other small-unit tactics that utilized the terrain as cover and confused their conventional European opponents. The European colonists quickly adapted and became every bit as skilled and savage as the Indians in waging frontier war and began using Indian tactics when they fought each other. In short, the Indians were good

because their environment and culture promoted armed combat as a necessary skill. From having to survive by matching wits against nature and wild game, to having to defend themselves against rival tribes, the North American Indians were some of the finest soldiers in the world by the time Columbus arrived. Those societies mentioned earlier that had perished by the fifteenth century did not seem to value warfare according to what archaeologists tell us. That may be a major reason they weren't there.

Evidence of the Indians' influence on the American military still is evident at Fort Benning, Georgia, where the United States Army Ranger School posts the standing orders of Robert Rogers. Rogers was a colonial militiaman who admired the Indian way of combat and built a unit that modeled itself after the Indians' tactics. They traveled off-road, learned ambush and tracking tactics, and traveled light while garnishing their food from nature as them rapidly moved overland. They proved extremely effective against the French in the French-Indian War and subsequent units that fought for both British and American colonists also utilized tactics learned from the Indians by Rogers' Rangers.

However, despite their skill as warriors and ability to survive in harsh environments, their culture and experience proved no match for the arrival of Western civilization. There were few battles with decisive winners and losers, and the supposed advantages in technology did not provide that big of an advantage to the Euro-Americans. In fact, not until the campaigns of Nelson Miles in the 1870s and 1880s did technology come into play and cause concern for the Indians. Students should know that the Indian defeat was not due to Euro-American military prowess, but the final destruction of the environment needed for Indians to maintain their culture. The biggest pure killer of Indians was not American or European arms but disease. Within fifty years of Columbus's arrival, the Arawaks that first greeted him became extinct. Epidemics of typhus, smallpox and cholera devastated numerous Indian populations. It is estimated that one epidemic along the Missouri River in 1837 reduced the Plains Indian population by 50 percent. As far as casualties of war, the 100 years after the American Revolution saw just over 12,000 Indians and whites killed as a result of battle and/or raids.

Instead of military pressure, the Indians succumbed to economic and political pressure. The economic pressure was the loss of their environment. With the establishment of the railroad, transcontinental communication, technological developments in agriculture including barbed wire, and an ever-growing population of Euro-Americans, the Indians slowly ran out of territory for sanctuary. The great buffalo slaughter after the Civil War took the buffalo herd of the Plains from an estimated 12 million to fewer than 700 by 1889. This proved a devastating blow to the dominant tribes of the Plains as the buffalo was the central pillar of their economy. In short the Indians could not survive against the Western culture and economy of development and consumption.

Politically, the Indians suffered because they themselves could not unite. Many of the thousands of tribes were nursing centuries-old rivalries and hatred against other tribes when the Europeans arrived. In almost four hundred years, they could not set aside differences enough to unite against the greater threat. American Indian history has many farsighted individuals who realized this but none who succeeded.

Beginning with one of the first major wars between Indians and whites, King Phillip's War in 1675, the Wampanoag Chief, Metacomet, sought to unite the various tribes of the region against the growing English settlements. For two years he was effective and almost destroyed major settlements at Deerfield, Medfield, Northfield, and Brookfield in what is now Massachusetts. However, Metacomet was assassinated by another Indian at the behest of the British in 1676 and King Phillip's war ended in defeat for the Indians. Subsequent efforts by Indians to unite also failed. Pontiac of the Ottowas was murdered by another Indian near Cahokia after he had almost forced white settlers out of the Ohio Valley. This situation convinced King George to issue the proclamation of 1763 prohibiting colonists from settling in large numbers west of the Appalachians. Tecumseh had to ally with the British and even accepted a commission as a Brigadier in the British Army, but his failure to convince the Creeks to join his confederation led to his defeat and death at the Battle of the Thames in 1814. Osceola was tricked by English and rival Seminoles into surrendering and this led to his death in an English prison. Captain Jack, leader of the Modocs was betrayed by a tribal rival to the Americans and subsequently hung. The list goes on and on regarding great Indian leaders either totally or partially being undone by their fellow Indians. This inability to unite created tremendous opportunities for the dividing part of the divide-and-conquer strategies employed by the Euro-Americans against the Indians. Most of the intelligence and scouting used by the Europeans and Americans were provided by tribes that rivaled those the Euro Americans were pursuing. Modern Sioux and Blackfeet still despise each other for the role each other played in the Black Hills campaigns of 1874-76.

This failure to unite was probably the major reason the Indians lost. On the battlefield itself the Americans seldom enjoyed a numerical or technological advantage and one of the reasons for Custer's disaster at Little Bighorn, was that the Indians were actually technically advantaged. Custer's practice was to move light and fast, like Indians, and surprise small groups of Indians while they camped. This worked well for him until he surprised a large group of Indians camping along the Greasy Grass of the Little Bighorn River.

The Indians also proved very adept at adapting Western technology and tactics themselves, and that adaptation is another military lesson learned from the Indian Wars. North American Indians showed tremendous adaptability and their martial heritage came through in some of

the absolutely brilliant leaders and tacticians they produced. Without a West Point or even formal education as the Euro-Americans knew, Indian leaders such as Chief Joseph of the Nez Pierce, Osceola of the Seminoles, and Red Cloud of the Sioux proved more than a match against their West Point counterparts. They are a critically important part of the American military heritage, though it would make great chiefs like Opechecanenough, Tecumseh, and Gall turn in their graves to hear that being said about them.

American military commanders also learned the importance of critical thinking. In the wilderness against a foe that possessed superior knowledge of the terrain and cut off from the major supply and logistics support networks, Army commanders had to devise tactics and methods for pursuing, isolating, and surprising fast moving and unpredictable groups of Indians. In the wars against the Sioux, Cheyenne, Apache and Comanche, the Army learned to conduct operations at night and in bad weather as this proved most effective. Unfortunately, this led to Indian women and children being killed, since these attacks at places like the Washita River and Sand Creek led to attacks on tribal units and not just war parties. Even today, military commanders agree that much of their success in the field is due to the fact that experience and technology has enabled the U.S. Army to "own the night."

Another important lesson learned from the frontier wars has to do with peacekeeping. Pacifying and keeping Indians under control is probably the first example of postwar peacekeeping done by the U.S. government. It's not a great story, with corruption at one end of the policy and the deaths of innocents at the other. The greatest injustices to the American Indians usually came after Indians succumbed to American and European demands. The Trail of Tears, the squalid conditions at the Bosque Redondo Reservation, the Long Walk of the Navajos, and many other tragic stories relate that no matter how well-intentioned U.S. government policies such as President Ulysses Grant's "Peace Policy," a lack of dedicated and trustworthy officers in the field can lead to disaster.

American students need to know that there is much more to this conflict than popular culture has shown. They need to know of the American Indians themselves and what varied, rich, and accomplished cultures they possessed. They need to know that they put up one heck of a fight and did so because their various cultures emphasized combat skills, sacrifice, and discipline. They need to know that failure to unify beyond family or tribal limits provided a key element to their ultimate defeat as well as the loss of their environment and way of life. They need to know the lasting impact the frontier wars had on American history and culture. As Frederick Jackson Turner pointed out in his landmark work *The Frontier in American History*, pushing west forced settlers to change away from the European-like practices of the eastern city; support a communal society where participation and support of community decisions, elected leaders and plans meant survival; and to exercise the creative thinking and ingenuity needed to

bring the wilderness under control. To me, this sounds very much like the American Indian way of doing things. From the Massasoit Indians who welcomed the Pilgrims to the Nez Pierce Indians who befriended the whites right up until they were forced to fight for their survival, they set the example in living as well as fighting and dying.

<p style="text-align:center">Chapter 12:</p>

The Spanish-American War and the Philippine War

<p style="text-align:center">By Brian McAllister Linn</p>

In teaching the "unknown wars" that straddle the 19th and 20th centuries, one encounters numerous problems. First, many Americans nowadays have as much difficulty finding the Philippines on a map as they did in 1898. Especially people living in inland states have difficulty understanding the isolated island culture. The Philippines comprise hundreds of islands, dozens of dialects and cultures, at least five distinct "tribes" on the main island of Luzon alone. A single island can have mountains, jungles, swamps, and grass fields. Communication and transportation are essentially along rivers or the coast. Because we tend to think about peoples in a nation-state context where people have been a nation for a long time, it's hard to explain that when Americans were fighting in the Philippines, they were not just fighting nationalists with a concept of a Philippine nation.

Much of what we read about this war, including in virtually every textbook, is deeply flawed. Even the web-based primary sources teachers often use have been carefully selected to present only the juiciest atrocity stories. So a great deal of ideological baggage goes along with this subject. Students also find it hard to understand the complexity of the military missions involved in these wars. They don't necessarily understand nation-building, civic action, building roads and schools, all the things the army did. In some places the U.S. Army was restoring peace and order and was welcomed as a liberator, in others it ran into a great deal of opposition. The army itself didn't always understand its mission. And President William McKinley was so good at hiding his ideas that after the commander of the Philippine mission met with him in Washington for several hours, he still didn't understand whether he was supposed to take just Manila or the entire Philippines.

Situation In 1898

For years, Americans had watched an endemic war in Cuba between Cuban nationalists and Spanish forces. Spanish atrocities against Cubans were widely publicized in America's "Yellow Press." The turmoil threatened U.S. investments in Cuba, and there was concern that this would destabilize the entire Caribbean area, invite European intervention, and thus threaten the Monroe Doctrine. McKinley's administration therefore increased pressure on Spain to find some solution to the Cuban war.

McKinley sent an American warship, the USS *Maine*, to serve as a reminder that the U.S. could impose militarily if Spain did not reach a quick solution to the problem. However, on February 15, the *Maine* was destroyed by an explosion. American newspapers whipped up stories blaming Spain (actually, if anyone had anything to gain, it was the Cuban rebels), and it quickly became accepted that Spain had done this. Historians still have trouble making sense of the ensuing rush to war. What Walter Millis called the "martial spirit" in his 1931 book of that name seemed to seize the nation. McKinley tried to restrain the war sentiment in Congress. But the cry "Remember the Maine, to hell with Spain!" was loudly proclaimed in public meetings, the press demanded retaliation, and on April 19 Congress took the initiative and proclaimed Cuba free. It demanded Spain's immediate withdrawal and authorized McKinley to use force to achieve this. War was declared on April 25, 1898.

In 1898, the U.S. hadn't been at war with a European power for almost eighty years. But its navy was quite confident. It had developed a simple war plan against Spain: it would deploy its fleet and blockade Cuba, preventing Spain from reinforcing it. It also planned a diversionary attack on the Spanish squadron in Manila Bay. It didn't make extensive plans for an invasion of Cuba because it didn't think that was going to be necessary; in any event, that was the Army's job. Unfortunately, it didn't tell the Army what its plan was.

The Navy's plan worked quite well at first. Just days after the declaration of war, on May 1, 1898, Commodore George Dewey's small squadron wiped out the decrepit Spanish squadron at Manila Bay without a single American battle death. This victory rallied public opinion and U.S. financial interests, who had been very worried about the war, and set off an even huger explosion of public support for the war. It also set off a series of very serious events in the Philippines. With the Spanish squadron destroyed, Spain could not prevent Philippine insurgents from throwing Spain's isolated garrisons out. The garrisons were quickly overwhelmed by Filipino forces, most of them operating on their own, fighting for local causes. Emilio Aguinaldo, who had taken a large sum of money and left the Philippines, returned and declared Philippine independence.

The War Expands, May-June 1898

In the weeks after Manila Bay, the war rapidly became a fiasco for the U.S. The U.S. Army was prepared for frontier wars and defending the Atlantic coast. With its initial defense appropriation, it started fortifying the Atlantic coast lest Spain send a fleet against it. It only had about 2,800 troops, most scattered out west. Disregarding his generals' advice, McKinley called up over 200,000 volunteers, a move that aroused huge public enthusiasm. Theodore Roosevelt, then the assistant secretary of the Navy, resigned and formed the Rough Riders, composed of everyone from college athletes to cowboys. As these thousands of volunteers poured into the training camps, they discovered that the camps really didn't exist. They were

just big tracts of territory. There were no weapons, tents, or food. Thousands of volunteers fell sick and hundreds died.

Despite this confusion, the war was really over before it began. The Spanish relief squadron did elude the U.S. Navy, but once it got to Cuba, it couldn't do anything. So it sailed into Santiago Harbor, where the U.S. Navy bottled it up. The U.S. Marines seized Guantanamo as an advanced naval base. After a chaotic departure from Tampa with troops scrambling onto transports, 18,000 troops landed at Daiquiri and moved to besiege Santiago. In the Battle of San Juan Heights on July 1, the U.S. forces suffered 243 killed and over 1,400 wounded-- roughly 10 percent of the forces engaged. They captured two relatively insignificant outposts, but the main Spanish fortifications were untouched. It was only later, thanks to Roosevelt, that these became glorious attacks. At the time, even Roosevelt's own correspondence indicates that everyone thought it had been a disaster. The battle resolved nothing, and the 5th Corps began to suffer from malaria, dysentery, and other diseases.

On August 2, the commander of the 5th Corps wrote to Washington that three quarters of his soldiers were sick, his army was too weak to operate in Cuba, and unless they were withdrawn, the entire corps could be lost. Fortunately for the army, the Spanish were in even worse shape and lacked knowledge of the true situation within the American forces. The Americans controlled the water supply, and people in Santiago were reduced to eating rodents. On August 16 the Spanish surrendered, probably a week before the U.S. would have had to.

It's hard for us to imagine now such an enormously popular war. Men fought to get into the service, even those under age 21. Boys read gripping yarns of young glory defeating the evil Spaniards. Roosevelt's serialized memoirs of the Rough Riders were wildly popular. The possessions had broken their shackles, and Cuba, Puerto Rico and Hawaii were welcomed in by Columbia. But the Spanish-American War also was followed by another far less splendid war.

The Philippine War, 1892-1902

Following Dewey's victory in Manila Bay, U.S. ground troops arrived in the Philippines in June 1898. In August they captured Manila. But in the process they excluded Aguinaldo--the self-proclaimed president of the self-proclaimed Philippine republic--and his army from taking part in the occupation of Manila. The Spaniards essentially struck a deal with America to move in and then turn around and face off Aguinaldo.

In December 1898, McKinley finally outlined his plan for occupying and administering the archipelago, announcing that the U.S. intended to annex the Philippines. He sent his

commanders what became known as the Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation. The U.S. Army was to be the forefront of an American mission to help the Filipinos after 400 years of Spanish mismanagement and tyranny. The Army would secure private property, suppress crime, establish a judicial system, ensure religious freedom, protect local customs and traditions, build schools and roads, restore trade, and perform a host of other civic reform duties. McKinley intended thereafter to appoint a civilian governor to administer the Philippines. For the Americans, this was a civilizing mission. The Army's job was to act in such a way that it would win Filipino support for American sovereignty. So from the beginning, McKinley established what in Iraq parlance would be a Phase IV military strategy. He did not think there would be any fighting. When his military commanders asked him under what circumstances they could go to war, McKinley responded that they were not there to fight, but to show the Filipinos that American rule would be a good thing and comport themselves in such a way as to gain the affection and trust of the Filipino people.

Fortunately for McKinley, he had a very able military commander in the Philippines, Elwell S. Otis. Otis was a highly competent officer, a Civil War hero, and also a Harvard-trained lawyer. He accepted the Benevolent Assimilation mission and set out to make Manila a test case for it. Manila had been one of the most filthy and disease-ridden cities in the Far East. Under Otis, the streets were swept, sewer lines were dug, markets were inspected, and there were new rules about, for example, killing livestock and hanging it. Schools were opened and Manila went from being one of the most unhealthy cities to one of the healthiest in about two years. Even within six months, people could not believe the dramatic changes.

But on the other side, Benevolent Assimilation did not resolve the issue of the Filipino independence movement led by Aguinaldo, a very controversial figure. The anti-imperialists termed him the George Washington of the Philippines--ignoring his tendency to kill off his opponents. He was very good at putting together coalitions of the regional elites, the landowners, merchants, etc., predominantly in the Tagalog area around Manila. His support came from people like him, a very small group representing perhaps one percent of the population. The Philippine republic had an assembly in which representatives of all the islands appeared, but many of these representatives had never been to those islands, they were just appointed by Aguinaldo. Since the Great Powers recognized only nations supported by Western-style armies, Aguinaldo organized the Army of Liberation, with generals, colonels, and a complicated organization chart. But his army was really a group of local militias gathered together under local elites and held together very much by personal bonds and loyalties.

Relations between Aguinaldo and his forces were always tenuous, and he eventually killed his commander-in-chief. Relations between Aguinaldo and his army and the American army were

also tenuous. On the evening of February 4, 1899, one of a series of skirmishes and alarms outside of Manila escalated beyond the control of either Aguinaldo or Otis into full-fledged fighting and a three-week battle. This was the biggest battle by far of the war, and probably the most decisive, as well. It represented the best chance Aguinaldo had for either expelling the Americans or at least confining them to Manila. Instead the opposite happened. Not only were Aguinaldo's forces defeated in battle, but American troops were able to march to the lake beyond Manila and split his army in half, into the southern and northern factions. It was impossible for the two forces to cooperate. Many of Aguinaldo's trained soldiers, who fought extremely bravely, were killed, and he lost most of his modern ammunition and his weapons. And so this was an absolutely devastating battle for the cause of Philippine independence.

After this the Americans developed a three-part strategy. First, they would continue Benevolent Assimilation to try to stave off the war by continuing to show Filipinos that the Americans were there to help them. The conflict was now being called an insurrection, both because we were now in charge and because under the U.S. constitution, the militia can only be deployed to suppress invasion and insurrection. Most of the U.S. troops were national guard or militia, and thus had a somewhat uncertain legal status now that the war with Spain was over. Calling it an insurrection solved this thorny constitutional question.

Benevolent Assimilation continued, the hope being that Filipinos would recognize that Aguinaldo was a bad person and while the Americans were good people. A naval blockade was imposed, cutting off inter-island communications and preventing Aguinaldo from shifting troops, or even other guerilla groups from moving within one island. The blockade isolated all the various independence movements and local rebellions in their areas, preventing them from spreading. The final part of the strategy was that the Army would move north along the railroad to try to smash Aguinaldo's army in one decisive battle in Central Luzon and end armed resistance.

Americans quickly recognized that campaigning in the Philippines was extremely costly in terms of disease and fatigue. The troops essentially out-marched their logistical line, Carabao, within the first day. By the second day they were living on what they could carry. In the tropics, they could only carry about 40 pounds without collapsing, and that included their rifles. By the third day they began to forage and drink polluted water, and then the entire expedition began to break down. Within a week 30-40 percent of the troops had been lost. So essentially the Americans would launch an attack, fail to encircle Aguinaldo's forces, who would slip out of the trap, and then break down and have to take several weeks to rebuild their strength before going on the offensive again.

Finally, in the fall of 1899, Aguinaldo's army ran out of room. It ran into the ocean in the north and dispersed--the troops took their weapons and went back home, and Aguinaldo

became a fugitive up in the mountains of Luzon. U.S. forces then swept south, all the way to Tawitawi, establishing almost 500 American garrisons throughout the Philippines.

As the U.S. Army prepared to hand off governance to the civilian colonial government McKinley was forming to come out and take over. As far as everyone was concerned, the mission had been accomplished, the war was over, and all that remained was to hold on for a few more months until the civilian government could come in and take over.

Unfortunately, as in Iraq in our time, the conventional operations were the easy part of the war. What followed was the difficult and controversial part. As the Americans spread throughout the archipelago and began to garrison villages and towns, they attracted a great deal of resistance, often from people who had no connection with Aguinaldo, even from local elites who had opposed Aguinaldo's government. The soldiers in the field appreciated this very quickly, but it took Manila and Washington a long time to learn it.

The guerrilla warfare was very decentralized. A local leader, a jefe, who had political and military authority, often acted as both the governor and general. The local forces spoke the dialect, knew the terrain and had close family connections among the villagers. Tactics were hit-and-run--attack supply convoys and messengers, harass the troops, but avoid battle, because the Filipinos had learned that Americans were always going to win in battle.
As the Americans began to impose government, they replaced or became another layer on top of insurgent or revolutionary governments that had existed since the Spanish had withdrawn. Many of these governments became "shadow governments." They replicated the American system. Americans would appoint a mayor, a police chief, and tax collector, and the insurgents would too. Often the same people served both sides, not seeing a conflict.

Filipino resistance had political as well as military goals. The insurgents recognized that this war was controversial in the U.S., that many Americans were unhappy about the U.S. having an empire, and so they sought to remove collaboration. Terrorism and assassination became common in many villages. The resistance staged military operations to influence the U.S. public going into the 1900 elections, knowing that William Jennings Bryan was running on an anti-imperialist platform.

There was a great deal of rivalry among the villages, so it was hard for guerrillas from one village to cooperate with other guerrilla bands. They had poor weapons and no sanctuaries. They were also very dependent on their leadership. The death or capture of the jefe would often lead to factional fighting, because most of them lived in the villages under the American garrison. They couldn't form sanctuaries out in the jungle, since the Americans were being effective. Thus one informant in the village could point out all the guerrillas and where the

weapons were, and so the guerrillas were highly vulnerable to any form of collaboration. Guerrillas are a predatory fish swimming in the population, extracting taxes, bringing danger to the village, taking young males, and terrorizing people who threaten collaboration. So sooner or later guerrilla exactions are going to alienate the population. Sooner or later they irritate enough people that there's one person who will denounce them. Once that happened, the Americans could roll up the guerrilla infrastructure. Owing to its local nature, if a guerrilla group was driven out of its village, it couldn't easily move into a new area. Either there was already another guerrilla group there or it didn't know the terrain or speak the same language. It became an outside group, and the locals would cooperate with the Americans to wipe them out. So once a group was driven out of an area, it often couldn't spread, and it had to surrender.

The U.S. counterinsurgency program in the Philippines is very interesting, especially in view of the current surge in Iraq. First, the Americans always continued Benevolent Assimilation. American military personnel from the top down had both political and military duties. The commanding general was also the governor general. Lieutenants and captains in villages not only led their units, but also served as town mayors, customs officials, police chiefs, tax collectors, judges, and in dozens of other functions as well. Most officers proved highly effective administrators, in part because they were citizen-soldiers. They were very capable of taking over local duties. The one thing they couldn't stand was inaction. They were problem solvers.

Along with Benevolent Assimilation there was also a great deal of repression. We can't cloak this as a splendid little war. Americans in areas in which they faced great resistance increasingly took to punitive raids: burning crops and houses to punish civilians for collaborating with the guerrillas. They required police and political leaders to cooperate against insurgents. Americans were not averse to encouraging inter-tribal and inter-town rivalry, pitting them against each other. And there was a great deal to be gained by cooperating with the Americans. After all, who was reading the land grants but the U.S. authorities? As the areas that were pro-American essentially became pacified and got turned over to civil governments, the Americans took a harder and harder line on those areas that remained recalcitrant. So after December 1900, when several provinces had already been pacified, the Americans intensified the property destruction and coercion. The last campaigns were grim indeed.

Americans also turned increasingly to using Filipino auxiliaries. The Macabebe Scouts became the foundation of the Philippine scouts who fought so well for us in WWII. Thousands of Filipinos served as porters, auxiliaries, militia, and other paramilitary forces, and were

indispensable. By mid-1901 there were more Filipinos serving with the U.S. than with nationalist guerrillas.

The Navy was extremely important. Guerrillas can only survive if they have access to weapons and supplies. The Navy provided interdiction of the islands. It destroyed all coastal commerce, making severe hardships for the civilian population, until a town capitulated and was pacified. It suppressed piracy, particularly from the Muslims in Mindanao and Jolo, and used amphibious operations, landing troops all over the coast. One such operation captured Aguinaldo.

In U.S. counterinsurgency in the Philippines, if the army was the stick, civil government became the carrot, once a province was pacified. William H. Taft made his reputation as the first civilian governor in the Philippines and the Commission's constabulary took over from the Army in policing the archipelago.

The dominant interpretation in textbooks is that the Philippine War was America's first My Lai, first Vietnam, first war of terrorism. The American "Kill and Burn" tactics are said to have suppressed Aguinaldo's legitimate nationalist revolution. The war is depicted as a race war, and proof that foreign interventions and imperialism inevitably breed atrocities. The neoconservative interpretation popular with Max Boot and others is that the Philippine war is the ideal template campaign for how to impose U.S. rule across the world today. In "Supremacy by Stealth: Ten Rules for Managing the World" (*Atlantic Monthly*), Robert Kaplan lists as #7 "remembering the Philippines." Max Boot refers to the Philippines in *Savage Wars of Peace* and several op-eds. A *USA Today* editorial in June reminds us that we stayed the course there and didn't vote for an antiwar candidate. The Philippines become the ideal way to wage a counterinsurgency. But what these authors often really mean is how to impose American control over much of the world.

The impacts of 1898 are huge. From a military non-entity in 1897, the U.S. emerged as a global power, by 1917 holding in the balance who would win WWI. But it also led to Americans being increasingly pulled into Caribbean interventions (Haiti, Santa Domingo, Nicaragua, Panama Canal, and Mexico), and ultimately would lead to conflict with Japan and also to what we now accept as a norm: a large military state. After this war, the U.S. was largely committed to a global presence and the military forces to go with it.

FROM GREAT POWER TO DECISIVE POWER

Chapter 13:

What Students Need to Know about World War I

By Michael Neiberg

Ask any British student about the Somme or any French or German student about Verdun and you are likely to get a quick response. It may be a response about an ancestor who fought in one of the war's titanic battles or it might be a response influenced by a work of fiction like *Blackadder*, *Oh! What a Lovely War*, or *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It might even be the now fashionable response of dismissing the war as a fratricidal relic of Europe's "old" age of nationalism and rivalry. These responses might well be slightly inaccurate or even wildly so, but the war remains enough of a part of the living memory for Europeans to elicit certain emotional and historical triggers. This continued sense of relevance for Europeans is, of course, entirely natural given the great destruction the war brought and the impact the war had on European history.

American students, by contrast, are unlikely to have such close associations to World War I. The war for Americans was a brief event, and a relatively small proportion of Americans saw any sustained military action. The United States was never attacked and there is no single moment associated with the war in American memory as the Somme is in British memory. The war, moreover, falls in between two much larger and more emotive events in American history, the Civil War and World War II. American students might thus be forgiven for not responding to Belleau Wood or the Meuse-Argonne in the same ways they might react to Gettysburg or Pearl Harbor.

That contrast is the first point I always make to my students. Whereas for the United States, World War I is a little-known and arcane period in history, for Europeans it is absolutely formative. For France and Great Britain especially, World War I (known as the Great War or *La Grande Guerre* for a good reason) remains *the* war both in the popular imagination and among scholars. While one compares humanitarian catastrophes at one's own peril, a few numbers may make the case. The British Empire suffered an estimated 908,000 deaths in World War I, or more than twice the number of World War II. Put another way, the British had more men killed on one day of World War I (July 1, 1916, still the bloodiest single day in the history of the British Army) than it suffered in the first month of operations on and subsequent to D-Day. For France, of course, the contrast is even more stark: an estimated 1,300,000 Frenchmen died in World War I compared to 567,000 in World War II.

A simple car ride along any of World War I's many battlefields will prove the point to those less statistically inclined. On many battlefields, such as Verdun, Champagne, and the Somme, the war still speaks through the massive shell holes and mine craters that continue to scar the landscape 90 years later. An observant tourist can also see signs reading *village detruit* (destroyed village), marking a place that was quite literally pulverized during the war and never rebuilt. The French burial custom has been to build massive cemeteries such as the ones

at Verdun, Les Islettes, or Notre Dame de Lorette that impress by their sheer size. Ossuaries containing the remains of thousands of *inconnus* (unknown soldiers) stand as silent witnesses to the awesome power of modern weapons, most importantly artillery, to kill men without leaving sufficient remains to allow for identification or burial. The British have preferred to build smaller, more numerous cemeteries with the unique touch of including a personal statement from the family on the headstones. The Germans, too, built cemeteries with black, solemn crosses that stand in stark contrast to the gleaming white marble to be found in the American ones.

Driving away from the battlefield, a traveler might stop at any of a number of appealing French or Belgian towns to have a coffee or meal and try to get the horrors of what they have just seen out of their minds. But it will not take much imagination to see the impacts of the war in any town near the western front. Some, like Arras or Ypres, will have post cards for sale showing the astonishing destruction and devastation that left them mere piles of rubble. Others will have place names like Place Foch or Avenue Joffre named to honor the heroes of the war. One might even see an Avenue Haig or a Rue Pershing thrown in. Every French town, no matter how small or how far from the western front, will have a statue near the town hall commemorating the young men who died *pour la patrie* from 1914-1918. If one looks very closely, one will see a tragic recurrence of family names on such statues and, often on the back, the addition of a smaller number of names from the war of 1939-1945, seemingly added as an afterthought.

For Europeans, the war is the epochal event of the century. Without it, there would have been no great depression, no fascism, no Second World War, and no concentration camps. We will never know, of course, what the estimated 8 million Europeans who died in the course of the war might otherwise have contributed to politics, to medicine, or to art. What we do know is that Europe is still suffering from that huge loss of its best men and is still struggling to figure out how to even cope with their memory.

The American experience of World War I must therefore be kept in its proper perspective. Americans who do not understand what the war did to Europe will never really understand the Europe that emerged. Europe's ambivalent attitude toward the United States, its drive toward unification, and the relatively recent coming together of the French and German governments will all come into sharper focus if they are set against the backdrop of the killing of 1914-1918. Americans, a European might say over coffee in Arras, do not really understand war because it has not touched us as it has them.

For that, of course, we can all be very grateful. Although the war did not result in destruction for Americans on the European scale, it nevertheless had deep and often forgotten impacts on America. Perhaps most importantly, it led to fundamental, long-term changes in the way America (and Americans) relate to the outside world. It is hard to imagine today, but when Woodrow Wilson went to Paris for the postwar peace conference in early 1919, it marked the first time ever that a sitting American president had visited Europe. This was due to much more than the limits of transportation technology. It reflected instead an American mindset that clearly relegated European affairs to the back burner.

Woodrow Wilson forever changed that attitude, and with it he changed much more. Wilson committed America to international sponsorship of an idea of foreign policy based around the high-minded quest for democracy, capitalism, and freedom. While not all Americans have seen the problem in the way Wilson did and while even Wilson did not fully believe in all of the consequences of his own idealism, his way of viewing the world has bequeathed a legacy to every American leader since. Echoes of his belief in the use of American power to pave the way for ideals that would in turn secure the freedom and peace of peoples everywhere has influenced American foreign policy ever since. Presidents of both parties, down to the present day, have used Wilson's ideals and his language as the basis for their global involvement.

To many Europeans, these ideals have come, as Wilson hoped they would, as a breath of fresh air to a continent hopelessly mired in ancient hatreds. To others, they have come as a lofty intrusion from a society that they see as having more power than wisdom. Georges Clemenceau, France's hard-bitten premier, famously dismissed Wilson's idealistic Fourteen Points with the witty, "God Himself only gave us ten." In some versions of the anecdote, the anti-clerical Clemenceau followed that quip with "and we soon enough learned to break those." His principled distaste for Wilson's idealism notwithstanding (Clemenceau derisively called him "the professor"), Clemenceau had a deep admiration for America. As a young journalist, he had covered the end of the American Civil War, spoke English with American idioms, and had an American wife, at least until he had her deported on trumped up charges. His experiences with America are a symbolic microcosm of those of his French countrymen, and, more generally, Europeans across at least the western part of the continent.

Clemenceau and Wilson did agree on their shared dislike of communism. Although it is now hardly more than a footnote, even in American histories of the war, the United States sent an expedition to northern Russia from 1918 to 1920 to assist the noncommunist Whites in the Russian Civil War. Although ultimately unsuccessful in stopping the spread of Bolshevism, the incident showed Wilson's faith in the ability of even small numbers of American soldiers to influence world events. It can also be seen as the first real American shot in the Cold War, and one that Josef Stalin never fully forgave or forgot.

Historians short on space and teachers short on time like to contrast the interventionist Wilson to the supposedly isolationist years that followed. But the contrast is not entirely accurate. The United States rejected the Treaty of Versailles and refused to join the League of Nations, but those events are only part of the story. The United States did participate in a number of international conferences and programs designed to reduce world tensions; in many cases the United States provided the key leadership. These conferences included the Washington Conferences on Naval Disarmament, the Kellogg-Briand Pact that aimed to eliminate war as an act of statecraft, the Dawes and Young Plans to refinance German war debt, and the promotion of international trade in the hopes that nations that trade together would not go to war against one another. American isolationism, to the extent that it even existed, is therefore best seen as a desire not to go to war; it was not a desire to bury the nation's collective heads in the sand. The distinction is critical. A rough analogy might be found today in the environmental movement, where the United States is a recognized player and sometime leader,

but only on American terms, as the continued American refusal to sign the Kyoto Accords demonstrates.

The war had equally dramatic impacts on the American home front. The idea of intervening in a bloody and inconclusive European war for unclear gains generated tremendous controversy. Conservatives and many east coast elites supported American entry into the war in large part because they believed that the nation's honor had been impinged by repeated German insults such as submarine warfare and the notorious Zimmerman telegram promising Mexico parts of American territory in exchange for military intervention. Even before America entered the war, hundreds of young men from "good families" and Ivy League universities had volunteered their services for the French cause in the French Foreign Legion and an all-American fighter squadron called the Lafayette Escadrille. Among the Escadrille's most vocal supporters was the former president and Wilson nemesis Theodore Roosevelt, who praised the courage of young Americans willing to risk their lives and their American citizenship to fight for a cause that they believed to be just.

But not all Americans responded as Roosevelt did. In the Midwest and South there was widespread suspicion of entering the war and lukewarm feelings about America's potential British and French allies. Although few Americans supported the Central Powers after the callous German sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915, there was a deep chasm between anti-German sentiment and a desire to send American troops "Over There". The problems of Europe were a long way from the minds of most Americans and, censorship notwithstanding, Americans could read the newspapers and understand how murderous the battlefields of the western front were. Moreover, Americans were making money from their definition of neutrality, which permitted trade with both sides. Why put American safety and security at risk? Why kill the goose that laid the golden eggs?

Germany's decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare in April 1917 may have convinced Wilson and his advisers of the need for war, but millions of Americans remained unconvinced. The administration was worried about active opposition to the war from radical labor groups like the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), anti-British Irish-Americans, and ethnic Germans living in the Midwest and in most major cities. Aware of the need to build consensus and ensure support for the war, the government engaged in a massive public relations and propaganda campaign, the like of which the country had never seen. Newspapers and books combined with new media like movies to saturate the American people with images and ideas to promote the war. As with all propaganda, it is hard to know exactly how average Americans responded to these images. But Americans did rally around the flag and even opponents of the war generally gave the government its support once the country was officially at war.

The American experience of war may have been brief, but its impacts on the home front were dramatic. Among the groups most deeply affected were African-Americans, thousands of whom moved north to take jobs in the now booming northern factories. This "great migration" was a transformative event in African-American history as individuals and entire families left the sharecropping south and came north. While the jobs paid well and offered an

escape from the Jim Crow racism of the south, problems and violence emerged when white workers came back and demanded their jobs. Many also demanded that African-Americans return to the South as well. Nineteen-nineteen was a year of terrible racial violence characterized by widespread lynching. African-American deaths due to racial violence in the turbulent period 1917-1923 appear to have at least equaled, and may have exceeded, the number of African-American battle deaths. This figure is a function both of the general exclusion of African-Americans from the battlefield and the intensity of racial tension in the immediate postwar years.

The extent to which the war made the United States a "nation" remains a point of considerable debate among scholars. Some argue that the mass movement of people across the nation, the shared military service of Americans (in segregated units) raised across the nation, and increased government standardization of the economy all point to the emergence of a national mindset. World War I was the first large-scale crisis that required a shared response from Northerners and Southerners, Easterners and Westerners, city dwellers and farmers, men and women. The country had national heroes like John Pershing (born in Missouri), Alvin York (born in Tennessee), and Eddie Rickenbacker (born in Ohio). Having worked together to meet a common challenge, America, these scholars argue, was ready to face the 1920s era of mass media as people who identified themselves as Americans first and foremost.

This narrative is compelling, but it is not the full story. America remained deeply divided along numerous fault lines, especially that of race; the United States Army raised two African-American divisions for military service, but it treated one so brutally that it performed badly in combat and it gladly dispatched the other to the French Army, under whose guidance it won numerous citations. Most of the divisions in the United States Army, moreover, were National Guard units connected to a state. Many of the largest and most important monuments to the Americans on the Western Front are dedicated not to the United States Army, but to state units like the 28th Division from Pennsylvania, memorialized at Varennes in one of France's largest World War I monuments.

Perhaps what makes this complex war ultimately so difficult to teach is the absence of an easy and straightforward narrative. Although we recognize the limits of grand narrative, there is a simplicity in teaching the Civil War as the end of slavery and World War II as the destruction of Nazism and Japanese totalitarianism. World War I's narrative is much more complex and ultimately less satisfying to most students. Nevertheless, it is a critical part of American history and deserves a greater place in the curriculum than the parenthesis to which it all too often gets relegated.

Resources

Books:

Hew Strachan's *First World War* and my own *Fighting the Great War* are accessible to high school and college students; my *World War I Reader* contains excerpts from primary and secondary sources. For the American home front, David Kennedy's *Over Here* remains a

classic. Joe William Trotter's *The Great Migration*, Ronald Schaffer, *America in the Great War*, and Jennifer Keene's *The United States and the First World War* are also well worth recommending to students. Keene's is designed for classroom use and is written by one of the finest scholars in the field. Erez Manela's *The Wilsonian Moment* nicely dissects and analyzes the meaning of the Americans to the rest of world at the end of World War I.

Web sites:

http://www.abmc.gov (the site of the American Battle Monuments Commission, which overseas American cemeteries overseas)
http://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar (the Canadian War Museum's new trench warfare exhibit)
http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/
http://members.aol.com/TeacherNet/WWI.html
http://www.worldwar1.com
http://www.history.sfasu.edu/BaylorExhibit.html
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwone/index.shtml
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/games/western_front/index.shtml
http://www.1914-1918.net/
http://www.gwpda.org
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/rotogravures/rototime1.html
http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec/index.htm (the official site of the U. S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pa.)

Maps:

http://www.dean.usma.edu/history/web03/atlases/atlas%20home.htm
http://www.westernfront.co.uk/thegreatwar/maproom.php

Chapter 14:

The Battle of the Meuse-Argonne, 1918: Harbinger of American Great Power on the European Continent?

By Michael S. Neiberg

Standing on Governor's Island, just south of Manhattan, Elizabeth Coles Marshall watched her husband George board the *SS Baltic* with 190 of his fellow US Army officers. They were the vanguard of the new American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) command system, led by Gen. John Pershing. In order to maintain secrecy, the men were directed to come to Governor's Island in civilian clothes, although many wore their Army shoes and a few even carried swords on their belts. The secrecy was a wasted precaution in any case as journalists were on hand to report on the departure and crates carrying the words "General Pershing's Headquarters" had sat on the dock for days. There was even a cannon on hand to give the party an official sendoff. In retrospect, it is amazing that no German spy got word to a prowling U Boat commander of the exact place and time of the departure of the senior leaders of the US Army.

As she watched this odd assemblage board the *Baltic* to head overseas, Mrs. Marshall thought that "Dressed in antiquated civilian clothes, coat collars turned up in the absence of umbrellas or raincoats, such a dreadful looking lot of men could not possibly do any good in France."[1] She had good reason to worry. The American Army was headed off to the deadliest war yet known without appropriate doctrine, weapons, leadership, or staff system. And they were about to go into battle against the powerful German Army on the most dangerous terrain in the world.

Despite this inauspicious start, the AEF showed its mettle on the battlefield. The Americans needed a great deal of help from the French, British, and Australians, but they proved to be eager learners. Veteran soldiers from those armies taught the Americans how to fight a modern, combined-arms battle and provided the heavy weapons and modern staff systems that the Americans lacked. Driving French-made tanks and flying mostly French-made airplanes, the Americans learned that the war on the western front bore scant resemblance to the war they had trained for in the United States.[2]

Working within an overall Allied command structure the Americans slowly began to find their way. The French Marshal Ferdinand Foch set overall Allied strategy, but American generals

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[1] George C. Marshall, *Memoirs of My Services in the World War, 1917-1918* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 3.
[2] See, especially, Mark E. Grotelueschen, *The AEF Way of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

commanded American divisions. This arrangement allowed the Americans to prevent their soldiers from being sent in small pieces to French and British divisions but it also allowed the Americans to make maximum use of Allied corps and army staff systems.[3] Pershing persistently demanded the creation of an American First Army, with all of the AEF's troops under his direct command, as soon as possible. Foch agreed in principle, but he did not want to make major changes to the Allied system until the series of German offensives in 1918 had been stopped.

With American help, they were stopped. The AEF participated in small-scale (by 1918 standards) but critical operations at Cantigny and Château-Thierry. In both cases, the Americans had made serious mistakes but had shown both a willingness to fight and an ability to learn. They gained the respect of their British and French allies and of their German foes as well. In July, American divisions had played a decisive role at the Second Battle of the Marne, which put a final stop to the German offensives and allowed the Allied counteroffensives to begin. Foch determined shortly thereafter to create a First US Army on a dedicated American section of the western front.[4]

That section was centered on the St. Mihiel salient which jutted into Allied lines southeast of Verdun. Heavily defended and protected by favorable defensive terrain, the salient had sat there for the better part of four years. Foch gave Pershing the chance to eliminate it and Pershing leaped at the opportunity, finally concentrating the mass of his American divisions in one place. Mistakes and difficult terrain notwithstanding, the Americans accomplished the mission with the help of tanks and what was then the largest air armada ever assembled. Mrs. Marshall would have been proud at how much good her husband and his fellow Americans had managed to achieve.

With the St. Mihiel salient cleared by mid-September and with French and British armies advancing across the western front, Foch set his eyes on the main lateral railway that ran just behind, and roughly parallel to, the western front. That railway fed and moved the German armies. If the Allied armies could cut it, they would force the Germans out of their fixed defenses and into open country where the Allied advantages in armor, mechanization, and aviation would give them an insurmountable advantage.

Foch wanted the AEF to move northwest from St. Mihiel to the area bounded by the thick Argonne forest in the west and the mostly impassable Meuse River in the east. This movement would pressure and then cut the main railway link between the key rail depots of Mézières and

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[3] The Americans made one important exception in giving the French Army the 93rd Division, composed of African American National Guardsmen.
[4] Michael S. Neiberg, *The Second Battle of the Marne* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008) and Douglas V. Johnson and Rolf Hillman, *Soissons, 1918* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1999).

of Sedan. The Meuse-Argonne region was, however, heavily defended. German artillery on the heights of the eastern bank of the Meuse dominated the valley below and the forest canalized American movements, making surprise difficult to achieve. The region was defended, moreover, by three strong belts of defensive works, each named for a witch from German mythology. The Meuse-Argonne would be a very tough area for the still inexperienced AEF to conquer.

Pershing had preferred instead to attack to the northeast toward the railway junction at the historic town of Metz. From there, the AEF could advance to Thionville, another critical rail juncture. The terrain would also be more favorable to the kind of war Pershing wanted to fight and would not require the Americans to execute a major repositioning of their forces from St. Mihiel. Despite these arguments, Foch overruled Pershing because the proposed American movements would take their army away from those of the Allies, thus sacrificing the military principle of concentration of force. Foch, sensibly enough, wanted to keep the Allied armies moving in the same general direction. He used logic and not a little bit of flattery to convince Pershing, telling the American commander that only the Americans could accomplish so glorious a mission.[5] Pershing then quashed a proposal, supported by Brigadier General Douglas MacArthur and Colonel George Marshall, to attack in both the Meuse-Argonne and Metz sectors simultaneously.[6]

Foch's conclusions were strategically sound, but they did not make the operational task of the AEF any easier. AEF planners had less than two weeks to prepare for what was destined to become the largest and bloodiest battle ever fought by an American army. George Marshall and his staff had to redeploy and reposition a vast army of 600,000 men, 4,000 artillery pieces, and one million tons of supplies more than sixty miles in a region with primitive roads—and all without giving the upcoming offensive away to the Germans.[7] The result was a traffic jam of epic proportions. Even the French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, could not move through it.

These problems notwithstanding, Pershing remained confident. He planned to break the German lines in three stages. In the first, the AEF would advance through the German first line and outflank the dominant central heights of Montfaucon. He unrealistically expected to advance as many as ten miles in 36 hours in order to seize critical high ground before German reinforcements could rush into the area. Then in the second stage American forces would advance another ten miles toward the high ground around the town of Romagne. Once past Romagne, American troops could easily outflank German positions and open a clear route to

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[5] Edward Lengel, *To Conquer Hell: The Meuse-Argonne, 1918* (New York: Holt, 2008), Kindle Edition, location 1036.
[6] David Trask, *The AEF and Coalition Warmaking* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 112.
[7] Lengel, *To Conquer Hell*, Kindle edition, location 1314.

the rail junctures of Mézières and Sedan that were the campaign's operational goal. Finally, the AEF would cross the Meuse river, silence the German artillery batteries there and move into Mézières and Sedan themselves.

The plan was far too ambitious, especially for such green troops. Only three American divisions slated for the attack had seen serious fighting and two of those would ideally have been given a rest instead of being sent into the attack. Still, Pershing's doughboys had 2,800 artillery pieces to support their attack, an average of 156 guns per mile of front. They also had 821 airplanes (most of them French and many piloted by French airmen) and 182 French-built Renault tanks.[8] It represented an impressive accumulation of firepower. The French Fourth Army, commanded by the talented and pro-American Henri Gouraud, would protect the left flank of the American advance.[9] Pershing's staff drew even more confidence from reports suggesting that most German divisions in the area were under strength by as much as two-thirds and of generally poor quality.

The initial attack produced some impressive gains. The American divisions took much of the first German defensive line on day one and made serious progress toward outflanking Montfaucon. But the much stronger German defenses near Romagne proved to be too much and, as Pershing had feared, the Germans rushed five infantry divisions worth of reinforcements into the Meuse-Argonne sector within five days. German aviation and artillery kept up a steady harassment of American troops and German machine gunners used the forested terrain to deadly advantage. German soldiers expertly booby trapped any position that they had to yield and they used all of the cunning learned in four murderous years on the western front to make the Americans pay dearly for each and every inch they captured. The German practice of faking surrenders in order to draw Americans out of their trenches then firing on them with hidden machine guns turned this campaign very nasty very quickly. By the end, most American units had stopped taking prisoners.

As the fighting began to grind down to a halt, the weaknesses of the AEF became evident. Training was both inadequate and inappropriate to the actual conditions on the front. Pershing's emphasis on individual marksmanship and his doctrine of open warfare was much more suited to 1914 or even 1863 than it was to 1918; comparisons to Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg were commonplace.[10] Equipment was, in the words of the battle's chief historian, "wretched," and staff work primitive.[11] American soldiers were mentally and materially unprepared for the horrifying conditions of combat like this. Unknown thousands suffered

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[8] Trask, *The AEF and Coalition Warmaking*, 123.
[9] Gouraud was later named an honorary commander of the US 42nd "Rainbow" Division.
[10] See, especially, Grotelueschen, *The AEF Way of War*, for a solid critique of American tactics. For the comparisons to Pickett see Lengel, *To Conquer Hell*, Kindle edition, location 2187.
[11] Lengel, *To Conquer Hell*, Kindle edition, location 3958. He is especially critical of American aviation.

mental breakdowns and as many as one in ten simply walked away, creating a straggler problem that the Army never did find a way to solve.[12]

Symbolic of American failures and shortcomings was the episode of the Lost Battalion. Commanded by Major Charles Whittlesey, the First Battalion, 308th Regiment was filled with new and untrained men. On October 2, they attacked amid massive command confusion and ended up in a thickly wooded ravine with no support on either side. They were soon surrounded, with no hope of food, ammunition, or reinforcements, but they fought on. At one point, confusion in AEF ranks even led to their own artillery firing on them. By the time they were rescued they had just 194 of their original 554 men, and the survivors were in deplorable shape. Although reporters and the Army news bureau tried to make the episode heroic (the Army gave the battalion three medals of honor), it had clearly shown the inefficiencies and limitations of the AEF.[13]

Of course, many American soldiers fought well and led well. Among the most famous were Sgt. Alvin York, a reluctant soldier and deeply religious man from Tennessee who single-handedly killed 28 German soldiers and captured 132 others near the town of Chatel Chéhéry. Another was John Lewis Barkley, who broke up a German counterattack by himself when he climbed into an abandoned French tank and operated the machine gun. His actions saved an entire American battalion and earned him a medal of honor.[14]

Despite the best efforts of York, Barkley and thousands of others, however, by mid-October the Meuse-Argonne front had stagnated. Pershing responded by effectively promoting himself out of immediate command of the operation and turning over control to General Hunter Liggett. A distinctly portly and unmilitary looking man, Liggett was nevertheless a dedicated professional who had made a lifelong study of his profession. He was well-respected in both the American and French armies.[15] Liggett rotated tired units out of the line and brought in divisions that were relatively fresh, if usually inexperienced.

The increasing number of German prisoners of war, many of them very young or very old, showed that the tide was at last turning. The sheer weight of American divisions combined with the tactical improvement of many of their companies and platoons were starting to show.

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[12] See Richard S. Faulkner, "Disappearing Doughboys: The American Expeditionary Forces' Straggler Crisis in the Meuse-Argonne" *Army History* 83 (Spring, 2012), 6-25. Faulkner is skeptical that the problem was quite as bad as one in ten soldiers, but it was certainly a serious crisis.

[13] Whittlesey went on to be a reluctant hero and was at the unveiling of the Unknown Soldier memorial at Arlington Cemetery. Shortly afterward, however, he committed suicide by jumping from an ocean liner bound for Havana.

[14] His story is now retold in a new edition of his memoirs edited by Steven Trout. See John Lewis Barkley, *Scarlet Fields: The Combat Memoir of a World War I Medal of Honor Hero* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2012). A 1930 edition of these memoirs appeared under the title *No Hard Feelings*.

[15] For a brief and flattering biographical sketch see Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 249-251.

The Germans, by contrast, were quickly reaching the end of their manpower. Successful French and British attacks on other parts of the line made the AEF's task in the Meuse-Argonne region easier by tying down German reserves and overloading the German logistical system.

The AEF made a final push on November 1 amid rumors that armistice negotiations would soon begin. That night, realizing that they were fighting a losing battle, the Germans abandoned the west bank of the Meuse, leaving the strategic heights of Romagne and Cunel safely in American hands. The Germans did, however, continue to defend the Mézières to Sedan rail line, which remained in their hands until November 7.

The American Expeditionary Forces fought in the Meuse-Argonne region for 47 days. According to official figures, they suffered 117,000 casualties and inflicted just under 100,000 casualties on the Germans. This figure included 26,000 prisoners of war taken. The Americans also seized 874 artillery pieces and 3,000 machine guns.[16] Given the enormousness of the task and the strength of the Germans defenses, Pershing and his staff were proud of the AEF's achievements, even as they recognized their own shortcomings. Allied generals, however, were quick to criticize the amateurish nature of American staff work. Still, had the armistice not come, it was evident to all that the Americans would have played the leading role in any 1919 campaign.

Today the Meuse-Argonne region is home to many monuments that commemorate what was then the largest battle in American history. Particularly noteworthy is the massive, but crumbling, monument to the Pennsylvanians who seized the key town of Varennes and the American monument that towers triumphantly over the ruins of the old town of Montfaucon. Tucked into the woods of the area are some intact German defenses, including one that sheltered the German Crown Prince, that give a sense of the strength of the German defensive lines. But the most important and impressive of them all is the American military cemetery at Romagne. It contains the remains of 14,200 American soldiers who fell at the Meuse-Argonne. The largest American cemetery in Europe, it is a beautiful and haunting reminder of the sacrifice of the generation who hoped that the World War would truly be the war to end all wars.

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[16] *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1938), 186. This book also serves as a guide to monuments and key locales. Much of the writing and research was supervised by an Army major who did not see action in the war named Dwight Eisenhower.

Chapter 15:

The Gathering Storm: From World War I to World War II

By Williamson Murray

On September 1, 1939, twenty years and three months after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, war broke out again in Europe. It is one of the great conundrums of history that after the catastrophe of World War I, another massive catastrophic war could have happened, one that brought even more destruction to Europe and world civilization than World War I.

One of the many explanations historians have given is that the origins of World War II are directly attributable to the Treaty of Versailles--that Versailles was much too harsh a peace, and that the Germans should have been given an easy peace that brought them into the European community. From my perspective, this is simply wrong.[1] Too often historians fail to take into account the context within which events happen. Certainly from our perspective today, a wonderful, easy peace on Germany might have made some difference in preventing World War II. But that misses the context of 1919 and how World War I had broken out. It had been deliberately instigated and caused by the German Reich--perhaps not quite to the extent that World War II (at least in terms of Europe) was caused by Nazi Germany, but German behavior in the first months of the war was extraordinary by any account. This is something historians have begun to notice as we come to understand the profound impact World War I had on world history.

Six thousand civilians--men, women and children--were executed in Belgium and northern France by German troops in August-September 1914. The Germans claimed the civilians were engaged in guerrilla warfare; in fact, historians' reconstruction of these events indicates that these were friendly-fire incidents or simply retreating troops. It was an extraordinary atrocity, notwithstanding that it has been overwhelmed by later crimes in places like Auschwitz, where the Germans moved from killing thousands to millions. In 1914, the excuse was military necessity as Germany invaded Belgium and Luxembourg, countries with which Germany had signed treaties promising to respect their neutrality. (The German chancellor told the British ambassador in July 1914 that these treaties were just "scraps of paper.")

In addition to the Germans' criminal treatment of Belgian and French civilians in German-occupied areas, Operation Albrecht in winter 1916-17, as the Germans retreated, devastated approximately 10,000 square miles of French territory. Every single tree was cut down, every

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[1] *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War*, Williamson Murray and James Lacey, eds. (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

well was poisoned, the entire population was removed, and all the bridges and infrastructure were ruined. As late as October-November 1918, German troops retreating from the French territories were poisoning the landscape, flooding coalmines, and destroying factories.

The way World War I ended gave the peacemakers at Versailles an impossible problem. First, no Allied troops were on German territory when the war ended. Consequently, Germans across the political spectrum almost immediately claimed that their army had stood unbroken and unbeaten in the field. But German records and the testimony of German officers before the Reichstag in 1924 prove that this is false. Some German divisions were down to 200 men, companies were down to as few as 10-20 men, and platoons no longer existed. There were 700,000 deserters by fall 1918. The German Army had been defeated and crushed, but the Germans simply hid that reality. They pretended that they had accepted the armistice because they believed doing so would aid Woodrow Wilson's 14 points campaign. The result, within a year or two of the armistice, was a sense of deep wrong on the part of the German people that had virtually no justification.

Of course, there was no possibility of an easy peace, nor indeed of a harsh peace as in 1945. Versailles fell between two stools. It did not address the fact that Germany was the most powerful country in Europe and (had it not waged World War II) over the next 20-40 years was clearly going to resume its pre-1914 position as a semi-hegemonic power in Europe.
British and French politicians would have been lynched by their populations had they proposed an easy peace. The sacrifices of the French and English people were such that there was no way they were going to allow such an outcome, nor should they have, given German behavior. When General Pershing was told about the armistice in October 1918 and asked what terms the allies should give the Germans, he warned that unless the peace was dictated in Berlin, we risked repeating such a war. He was right.

World War I had a huge, baleful influence on Europe's entire political spectrum in the 1920s and 1930s. Those years saw the emergence of the Soviet Union, a state that rejected the entire European past--both economic and political and the state system--and believed in world revolution. The second great strategic result of World War I was the appearance of what the Germans called the *saison* states in Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, the Baltic States, Finland) that had been part of the great empires of 1914 (Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Germany). These new states were incapable of cooperating with each other politically, militarily, or economically. So while Germany had suffered military defeat, its economic and political potential remained and gave it an easy road to dominating Eastern Europe. In 1914 Germany had three great powers on its frontier, which had given it great strategic and military angst. In 1919, it had only one--France, which had been severely damaged psychologically and economically by the results of World War I.

The European powers' reaction to World War I in the 1920s is extremely important for understanding the context of how Nazi Germany and fascist Italy arose and the events of the late 1930s. There was a sense in Britain when the war was over and the German fleet had been surrendered that Germany was no longer a strategic threat. The conundrum was that economically, prewar Germany had been Britain's most important trading power. For Britain to regain its economic position in the world, it needed a strong trading partner in Germany.

Moreover, by the late 1920s popular thinking about the war was heavily influenced by a number of stunning literary pieces. Unfortunately, some of the greatest literature of the twentieth century is no longer read in literature courses in universities and high schools because it involves war. Robert Graves' *Good-bye to All That* (1929), Siegfried Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930), Guy Chapman's *Passionate Prodigality* (1933), Frederic Manning's *The Middle Parts of Fortune* (1930) were brilliant books, great literary triumphs. There was the poetry of Wilfred Owen among others. All of these were deeply antiwar and understandably so, because all of these men had experienced World War I close up. This literature underlines the crushing impact of battles like the Somme and Passchendaele on the British psyche, which had been completely unprepared for that kind of sacrifice and catastrophe. If you have the chance to travel around northern France and any of the battlefields, it's well worth seeing the great Thiepval memorial to British soldiers, at which there are inscribed 76,000 names of soldiers whose bodies were never recovered. At the Menin Gate there are another 20,000; the list goes on and on.

The attitude in the British polity from the early-mid 1930s through to spring 1939 was that there was no reason why a country should go to war--there was absolutely nothing worth defending. In a world of reasonable men, war could be avoided. The result was a complete ahistoricism and an incapacity to understand the danger that fascist Italy and Nazi Germany represented. That explains a great deal about the British response--in particular, the response of Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister from March 1937 to May 1940. To Chamberlain, all one needed to do to settle differences between the democratic powers of Europe and the dictators was to sit down with them and list one's desiderata; all matters could be settled peacefully. No matter how disastrous that looks from our perspective, this was the view of nearly the entire British polity at the time. Winston Churchill held a quite different position as he commented in the *Daily Mail* in summer 1934, when Europeans were going on vacation and deporting themselves as if there were no troubles at all even as Germany was arming. Right from the beginning, Churchill understood and made it clear in his speeches and writings that Nazi Germany represented not only a terrible moral danger but a terrible strategic danger. We know that Churchill was right, but his warnings went unheeded at the time.

The American response to the end of World War I was "Good, we can go back and stick our heads in the sand; what happens in the rest of the world doesn't matter." The war was seen as the fault of the merchants of death and the bankers. Combined with that was the kind of irresponsibility that Congress can show at times. The Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 destroyed the world economy. It turned a major recession into a catastrophic world depression, which had a huge impact across the board in Europe and the Pacific, particularly on the political leaderships of Germany and Japan.

The French recognized that the Germans were going to come back. They feared Germany, dreaded the future, and understood that they could not handle the German problem by themselves. France had to depend on the British, Russians, Poles, and anyone else who would sign up to help them. When help was not forthcoming, the French were incapable of acting on their own.

As to the Germans, right from the beginning, from 1919 on, there was a deep bitterness, not at the Treaty of Versailles--that was the excuse--but at the fact that they had lost the war. The sense was that somehow history had been unjust and the world had ganged up on Germany, that Germany had been completely mistreated. Moreover, there was a very different reaction to World War I that is difficult for us to understand unless we're willing to read some first-class literature. The greatest twentieth-century novelist in Germany was arguably Ernst Juenger, who wrote probably the best book on World War I, *Storm of Steel* (1920). It's a very disquieting book. Juenger served as a front-line combat infantry officer on the Western Front. He was wounded 17 times. He was awarded the pour le Mérite, which was given to very few combat veterans. Juenger thought World War I was wonderful, that every generation should have the opportunity to experience it. He wrote many other novels before he died in 1998 at the age of 102, and his collection of books and other writings is extraordinary. But his great book on World War I was *Storm of Steel* (*In Stahlgewittern*, retranslated excellently by Michael Hofmann in 2003). This was not Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929), which was as unpopular in Germany as it was popular in Britain, France, and the United States. *Storm of Steel* represented the German intellectual and literary reaction to World War I. That in itself should tell us a great deal.

There is another important element here having to do with government's use of history. We now know that beginning in 1919 the German government waged a massive disinformation campaign on the subject of who had caused World War I and how Germany had acted during the course of that war.[2] The arguments of the German government persuaded not only the

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[2] See Holger H. Herwig, "Clio Deceived: Patriotic Self–censorship in Germany after the Great War," *International Security*, Fall 1987.

German population but a substantial number of American and British academics in straight-out misuse of the documents and history of the period. The books of historian Sidney Fay, notably *The Origins of the World War* (1928; rev. 1930) are utter nonsense. The German government got him to write this nonsense by providing him with numerous fellowships to Germany, where they showed him a selected choice of documents which he further distorted.

We also have to understand that while World War I bears a major responsibility for bringing the Nazis to power, the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923--the one case where the French acted decisively on their own--also played a role, as did the Great Depression. By winter 1932-33 some 40 percent of the German working population was jobless. Adolf Hitler came to power by creating an ideology based on race. The Nazis identified the enemy as racial, where the communists and USSR identified the enemy as class. Both of them threw huge numbers of innocent people into categories that allowed their respective states to follow their murderous paths to the future.

I highly recommend the HBO movie "Conspiracy" (2002, Kenneth Branagh and Stanley Tucci), which I've shown to my classes at the Naval Academy. It depicts the January 1942 Wannsee Conference in which the leadership of Nazi Germany decided bureaucratically how they were going to solve the problem of there being 6-7 million Jews on the European continent and how they would get rid of them. It is a chilling, frightening meeting.

In addition to an ideology that defined the Jews as the enemy of world civilization, Hitler argued that the Aryans, exemplified by the Germans, were the center of all advances in world civilization. In order to survive, the Aryans were going to have to expand and enslave the populations of Eastern Europe, which began on September 1, 1939. The German actions in the first six months of the occupation of Poland were not aimed at the Jews, but at the mass extermination of Polish professors, religious leaders, and intellectuals. Jews were crowded into concentration camps. The Nazi aim was to enslave Europe from the Urals to the Bay of Biscay.

After Hitler came to power on January 30, 1933, Nazi Germany undertook a massive rearmament. Four days after he took power, Hitler met with his senior generals and made clear that he was willing to give them a blank check to rebuild Germany's military into the most powerful instrument in Europe. He also made clear that it was going to be used not to restore Germany to the position that it held in 1914, but to overturn the European state system as it had existed since the seventeenth-century Treaty of Westphalia.

The world now entered into the truly depressing period of the 1930s. In 1933 Hitler withdrew Germany from the League of Nations; in 1935 he began rearmament and conscription and announced the formation of the Luftwaffe. In 1936 the Germans remilitarized the Rhineland,

from which the French had withdrawn in 1931, well before the Treaty of Versailles had said they had to. There were of course other signposts along the way to the destabilization of Europe. There's a tendency to look at this period as if there was a linear set of events. Yes, there was the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, in 1936 the Spanish Civil War. But those were peripheral events. In fact, Hitler had a meeting in 1937 where a number of his followers argued for giving additional aid to Franco in order to end the Spanish Civil War. Hitler disagreed, arguing that that war was a wonderful smokescreen as German rearmament proceeded on its course.

In 1938, the chickens came home to roost. Chamberlain's government made a major effort throughout the year to appease Germany at almost any cost. The result was the occupation of Austria in March 1938, which was greeted by the Austrians with huge enthusiasm, notwithstanding the continuing Austrian claim that they were the first country to be raped by the Nazis. That was followed in summer 1938 by the Czech crisis, in which the Germans demanded that the Sudeten Germans be brought back into Germany, of which they'd never been a part. A crisis was manipulated by Hitler with the aim of causing a European war. Hitler never believed that the British and French were going to enter the conflict. He believed he could get away with an invasion of Czechoslovakia and wanted to try out his new military. In retrospect, it would have been a disaster for the Germans. We'd be talking right now about a small war that had occurred in 1938-40 and Germany's defeat. But Chamberlain set in motion a set of events that eventually resulted in the Munich agreement of late September 1938 and the destruction of Czechoslovakia.[3] Chamberlain believed in sitting down with the dictators and getting them to agree to a reasonable settlement, but of course the settlement was not reasonable. It destroyed Czechoslovakia's independence and chance to defend itself and turned over to the Germans not only the Sudeten Germans but within six months the rest of Czechoslovakia, which the Germans occupied in March 1939.

The British missed the entire strategic framework within which the crisis was taking place. The Czech divisions were a key component of France's capacity to defend itself in 1938, and the Czech army would have been in 1939. When it was all over, Chamberlain returned to Great Britain to huge acclamations and popularity. On October 5, Winston Churchill gave what may be the greatest speech of his entire career to a House of Commons that booed him and was outraged by what he said:

> "All is over. Silent, mournful, abandoned, broken Czechoslovakia recedes into the darkness. She has suffered in every respect by her association with France, under whose guidance and policy she has been actuated for so long…. Every position has been undermined and abandoned on specious and plausible excuses.

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[3] See Williamson Murray, *The Change of the European Balance of Power, 1938-39: The Path to Ruin* (1984)

I do not grudge our loyal, brave people, who were ready to do their duty no matter what the cost, who never flinched under the strain of last week, the natural, spontaneous outburst of joy and relief when they learned that the hard ordeal would no longer be required of them at the moment; but they should know the truth…. They should know that we have sustained a defeat without a war, the consequences of which will travel with us along our road; they should know that we have passed an awful milestone in our history, when the whole equilibrium of Europe has been deranged and that the terrible words have for the time been spoken against the Western Democracies: 'Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.' And do not suppose that this is the end. This is the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup."

How right he was. Occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 turned around the European situation to the point that the Chamberlain government confronted a storm of outrage in the country. Accordingly, within two weeks of the German occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia, Britain extended guarantees to Poland and virtually every country in Eastern Europe, none of which it could actually honor militarily, because the Chamberlain government had not rearmed Britain seriously.

Hitler's response to this probably would have happened anyway. He ordered the German high command to prepare German forces for an invasion of Poland to take place on September 1, 1939. The German forces were ready, and the invasion took place.
Chamberlain was not preparing the allies for war, but attempting diplomatically to deter Germany from going to war. That's why the guarantees were given, why the support for the French was now forthcoming both militarily and politically, and why the British were so willing and enthusiastic about reestablishing the connections they had had with France in World War I.

The great question mark in summer 1939 was what the Soviet Union would do. Most of the liberals expected that it would sign up for a great antifascist crusade. We now understand that this was not a liberal democratic regime but a regime of enormous evil. What Stalin understood in March 1939 when the British and French guarantees were sprinkling the landscape of Eastern Europe was that he had two choices: dealing with the Germans or the Western Powers. In the case of the former, he could avoid war, sit back and watch the capitalist powers (according to Soviet ideology) destroy themselves, and then come in and pick up the pieces after the war had severely damaged both the Germans and the West. It is, thus, easy to see what choice Stalin was going to make. On the other hand, the Germans did not wake up until June 1939, when they realized how advantageous a deal with the Soviets would be: there would be no Eastern Front, if the Western Powers honored their commitment to Poland. The result was the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, or Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, of August 1939. Stalin and his advisors believed this would minimize the German danger. Again,

according to the country's Marxist ideology, Hitler was the puppet of the capitalists. But Germans would follow him much more enthusiastically than the Russian, Ukrainian, and other populations were going to follow Stalin. The Soviet regime had grossly misread the Nazis' power and intentions.

The signing of the August 1939 pact sealed the fate of Poland, which was now in an impossible situation. Again, one of the great tragedies of World War II is the fate of Poland. Nearly 2 million Polish civilians (non-Jews) died in the war. One of the most moving memorials in Normandy is to the Polish armored division, which fought through to Falaise in August 1944. They knew their country was going to go down the drain, that it would be occupied by the Soviet Union. They had few illusions.

The attitude of the Soviets themselves is best summed up by three remarks. The first is a toast Stalin made at the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. He toasted "Heinrich Himmler, the man who has brought order to Germany." The second came in June 1940, in which Molotov congratulated the German ambassador on the spectacular and wonderful victory of the German Army over the French and the British. The third remark occurred on June 22, 1941, when Molotov commented to the German ambassador "What have we done to deserve this?" He was right. The one agreement the Soviet Union lived up to faithfully from beginning to end was the Nonaggression Pact, and the results for the Russian and Ukrainian populations would be 27 million dead by the time the war was over.

Chapter 16:

World War II and Its Meaning for Americans

By David Eisenhower

When America went to an all-volunteer force in the 1970s, many predicted that a gap in outlook would arise between the military and civilian worlds. To counter the growing gap that has indeed arisen, military history and subjects like World War II need to be taught more widely.

Understanding World War II--the decisive passage of twentieth-century American history--requires a background, rudimentary knowledge of the concepts and terms of military history. To neglect military history in our schools and on our campuses would indeed amount to an "erasure of national memory" that we can't afford. Amnesia about the wars of American history undermines Americans' ability to reach the informed decisions about military affairs that, as citizens and taxpayers, they are obliged to reach.

Understanding the story of WWII begins with knowing the stories and views of those who fought in it. In June 1984, President Reagan began his remarks at the U.S. cemetery above Omaha Beach in Normandy with extensive quotations from correspondence between Lisa Zanatta Henn and her late father, a First Division soldier who landed with the first wave at Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944. Only after quoting Private Zanatta extensively did President Reagan venture his view of Normandy's lasting meanings: that the landings there had opened a phase of a victorious Allied campaign that would win the war in the West and secure freedom there for the indefinite future. President's Reagan's view seemed bold at the time, but it was to be vindicated by the sudden end of the Cold War several years later.

Twenty years earlier, in an interview with Walter Cronkite filmed at the same location, Dwight Eisenhower had been more cautious. The Allied victory over the Nazis, he told Cronkite, had not solved the problem of peace in our time but had given the Allies a "chance to do better" in the decades to come. Separated by twenty years, these differing assessments had one thing in common: both presidents agreed that the victory in WWII had had a positive and lasting result.

WWII and WWI

The meaningful outcome of WWII seems to set it apart from most major events of the twentieth century. It is evident here at the First Division Museum and the mansion of WWI veteran and newspaper owner Robert McCormick that McCormick saw his participation in

the First Division battle at Cantigny as one of the most important events in his life. Yet two decades after Cantigny, McCormick emerged as the foremost champion of "America First," opposing war against the same enemy he had fought at Cantigny. About the terrors and waste of war, McCormick arrived at a number of conclusions shared by a majority of Americans of his day, conclusions shared in part by Franklin Roosevelt, McCormick's great nemesis in the "America-First" debate.

In the summer of 1999, my father, John, who was completing his book *Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I* (2001), invited me to accompany him on his final research trip to France. We went for a week of research and touring in the Argonne-Meuse and St. Mihiel sectors.

Our itinerary was a repeat of the tour of the same area that Dad's father had taken him on 70 years before. At that time, Major Dwight Eisenhower was finalizing his work on a guidebook he was compiling for the American Battle Monuments Commission and General Pershing. Major Eisenhower's ABMC guidebook is as useful as ever--Dad and I relied on it in 1999. In nearby Verdun I picked up a second guidebook, published by the French-German Verdun Foundation that maintains that battlefield, scene of the epic 1916 battle for control of the high ground north of the city which claimed 1 million French and German lives. The preface explains that the Foundation is "dedicated to maintaining the Verdun battlefield eternally so that future generations can visit and consider the question—how it was that our two governments could ever have permitted this to happen."

Histories of the Great War tend to suggest that it was a meaningless conflict. Yet in hindsight, we can appreciate that meaninglessness on the scale of the Great War could not fail to generate meanings--and malevolence--on a commensurate scale. In any event, WWII, unlike WWI, ended in clear-cut victory with enduring positive effects. If the Great War brought an end to an established way of life, WWII opened doors to a new and better way of life.

WWII and the Twentieth Century

Granddad was generally reluctant to discuss any aspect of the war. But he felt sure that in an eventful century, WWII had been the decisive event. The twentieth century was a time of unprecedented innovation and progress, haunted throughout by tremendous dislocations, the Great Depression, and the two world wars and their aftermath. Born in the horse and buggy era, by the time Eisenhower was a teenager automobiles had appeared in great numbers and the Wright brothers had pioneered flight. Aviation and mobility transformed warfare by 1941 and transformed America into an economic, military, and industrial superpower. His military career spanned it all--the era of horse drawn artillery and the slow and noisy tanks making

their appearance in WWI, the era of air fleets and modern naval ships, the atomic era. During his presidency, America entered the computer age, the television age, and the space age. America prevailed in all of these new departures, none less so than in war.

Indeed, Dwight Eisenhower regarded his wartime service as more important than his two terms as president. My favorite story illustrating this was told to me by my great-uncle Milton. In 1954, when Milton was president of Penn State University, his brother, President Eisenhower, agreed to deliver the commencement address. Penn State is huge, and just as the hour for the outdoor ceremony approached, the rains came and the event had to be transferred indoors, a massive logistical undertaking. A slightly panic-stricken Milton apologized to Ike for the pandemonium and the makeshift arrangements, whereupon Ike smiled. "Milton, since June 6, 1944, I've never worried about the rain."

What WWII Teaches about Americans

The study of WWII illuminates many positive aspects of America and of Americans: their adaptability to change, their innovativeness, their keen sense of citizenship. Americans do not routinely reflect on positives about themselves. If books and newspapers are a guide, Americans are accustomed to going about their lives in a state of earnest concern about the manifold problems that public figures insist are all around us. Americans live with constant reminders of social, political, and cultural divides, reminders that America is a 50-50, red-blue nation, reminders of battles being lost and promises to keep. American history is routinely presented as a story of unfulfilled promises, not as a story to be celebrated but as a legacy to be redeemed.

It is fair to ask how many Americans have NOT lived--if informed critics are to be believed--under the most corrupt government in our history. How often can we pause and say that American policies are NOT on the point of bringing ourselves and others to the brink of disaster, discredit, and the apocalypse? Our recent history, including WWII, can be chronicled as a long series of setbacks and mistakes, punctuated by stunning and complete victories which seem to catch informed Americans by surprise. Yet the truth is that Americans are fortunate and know it. They are creative, restless, hopeful, and optimistic, unwilling to exchange places with anyone anywhere.

This paradoxical truth--an outwardly self-critical bent, on the one hand, contrasted with America's steady record of growth and progress on the other--will in my opinion interest historians well into the future. Five hundred years from now, historians will perhaps look back on America in the 1940s and speculate about the origins of globalization, which began to emerge in the war's immediate aftermath. In mid-twentieth century America, they may trace

the origins of patterns of government, commerce, and society prevailing centuries from now. However they feel about America, the lessons of American dynamism will certainly be explored.

In the context of WWII history, the facts of American dynamism can be summed up by a single fateful strategic and military fact. Looking back to 1943-44, whereas a German invasion of England across the 25-mile-wide Channel proved to be beyond Germany's capabilities; whereas a Russian, German, Japanese, French, Chinese, or even British military move in strength aimed at any place in North or South America would have been unthinkable, Americans thought little of mobilizing 16 million men and women, transporting them across the seas, and hurling them against the finest armies of Eurasia. Would it not be ironic--even tragic--if these key facts about us that will be so apparent to future historians were to be obscured or missed by us?

Today's foreign policy news mostly features the latest problems, the ongoing erosion of our wartime and postwar partnerships, the malaise of NATO, America's estrangement from the UN, the problem of working out exit strategies to salvage what a sizeable number of people see unfolding in Iraq as yet another Vietnam. Yet we are committed to the idea of making things better and to the study of history as a guide and so shouldn't we, as a practical matter, study success as well as failure? Shouldn't Americans have a full appreciation of the possibilities opened up and demonstrated by the record of American successes?

Maybe the slump in interest about the war has something to do with the dynamics of historical memory. Among history's lessons is that considerable time passes before history's verdicts take hold. As a boy in Gettysburg, I well remember the summer of 1963, the centennial of the battle of Gettysburg, when the state of Alabama--the last state to do so--finally contributed a monument to the Alabamians. On hand for Alabama's dedication ceremony was Governor George Corley Wallace of Alabama, who would go on to wage bitter end resistance to the plain lessons of the Civil War for yet another twenty years, before finally, and sincerely, seeing the light.

We are still some 35 years shy of the WWII centennial. Maybe then the positives of the war, which have now been on display for over sixty years, will be even more fully appreciated: American dynamism, the practical benefits of democracy, along with the possibilities demonstrated for fuller international military and political cooperation and reminders about citizenship.

International Cooperation

The possibilities opened up for future international cooperation is one of the war's most important legacies. As one who knew Dwight Eisenhower as a grandfather for 21 years, I can't help reflecting on the unlikelihood of this aspect of his career, given his background and expectations. In 1911, when he left his home town of Abilene for good, embarking for West Point and a career that would send him to 30 duty stations around the world, the last thing on his mind was the idea of achievements that would symbolize international understanding. He first wanted a free education and second a military education. Several summers ago, my wife, Julie, and I and our youngest daughter drove through Abilene again, to be reminded once again that there are few places in America more remote from the cosmopolitan centers of the seaboards and cities overseas where Eisenhower and his wartime colleagues would perform their greatest service.

What Eisenhower and other Americans discovered is that people everywhere are pretty much the same. Like people everywhere, Abileners go about their daily lives, they strive, they pursue personal goals and interests, they raise families, make friends, they want change for the better and the chance to lead meaningful lives.

To be sure, Americans place the accent on "change," Dwight Eisenhower being an example. In fact there was no Dwight David Eisenhower raised in Abilene in the 1890's. Granddad was born and christened David Dwight Eisenhower. When he entered West Point in June 1911, he switched his first and second names because he liked the sound of "Dwight D." better.

Registering at West Point, he listed "Tyler, Texas" as his birthplace instead of "Denison," Texas, evidently because in those days it was considered better to be from Tyler. He also omitted the fact that he had played pro ball in the KOM league in the summers of 1909 and 1910, figuring West Point would be none the wiser and he would thereby be eligible for football. The idea was to get ahead, to change for the better. Many Americans of his era took similar advantage of the absence of precise public personal data records.

Parenthetically, Granddad held to the fiction of amateur athletic status all his life. In 1947 at a Dodgers-Giants game at Ebbetts field in Brooklyn, the Dodger publicist (Red Patterson) who accompanied him to the park asked General Eisenhower about the long-standing rumors that DDE had once played pro ball in the KOM league under the alias of "Wilson." It had been 1909-10, according to the rumors, but Patterson told Ike that league records indicated there were two Wilsons in the league. Which one was he? "The one who could hit," Ike replied.

Like so many nineteenth-century Americans facing the challenges of the wider world beyond, Ike felt he needed an edge. So he changed his name and birthplace, omitted a detail here and there, showing that America was--and should be--a place where it doesn't matter who you are, just what you become.

Dwight Eisenhower was as Kansan and American as they came, adaptable and open. He remained so as he advanced through West Point and his military career, striving to exhibit "Duty Honor Country," West Point's motto. Eisenhower rose in the service of Douglas MacArthur and George Marshall, architects of the twentieth-century American military, becoming a military commander of the first order. Their main challenge, of course, was leadership in WWII, which marked the advent of revolutionary factors in warfare and international affairs. Significantly, the single most important strategic reality faced was that U.S. strategic objectives could not be achieved by American power alone. Coalition warfare was new for the U.S. but essential for success in the war. The American leadership was obliged to think in terms of allies, of harmonizing political and military aims within a diverse coalition, of building consensus beyond the letter of agreements, as something vitally necessary and possible. In the most destructive war in history, American, British, French, and Polish forces fought as a single army, in company with the Russian armies in the east. No one emerged knowing better than he the critical importance of international cooperation, or more profoundly aware of the possibilities of cooperation.

One of his favorite memories, which has been described in books, involved the King and Queen of England. On May 26, 1944 during the climactic final days of planning and preparations for Overlord, Eisenhower took time away from meetings to call on the royal family at Buckingham Palace. Eisenhower had nothing but reverence for the English royal family, which had honored him with friendship and hospitality. Yet he was apprehensive. The King, afflicted by ill health since youth, was notoriously quiet and shy and hampered by a speech impediment. Staff members remembered how the King and Eisenhower in Tunisia had once ridden together in a jeep for several hours in complete silence. But on this May day King George was gregarious.

Over lunch, served buffet style in an upstairs apartment, the three reminisced. The Queen told Eisenhower for the first time about something that had happened on a tour of Windsor Castle that had been arranged for him two years before. It turned out that the guide, Colonel Sterling, had forgotten that the royals were on the grounds. The couple were sipping tea in a garden when they suddenly heard Sterling, Eisenhower, and General Mark Wayne Clark approaching. Not wanting to intrude, they had knelt on hands and knees behind the hedge until the Americans and Sterling passed by. Eisenhower was delighted by the story and the three shared a good laugh.

Back at HQ, Eisenhower described the luncheon to his closest aide. During the dessert course, he did not notice that his napkin had fallen to the floor. Yet he felt no self-consciousness or embarrassment when the King had mentioned it to him. "It could have been like visiting a friend in Abilene," Ike remarked.

"Kinship among nations is not determined in such measurements as proximity, size, and age," Dwight Eisenhower said in June 1945, while accepting the Freedom of London in a speech at the Guildhall. "Rather we should turn to those inner things . . . those intangibles that are the real treasures that free men possess. . . . If we keep our eyes on this guidepost, then no difficulties along our path of mutual cooperation can ever be insurmountable."

Cooperation among nations did not mean adopting a new consciousness or a brand new view of human nature or shedding old identities rooted in family, community and country. Nor was Eisenhower's wartime role merely one of a harmonizer of differing points of view, a mere compromiser. The strategy debates were as intense as the historical record implies and they left a deep mark on the conduct of the war and postwar politics. But strategy differences did not impede victory.

Success Factors

What was the secret of the Allies' success and Eisenhower's success as an Allied Commander? My conclusion is that Eisenhower's approach towards the various strategy controversies was to assume that regardless of nationality, people would reason their way to similar conclusions. In the various command controversies, he assumed that everyone, British and American leaders alike, having accepted the basic aims implied by the "unconditional surrender" policy, would come together behind the key elements of grand strategy that stemmed logically from the policy.

The remarkable D-Day exhibit here allowed us to try and imagine what the First Division soldiers went through on the morning of D-Day. All the exhibits bore reminders that the First Division of the time was comprised of citizen-soldiers--citizens who, as fate would have it, were obliged to endure great trials.

In 1982, my wife and I toured the invasion zone in southern England and northwest France. Along the Normandy coast, we hiked through the remnants of the Atlantic Wall in the Omaha Beach area and visited the cemeteries. We strolled through Ste-Mere-Eglise and along Utah Beach and the British and Canadian beaches that stretch eastward to Caen. These sites stand

as monuments to the ingenuity, the bravery, and the highest ideals of citizenship which the soldiers of D-Day exemplified.

We continued on to southern England, which had been one large military encampment in late May-early June 1944. We visited the 101ˢᵗ Airborne bivouac area where Granddad had dropped in on the troops to wish them Godspeed hours before the attack. We saw Southwick House, still an active Royal Navy station, where Eisenhower and his deputies met continuously in the days and hours before D-Day.

The hills surrounding Portsmouth are peaceful, yet the mind's eye can imagine the sights and sounds of 1944 described by the people who were there, the caravans of vehicles streaming south towards the docks, winding past quaint country homes with "tea for sale" signs posted, through the narrow streets of the towns where villagers stepped out to wish the troops good luck.

A vivid story of the time describes British Admiral Bertram Ramsay, commander of the Dunkirk evacuation, who by the spring of 1944 served as commander of the Allied Naval forces on D-Day. One evening, a week before the attack, Ramsay and his driver pulled over to the side of a road on a promontory overlooking Portsmouth where they could see the convoys passing and the ships loading in the distance. Ramsay looked on pensively for what seemed a long while. Had everything been done? What would the next few days bring? "It is a tragic situation that this is a scene of a stage set for terrible human sacrifice," he remarked, "but if out of it comes peace and happiness, who would have it otherwise?"

Free Citizenries

I believe in the power of speech as both a window on history and an important tool of citizenship. Each semester at Penn, I review perhaps the greatest such example, the oration by Pericles in honor of the fallen Athenians. His famed Funeral Oration is a classic description of citizenship, and it is addressed to perhaps the first *polis* in history to resemble our own, to an assembly of free Athenian citizens during the first winter of the Peloponnesian war.

In it, Pericles acknowledged a fact that may seem strange, but one that Americans may confront today: that the sheer dynamism of a free society can--and in the case of Athens did--result in such an expansion of power and reach of influence that challenge and reaction become inevitable. Yet in responding to those challenges, the free citizens of Athens had a choice. Would citizens enjoying the fruits of success in so favored a country risk all for something so ephemeral as honor? "Make up your minds that happiness depends on being

free, and freedom depends on courage," Pericles declared. "Let there be no relaxation in the face of the perils of war."

"Let me say that our system of government does not copy the institutions of our neighbors. It is more of a case of our being a model to others. . . . Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority, but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not membership of a particular class, but ability. . . .

Here each one of our citizens in all the manifold aspects of life is able to show himself the rightful lord of his own person, and do this, moreover with exceptional grace and exceptional versatility. . . .

Here each individual is interested not only in the in his own affairs but in the affairs of the state as well.. this is a peculiarity of ours. we do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say he has no business here at all"

Thus Pericles spoke in 431 BCE, at the beginnings of the Peloponnesian war, which is but a short interlude in ancient history. Athens inspires, and it warns. As the ultimate defeat of Athens shows, political eras and empires come and go. The permanence of any country or of any institutionalized way of life is best seen as an "aspiration." How long the United States can retain its considerable stature and favored way of life is a question we ask often these days. In reply, Americans can derive confidence from the fact that unlike emerging Athens and its city-state allies, the principles espoused by Americans have a large and global following, whether American sponsorship of those principles is welcomed or not.

The story of WWII demonstrates kinship and the toughness of free peoples everywhere, freely choosing the path of citizenship. To paraphrase Eisenhower's address at Guildhall, he was not expressing a hope that Abilene, Kansas and London, England were linked by a common dedication to freedom of worship, equality before the law, the liberty to act and speak as one saw fit; or that a Londoner would fight for these principles as would an Abilener. He was stating these things as proven facts, facts proven on D-Day, in Normandy and in the dozens of other battlefields in dozens of theaters from Burma to the Po River Valley.

Trends since 1945 affirm strong movement in the direction of these principles. The story of WWII provides a vision of the world we say we want and the world we are moving towards. For these and other reasons, we need to study and teach the war that as a practical matter helps explain our world today. If the demands of citizenship in our world are less vigorous than they were sixty years ago, we should remember that it was planned that way. Those who

fought in WWII wanted to leave a better world for those to come, and they succeeded in doing so. If the qualities necessary in war are less in evidence, maybe we are less in need of them. Yet our independence and ability to govern ourselves depend, ultimately, on respect for our country's traditions and on a strong sense of citizenship and on the readiness to accept the responsibilities of citizenship.

Conclusion

In sum, WWII was a decisive event with an outcome that has moved us towards a better future. It should be taught and studied in order to comprehend not only its warnings but the insights it offers into American strengths and those inhering in a free society.

I believe the history of WWII will always be taught and studied, whatever the current fashion. Whatever the view of publishers and some educators these days, the popular demand for these subjects shows that they answer a deep-felt need. History should inspire and inform.

Chapter 17:

The Great Battle for Normandy, 1944

By Paul H. Herbert

The 1944 battle for Normandy was the most important battle between the western Allies and German forces on the continent of Europe in World War II and the first and essential battle in "Operation OVERLORD," the invasion of Europe that preceded the final Allied drive to Germany. It began with the largest amphibious operation in history, in which more than 5,000 ships, the largest armada ever assembled, placed 130,000 Allied soldiers on a hostile shore in a single day. It established Allied forces in a secure lodgment from which they began the liberation of Nazi-occupied Europe and the destruction of German armed forces in the west. It ensured that Germany would never be able to concentrate all her military power against the Soviet Union and thus forced the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany.

The battle began on the northern coast of Normandy, France, between the Orne River and the Cotentin Peninsula, on June 6, 1944—D-Day. This location reflected the US view that eventually an attack across the English Channel from Britain would be necessary to place Allied armies on the shortest, most direct route to the German heartland, forcing the Germans to risk the destruction of their field forces in its defense. The battle expanded west to the Cotentin Peninsula and Cherbourg, south to Avranches and southeast to Argentan. The Allies chose this area because it exploited weaker German defenses than the Pas de Calaise; afforded surprise; offered wide assault beaches for landings and follow on support; was isolated from German counter-attack except from the south; and included the port of Cherbourg. The battle lasted until July 24, 1944, when the lodgment was sufficiently secure that break-out operations could begin. However, the strategic purpose of the battle really was not achieved until the liberation of Paris on August 25, 1944, when German forces were utterly defeated and fleeing back to Germany.

Adolph Hitler's priority was always in the East where he sought *Lebensraum ("living space")* for the master German race. The Germans' invasion of France in 1940 was to neutralize the threat from the west and free them to march east against the Soviet Union. The Germans were on the strategic defensive in the west from the end of the Battle of Britain in September 1940 onwards. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Germans used the western theater as a place to rest troops.

Although the Allies were relatively free to act in the west, choosing what to do and when was very difficult. When the US entered the war in December, 1941, the British were already

committed in North Africa and in any case provided the preponderance of resources, which is why US forces landed in North Africa in November, 1942. Allied strategy from then on had to reconcile many contentious variables. First were the US and British views of how best to defeat Germany—for the US, via invasion from the British Isles across the English Channel directly on to the continent and thence straight to Germany; for the British, from a consolidated base in the Mediterranean basin through Italy, the Balkans and Turkey, the so-called "underbelly." Second was the identification of strategic priorities among three theaters (Europe, the Pacific and Southeast Asia); support for the embattled Soviet Union; defeating the German U-boats in the North Atlantic; sustaining the strategic bombing offensive against Germany from the British Isles; continuing the build-up for an eventual cross-channel attack; and supporting resistance forces in the Nazi-occupied lands. As the US mobilized, resources had to be allocated among these priorities and production schedules synchronized accordingly—despite constant interruption by unfolding events. Remarkably, Allied strategy was coordinated in a series of conferences in 1942 and 1943 at Casablanca, Washington, Quebec, Cairo and Tehran. The Allies agreed early to the principle of a major cross-channel attack and, urged by Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, set the Spring 1944 date for it at the November 1943 Cairo-Tehran conferences.

Hitler believed that he could secure Europe behind an impregnable "Atlantic Wall" of fixed fortifications, coastal artillery and obstacles—"*Festung Europa*." However, he made few resources available to fortify all 3,000 miles of vulnerable European coastline. On November 3, 1943, Hitler's "Fuhrer Directive 51" stated that the threat from the west now outweighed that from the east, due to the proximity of massive Allied forces in Britain to the German industrial heartland. The west was the likely site of the critical battle of the war and would not be further weakened in favor of the east. Hitler appointed Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, hero of the North African campaigns, to command Army Group B in northwest Europe and ordered him to begin inspection of the coastal defenses.

Rommel was at odds with his immediate commander, Field Marshall Gerd von Rundstedt, Commander-in-Chief—West, over the defensive concept. Rommel assumed Allied air, sea and numerical superiority and concluded that the invasion must be met at the waterline and destroyed there. He favored a system of fixed defenses along the coast with armor reserves close up for immediate counter-attack. Rundstedt assumed great difficulty discerning which of more than one probable Allied invasion would be the main effort. He therefore believed that defenses should be prepared in depth and that armored reserves should be held well back from the coast in readiness for a decisive counter-attack.

Rommel had direct responsibility for the coastal defenses and planned them according to his concept. Hundreds of thousands of obstacles and mines were placed on likely landing beaches

and thousands of fortifications constructed along the coast. Harbors were prepared for demolition. At likely landing beaches, the Germans paid particular attention to blocking the natural exits off the beaches that tanks and other heavy equipment needed to move inland.

Regarding the use of armor, Hitler decided in April to appease both commanders without really making a choice. Of the German "panzer" or armor divisions then in the west, he assigned three to Rommel's Army Group B to be employed as Rommel wished; three more to a new Army Group G protecting the Mediterranean coast of southern France; and the remaining four he allowed von Rundstedt to retain as a central reserve near Paris. However, this reserve could not be committed without Hitler's personal approval, nor could von Rundstedt shift forces among his army groups without Hitler's approval. As he himself complained after the war, "My sole prerogative was to change the guard at my gate."

Almost half of the German infantry divisions in the West were coast defense or training formations. Many were classified as "fortress" divisions and had no transport and only a variety of captured foreign arms. The infantry included many older men, convalescents, inexperienced officers and foreign volunteers, especially in the supply and administrative services. The infantry divisions included Russians, Hungarians, Poles, Yugoslavs, Czechs, Romanians and Dutch. Although the panzer divisions were powerful, three had never seen action, and the rest had been in the west only since January. Average battle strengths were low—some 75 battle ready tanks per division—and many of the soldiers were in need of rest after service on the Eastern Front.[1]

To attack these defenses, the Allies assembled their most experienced commanders, many with recent experience fighting the Germans in the Mediterranean. The Allied command team was bi-national and built on the earlier work of a small planning team that crafted a very carefully phased operation of seizing beaches, then a lodgment area, and then a port sufficient for building up a force large enough to liberate France. American General Dwight David Eisenhower was the overall commander. British Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery was land commander and also commander of the 21st (British) Army Group; Eisenhower would take overall land command once the US 12th Army Group was activated ashore.

Among the most difficult factors was weather, which turned prohibitively severe in early June with the invasion force loaded and putting to sea. Eisenhower had to decide whether to postpone the invasion for two weeks, when moon and tide conditions would next be acceptable, or delay for 24 hours, when a short break in the weather might allow the invasion to succeed under less than optimal conditions. He chose the latter—D-Day moved from June 5 to June 6, 1944.

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[1] Matthew Cooper, *The German Army, 1933 – 1945,* pp. 496-497.

There were five assault beaches along some seventy miles of shoreline. From west to east, they were Utah and Omaha to be seized by US forces, and Gold, Juno and Sword, to be seized by British and Canadian forces. US airborne forces were to parachute into the Cotentin Peninsula in the pre-dawn morning of D-Day to seize exits off Utah Beach and secure the west flank; British airborne forces likewise landed east of Sword Beach to secure the east flank. The plan called for seizing the city of Caen in the east on D-Day, as it was the nexus of roads leading east and southeast in good tank country along the Seine River to Paris. As soon as possible, US forces were to clear the Cotentin Peninsula and seize and open the port of Cherbourg to hasten the delivery of war materiel by sea. They would then turn south to conduct the breakout and open more ports in Brittany.

Moving the invasion force by sea across the English Channel and onto the beaches was a formidable task involving advance reconnaissance by submarines, minesweeping, air and naval anti-submarine screens to the north and south, early positioning of the great battleships and cruisers of the shore bombardment force, and the careful sequencing of hundreds of troop ships to the off-shore locations from which they would launch their assault landing craft. The assault waves were thoroughly organized for bringing key weapons and capabilities onto the beaches in deliberate succession—tanks, then infantry, then engineers to clear obstacles.

The heaviest fighting on D-Day occurred on Omaha Beach. The German defenses there were anchored on 12 *wiederstandnesten* or fortified strongpoints sited to deny the exits off the beach. To open the exits, each boat landing team had a specific objective to seize or neutralize, and had rehearsed its mission repeatedly using maps, aerial photos, scale models and full-scale mock-ups. However, an offshore current, unknown to planners, helped shift many landing craft well east of their objectives and onto unfamiliar stretches of beach. A heavy overcast made planned tactical air support and naval gunfire less effective than desired. The dual-drive, floating tanks that were to lead the assault swamped and sank in the unanticipated heavy swells. The German *352d Infantry Division* had reinforced the beach defenses without being detected. The first wave (which landed at low tide so the landing craft pilots could see and avoid obstacles) came under continuous, heavy direct and indirect fire as soon as it was sighted and thence all the way to the feeble cover of the high tide line. Many landing craft took extreme evasive action, further scattering the troops, while many soldiers abandoned their craft into deep water to avoid being killed before they could fight. There many drowned, at worst, or, at best, dropped their equipment to swim ashore. By 7:30 AM, an hour after H-Hour, some 1,200 soldiers of the 16th and 116th Infantry Regiments were pinned down on the beach, disorganized, disoriented, missing leaders and key equipment, riddled by casualties.

Iron-willed soldiers and sailors of all ranks met this crisis. US Navy destroyers scraped bottom

trying to close the beach from where they placed 5-inch direct fire on targets troops ashore were engaging. Colonel George Taylor commanding the 16th Infantry Regiment urged his men that only the dead and those sure to die would stay on the beach; they must advance to the bluffs above. Sergeant John Pinder repeatedly left the safety of the high tide line to search for radio parts among the battle debris on the beach; he was killed in the attempt. General Willard Wyman calmly walked along the beach under heavy fire giving orders and direction to individual soldiers. Private Carleton Barrett rescued many of his wounded comrades from certain drowning in the surf. Lieutenant John Spaulding found a crease in the German bluff defenses and led his rifle platoon through it and to the top. Lieutenant Jimmie Montieth commandeered the only two tanks to make it ashore, directing their fire in support of his platoon that likewise scaled the bluffs to attack German positions from flank and rear. These and countless others took the battle into their own hands, allowing some of the critical beach exits to be cleared from behind by the end of the day.

Nevertheless, the Allied beach-head was in a precarious state. Although 130,000 Allied troops were ashore, the beach-heads were not united, the beaches themselves were still under enemy artillery and mortar fire, the casualties on Omaha Beach had been heavy, Caen had not been taken, and German panzer divisions were en route. Had they arrived in strength and attacked immediately, they might have set back the invasion. But they did not.

Only one German panzer division was in Normandy on June 6—the *21*[st], positioned in Caen, from where it successfully prevented the planned seizure of that town by British forces. Three more (*12th SS, 17th SS* and *Panzer Lehr*) were close enough to have been on the battlefield the next day, but the German command was incapable of such a decision. Hitler's staff did not awaken him at first news of the invasion but only late in the morning; he did not give his personal release of these divisions until mid-afternoon. Low on fuel, battered by swarms of Allied fighter-bombers, harassed by French resistance forces, and delayed by the destruction of nearly every bridge and railroad along their routes, these divisions arrived piece-meal onto the Normandy front between June 7 and June 17 where they were used in stop gap measures to shore up the German line. Seven more arrived in similar fashion over the next eight weeks, never enough to mount a massive counter-attack.

Many factors explain the fitful German response. The Allied deception plan FORTITUDE played to Hitler's belief that the main Allied effort must come across the Pas-de-Calais. Hitler was fixated on the Pas-de-Calais and thought that Normandy was a feint. On June 8, he ordered seventeen divisions released from Calais to Normandy, but canceled the order on June 9. At a conference on June 17, von Rundstedt and Rommel both advised him the invasion force could not be expelled and that German forces must withdraw to a more defensible position. Hitler ordered no withdrawals -- German forces were to stand fast, fight to the last

man, and counter-attack vigorously. He promised some reinforcement and new miracle weapons, but came to believe that his generals were defeatist and untrustworthy. He dismissed them both from a subsequent conference on June 29, replacing von Rundstedt with Field Marshall Gunther von Kluge, who vacillated on every decision. Allied fighters attacked Rommel's staff car in the open on July 17, wounding the disgruntled field marshal severely— he was out of the war. The failed assassination attempt against Hitler on July 20 implicated Rommel and Kluge (both of whom committed suicide) and many others, punctuating the toxic state of German command relationships.

The Allies also had profound problems, however. On their eastern flank, despite repeated attempts, British and Canadian forces made little headway toward seizing Caen, where most of the arriving German armored forces were concentrated. On their western flank, US forces cleared the Cotentin Peninsula and seized Cherbourg by June 27 only to find that harbor so thoroughly demolished and mined that it could not be used until September. American forces pushing south from the beaches encountered the *bocage*, a seemingly endless expanse of small fields demarcated since the Middle Ages by thick stone walls entangled in heavy vegetation. These "hedgerows" and the fields they contained, some 34 per mile, constituted a maze of ideal defensive terrain in which the Germans stymied the US advance south for weeks. Meanwhile, a severe channel storm from June 17 to 22d halted further landings and supplies over the beaches, ruined the "Mulberry" artificial harbors, and wrecked nearly 800 Allied vessels. Because the storm also suppressed allied air operations, it might have afforded the Germans a last opportunity to counter-attack the beach-head, but they did not. On June 23, the Soviets launched Operation *Bagration* on the Eastern Front, a huge offensive that caused Hitler to cancel promised reinforcements from Germany.

Forced to extemporize, the Allies learned that they could beach LSTs (landing ships, tank) under an ebbing tide, offload them, and refloat them on the rising tide without harm to the vessels. This technique and other logistical feats put 32 fully equipped and supplied Allied divisions, including eight armor divisions, ashore by the end of July. With these forces and substantial air support, the British finally seized Caen on July 13. The Americans broke free of the *bocage* at St. Lo on July 18 and attacked south under a massive carpet bombing of the German defenses by strategic bombers from England on July 25. The Third US Army, recently activated ashore under General George S. Patton, swarmed past Avranches, into Brittany and, even more important, east toward Paris. Against the advice of Kluge, Hitler ordered a counter-attack west toward Avranches with his last remaining armored forces. Stopped at Mortain on August 10, they were unable to disengage and withdraw east fast enough to avoid near encirclement and destruction between the US and British forces in the Falaise Gap. Allied landings in southern France in Operation Dragoon on August 15 sealed the fate of German forces in most of France. Whether Hitler desired it or not, they were fleeing north and east by

any means they could find, saved only by overstretched Allied logistics.

The Allies won the battle for Normandy because they defeated piece-meal German attempts to destroy their lodgment before Allied power within it became prohibitively superior. The Allied victory can be attributed to the defeat of the U-boats in 1943, which allowed the build-up in Britain in the first place; gaining air and naval superiority over and around the Continent; achieving surprise, in part by deceiving Adolph Hitler; fighting tenaciously and adapting tactics throughout the battlefield; winning the build-up race; and breaking out in order to pursue and destroy German forces.

There were at least three points at which the course of the battle might have been different. The first was on June 4 when General Eisenhower made the decision to land on June 6 rather than postpone the landings two weeks and into the storms. The second was on June 6, when a vigorous German counter-attack might have been organized against the Allies at their weakest moment. The third was between June 9 and 17. Had Hitler allowed the transfer of divisions from 15th Army between those dates and a counter-attack been launched during the storms, the lodgment might have been defeated. By July 25, however, even Hitler's generals knew that the lodgment could not be destroyed and that therefore France and, most likely, Germany, could not be defended. The end of World War II was in sight.

The price for these achievements was high: some 10,000 Allied casualties on June 6 alone, including more than 4,000 dead. German casualties on D-Day are estimated between 4000 and 9000. Thousands more died in the preliminary air and resistance campaigns. The larger battle into July and August cost another 425,000 Allied and German troops killed, wounded or missing. Another 200,000 German troops became prisoners in the Falaise pocket. Between 15,000 and 20,000 French civilians were killed, mainly as a result of Allied bombing. Thousands more fled their homes to escape the fighting.[2]

The Battle for Normandy is important today because it was essential to the Allied victory in World War II. It further ensured that the Western Allies would reach deep into Central Europe, meeting the Soviets on the Elbe and not the Rhine, thus allowing a democratic West Germany to become part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and thus setting the stage for later victory in the Cold War. These benefits to generations of Americans and Europeans are very unlikely to have followed had the invasion not happened, or had it been postponed, or had it failed. Normandy stands as a testament to Allied (and especially US-British) partnership and cooperation, and to the valor of countless Allied soldiers, sailors and airmen.

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[2] http://www.ddaymuseum.co.uk/faq.htm#casualities, accessed April 9, 2012.

Chapter 18:

Ten Things Every American Student Should Know about Our Army in World War II

By Rick Atkinson

The U.S. Army in World War II is obviously a big subject. It was a big war with a lot going on. For example, on this very date, May 2, in 1945, Berlin fell to the Red Army, and, in Italy, the war ended, as the surrender of German forces there took effect. That's just one day, in a war that lasted 2,174 days and claimed an average of 27,600 lives every day, or 1,150 an hour, or 19 a minute, or one death every three seconds. One, two, three, snap. One, two, three, snap.

In an effort to get our arms around this stupendous catastrophe, the greatest calamity in human history, let's examine ten points every American student ought to know about the U.S. Army in the Second World War. This is a malleable list, and we can probably all agree that we'd like students to know more than only ten things. But let's give it a shot.

#1. *The U.S. Army was a puny weakling when the war began.* When the European war began in earnest on September 1, 1939, with the German invasion of Poland, the U.S. Army ranked seventeenth among armies of the world in size and combat power, just behind Romania. It numbered 190,000 soldiers. (It would grow to 8.3 million in 1945, a 44-fold increase.) When mobilization began in 1940, the Army had only 14,000 professional officers. The average age of majors--a middling rank, between captain and lieutenant colonel--was nearly 48; in the National Guard, nearly one-quarter of first lieutenants were over 40 years old, and the senior ranks were dominated by political hacks of certifiable military incompetence. Not a single officer on duty in 1941 had commanded a unit as large as a division in World War I. At the time of Pearl Harbor, in December 1941, only one American division was on a full war footing.

Some American coastal defense guns had not been test fired in 20 years, and the Army lacked enough antiaircraft guns to protect even a single American city. The senior British military officer in Washington told London that American forces "are more unready for war than it is possible to imagine." In May 1940, the month that the German Blitzkrieg swept through the Low Countries and overran France, the U.S. Army owned a total of 464 tanks, mostly puny light tanks with the combat power of a coffee can.

There was also a mental unreadiness in many quarters. In 1941, the Army's cavalry chief assured Congress that four well-spaced horsemen could charge half a mile across an open field

to destroy an enemy machine-gun nest, without sustaining a scratch. This ignored the evidence of not only World War II, which was already two years underway, but also World War I.

#2. *The war encumbered all of America*. Obviously a lot happened to get from an army of 190,000 to an army of almost 8.5 million. A total of 16 million Americans served in uniform in WWII; virtually every family had someone in harm's way, virtually every American had an emotional investment in *our* Army. That WWII army of 8.5 million existed in a country of about 130 million; by comparison, today we have an army of roughly 500,000 in a country of 307 million.

About the time of Pearl Harbor, Army planners estimated that the U.S. Army would require 213 divisions by 1944. (A division typically had about 15,000 soldiers.) We never even got close to 213; instead, the Army mobilized only 90 divisions by the end of the war. That compares to about 300 divisions for Germany; 400 for the Soviet Union, and 100 for Japan.

There were several reasons for this. First, the manpower demands of the air forces and particularly of the supply services competed with the manpower demands of the Army. (Service forces--quartermaster, transportation corps--were more than one-third of the strength of the Army by September 1942.) Second, there was a gradual recognition that the Soviet Union was fighting most of the German army, which meant the United States would not have to face as many Germans as originally feared. There was also a recognition that the United States could provide industrial muscle unlike any nation on earth, to build tanks, airplanes, and trucks, to make things like penicillin and synthetic rubber, not only for us but for our Allies. That meant keeping a fair amount of manpower in factories and other industrial jobs, while of course also getting women into the workforce as never before.

Because we had relatively few divisions, virtually all of them had to be committed to combat. A bit more than two-thirds of the U.S. Army fought in Europe and the Mediterranean, with the remainder in the Pacific (along with all six U.S. Marine Corps divisions). That also meant that you couldn't easily pull the divisions out of the war to let them rest or rebuild; they had to be kept up to strength *while in the fight*.

The First Division is an example. It had fought in North Africa and in Sicily in 1942 and 1943, and when it was committed to battle in Western Europe, on Omaha Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944, of the next 11 months, until the war in Europe ended on May 8, 1945, it spent 317 days in combat. During that period it typically took two to three thousand casualties a month, up to five thousand or more a month. In Western Europe, it had almost 30,000 battle and non-battle casualties (like frostbite or trench foot.) Remember, a division typically has about 15,000 soldiers.

Yet the division ended the war almost at full strength. The Army's replacement system, although poorly run in some fundamental ways, still managed to keep units muscled up, in very sharp contrast to our adversaries, which tended to crumble to nothing. In Western Europe, from Normandy to Czechoslovakia, the Army had 18 divisions with more than 100 percent casualties, and five divisions—including the First—with more than 200 percent casualties. That means the division would be wiped out twice and still be at nearly full strength.

#3. The U.S. Army did not win World War II by itself. We can be proud of our role, proud of our Army; we must *not* be delusional, chauvinistic, or so besotted with American exceptionalism that we falsify history. The war began 27 months before American entry into the war. It was fought on six continents, a global conflagration unlike any seen before or since. The British had done a great deal in those 27 months to keep alive the hopes of the western democracies. Russia lost an estimated 26 million people in the war, and its military did most of the bleeding for the Allied cause.

By the end of the war, there were about 60 nations on the Allied side, aligned in what President Roosevelt had long called the "united nations." In Italy alone, Brazilians, Poles, Nepalese, New Zealanders, French, Italians, and a number of other nationalities fought beside us.

Coalition politics played an enormously important part in shoring up the U.S. Army's fighting strength--a recognition that in a global war, the best team wins. In WWII, this was best embodied in Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, who demonstrated diplomatic skills of the first order, including compromise, resolve, coercion, flattery, and patience.

#4. The U.S. Army's role in the liberation of Europe didn't start at Normandy. The army, those soldiers and commanders, who landed in France on June 6, 1944, did not leap fully armed from the ether. They had a pedigree, individually and collectively, and it's difficult to understand what happened in those final eleven months of the European war following the invasion at Normandy without understanding what preceded it.

In fact, the path to Normandy began more than two years before D-Day, and involved other, earlier D-Days. On the battlefield, it really started in North Africa. How did the U.S. Army end up in North Africa? The United States, famously, entered the war in December 1941, and almost immediately there was agreement between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill that the first task at hand was to defeat Germany. Their presumption was that Germany was the strongest of the Axis powers, and that clubbing it into submission would inevitably lead to the defeat of its two main partners in crime, Japan and Italy. But beyond

that concurrence, of *Germany first,* there was little agreement on how to translate the principle into a strategic plan.

In fact, there was savage disagreement between the Americans and the British, among the bitterest arguments of the war. Through the spring and early summer of 1942, the American military brain trust led by Gen. George C. Marshall, the Army chief of staff, argued that the quickest, surest way to defeat Germany would be to stage an invasion army in the UK, cross the English Channel, and march for Berlin. The British said "Whoa! Not so fast."

It would be much more sensible, argued the British, to begin the liberation of Europe by attacking the periphery of the Axis empire. North Africa was proposed as a candidate, its most attractive characteristic being that *there were no Germans there.* After Germany invaded France in the spring of 1940, Hitler offered the French a deal with the devil. He proposed the creation of a French rump state, occupying the bottom one-third of metropolitan France with a capital in the spa town of Vichy. (The Germans would keep Paris.)

As part of the deal, the French could keep their empire, notably the French possessions in northwest Africa: Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. The French could also retain their navy and an army of about 100,000 soldiers in North Africa, with the proviso that they agreed to fight any invading force, notably the British. Hitler knew that there were more than 17 million Arabs living in these French colonies, and he wanted the headache of governing them to fall on the French. France of course agreed to the deal, except for a few renegades like an obscure brigadier general named Charles de Gaulle.

In the high councils of the British and Americans this debate over where to strike raged secretly for months. In late July 1942, Roosevelt at last sided with the British against the advice of virtually all his senior military officers. He ordered an Anglo-American invasion of North Africa.

The landings--known as Operation Torch--occurred on November 8, 1942, in Morocco and Algeria. After three days of resistance, the Vichy French in North Africa capitulated, joined the Allied cause, and the Anglo-American army pushed eastward into Tunisia; they were close to within sight of the minarets of Tunis before being stopped cold by the Germans and Italians in late November 1942. The Germans, under the command of Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, reacted with much greater agility and audacity than the Allied brain trust had anticipated, shoving tens of thousands of troops across the Mediterranean. A stalemate persisted in Tunisia for months.

At the same time, 2,000 miles to the east, the British Eighth Army under General Bernard L. Montgomery had defeated another German-Italian army at the Egyptian crossroads of El Alamein, and for the next three months that Axis army, under Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, retreated across the breadth of North Africa, languidly pursued by the British. By late winter 1943, there were four armies--two Allied and two Axis--in Tunisia, a country the size of the state of Georgia.

Over the next two months, Allied strength waxed and Axis strength waned. The Allies gained air supremacy and almost complete control of the seas, effectively strangling the Axis supply line from Europe; the sea passage from Italy became so harrowing that Italian sailors called it "the death route." Hitler decided not to try to evacuate his forces from North Africa; the result was the capture of roughly a quarter million Germans and Italians, a defeat almost as catastrophic for the Axis cause as Stalingrad had been a few months earlier. After Africa came Sicily, then the campaign in Italy. *That* is the context for Normandy.

#5. *The U.S. Army for some considerable time after we entered the war was not very good.* Part of the WWII mythology is that all the brothers were valiant and all the sisters were virtuous. War is the most human of enterprises, and it reveals every human foible and frailty, as well as human virtues: cowardice and tomfoolery, as well as courage and sacrifice. The Greatest Generation appellation is nonsense. And which generation are we talking about—the generation of senior Army leaders like George Patton, born in 1885, Dwight Eisenhower, born in 1890--or the generation of trigger-pullers, mostly born in the 1910s and 1920s?

In the first couple years of American involvement in WWII the Army was burdened with equipment that in some cases was clearly inferior to the enemy's, tanks being a good example. It was burdened with a number of commanders who were not up to the task: of the first five corps commanders in action against the Germans, three were sacked for incompetence. Our first adversary in the liberation of Europe was the French, and we were hardly brilliant in combat against them.

Those first couple years of war required a sifting out, an evaluation at all levels within the Army of the competent from the incompetent, the physically fit from the unfit. It has sometimes been argued that in an even fight, when you matched one American battalion or regiment against a German battalion or regiment, the Germans tended to be superior, the better fighters. But who said anything about an even fight? Global war is a clash of *systems*. Which system can generate the combat power needed to prevail, whether it's in the form of the 13,000 Allied warplanes available on D-day; the 10:1 American advantage in artillery ammunition often enjoyed against the Germans; or the ability to design, build, and detonate

an atomic bomb? Which system can produce the men capable of organizing the shipping, the rail and truck transportation, the stupendous logistical demands of global war?

Germany could not muster the wherewithal to cross the English Channel, which is only 21 miles wide, to invade Britain. The United States projected power across the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and the Pacific and into Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Power-projection, adaptability, versatility, ingenuity, preponderance--these are salient characteristics of the U.S. Army in WWII.

#6. *The U.S. Army in WWII comprised much more than just riflemen*. It also included, for example, the Army Air Forces, which in turn embodied the single greatest military disparity between us and our enemies: the ability to flatten fifty German cities, to firebomb Tokyo, to reduce Hiroshima and Nagasaki to ashes.

Those fleets of airplanes--a thousand bombers at a time attacking enemy targets--are perhaps the most vivid emblem of the "arsenal of democracy" that outfitted our military and, to some extent, our military allies. The United States built 3.5 million private cars in 1941; for the rest of the war, we built 139. Instead, in 1943 alone, we built 86,000 planes, 45,000 tanks, and 648,000 trucks. We made in that one year 61 million pairs of wool socks; every day, another 71 million rounds of small-arms ammunition spilled from Army munitions plants.

The American war machine was "a prodigy of organization," in Churchill's phrase, derived from a complex industrial society. To service those planes and tanks and trucks required a vast army of support troops within the larger Army, an army that benefited from "the acquaintance of Americans with the gadgetry of American life," from what the historian Russell Weigley called a "confidence born of familiarity with the machine age." All of this gave the U.S. Army a mobility unmatched by any of our adversaries, a mobility that permitted the rapid movement and concentration of firepower. The German army by contrast relied on hundreds of thousands of horses to pull their artillery and to haul supplies.

#7. *The Army remained under civilian control throughout the war*. When the president, in July 1942, made the decision to invade North Africa, contrary to the advice of virtually all of his uniformed military advisers, he signed the order: Franklin D. Roosevelt, commander in chief. Harry S. Truman, *not* the military, made the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Military strategy, not to mention decision-making, tended to be made during WWII by the civilian leadership, frequently counter to the military's druthers. In *American Strategy in World War II: A Reconsideration* (1982), Kent Roberts Greenfield, a senior Army historian,

listed almost two dozen decisions made by Roosevelt against the advice, or over the protests, of his military advisers, from 1938 to 1944. Besides the decision to invade North Africa, there were more than a dozen strategic decisions for which the initiative apparently came from the president. A good example of this is his initiative to declare that unconditional surrender would be a central Allied war aim.

#8. The U.S. Army in WWII was among the greatest agents, perhaps the greatest agent, of social change in the country during the 20th century. This is ironic given the inherent conservatism of the institution. Our national evolution on core issues of racial and gender equality are very much shaped by WWII.

The U.S. Army was segregated in WWII and exclusionary. In 1939, fewer than 4,000 blacks served in the Army. By early 1944, that number exceeded 750,000, and the disparity between the avowed principles for which the nation fought and the stark, hypocritical reality of American life in the 1940s gave impetus and legitimacy to the civil rights movement. Many African-Americans endorsed what they called the "Double V" campaign: a righteous struggle for victory over both enemies abroad and racism at home. Severe restrictions on combat roles for black troops gradually eased; a group of fighter pilots known as the Tuskeegee airmen demonstrated the inanity of those restrictions, including assertions that black pilots lacked the reflexes to be good fighter pilots. It's hard to imagine Barack Obama elected as president of the United States in 2008 without the accelerated social change of WWII.

The Army in WWII was also an overwhelmingly male institution, and exclusively male in senior leadership roles. Of 1,300 generals in the Army in July 1944, not one of them was a woman. (The first female Army general didn't come into being until 1970.) But the extraordinary demand for military manpower meant that women were drawn into the national workplace in exceptional numbers; it's very hard to put that genie back in the bottle.

Moreover, the Army was a democratizing institution, even though it was and remains relentlessly hierarchical. Of 683 graduates from Princeton University's Class of '42, 84 percent were in uniform by 1945, and those serving as enlisted men included the valedictorian and salutatorian; 25 classmates would die during the war, including 19 killed in combat.

#9. The history of the U.S. Army in WWII is among the greatest stories of the 20th century. It ought to be taught and learned as a story, with character, plot, conflict, and denouement. John Updike wrote that WWII was the twentieth century's central myth, "a vast imagining of a primal time when good and evil contended for the planet, a tale of Troy whose angles are infinite and whose central figures never fail to amaze us with their size, their theatricality, their sweep."

Samuel Hynes, a fighter pilot in World War II who became a professor at Princeton, observed that the war "was an action in Aristotle's sense--it had a beginning, a middle, and an end." That *should* make for lively, coherent narrative, and narrative can be a wonderful teaching tool.

Two cautionary notes: first, as the British historian Sir Michael Howard warns, military history has "all too often been written to create and embellish a national myth, and to promote deeds of derring-do…. The Second World War is ransacked to provide material for the glorification of our past." Triumphalism is *not* the point. Second, we've got to take care not to view the present and the future through the distorting lens of the past. One residue of WWII is a tendency to narrowly define power in military terms, and to define threats in terms of traditional human enemies bent on doing ill. Climate change and our addiction to foreign oil have the potential to do more damage to American sovereignty and our way of life than anything al Qaeda can pull off.

#10. They died for you. We've talked about the WWII Army in as both an organism and a machine, an institution that grew stupendously, that demonstrated flexibility and adaptability. But we ought never forget that at the core of this story is suffering. The U.S. military sustained almost 300,000 battle deaths during the war, and about 100,000 others from accidents, disease, suicide. Many of those deaths were horrible, premature, and unspeakably sad. One, two, three, *snap*.

War is a clinic in mass killing, yet there's a miracle of singularity; each death is as unique as a snowflake or a fingerprint. The most critical lesson for every American is to understand, viscerally, that this vast host died one by one by one; to understand in your bones that they died for you.

I will close by offering a meditation on one death. Among those fighting in the ferocious battle in mid-December 1943 for San Pietro in central Italy, midway between Naples and Rome, was Captain Henry T. Waskow. Waskow was from Belton, Texas, born on a farm, and while he was a student at Trinity College he had joined the Texas National Guard.

The Texas Guard was federalized and became the 36th Infantry Division, and Henry Waskow eventually became commander of Company B, in the 143rd Infantry Regiment. He survived Salerno, but on December 14, 1943, while leading his company up Monte Sammucro, above San Pietro, he was killed by shellfire. His body lay on the mountain for several days until the company runner could get a mule from the valley below and bring Capt. Waskow down. At

the foot of the mountain was, by chance, Ernie Pyle, the great war correspondent. Here's part of Pyle's account of that scene:

"I was at the foot of the mule trail the night they brought Capt. Waskow's body down. The moon was nearly full at the time, and you could see far up the trail, and even part way across the valley below. Soldiers made shadows in the moonlight as they walked. Dead men had been coming down the mountain all evening, lashed to the backs of mules. They came lying belly-down across the wooden packsaddles, their heads hanging down on the left side of the mule, their stiffened legs sticking awkwardly from the other side, bobbing up and down as the mule walked.

The Italian mule-skinners were afraid to walk beside the dead men, so Americans had to lead the mules down that night. Even the Americans were reluctant to unlash and lift off the bodies at the bottom, so an officer had to do it himself, and ask others to help.

The first one came early in the morning. They slid him down from the mule and stood him on his feet for a moment, while they got a new grip. In the half light he might have been merely a sick man standing there, leaning on the others. Then they laid him on the ground in the shadow of the low stone wall alongside the road. I don't know who that first one was. You feel small in the presence of dead men, and ashamed at being alive, and you don't ask silly questions.

We left him there beside the road, that first one, and we all went back into the cowshed and sat on water cans or lay in the straw, waiting for the next batch of mules.

Somebody said the dead soldier had been dead for four days, and then nobody said anything more about it. We talked soldier talk for an hour or more. The dead men lay all alone outside in the shadow of the low stone wall.

Then a soldier came into the cowshed and said there were some more bodies outside. We went out into the road. Four mules stood there, in the moonlight, in the road where the trail came down off the mountain. The soldiers who led them stood there waiting. 'This one is Captain Waskow,' one of them said quietly.

Two men unlashed his body from the mule and lifted it off and laid it in the shadow beside the low stone wall. Other men took the other bodies off. Finally there were five lying end to end in a long row, alongside the road. You don't cover up dead men in the combat zone. They just lie there in the shadows until somebody else comes after them.

The unburdened mules moved off to their olive orchard. The men in the road seemed reluctant to leave. They stood around, and gradually one by one I could sense them

moving close to Capt. Waskow's body. Not so much to look, I think, as to say something in finality to him, and to themselves. I stood close by and I could hear. One soldier came and looked down, and he said out loud, 'God damn it.' That's all he said, and then he walked away. Another one came. He said, 'God damn it to hell anyway.' He looked down for a few last moments, and then he turned and left.

Another man came; I think he was an officer. It was hard to tell officers from men in the half light, for all were bearded and grimy dirty. The man looked down into the dead captain's face, and then he spoke directly to him, as though he were alive. He said: 'I sure am sorry, old man.' Then a soldier came and stood beside the officer, and bent over, and he too spoke to his dead captain, not in a whisper but awfully tenderly, and he said: 'I sure am sorry, sir.'

Then the first man squatted down, and he reached down and took the dead hand, and he sat there for a full five minutes, holding the dead hand in his own and looking intently into the dead face, and he never uttered a sound all the time he sat there.

And finally he put the hand down, and then he reached up and gently straightened the points of the captain's shirt collar, and then he sort of rearranged the tattered edges of his uniform around the wound. And then he got up and walked away down the road in the moonlight, all alone.
After that the rest of us went back into the cowshed, leaving the five dead men lying in a line, end to end, in the shadow of the low stone wall. We lay down on the straw in the cowshed, and pretty soon we were all asleep."

But Capt. Waskow had the last word. In a final letter to his parents, one of those just-in-case letters that soldiers sometimes write, he told them this: "I would like to have lived. But since God has willed otherwise, do not grieve too much, dear ones… I will have done my share to make this world a better place in which to live. Maybe, when the lights go on again all over the world, free people can be happy and gay again… If I failed as a leader, and I pray I didn't, it was not because I did not try." He added: "I loved you, with all my heart."

The first duty is to remember. We have an obligation to the Captain Waskows of World War II, and all our wars, to remember.

Chapter 19:

The U.S. Navy in World War II

By James Kurth

The story of the U.S. Navy in World War II has a central role in the long history of America's wars and indeed of America itself. The story obviously had great meaning and taught important lessons to the generation that fought World War II and also to the generations that came of age in its aftermath. But even now, almost sixty-five years after the end of the war, it is a story filled with potential meaning and importance for the young students of today. For there are aspects of this story that are part of the very nature of America, and even of the human condition itself.

In this essay, we will focus upon two features of the history of the U.S. Navy in World War II: first, the way in which it recapitulates the qualities of many of the great epic stories to be found in classical literature and in world history, and second, the way in which it illustrates continuing and enduring realities about the making of U.S. military policies and strategies, and particularly about the American way of making war.

An American Epic: Struggles and Dramas

The history of the U.S. Navy in World War II is an epic story, one equivalent in its excitement, engagement, and grandeur to the great epics of classical literature and world history. It can be seen as a series of distinct and concentrated battles or events, each of them a great struggle and drama comparable to the most important and legendary events in the history of any country and at any time. These include, for example, such battles of the classical age as Marathon and Salamis, which preserved Greek civilization from Persian conquest. They also include such battles of the modern age as Trafalgar and Waterloo, by which Britain defeated Napoleonic France, not only preserving itself but also establishing both the European balance-of-power system and the British Empire upon a new basis, one which would decisively shape the character of Western civilization for the next century.

In our review of the U.S. Navy in World War II, we will primarily discuss the Pacific theater. Here, we will focus upon four great events or struggles: (1) the attack on Pearl Harbor; (2) the Battle of Midway; (3) the political struggle over U.S. Pacific strategy; and (4) the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Of course, there were other great and well-known naval struggles in the Pacific that should also be discussed, especially the campaign to take Guadacanal and the Solomon Islands and the campaign to re-take the Philippines; the latter included the largest

naval battle in history, the Battle of Leyte Gulf, which involved more warships and a greater ocean area than any other naval battle ever. However, the complexity of these particular campaigns and battles requires a rather lengthy exposition in order to make their meaning and consequences clear, and so we will not be able to focus upon them given the space limitations of this particular essay.

We will also discuss the U.S. Navy's role in the European theater, particularly in the Battle of the Atlantic. In addition, most of the Pacific events also had a counterpart or analogue in the European theater, and so it will be useful to compare and contrast the Navy's role in the Atlantic war versus the Pacific war.

Like the great events and struggles drawn from the histories of classical Greece and modern Britain, those involving the Navy in World War II have the character of being at once strategic, dramatic, and tragic. Moreover, these events combine into a grand, unfolding narrative, one that takes the form of a classical epic.

The Character of Classical Narratives

Classical narratives, the ones that have had the most engaging and enduring power, often share particular elements or even share a particular sequence and development. The elements and sequence usually include something like the following: (1) at the beginning, a state of innocence, but also self-indulgence. This is suddenly shattered by (2) a devastating enemy assault and even disaster, followed by (3) a continuing enemy challenge which culminates in a decisive moment of truth in which one barely escapes extinction. There then follows (4) a period of uncertain recovery but firm determination, and this in turn is followed by (5) a period of long and hard testing, during which one slowly and painfully grows to strength and mastery. Finally, there is (6) triumph, redemption, and apotheosis.

For the most part, these particular elements and their sequence can be found in the great epics and histories of the classical age: the stories of the Greeks in the Trojan War, as told by Homer; of the Greeks in the Persian War; of the founding of Rome, as told by Virgil; and of the Romans in the Punic Wars. For the most part, too, these elements and their sequence can be found in some of the great national histories of the modern age. This especially seems to be the case with the history of successive British struggles with great continental powers seeking to establish hegemony over Europe and to subdue Britain in the process: the wars with Spain under Phillip II, with France under Louis XIV, and again with France under Napoleon. (The British tried to recapitulate this narrative when confronting Germany under Wilhelm II; however, its victory in World War I was so costly that it turned out to be a pyrrhic one.)

Indeed, this particular form of narrative probably has even deeper foundations within Western consciousness. Many of the same elements and much of the same sequencing can be found in the Bible, beginning with the origins of man and woman in the Garden of Eden, followed by the entry of the Serpent and the Fall, through successive people chosen by God and their subsequent falls, to final triumph and redemption (and in the Christian faith, resurrection) with the coming of the Messiah.

It may now be becoming evident that the story of the Navy in World War II, and particularly in the Pacific theater, fits this form of classical narrative. On the eve of its entry into the war, America is characterized by a state of innocence and self-indulgence. The devastating enemy assault comes on December 7, 1941, with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The enemy relentlessly presses this challenge during the first half of 1942, culminating in the decisive Battle of Midway in June. There then ensues within the U.S. government and between the U.S. military services a political struggle over Pacific strategy, along with bloody and arduous battles at Guadacanal and the Solomon Islands. Then comes the long and hard period of testing and the slow and painful growing in strength, which culminates in the terrible but decisive battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Finally, there is triumph and redemption, ending with the apotheosis of September 2, 1945 -- the majestic surrender ceremony on the deck of the battleship U.S.S. Missouri anchored in Tokyo Bay.

American Realities: Patterns and Issues

However, the history of the U.S. Navy in World War II not only presents a grand epic in the classical form. It also presents a series of vivid illustrations of some recurring and enduring patterns and issues in the making of U.S. military policies and strategies. These patterns and issues have long been central in the analyses of American political scientists and military historians, and they provide excellent and engaging topics for the teaching about American wars.

In this essay, we will focus upon six of these patterns and issues: (1) bureaucratic identities and intelligence failures; (2) service competition and party politics; (3) the classical American Way of War and its manifestation in the U.S. Navy of the 1940s; (4) personal honor and moral choice: (5) national morale and political will; and (6) the play of fate and chance. As it happens, each of the Pacific war events which we have listed exemplifies one or more of these themes.

The Attack on Pearl Harbor

Indisputably one of the most dramatic events in American history, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor also presents an archetypal case of a recurring and enduring American reality – the functioning – and the malfunctioning – of the U.S. military and intelligence bureaucracies.[1]

To begin with, the circumstances leading up to Pearl Harbor illustrate the perennial conflicts which occur within the U.S. Navy between its different component services, each with its own distinct *bureaucratic identity*. In the case of Pearl Harbor, this was a conflict between the battleship service and the carrier service. Although the naval aviation and aircraft carrier part of the Navy had been growing in importance and influence since the 1920s, in 1941 it was still subordinated to the battleship admirals. These of course saw the battleship as the only true capital ship, and they not only believed that carriers would remain marginal in U.S. naval strategy but that a successful attack by Japanese carrier aircraft upon Pearl harbor would be impossible. This conception represented a classic case of how bureaucratic identity and interests shape (and distort) bureaucratic perceptions and plans.

The attack on Pearl Harbor also presents a classic case of *intelligence failure*. In particular, crucial intelligence -- and more importantly the interpretation of intelligence -- fell between the gap between different intelligence services. For example, State Department officials in Washington knew that Japan would initiate hostilities on December 8, 1941 (which would be December 7, U.S. time), but they thought that any attack would occur someplace in Southeast Asia. Conversely, Navy officers in Pearl Harbor knew that Japan could initiate an attack on Pearl Harbor, but they did not know when it would be (and in any case did not believe that it would be successful). In short, Washington knew the date of the attack and Pearl Harbor knew the place, but no one knew both.

Pearl Harbor also illustrates the crucial role of *chance* in warfare. As it happened, on December 7 all of the eight battleships stationed at Pearl Harbor were in port, but the two aircraft carriers stationed there were away at sea. Consequently, the battleships were sunk, but the carriers survived. This instantly accomplished a bureaucratic and strategic revolution within the Navy: not only had Pearl Harbor demonstrated the effectiveness of aircraft carriers, but it rendered them the only remaining basis for U.S. naval strategy.

Pearl Harbor also illustrates the crucial role of *choice* in warfare. The commander of the Japanese fleet ordered two successive air strikes on Pearl Harbor. After the second strike, the returning head pilot reported that the battleships had been destroyed, but that there had been no sign of the carriers. The Japanese commander had planned a third strike to destroy the oil

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[1] Good accounts of the attack on Pearl Harbor are given by Max Boot, <u>War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today</u> (New York: Gotham Books, 2006), chapter 8; and Ronald H. Spector, <u>Eagle Against the Sun: The American War With Japan</u> (New York: The Free Press, 1985), chapters 3-5.

and gasoline storage facilities servicing the U.S. fleet, but now he became concerned that the U.S. carriers might be able to undertake a counterattack upon his own fleet. Consequently, he ordered his forces to withdraw and to steam back to Japan. This left the crucial oil and gasoline supplies available to service the U.S. fleet during the first six months of the Pacific War.

Finally, Pearl Harbor famously illustrates the role of *national morale and political will* in warfare. As is well known, the Japanese attack instantly united the American public, which had previously been greatly divided over the issue of U.S. entry into World War II. It produced an extraordinary national morale and political will for prosecuting the war (at least the war with Japan), which the Roosevelt administration could never have achieved on its own or by any other way.

The Battle of Midway

With its ultimate outcome in suspense until the very end, the story of the Battle of Midway in June 1942 is one of the most gripping tales ever told in military history. It also nicely illustrates several of our patterns and issues.[2]

To begin with, Midway, like Pearl Harbor, demonstrates the crucial role of intelligence. In this case, however, it is a story of *intelligence success*, rather than intelligence failure. Through ingenious methods and dogged persistence, U.S. Navy intelligence specialists had cracked a Japanese code which indicated movements of the Japanese fleets. This allowed U.S. naval officers to determine that an immense Japanese carrier and invasion task force was heading toward Midway Island and to thus send out the U.S. fleet (which was significantly smaller than the Japanese one) to disrupt the Japanese and prevent the conquest of the strategically-crucial island.

Once the opposing American and Japanese fleets encountered each other and the battle was joined, Midway becomes an intensely human story, one exemplifying such qualities as *personal honor*, *moral choice*, and the play of *chance*. The U.S. attack on the Japanese fleet began with a courageous but sacrificial assault by American torpedo aircraft. Despite the personal heroism of their pilots, this assault failed to cause any damage to the Japanese ships.

However, the U.S. torpedo effort did succeed in drawing down to a low altitude the Japanese fighters which were protecting those ships. It was at this point that chance played its decisive role. As a result of a set of two or three very improbable coincidences, U.S. dive bombers now

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[2] A detailed and vivid account of the Battle of Midway is given by Michael Bess, Choices Under Fire: Moral Dimensions of World War II (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), chapter 7.

arrived on the scene, at the very moment when the Japanese carriers were most vulnerable. In the ensuing dive-bomber assault, three Japanese carriers, the bulk of the force, were sunk, providing the Americans with an amazing victory.

The Battle of Midway was not yet over, however. The Japanese commander still held a large fleet in reserve to the west, which was unknown to the Americans. He expected to lure the unsuspecting U.S. fleet into a trap and a night-time battle, which was the kind of operation in which the Japanese navy excelled and in which U.S. carrier aircraft could not effectively operate.

The U.S. commander, the thoughtful and sensible Admiral Raymond Spruance, was under intense pressure from his staff to pursue and destroy the Japanese ships which remained from the earlier daytime battle and which were now retreating to the west. However, Spruance discerned that the U.S. had already accomplished its objective of destroying the Japanese carriers and preventing the occupation of Midway Island and that any further U.S. fleet action would be for little gain but with substantial risk. Demonstrating impressive moral character, he withstood the pressure from those around him, and he decided that the battle was over and ordered the U.S. fleet to return eastward to a more secure position.

The Political Struggle over U.S. Pacific Strategy

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor certainly united the American public and produced a strong political will and firm determination to prosecute a relentless war against Japan. In 1942, however, there was not yet a similarly strong and firm commitment to wage a relentless war against Germany, even though Hitler had formally (and foolishly) declared war against the United States on December 11, 1941, immediately after Pearl Harbor. In fact, there remained throughout much of 1942 serious political divisions within America with respect to how to prioritize the war (or, in some ways, the different wars) with the two different enemy powers and between the Pacific and the European theaters. This was the famous debate between a Pacific (or Japan)-first strategy and a Europe (or Germany)-first strategy. The ensuing political struggle provides an excellent example of *party politics and service competition*.[3]

On the Pacific-first side was much of the Republican Party and the Mid-Western and Western regions of the United States. Another, and crucial, part of this Pacific-first coalition was the U.S. Navy, especially its erascible and strong-willed Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral

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[3] Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, <u>For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America</u>, revised and expanded edition (New York: The Free Press, 1994), chapters 13-14; Russell W. Weigley<u>, The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy</u> (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), chapter 13.

Ernest King. Conversely, on the Europe-first side was much of the Democratic Party and the Eastern and Southern regions of the United States. Another and crucial part of this Europe-first coalition was the U.S. Army, especially its highly-capable and widely-admired Chief of Staff, General George Marshall.

Although the Democrats controlled the White House and also possessed a substantial majority in Congress, President Franklin Roosevelt knew that, in order to effectively prosecute the war (and especially the war that he himself prioritized, the war against Germany), he had to have bi-partisan support. The result for U.S. strategy was a sort of grand bargain, by which Roosevelt and the Democrats got their war against Germany, but the Republicans got their war against Japan. Thus, the U.S. government assigned roughly equal amounts of military resources to each of the two theaters until 1944.

Moreover, there were second, lower-level, divisions within the U.S. military with respect to the Pacific theater itself. Each of the military services had its own preferred strategy for defeating Japan. The Navy, under the command of the clear-thinking and effective Admiral Chester Nimitz, and also its brother service, the Marines, wanted an advance straight across the Central Pacific. This would entail invading and occupying a limited number of small islands along the way, a climactic battle with the Japanese fleet, and the blockade of the home islands of Japan, until it was forced to surrender. Since the Pacific was, after all, an ocean (indeed, the largest ocean in the world) and since the Navy had long been assigned overall command in the Pacific theater, it might seem obvious that the Navy would get its way.

However, the Army and also the Army Air Force (which by now had become virtually independent of the Army) each had its own and different preferred strategy. The Army forces in the Pacific were under the command of the charismatic General Douglas MacArthur. He naturally wanted these forces to play the major role in defeating Japan, with the Navy assuming a largely supporting role. This would entail an advance upward from Australia through the South and West Pacific, invading and occupying several large islands along the way, including the Philippines (where MacArthur had famously pledged, "I shall return"), and ultimately culminating with the invasion and occupation of the home islands of Japan itself.

At first glance, it might seem that MacArthur's strategy for the Army in the Pacific would have little chance of acceptance back in Washington. It promised to be more costly in American casualties than the Navy's strategy, and the high command of the Army itself much preferred to focus upon defeating Germany. However, MacArthur had long been the Republican Party's favorite general (he had even been the Army Chief of Staff under President Herbert Hoover). Consequently, in order to maintain the bi-partisan support for the two wars and the two

theaters, MacArthur largely got his way. More accurately, both the Navy and MacArthur got their way, i.e., the United States pursued both strategies in the Pacific theater.

Finally, the Army Air Force had its own preferred strategy by which it would defeat Japan. Although technically still part of the Army, the Air Force developed a plan for the strategic bombing of Japan's cities that would permit it to operate almost completely independent of the Army. It would, however, have to depend somewhat upon the Navy and the Marines, because it would have to establish and use bases for its bombers on some of those islands which the maritime forces conquered during their thrust across the Central Pacific. Those bases, and thus the basis for the bombing strategy, were available by Fall 1944, and the Air Force then began the ruthless and systematic destruction of Japan's cities, a campaign which finally culminated with the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 (which the Air Force has always claimed was the decisive action which brought the Pacific war to an end).

And so as it turned out, each one of *three* U.S. military services received enough military resources to convincingly wage its own war in the Pacific. In effect, the United States deployed enough resources to fight and win three wars against Japan; in this sense, Japan's defeat was massively over determined.

The U.S. war in the Pacific thus becomes an archetypal example of the classical *American way of war*. Many military historians have concluded that this distinctive way of war has been characterized by the effective employment of both (1) the *overwhelming mass* of military forces, with respect to both men and material, and (2) the *wide-ranging mobility* of these forces. Indeed, when he was interrogated by U.S. officers after the surrender, the Japanese wartime leader, General Hideki Tojo, said that what had surprised him about the U.S. military and what had accounted for Japan's defeat was the U.S. ability to operate its forces at great distances from their bases, to bypass and leap-frog around Japan's bases, and to continuously resupply and replace those forces.

The Battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa

The battles of Iwo Jima (February – March 1945) and Okinawa (April – June 1945) were two of the deadliest battles in American history. Coming late in the war, when many Americans thought that it was nearly over, the 7000 U.S. fatalities at Iowa Jima and 12500 at Okinawa were a profound demonstration of how costly the Pacific war was and of the even more terrible costs to come, when U.S. forces finally undertook the invasion of the home islands of Japan. Given the magnitude of these two epic battles, they certainly exemplified several of the themes which we have been discussing.[4]

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[4] Spector, <u>Eagle Against the Sun</u>, chapters 21, 23.

To begin with the U.S. invasion forces at both Iwo Jima and Okinawa perfectly represented the overwhelming mass, far-reaching mobility, and sustained force of the classical American way of war. In each battle, the assembled and deployed U.S. naval and ground forces were comparable in scale to those that the United States had employed in the invasion of Normandy in June 1944.

Essential as mass and mobility were, however, they would not have been sufficient by themselves to produce an American victory. For that, extraordinary demonstrations of *personal honor*, and many of them, were also required. Indeed, the courage, determination and sacrifice of the Marines at Iwo Jima made that battle the finest hour in the entire history of the Corps. As Admiral Nimitz later said, "at Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue."

However, as the reality of the terrible casualties at Iwo Jima and Okinawa began to sink into the mind of the American public, it had an effect upon U.S. national morale and political will. In the immediate aftermath of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, in the late Spring and early Summer of 1945, U.S. political leaders, and particularly the new President, Harry Truman, knew how difficult it would be to sustain *national morale and political will* throughout the even more deadly invasion of Japan that was planned for late 1945 and early 1946. This prospect certainly concentrated these leaders' minds upon finding some other way to defeat Japan and to end the war. It clearly was of great weight in Truman's decision to use the atomic bombs as soon as they became available, i.e., in August 1945.

The Battle of the Atlantic

Although the Navy was the preponderant military service in the Pacific theater, the Army clearly played that role in the European theater. There, the role of the Navy was largely a supporting one, providing transport and gunfire for the Army's successive invasions, along with protecting supply convoys in their perilous journey across the Atlantic. These kinds of naval operations did not make for dramatic and climactic battles, and the Navy has not paid much attention to the European and Atlantic theaters when it teaches about World War II at its military schools and its war college. Nevertheless, the Battle of the Atlantic, particularly the campaign which the U.S. Navy waged against German U-boats from the Fall of 1941 to the Spring of 1943, does provide an engaging and gripping story and also a series of important and useful illustrations of some of the themes which we have been discussing.

Since Britain was desperately dependent upon a continuing supply of vital resources and armaments across the Atlantic, a supply continuously threatened by the growing fleet of

German U-boats, the Royal Navy had begun extensive convoy-protection operations in 1940. However, by the Summer of 1941, the British naval forces were stretched thin to their limit. At this point, President Roosevelt made the decision to have the U.S. Navy assist the Royal Navy in its anti-submarine activity, particularly in the Western Atlantic. Thus began a largely secret U.S. naval war against Germany, one which was carried on for several months before the official and real war began after Pearl Harbor.[5] This naval war was secret because Roosevelt knew that he did not yet have enough unity within the American public to provide the political will to engage in a public war. But he also knew that German U-boats would likely respond with counter-attacks upon the U.S. destroyers which were engaged in anti-submarine operations in support of British ships, and indeed this soon became the case. During September and October 1941, Germany U-boats attacked U.S. destroyers on three separate and escalating occasions, and Roosevelt then publicly denounced these encounters as unprovoked German assaults on innocent U.S. ships. Clearly, Roosevelt was anticipating that the naval war in the Atlantic would eventually escalate to the point that there would at last be enough public unity and political will within the U.S. for it to declare a full and real war against Germany.

When that full and real war did come after the German declaration of war upon the U.S. on December 11, 1941, the U-boats launched a ferocious and effective assault on U.S. shipping, not only in the broad Atlantic itself but also on the vital sea routes up and down the Eastern seaboard of the U.S. and in the Gulf of Mexico. It is now almost completely forgotten, but during the first six months of 1942, German U-boats sunk so may U.S. and Allied merchant ships that for awhile it seemed that with their U-boats alone, the Germans would be able to knock the United States out of the war.[6] The U-boats were greatly facilitated in their attacks because American civilians living along the shore insisted upon leaving the lights of their buildings on at night, and this provided a perfect backdrop for high-lighting the silhouettes of the ships which were the U-boats' targets. This was a perfect illustration of individual choice prevailing over national morale, and it took several months before the U.S. government could effectively enforce a reversal of these American priorities.

Even after the American public was brought into line and the Eastern seaboard suitably darkened, the U-boats continued for many months to sink large numbers of American merchant ships. A major reason for this was a feature of the *bureaucratic identity* of the U.S. Navy. The Navy had long seen itself as a rival to the Royal Navy, and this attitude was especially intense in the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Ernest King, who was an open Anglophobe. U.S. naval officers thought that there was nothing that they could learn from the Royal Navy, which they viewed to be stuffy, old-fashioned, and overly-defensive.

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[5] Millett and Maslowski; For The Common Defense, pp. 435-439.
[6] Barrie Pitt, The Battle of the Atlantic (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1977), chapter 6.

Unfortunately, they applied this attitude to the Royal Navy's system for protecting convoys, which was actually quite effective. Instead, the U.S. Navy tried one imaginative anti-submarine innovation after another, all of which failed, until at last by July 1942 it came to agree that the convoy system was best. The U.S. adoption of the convoy system, along with technological improvements upon it, were the major reasons why the Navy was able to win the Battle of the Atlantic by May 1943. [7]

The Atlantic War versus the Pacific War

It seems clear enough from our above account that the war in the Atlantic was very different from that in the Pacific. However, there are some interesting and illustrative comparisons that can be drawn between events and operations in the two theaters.

First, when President Roosevelt ordered a secret naval war in the Western Atlantic in the Fall of 1941, one of his purposes was to provoke the Germans into taking hostile action against U.S. ships, which in turn would provoke the American public into going to war with Germany; this interpretation is widely accepted among professional historians. However, Roosevelt's actions toward Japan in the Fall of 1941, particularly the U.S. oil embargo, served to provoke Japan into planning the attack on Pearl Harbor; it is not surprising, therefore, that over the years a small minority of historians have taken the much more controversial and dubious position that Roosevelt deliberately provoked, and even expected and welcomed, the Pearl Harbor attack.

Second, Germany's campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare against American merchant ships was widely perceived within the United States to be ruthless and immoral. However, immediately after Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt authorized the U.S. Navy to engage in unrestricted warfare against Japanese merchant ships. The only real difference between the German and the American campaigns was that the German one was at first an impressive success but eventually became a failure, while the American one at first a failure but eventually became a resounding success. (By the Spring of 1945, virtually no merchant shipping was reaching Japan.)

Third, several of the U.S. ground campaigns in the European theater had rough counterparts in the Pacific theater. The North African campaign of November 1942 – May 1943 served as an effective training exercise for the U.S. Army, converting it from an incoherent collection of inexperienced troops into a real army; the Guadacanal campaign of August 1942 – February 1943 did much the same for both the Army and the Marines. The Italian campaign of 1943 – 1945 has often been criticized as being an unnecessary and costly diversion from the most

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[7] Pitt, Battle of the Atlantic, chapters 6-7.

direct and effective way to defeat Germany, i.e., across France; the Philippines campaign of 1944 – 1945, including the giant naval battle of Leyte Gulf, which the U.S. Navy considers to be one of the most important battles in the history of naval warfare, has similarly been criticized as an unnecessary and costly diversion from the most direct and effective way to defeat Japan, i.e., across the Central Pacific. Finally, as we have already noted, the massive and mobile U.S. logistical achievement at Normandy was later recapitulated at Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

With respect, however, to the much bigger question of which U.S. military service, and which Allied power, did the most to win the wars against Germany and Japan, there is a crucial difference between the European theater and the Pacific one. In Europe, the United States was only one of three major Allied powers (the others were the British Empire and the Soviet Union), and the U.S. Army was thus only one of three major armies fighting Germany. In the Pacific, the United States was clearly the most central Allied power, and the U.S. Navy was clearly the most central U.S. military service fighting Japan. The commanding prominence of the United States in the Pacific War, and the commanding prominence of the U.S. Navy there, means that ever since, the Navy has seen itself as forged in the cauldron of that war, shaped in its image, and bearing the legacy of that truly epic story and heroic age.

Chapter 20:

General George C. Marshall and the Development of a Professional Military Ethic

By Josiah Bunting III

I want to say, first of all, that you are the saints of your profession. Most of you are high school teachers. This is the most important period of education in the life of a young person—13 to 17, as opposed to 18 to 22. This is where you can really inculcate the fire, the love of learning, and the habits that will last over a lifetime.

A common story, which most of us have heard, features a prominent citizen's death in a small town, probably in the American Heartland. He is in his mid-80s, perhaps even a little bit older. His best friend gives the eulogy. When the eulogist mentions that the man who has died served at Normandy, there is a great deal of whispering in the church. What are the people attending the funeral saying to each other? Well, it's perfectly obvious—"I never knew that." The extraordinary feature of that generation, with which we are losing contact at the rate of about 1,200 a day, is that they did what they did and didn't think, or talk much about it. We are losing physical touch slowly with that generation.

Alexis de Tocqueville noted in the 1830s, when visiting the United States that the last signer of the Declaration had died. This was the only Catholic signer, as it happens, Charles Carroll of Maryland. And Tocqueville was struck by the country's sense of loss of its "physical touch" with one of the founders. And I think many of us feel that way about "the greatest generation." Which raises the question: Why are we, as amateur scholars of the military—military buffs—fixated on two wars in particular, the Civil War and the World War II? Americans know a great deal about these two conflicts and very little about the Great War in between, the war in France, in which America's participation was quite brief, and in which U.S. casualties relative to those of the Germans, the French and the British were quite small. But you may remember, during the last six weeks of the war in France, from September 26 until the armistice, 26,500 Americans were killed and 105,000 wounded. Our actual experience of combat was brief, but extremely costly. And yet, most people have forgotten World War I.

There are many links between the Civil War and the World War II. We tend to forget them. I'm going to talk a little about George Marshall within his generation. Marshall was born in 1880, the same year as Douglas MacArthur. He grew up in a small town, a suburb of Pittsburgh, surrounded by veterans of the Civil War. For that generation, that was their "great generation." If you were 20 years old and had fought at Chancellorsville or Antietam or

Gettysburg, you were still a relatively young person in the early 1890s. You'd be in your middle or late 40s. So if you were a doctor, a lawyer, an executive, a teacher in small town America, you were the person that people looked up to. Yet, the great military figures of that war were the people you aspired to be if you had any interest in the military.

Some of the links between the two wars are quite charming and unexpected. For example, Henry "Hap" Arnold, the chief of the Air Corps in World War II, was decorating workers at a B-29 factory in Wichita in 1943, and the foreman introduced a woman in her 70s, saying, "This is our best worker" The woman was Helen Longstreet, widow of the Civil War solider James Longstreet. He had lived a long life and married a young woman. Consequently, you still had people serving in World War II who had those connections to the Civil War

Many of you, if you are historians, know the word "prosopography," an alluring subset of history concerned with the study of groups united in some purpose or by some chronology. The prosopography of Civil War leadership is very interesting. The most important prosopography in our history is that of the American founders. Henry Steele Commager talked about periods of extraordinary fluorescence in human leadership and human talent in history. He detailed the Athens of Pericles, Elizabethan England, Renaissance Italy, and particularly the American founders. How was it that at that time in our history we had a number of people born roughly between 1730 and 1750 who grew to be such extraordinary human beings allied in a common purpose—people of astounding versatility? Where did they come from? Commager makes the point that once you clear away the debris of great challenges bringing forth great leadership, you have to look very seriously at the way people were raised and how they were educated. What did they study? What did they read? What were their parents' expectations for them? They were not obsessed with SAT scores, there were no Blackberries, no one cared if you went to Princeton or the University of Virginia. You went up to your room at 7:00 at night, and if you were John Adams, you read Plutarch, and you were given no rewards for reading Plutarch. This is essentially Commager's thesis.

The generation of George Marshall, the American generation born between roughly 1880 and 1900 or 1905, was also such a generation. The British historian Paul Johnson considers it the "ablest in our history, almost as good as that of the American founders." This is the generation bounded roughly by 1880 extending all the way up to include the people that led the United States during the Cold War, Walter Isaacson's so-called "wise men."

Before discussing Marshall, in particular, I need to begin with a personal story. In September of 1997, I was in the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Hall at the Virginia Military Institute. I was looking at the Corps of Cadets who were sitting at rapt attention and listening very earnestly to a speaker who was the president of the first class at that time, or the senior class. The Corps

was in a sulfurous mood. After a nine-year progress through the courts, the Supreme Court had ruled—by a vote of seven to one—that the Institute must admit women. (I don't know how many of you have been through situations in which your college or your school which was all-women's or all-men's goes coed, but it absolutely unhinges people. They become irrational and very hard to manage. It is as though Western civilization has been threatened itself.) In this case, the opposition to female students had been very strong. This young man stood up, looked at his classmates and friends and quoted Marshall.

In the story, Marshall had been asked what he had learned working for John Pershing in World War I. Marshall said the most important was that if you were a subordinate officer, when you were given an order with which you disagreed, you must call yourself to account to execute that order with re-doubled and visible enthusiasm and efficiency. That was your obligation. This is what the British call "hard cheese." This was a brave act by this young cadet. The issue was fought; VMI had fought the good fight for a long time. It had become a very emotional issue. But to see this young man remind his fellow Cadets that they were to behave themselves and do it properly, which they did, was an interesting reflection on the influence and impact that Marshall still had at that school.

George Marshall was born in 1880, and was an exact contemporary of his imputed rival Douglas MacArthur. Marshall, incidentally, did not *do* rivalry but subsequent historians have imputed some kind of a rivalry there. His provenance was Virginian. He was a collateral descendant of Chief Justice John Marshall, and interestingly, a grand-nephew of Charles Marshall, who was one of General Robert E. Lee's young men. Lee traveled with a group of three or four young men who looked after him, wrote his speeches, among other things. Charles Marshall had the same relationship to Lee essentially that Abraham Lincoln had with John Hay. It is useful to remember, as I have said, that Marshall grew up in the shadow of the Civil War. He knew many veterans of the Civil War.

When he was a cadet himself at the Virginia Military Institute, he was surrounded by veterans. His early living heroes were members of the returning National Guard unit from western Pennsylvania coming back from Cuba, and later on, from the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. Watching this, we think, confirmed Marshall's early romantic impulse to become a soldier. After commissioning, Marshall's first assignment was in the Philippines where he was responsible for the security of the island of Mindoro; a place the size of Connecticut. He was a second lieutenant and had just one associate. The war was over. He was dealing with the insurrection. He was more or less alone. Mail came every six weeks. Here is the school of responsibility and self-reliance. No expectation of reward except General Lee's famous general orders number nine. "It will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed." That's it! No house in the Hamptons, no

BMW, your kids don't get into Princeton— none of the appurtenances of success in this country. Instead, "You did it, and you know you did it." A rapid sequence of assignments, mainly to schools and National Guard units, followed. On one occasion, as a first lieutenant, Marshall took charge of an Army division in maneuvers and successfully defeated the enemy aggressor. The general watching all of this said that Marshall was a military genius, and his reputation would one day threaten that of Stonewall Jackson. (Imagine if you were a lieutenant and somebody said that to you.)

In 1917, as Operations Officer of the First Division, Marshall sailed to France. Before that, he had an experience that made a profound impression and significantly influenced him early in World War II. He was working as an aide to General Franklin Bell at Governors Island in New York, First U.S. Army Headquarters. Through the First U.S. Army, a number of early units were sent over to France. Five or six young lieutenants came by one day and asked to see General Bell. Major Marshall said, "He's not available. May I help you?" "Yes, sir, all of us have been married in the last couple of weeks. We're hoping for an extra two days of furlough before we sail for France to be with our young wives." Permission was, of course, granted. Within four months, all were dead. Marshall took from that the following lesson: to commission young men who have been to what we would call "high class Eastern colleges," and who were well-born, simply because they were the beneficiaries of that kind of privilege, and perhaps had had two or three weeks of drilling with a rifle in Plattsburg, was not a good way to train young officers. First of all, it was undemocratic, but secondly, however brave, however ardent you might be, if you were not properly trained and had not proven yourself as an enlisted man, you should not be commissioned. And Marshall believed that until he died. During the early days in World War II, he and Henry Stimson, Secretary of War, had a long argument about this. Stimson wanted to continue commissioning people that way. Marshall, on the other hand, insisted that the only people to receive commissions—aside from medical doctors, chaplains, perhaps dentists—should be West Point graduates or people who have been through Officer Candidates School (OCS). And he had Omar Bradley, one of his protégés, went down to Fort Benning and established OCS. Stimson was extremely angry. (A stout-hearted Republican, Stimson was Secretary of War under Franklin Roosevelt from age of 74 to 78. Roosevelt hired him because he was good, and he had been Secretary of War 35 years earlier under William Howard Taft. At the age of 51, Colonel Stimson volunteered, and went to France as an artillery battery commander. This gives you a sense of what he was like.)

In the mid-1950s, several volumes of a lengthy study of Civil War leadership appeared by historian Kenneth Williams. It was entitled "Lincoln Finds a General." Ulysses Grant was not "brought east," as they used to say, until 1864. He was then made commanding general of all Union forces, and promoted to the grade of lieutenant general, our first to have a regular appointment as a three-star general since George Washington. My point is that it took

President Lincoln some three years to find, consider, hire and promote Grant to his new eminence. This appointment soon led to the accelerated promotion of men like William T. Sherman and Philip Sheridan. Now hold that thought just for a moment.

In the summer of 1942, less than six months after Pearl Harbor, the Army was preparing for what would be its first offensive in the Atlantic theater, operation towards the invasion of North Africa. The retinue of senior American generals at the start of the war, on active service, comprised Douglas MacArthur, Charles Marshall, Joseph Stilwell, George Patton, Dwight Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, Courtney Hodges, Walter Bedell Smith, Robert Eichelberger, Walter Krueger, Mark Clark, Lucian Truscott, and a coterie of colonels soon to command divisions, among them Albert Wedemeyer, J. Lawton Collins, Matthew B. Ridgway, Forrest Harding, James M. Gavin. They were all there in positions of responsibility at the start of the war—that array of talent. How were they, to borrow a phrase, all present at creation? The Army of the 1920s and the '30s was what Marshall called "a little sketchy thing." Its average strength was 130,000 soldiers and 13,000 officers. The latter were almost never promoted. Among them, men who had fought in France and who had become majors and lieutenant colonels were all reduced in grade two ranks in 1919. In other words, you were a lieutenant colonel, now you're a captain. Your pay was suitably adjusted downward. Those who were commissioned right after the Armistice were to park in the grade of first lieutenant for between 15 and 18 years. They called their insignia the "bar sinister." Yet, consider this. When the West Point class of 1915 assembled in June 1940 for its 25th reunion, only a month after the Germans had invaded the low countries, only some five percent of that class had left the Army. The equivalent for the West Point classes of 2000-2005 of people who have left of attrition is between 50 and 60 percent. I draw no conclusions, but it is interesting to compare those numbers.

Those who had remained during this slack, arid, inter-war period studied, learned and taught their profession. They *heard* their calling. They *learned* each other. They had leisure to think, to ponder, to write. Much of the time was uninterrupted The culture of what we may call "visible busyness" had not yet infected the way that we live—soldiers and civilians both. Since there were so few commands available, officers exploited unusual interests and eccentricities. Joseph Stilwell had three tours of duty in China; he learned Mandarin fluently. Eisenhower spent time working for General Pershing on his memoirs, as well as learning industrial management. Forrest Harding, working for Marshall, put together an important compendium of World War I tactical situations—infantry and battle. Wedemeyer spent two years at the German Kriegsakademie. During Marshall's tenure as assistant commandant of the infantry school from 1927-1932, about 1,200 students passed through the school. Two hundred became general officers in the 1940s. Do the math. If you were a captain and you were 27 or 28 years old at the Infantry School in 1927, in 1943 you were the perfect age to be a general in the

Army. Napoleon said the perfect age for a general was 40. Somebody reminded Grant of that, and for one of the few times in his life, Grant smiled.

The important thing is that during this period in the 1920s and '30s, this fallow period, powerful and ethical lessons were taught. As a student at the Infantry School, you were expected to stand up and argue your solution to tactical problems no matter how far they deviated from the expected norms and the conventional –the school solution. Originality was encouraged and rewarded. Writing or arguing the conventional, the safe answer, did not make people think you were smart. It made them, Marshall in particular, think you were dull. In making officer students better students and scholars of the profession, he was teaching them essentially an ethical lesson, Specifically, saying things to please superiors, responding to the goad of ambition rather than answering the calls and claims of truth will get you nowhere in the Army as it should be. Marshall had understood that the worst source of lessons in how to fight a German enemy, if the enemy was to be Germany once again, were the lessons presented by America's brief experience at the end of World War I. Independent thinking—rather than mute allegiance to doctrine—was the whole purpose of the Infantry School. Students were expected to respond under pressure to difficult tactical problems, and to explain their solutions without notes. Professors were not allowed to use notes when they lectured. They were to be self-reliant, and self-reliance in leadership depends upon courage, which is habitually called upon.

The ethical leadership of George Marshall provided many lesson including: an officer never is to take the counsel of his ambition. He became the intellectual tutor of Dwight Eisenhower. You do not angle for assignments, for promotions, or for choice positions. When the Secretary of War asked Joseph Stilwell if he was ready to take up what would become a mission impossible in China in 1942—the winter of 1941-1942—Stilwell said simply, "I'll go where I'm sent." That's the kind of answer that people like Stimson and Marshall liked to hear. Marshall himself, during the full length of the war, would not permit himself to receive a decoration. He refused all honorary degrees and any tributes, honorifics, or decorations. He told his aides that if any was given him, they would be fired. When Admiral Ernest King, Chief of Naval Operations, sought five-star rank for the most senior officers of the Navy and the Army, Marshall discouraged him abruptly. King wished to call himself "arch admiral." That was his suggested term. This provoked ill-concealed merriment among many people in Washington. Marshall, of course, did not want to be called "Marshall Marshall." There was some suggestion that we should have field marshalls, as well as generals. Against the advice of his aide—the young Dwight Eisenhower—Douglas MacArthur allowed himself to be given the title "Field Marshall" by the Philippines in 1937.

In his short biography of his father-in-law, Agricola (the pro-consul in Britain in the first century B.C.), the Roman historian Tacitus remarks that "To praise him for his acts of courage was to insult him and to misunderstand him. Choices and decisions which many men would labor over, finally choosing the harder or more dangerous right over the easier wrong, were to Agricola simple matters of execution. That was the way he was. He had consciously made himself that way." Like Agricola, Marshall, a Victorian, was very much an artifact of his own conscious making and his life-long superintendence. Selflessness was one of the things he taught himself. In the Army, this selflessness meant doing one's work without calculation of risk or reward.

There are many famous demonstrations of this selflessness. I will highlight just two of them. One is interesting and in a way, quite funny, and involves General Pershing and another general, William Siebert. In the early fall of 1917, Pershing was in France visiting the First Division. This was the only division in France at that time and Pershing liked to visit troops. If you were in the First Division, you could expect that Pershing would come to see you often. Pershing was a very formidable presence—stern, unbending, very direct on duty. He concluded his visit, by asking to be shown a demonstration called "battalion in the capture of a trench." And watching the whole division in a review, he concluded his visit by asking General Siebert to assemble all of the officers of the division so he could speak to them. He then said, "I have rarely seen a poorer demonstration. I am ashamed of you. I am disappointed by the division's efficiency, ashamed, and I don't think I've ever seen anything worse in the U.S. Army." He looked around the officers, stared at them, and then turned from the assembly and began to walk toward his limousine. "Just a minute, General. There's something that needs to be said, and if nobody else will, I guess I'd better." "Who are you?" "Major Marshall, sir, Operations Officer." "What do you have to say for yourself?" "Nothing for myself, but you need to know the reasons for our difficulties for what you have seen. This division marched almost 30 miles overnight to give you your review. We have done everything in our power with very little to work with in a very brief amount of time." Pershing resumes his walk to the limousine to hear Marshall say as he's walking away from him, "I'm not finished." The great man turns around, more of the same. Pershing makes a lame, almost apologetic farewell and says something like, "Well, we have our troubles, too, up at Headquarters," and he leaves. All of the officers gather around Marshall. General Siebert puts an arm around his shoulder. All are certain he will be sent away immediately. On the contrary, on his next visit, and every visit thereafter, Pershing insisted that Marshall brief him before he did anything. Five months later, he made him his senior aide, a position that Marshall held for five years. Incidentally, Pershing was a very great military commander, but he hated administration. He couldn't stand being in the office and going through papers. So, when Pershing was chief of staff, Marshall was a lieutenant colonel, virtually every piece of paper that went into Pershing's office came back with a notation "LTC Marshall," meaning "Please George, do this for me so I can go out and do other things." I say

this only to indicate that Marshall was receiving an extraordinarily high level of political military education as Pershing's aide.

Another incident occurred on November 14, 1938. Marshall was now a Brigadier General. He was the Deputy Chief of Staff, very much the junior man in an audience which had been assembled at the White House, about 14 senior people including the Secretaries of War and Navy—to listen to Franklin Roosevelt pronounce on an important element of the country beginning to prepare itself for what might come. The President had made an enthusiastic argument for a huge increase in the production and procurement of what, in those days, were called war planes. "We must have 10,000 planes as soon as they can be manufactured. The planes will act as a deterrent. They do not require hundreds of thousands of soldiers. We will not use them unless someone attacks us. Everyone OK with that?" Everyone nodded. "What about you, George?" Marshall was sitting by himself down at the end of a sofa. "Do you agree?" "No, Mr. President, I don't agree at all." The same Pershing-like sequence was repeated. Marshall's colleagues were shocked. As they left the Oval Office together they said, "Nice knowing you. Have you ever been to Guam?" Marshall later said that he was offended by the President's "first naming" him. Marshall was quite a starchy person. "I objected to this misrepresentation of our intimacy. Within six months, FDR had asked Marshall, junior to all of the obvious candidates, to be the head of the Army. Now, he did not make a habit of boldly challenging authority in ways which were discourteous, but he always spoke out when he had the facts.

Marshall, as a representative of the military before Congress—one of the important elements of military leadership in those days and today—was to act as an advocate for the administration's policies. Remember that in those days there was no hoard of frisking deputy assistants. There was Marshall, Admiral King, Mr. Stimson, Frank Knox, and the President. That's how things operated. And they did pretty well. He was always an austere presence at the witness table, but calmly and pleasantly responsive to questions from Senators and Congressmen. No aide was allowed to accompany him. No papers were visible. He assumed his questioners were American patriots and men as anxious to see the war finished as quickly and cheaply as he was. He wore almost no ribbons or decorations. Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn noticed that Marshall habitually offered evidence that hurt his own case when such evidence seemed demanded, if you were completely honest. Later in his career, as Secretary of State, making his presentation in behalf of the plan for European recovery— the Marshall Plan--which is how most people remember him, he stressed the huge costs and the sacrifices that would be demanded of all, and indeed, the uncertainty of success.

This was a period of extraordinary accomplishment in U.S. foreign policy, the administration was strongly Democratic, and the Congress, both Houses, was strongly Republican. By now,

Marshall's reputation for rectitude, uprightness, self-mastery and sheer wisdom virtually guaranteed that the things he advocated would receive an earnest and usually favorable reception from Democrats and Republicans alike. By executive order in March, 1942, Marshall was made principal advisor to the President on matters of strategy. His position vis-à-vis the President was the same as Admiral King's was for the Navy. There was a much smaller scaffolding of Defense Department so-called "defense intellectuals" than today. Incidentally, Marshall, according to Peter Drucker, was the greatest "picker of men" in American history. His ability to identify people of talent when they were very young and move them ahead so that they would be in important positions when the time came for their services was unsurpassed.

In any community of persons brought together for some common purpose—schools and colleges, as well as military organizations—leaders emerge. By far the most potent means of creating an ethical environment is the power and authority of one's own example. Marshall's was an example which represented the standards of the Army—an army appropriate to an American Democracy, as it should be. He was austere, committed to doing the mission with the minimum of cost necessary to complete it, and in which advancement within was to be achieved only by demonstrated mastery of duty. Marshall was to the Army of 1945 what Grant had been to the Union Army and the Duke of Wellington had been to the British Army. He was its exemplar, and he was known and admired as such.

It's interesting that of all of the great World War II figures, Marshall is the one least well-remembered. In fact, when David McCullough, the most popular and excellent historian of our time, ran a seminar at Dartmouth College, not a single member of the seminar he taught could identify George Marshall. Mercy.

THE PROMISE AND LIMITS
OF AMERICAN POWER

Chapter 21:

What Students Need to Know about the Vietnam War

By Ronald Spector

The Vietnam War--or as the Vietnamese call it, the American War--is the longest war in American history (so far) and the first one the U.S. clearly lost. More significant for our purposes, its history is also the most contested. How contested it is can be readily illustrated by the titles of two influential books published during the last three years. The most recent, by John Prados, is called *Vietnam*: *The History of an Unwinnable War* (University Press of Kansas, April 2009). The other, by Mark Moyar, is called *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954-65* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). Whether the American war in Vietnam was an intractable mess or a near triumph tragically missed, in other words whether the war was "winnable" or not, is at the heart of most historical discussions about the U.S. in Vietnam. (Both sides in the debate usually cheerfully disregard the question of how "winning" is to be understood.)

Of course there is an important subtext to this debate. The Vietnam War called into question many of the most widespread assumptions that Americans had held about their country: that the U.S. was a special nation, that it adhered to a unique set of values, that its foreign policy was designed to promote freedom and safeguard democracy, that American soldiers were always good-hearted and patriotic, that American leaders could be trusted to carry out the complex and often secret tasks of national security with competence and integrity. Some writers and politicians would like to partially restore some of this faith and confidence by showing that the U.S. loss in Vietnam could have been avoided and that it was not, in any case, due to systemic faults in American government and society. It is therefore rather difficult to identify with precision what "students ought to know about the Vietnam War" because much of what they probably ought to know about is subject to dispute.

As a start we need to remember that, in a sense there were several separate, though related, Vietnam Wars going on at the same time between 1965 and 1973. There was the air war against North Vietnam and against the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. There was the ground war in South Vietnam waged by the North Vietnamese Army, the Americans, the South Vietnamese and the Viet Cong (who called their army the People's Liberation Armed Forces--PLAF). There was the "Other War" to establish the South Vietnamese government's control over the rural areas and destroy the Viet Cong presence there, often referred to as the pacification campaign. In the U.S. there was the "war at home"--the growth of both organized and unorganized opposition to the war, the movement of public opinion, and the impact of

those developments on domestic politics. And there was what might be called the diplomacy of the war involving negotiations, at first through intermediaries, between the United States and North Vietnam as well as relations with U.S. allies, the Soviet Union, and eventually China. Of these, the two that have been subject to most argument are the air war and the Pacification campaign.

Air War

The sustained bombing of North Vietnam began in the Spring of 1965. By the end of that year American aircraft had flown over 55,000 sorties and dropped 33,000 tons of bombs on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. By the end of 1967 the U.S. had dropped 860,000 tons of bombs on North Vietnam. That was more than the 630,000 tons of bombs dropped during the Korean War and far more than the 500,000 tons dropped in the War against Japan. About 35,000 North Vietnamese are estimated to have died in the bombing, which the communists reported to have destroyed virtually all industrial and communications facilities built since 1954.

There was heated disagreement about what all this bombing had accomplished. When the initial air attacks against North Vietnam were launched, strategists in the White House had expected that the pain and shock inflicted by the bombing would soon compel the North Vietnamese to stop, or at least slow down, their support of the war in South Vietnam. They also believed that the bombing would boost the morale of the Republic of South Vietnam, sorely beset by increasingly destructive attacks by the Viet Cong.

The bombing did boost the morale of South Vietnamese leaders--or at least they told the Americans it did. Unfortunately, this display of will and determination had little apparent effect on the North Vietnamese, whose commitment to the war in the south showed no sign of abating. Washington leaders were acutely aware that unleashing dozens of aircraft and thousands of pounds of bombs against a country on the border of the People's Republic of China and closely allied to the Soviet Union carried considerable risks. Many of them held vivid memories of the Chinese intervention in Korea fifteen years before. For those reasons the bombings were carefully regulated and modulated from Washington. Each list of targets to be bombed was submitted one (later two) weeks at a time through a long chain stretching from the military commands to the Department of Defense, the State Department, the White House, and often the President himself. Washington officials even determined the strength, altitude, and direction of each strike.

The President and his top civilian advisers also saw the bombing as a slow and deliberate means of compelling the North Vietnamese to ease their pressure on the south. The carrot of

stopping the bombing was deemed as important as the stick of continuing it, and bombing pauses were provided for. But the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Army, Navy, and Air commanders in Vietnam had no use for carrots and sticks. Their preference was for sledgehammers. They wanted to attack North Vietnam rapidly, unrelentingly, with overwhelming force. Instead they had to settle for a finely adjusted mix of restraints, of fits and starts emanating from Washington. Aviators saw this approach as absurd and dangerous, and the generals saw it as militarily unsound and futile.

With the commitment of American combat troops to Vietnam in the summer of 1965, Washington's emphasis shifted from bombing as a way of breaking North Vietnamese will to bombing as a way of depriving Hanoi of the means to wage war in the south. The list of targets was steadily increased, along with the rate and scale of attacks. Yet the increase was gradual, and entire areas of North Vietnam, including the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong, which contained important industrial and port facilities, were spared. Also off limits were areas within 25 miles of the Chinese border.

As the bombing continued, North Vietnam greatly strengthened its air defenses. China and Russia supplied it with sophisticated antiaircraft guns, radars, and missiles, as well as jet fighter aircraft, until by 1967 it had one of the most modern air defense systems in the world. The limited bombing campaign in the north, while increasing numbers of American troops were being committed to combat in the south, seemed ineffective and illogical to the Joint Chiefs and to most military commanders in the field. The Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, Admiral Ulysses S. Grant Sharp, expressed a view that would be repeated by military leaders many times throughout the war when he declared at the end of 1965, "The Armed Forces of the United States should not be required to fight this war with one arm tied behind their backs."

On the other hand, the Central Intelligence Agency emphasized that North Vietnam was an agricultural nation with a primitive transportation system and few industries. Almost all of the communists' military equipment came from China and the Soviet Union.

As for the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces in the South, they were dependent on the North for only a very small amount of supplies and equipment, estimated at about 100 tons a day. To the intelligence analysts, then, North Vietnam looked like a very unrewarding object of air attack; there simply weren't enough high-value targets. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's analysts calculated that the United States was spending almost ten dollars in direct operational costs for every one dollar of damage inflicted on North Vietnam. Those operational costs also included almost five hundred planes lost and hundreds of aviators killed or captured by the end of 1966.

"To bomb the North sufficiently to make a radical impact upon Hanoi's political, economic, and social structure," McNamara told the President in October 1966, "would require an effort which we could make but which would not be stomached either by our own people or by world opinion, and it would involve a serious risk of drawing us into war with China."

The debate over the strategy and operational approach to the air war is far from settled. However, with the availability of documents from the "other side" due to the end of the Cold War, it is now possible to evaluate the criticism of Johnson's direction of the war in a new light. On the one hand, there were factions in North Vietnam who had doubts about the policy of waging all-out war in South at any cost. To these doubters, the bombing provided further evidence that the attempt to win the south was not worth the costs to the progress of building socialism in the North. So the bombing did have an impact on some communist leaders. On the other hand, the doubtful faction was quite powerless to do anything against the much stronger "liberate-the-south-now" faction, headed by Le Duan, that completely dominated decision making in Hanoi through early 1968.

Similarly, we can now see that Johnson and his advisors were probably right in being super-cautious about the danger of intervention by China. Thousands of Chinese military engineers and antiaircraft units were heavily involved in the defense of North Vietnam. China had explicitly promised Hanoi that it would intervene should the U.S. invade North Vietnam. And, unlike in the case of Korea, the Chinese government had given the United States clear and firm, albeit secret, warnings about Beijing's reaction should the U.S. go too far in Vietnam.

Pacification

Another subject of lively debate is pacification and the question of whether the U.S. actually won the war in South Vietnam between 1968 and 1972 by shifting its emphasis to a greatly enhanced counterinsurgency effort to win the "hearts and minds" of the rural population. This effort was made more feasible by the heavy losses that the National Liberation Front (NLF) had suffered during Tet and follow-up offensives in 1968. A new intelligence and surveillance program called "Phoenix" was launched, intended to specifically identify and neutralize the remaining Viet Cong cadre.

By early 1969 it was apparent that the security situation in the countryside was improving. Communist defections reached an all-time high, and thousands of Viet Cong agents and functionaries were reported killed or captured. By the end of 1969 over 70 percent of the population were rated by American pacification analysts as living in areas under government control, as opposed to 42 percent at the beginning of 1968.

Even those who had come to regard all Saigon reports and statistics with deep skepticism could not deny the physical evidence of improved security. Roads and rivers that had been closed for years were reopened to civilian traffic. Bridges were repaired, and even the railroad began regular service again. By 1970 the dangerous "Street Without Joy" area of coastal Quang Tri province had been cleared of major enemy units for the first time since 1963.

William Colby, the CIA official who headed CORDS, the American umbrella organization for direction and support of pacification, not surprisingly sees that effort as a great success, a "lost victory" as Colby termed it in his memoirs (*Lost Victory,* 1989). General Creighton Abrams' biographer, Lewis Sorley, expressed a similar view in one of the more memorable passages in Vietnam War literature. "There came a day," Sorley wrote, "when the war was won. The fighting wasn't over but the war was won. This achievement can probably best be dated in late 1970… By then the South Vietnamese countryside had been widely pacified…"
Despite the confidence of Colby and Sorley, it remains impossible to know a lot about the counterinsurgency situation between 1969 and 1972 without more detailed studies for many of South Vietnam's widely varying provinces. None of the few that have been published so far provided much support for the idea that the pacification struggle was "won" by 1970.

My own view is that during 1969-71 the South Vietnamese and Americans came as close as they ever would to winning the war for the countryside, but not close enough. The Viet Cong, beset by losses and shortages of supplies, hounded by South Vietnamese government security forces, still hung on and did not disintegrate. They retained a number of their base areas in the more inaccessible parts of the Mekong Delta, along the Cambodian and Laotian borders, and in southern I Corps, the military region bordering North Vietnam. Even in the provinces that appeared to be most firmly under Saigon's control, communists were far from extinct. "We rid the country of larger enemy forces and armed every South Vietnamese who could stand still," Colonel Jack Weissinger, a senior adviser with extensive experience in Vietnam, stated. "Yet the government forces were still fearful. They were more afraid of the dedication, persistence, and uncompromising attitude of [the Viet Cong] than they were in their numbers. In some villages we got the Front cadres down to two or three but that was just enough to hang in there."

Colby's reports themselves revealed that in 1971 nearly 45 percent of rural villagers in I Corps lived within 1,000 meters of a recent terrorist incident. In Hau Ngia Province in III Corps near Saigon during the same period, an official or a Hoi Chanh was killed or wounded every few days throughout the year. More important, the top leadership of the Saigon government and army remained as dependent as ever upon the United States, not only for military support but for ideas, strategy, doctrine, and tactics. The same problems of sloth, incompetence, corruption, and nepotism that had always plagued the military and administrative organs of

the South Vietnamese government remained generally unchanged. A province or district chief might be removed here, a more competent and honest commander or administrator might be promoted there, usually as a result of relentless prodding, but the general picture remained unchanged.

American GI Experience

Compelling as the Pacification debate may be to counterinsurgency experts (who have begun to crawl out of the woodwork again), they are unlikely to be of great interest to students. Instead, what most fascinates young men and women about the war are the individual experiences of American GIs in Vietnam. Teachers are unlikely ever to have a class that is not well-supplied with students who have stories from their parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents, neighbors, et al. about what it was really like "in the Nam." Perhaps the best way to regard these stories is to recall the observation of one of my Quantico instructors many years ago. "No Vietnam story is ever completely true or completely false."
It could hardly be otherwise. Well over two million men served in Vietnam between 1963 and 1974. The great majority served there only about one year during the eight-year period the U.S. was directly involved in combat. The conditions and intensity of operations in Vietnam varied enormously; from the World War I-style warfare of Khe Sanh to the "amphibious" riverine warfare of the Mekong Delta, from fierce clashes in the mountains and jungles to endless patrols in the agricultural lowlands, where the main menaces were often mines and booby traps. Even in a single province, the pattern of battle and death could vary enormously. A study prepared for the Pentagon of operation by a single Marine division in one province during 1968 and 1969 showed wide variations in the tactics employed by the U.S. and communist forces, the terrain, and the cost in U.S. casualties. The causes of the casualties also varied. In one operation, almost 30 percent of the casualties were due to mines and booby traps. In another, there were virtually no losses to those devices.

Despite the attention paid in the media to such large engagements as Khe Sanh, An Loc, and the struggles around Hue and Saigon during Tet, most of the "battles" of the Vietnam War were short, sharp clashes between company-, platoon-, or squad-size units. The majority lasted only a few hours, often only a few minutes. There were hundreds of such small engagements during 1968 in Vietnam, and, although clashes between large units continued to capture the attention of the Pentagon and the press, these small engagements remain the characteristic "battle" for most GIs.

Short as they usually were, these small battles could be costly indeed. Most U.S. casualties occurred during the first few minutes of a fight, before the U.S. unit could bring supporting artillery aircraft to bear on the enemy. The head of the MACV operations center, Brigadier

General J.R. Chaisson, estimated that in engagements in the rugged, jungle-covered mountains of the central highlands, it was not unusual for a U.S. company to sustain twenty to fifty casualties in the first few minutes of contact.

In popular culture the Vietnam veteran is almost always portrayed as a man (never a woman) who spent most of his time in the jungle confronting the elusive Viet Cong; a man who had experienced many terrifying and tragic events in the course of frequent combat and now suffers from some sort of post-traumatic stress disorder. Given this widely accepted image, it may come as a surprise to your students that the majority of GIs who served in Vietnam were seldom, if ever, in direct contact with the enemy. What proportion of men actually experienced combat in the television sense is hard to measure exactly. One method is to count the percentage serving in maneuver battalions. A maneuver battalion is a combat unit of battalion size, usually infantry, armored cavalry tanks, or mechanized infantry, that is able to move under its own resources and engage the enemy with its organic weapons. In 1968, the U.S. had 112 maneuver battalions, and Department of Defense figures showed 29 percent of total Army personnel in Vietnam and 34 percent of the Marines as serving in maneuver battalions.

The large majority of GIs who did not operate in the field served as supply, service, or administrative troops stationed in or near one of the dozen-odd American base complexes such as Quang Tri and Dong Ha in the north near the DMZ, Phu Bai near Hue, Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang, and Cam Ranh Bay along the central coast, and the Saigon-Bien Hoa complex, the largest of all. All were located near large airfield or port facilities and housed upwards of 10,000 U.S. troops.

In general, the larger the base or headquarters, the greater were the amenities. Troops at the major installations often enjoyed hot food, electricity, hot showers, a club, athletic facilities, movies, and plenty of beer. Many clubs were air-conditioned, and the larger ones featured dining rooms where hamburgers, French fries, fried chicken, or steak were always available.

This is not to imply that GIs "in the rear" had a wonderful time--despite the derisive and contemptuous comments to that effect by troops in the field. Most men in service units worked hard at mind-numbing jobs 10 to 12 hours a day, seven days a week. The heat, insects, blowing dust, flooding and seas of mud during the rainy season were experienced by soldiers in all types of jobs. There was also the disquieting understanding that no place and no job was completely safe.

"You could be in the most protected space in Vietnam and still know that your safety was provisional; that early death, blindness, loss of legs, arms, or balls, major and lasting

disfigurement-- the whole rotten deal--could come in on the freaky fluky as easily in the so-called expected ways," the reporter Michael Herr wrote, "the roads were mined, the trails booby-trapped, satchel charges and grenades blew up jeeps and movie theaters, the VC got work inside all the camps as shoe-shine boys and laundresses and honey-dippers; they'd starch your fatigues and burn your s--- and then go home and mortar your area. Saigon and Cholon and Da Nang held such hostile vibes that you felt you were dry-sniped every time someone looked at you."[1]

For the minority of GIs serving in combat units in the field, life was not safe at all. Although officials in Washington were fond of pointing out that the casualty rate of American forces in Vietnam was considerably lower than in World War II and Korea, this had far more to do with the larger percentage of personnel in support units and the availability of improved medical care than with any differences in the intensity of combat. Men in maneuver battalions, the units that actually did the fighting, continued to run about the same chance of death or injury as their older relatives who had fought in Korea or in the Pacific. Indeed, during the first half of 1968 the overall Vietnam casualty rate exceeded the overall rate of all theaters in World War II, while the casualty rates for Army and marine maneuver battalions was more than four times as high.

So if we are going to make any sweeping generalizations about a war that defies generalization, we might say that the great majority of Vietnam GIs did not spend their time patrolling or fighting in the mountains, jungles or rice paddies, but for those who did, the dangers and the costs were comparable to other twentieth-century American wars.

Like other disasters in American history--the Civil War, the Great Depression, Pearl Harbor--the Vietnam War inspires denial, rationalization, and finger-pointing. Americans don't like stories without happy endings or problems without solutions. But so as not to end on a completely negative note, I would like to read a short portion of one of Jan Herman's dozens of interviews in his *Navy Medicine in Vietnam* (McFarland, Oct. 2008):

> "I went back to Vietnam in 1997 with a few of the Marines I knew from that era…. We remembered a village called Nhi Ha. If you went to Nhi Ha in 1968 you were going to die. That was guaranteed. [In 1997] the village was still small but it had an elementary school. Some kids came out of the school onto a grassy little slope where we were eating our box lunches. One of the guys in our group had a bottle of bubble soap. He stood upwind from the kids. They stood on the grassy slope while Greg blew bubbles across their faces. As they reached up and tried to grab the bubbles they screamed with delight. Watching this, I realized the war was over."

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[1] Michael Herr, *Dispatches.* New York: Alfred A Knopf, , 1977.

Chapter 22:

Tet 1968: The Turning Point

By James H. Willbanks

The Tet Offensive of 1968 proved to be the turning point of the Vietnam War and its effects were far-reaching. It changed the entire way that the United States approached the war: before the Tet Offensive the U.S. objective in Vietnam was to win the war; after the Tet Offensive, the U.S. objective shifted toward finding a face-saving way to get out of Vietnam.

To understand fully the impact of the 1968 Tet Offensive, we must first go back to the previous year. By 1967, after more than two years of bitter fighting, the commitment of more than 400,000 troops, and steadily increasing casualty figures, many Americans believed that the war had degenerated into a bloody stalemate. At the same time, the anti-war movement was increasing in volume and intensity. Politically, President Johnson was under fire even within his own party for his handling of the war.

Given this situation, Johnson launched what became known as the "success offensive," designed to convince the American people that the war was being won and that administration policies were succeeding. Administration spokesmen fanned out and began to spread the word. As part of this effort, the President brought home General William Westmoreland, senior US commander in Vietnam, in mid-November 1967 to make the administration's case.

Westmoreland was glad to do so. By his primary metric—the body count—the US and allied forces were making significant headway against the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army on the battlefield, prevailing in every major battle and inflicting heavy casualties on the NVA and main force VC units. In a number of public and private venues, the general insisted that progress was being made in the war and that there was "a light at the end of the tunnel." These words would come back to haunt him in a very short time.

Meanwhile, in Hanoi, even as Westmoreland spoke, the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party was finalizing preparations for a country-wide offensive designed to break the stalemate and 'liberate' South Vietnam.

The decision to launch the offensive was the result of a long-standing internal struggle over military strategy within the leadership in Hanoi. These struggles were principally over the timing involved in shifting from a protracted war toward a more decisive approach. In the end, however, the more cautious proponents of protracted war were overcome by those like

General Nguyen Chi Thanh, commander in the South, who advocated a nationwide general offensive.

Ironically, Thanh died before the decision was made to launch the offensive and the responsibility for preparing the plan for the offensive fell to General Vo Nguyen Giap. The plan he came up with was designed to ignite a general uprising among the people of South Vietnam, shatter the South Vietnamese armed forces, and topple the Saigon regime, while at the same time increasing the level of pain for the Americans by inflicting more casualties on U.S. forces. At the very least, the decision-makers in Hanoi hoped to position themselves for any follow-on negotiations that might take place in the wake of the offensive.

The preparations for the offensive began in the summer months of 1967; the target date for launching the offensive was the beginning of Tet, the lunar New Year holiday, which would come at the end of January 1968.

During the second half of 1967, in what we would today call "shaping operations," the Communists launched a number of attacks to draw US and allied attention away from the population centers, which would be the ultimate objectives for the 1968 offensive. As part of this effort, NVA forces engaged the Marines in a series of sharp battles in the hills surrounding Khe Sanh, a base in western Thua Thien Province, south of the DMZ up against the Laotian border. Further to the east, additional NVA forces besieged the Marine base at Con Thien just south of the Demilitarized Zone. Further south, Communist forces attacked Loc Ninh and Song Be, both in III Corps Tactical Zone, and in November they struck U.S. forces at Dak To in the Central Highlands. In purely tactical terms, these "border battles" as they became known, were costly failures for the Communists and they no doubt lost some of their best troops; they sustained over 300 killed at Dak To alone. However, at the operational level, these battles achieved the intent of Giap's plan by diverting General Westmoreland's attention to the outlying areas away from the buildup around the urban target areas that would be struck during the Tet attacks.

US military intelligence analysts knew that the other side was planning some kind of large-scale attack in 1968, but they did not believe that it would come during Tet or that it would be countrywide. Still, there were many indicators that the enemy was planning something. When new intelligence poured in from all four Corps Tactical Zones, Westmoreland and his staff came to the conclusion that a major enemy effort was probable—all signs pointed to a new offensive. Still, most of the significant enemy activity had been along the DMZ and in the remote border areas.

In the words of one official in the Johnson White House, writing later in 1968, the Tet Offensive represented "the worst intelligence failure of the war." Many historians and other observers have endeavored to understand how the Communists were able to achieve such a stunning level of surprise. There are a number of possible explanations, but there are two main reasons for the failure to predict what was coming. First, Allied estimates of enemy troop strengths and intentions were flawed. Part of the problem was that in the fall of 1967, Headquarters MACV in Saigon, in the face of vigorous disagreement from the Central Intelligence Agency, changed the way it calculated enemy order of battle—in terms of strength and organization for combat. At Westmoreland's direction, the military analysts decided not to count the local militias of the National Liberation Front in the enemy order of battle, instantly reducing estimated enemy strength downward from 300,000 to 235,000. Almost overnight, this seemed to indicate that the war was going better than it was, but at the same time discounted a large number of potentially effective enemy fighters and support personnel. Having revised their enemy estimates, it appears that US military intelligence analysts then apparently accepted those estimates at face value—as ground truth—this is tantamount to what is known in some military circles as "drinking your own bath water."

This caused Westmoreland and his analysts to discount any intelligence indicators that ran counter to the assessment that the enemy was getting weaker and, they reasoned, that any new offensive, because of this overall weakness, would be localized and limited. Thus, when incoming intelligence reports indicated that the enemy was planning a country-wide offensive, the reports were largely ignored.

The second major reason for the failure to predict the size and scope of the coming offensive was the focus on Khe Sanh. In late December 1967, signals intelligence indicated that there was a significant enemy build-up in the Khe Sanh area, site of the earlier "Hill Fights" in western Thua Thien Province. Westmoreland and his intelligence analysts decided that this build-up signified that the enemy's main effort in 1968 would come at Khe Sanh. Therefore, Westmoreland, his headquarters, and the White House turned their focus on Khe Sanh and the northernmost provinces.

On 21 January, the North Vietnamese Army began the first large-scale shelling of Khe Sanh, which was followed by renewed heavy fighting in the hills surrounding the Marine base. These attacks seemed to confirm Westmoreland's earlier assessment that the remote Marine base would be the focal point for any new Communist attack. He was sure that this was the opening salvo of the anticipated enemy offensive. The fact that the Khe Sanh situation looked hauntingly similar to that which the French had faced when they were decisively defeated at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 only added increased urgency to the events unfolding there.

Accordingly, Westmoreland ordered the commencement of Operation Niagara, a massive bombing campaign focused on suspected enemy positions around Khe Sanh. Additionally, he ordered the 1st Cavalry Division from the Central Highlands to Phu Bai just south of Hue and one brigade of the 101st Airborne Division to I Corps to strengthen the defenses of the northernmost provinces. By the end of January, more than half of all US combat maneuver battalions were in the I Corps area.

For the reasons just stated, when the Communists launched the Tet Offensive, they achieved almost total surprise. It could have been worse—due to a failure in coordination, a number of enemy attacks were launched prematurely in the Central Highlands and the adjacent coastal plains, during the early morning hours of 30 Jan—this was due to the fact that they were using a different lunar calendar than the main force, which was off by 24 hours. These premature attacks provided at least some warning for U.S. forces, but it was too late in most cases for the South Vietnamese forces, because most of the ARVN soldiers were home on leave and could not be recalled in time to stop what was to come the next night.

In the early morning hours of 31 January, the combined forces of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army, a total of over 84,000 troops, struck with a fury that was breathtaking in both its scope and suddenness. In attacks that ranged from the DMZ all the way south to the tip of the Ca Mau Peninsula, the NVA and VC struck 36 of South Vietnam's 44 province capitals, 5 of its 6 largest cities, 71 of 242 district capitals, and virtually every allied airfield and key military installation in the country. One American general at the time said the situation map depicting the attacks "lit up like a pinball machine."

In one of the most spectacular attacks, 19 VC sappers conducted a daring raid on the US Embassy in Saigon. Elsewhere in Saigon, VC units hit Tan Son Nhut Air Base, the South Vietnamese Joint General Staff headquarters, and a number of other key installations across the city. Some of the bitterest fighting was in Cholon, the Chinese section of Saigon.

Far to the north, 7500 VC and North Vietnamese soldiers overran and occupied Hue, the ancient imperial capital. Marines and ARVN soldiers had to be sent in to retake the city in almost a month of bitter house-to-house fighting.

The attacks of the Tet Offensive that raged up and down the length and breadth of South Vietnam were unprecedented in their magnitude and ferocity and the reports streaming in from Saigon portrayed the bitter fighting in near real-time on the evening news on the three TV networks.

CBS television news anchor Walter Cronkite, who had witnessed firsthand the bitter fighting at Hue, no doubt voiced the sentiment of many Americans when he exclaimed, "What the hell is going on?—I thought we were winning the war." On 27 Feb, after returning from Vietnam, Cronkite went on the air, and declared the war a stalemate, and called for the U.S. to negotiate its way out of the war.

In truth, the Tet Offensive, as it unfolded during the next weeks and months, turned out to be a disaster for the Communists, at least at the tactical level. While the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong enjoyed initial successes with their surprise attacks, allied forces quickly overcame their initial shock and responded rapidly and forcefully, driving back the enemy in most areas. The first surge of the initial phase of the offensive was over by the end of February and most of these battles were over in a few days. There were, however, a few notable exceptions— fighting continued to rage in the Chinese section of Saigon, at Hue, and also at Khe Sanh— battles in which the allies eventually prevailed as well.

In the end, allied forces used superior mobility and firepower to rout the enemy troops, who failed to hold any of their military objectives. Additionally, the South Vietnamese troops, rather than fold, as the North Vietnamese had expected, acquitted themselves reasonably well. As for the much anticipated general uprising of the South Vietnamese populace, it never materialized.

During the bitter fighting that extended into the fall, the Communists sustained staggering casualties. Conservative estimates put their losses at more than 40,000 killed in action with an additional 7,000 captured. By September, when the subsequent phases of the offensive had run their course, the Viet Cong, who had borne the brunt of the heaviest fighting in the cities, had been dealt a significant blow from which they never really recovered; the major fighting for the rest of the war would be done by the North Vietnamese Army from late 1969 until the end of the war.

The casualty figures during Tet for the allied forces were much lower, but they were still high. On 18 February, MACV posted the highest US casualty figure for a single week during the entire war—543 killed and 2,500 wounded. Total U.S. killed in action figures for the period February to March, 1968, were over a thousand. These casualty figures continued to mount as subsequent phases of the offensive extended into the fall. By the end of the year, U.S. killed in action for 1968 totaled more than 15,000.

Allied losses combined with the sheer scope and ferocity of the offensive and the vivid images of the savage fighting on the nightly TV news stunned the American people, who were astonished that the enemy was capable of such an effort. Their president and the senior US

general in Vietnam had told them only two months before that the enemy was on its last legs and that the war was near an end. The intense and disturbing scenes depicted on the nightly TV news told a different story—a situation which added greatly to the growing credibility gap between the people and the administration. Having accepted the administration's optimistic reports, but now confronted with a different reality, many Americans concluded that we were losing or at best locked in a bloody stalemate with no end in sight.

The Tet Offensive also had a major impact on Lyndon Johnson, who was visibly shaken by the turn of events. Although General Westmoreland rightfully claimed a great victory in the heavy fighting that continued into the fall of 1968, Johnson, like the American people, was stunned by the ability of the Communists to launch such wide-spread attacks. When Westmoreland, urged on by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Earle Wheeler, asked for 206,000 troops to "take advantage of the situation," the president balked and began to consider alternative courses of action.

Johnson turned to a group of unofficial advisors known as the "Wise Men." This was a group of senior statesmen and retired generals to whom he had turned in the past for advice and support. He had met with them in mid-1967 and they recommended that he stay the course in Vietnam. However, when he convened the group in March 1968, they almost unanimously recommended that he find a way to disengage from the war in Vietnam. Stunned by this reversal, Johnson charged Clark Clifford, who had replaced Robert McNamara as Secretary of Defense, to conduct a study to determine the way ahead in Vietnam.

In a very real sense, the Tet Offensive fractured the administration's "shakey" consensus on the conduct of the war and the reassessment that Johnson ordered permitted the airing of new alternatives. The civilians in the Pentagon recommended that allied efforts focus on population security and that the South Vietnamese be forced to assume more responsibility for the fighting while the US pursued a negotiated settlement. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, not surprisingly, took exception to this approach and recommended that Westmoreland be given the troops that he had asked for and be permitted to pursue enemy forces into Laos and Cambodia.

While the way ahead was being debated within the administration, public opinion polls on the President's handling of the war continued to spiral downward. In the New Hampshire democratic primary, Johnson barely defeated challenger Senator Eugene McCarthy, winning by only 300 votes—a situation which convinced Robert Kennedy to enter the presidential race as an antiwar candidate.

Beset politically by challengers within his own party and seemingly still in shock from the spectacular Tet attacks, on 31 March, Johnson went on national television to address the nation. He then stunned the audience by announcing that he would not run for re-election—The Tet Offensive had claimed its most important victim—the sitting president of the United States.

In the aftermath of Johnson's announcement, chaos reigned at the Democratic National Convention in downtown Chicago. Eventually, Vice President Hubert Humphrey won the democratic nomination. The following November, Richard Nixon won the presidential election and began the long U.S. bloody withdrawal from Vietnam.

In summary, The Tet Offensive of 1968 was a turning point in the war in Vietnam. Westmoreland and other senior officials were blinded to the indications that a countrywide offensive was imminent because these indications did not conform to their preconceived notions about enemy capabilities and allied progress in the war. Even after the offensive was launched, the initial reaction at Westmoreland's headquarters was to place the attacks within the framework of those notions, seeing them as diversionary actions meant to focus attention away from what was seen as the main objective—the Marine base at Khe Sanh. Thus, MACV was not prepared when the enemy offensive was launched.

In the case of the Tet Offensive, intelligence became an extension of Westmoreland's optimism and LBJ's need to show progress—not an accurate reflection of the enemy's capabilities. This set the stage for the impact of the enemy's surprise attacks in Tet 1968. Johnson and Westmoreland built a set of expectations – false, as it turned out -- about the situation in Vietnam in order to win public support for the administration's handling of the war and dampen antiwar sentiment. These expectations, based on severely flawed intelligence, played a major role in the stunning impact of the Tet Offensive. When the Tet Offensive exploded on 30-31 January, the resulting loss of credibility for the president and the military high command in Saigon was devastating. At that point, the fact that the allied forces had prevailed in 1968 was rendered irrelevant.

The images and news stories of the bitter fighting seemed to put the lie to the administration's claims of progress in the war and stretched the credibility gap to the breaking point. The tactical victory thus became a strategic defeat for the United States, convincing many Americans that the war was unwinnable. It effectively toppled an American president, convinced the new president to "Vietnamize" the war, led to U.S. disengagement from the war, and paved the way for the ultimate triumph of the Communists in 1975.

Chapter 23:

Gulf War I

By LTG (Ret) Bernard Trainor

If you tell your class that "Today, we are going to study the first Persian Gulf War," you will get an unenthusiastic response. That war took place almost twenty years ago, in 1991. Today's students weren't born yet. To them, it's ancient history.

And yet Gulf War I was a watershed in American history, especially American military history. By the time today's students graduate, the stream of events that was set in motion by that War will still be affecting America's youth, who will still be fighting and dying in the deserts and mountains of the Middle East.

Youngsters who are learning history, and particularly military history, in today's academic world see it as a recitation of events almost like a movie script. It starts, it goes through, and then it ends. It's devoid of drama or uncertainty. And yet military history has a human dimension that surpasses any other subject. Human beings are killing one another. Teachers should try to imbue these events with some of their drama.

Gulf War I is a case study of the drama. It was a war of erroneous assumptions and miscalculations on both sides. The end was full of surprises and disagreements that have stayed with us to this very day. This was the first major post-Cold War U.S. military engagement. From it came a new organizing principle. The U.S. has always had to have organizing principles. In the 1930s, it was getting out of the Depression. Then came WWII, the defeat of fascism and the Japanese. During the Cold War, the organizing principle was dealing with the Soviet Union and the possibility of nuclear war. After the Soviet Union collapsed, there was no organizing principle. Then events in the Middle East took a turn. Since that time, the United States' organizing principle has been dealing with the Middle East, with its many ramifications--fundamental Islam, terrorism, insurgencies, failed states, WMD. It all starts with the Kuwait war. But to understand that, it's well to understand the context of the times.

Through the 1970s, Arab Iraq and Persian Iran both sought hegemony in their own right, but each was somewhat of a satellite of one of the two great powers, with the U.S. supporting the Shah in Iran and the Soviet Union supporting Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

Things changed when the Ayatollah Khomeini came on the scene in 1979 and there was the Islamic revolution in Iran, which ousted Shah Reza Pahlavi. Iran under Khomeini turned

against the U.S., which they saw as a supporter of the hated Shah. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was waning as a threat.

In a reversal, the U.S. began to support the Iraqis against its former friend Iran. Meanwhile, Saddam decided to take advantage of the weakness he perceived in Iran as a result of the fall of the Shah and the dissolution of the Iranian Army to attack across the Euphrates into Iran. This led to a long, bitter, and enormously costly war that finally came to an unsatisfactory conclusion with millions of casualties on both sides.

The war left Saddam badly in debt. He came to see himself as Saladin in the Arab world, leading the fight against the hated Persians, and felt that Iraq had borne the brunt of the fighting. His campaign had been funded largely by war loans from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Now the bill was coming due, and the Kuwaitis in particular were anxious to be paid back. Saddam sought forgiveness of the debt, claiming the Kuwaitis were ungrateful. Besides, he reasoned, looking for excuses to get out of paying the debt, Kuwait was not really a legitimate government, but was carved out of the Iraqi portion of the Ottoman empire. It was no more than the 14th of the Iraqi provinces, to Saddam. Moreover, he claimed that Kuwait was stealing oil from the Iraqi Ramallah oil field by slant drilling. That may have been true, but it was largely a pretext.

Saddam was uncertain how the international community would receive his claim that Iraq was entitled to reclaim Kuwait. The Arab states interpreted this as mere saber-rattling. As to the U.S., Saddam called in U.S. Ambassador April Glaspie for a long conversation about Iraq's complaints against Kuwait. In the version published by the *New York Times*, Glaspie told Saddam the following, which was music to his ears. "We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait." Saddam heard that the U.S. would stand clear, interpreting it almost as a green-light to go ahead with aggression against Kuwait.

The U.S. government was perfectly aware that Saddam was starting to mass his armies down along the border with Kuwait. Discussions were held in the Pentagon and NSC on whether to send a signal to Saddam to deter him. It was proposed to send some F-15s over to Saudi Arabia and to move an amphibious task force into the Gulf waters. But the Arab leaders told us that sending planes or a fleet might be provocative, so we didn't do it. This, beside Glaspie's comments, convinced Saddam that the U.S. was not going to intervene, because if we were really concerned, we would have deployed some forces to the region signaling him to back off.

It came as an enormous surprise to the U.S. when Saddam made his move in August 1990. The Iraqis took the Kuwaiti capital and then moved toward the Saudi-Kuwaiti border.

The concern in the U.S. was not so much for Kuwait per se but oil--if Saddam had been able to surprise us as he had in Kuwait, he might just surprise us and continue on into Saudi Arabia for its oilfields.

Saddam was aware of this and afraid of the U.S. reaction, so he pulled back from the border to a line further back. The area in between became no man's land, and he started to build two unoccupied lines of defense, one a couple of miles back from the first. While it was devoid of troops, it became heavily mined, crisscrossed with barbed wire entanglements and fire trenches.

President George H.W. Bush sent Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell to talk to the Saudi king and princes to convince them to allow American forces on Saudi soil. Saudi Arabia is a holy land, with Mecca and Medina on its ground. Bringing foreign, Christian infidel forces into the country was a very big thing to do. Cheney and Powell had difficulty doing so, but finally their delegation convinced the king that Iraq really was a threat to his nation and the king acceded to our request to land our forces, which we began to do. We flew in aircraft and units of the 82nd Airborne Division. We put in a Marine regiment in what was known as Operation Desert Shield.

These forces dug in as a signal to Saddam that he had best not move against Saudi Arabia (which he had no intention of doing, although he did come up with contingency plans). But he had bitten off more than he could chew. He didn't know the Americans were going to react this way. How would he get out of this? In the meantime his soldiers started to steal anything that was moveable in Kuwait.

The idea of getting involved in Kuwait was not very popular with the American people. We had had the experience of Beirut in 1983 where we'd gotten a bloody nose and an embarrassing retreat. There was no desire to repeat the experience. The Kuwait-Iraqi dispute was perceived in the eyes of many Americans to be about the oil companies' interests. But there were three people in Washington who were of a different view and they controlled the decision process: President George H.W. Bush, Secretary James Baker, and Brent Scowcroft,

the national security advisor. (Officials like Cheney and Powell were on the periphery.) The troika was determined to force Saddam to back down. But they could not use force unless a coalition could be built to support direct action--not only a foreign coalition, but a bipartisan American coalition. They would first build up support abroad and then focus on the American people, able to say to them "See, the international community supports our efforts, you should, too."

President Bush worked the outside world and succeeded in gaining support. The UN passed resolutions condemning the Iraqis and told them to withdraw. Once this international community had been built, and it was clear that even Arab states would join a multinational coalition army to face the Iraqis, President Bush went to the Congress to get American support for any military action that he might deem necessary. When it came to giving the President the right to use military force, it came down to a 52-47 vote in the Senate on January 12, and 250-183 in the House, which was pretty close. So the idea that the American people enthusiastically supported the war was suspect.

Even within the DoD and Pentagon, there was great disagreement over how to deal with the Iraqi threat. Cheney was a hawk, and felt we had to do something about the invasion of Kuwait. Powell disagreed, arguing that Kuwait wasn't worth the life of one American soldier. He proposed drawing the "line in the sand" at the border of Saudi Arabia; if the Iraqis crossed it we'd fight; otherwise we wouldn't. Cheney told Powell he was not reading the president very well; Bush had decided that Iraq must be forced from Kuwait, by force, if needed.

Initially, the American forces rushed to Saudi Arabia in August were small. But the build-up had started and eventually reached half-million troops, backed by an awesome array of air and sea power with the latest in modern weapons and technology.

Saddam made the terrible miscalculation in challenging the U.S., which at that time had a formidable army that was "unemployed"--i.e., the Cold War was ending, leaving us with a big army in Europe with no one to fight. We sent our forces from Germany and from the U.S. to Saudi Arabia not to only defend that kingdom but to prepare for an assault on the Iraqi army in Kuwait if it did not withdraw. So it was not a very smart move on Saddam's part to invade Kuwait at this particular time.

The UN sanctions and resolutions were taken, but nothing was happening in Kuwait to convince the president and the coalition that they wouldn't have to resort to force to expel Saddam. Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev sent Yevgeni Primikov, his foreign minister, to Iraq to advise Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait, but Saddam wasn't convinced the Americans would do more than drop some bombs, if that. Knowing that the American public was

casualty-averse, he did not believe the U.S. had the stomach for war. After all, it had pulled out of Vietnam and Beirut after some blood was shed. He also believed that in the long run, the Soviet Union and the international community would deter the U.S. from attacking. He was adamant about remaining in Kuwait. Once again, he miscalculated.

There were Cassandras here in the U.S. The Iraqi Army had fought the Iranians for eight years and was battle-hardened, they held. We were sending into war a relatively untested, post-Vietnam all-volunteer force whose quality was unknown. There were dire predictions of American casualties in the range of 10,000 during the first 24 hours. Americans were nervous about liberating Kuwait by force.

In the White House, there was certainty of a swift victory, but concern about Saddam's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons programs. There was abundant evidence of very active Iraqi programs aimed at developing those weapons. This was fully acknowledged by the international community. We knew of two particular sites where the Iraqis had nuclear weapons development sites: al Qaim and al Tuwaitha.
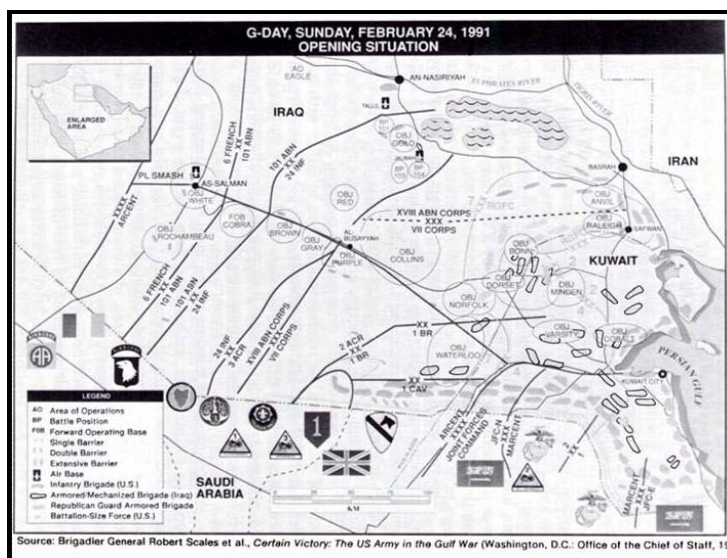
We wanted to see Saddam withdraw, but didn't believe he would. Therefore we would invade and drive him out by defeating his field army in Kuwait. The assumption was that he would then probably be overthrown by an internal military coup, The Administration wanted a regime change, but assuming a coup, there was no need to go to Baghdad to oust the Iraqi president. Indeed, the UN resolution which finally authorized force restricted the action to the liberation of Kuwait. It said nothing about regime change in Baghdad.

How were we going to take on the Iraqi field army? The plan according to General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was to isolate it in Kuwait and destroy it with superior firepower and deft maneuver. As was mentioned earlier, the Iraqis had built up the two lines of defenses. But they left the open desert in the west undefended. They did not anticipate an attack coming from that direction. The plan devised by General Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the coalition forces, was to conduct a prolonged air campaign against the Iraqi infrastructure--political, economic, and military. At the same time a multidivisional armored and mechanized corps would secretly move to the west, blind to Iraqi intelligence and surveillance. Two Marine divisions in the east would directly face the Iraqis. When the order to attack was given, the Marines directly facing the Iraqis were to engage the Iraqis and hold them in place while as planned the western task force cut behind them severing their line of retreat, leaving them isolated and open to either surrender or destruction.

When the air campaign started on January 17, 1991, the Iraqis attempted to draw Israel into the fight by launching Scud missiles at Tel Aviv. Saddam reckoned that the Israelis would

retaliate. This, he reasoned, would outrage the Arab members of the coalition and undermine it. Once again he had miscalculated, although, it took great pressure from the White House to persuade the Israelis to stay out of the fight.

As the bombing campaign progressed the Saudi government and CIA conducted a psychological campaign encouraging the Shia population in southern Iraq, always suppressed by Saddam, to "Rise up! Throw off your chains! This is your opportunity to rid yourself of your tormenter! Be prepared for the Hallelujah day." The hope was that between the destruction of Saddam's field forces, an uprising by the Shias, and possibly an army coup it would be the end of Saddam.

Source: Brigadier General Robert Scales et al., *Certain Victory: The US Army in the Gulf War* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Staff, 19

Meanwhile, oblivious to an attack from the west, the Iraqis planned to fight the Americans the same way they had fought the Iranians. They established sequential defensive positions behind the unoccupied barrier zone just above the border with Saudi Arabia. The positions were occupied by the regular army, backed up by armored Republican Guards divisions. The Iraqis planned to turn the barrier zone into a killing zone in which to entrap and inflict intolerable casualties on the attacking Americans with their abundance of artillery. Any Americas that made it through the firestorm would be met by Iraqi infantry and counter attacked and destroyed by the Republican Guard. It was exactly what Schwarzkopf hoped they planned to do. His end run behind them from the west would come as a complete surprise.

What the Iraqis also hadn't counted upon was the effectiveness of the prolonged coalition air attacks. Iraq was being devastated. Saddam decided to seize the initiative and start the ground war. He would make Schwarzkopf react to a provocation and draw the Americans into a premature counterattack. To do this, at the end of January, he sent a mechanized task force south across the border into Saudi Arabia to the seaport town of al Khafji, which had been evacuated of civilians. The town was defended by a small Saudi Arabian force backed up by Americans some miles to the south. Saddam planned to bait the Americans.

The Iraqis succeeded in taking Khafji without difficulty, but Schwarzkopf reacted, not with ground forces, but with air power. Saddam had taken the potency of our air power into account, but had equipped his forces liberally with air-defense weapons. He was convinced that he could provide an air defense bubble over his forces that would drive off the Americans. He was wrong. The mechanized corps that went into Khafji was devastated by air strikes.

Faced with *prima facie* evidence that his air defenses were no match for the Americans he radically changed his strategy. No longer would he attempt to hold Kuwait and bleed the Americans in a brutal defensive battle - whose outcome he assumed would lead to a negotiated settlement. Now he recognized that he was outmatched. He decided that if and when the Americans attacked he would abandon Kuwait, but preserve his army, particularly the loyal Republican Guards. He would conduct a fighting retreat out of Kuwait back into Iraq.

Not aware of the radical turn of events, the assumption was made by Schwarzkopf that the Iraqis would defend in place. Indeed, as we noted, until Khafji, that's exactly what they had planned to do. Schwarzkopf never understood the importance of the Khafji battle and made no analysis on what impact the Iraqi defeat might have on Saddam. He was totally unaware of the dramatic change in Iraqi strategy. His attention was focused on monumental enterprise of positioning multiple divisions in the western desert. He remained committed to his basic plan to hold the Iraqis in place and envelop them from the rear. On February 21 *Desert* Shield became Desert Storm. The coalition attack went in against the Iraqi forces as planned, with the Marines leading the way to engage their attention and lock them in battle. A day later the surprise corps-sized attack of three armored and a mechanized division in the west was launched against the Iraqi flank and rear.

It turned out that the "battle-hardened" Iraqis weren't battle-hardened at all. They were tired, undernourished, and under-equipped army, largely unwilling to fight. So many had deserted earlier that it was a hollow army. (Managing surrendering Iraqis posed a greater problem than the fighting.) Some of them were even surrendering to helicopters and reconnaissance drones There was very little fighting. The Iraqis gave up all along the line. Some Republican Guard units fought, but most of the Guard was under orders to flee back to Iraq and let the regular army cover their retreat. The unexpected collapse of the Iraqis upset Schwarzkopf's careful plan. The Marines advanced so fast that instead of holding fast to the Iraqis so that the western attack could trap them, the attack acted like a piston and rapidly drove them north towards escape over the Iraqi border before the American armor engaged them.

Schwarzkopf also had trouble with the heavy armored corps' field commander, Lt. Gen. Frederick Franks, a very cautious man. He didn't realize that the Iraqis were on the run and that he had an opportunity to go hell-bent across the desert and cut the Iraqis off. He was

moving very slowly so that all units would be synchronized into a steel fist when they met the Iraqi Republican Guard. The result was that while Franks cautiously advanced, over half the Guard units along with their equipment, were escaping back into Iraq.

Saddam was quickly defeated at an astonishingly low cost to the coalition. But the idea of destroying his field forces was gone; the best and most loyal ones had escaped to pose a subsequent threat.

That was the first undesirable outcome of the war. And while there was a clamor by some to continue on to Baghdad and overthrow Saddam, President George Bush rejected the idea and stuck with the UN mandate, which limited its warrant to ousting the Iraqis from Kuwait. Secondly, the President did not want to get tied down in administering the occupation of Iraq. This decision was to have unfortunate consequences for the Iraqi Shias just across the border.

With the Iraqis fleeing and coalition forces pummeling them, it brings us back to Washington and discussions on ending the war. Bush and his advisors knew that the Iraqis were thoroughly beaten in the fast moving war, but they had little idea of the actual situation on the ground. When asked about it, Schwarzkopf reported that the weather was bad, it was raining, there were sandstorms, units were scattered all over the desert. He confessed that didn't have a clear idea of where each of his units and those of Saddam's army were located . But, as he boasted in a televised news conference, the "gate was closed," meaning that the Iraqi's escape route into their own country was blocked and the Iraqi army was trapped. Of course that was not the case as his field commanders knew. Schwarzkopf had again based his remark on an assumption that was wrong.

Bush presided over an oval-office meeting of his advisers and Douglas Hurd, Britain' foreign minister, whose country's forces were fighting next to the Americans. Although there was utter confusion on the battlefield, it didn't make any difference. The decision to stop the war was a political, not a military one. To continue killing already retreating soldiers was viewed as impolitic and unethical, particularly in light of media accounts of what was happening on the highway from Kuwait City to the Iraqi border. Iraqis in Kuwait city were headed home on the main highway with everything they could loot from Kuwait. Theirs was an endless stream of every conveyance that would move headed north, bumper to bumper. They became a target-rich environment for American aircraft, which flew up and down, blasting away at "fish in a barrel." Scenes of devastation garnered bad press for the administration. This prompted Colin Powell to step out of his military role and recommend a ceasefire on humanitarian grounds because the enemy was already beaten and he was afraid of sullying the American escutcheon by continued attacks on what was becoming known as the "Highway of Death."

With imperfect intelligence of the military situation, the President announced a ceasefire on February 28.

Schwarzkopf was authorized to enter into ceasefire arrangements with the commanders of the Iraqi field forces, not realizing that all decisions would actually be made by Saddam from his Baghdad sanctuary. The general, still ignorant of the opposing troop dispositions on the battlefield, announced Safwan, a small community just inside of Iraq, as the site for the talks. Much to his chagrin he was told that Safwan was still in Iraqi hands. Under threat of annihilation, despite the ceasefire, the Iraqis were finally persuaded to withdraw. Tents were erected for a meeting between Schwarzkopf, his Arab forces counterpart, and three Iraqi generals. Here was an opportunity to use coalition leverage to make substantial demands upon the Iraqi military under threat of resumed violence. But Schwarzkopf received no guidance from Washington. His only concern was cementing the ceasefire on the ground and of recovering the few coalition captives who had fallen into Iraqi hands. Instead of dictating terms as a conqueror, he treated the Iraqi delegation as equals. There were no draconian options presented. Moreover, Schwarzkopf acquiesced to an Iraqi request for freedom to use helicopters for logistic and administrative purposes as the bridges in southern Iraq had been destroyed.

You will recall that the CIA had been urging the Shias of southern Iraq to revolt against the regime. With the defeat of the Iraqi army, they saw their opportunity to do so and expected American support. But the White House had no intention of providing it. As far as the President was concerned the war was over and it was time to come home. When the Shias rose up, the coalition forces did nothing to help them even as refugees fled across the border into Kuwait with horrifying tales. Saddam brutally suppressed the uprising, notably using armed helicopters to attack the insurgents. That use was not what Schwarzkopf had in mind when he authorized the use of helicopters. The Shias were left to a dismal fate. It was another unfortunate consequence and a shameful footnote to a notable American victory.

And so Gulf War I ended. It was marked throughout by a series of miscalculations and faulty assumptions on both sides. It turned out to be a precursor for another war in 2003, the results of which are still with us. In 1991 Saddam remained in power, his Republican Guard was intact, revolt had been suppressed and his quest for WMD, particularly nuclear weapons continued--at least temporarily. As mentioned earlier, we had identified two WMD sites prior to the war. At its end when UN and IAEA inspectors had access to Iraq, under provisions of the ceasefire and UN authorization they found not two but 19 nuclear sites with 39 separate facilities. So there was no question about Saddam's intent. This was to have a bearing on the events over the 12 years of sanctions on Iraq and the events leading up to Gulf War II.

With the war over, the troops came home, many of them were embarrassed because they saw very little of any fighting. For most ground troops it was little more than a motor-march through the desert. Saddam was discredited in much of the world, but he was a canny survivor and cast himself at home as a hero of the war. He told the Iraqi people that under his leadership the Iraqi army had defeated the Americans and their puppets in the "Mother of All Battles." As proof he noted that the Americans were defeated in their attempt to invade Iraq, something an enemy army would have done if it was victorious. The sacred soil of Iraq was preserved. He liberally handed out medals and awards to the warriors of his victorious army. But beneath the bravado, Saddam was shaken to the core by the performance of his army, the Shia uprising, and the fear of a coup. All three concerns were to influence his postwar decisions and the way he would fight Gulf War II.

Chapter 24:

Teaching the Long War and Jihadism

By Mary Habeck

This presentation will address ways to understand the war on terror, or as I will be calling it, the "long war"; as well as jihadism; and also how to teach these issues to high school students. There are many landmines in teaching this subject, and navigating them can be tricky.

It is important to first introduce students to the ideology of the people who attacked us on 9/11, so that they can differentiate them from ordinary Muslims and ordinary Islamic beliefs. Islam is an ancient religion of 1.5 billion people. It is an entirely separate subject from the jihadis that this presentation will discuss, and comprises a diversity of beliefs, practices, and ways of thinking about the religion.

A large number of Muslims are Islamists (also called fundamentalists), perhaps 15-20% of the Muslim-majority world. This is the Islamic current that is growing the fastest. The main difference between Islamists and other Muslims is that they believe one must have political power and an Islamic state in order to correctly practice Islam. They see a government dominated by Islamic law, or sharia, as necessary.

There is, however, no unanimity among Islamists about many other issues. For instance, some Islamists are open to democracy and participate in elections; the current government of Turkey calls itself Islamist, and there are Islamists who have run for office from Jordan to Indonesia. Other Islamists do not support elections as the way to transform their societies and instead believe that through preaching and social work they can change their countries from below.

Within the Islamist movement, those who subscribe to jihadism (jihadiyya) and argue that violence is necessary in order to achieve a perfect Islamic state, are a tiny minority–less than 1 percent of that 25 percent. This implies that perhaps a few thousand people—out of 1.5 billion—believe in using violence to create that state. The rest of the Islamists are willing to work through some gradual social or even democratic process.

The jihadis also have a notion about what this Islamic state will look like that most Islamists do not share. They generally call it the caliphate; it will be ruled by their version of Islamic law only; and no democratic process will be able to overturn it once installed.

But it was not just jihadis who carried out the 9/11 attack: the global jihadis who decided to attack the U.S. of that day are an even tinier minority of a minority of a minority. They were a few hundred—today a few thousand—people who did not even agree with a majority of the jihadis, who argued that they were not extreme enough. It was not just violence that was the only way to create this caliphate, but violence specifically directed at the U.S.

Before 9/11, most jihadis thought they should work in their local country, province, or region. But the global jihadis (al Qaeda and affiliated groups) argued that forty years of jihadi action around the world had gotten them nowhere. The only way to succeed would be to attack the head of the snake, as they like to call the U.S., to remove the support for all the local governments with one blow. This would allow them to create an Islamic state that would cover the entire world. Their vision of this caliphate is really a totalitarian dictatorship that is implacably hostile to democracy or democratic methods. Indeed, a fight broke out between the Palestinian movement Hamas and al Qaeda over Hamas's decision to participate in elections. Al Qaeda immediately threw them out of the global jihadi fraternity.

In its ideology, global jihadism defines many terms--at least 25--completely differently from the vast majority of Muslims around the world. Of these many terms, the two most important aberrant definitions are of jihad and tawhid: we'll discuss these two in greater detail in just a moment. They also believe that only they are the true believers (the saved sect); all other self-professed Muslims are only "so-called" Muslims who do not practice their religion as they should. The global jihadis believe as well that hostile unbelievers control the world and desire the destruction of Islam. To do this, the unbelievers have created an international system to impose their principles, including Christian ideas about human rights, on the Muslim-majority world. Therefore war against them and their puppets is justified—not because the global jihadis desire war, but because the hostile unbelievers have imposed their ideas on them. The global jihadis often invoke the concept of a defensive war—they are never on the offensive or committing aggression. To them, 9/11 was a just response to ongoing attacks by the U.S. and the rest of the international community on Muslims.

Thus, for the global jihadis, an Islamic state is necessary not only to implement Islamic law correctly, but also to wage eternal war with the unbelievers. When the war ends, time will come to a close and paradise on earth will ensue.

Tawhid and Jihad

This ideology has been rejected by the vast majority of the Muslim community. An examination of global jihadis' definitions of tawhid and jihad illustrate just how different their views are from those of the rest of the Muslim-majority world. The global jihadist definition

of tawhid in particular is central to understanding them. In mainstream Islam, tawhid means that there is only one God, that he has no partners; he is the only one who should be worshiped. Anyone who worships another god is sinning, and after death, he will be judged by God. God is compassionate, and he might be merciful, but it is not for Muslims to make any determination about the ultimate fate of other human beings.

Global jihadis also believe that tawhid means there is only one God, the only one who should be worshiped, but to them, worship includes obedience to all of his commands. If one is not perfectly obeying him, they argue, then you are not really a Muslim. Their definition of tawhid also implies that only God can make laws. Anyone who claims to have sovereignty or who makes laws is making himself into a god and must be killed. This is how they arrive at the conclusion that democracy is a foreign religion. The reasoning here is rather complex – one has to go through a number of steps – but it is logical to them, if not to other Muslims. And this is one of the biggest problems that al Qaeda and other global jihadis have: that this line of logic does not make sense to the vast majority of the Muslim-majority world.

One encounters the same contrasting definitions for the term jihad: most Muslims say that jihad is a peaceful, internal struggle to follow God, but that the word can also refer to a defensive war if the community is attacked. The jihadis, on the other hand, argue that jihad is about fighting alone.

Jihad actually means struggle, not war or killing. When Muhammad or early Muslims used the term, they were talking about something beyond killing or fighting. Within the Quran, the term (and its derivations) is used only 4-5 times, and then generally meaning a struggle to follow God and to understand the Quran. Muhammad's life shows that he began preaching peacefully to the people of his hometown of Mecca. For thirteen years he preached in the streets, telling people they needed to turn away from their idols to the worship of the true God. During this time, he consistently used the term jihad in terms of understanding him and God's message, and controlling one's own desires.

But then something terrible happened. He and his small group of followers were persecuted. Seeking a place of safety and security, he eventually found refuge at the nearby town of Medina. As Muhammad began to win over more followers in Medina, he began to receive revelations that struggling was more than just struggling to understand how to follow God—it was about self-defense. One could struggle by protecting the community from attack, and that also would be blessed by God. Then jihad became about taking Islam back to Muhammad's hometown, back to Mecca, and that also was blessed by God.

At the very end of his life, Muhammad returned from his final battle and said to his followers, "We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad." When asked what this "greater jihad" was, he explained that it was to follow God and create a just society. Most Muslims take that as a circle--Muhammad's life began peacefully, he had to defend himself, and eventually he was allowed to struggle to bring Islam back to his hometown. But at the end of his life, the greater jihad was about self-control and internal struggle.

Most Muslims today say that jihad is foremost an internal struggle; only secondarily is it about self-defense if the community is attacked. And always in Islamic history jihad was a matter for the state to decide.

The global jihadis have a vast disagreement with this view of history and this definition. They say jihad is fighting. They say that the Hadith, or saying of Muhammad, about the greater versus the lesser jihad was made up by the Sufis because they are cowards. Near the end of his life Muhammad struggled to bring Islam back to Mecca and to other nearby countries through fighting, and it is therefore as fighting that jihad must be understood. For them, jihad can be both a defensive and offensive fight, but there has been no evolution since Muhammad's death; there can be no change.

This can be a persuasive argument to some young, untutored Muslims. And those who are most attracted to the global jihadi message are not those who have the most knowledge about Islamic history or theology. At the same time, the jihadist argument refuses to take into consideration the way the ulama or clerics, have worked with the Islamic definition of jihad and how it was especially transformed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The global jihadis claim that jihad can be either an "individual duty" or a collective duty. Jihad is an "individual duty" whenever the Islamic community is attacked; the entire community must come out to defend itself. And that is what has happened today they say: we have been attacked. The entire international community wants to destroy Islam.

The term "individual duty" is very powerful in Islam – it is applied to the basic duties of the religion which no one else can do for another. Thus, one cannot pray, fast or pay charity for any other person. The jihadis say that—just as with these other duties—no one else can wage jihad for any other individual. If a Muslim does not take part in our jihad, they argue, he or she will go to hell. But if they join us, at the first drop of blood, all their past misdeeds are done away with and they go to paradise. For young idealists, this can also be appealing.

So today, jihad is an "individual duty," they say; but tomorrow, once the invaders have been repelled from Muslim lands—which the global jihadis define to include Spain, southern

France, much of Italy, and Sicily, eastern Europe, Russia, India, Central Asia, most of China, and the vast majority of Africa—in a defensive jihad, then there will be a collective duty to have an army to carry out an offensive jihad.

The most important point about global jihadist ideology is that it clearly shows that most of the current conflict is about the jihadis' war with other Muslims—it's not about us at all.

Ideologically, their preaching is aimed at converting other Muslims to jihadism or to supporting their wars.

Politically, they are attempting to create a Caliphate on the backs of other Muslims, persecuting those who are not dressed "correctly" or do not have a beard or are listening to music. This is why they lost Iraq, and why they had problems in Somalia the first time they sought to win over that country. They were trying to impose their vision of an Islamic state on Muslims who did not want it.

And militarily, they are killing about 100 Muslims for every non-Muslim.

Global jihadism's founders—the eighteenth-century Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, Hasan al-Banna, and Sayyid Qutb--demonstrate this in action. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was an itinerant preacher in what would later become Saudi Arabia, whose main notion was that everyone had left true Islam. He decided to preach and try to get them to return to true Islam. When people did not listen to him, he said he had the right to declare a violent jihad against them. Al-Wahhab would go on to found Wahhabism, the sect of Islam that holds sway not only throughout much of the Arabian Peninsula but in many other places in the world as well. The only part of the Saudi version of Wahhabism that has changed from its founders' teachings is that it no longer calls for violence against wayward Muslims – they just use preaching to convince Muslims to join their version of Islam. And it is this part that the global jihadis disagreed with. They would use violence.

Hasan al-Banna (1906-49) grew up in a very different time and place—Egypt when it was occupied by the British–yet he too believed that the entire Islamic world had fallen away from true Islam. But feeling that the community had been led astray by the occupying British, with their wily control of Egypt's educational system, he would change this reality by preaching, not violence. To do this, he created the Muslim Brotherhood to reach out to Muslims through social work and preaching. But the Muslim Brotherhood also had a secret armed section that prepared for jihad against the occupiers. As it happened, the British gave up power peacefully, putting in place a Muslim Egyptian king. Al-Banna, however, saw this king as nothing but a puppet, used by the occupiers to maintain their ideological control over Islam. He turned to

violence against this "agent ruler," who finally assassinated him, but not before his movement had caught on. Off and on throughout the 1950s-60s, Gamel Abdul Nasser and others suppressed the Muslim Brotherhood militants. Most of those who remained gave up on violence and/or fled to countries like Syria, Palestine, and Saudi Arabia, but a remaining hard core continued its mission.

Sayyid Qutb, one of al-Banna's most famous disciples, wrote a 30-volume commentary on the Quran, later condensed to a short manifesto called *Milestones Along the Way*, in which he added a twist to the ideas of al-Wahhab and al-Banna. He agreed that the entire Islamic world had left true Islam, and that he and his co-believers were the only ones who understood Islam. But he felt the target of the struggle should be the U.S. and Britain, whose notions of democracy directly contradicted his definition of tawhid. Qutb was among those executed in one of Naser's crackdowns, but his brother Mohammed Qutb fled to Saudi Arabia and became a university teacher; among his pupils was Osama bin Laden.

For the few thousand global jihadis today, this appears to be authentic Islam. Especially for young men who feel alienated in Europe or in large cities like Cairo or Istanbul, the attraction of authenticity cannot be overstated. They believe that they are sacrificing their lives for the good of the community while avoiding hell. They are taking a stand against evil societies, many of which in fact are corrupt—they indeed face governments that are not responsive to their needs and economies that are not producing jobs. Finally, there is an appeal for revenge and retribution for such things as Abu Ghraib and purported American rapes of Muslim women. Considering how strong some of these appeals are, it should be reassuring to us that only a few thousand people have answered this call.

To help students see these ideas in action, they can be shown images of global jihadism: Hamas, for instance, which is the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood. They believe that they should be attacking the occupiers, who in this case are the Israelis.

Al-Jihad/Egyptian Islamic Jihad, on the other hand, was a splinter group of the Muslim Brotherhood which would not follow the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood and their renunciation of violence against the regime. They helped carry out the assassination of Sadat, who they saw as a puppet of the Americans for signing the Israeli peace treaty.

Jama'ah Islamiyah made a slightly different argument. These are the terrorists in Indonesia who carried out the October 2002 Bali attack. They saw even tourists as occupiers. One sees this thread also in Egypt, where groups like Gama'a al-Islamiyya attacked tourists in Luxor and elsewhere.

But it was Al Qaeda that took on the U.S. directly, first seeing Americans as occupiers in Saudi Arabia after the 1991 war for Kuwait, and then as the leaders of an offensive ideology that, they argued, contradicted true Islam.

The above should help students place this evolution of global jihadi thinking into some kind of framework, within Islam in general and within jihadism. Then one can talk specifically about global jihadism's war with the U.S. Al Qaeda justified its attack on the U.S. because it regards America as the "greater unbelief," the eternal enemy. I think that it is also important for students to see that the global jihadis achieved none of their strategic goals on 9/11. The U.S. did not leave the Islamic lands; in fact, we got more involved. Other Muslims were not convinced to join up with al Qaeda; there was a trickle of support, but now there has been a huge backlash. Nor have any apostate puppets fallen, except in Iraq and that was done by an American invasion.

Al Qaeda is still continuing its war. They have convinced the diverse groups involved in local jihads on various levels—in North Africa, Egypt, Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, Indonesia--that they have failed in their struggles, and gotten the remaining believers to join with them. There are now far more people involved in Al Qaeda than there were before 9/11, but only because the number of jihadis in general has shrunk considerably. Their post-9/11 strategies include information operations (exploiting the media), using oil as a weapon, and guerrilla warfare.

The global jihadis see this as a two-hundred year war. One way you can help your students think about the U.S. in this war is the fact that the global jihadis are now very unified, whereas the U.S. is very diverse. There is very little unity on what we think happened on 9/11 and where it is all going. You can present models for understanding the war and talk through the differences among these models, without emphasizing or giving priority to only one.

1. Crime: A crime was committed on 9/11. A group of criminals decided to murder Americans. This pinpoints al Qaeda as the main problem, not blaming the entire Islamic world; but it refuses to recognize the deeper roots and global nature of the conflict.
2. Clash of civilizations: Going from the very small to the very big, the "clash of civilizations" model emphasizes the cultural/religious roots of the conflict. Unfortunately, this conflates most Muslims with the radicals.
3. Global Insurgency: Our military sees the conflict as a global insurgency. This provides a global vision that gives us strategies for fighting the war, but downplays the role of nations.

4. Islamic Reformation: The Islamic Reformation model suggests that it is not about us at all; it emphasizes the role of religion, culture, and history and downplays the economic/social issues, leaving us without a model for the war.

5. World War IV: Finally, there is the Long War or World War IV model. This emphasizes nation-states and the lengthy nature of the global conflict. However, it does not deal well with non-state actors. No nation-states openly support the jihadis.

For each of the above models, one can ask questions like when did the war start? If it was a crime, the war started on 9/11, 2001. If it is a clash of civilizations, it started in 622 C.E. If it is a global insurgency, the military usually cites 1993, when Al Qaeda-trained soldiers in Somalia killed American military personnel. If it is a reformation, it started either with Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab in the eighteenth century or in 1928, with the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood. If it is a long war, then it started in 1979, with the founding of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The models also answer the question of "who is the enemy" differently. If it is a crime, then obviously it is bin Laden et al. If it is a clash of civilizations, then it is the entire Arab/Muslim world. If it is a global insurgency, it is Al Qaeda and affiliated groups. If this is a reformation, then it is the Islamists and/or the jihadis. If it is a long war, then the problem are nation-states: Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, et al. One can see why a government might prefer this vision.

What are our objectives in this war? If it's a crime, then it would be to arrest or kill Bin Laden et al. If it's a clash of civilizations, then it's to achieve the transformation of the Islamic world. When Samuel Huntington talked about a clash of civilizations, he was not talking about all-out war between Islam and what he called western Christianity. He was arguing that what was needed was modernization. If it's a global insurgency, the goal would be to suppress or kill al Qaeda while preventing other Muslims from joining the fight. If it's a reformation, then an "enlightenment" is needed. If it's a long war involving nation states, then we need to achieve regime change.

How do you operationalize all these models? If it's a crime, one arrests people – it's a law enforcement problem. If it's a clash of civilizations, then you need diplomatic pressure and international institutions. If it's an insurgency, then you need counterinsurgency tactics, which are military but also include society, culture, and economic measures. If it's a reformation, there's very little we can do. It all has to be done internally by legitimate Islamic clergy. Finally, if it's regime change that's needed, then we would be invading and state-building.

Presenting the war this way can help students understand, for instance, how the Bush administration thought about the war, how the military thinks about it, how diplomats think

about it, and how different people within our society think about this controversial issue. The Bush administration thought about it in terms of nation-states and in its last years as counter-insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Obama administration seems to see it as a law enforcement and counter-insurgency problem worldwide. We will likely see them downplaying the military while offering advice and aid to individual states, leaving to them the main burden.

Of Related Interest:

The World of Islam, a 10-volume series of books for middle and high school students put out by Mason Crest Publishers (with FPRI as Editorial Consultant) in 2009. For information, visit: http://www.masoncrest.com/series_view.php?seriesID=90

The Making of the Modern Middle East, another 10-volume series for middle/high school students (Mason Crest, 2007). For information, visit:
http://www.masoncrest.com/series_view.php?seriesID=77

Chapter 25:

The Anatomy of the Long War's Failings

By F.G. Hoffman

What we now sometimes refer to as the Long War began much earlier than the 9/11 attacks on America. But that day was seared into our collective national consciousness and animated our collective response. That sunny morning in Manhattan marked the second most violent day in U.S. history, exceeding Pearl Harbor and even D-Day in fatalities. Only Antietam's bloody wheat fields have witnessed more carnage in a single day. Since then, our country has mobilized for a global conflict against extremism with a multidimensional approach that has relied heavily on our military forces.

Just what have we accomplished to date in the Long War? Any ledger is going to identify some clear gains. Our campaign in Afghanistan quickly toppled the Taliban, and as a result al Qaeda no longer enjoys any sanctuary in Afghanistan. A major multinational invasion of Iraq led by the United States sliced though the remnants of the Iraqi Army and destroyed Saddam Hussein's regime. We have generated and exploited a degree of international cooperation and intelligence sharing--much of it very discrete--to foil several plots against ourselves or our partners. We have substantially reduced al Qaeda's infrastructure around the world, including its leadership, training facilities, and financial networks. And the nation has begun to shore up our home defenses. Notably, no similar attacks have occurred here at home.

But the ledger has both black and red ink. Bin Laden is alive and apparently well, although al Qaeda is a more diffuse organization. The core leadership of al Qaeda itself has probably been weakened, but its cause has been amplified and a generation of Muslims has been mobilized if not radicalized.

Afghanistan remains a key campaign in this war. Our initial campaign was brilliantly conceived by the CIA. An American force of CIA operatives and special forces aided no more than 15,000 Afghan troops to drive out some 50,000 Taliban and foreign fighters in late 2001.[1] But six years later, Afghanistan remains a troubled land. The Taliban, once vanquished, is resurging.

Like the early phases in Afghanistan, the early military operations in Iraq were also conducted in accord with the U.S. military's preferred style and exploited its overwhelming conventional

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[1] For a review of Afghanistan, see Daniel Marston, "Lessons in 21st Century Counterinsurgency: Afghanistan 2001-2007," in Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, eds., *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, New York: Osprey, 2008; and David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

military superiority. The early successes were ephemeral and temporary. The early occupation of Iraq went well for six months, but then turned sour as political enemies vied for national and local control. What Tom Ricks has called "perhaps the worst war plan in American history" failed to secure victory as defined by our political leaders. The planning shortfalls helped create the conditions for the difficult occupation that followed.[2] For two years, American commanders and diplomats looked for a way out, and tried to nurture along a weak government in Baghdad and shift the fight to the slowly developing Iraqi Army.[3]

The cost for what has been accomplished to date is completely disproportionate to the limited gains. How did we get to this point?

Assessment Framework

In a highly regarded evaluation of modern military history entitled *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (1990), two noted historians, Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, defined a useful framework or taxonomy for analyzing military failures and their institutional origins. This taxonomy lays out three types or sources of organizational failure derived from a superb assessment of the institutional shortcomings that can lead to lost opportunities and operational defeat.

The first type of failure is the ability to properly *anticipate*. Anticipation is a crucial function of military services during peacetime as they attempt to discern key trends and the impact of new technologies on the conduct of war. It requires the ability to look past the last war, and anticipate where future threats could arise, and what the ever evolving character of conflict will be in that scenario. Strategic anticipation is abetted by understanding the enduring continuities of war, while ruthlessly looking for potential discontinuities and opportunities.

The second type or source of misfortune is the failure to *learn*. The U.S. Navy's failure to learn from Britain's experiences in World War I or during the Royal Navy's desperate efforts against the Nazi U-boats in 1940-41 is a notable example. The Navy was slow to implement convoys needed to conduct successful antisubmarine warfare. This resulted in relearning the hard way- -in combat--a rather bloody education.

The final and perhaps most puzzling failure is the inability to *adapt*. "Where learning failures have their roots in the past," Cohen and Gooch stress, "adaptive failures suggest an inability to handle the changing present."[4] The U.S. Army Air Corps' insistence that daylight strategic

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[2] Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*, New York: Penguin, 2006, p. 115.
[3] Carter Malkasian, "Counterinsurgency in Iraq: May 2003-January 2007," in Marston and Malkasian, eds., *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*; and Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, pp. 115-85.
[4] Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes,* p. 27.

bombing without fighter cover over Europe during World War II would materially contribute to the war effort, and its deadly persistence despite evidence to the contrary over Germany represents one notable example.[5]

The remainder of this paper will break down these three sources of misfortune and their relevance to the Long War in greater detail.

Failure to Anticipate

The failure to anticipate is perhaps the easiest to understand, as it usually relates to a failure in intelligence or some sort of strategic surprise. The failure to anticipate is often abetted by the use or imposition of false assumptions. These too can be explicit or implied. As one strategic analyst has noted, "Making assumptions can be a double edged sword, correct assumptions can minimize surprise and aid a desired outcome; errant assumptions can ensnare a nation and its armed forces in the unexpected. Sometimes assumptions, rather than physical inferiority, result in fiasco or defeat. The corridors of power are filled with consequential officials boasting of "slam dunk" certitude."[6]

The American failures in Iraq and the Long War come from such assumptions. They also come from a fundamental misreading in the evolving character of conflict, and an implicit net assessment that did not consider irregular adversaries worthy of study. In fact, rather than conduct serious net assessments, American planners generally worshipped at the altar of technology and imagined future conflicts as a mechanistic engineering exercise rather than a contest of wills with a determined adversary with a different culture and his own rule book.

For far too long American military planners and civilian policymakers have imagined future military capabilities through rose-colored glasses. The Bush administration embraced the Revolution in Military Affairs argument and promised to "skip a generation" in military modernization to exploit precision technology and information systems.[7]
Many if not most of these visions and concepts were not solving existing and evident military or security problems, but were simply advancing military revolutions devoid of political

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[5] The best source is Williamson Murray's "Strategic Bombing: The British, American and German Experiences," pp. 96-142, in Murray and Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period.*

[6] Patrick Cronin, pp. 2-3 in his introductory chapter in *The Impenetrable Fog of War: Reflections on Modern Warfare and Strategic Surprise,* Westport, CT: Praeger Security, 2008.

[7] See Williamson Murray, "Computer In, Clausewitz Out, Military Culture and Technological Hubris," *National Interest*, Summer 1997; H.R. McMaster, "The Human Element, When Gadgetry Becomes Strategy," *World Affairs*, Winter 2009.

context or historical understanding. They were also often devoid of any opponent, reflecting a rather one-sided misconception about warfare.[8]

The technophiliacs in the Pentagon were abetted by a military culture that since Vietnam had retreated to a narrow view of its professional domain. Military culture is a prime factor in military effectiveness, adaptation, and innovation.[9] The Army didn't just ignore its Vietnam experience; it deliberately jettisoned the lessons learned and chose not to study it, or to determine what actually worked. Moreover, "it deliberately reconfigured itself physically as well as intellectually only to fight major war."[10]

The combination of civilian policymakers and a narrow military conception of its professional jurisdiction set the stage for serial failures in anticipation in the run-ups to both Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in the fall of 2002 and Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003. These include failures to anticipate al Qaeda's resilience in battle and its ability to elude capture in Afghanistan; the extensive timelines and costs of reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq; the long-term implications of its military/kinetic approach against the broader Muslim community and well as potential allies; the effect of its poor strategic communications and public diplomacy resources; the decrepit nature of Iraq's infrastructure and its implications for post-conflict stability; the need to secure Iraq's critical infrastructure from damage or to secure its vast stocks of conventional military arms and munitions; the need for comprehensive guidance for the detention, control, and interrogation of large numbers of Iraqis; how improper interrogation techniques would undermine U.S. moral authority and undercut its standing internationally and its legitimacy in Iraq; and the implications of a de-Baathification policy or the impact of the dissolution of the Iraqi army.

Failure to Learn

Each of the above failures of anticipation were ultimately compounded by failures to learn. Even when one fails to anticipate problems, it is usually beneficial to recognize a problem when it arises and immediately seek out historical precedents to compress the learning curve. It is always better to use the experience of others, if only to minimize losses. History is our best source of professional experience, and as General Mattis of the Marines once noted, it provides a professional edge to those willing to invest the time. To simply improvise out of

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[8] Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy,* New York: Encounter Books, 2006.

[9] On military culture and self-identity see Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff, eds., *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology,* Boulder, CO: Rienner, 2002, pp. 268-70; and Williamson Murray, "Innovation, Past and Future," in Murray and Millett, *Innovation in the Interwar Period*, pp. 312-18.

[10] Strachan in Cronin, p. 81.

ignorance, "by filling body bags as we sort out what works" is an act of incompetence.[11] With thousands of years of historical knowledge before them, our military has no excuse not to have made better use of its storehouse of history.

These lessons were quite accessible to American policymakers and military planners. But the Army and Marines did not make this portion of the conflict spectrum a focus of effort. "It's not unfair to say," Dr. John Nagl has observed, "that in 2003 most Army officers knew more about the U.S. Civil War then they did about counterinsurgency."[12] Thus, in Iraq and Afghanistan, our forces relearned irregular war the hard way--in combat.

The basic tenets of counterinsurgency warfare can be captured by a set of principles or better yet by a collection of best practices. A number of Americans have produced sets based off of historical case studies and vetted by a variety of counterinsurgency experts.[13] These best practices include the following:

1. *Integrated Civil-Military mechanisms*. How all government agencies were coordinated, either under the command of a single individual or if "unity of effort" was gained by overall campaign plans and coordination committees.
2. *Governance/Political Reforms*. The degree to which government or political reforms were instituted to counter weaknesses or enhance credibility of the state.
3. *Socio-Economic Services*. The degree to which social development and economic projects were employed to better support the local civilian population.
4. *Integrated Intelligence*. The degree to which special intelligence organs were constructed or existing agencies integrated to deal with the insurgency.
5. *Special Units for Foreign Internal Defense*. The degree to which special units or local indigenous units were created as counters to the insurgents.
6. *Unique Military Training*. The degree to which the counterinsurgent forces are uniquely trained to deal with an incipient or full-blown insurgency.
7. *Information Operations*. How the counterinsurgency employed psychological operations to isolate the insurgents, to degrade their morale, to minimize their accomplishments or promote the government's themes.
8. *Population Control*. How the civilian population was isolated from the insurgents through security, identification cards, barriers or forced relocation and reestablishment into safer and cordoned centers.
9. *Resource Control*. This factor accounts for efforts to limit or isolate the insurgents from food, weapons or other forms of support.

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[11] James N. Mattis, "The Professional Edge," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Feb. 2004, pp. 19-20.
[12] Dr. John Nagl in the foreword to the Chicago University Press edition of the Counterinsurgency manual.
[13] Kalev I. Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, May-June 2005, pp. 8-12.

10. *Discriminate Force*. The degree to which counterinsurgent forces limit the use of military power to the minimal degree necessary to avoid antagonizing the local population and to preclude collateral damage being exploited as propaganda.

The literature suggests a high correlation between all the best practices and operational success. When governments and their supporting allies and partners used these elements as key components of their overall campaign, they were generally successful. The same is true in Iraq. Regrettably, too many U.S. commanders were not familiar with these practices. Only a few officers understood this mode of conflict and this aspect of their profession. Population-centric and kinetically disciplined operations were successfully implemented by then Major General David Petraeus in Mosul in 2003 and in Tal Afar by the 3rd Armored Combat Regiment later in 2005.[14]

In almost all cases, some sort of learning curve was evident, and eventually policymakers and military leaders reassessed themselves and made numerous strategic or operational changes. Some adapted faster than others. Those who ignored history, continued to underestimate the opponent, and failed to learn from the experience of others fared much worse.

The failure to learn is quite understandable if you think of the U.S. military culture. For several decades, thanks in large part to lingering attitudes from the Vietnam War, irregular warfare has been an intellectual and strategic orphan in U.S. professional military institutions. The heavy cost of both wars is the price paid for ignoring known historical lessons and for a narrow military cultural prism that constrained U.S. strategic and operational planning and the intellectual readiness of our Officer Corps.

Failure to Adapt

The final factor in evaluating military failures involves operational adaptation. Adaptation is the ability "to handle the changing present" and the interactive nature of war. Strategic and operational adaptation is a key element in warfare, one often retarded by ideological policies or by military cultures that fail to recognize how critical assumptions in prewar planning have been proven to be false on the battlefield.

The velocity of organizational learning and adaptation is important in insurgencies. The U.S. military has made a number of adaptations in its approach to these conflicts, in how they prepare for them, and for how they train, education and organize their forces:

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[14] George Packer, "The Lessons of Tal Afar," *New Yorker*, April 10, 2006.

- The military has moved from ad hoc headquarters to robustly staffed structures to better coordinate the comprehensive activities they are managing with the Iraqis and with NATO.
- Military Transition Teams (MTTs) and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) have been formed and employed in both Iraq and Afghanistan to assist in training indigenous personnel and to provide development and economic assistance at lower levels.
- There have been substantial changes to the training and educational base to better prepare U.S. service members for irregular warfare.
- The Services have stood up a variety of special cultural and language programs, and centers of excellence for the study of culture, for counterinsurgency, and for stability operations.
- The Army and Marines have adapted their forces to increase the skills sets that are of greater salience in these kinds of war (intelligence personnel, translators and interrogators, explosive ordnance personnel, and military policemen, civil affairs specialists and information or psychological operations experts). But both the Army and Marines have bureaucratically resisted innovative organizational structures dedicated to preventing or prevailing in irregular warfare.[15]
- Probably the most significant shift was the intellectual surge produced by the development and promulgation of an updated counterinsurgency doctrine.[16]
- Adaptation, however, is not yet complete. While the Army and the Marine Corps have seen changes in their structures, and more substantively in their training systems, the Air Force is still mulling over what it should do. We still lack the non-military personnel and skill sets from the rest of the U.S. government, although steps are being taken to increase the size of the Foreign Service and establish a Civilian Response Force. The State Department has also stood up a cell to improve cross-agency crisis planning, but the ability of the National Security Council and the broader national security community to develop coherent strategic and operational plans for protracted complex contingencies remains a subject of numerous studies and recommendations.[17]

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[15] Robert Martinage, *The Global War on Terror: An Assessment*, Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2007, p. 279.

[16] Headquarters, Department of the Army (Headquarters, Marine Corps), *Counterinsurgency.* Field Manual No. 3-24 (Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5), December 2006.

[17] Clark A. Murdock and Michele A. Flournoy, *Beyond Goldwater Nichols: U.S. Government and Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era, Phase 2 Report*, Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2005. For shortfalls in U.S. government initiatives, see Stephen D. Krasner and Carlos Pascual, "Addressing State Failure," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005.

These are merely operational forms of adaptation. Many were obvious after 2004 but were only eventually implemented after trial and error. This compounded the failure to anticipate and learn.

The more substantial adaptation was the shift in strategy that was approved in late 2006 and executed in 2007 in Iraq. At some point, members of President Bush's NSC staff, energized by external criticisms and the media and the worst public opinion in U.S. presidential history, started looking for a new strategy. After the better part of a year of various reviews and external study groups, the administration finally settled on a shift in leadership in the Pentagon and in theater. It also crafted a change in priorities and operational focal points, shifting from training Iraqi forces to a population-centric approach that put "boots on the ground" in their neighborhoods. Ultimately, President Bush elected to endorse the strategy shift and the manpower resources to support it. This is often referred to now as the "surge strategy." This approach is founded on best practices and principles that should have been employed in 2004.[18] Thanks to the combined leadership of Generals David Petraeus and Ray Odierno and then Ambassador Ryan Crocker, the strategy was actually carried out. They made a critical situation more palatable in Iraq, and the turnaround they created will be studied for many decades to come.

Conclusion

In their multilevel taxonomy, Cohen and Gooch noted that the presence of two kinds of misfortune can produce what they called "aggregate failures." These are usually the result of anticipatory and learning failures. However, when all three kinds of failure simultaneously happen, it is usually catastrophic. Catastrophic failure is most often fatal to nations. Fortunately, a catastrophic failure in the Long War has been averted by the painfully slow adaptation of American strategy and implementing tactics. The sclerotic American strategy process reacted to several years of diminishing results and rising criticism. Key individuals with fortitude, intellectual capacity, and an eye for opportunity were placed in charge.

Continued adaptation in institutions, processes and human capital remain critical if the United States and its allies are to ultimately prevail. Yet, the issue is still in doubt. Whether adaptation and innovation will be locked in is being contested in the Pentagon, and only time will tell if Secretary Gates is successful in adapting long-held mindsets in the armed forces.[19]

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[18] Tom Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008,* New York: Penguin Press, 2009.
[19] See David Ucko, "Innovation or Inertia: The U.S. Military and the Learning of Counterinsurgency," *Orbis*, Spring 2008.

History teaches us that rigorous study of the past, questioning received wisdom and reconsidering assumptions are the best security against catastrophic failure.

OTHER MILITARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN SOCIETY

Chapter 26:

Defending U.S. Maritime Commerce in Peacetime: From 1794 to Today

By James Bradford

Maritime commerce has been vital to the American economy since the founding of the colonies in the seventeenth century. Indeed, the ability to navigate the Atlantic Ocean freely has always been crucial to U.S. national interests. Historically, any time that a war has threatened our ability to trade in the Atlantic, the United States has eventually entered that war. When both Britain and France infringed on what we considered our neutral rights during the wars of the French Revolution and Empire, we first fought the French in the Quasi War, then the British in the War of 1812. For the next century, the Atlantic was free of a major war. However, with the World Wars of the twentieth century and German U-boats preying on American commerce, the United States ended up becoming involved in wars yet again.

Only a month after the Treaty of Paris was signed, ending the War for Independence, *the Betsey*, a merchantman from Salem, Massachusetts, became the first of six American trading vessels to be seized by Algiers in the final three months of 1783. In August of 1784, the New York merchantman *Empress of China* arrived at Canton to open trade with China. As other trading vessels entered waters of the Far East, Mediterranean, and Caribbean, they were subject to attack, and none could look to an American navy to protect them. In 1785, Congress ordered the last ships of the Continental Navy to be sold.

The U.S. Navy's Creation

In 1794, the first ships of the U.S. Navy were commissioned. Protecting commerce against the Barbary Corsairs was the key factor in rallying the congressional support needed to establish the new service in 1794. For the next 20 years, the young service sought— with only limited success— to defend American ships from attacks by the warring states of Europe and North Africa. While no wars involving major powers were waged in the Atlantic during the nineteenth century, the seas were far from peaceful in the century that followed, Barbary Corsairs continued to plague the Mediterranean Sea, the Latin American Wars for Independence bred piracy south of the United States, and the East Indies remained a region of weak governments and instability. Thus, American commerce often fell prey to raiders at sea and the property of its citizens was frequently threatened ashore. In these troubled times, it quickly became the duty of the U.S. Navy to provide protection for American citizens and their property abroad.

While systematic plans had been established to provide coastal defense for the continental United States, no such plans existed to defend trade. Instead, the government dispatched warships to trouble spots as needed. These actions often resulted in the subsequent assignment of a squadron to the region on a permanent basis.

The first ad hoc instance of this kind followed the War of 1812, when President James Madison dispatched two squadrons to the Mediterranean. They were to deal with corsairs, or privateers, from Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. These corsairs had resumed seizing American ships during the war. The ships commanded by Stephen Decatur arrived first, captured the *Mashouda*, flagship of the Algerine Navy. Decatur then visited Tunis and Tripoli where he exacted indemnities for damage done to American merchantmen over the previous four years. Having, in his words, "dictate[d] peace at the mouth of a cannon," Decatur sailed to Gibraltar from where he wrote Secretary of State James Monroe saying that "the only secure guarantee we can have for the maintenance of the peace just concluded with these people is the presence in the Mediterranean of a respectable naval force." When he departed for America, Decatur left behind two frigates and several smaller vessels which formed the nucleus of what would become the Mediterranean Squadron. After an Anglo-Dutch squadron shelled Algiers the following year, the Mediterranean waters were relatively safe for a decade. However, Greece then rebelled against its Ottoman Turk rulers, and both sides authorized privateering and its practitioners often turned to piracy in the mid 1820s. Still Decatur's advice proved prophetic not only for the future of U.S. commerce in the Mediterranean, but for the rest of the world, as well. Over the next 25 years, the United States established another six naval squadrons to protect American lives and property.

Half of these naval squadrons patrolled the waters off Latin America where both the imperial governments of Spain and Portugal— and their rebelling colonists— announced blockades and counter blockades. They also licensed privateers to prey on merchant ships trading with their opponents during the Latin American Wars of Independence from 1811-1825. These blockades were often *paper blockades*, where the government declaring them had few— if any— ships to patrol the areas declared to be closed to shipping. Mostly, they used the declared "existence" of a blockade as an excuse to seize any vessel suspected of trading with an enemy. In 1823, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams noted that Spain had only one frigate, one sloop, and a single brig to enforce the 1,200-mile-long blockade it declared along the coast of Central and South America. Such a paper blockade, Adams declared, was not a blockade at all but "a war of extermination against neutral commerce."

With the start of the Latin American Wars for independence, Caribbean piracy increased significantly. Jean Lafitte, the leader of a colony of smugglers at Grand Terre in Barataria Bay, south of New Orleans, was especially important to the United States. When Colombia

declared its independence from Spain in 1810, Lafitte obtained a letter of marque from the rebel government and added privateering to his business enterprises. When Spain announced a blockade of its rebelling provinces, the revolutionaries declared a counter blockade—banning trade with all ports still under Spanish control. Lafitte then began seizing U.S. ships anywhere he found them in the Caribbean. U.S. naval forces at New Orleans were unable to control his freebooters prior to the War of 1812. When Lafitte helped Andrew Jackson defend New Orleans from the British in 1814-1815, he received a pardon for past actions. However, by 1817, he was back to his old ways, with a privateering license from Mexico. In 1823, Spanish forces finally captured and executed Lafitte.

In 1819, President James Monroe dispatched Oliver Hazard Perry to Venezuela where he met with Simon Bolivar. Bolivar signed a treaty ending attacks on American commerce by individuals licensed by his government. But this did not end piracy in the Caribbean. In 1820, a total of 27 American vessels were seized. This prompted more navy ships being sent to the area. In 1822, Congress formed the permanent West India Squadron. Based at Key West and St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies, its ships patrolled the Caribbean until 1842 when it was renamed the Home Squadron.

When rebellion against Spain spread to Latin America's west coast, both the Royalist and rebel forces started seizing U.S. ships. In 1817, a ship was dispatched to the Pacific to show the American flag and demand respect for U.S. merchantmen and whalers. Other warships followed and in 1821, all the area forces were organized into the Pacific Squadron and placed under a single commander. This squadron was to patrol the coasts from Valparaiso, Chile, north to Panama similarly to how the West India Squadron had operated on the other side of Central America. As American whaling expanded in the Pacific, the squadron added Hawaii—where many whaling ships spent the winter—to its cruising ground.

Establishing the Brazil Squadron in 1826 was not the product of a war for independence but rather a war between Brazil and Argentina over present day Uruguay. The United States had little trade in these regions, but Rio de Janeiro was a dock for ships going to the Indian Ocean via the Cape of Good Hope or around Cape Horn to the Pacific. Ten years later, the squadron protected U.S. merchants from attacks tolerated by Juan Manuel Rosas, the dictator at Buenos Aires.

 Nearly a decade later, the East India Squadron was established to protect America's limited lucrative trade in lands bordering the South China Sea. On February 7, 1831, natives of Kuala Batu on the so-called "Pepper Coast" of Sumatra, seized the U.S. merchant ship *Friendship*, killed three sailors, and wounded three others. The captain and a party ashore at the time escaped to another village and, with the help of friendly natives, retook the *Friendship*. The

ship's owners demanded assistance from the U.S. government in obtaining compensation, and the ship's cargo. Captain John Downes and the Peacock were sent "to obtain redress." When Downes reached Sumatra in February 1832, he made no attempt to meet with local officials. Instead, he landed 282 sailors and marines who captured the four forts defending Kuala Batu, burned much of the town, and killed 150 people. A strong possibility exists that Downes destroyed the wrong village. The people killed may have been innocent regarding the attack on the *Friendship*. Still, the attack served as a warning to others not to allow attacks on U.S. ships lest they become the victim of retaliation. Indeed this incident illustrates how U.S. naval forces operated—partly like cops on the beat— to deter violence but also through retribution to punish wrongdoers.

In 1835, the United States sent a diplomat to Canton with orders to secure a trade treaty with China. The diplomat was escorted by two warships which remained on station as the first vessels of a permanent East India Squadron, the ships of which patrolled widely. Such patrols did not prevent attacks on U.S. ships. However, attacks could be punished more quickly. The murder of merchant ship *Eclipse's* captain, by natives of a village near Kuala Batu in 1838, was such a case. News of the attack reached Commodore George C. Read in Ceylon. Read, commander of the East India Squadron, proceeded to Sumatra post haste, put 360 men ashore, and after giving natives time to leave a village, burned it to the ground. Downes then collected an indemnity and forced a promise that U.S. mariners would not be harmed in the future.

Commerce Curbed

The final squadron formed during the antebellum period, the African Squadron, was assembled not to protect commerce but to prevent it. In 1808, Congress had banned importing slaves and in 1818 declared the international slave trade illegal. During the following decades, foreign slave traders, mostly Spanish and Portuguese, often flew the U.S. flag, hoping that it would protect them from being searched by ships of the British anti-slavery patrol. It did not. And in their effort to eradicate the trade, Royal Navy captains sometimes boarded legitimate U.S. merchant ships leading to disputes. In 1842, the United States and Great Britain signed the Webster-Ashburton Treaty which called for the United States to station naval forces on the west coast of Africa to enforce anti-slavery laws in which case the Royal Navy would stop inspecting U.S. ships.

During this same Antebellum period, the Navy carried out a series of expeditions designed— at least in part— to further the commercial interests of American traders by charting coastlines, negotiating for the safety of Americans with native leaders, and gathering information about winds, currents, and the likely place to find whales. The Great U.S.

Exploring Expedition of 1838-1842 and Matthew C. Perry's "Opening of Japan" were the most famous of these.

The primary motive of the Exploring Expedition was scientific—to chart little known islands of the South Pacific along with a portion of the coast of what is now British Columbia, and to determine if the southern polar icecap covered land. In four years, the six ships of the expedition sailed 85,000 miles, charted 280 islands and 1,500 miles of the Antarctic continent, and reached agreements with several native leaders providing for the safety of shipwrecked Americans.

The best known of the voyages of the era, Matthew Perry's 1852-1854 mission to Japan, sought to obtain three things from the rulers of that nation: 1) protection for American seamen shipwrecked on the coast of Japan and for U.S. ships driven into Japanese ports by bad weather; 2) the right to establish coaling and supply stations at Japanese ports; and 3) permission for U.S. ships to trade in one or more Japanese ports.

Perry's mission was a great success. Increasing American commerce in the region led to the North Pacific Surveying and Exploring Expedition that charted the coasts of Japan, the Kurile and Aleutian Islands (1853-1856). This coincided with the survey of Rio de la Plata those same years. The California Gold Rush led to thoughts of a Central American canal. A naval expedition surveyed the coast of Panama in 1854-1857. Other expeditions surveyed the coast of western Africa in 1853-1858. Each of these had both scientific and commercial development components.

Civil War

With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, the navy's ships were called home from their distant stations to conduct operations against the Confederacy. The sole exceptions were the Africa Squadron ships, which remained on station as required by the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, so as to not alienate the British who were feared to have pro-Southern sympathies.

Once the Civil War was over, the squadrons were reestablished, usually with new names and slightly different territorial assignments. However, the mission remained the same: protecting American lives and property.

In 1866, for example, the Mediterranean Squadron became the European Squadron, the Brazil and Africa Squadrons were merged to form the South Atlantic Squadron, the Pacific Squadron was divided into the North Pacific and South Pacific Squadron (later reunited from the Pacific Squadron, 1878-1907 when it became the Pacific Fleet). The East India Squadron was briefly

reconstituted, 1865-1868, then renamed the Asiatic Squadron. In 1902, it became the Asiatic Fleet, the name it bore until World War II.

All of these squadrons operated much as their Antebellum predecessors. Their ships patrolled regular circuits showing the flag and steamed to trouble spots when needed. For example, when villagers on the island of Taiwan killed the crew of an American trading ship in 1867, a landing party from ships of the Asiatic Squadron retaliated by burning the village to the ground, killing many of its inhabitants.

Four years later, ships of the North Pacific Squadron carried Frederick Low to Korea with orders to obtain a treaty from the Hermit Kingdom. The treaty was designed to open trade and provide safety to American seamen washed up on its shores. When forts at Inchon fired on one of the American warships, squadron commander John Rodgers destroyed three Korean forts killing 243 Korean soldiers. Feeling American honor had been served, Rodgers sailed away—without the treaty Low had sought. That had to wait until 1878 when Commodore Robert Shufeldt returned to Inchon with the squadron and intimidated the Koreans into signing a treaty.

This pattern repeated itself in the early twentieth century when the United States joined other nations in intervening in China to put down the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. Additionally, the United States acting alone under the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, landed Marines and blue jackets in virtually every country in the Caribbean. Indeed because of unrest in both regions, the United States established two squadrons—the Special Service Squadron in the Caribbean, and the Yangtze Patrol on that river in China— to protect American citizens and their property in those regions.

The U.S. Navy began operating gunboats on China's Yangtze River in 1903, but they were not formally organized as a sub-unit of the Asiatic Fleet until 1919. In addition to protecting Americans in the region, the half dozen gunboats of the Yangtze Patrol were charged with enforcing America's "Open Door Policy." This policy called for the equality of opportunity for trade and investment for all nations in China. When Japan invaded the region in 1937, patrol vessels helped evacuate Americans caught in the war zone. Later that year, Japanese aircraft attacked the patrol boat *Panay*. World War II brought an end to the patrol when one of its last two gunboats, the *Wake*, was captured by the Japanese on December 8, 1941. The crew of the other, the *Tutuila*, turned the ship over to the Nationalist Chinese and flew to India the next month.

In the Caribbean, the Navy was the "big stick" that protected U.S. citizens and their property and countered foreign influence in Theodore Roosevelt's "Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick"

style of diplomacy. From 1900 until America's entry into World War I, this was carried out by detached units of the Atlantic Fleet, but in 1920, the Special Service Squadron was formed as a component of the U.S. Fleet. Headquartered at Balboa, Panama Canal Zone, the squadron was charged with patrolling—and policing—the Caribbean Sea and defending the Panama Canal, which it did until it was disbanded in 1940.

World War II and Beyond

The outbreak of World War II forced a major reorganization of the entire U.S. military as it geared up to fight a global war. After the war ended, there was a stability imposed on the maritime world due, in part, to the Cold War's rise and the fear of escalation to nuclear war. The implosion of the Soviet Union, the spread of terrorism, and the rise of non-state actors, including organized crime syndicates, led to the reemergence of piracy as a major problem in the post-Cold War world.

Merchant ships were caught in wars between nations such as that between Iraq and Iran in the 1980s. Much of the world's economy depended on oil from that region so when oil tankers were attacked by both sides, the U.S. Navy was called upon to protect them in what came to be called the "Tanker War."

There has also been a rise of piracy, traditionally defined, particularly in the waters of Southeast Asia and those off the Horn of Africa. The United States has responded to attacks on shipping in these areas in slightly differing ways.

Maritime Issues Today

In the 1990s, Southeast Asia was the world's most piracy-prone region accounting for about half of global attacks reported each year. The United States has occasionally stationed a warship in the region, such as when the destroyer *Vandegrift* was sent to the region between September and November 2001, and escorted 25 U.S. vessels through the Strait of Malacca. Generally, however, it has sought to work with friendly governments in the region—often by providing them with training and financial aid, a policy followed by Japan.

The threat of piracy became so significant that from July 2005 to August 2006, international insurers designated the Strait of Malacca a "war-risk zone." Since then, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia have invigorated their domestic efforts to fight sea robbery by increasing operations within their territorial waters and going after the pirates in their shore areas. The littoral states have also strengthened cooperative efforts to deal with piracy and sea robbery as a transnational phenomenon. The most visible of these efforts is the trilateral Strait of

Malacca patrols that began in 2004. At first, these were only coordinated surface patrols. More recently, the program has been expanded to include cooperative airborne patrols, intelligence exchanges, standardized operating procedures, and limited "hot pursuit rights" into each other's territorial seas. Although these actions have substantially reduced piracy rates, especially in the Strait of Malacca, the problem remains unsolved.[1] In 2009, the International Maritime Bureau counted forty-five acts of piracy and armed robbery on Southeast Asia seas, more than anywhere except the waters around the Horn of Africa.

In that region, local governments, especially that of Somalia, have been unable to stop pirates operating from their territory. Here, the United States has taken the lead in forging an international response to the problem. As Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has stated: "The problem [of piracy] is easier to deal with when the surrounding land—as in the case of Southeast Asia and the Straits of Malacca—is controlled by real governments that have real capabilities, which is not the case in Somalia."[2]

In September 2001, the United States formed Task Force 151 as a division of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. TF151s ships began patrolling the northwestern portion of the Arabian Gulf, the waters off Somalia. By the following May, warships of four other nations (Spain, Germany, Great Britain, and France) had joined the Task Force. Since then, the multinational organization has been joined by warships from India and Russia, and established a Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA) in the Gulf of Aden and adjoining waters of the Arabian Sea.

In October 2007, U.S. officials announced a new American maritime strategy called a Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower (CS21) which places emphasis on the forging of Global Maritime Partnerships (GMPs) to wage wars, ensure safety and stability in peacetime, and to render humanitarian aid in times of natural disaster. To date, measures taken under this strategy have had only limited success. Between January 2008 and March 2010, pirates operating from Somali have attacked more than 330 civilian vessels ranging in size from sailing yachts and small fishing boats to 70,000-ton bulk carriers.

Attacks on ships carrying humanitarian aid finally evoked a response from the United Nations in October 2008. UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon asked NATO to provide escorts for ships chartered by the UN's World Food Program. NATO responded by forming Standing

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[1] For further discussion, see Catherine Zara Raymond, "Piracy and Armed Robbery in the Malacca Strait: A Problem Solved?," *Naval War College Review,* Summer 2009, pp. 31-42; Ian Storey, "Securing Southeast Asia's Sea Lanes: A Work in Progress," *Asia Policy,* July 2008, pp. 99-100, 109, 126, and John Bradford, "Shifting the Tides Against Piracy in Southeast Asian Waters," *Asian Survey*, May/June 2008,, pp. 474-5.

[2] John J. Kruzel. "Navy's Rescue Mission 'Textbook,' But Piracy Still Looms, Gates Says," Navy.mil. http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=44297. Outside assistance, especially the sending of warships to the area is often resented by local governments. Victor Huang, "Building Maritime Security in Southeast Asia: Outsiders Not Welcome?" *Naval War College Review,* Winter 2008.

NATO Maritime Group Two, which worked with the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151) until December of 2008 when the UN force was replaced by a group of ships flying the European Union flag. This began as a short term deployment called "Atalanta" but has since been extended. NATO forces returned to the region in the spring of 2009. Thus, there are now three distinct forces operating in the Arabian Gulf: The European Union Naval Force in Operation "Atalanta"; NATO forces under the current name Operation Ocean Shield; and CTF 151 of the Coalition Combined Maritime Forces, the naval arm of Operation Enduring Freedom. Plus other nations, including China and Japan, have warships operating independently of any of these three groups. It is a complicated arrangement made more so by such facts as the EU having an agreement which allows its naval forces to send captured pirates to Kenya for trial, but NATO has no similar agreement with any nation in the region. How this will all work out remains to be seen.

In short, in 2010, the line between peace and war is as murky in the war against piracy as it was during the Barbary Wars of two centuries ago. Yet constants remain in war or in peace. Indeed, one might argue, especially in peace. First, the economy of the United States is dependent on maritime commerce today as it was two centuries ago. The globalization of the past fifty years has resulted in a 90-fold increase in the value of foreign trade.[3] Without access to overseas commodities, manufacturers, and markets the economy of United States would atrophy. Secondly, defending that commerce remains a primary role of the U.S. Navy. As in most of the nineteenth century, the period between the War of 1812 and the Spanish American War, the Navy has, for the past three decades, played a largely support role in Americas combat operations, but has been the service primarily responsible for keeping open sea lines of communication. While it has received assistance from allies, the primary burden for patrolling troubled regions, currently bordering the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea has rested with the U.S. Navy.

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[3] The combined value of goods exported and imported grew from $35,408 million in 1960 to $3,243,042 in 2009 of which approximate 30% was with Canada and Mexico. The amount moving by sea changed little due impart to the increase in the volume of bulk commodities, especially oil, that moves by sea. "U.S. Trade in Goods and Services - Balance of Payments (BOP) Basis,: *U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/historical/gands.pdf*

Chapter 27:

The Military's Role in Stimulating Science and Technology: The Turning Point

By Kathleen Broome Williams

Fido: The Mark 24 Mine

On May 12, 1944, a torpedo from a Royal Air RAF heavy bomber based in Northern Ireland struck and crippled a German U-boat in the dark waters of the mid-Atlantic. The next day, other Allied forces located U-456, still wallowing on the surface, and sank it. Another torpedo, this time dropped by an Iceland-based US Navy Catalina, sank a U-boat a day later. These were the first successes for the new torpedo, code-named Fido. Fido was the top secret, first-ever, air-launched, anti-submarine, acoustic homing torpedo and it arrived at a critical time in World War II, helping to turn the tide in the Allies' favor in the hard fought battle for control of the Atlantic sea lanes.

Conceived, developed, and manufactured in America, Fido was the joint creation of engineers at the Bell Telephone Laboratories (BTL) and scientists at the Harvard Underwater Sound Lab (HUSL). The HUSL team was led by Harvey Brooks, a young physicist with an interest in underwater acoustics but no prior experience with torpedoes or, indeed, weapons of any kind. This was the norm for civilian scientists engaged in war work during World War II. In just under a year and a half, along the way mastering new science, these novice weaponeers produced an effective new device for anti-submarine warfare.

The rapid and successful creation of Fido demonstrated the strengths enjoyed by civilian research labs and their unexpected potential for applying basic research to the development of naval technology. Scientific and technological breakthroughs by civilian scientists occurred in many fields during World War II involving every branch of service and altering the course of the war. For the first time, success on the field of battle depended to an unprecedented degree on advanced science-based technologies, making World War II a turning point in the relationship of the military to science. Previously, this relationship – characterized by one historian as "mutual aloofness"[1] – had been marked by lack of understanding and regard. Generally, the military – with the possible exception of those in technical branches – had little interest in stimulating science. During the course of the war, however, a revolution took place, one that was initiated and sustained not so much by the military as by science. The civilian National Defense Research Committee (NDRC) saw to it that by the end of the war prewar disinterest was largely reversed. Military stimulation of science and technology became

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[1] Daniel S. Greenberg, *The Politics of Pure Science*, new ed. (The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 62.

institutionalized, supported by government funding directed not only to service labs but also to industrial laboratories and academic institutions. The Cold War ensured that military funding of science would continue, even in peacetime, changing both academic science and the military.

Brief History of Science and the Military before World War II

In contrast with Europe, where state-sponsored basic science advanced rapidly in the nineteenth century, Americans were mostly preoccupied with practical innovations, such as improvements in surveying and navigation, that furthered national purposes like westward expansion. With the rise in industry came a corresponding interest in, and encouragement for, the science behind technological change. In the late nineteenth century, American Telephone and Telegraph and General Electric pioneered the establishment of major industrial research organizations, but this happened without government funding. Academic science continued to fend for itself in universities that did not receive federal support. The rare exceptions, the land grant colleges that began to appear in the 1860s, focused largely on research in agriculture.

To be sure, during the Civil War, there was a flurry of scientific and technological activity resulting in the first ironclads and submarines. Semaphore signaling took to the skies when it was used from hot air balloons, and the electric telegraph came into its own. The First World War also saw important technological advances, particularly in the development of aircraft and submarines. Physicists worked on radio communications and sound-based methods of detecting submarines, laying the groundwork for sonar, radar and direction-finding. But many scientists remained leery of cooperating with government, fearful that military need would come to dominate research priorities. For their part, many in the military still failed to recognize the utility of science. James Conant, a chemist and later president of Harvard University, recalled that when, on the outbreak of World War I, the American Chemical Society offered its services to the government, the secretary of war noted that the War Department already had *one* chemist and did not need more. This was a war that has sometimes been called the chemists' war for its development and use of poison gas, nitrates and high explosives. And yet, at the end of the war, the chief of staff of the war department still wrote that "Nothing in this war has changed the fact that it is now, as always heretofore, the Infantry with rifle and bayonet that, in the final analysis, must bear the brunt of the assault and carry it on to victory."[2] This attitude prevailed among many in the military even well into World War II.

The Great Depression hit science hard. Research in the natural sciences remained largely the preserve of universities and philanthropic foundations, like the Carnegie Institution and the

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[2] The previous anecdote and the quote are found in Greenberg, *The Politics of Pure Science,* 58.

Rockefeller Institute, and their endowments shrank severely in the economic crisis. The New Deal, which came to the rescue of other sectors of the economy, was stingy in its support of science. The military suffered too. The isolationism that followed the carnage of the First World War put a damper on military appropriations whose funding and numbers were drastically cut, leaving little possibility for the pursuit of scientific research for military purposes. Even in the inhospitable climate of the 1930s, however, advances were made in radar and sonar at the army's Signal Corps Laboratory and at the Naval Research Laboratory. In spite of this, Vannevar Bush, an electrical engineer and former vice president and dean of engineering at MIT, wrote in 1949 that prior to World War II "Military laboratories were dominated by officers who made it utterly clear that the scientists and engineers employed in these laboratories were of a lower caste of society….[The] senior officers of military services everywhere did not have a ghost of an idea concerning the effects of science on the evolution of techniques and weapons…."[3]

The National Defense Research Committee

The mutual mistrust of scientists and the military began to change in 1940. When France fell to the Nazis in May, a group of American scientists mobilized. They were led by Vannevar Bush, by then chairman of NACA and president of the Carnegie Institution. With the support of Bush and a number of prominent colleagues, President Roosevelt established the National Defense Research Committee in June 1940. Among those involved from the beginning, in addition to Bush, were Karl Compton, a physicist and president of MIT; James Conant of Harvard; Frank Jewett, an electrical engineer and president of the National Academy of Sciences and of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, and Alfred Loomis, an investment banker with deep pockets and a passionate involvement in science. These men understood that the military often had little knowledge of the latest trends in science or what science could do. They determined to act as interpreters, linking the needs of the military to scientific and technological capabilities.

The World War II revolution in military and scientific, as well as industrial, cooperation was, to a great extent, the work of the NDRC. Eventually, academic and research institutions across America were drawn into war work. The NDRC organized a massive migration of personnel to the war laboratories it set up, funding these operations through government contracts. Mutual interest in winning the war, reinforced by financial support, permanently linked the military and science in a web of cross-fertilization that continues today. Understanding this World War II revolution is the key to understanding modern military stimulation of science and technology.

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[3] Quoted in Greenberg, *The Politics of Pure Science,* 68.

Much was accomplished in one year to create a civilian-led mechanism for harnessing the nation's scientists to the war effort and to cooperate with the military without falling under its control. By mid-1941, Bush had recruited -- and the government had funded -- some 6,000 physicists, chemists, mathematicians and engineers, a number that grew to 30,000 by the end of the war.[4]

The US Navy and Science

People expect stirring narratives from guns and bugles military history but may be surprised that scientific and technological developments can be stirring too. Telling some of these stories to students is the best way to make the new relationship between the military and science both meaningful and memorable. The Manhattan Project is one of the most obviously gripping stories. Yet, this tale is familiar and has been told often and well. So, too, has the story of radar and of the early work in computing used for code-breaking. It might be more interesting, therefore, to consider some less-well-known examples of the way the war changed the interplay of the military and science and technology.

Because of its reliance on astronomy for navigation, and meteorology for weather forecasting, the navy had long had a certain dependence on science. The following stories illustrate how World War II confirmed and vastly expanded that dependence. The driving force behind the creation of the torpedo called Fido, for example, had come from Capt. Louis McKeehan, head of the Mine Warfare Branch of the Bureau of Ordnance. Scientists at the Naval Torpedo Station at Newport, Rhode Island had been considering acoustic homing torpedoes for fifteen years but insisted that torpedoes made too much noise themselves to be able to home on any external noise source and until McKeehan came along to challenge them they seemed to have a point. But McKeehan was not a career naval officer. He was a reserve officer, on active duty for the duration, whose peacetime job was director of the physics laboratories at Yale University. Unimpressed by the received wisdom of Navy engineers, McKeehan turned to HUSL and BTL where his idea for an acoustic homing torpedo quickly bore fruit. With support and funding from the NDRC, HUSL and BTL proved Newport wrong and only seventeen months after the beginning of the project Fido had entered service and made his first kill.[5]

High-Frequency Direction Finding

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[4] Irving Stewart, *Organizing Scientific Research for War: The Administrative History of the Office of Scientific Research and Development* (Boston: Brown, Little and Company, 1948), 34-37.

[5] For the role of Bell Laboratories and Western Electric see M.D. Fagen. ed., *A History of Engineering and Science in the Bell System: National Service in War and Peace (1925-1975),* (Bell Telephone Laboratories, Incorporated, 1978), 187-201.

Between the wars, Henri Busignies, a young French engineer working for the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT) in Paris, developed a high-frequency direction finder (HF/DF) capable of locating German U-boats by tracking their radio transmissions. This technology had been used with some success in World War I when, in spite of the rudimentary nature of the equipment, British shore stations detected the presence of German submarines by their radio messages. During World War II Admiral Karl Dönitz, head of the U-boat arm, relied on frequent radio transmissions to maintain tactical control of his U-boats and direct them effectively onto convoys in coordinated "wolf-pack" attacks. Dönitz believed that the new, very brief, high-frequency transmissions now used by his submarines -- as opposed to the low-frequency transmissions of the previous war -- were impossible to pinpoint. This proved a costly mistake.

Escaping from Nazi-occupied France, and smuggling out plans for his direction finder, Busignies made his way to America where his device, superior to anything then produced in the US, was quickly adopted by the Navy. So it happened that the strategic, land-based HF/DFs deployed by the US Navy to locate distant U-boats by their radio transmissions were the creation of a French engineer. More importantly, Busignies also had ready an HF/DF set that was designed for tactical use at sea. By mid-1943, the US Navy deployed Busignies's shipborne HF/DF and used it to good effect. It had been produced by ITT and tested and refined by the Naval Research Lab using a destroyer and crew lent by the Navy. From then on, the high-frequency direction finder took its place -- on a par with radar and sonar -- as a tactical way to locate nearby U-boats.[6]

Oceanography

The tale of a Frenchman who, for much of the war, was denied full clearance by the Office of Naval Intelligence on the grounds that he was an alien of questionable loyalties, while at the same time -- under the auspices of the Bureau of Ships -- producing highly classified equipment for the Navy, is not the only strange tale of the military relationship to science. Who would think, for example, that a short, arthritic, shy, forty-year-old Harvard-trained specialist in a species of minute plankton could influence the combat effectiveness of the US Navy? Perhaps just as surprising, this planktonologist was a woman. In April 1943, Dr. Mary Sears was ordered from her work at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) to Washington, DC, to collect, organize and present oceanographic intelligence required for planning combat operations.

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[6] For Busignies and HF/DF see Kathleen Broome Williams, *Secret Weapon: U.S. High-Frequency Direction Finding in the Battle of the Atlantic,* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1996).

An interest in the possible military uses of oceanography had begun to develop in America even before the start of World War II, particularly in anticipation of anti-U-boat warfare in the Atlantic. By the end of 1942, amphibious assaults like Operation Torch in North Africa and sea-borne attacks on Japanese-held islands in the Pacific indicated further uses for oceanography. Costly mistakes continued to occur in the amphibious assaults of 1943, particularly at Tarawa, in November, where unusually low tides grounded landing craft on the surrounding reef, forcing troops to wade slowly ashore in the face of devastating enemy fire. The losses at Tarawa highlighted the need for strategic planning based on intelligence assessments that included the best hydrographic information -- information about the physical characteristics of bodies of water and their adjacent shores.

In 1942 Sears had tried to join the WAVES -- as women in the Navy were called -- but she failed the physical, rejected because of an earlier bout with arthritis. Resuming her work as a marine biologist at WHOI, she was surprised one day to find Lt. Roger Revelle, an oceanographer from the Scripps Institution now serving in the Navy reserve, leaning against her doorjamb. Revelle was there to recruit Sears to help him at the Navy's Hydrographic Office (Hydro). Because the Navy wanted a serving officer to head its oceanographic effort, Revelle had already managed to get Sears a waiver for her medical disability. So it was that a "prim WAVE lieutenant, j.g.," became -- according to Revelle -- the "first Oceanographer of the Navy in modern times," directing twelve women and three men in the application of oceanography to war. This predominantly female group of marine biologists -- none of them with any previous experience in military planning -- was given practically free rein to do the work that came its way from the Navy, and from whichever other of the armed services needed oceanographic information.

The most crucial task of the Oceanographic Unit was to transform research data from oceanographic centers on the East and West coasts into intelligence reports demonstrating the main hydrographic factors -- including sea, swell, and surf forecasting -- that might affect the location and timing of long-range operations. Data from the unit was used by decision makers at the highest levels for planning strategic and tactical operations, particularly in the Pacific. In early 1945, for example, the unit put together a report for the Joint Chiefs of Staff indicating which Okinawa beaches would have the least surf during the invasion of the island planned for 1 April. While many know of the meteorologist on whose weather forecast Eisenhower depended for his decision to go ahead with the D-Day landings in Normandy, few are aware that a woman working at her desk in Washington was responsible for compiling a report indicating where the Okinawa invasion forces could land with least danger from currents and surf.

Oceanographic intelligence proved so important to the Navy that, after the war, it established a permanent Oceanographic Division within Hydro, headed by Sears until her retirement from active duty in June 1946 when she returned to WHOI. In 1962 Sears saw the evolution of Hydro into the Naval Oceanographic Office headed by an admiral. Navy support for oceanography had come a long way since Sears's tiny group was formed in 1943.

Meteorology

With the support of the Navy, meteorology, too, played an increasingly vital role in military operations, growing rapidly to meet new calls on the young science. Vice Admiral Bill Halsey's January 31, 1942 raids on the Marshall and Gilbert Islands were the first offensive action by US naval forces in World War II. Two carrier task forces approached the islands, subjecting them to coordinated air attacks. With unlimited visibility, the planes from the northern task force were able to bomb targets all morning; but, by early afternoon, the same clear skies enabled Japanese planes to locate the northern carrier and begin to attack it, just as it was recovering its last planes. Given the speed of the Japanese planes, it seemed impossible for the task force to escape; but Halsey's weather officer on the carrier *Enterprise* had the answer. His weather map showed a cold front nearby with a cloud screen pointing towards Pearl Harbor. By steaming at high speed into the frontal zone and then moving with the front, the task force managed to hide in the drizzle and low clouds. They could hear Japanese planes buzzing overhead, but were so effectively hidden that they were never found. Once out of range of Japanese air patrols, the task force emerged from the front and headed safely home to Pearl Harbor.

Weather played a critical role in the extensive, two-ocean naval operations of the war. Accurate weather forecasts were necessary at sea for decisions about refueling, avoiding storms, and launching air offensives. Weather had to be considered for small boat operations -- especially, amphibious landings -- for aircraft operations, gunnery practice, and action against the enemy. Major naval vessels to which aircraft were assigned needed weather specialists on board to make forecasts on which the safety of the ship, of the aircraft, and of the pilots depended.

After Pearl Harbor, the Navy trained increasing numbers of weather personnel, including several hundred women, to meet the demands of a rapidly expanding force. Among the first group of women trained as aerological engineers -- as the Navy called weather forecasters -- was Dr. Florence van Straten, a New York University professor of physical chemistry. After receiving a commission in the WAVES, Lt. van Straten -- also with no previous military experience -- spent the war at Weather Central in Washington, initially analyzing the use of weather in combat operations in the Pacific. It was she who wrote the report on Halsey's

island raids. The purpose of the reports was to "form a basis for a better understanding of the applications of weather information to future operations."[7] Later, van Straten transferred to the R & D section, where she worked for the rest of the war on radar and other new technologies.

Post World War II

After the war, the scientists at Bell Labs who had worked on Fido returned to telephone work, Captain McKeehan returned to Yale, and Harvard - like some other universities - anxious to shed the military connection as soon as possible took back its buildings and ended its classified work. ITT retooled for the civilian market. On the other hand, many scientists had been energized by the huge projects, seemingly unlimited funding, and exciting research possibilities opened up by the war. It seemed obvious that government neglect of science would no longer be possible in the nuclear age. Vannevar Bush believed that continued government funding for the sciences after the war was vital and he wrote a report to President Roosevelt published in 1945 as *Science: The Endless Frontier*, appealing for public support for research. The outstanding success of the NDRC meant that science had become an essential adjunct to the military, irreversibly tied to it through government funding. The Navy recognized this. In February 1945 James Forrestal, the secretary of the navy and soon to be the first secretary of defense, sent a memorandum to President Roosevelt in which he said: "The problem . . . is how to establish channels through which scientists can [contribute to the nation's security by carrying on research] in peace as successfully as during the war." [8] The frosty peace of the Cold War made the problem critical.

One solution was found in 1946 when Congress established the Office of Naval Research (ONR), making it responsible for funding basic science at the country's universities in fields of interest to the Navy. When NDRC closed up shop after the war, ONR became the chief government office subsidizing scientific research. It soon established the postwar pattern of federal support for academic science. Having learned from its war experience, the Navy was inclined to be broad in its interpretation of what might be of military interest, and ONR secured financial backing for a wide range of basic, as well as applied research projects, at universities all over the country. In the early postwar era, the ONR also channeled Navy funds to help develop computers for the Census and Weather Bureaus. It provided general support for the development of the computer industry, as well as supporting two major academic computers: John von Neumann's at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton and the Whirlwind computer at MIT.

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[7] Florence W. Van Straten, *Weather or Not,* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1966), 10-11.
[8] Quoted in Kathleen Broome Williams, *Improbable Warriors*: *Women Scientists and the US Navy in World War II*, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 194.

Many civilian scientists, like Roger Revelle, the oceanographer friend of Mary Sears, worked directly at ONR. Others in the scientific and technological community, however, were wary of the influence that military funding might exert on the development of science. They supported another of Vannevar Bush's initiatives that, in 1950, led to the creation of the National Science Foundation (NSF) as an alternative civilian source of government money. Nevertheless, the interconnectedness and mutual dependence of science and the military has remained dominant. The Department of Defense still accounts for nearly 70 percent of all government funds directed towards research and development, while the NSF is responsible for less than 5 percent.

When she left active duty, Mary Sears had been afraid that the Navy would lose interest in oceanography, perhaps cancelling its wartime contracts with WHOI and Scripps. But Operation Crossroads and the need to understand the effects on Navy ships, and on the environment, of atomic testing at Bikini Atoll made oceanography even more essential to the Navy. Today, the Office of the Oceanographer and Navigator of the Navy has an important place in innovative navy science. After the war, van Straten continued to work for the Naval Weather Service as a civilian atmospheric physicist where her analytical work on the conditions of the upper atmosphere assisted in the development of long-range missile technology.

The war also saw the beginnings of whole new fields of scientific research -- most with peaceful as well as military uses -- that the military continues to fund today. The most obvious of these is nuclear power. Among many other advances, World War II also spawned operations research - the mathematical analysis of situations to determine optimal courses of action -- and game theory -- a mathematical framework for studying conflict. Work on rocket science during the war led to today's space program.

The vast scale of military funding of science since World War II has led to a debate among historians about its effect. Some argue that military funding of science caused a shift in direction towards applied research and that, inevitably, it also affects the focus of basic science. Others, however, believe that military funding has dramatically expanded opportunities for research without seriously undermining the autonomy and independence of scientists. Whichever view you take, it is undeniable that since the Second World War both the military and scientific establishments have been irreversibly altered by their many intertwining interests and shared preoccupations. The stimulation continues to work both ways.

Chapter 28:

Why the Military Makes Public Health a Priority

By Sanders Marble

The military is involved in public health because diseases do not respect a uniform. The mosquito cannot tell whether the arm is in a uniform or not. The military has to protect itself—campaigns have been affected (even lost) because a force was unhealthy due to communicable disease. The military also has to protect the people on its bases or communities. It must keep its forces force healthy, and— when it provides housing— it takes on responsibility that the housing be healthy.

The U.S. government has a responsibility to the population they are overseeing. Specifically, the Army does not want to bring diseases back to the United States and cause a problem. For instance, malaria was brought back to the United States during the Vietnam War because patients had not taken their anti-malarials. When they were flown back to the United States, mosquitoes bit them and then bit other people, spreading malaria.

So the military gets involved with research. Generally, this is identical to civilian research (the medicine is the same, and military-specific work benefits everyone) although there are different interests. For example, malaria is not a major concern in the United States, but the military is definitely interested. Implementation is a very different matter. Civilian public health departments have far fewer tools available—shutting down restaurants, declaring quarantines, denying children access to school for not being vaccinated, but not a great deal more. The military, on the other hand, can order vaccinations, order bug nets/bug spray, order trash removal, and back up initiatives with threats of punishment.

The History of Military Medical Research

Before the Germ Theory of Disease, there was little understanding of what caused disease. The Army tried to reduce disease, largely through better sanitation. Clean quarters, clean latrines, clean water—these were recommended from the earliest days of the United States. However, these were merely empirical rather than having a strong chain of If-Then.

There were few active measures to take. In January 1777, a multi-colony smallpox epidemic broke out. George Washington had some tough choices: he could hope that it missed his army and do nothing, or hope that inoculation would not cause a general outbreak—and that the British didn't attack while his troops recuperated. In February (with the epidemic spreading),

Washington went ahead with inoculations, deciding that was the lesser risk. It paid off: only 8 per 1,000 died, and the smallpox death rate in the population fell from 160 per 1,000 in 1777 to 3 per 1,000 in 1778.

When Edward Jenner introduced vaccination rather than variolation, the Army seized upon it almost immediately. All troops were ordered to be vaccinated. This measure prevented soldiers from developing smallpox and, consequently, it did not spread around the country.

The first Surgeon General, James Lovell, had a strong interest in reducing disease in the Army. He directed the post surgeons (the physicians in charge of medical care at posts) to record not only what their patients suffered from, but also the weather conditions. He hoped to find what climatic conditions caused particular diseases—an attempt to put science into the miasmatic theory of disease. He also oversaw the (long held) sanitary precautions. But there was nothing more to be done.

By the 1840s, the "Sanitary Reform Movement" was underway. It ran through the Victorian Era, influencing matters as varied as medicine and city planning. It started with Edwin Chadwick's report on the health conditions of the poor, "General Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain." Bad housing, bad water, and lack of baths led to bad health results. Chadwick's findings led to projects for providing clean water, building sewers instead of having cesspools, establishing public baths to let people wash, and tearing down slums to build better housing. All of these ideas were compatible with both miasmatic theory and Germ Theory. And they spread to the United States. Lemuel Shattuck did much the same work in Massachusetts. Though these new ideas took shape before the Civil War, they had little effect because it was too early. Means of cleaning the water were not yet developed and implemented. The Germ Theory developed during the 1860s and 1870s, but it would take a couple of decades to gain wide acceptance.

However, the Army plunged in. Doctors at dusty frontier posts could get microscopes and explore for bugs. As post surgeons, they were also responsible to the Commanding Officer (CO) for overall health on post, e.g. the water supply or adequacy of housing. From 1889 onwards, when the surgeon made a recommendation on health, the post commander had to commit to paper his "yes" or "no." Now the CO would have to go on record about science and progress. In fact, Henrik Ibsen's ¬An Enemy of the People is about the issues that civilian physicians faced on these topics.

In 1893, George Sternberg, an excellent researcher, was appointed Surgeon General of the Army. Three weeks later, he established an Army Medical School (AMS) from the belief that "a special education is needful to prepare a military man to undertake the protection of the

public health." It was not a normal medical school; it was a post-graduate (i.e. post-MD) institution that taught some Army topics (uniforms, saluting, and equestrian skills) and some Army medical topics, such as surgery. It also taught public health—because the Army was responsible for it.

There was a Professor of Military Hygiene (John Billings, already a past president of the American Public Health Association) and a Professor of Bacteriology, one Walter Reed. As the civilian medical world would recognize, the Army had the first preventive medicine/public health school in the country. And that's because the Army has broader responsibilities: civilian medical schools trained general practitioners who did retail care in both senses of retail. They provided care in small numbers and for money while the Army had an interest in doing it wholesale (for larger numbers).

The Army Medical School also conducted research. Typhoid was a major problem in the Spanish American War. More soldiers died of typhoid in training camps than died from battle, and that was bad for public relations. So Sternberg appointed a Board to investigate. They made important contributions in science— they identified a carrier stage, proved that typhoid was not bad water but an infection (brought by the soldiers from civilian life, such was the state of American water supplies), and showed that flies spread it.

By 1908, the AMS had developed an experimental vaccine, and in 1911 the Army made it mandatory. A few years later, World War I erupted and the Army ramped up vaccine production to 18 million doses, with obvious and excellent results.

The Spanish American War

The United States also faced new tropical medicine problems—it controlled Puerto Rico and the Philippines, and had a major interest in Cuba. Bailey Ashford investigated anemia in Puerto Rico to determine if the Army was at risk. It wasn't—unless soldiers walked around barefoot and got hookworms. This research, resulting from a concern for soldiers, mainly benefited civilians. Ashford's work also interested John Rockefeller in public health, and in 1913 that led to the creation of the International Health Commission. Between the world wars, $25 million was spent on schools of public health.

A more famous outcome of the Spanish American War was yellow fever research. Yellow fever was a problem in Cuba during the war, and afterwards. (In 1885 there had also been a devastating yellow fever epidemic in the Mississippi Valley, so yellow fever was America's problem also.) The initial effort was focused on clean up—the sanitary engineering approach.

Sewers, fumigation, hand washing, and better water supplies were implemented, but with no results.

So Sternberg appointed another Board with Walter Reed at the helm. His Board determined how yellow fever spread: mosquitoes. If the relevant mosquitoes were killed, the yellow fever endemic could be controlled. The Army had the tools to compel civilians to change in ways an elected government in the United States could not. Such requirement included: covering and screening water cisterns, implementing anti-mosquito patrols, oiling puddles, and digging ditches to drain marshes—literally draining disease out of the swamp.

William Gorgas had earned enough of a reputation in Cuba— as an implementer of control measures —that he was sent to Panama to head up the medical side of building the Panama Canal. With much labor and political support (he was backed by the President when the overall director of the canal effort wanted to sack him for demanding too many resources), Gorgas accomplished his task.

In 1900, the Army also set up a Tropical Disease Board in Manila. This board lasted until 1933, and was revived in Panama in 1936. It drew in local expertise and experience, but also dealt with a variety of diseases because they were endemic where the Army would be operating. Medical concerns studied included beri-beri (the first deficiency disease, though nobody knew it was a deficiency disease), plague, malaria, dengue, rinderpest (the Army had animals) and surra.

During World War I, the Army faced different problems. Physicians could not undertake all the necessary work so the Army brought in other peri-medical specialists; then created a new organization, the Sanitary Corps. Relevant here are the Sanitation and Laboratory officers. Their employment by the Army gave them more prestige after the war—the Army commissioned these men; their work was serious and professional.

The Army's biggest public health topic during the war was a disaster: the 1918-19 influenza pandemic. It likely began in Haskell County, KS, and the Army inadvertently spread it around the country. Draftees from Haskell County went to Camp Funston, at Fort Riley, where they were packed into barracks. The Surgeon General had asked for the normal amount of space per man (72 square feet) to put more space between coughs and sneezes. However, the Army needed to mobilize quickly, and the Chief of Staff, accepting the risk, decided to pack the troops into 40 square feet. These conditions helped the flu spread, so that hospitals were equally packed. When crowded troop ships took troops to France they took the virus there, as well.

Given that the first viruses were not isolated until the 1930s, there was no treatment in 1918. Prevention was the only option. All kinds of activities spread the virus—war bonds rallies, working in war factories, packed trains. Many people died, partly because the virus killed the healthy people. A V-shaped graph is more common, with old and young dying, but the immune system over-reacted so the strong, healthy people died, too.

Another issue the Army encountered for the first time was mental problems. When the United States went to war, the Army had heard about "shell shock" and wanted to do everything possible to avoid it. Prevention is, after all, better than curing. The prevailing idea was that smarter people were more psychologically resilient. So the Army screened recruits for intelligence. Psychologists volunteered their services to the Army, and the Army Medical Department happily accepted them. Since there were many illiterates (immigrants who didn't know enough English, people who'd left school to work, African-Americans who received a segregated education, and others) the Army developed literacy tests. There were issues with the tests, however, because they were skewed. In some tests, a knowledge of tennis was necessary to identify missing objects. So the data was skewed. (In the 1920s this data was used by others to argue (successfully) for limits on immigration.)

After World War I, there was a slight increase in the number of schools for Public Health. Sternberg, in retirement, established one in Washington, DC, but only 4 or 5 were operational by the 1920s. Jurisdictions start adding Public Health officers--doctors and nurses. But the positions were poorly paid (especially in comparison with private practice) and had few benefits.

The American Medical Association (AMA) lobbied against Public Health. Public Health jobs were typically low-paying (government) jobs, and there was rarely the satisfaction of seeing patients respond to treatment. The AMA also worked to keep instruction out of medical schools. So the Army was one of the few areas where there was long-term growth. The Army expanded its course to 14 weeks and built new facilities. From 1921, the American Journal of Tropical Medicine was edited by various officers in the Army Medical School—the Army was the only organization in the United States that had a long-running interest in tropical medicine.

By World War II, the Army was entering some new areas. Issues, like industrial hygiene and occupational health were studied by the Army because it was running industrial plants and wanted to keep its employees as healthy as possible.

The chief of Preventive Medicine also reached into the civilian world for expertise. Not only would doctors be putting on uniforms, he created a board (ultimately titled the Army

Epidemiology Board) that would have 100 eminent civilians on 10 sub-committees. This board helped both the military and the Public Health world. The military profited from the expertise of the medical elite (who were draft exempt), while the Public Health world had the aura of helping national defense. For the boys in uniform, there were plenty of vaccines required, but none helped with malaria. Thanks to the war in the South Pacific, malaria was a huge problem.

A major effort was initiated to find better drugs, and Atabrine was a key. But malaria discipline broke down early in the war. Inadequately equipped troops went into action in the South Pacific, they couldn't get enough bug dope or bed nets. They wouldn't take their pills properly—and disease rates skyrocketed. Douglas MacArthur commented that it would be a slow war if he had a division in the hospital and another recuperating for each one in action.

The Army created a School of Malariaology training units in two areas. First, they supervised malaria control, and second, they dug the ditches and sprayed the oil. There were also campaigns directed at encouraging troop compliance, and new tools (the pyrethrum 'bomb') to zap bugs in buildings.

In late 1943 an epidemic started in Naples, Italy—refugees, a collapsing local health system, and a crowded and dirty population set the stage. Enter DDT. A five percent powder, puffed out of a duster, killed the lice—and the effects lasted for weeks. The epidemic was quickly broken.

Since DDT was wonderfully effective against other bugs—including mosquitoes that spread malaria and other diseases—it was widely used after the war. The World Health Organization (WHO) initiated a major campaign, thinking that malaria might be eradicated by wiping out the relevant mosquitoes. There were significant -side effects, however.

Wartime Efforts to Control Malaria

Malaria was a problem throughout much of the United States; prompting the creation of the Office of Malaria Control in War Areas (OMCWA). Since mosquitoes could fly from off-post to bite soldiers, and the Army lacked authority off post, someone had to coordinate the dozens of local and state health departments with the Army. It involved lots of committee meetings, but it worked. OMCWA was located in Atlanta, because that's where Third Service Command was based. There was a high volume of malaria in the southeast. After the war, it was one more government program that never went away. In fact, it expanded from covering only malaria to covering other civil-military problems.

America has had a complicated history with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and the Army is no different. There are problems with virtually all options (abstinence-only, punishment for contracting disease, treating contraction of diseases as immoral and/or illegal, etc). The Army has vacillated on treatment policy. However, it had always discouraged Venereal Disease (VD) because it kept soldiers from duty. At times, VD was one of the leading causes of medical discharges. For instance, advanced syphilis can kill, and soldiers were discharged once they had nerve damage. Until 1910, mercury was the only effective treatment, and it has massive side effects. There was still nothing to treat gonorrhea, and condoms were not popular a century ago.

By World War II, penicillin could quickly cure most VD. Just before D-Day, the Army was accused, by civilians, of hoarding penicillin for VD cases. However, it was actually stockpiling it for anticipated invasion casualties. The Army was unable to say anything for fear that the Germans would hear about it.

The occupation of Germany and Japan after WWII proved a major public health problem for the Army. Food was short, there were millions of displaced persons (refugees); Prisoners of War, Recovered Allied Military Personnel; and concentration camp survivors. In both countries, infrastructure was badly damaged and sanitation was a mess.

The "former regime elements" had to be removed from office while the Army attempted to run as many public health programs as possible through locals. The Army did not want to get involved with retail patient care. The objective was to get the locals back on their feet and brought to good standards. The problems were daunting—and took years to fully solve. The efforts were helped by: identifying the problem early (before occupation of enemy soil); the front gradually advancing rather than having to do everything at once, and by bringing in civilian sector experts (public health officers and nurses from civilian life). The efforts were also aided by the lack of resistance. In other words, the Italians, Germans, and Japanese accepted their defeat.

After the war, public health was accepted by the medical community—with a board established in 1948, and state recognition quickly spreading. The Army's role during the war—training doctors in public health and persuading medical schools to teach some public health (and tropical medicine)—probably nudged the AMA towards accepting public health.

The Army Medical School became the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and continued doing good work. Joe Smadel discovered what chloramphenicol could do against scrub typhus, the first specific treatment for a rickettsial disease. Ed Buescher and Maurice Hillman isolated the Asian influenza virus and another team isolated rubella. Both led to new vaccines.

But civilians were also providing marvelous research. Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin found ways to prevent polio. The focus had changed from the environment (getting rid of mosquitoes, for instance) to protecting the individual. Vaccination was still the preferred route, but taking pills proved easier and was cheaper for the United States in foreign countries. Whether the results were lasting for the locals was not necessarily the Army's problem.

Vietnam created a different dynamic than that of Germany or Japan. The United States was trying to build up an allied government, not impose American ways of doing things. This was in part because that could have been grounds for anti-imperialist rhetoric. But there were lots of endemic diseases, and the indigenous standards of sanitation and health were not high. But the Army's focus was on individual protection and treatment (whether it was insect repellant against mosquitoes, or treatments for skin diseases and plague), rather than on collective protection.

Public Health Today

In recent decades, public health (at least in the United States) has changed to education. This education includes diet and exercise, risk awareness, and trying to steer people away from high-risk endeavors. And of course the United States, generally, has the infrastructure (sewers, water supplies, etc.) for good public health.

In many ways, the Army now runs a pretty normal public health campaign. Yet, there are still military-specific problems. The military mostly operates outside the United States, so tropical diseases such as malaria need research. While organizations like the National Institute of Health (NIH) research AIDS in the United States, the Army is involved in clinical trials of a multi-strain HIV vaccine in Thailand. And the military faces biological weapons threats.

In summary, the Army has been interested in public health because it needs to be healthy to do its job, and to protect those for whom it is responsible. It played a useful role in advancing public health, in general, when the general medical community was not interested; it has made key advances at times, but has also taken advantage of civilian advances. The Army's requirements are different than those of American society, and so are the military's tools. But science and command authority have to come together to prevent disease.

The views expressed in this essay are the author's alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. government.

Chapter 29:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in American History

By Todd Shallat

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is America's oldest and largest engineering organization. It is also the most controversial. Since 1802, when Congress created the Corps within the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the army engineers have brought science into government and extended the federal responsibility for natural resources. As the construction arm of Congress, the engineers managed some of the world's most monumental construction. As the nation's premier builders of water projects—dams, dikes, canals, harbors, hydro facilities, and navigation channels—the Corps promoted a systems approach that standardized construction, elevated the power of Congress, and professionalized public works.

The story of the Corps rarely intersects with the traditional textbook history of the United States. Corps history, however, reveals many American themes. Beast and benefactor—praised as a nation builder, elsewhere denounced as an out of control bulldozer —the agency straddles deep divisions. In a bigger-is-better nation, the Corps had been grandiose. Yet the Corps is also at odds with American traditions. In a nation committed to private enterprise and states' rights, the Corps has been denounced as a military agent of big-government centralization. Army engineering lent support to the grand construction projects that were the target of resistance to federal public works.

Origins of the Civil Works Mission

The Corps emerged from the formative conflicts that divided the young republic during the Federalist Era. George Washington's America stood at a geopolitical crossroads between two great rivals in Europe: Britain and France. Britain was the great center of industrial capitalism. Its grandest construction projects were built by self-made private enterprise. France was the center of science and formal academic training. France's most magnificent projects were tax-financed and military inspired.

Young America mixed those traditions. Antebellum America, like Britain, relied on private enterprise and apprenticed craftsmen. The first well-engineered highways were private turnpikes. Early canal projects were privately financed through the purchase of stock. Maritime entrepreneurs built warehouses and wharves without federal aid. It remained for Alexander Hamilton, as George Washington's Secretary of the Treasury, to develop the constitutional arguments that led to federal support for public projects. Hamilton advanced

the idea that roads, canals, and other public construction were necessary for public safety. The Constitution, said Hamilton, implied a federal authority to build lighthouses for the safety of shipping, to remove obstructions to river commerce, and to build highways for troops. Thomas Jefferson, although suspicious of bureaucracy, admired the French talent for comprehensive planning and scientific professionalism. The result was a so-called "mixed enterprise" that allowed Congress to purchase stock and otherwise subsidize local construction. Jefferson envisioned a military academy for engineers that would professionalize the army and coordinate public works.

French engineering inspired the Corps. At the U.S. Military Academy, an engineering school, West Pointers learned French, studied mathematics, and grounded engineering in theory. French schooling left the West Pointers with an attraction to federally funded networks of projects and a preference for complex design. In 1816, President James Madison recruited French general Simon Bernard to head a U.S. board of fortification planners. The Monroe administration expanded Bernard's authority to roads and canals. After 1824, with the passage of the General Survey Act and the first federal river improvement act, the French-led Corps of Engineers assumed an active role as transportation planners. The Corps supervised the massive Delaware Breakwater. Together with the U.S. Bureau of Topographical Engineers, the Corps planned lighthouses, bridges, and Great Lakes ports of refuge from Buffalo to Duluth. French-trained army engineers pioneered urban planning and sanitation engineering in Washington, D.C.

In antebellum times, when Congress hotly debated the constitutionality of federal internal improvements, the most expensive federal projects were seacoast fortifications. From 1808 to 1861, army engineers built one of the world's most sophisticated systems of fortified harbors—more than 50 massive projects. Army engineers also surveyed the competing routes for the Pacific Railroad.   In antebellum times their numbers were never more than 100, yet the engineering elite of the army planned a dozen major canals, a national highway, hundreds of beach-front dikes, and thousands of miles of navigation channels. In the 1820s and 1830s, the Corps loaned officers to corporations as a form of federal aid.

The U.S. Civil War settled, among other issues, the constitutional question of internal improvements. For Lincoln Republicans used the reorganized Corps to promote industrial development. It was an age of innovation—of rivers that resembled canals, the so-called slack river projects of the Ohio valley. It was an age of concrete, the motorized canal lock, and the suction-cutter dredge. The Delaware became a 30-foot channel; the Ohio, a series of locks and dams. Congress, increasingly powerful, spent freely and the Corps became a funnel for federal money to local constituents. Gradually the Corps also took responsibility for planning a system of flood levees on the Lower Mississippi. After 1902, civilian agencies such as the U.S.

Geological Survey and the dam-building U.S. Reclamation Service rose to challenge the Corps monopoly over monumental construction. But the Corps, still the favorite of Congress, remained the nation's foremost authority on water construction. Broad powers of implementation allowed the engineers to broker public assistance and direct federal aid.

Three Missions

Three missions have since dominated the Corps civil works. The first is navigation improvement—the channeling of rivers, the dredging of harbors, and the construction of locks and dams. Corps-built navigation channels move oil from Tulsa to refineries above New Orleans. Barges of wheat and corn lock through Army engineered rivers from Omaha to Chicago. Soo Locks allow ships to travel between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes. The Corps's Saint Lawrence Seaway connects the North Atlantic to the Great Lakes. Mississippi tows push river barges through the Corps's slackwater staircase from St. Louis to St. Paul.

Twentieth century navigation improvements contributed to the Corps's decentralization. The Corps answered to local shippers. Powerful river and harbor lobbies fractured the agency into regional divisions and districts, each with its own character. In New Orleans, for example, the Corps became closely tied to powerful shipping interests. The problem of mud bars in the delta channels below New Orleans became a focus of agency science. New Orleans evolved into a Corps-built leveed fortress of canals, floodwalls, and dikes.

A second mission is flood control. This mission began in 1850 when a flood on the Mississippi excited the attention of Congress. After 1879, with the creation of the Corps-led Mississippi River Commission, engineers developed a sophisticated science of floodway design. In 1917, after another bad flood year on the Mississippi, Congress turned again to the Corps. On the Mississippi River and Sacramento River, the agency methodically networked pumps, levees, and spillways. In 1927, when the great Mississippi flood became the nation's most horrific disaster, the Corps emerged as a target of public dispute over military thinking and the role of the army as a protector of public safety. Yet the Corps had powerful patrons. In 1936, Congress expanded the federal flood program to the 48 states with $310 million for 250 projects.

The grandest result of the program was the Mississippi River and Tributaries project—the MR&T. Its vast system of levees and spillways funnels the dangerous river from St. Louis to New Orleans.

The Corps is also a builder of dams. Wilson Dam on the Tennessee River, completed in 1924, added hydropower to the Corps' waterway mission. Bonneville Dam on the Columbia and Fort Peck on the Missouri were monumental examples of multipurpose construction, merging navigation with flood protection, recreation, irrigation, hydro, and erosion control.

Environmental protection, a third mission, grew from the same scientific tradition that made the Corps an expert on floods. Corps engineers led the scientific surveys that mapped water resources. The engineers also surveyed Yellowstone and Yosemite parks. In 1899, the so-called Refuse Act extended the environmental mission, making the engineers responsible for obstructions in navigable streams. Here began the Corps's controversial permit authority to regulate dumping. Legislation such as the 1972 and 1974 Clean Water Acts expanded that authority. With the rise of the environmental movement, and the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1969, the Corps became the steward of fraying coastlines and vanishing swamps.

Teaching the Corps: Lessons Learned

Teaching the Corps's remarkable story illuminates some deeply American conflicts over the role of the peacetime Army and science in policymaking. Heirs to the French tradition of the scientific expert, the Corps moved from fortifications, to roads, to river and harbor improvement. The growth of the Corps divided the engineering profession. Builders in the craft tradition damned the Corps as aristocratic. Advocates of small government feared that army engineering might trample on states' rights. Anger at the Corps in the wake of Hurricane Katrina emerges from a long history of opposition to army civil works. There has seldom been a time in U.S. history, not even wartime, when the Corps was not a lightning rod of controversy over the scientific expert in national affairs.

Gaining perspective on the rise of national planning is another reason to study the Corps. Only the Corps had both the training and national stature to broker public resources, to map basinwide networks of river and harbor improvements, to regulate and plan. Routinely denounced, the Corps, nevertheless, relied on powerful patrons and coped with political change.

The story of the Army Corps, finally, gives pause to consider what waterway construction has wrought. In 200 years more than 15,000 miles of rivers have been dredged for navigation. More than 300 American rivers have been impounded for flood control. Erosion-control dikes have aggravated erosion. Wetlands became subdivisions. Corps dams quiet the rivers, killing fish. Corps levees sink Louisiana by denying the lowland marshes their annual blanket of silt.

The Corps—for better or for worse—has been the agent of this modernization. Americans have learned that every engineering solution has secondary consequences.

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