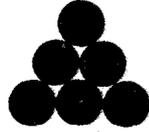


# A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History



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John E. Jessup, Jr. & Robert W. Coakley

Center of Military History  
United States Army  
Washington, D.C., 1988

**Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data**

Main entry under title:

**A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History.**

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. United States—History, Military—Historiography.
2. History, Military—Historiography. 3. United States. Army. I. Jessup, John E. II. Coakley, Robert W. III. Center of Military History.

EA81.G85

973'.07'2

78-606157

First Printed 1979—CMH Pub 70-3

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For Sale by the Superintendent of Documents  
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402

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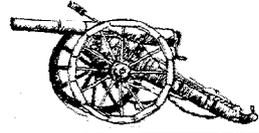
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# Contents

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## Foreword ix

Brig. Gen. James L. Collins, Jr.

## Preface xi

Col. John E. Jessup, Jr., and Robert W. Coakley

## One: Military History, Its Nature and Use

- 1 The Nature of History 3  
Maurice Matloff
- 2 A Perspective on Military History 25  
Col. Thomas E. Griess
- 3 An Approach to the Study of Military History 41  
Lt. Col. John F. Votaw

## Two: Bibliographical Guide

- 4 The Great Military Historians and Philosophers 59  
Jay Luvaas
- 5 Military History to the End of the Eighteenth Century 89  
Theodore Ropp
- 6 World Military History, 1786-1945 117  
Jeffrey J. Clarke
- 7 American Military History: The Early Period, 1607-1815 151  
Robert W. Coakley
- 8 American Military History: The Middle Years, 1815-1916 187  
Richard J. Sommers
- 9 The United States and the Two World Wars 225  
Charles B. MacDonald
- 10 The United States and the World Military Scene Since 1945 251  
Robert W. Coakley and Charles B. MacDonald

## Three: Army Programs, Activities, and Uses

- 11 A Century of Army Historical Work 285  
Col. John E. Jessup, Jr. and Robert W. Coakley
- 12 The U.S. Army Military History Institute 303  
Col. James B. Agnew and B. Franklin Cooling
- 13 The Military History Detachment in the Field 311  
Richard A. Hunt
- 14 The Army Art Program 319  
Marian R. McNaughton

- 15 Military Museums and Collections 339  
Joseph H. Ewing
- 16 The Place of Unit History 349  
Stanley R. Connor
- 17 Military History in the Army School System 357  
Brooks E. Kleber, Col. Roy K. Flint, and Charles S. Hall
- 18 The Use of Military History in Staff Work 373  
Walter G. Hermes
- 19 Military History and Army Records 381  
Vincent H. Demma
- 20 Writing for Official and Unofficial Publication 393  
Joseph R. Friedman

#### **Four: History Outside the U.S. Army**

- 21 Military History in the Department of Defense 401  
Romana Danysh
- 22 Official Programs Abroad 415  
Alfred M. Beck
- 23 Military History and the Academic World 431  
Ronald H. Spector

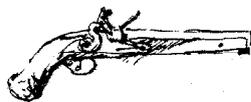
#### **Appendices**

- A Reference Works: A Select List 441  
Thomas E. Kelly, III
- B Historical Journals and Societies 449  
Thomas E. Kelly, III

#### **Index 457**

## Foreword

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**O**VER the years the study of military history has had its ups and downs within the Army. In the education of the World War II generation of military leaders it played an important part, for the study of past operations held a preeminent place in the Army schools' curricula in the period between the two great world wars. In the years immediately following World War II, it lost that place. This happened partly because the information explosion broadened so greatly the areas in which an officer had to be knowledgeable and partly because of a belief that the pace of change in technology had rendered the study of past experience irrelevant. In the Army's higher schools, military history became largely a matter of using examples from the past in courses dealing with current problems.

On his retirement in 1970 as Chief of Military History, Brig. Gen. Hal C. Pattison voiced his concern to the Army Chief of Staff, General William C. Westmoreland, over "the departure of the Army from its traditional reliance upon the experience of history." General Pattison suggested that the Army had paid the price of this neglect in many of the problems it encountered in the late 1960s and urged the restoration of military history to "its proper place in the importance of things." In response General Westmoreland established an ad hoc committee to "ascertain the Army need for the study of military history" and to "develop recommendations on how any unfulfilled needs can be met." Under the chairmanship of Col. Thomas E. Griess of the U.S. Military Academy and composed of representatives of the higher Army schools, the Continental Army Command, and the Office of the Chief of Military History, the committee met over an extended period at West Point in 1971. The committee concluded that there was indeed a need for study of military history in the Army to contribute to "broadened perspective, sharpened judgment, increased perceptivity, and professional expertise." It included in its recommendations to meet "unfulfilled needs" the publication of a "guide to the study and use of military history" which would be "issued to all officers at the Basic Course and others on request." The Chief of Staff approved this recommen-

dation, entrusted the preparation to the then Office of the Chief of Military History (now Center of Military History), and this *Guide* is the result.

As recommended by the ad hoc committee, the primary audience is the young officer just entering upon a military career. But the *Guide* has been shaped for use throughout that career as he matures and progresses, not as something to be thrown aside after one reading. It should serve the officer in the advanced courses, the Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College, as well as those in basic courses. Perhaps more important, since the time Army schools can allot to military history is limited, it can serve as a most useful tool for self-education at any stage of an officer's career. It should also be of value to instructors in all Army schools and to noncommissioned officers and other enlisted personnel with an interest in the military past. Civilian students and instructors in history, and indeed all those interested in military affairs, should find much of interest and value in this volume. In sum, the *Guide* should become an important tool in the never-ending process of education of both Army officers and civilian students of history. I hope that it will indeed assist in restoring military history to its "proper place in the importance of things."

James L. Collins, Jr.  
Brigadier General, USA  
*Chief of Military History*

## Preface

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ON 6 June 1944, as the allied forces began the invasion of Normandy, General George S. Patton, Jr., wrote to his son, then a cadet at the United States Military Academy, that “to be a successful soldier, you must know history.” The number of similar pronouncements from noted military figures, including Napoleon, is almost endless and the basic refrain is the same—to understand the present and to prepare for the future the study of history is vital. This applies most particularly to those who lead men in battle. As Marshal Foch wrote, “no study is possible on the battlefield, one does simply what *one can* in order to apply what one knows.” Despite vast changes in technology since World War II, the combat leader may still learn much from the study of past battles and campaigns. Weather, terrain, and intelligence of friendly and enemy dispositions, for instance, are as important today as in the days of Alexander, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon; human reactions in combat remain relatively constant.

Quite beyond vicarious experience of the battlefield, the study of military history affords an understanding of the interplay of forces that have shaped the present and provides the means of viewing current problems against the long perspective of how men have handled similar problems in the past. The immediate utility of a knowledge of history is likely to vary with the situation in which the individual soldier finds himself. Certainly force planners could profit from a study of the varying approaches of General Pershing and General Marshall in the two world wars toward the size and composition of the Army, officers in charge of training from a reminder that the American soldier's traditional outlook was not conducive to fighting a counterinsurgency war in Vietnam, and military leaders and policy makers alike from an appreciation of the long American tradition against drafting men for combat service in anything short of an all-out national war effort. Knowledge of military history cannot produce solutions to all problems, nor can it guarantee success in a military career. But it can provide a foundation for both problem solving and career achievement.

This *Guide to the Study and Use of Military History* is designed to foster an appreciation of the value of military history and explain its uses and the resources available for its study. It is not a work to be read and lightly tossed aside, but one the career soldier should read again or use as a reference at those times during his career when necessity or leisure turns him to the contemplation of the military past.

The *Guide* consists of four parts. Part One is general in nature and deals with the nature of history as a discipline, military history as a branch of that discipline, the uses of military history, and suggested methods of reading and study.

Part Two is a guide to the areas of study and the materials available for study in each. It consists of seven bibliographical essays—one on the great military historians and philosophers with whom all students of military history should have some acquaintance, two on world military history, three specifically on American military history, and a final essay on the merging of American and world military history since the end of World War II. Each of the period essays weaves its bibliographical information into the framework of a discussion of the main military developments of the era covered, introducing, where pertinent, varying historical interpretations of events and issues. Each contains at the end an alphabetical listing of all works mentioned.

Part Three deals with U.S. Army historical programs and activities and how the Army uses or has used military history. This part informs the reader of the resources available within the Army for study and research in military history and some of the practical uses of history in staff work.

Part Four similarly deals, albeit more briefly, with military history outside the Army—in other elements of the Department of Defense, in foreign military establishments, and in the academic world.

Finally two appendices provide annotated listings of reference works and historical periodicals of greatest interest and utility to the student of military history.

The longest part of the *Guide*, Part Two, contains the bibliographical essays, generally modeled on the bibliographical pamphlets published by the American Historical Association Center for Teachers. Like them, each individual essay, written by a specialist in the field, adopts a somewhat different approach. All of them, however, must list many works within a relatively short space to give the reader some understanding of the vast variety of historical literature available. Bibliographic

essays seldom make light bedtime reading, and those in the *Guide* are no exception. But the editors do believe these essays can be read initially with interest and profit for a general appreciation of the whole field of military history, and then used later as a more detailed reference when the student develops an interest in a particular period or subject. Except in the essay on the great military historians and philosophers, only works written in English or translated into English have been included. And there is relatively heavy emphasis on American military history as opposed to the broader field of world military history. The reason is simply the belief that books in the national language and on the national experience will be of greatest interest and utility to the American officer.

As the title indicates, the volume is primarily a guide to the study and use of military history and not a guide to research and writing, although certainly parts of it should be useful to the researcher. It is not intended to supplant *The Writing of American Military History: A Guide*, published by the Office of the Chief of Military History (OCMH) as a Department of the Army pamphlet in 1956, although the student should find the bibliographies on American history in this volume more comprehensive and up to date.

The *Guide* is a cooperative work to which many individuals, both in the U.S. Army Center of Military History and outside, have contributed. When the task was first assigned to OCMH in 1972, the office enlisted the aid of the History Department at the U.S. Military Academy, personnel of the U.S. Army Military History Research Collection (now the U.S. Army Military History Institute) at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, visiting professors of military history at West Point and Carlisle, and others. It has been assembled and edited by personnel at the center in Washington. For the most part, the editors have let authors approach their subjects as they wished, within certain space limitations. The editors and others, however, have made many suggestions to the authors in the course of several reviews of drafts and in some cases have made changes on their own in the interest of a better integrated work. Like all Center of Military History publications, the various chapters have been carefully edited, form and references standardized, and duplication eliminated. Essentially, nonetheless, each chapter remains the work of its author and is intended to stand on its own.

The original conception for this *Guide* was largely the work of Col. John E. Jessup, Jr., who served as the OCMH member of the 1971 Ad Hoc Committee on the Need for the Study of Military

History in the Army and was chief of the OCMH Histories Division when the task of preparing the volume was assigned. With some advice and assistance from others in OCMH and at the Military Academy, Colonel Jessup developed an outline, made the original chapter assignments, and assembled most of the contributions before he retired from the military service in October 1974. For some months thereafter the *Guide* languished in partial rough draft form until Dr. Robert W. Coakley, Deputy Chief Historian of the center, assumed responsibility for it in April 1975. Since that time Dr. Coakley has seen the draft through two main revisions—one before submission to a review panel in September 1975 and the other after the panel had rendered its critique. Both the concept and the draft underwent considerable revision in detail during the two separate processes, but the general scheme of the *Guide* and much of its contents remain as initially shaped by Colonel Jessup.

Preparation and coordination of this work among its many authors has required considerable time. One consequence has been the danger that many sections might become outdated before publication. Even though in the later stages the editor made every effort to have authors update their respective contributions, there has been some time lag as a result of delays in receiving various revisions and time consumed in editing and printing. New works of considerable significance may have appeared since the bibliographic essays were originally prepared. A more serious consequence is in the chapters on the Army and other Department of Defense military history institutions and programs and those of foreign governments. Although the general nature of these programs and activities usually remains constant from year to year, there are frequent changes in detail. Some organizations and practices may have changed since the summer of 1976 when most of the descriptions underwent final revision.

The editors wish to express their great appreciation to the other contributors to the *Guide*, some of whom rendered generously of their time and effort without remuneration, and most particularly to Col. Thomas E. Griess, Professor and Head of the History Department at the United States Military Academy, who chaired the ad hoc committee that gave birth to the idea of the *Guide* and later not only contributed a chapter of his own but secured contributions from two others then at the academy.

All members of the center panel who reviewed the draft in 1975 made valuable suggestions as have others who read and

commented on the draft from time to time. Dr. Maurice Matloff, Chief Historian of the center, although a contributor, served as chairman of the review panel; Mr. Joseph R. Friedman, then Editor in Chief, also a contributor, served on it. Other members of the panel from the center were Col. James F. Ransone, Jr., Mr. Robert Ross Smith, and Dr. Alfred M. Beck, and from the outside Mr. Martin Blumenson, then Visiting Professor of Military History at the Army War College, Capt. John R. Miller, Assistant Professor of Military Science at Washington and Lee University, and Dr. Russell F. Weigley of Temple University.

Others who made valuable comments at one time or another have been Dr. Edward M. Coffman of the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Stanley L. Falk, Chief Historian of the Air Force, Dr. Frank Freidel of Harvard University, Dr. Peter Paret of Stanford University, Maj. Gen. Robert C. Hixon, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and Brig. Gen. Benjamin L. Harrison, Deputy Commandant of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Mr. James McSherry and Ms. Joyce Hardyman of the Center's Editorial Branch performed the detailed editing necessary to prepare this volume for the printer. Mr. Dudley Kruhm of the Typography and Design Section of the Government Printing Office designed the book. The sins of omission and of commission of which this Guide may be guilty, however, must be attributed in the main to the general editors, rather than to the contributors, advisers, or technical editors.

John E. Jessup, Jr.  
Robert W. Coakley

One

## Military History, Its Nature and Use

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