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## Commemoration in Military History Education: The Engineer Role in the Battle of the Bulge

John T. Greenwood

As the forty-year anniversaries of events in the closing months of World War II roll by, commemorations proliferate in the United States and abroad. In and of themselves, commemorations are fine occasions, but beyond that they are attention-getters, vehicles for putting actual participants in the Army's past in contact with today's soldiers, and means to get across historical programs. The Historical Division, Office of the Chief of Engineers (OCE), recently had a measure of success with a commemoration of this type, and we would like to share with our Army colleagues how we went about it.

In 1983, the Historical Division initiated a program to collect interviews and papers from Army veterans who had participated as Engineers in the Battle of the Bulge. The primary impetus for this effort was two-fold: the desire to supplement the Division's oral history collection with special interviews on the role of the Engineers in the Bulge fighting, and the need to gather additional information on Army Engineer battalion and company operations for use in the Military History Education Program at the U.S. Army Engineer School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

The Historical Division began its Battle of the Bulge program by trying to identify those living veterans who had participated in the battle as engineers, especially as battalion and group commanders. West Point registers and retired officers lists, which provided many names, were supplemented with general appeals in retired officers' and veterans' magazines. Although replies were few, those we received proved very useful. The interviews added new materials to the Historical Division's research collections.

During the summer of 1984 the many fortieth anniversary commemorations of events in Europe during 1944, such as the fall of Rome and

D-Day, provided examples for emulation. After discussing the idea of a special fortieth anniversary commemoration of the Engineer role in the Battle of the Bulge with my staff and identifying possible participants, I contacted Col. Ralph Rundle, Assistant Commandant of the Engineer School. We agreed that five former Engineer officers who had participated in the battle should come to the school and tell of their personal experiences forty years ago. To put the battle into perspective, we also agreed to invite Charles B. MacDonald, author of *Company Commander* and *A Time for Trumpets: The Untold Story of the Battle of the Bulge*, the latter just then being released, to provide an overview of the battle.

Colonel Rundle ordered the School Secretary and Director, Department of Combined Arms, to complete all necessary arrangements to guarantee that all Engineer Officer Advanced and Basic Course students, as well as the school's staff and faculty, would attend the presentation. The School Secretary cleared 12 and 13 December for the program, and then we at the Historical Division began calling prospective participants.

In order to provide a broad perspective, we asked Maj. Gen. William A. Carter (USA, re-



*Mine detection, a critical Engineer role in the Battle of the Bulge.*

tired), who had been Chief Engineer, First U.S. Army, at the time of the battle, to attend and give the benefit of his view from the Army level. Then we lined up three veterans who as Engineer battalion commanders had been deeply involved in the initial phase of the fighting: then Lieutenant Colonels David E. Pergrin, who had commanded the 291st Engineer Combat Battalion (ECB), Harvey R. Fraser (Brig. Gen., USA, retired), who had commanded the 51st ECB, and Thomas J. Riggs, Jr., who had led the 81st ECB, 106th Infantry Division. James W. Shoff, who as a Major was the 35th ECB's S-3 at the time of the battle, rounded off our battalion-level participants. His battalion was responsible for defending the southeast sector of Bastogne until finally relieved by the 101st Airborne Division. Retired General Bruce C. Clarke was invited to make a special

guest appearance to discuss the fighting at St. Vith and his views on the battle.

These men had been in the thick of it. In the opening days of the battle, Lieutenant Colonels Pergrin and Fraser were both on the northern shoulder of the German attack, where they were responsible for blowing bridges, erecting road blocks, and fighting as infantry in the areas of Malmedy, Stavelot, Trois Ponts, and the Ambleve River valley. Their isolated actions imposed serious and, as it turned out, fatal delays in the movement to the Meuse River of the 1st SS Panzer Division's heavily armored spearhead, *Kampfgruppe Peiper*. Tom Riggs was at the forefront of the fighting; his division, the newly arrived 106th Infantry Division, took the brunt of the German attack toward St. Vith. Soon after then Brigadier General Clarke ar-

See *Engineers*, p. 12

## Editor's Journal

Over the past quarter, the number of unsolicited manuscripts we have received for publication in *The Army Historian* has grown by leaps and bounds. Many of these submissions have been excellent, and we are delighted to have them. Word is getting around that *TAH* is a place to make innovative ideas on teaching and using military history in the Army heard. Soldiers—active, retired, reserve, and guard—civilian historians and curators, and people without any official connection to the Army who are simply excited by the field, are finding in the periodical a long-overdue forum.

As with the manuscripts that keep coming in, so with the letters for our Commentary and Exchange section, now in its third issue. Some of these are as significant in the views they share as our article-length pieces. We only regret that space does not allow us to print more of them. Please keep them coming.

With pieces like John Greenwood's front page article on the Engineers' commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge and Mary Cagle's on the challenges of command historical work, we are featuring more on what's going on in the field. Jay Luvaas offers our Perspective piece this time, a reasoned view of how military history should be taught in officer education. The Center's Bob Wright lends the benefit of combined experience as a civilian Army historian and commander of a Military History Detachment to tracing the history of MHD's and providing proposals on their future.

Very much as for the Center, this is for *TAH* a time of stock-taking. Thanks to our readers and authors, we seem to be going in the right direction.

### *The ARMY HISTORIAN*

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# THE COMMANDER AND MILITARY HISTORY

## Clio in Combat:

### The Evolution of the Military History Detachment

Robert K. Wright, Jr.

Military histories written by participants have been around at least since ancient Greece, and American efforts to gather and preserve battle details predate independence. In April 1775, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress prepared an official account of the engagement at Lexington through the use of oral interviews conducted in the field. The Lexington exercise was a precursor to the Army's use of military history detachments charged with the mission of gathering historical materials on the battlefield.

The military history detachments have their roots in the groundwork laid in 1918 with the creation of the Historical Branch of the War Plans Division within the Army's General Staff. Secretary of War Newton Baker directed this permanent historical activity to collect, index, and preserve the records generated during World War I, and to prepare a limited array of monographs. Its effectiveness was handicapped by the fact that the Army did not have military historians assigned to the field during this period. The weakness in documentation uncovered during the work of the Historical Branch led directly to a 1929 regulation that is the ancestor of major portions of the current regulation governing, among other things, the military history detachments—AR 870-5.

#### World War II

World War II produced a major change in the Army's historical philosophy. Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy and Chief of Staff George C. Marshall determined that the Army would prepare a comprehensive account of the war and, in August 1943, created the Historical Branch in the Military Intelligence Division to supervise the work. A month later General Marshall tasked the branch with an additional mission: preparing a series of short monographs on selected combat actions for internal Army use—the fourteen volumes known today as the American Forces in Action series. The first test of this concept came when Lt. Col. S. L. A. Marshall, the spiritual father of military history detachments, went to the Pacific to cover the 7th Infantry Division's invasion of Makin. From his back-

ground in journalism, Colonel Marshall knew the value of oral interviews. Conducted immediately after the action, his interviews filled in the inevitable gaps in the written records. His experiences as a staff officer told him that prompt collection and processing of historical materials could produce tactical "lessons learned" of immediate value to planners and commanders. These two pillars formed the basis determining the subsequent development of a military history program. Colonel Marshall assembled a provisional team of two officers and one enlisted man in the Pacific in December 1943, and the new unit began operating three months later. In the interim, the theater historian in Europe learned of Marshall's experiment in the Pacific and laid plans to form teams of two officers and three enlisted men to provide historical support for each corps in this own theater of operations.

The Army institutionalized these experiments in April 1944 with the creation of Information and Historical Service (I&HS) units, providing for centralized historical and public affairs support at the numbered army level of command, with each function carefully separated. Historical assignments were carried out by a lieutenant colonel who served as the senior historian and army command historian, a monograph unit consisting of one officer and two enlisted historians, and a clerk-typist, together with a flexible number of contact teams, each with two enlisted and two commissioned historians. The monograph unit was to produce General Marshall's Army Forces in Action booklets and the teams were to provide records retrieval and oral interview support to document specific divisional actions. A total of nine Information and Historical Service units appeared during the war, supplemented by thirty-six additional separate teams, twenty of which supported the Army Air Force. The Army devoted some 300 officers and men to work in historical units.

Actual experiences of the historical units revealed some deviations from the ideal. Each army commander exercised direct control over his I&HS and therefore tailored its work to meet his own interests. One unit in the central Pacific



placed emphasis on furnishing lessons-learned data of use in current operations and relegated publication to secondary importance. Another inherited its personnel and primary emphasis from a provisional formation of historians the Fifth Army assembled to write a narrative history of that Army's operations. This unit, the 7th I&HS, carried out the task admirably, also producing several monographs, accumulating art and photographs, and collecting records.

Several major complaints emerged from this first experiment in military history units. Lack of clearly defined, centralized control over the units produced variety in quantity and quality of product. Not enough contact teams existed to ensure that every significant action received coverage. Personnel turnover (especially the demobilization of key individuals before the completion of projects), administrative, and transportation complications all interfered with missions. Finally, the late start in organizing units left a significant part of the war without coverage.

## Post-World War II

In the reorganization following the end of World War II, the Army sought to correct the problems which had been uncovered. In the process it made significant alterations in the operational philosophy of military historians. The Office, Chief of Military History (OCMH), predecessor of the Center of Military History, emerged by 1950 as the locus of historical efforts, carrying out a wide array of publication projects, the most significant of which was the massive US Army in World War II series. One Information and Historical Service unit, the 2d, redeployed to the United States and remained on active duty until 1949. Twenty-six separate teams with the two-officer and two-enlisted structure provided a trained reservoir within the Organized Reserve Corps. These interim measures led to a complete separation of the history element from the public affairs activities. Tailored to the echelon of command being supported, the history unit placed primary emphasis on preparing special reports and conducting interviews, rather than on producing finished monographs. The reports would provide OCMH historians with raw data and also serve as a data base for immediate analysis within the theater.

By 1949, then, the military historical detachment had emerged in a form it would basically retain for more than thirty years. Under the new organization, the theater historian supervised but was not a member of a detachment. An "A" team consisting of three historians (two officers,

one noncommissioned officer), a clerk, and a driver provided support to the theater of operations through the theater historian and the theater communications zone. It exercised supervision over one or more "B" teams, each designed to support a corps and each consisting of one officer historian, a clerk, and a driver. The "C" team carried out division-level support with a similar organization, but was commanded by a captain instead of the major found in the "B" team.

## Korea

Following the outbreak of the Korean War, the old units in the Organized Reserve Corps were disbanded, and the Army formed two "A", six "B", and four "C" teams. One "A" and three "B" teams deployed to Europe, the remainder to Korea. Plans assumed that enough "C" teams would be available to the Eighth Army to cover each division actually in line at any given moment. In practice, the intent of providing qualified historians for the detachments broke down badly as the war dragged on, as did direct contact between OCMH and the detachments. In January 1952, the theater historian consolidated all eight detachments in Korea at a centralized location, a move that greatly impeded the ability of the units to conduct interviews. Administrative burdens proliferated, more than doubling the time required to complete a report. The other major problem during this war involved the lack of support from line units, which had to be educated about the utility of history before they became fully responsive.

The end of the Korean War witnessed the inactivation of all of the detachments in Korea and the refinement of a new table of organization and equipment. Beginning in 1963, additional detachments were formed leading to a peak strength of thirty-five detachments within the Regular Army by the end of the decade: four in Europe, one in the United States, twenty-six in Vietnam, and four others elsewhere in the Pacific. The new table abandoned the Korean era experiment in tailoring and instead created a two-man detachment: an officer-historian and a clerk/driver. The detachments' primary mission continued to be gathering materials for OCMH, including using a bulky tape recorder for oral interviews, but they could occasionally prepare narrative monographs. All detachments were nominally assigned to the theater commander under the operational control of the theater historian.

## Vietnam

In Vietnam, as in the previous wars, reality differed from the theoretical ideal. OCMH at-

tempted to provide training for individual officers prior to their assignment, and conducted a regular program of liaison visits and correspondence with the detachments in the field. The workings of the personnel system in Vietnam, however, frequently resulted in officers receiving assignments without the prior training. The judicious selection of enlisted men with historical backgrounds to fill the clerk positions helped to ameliorate this problem, as did periodic visits by OCMH historians. A far more significant issue was the tactical deployment of the detachments themselves. Policy called for each corps, division, separate brigade, armored cavalry regiment, or equivalent headquarters to have one detachment attached to it. Each major commander was therefore able to determine the tasks the detachment carried out and to place it anywhere he chose within his headquarters. Some detachments were



*Field interviewing, 18th MHD, Cambodia, 1970.*

used merely as additional personnel within the Operations (G-3) sections; others were ignored. A lucky few received command support and worked through the commands' chiefs of staff. Depending on these variables, the quality of the product ranged from excellent to poor, and the size of a detachment could be anywhere from two to eleven persons. As in World War II, much depended on the initiative of the detachment commander.

Since Vietnam, the Army has revised its program yet again. Only one military history detachment is currently maintained at full strength in the Regular Army, with two others in Europe nominally active but unfilled. These are backed by a dozen detachments formed in the Army Reserve in 1967 and 1968, and by four others in the Army National Guard added in 1980. Each

detachment now has one officer and two enlisted personnel.

### **What Needs To Be Done**

The present military history detachments are the product of forty years of evolution. They retain their original mission: collecting and preserving the data the Center of Military History needs for official histories. The detachments ensure that written records prepared by individual units are complete and are retired through proper channels. They also identify gaps in those records and fill them with interviews, after-action reports, and monographs. The mission is clear, as is this program's value to the Center and the Army.

On the other hand, military history detachments continue to face many of the same problems that surfaced in previous wars. The Center of Military History needs to maintain quality control and direction of the historical program. Yet each detachment must have access and vital information which can only come if it becomes an accepted part of the organization for which it is responsible. In World War II and Vietnam decentralization met the second need, but produced uneven results. Overly tight control in Korea proved worse.

The Army assumes that each separate unit down to the brigade level will need the support of a military history detachment. Deployment plans will use the present seventeen detachments in the initial phase, and form others in a full mobilization. Current Army plans "pool" several detachments at the corps or army level under the supervision of the theater historian. This approach creates two immediate problems. Pooling, as Korea demonstrated, robs the detachments of direct contact with combat units. It also prevents a detachment from concentrating its peacetime training on any specific set of probable operations, such as mechanized combat, rear area logistics, or airmobile operations. The lack of specific assignments also leads to low deployment priority and prevents the detachment from establishing a working relationship with the combat units, both important factors in avoiding the gaps in coverage that occurred at the start of earlier conflicts.

We need to refine Army planning for military history detachments. Existing detachments should be aligned with specific early-deploying units and train closely with them in peacetime. Attachment to the supported unit—but retention of operational control by the theater historian—produces the balance missing in earlier conflicts. Furthermore, we should return to the Korean-era



concept of tailoring. The current detachment, possibly augmented with a second officer and modern tape recorders, can adequately support units up to the division-level. A slightly larger one would cover a corps headquarters and coordinate the detachments working with corps units. Each theater army requires more specialized support. A detachment with three officers, a warrant officer, and five enlisted men working directly for the theater historian provides manpower for theater-level coverage, as well as experts to assist the subordinate detachments in technical areas.

The theater army-corps-division arrangement solves more than the lingering question of adequate historical coverage. By identifying specific needs, it opens the door for a more efficient use

of personnel resources. It enhances the value of the current Forces Command/Center of Military History training cycle, especially if a new field manual is issued to cover military history detachment operations. Using the lessons of the past will provide the Army with a capability it has sought since 1943: trained, professional historians working on the battlefield to support both the field commanders and their colleagues at the Center of Military History. The people are out there; their skills need only to be properly organized and used.

*Dr. Wright is a Center historian and commander of the 116th Military History Detachment, Virginia Army National Guard.*

## The U.S. Army Missile Command Historical Program

Mary T. Cagle

The Army's field history program may be divided into two general groups: the large major and subordinate commands, which have full-time historical staffs, and the smaller installations and activities whose historical functions are performed by one person. One field history activity falling into the first category is that of the U.S. Army Missile Command (MICOM). The youngest of the Army Materiel Command's major subordinate commands, MICOM is located at Redstone Arsenal, in north central Alabama near Huntsville. What follows relates specifically to the MICOM historical operation, and all of the methods and techniques employed there may not be applicable to operations falling into the second general group of field history activities. Regardless of the size of their installations, however, their locations within their organizations or the sizes of their staffs, all field history activities have the common task of achieving command recognition and support through the timely production of good histories.

Over the years, we at Missile Command have developed a historical program that has won the respect and support of management officials from the Command Group all the way down to the lowest operating levels. The sustained recognition, acceptance, and support of our program can be attributed to several basic factors. The first deals with salesmanship. Outstanding histories and monographs are worth little if they are filed away to collect dust. Through

perseverance, resourcefulness, and the unstinting support of a long line of history-minded installation commanders, MICOM histories have been "sold" as valuable tools to assist not only in management and administrative processes, but in science and technology, as well. Two other factors contributing to the success of our program involve a good, day-to-day working relationship with operating officials and our demonstrated ability to provide them with timely historical research and reference services. Finally, MICOM's historical program, staffed by four historians and an editorial assistant, has had the advantage of personnel stability—a valuable asset to the corporate memory.

### Four Elements

At the U.S. Army Missile Command, we view the four major elements of the historical program—historical sources collection, historical research and reference, Annual Historical Reviews, and the provision of historical monographs—as interrelated, complementary parts of a whole. The historical sources element is the backbone of the total program, without which the other three elements could not be provided. The historical research and reference element complements other phases of the program in several ways. It provides valuable inside leads on current activities of historical significance, promotes good working relationships with operating officials, and assures the availability of

documents needed in other phases of the program. Annual Historical Reviews, the third element, provide command operating officials with current histories of their programs and activities, are the chief source for answering reference requests, and supply the raw material for the fourth element, monograph coverage of individual weapon systems.

### Sources Collection

Our success in collecting material for the historical sources element of the historical program can be attributed in large measure to the cooperation of historical officers and operating officials. At MICOM, we have found that most people take great pride in their projects or activities and are just as anxious as we are to see that the history of their functions is fully and accurately recorded. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the organizations of the command sending us the most information requests submit by far the best feeder reports and supporting documents. They have learned that the information must be recorded if it is to be available for use after their records have been retired or destroyed. The command historian is on automatic distribution for or can easily obtain such material as summary sheets, information papers, command review briefings, root cause analyses, project review and command assessment reports, end-of-tour reports, and special studies. Other valuable material is obtained from secondary sources and from leads we get in answering information requests.

### Research and Reference Service

The indispensable historical research and reference service element is closely bound to the sources collection program, the Annual Historical Reviews, and the monographs. We provide research and reference services for Missile Command and all tenant activities, as well as for outside agencies, both government and private. Some information requests can be answered in a few minutes, while others require anywhere from several hours to a day or more. In Fiscal Year 1983, we had 183 inquiries, requiring a total of 568 man-hours or about 7.2 percent of the net time available. In Fiscal Year 1984, the number of inquiries increased to 225, requiring 616 man-hours or about 7.7 percent of net time available. Although this service necessarily interferes with the preparation of programmed historical reports, the time spent is repaid many times over by the cooperation and support it engenders. People in MICOM's vari-

ous organizational elements rely on us for answers to their queries, and in return give us their support when we need information and documents to prepare annual histories and monographs. Moreover, in the process of answering information requests we obtain valuable leads on such things as special "Red Team" studies of critical problem areas, concept studies for new weapon systems, and special command briefings. In my view, there is simply no substitute for good, personal working relationships with the people who have hands-on knowledge of command missions and activities. Our historical research and reference service is a way of establishing and maintaining these relationships.

### Annual Historical Reviews

The Annual Historical Reviews element provides fully documented, selective coverage of major activities that will guide historians in the future and serve equally well to guide operating officials in the present. They are based upon feeder reports from the primary organizational elements and supplementary source material collected during the year. For the Fiscal Year 1984 annual review we have so far collected nearly six linear feet of documentation. Although feeder reports are useful in developing the history of a program or organization, they fall far short of the documentation needed to prepare an accurate, objective annual history. The feeder reports often contain, for example, erroneous or misleading information, and sometimes fail to cover all activities of historical significance. Supplementary source material is therefore essential to make the annual review useful as an authentic reference and research document. Our annual reviews are by no means viewed as "finished history"; we strive for the maximum perfection possible within the time allowed for their preparation. Meeting the deadlines for completion of the Annual Historical Reviews is essential. Operating officials need and appreciate a summary of what their activities did the previous year, but their interest in and support of the program would surely disappear if the annual reviews were published several years late. Moreover, we subscribe to the philosophy that the annual histories will never be correctly written and documented unless they are written promptly.

### Monographs

Monograph coverage of individual weapon systems, the fourth element of the historical



*Clockwise from top left: REDEYE, CHAPARRAL, TOW, and SHILLELAGH missile systems, subjects of MICOM histories.*

program, is entering its twenty-sixth year at Missile Command. The first study published as part of our weapon system monograph program was on the NIKE AJAX system twenty-five years ago. Since then, we have published monographs on nineteen weapon systems, plus a number of special subjects. In recommending weapon systems for monograph coverage, we give first priority to systems that were developed but never released for production. Second priority is given to systems that are standardized and in the field. Finally, we consider special requests from project officials. Requests of this last type are indicative of the value placed on historical monographs, and we try to oblige whenever possible. The monographs are widely used within and outside MICOM, including by Defense Department agencies, commands, and staff offices. Local operating officials use them for preparing orientation briefings, cost analysis studies, and weapon system analyses; relating current problems to similar earlier problems; orienting new project personnel; and conducting concept studies of advanced systems. The project offices were already using drafts of the REDEYE, CHAPARRAL, TOW, and SHILLELAGH histories before the monographs were approved for publication. In response to a local survey on

the use of the studies, one project management official summed up their importance in the following terms:

The Historical Monographs . . . have been the best sources of historical data used regularly by this office. For a number of years, these documents have proved invaluable as sources of data in support of studies, analysis, and questionnaires received from higher headquarters, project offices, and other Commands and agencies of the US Government. Altogether these documents have literally saved many years of effort which would have been needed to screen through retired files searching for specific data related to . . . this Command's activities in development, testing, and fielding of missile systems.

It has been said that the only true historian is the writing historian. My experience has convinced me, however, that historical writing, historical services, and an efficient records collection system are all essential to a sound command historical program. Through the effective application of all of the integrated elements outlined above, we historians at the U.S. Army Missile Command have been successful in achieving command support and making our historical program work.

*Mary Cagle is Command Historian, U.S. Army Missile Command, Redstone Arsenal, Alabama.*



# Military History and Officer Education: Some Personal Reflections

Jay Luvaas

*The Army Historian* continues here its series of guest contributions on the state of military history. Dr. Luvaas is Professor of Military History at the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Before the First World War, when few historians bothered to forage in the uncultivated field of military history, many in academic circles dismissed the subject as trivial or unimportant—"the study of a relic of barbarism to be eschewed by the serious, the devout and the human." When Sir John Fortescue was named the first lecturer in military history at Cambridge, his first task was to define the subject. Several years later another distinguished British historian felt compelled to deliver a lecture before a professional audience in defense of military history, and in our own country Professor R. M. Johnston of Harvard filed a similar plea with the American Historical Association. In the civilian sector Johnston's argument fell largely on deaf ears, but at Leavenworth and the Army War College military history quickly became an important element of officer education.

The Second World War had a curious impact on the study of military history in this country. Within a few years graduate programs in military history were being offered in universities, and in another decade, aided no doubt by the approaching Civil War Centennial, the subject had even won a measure of respectability in academia. In the Army, however, military history soon found itself squeezed out of the curricula at the branch and staff schools in favor of such other educational pursuits as management science, operations research and systems analysis, and computer technology. If the advent of nuclear arsenals prompted even a historian like Walter Millis to wonder if World War II had not become "as outdated and inapplicable" as the history of the Mexican War, it is scarcely surprising that soldiers should raise the same question.

By curious paradox, just when the civilian world was coming to recognize the place of war in history and to accept (albeit grudgingly) military history as a legitimate field of study,

the Army seemed to lose interest in the subject altogether. No longer did military history seem relevant, and after the war in Vietnam the emphasis was clearly on training rather than education. In recent years, however, there has been significant progress in the teaching of military history in parts of the Army's educational system. The program was revitalized at the Military Academy in the late 1960s, when officers slated to teach the history of the military art were given the opportunity for graduate study in the field. By the mid-1970s, when some of these same instructors surfaced again at the Command and General Staff College, a solid history program was developed there. Three years ago military history again became a part of the core curriculum at the Army War College, and the recent decision to create a historian's slot at each of the Training and Doctrine Command schools now provides the opportunity to create a comprehensive program in military history throughout the Army.

I would like to offer one historian's view of the value of history to the professional soldier and suggest at least some of the ways that the subject could best be handled in the Army schools. While much of what I say represents my own philosophy of history and insights gained from twenty-five years in a liberal arts college, I have taught both at West Point and the Army War College, and have lectured at enough other service schools to be confident that military history is no different from any other branch of the discipline and should be approached in much the same way. There are, to be sure, marked differences between civilian colleges and the service schools, particularly in the ways curricula are constructed and the time available for reading, but these differences need not change the way in which the subject is approached.

The purpose of history, *any kind* of history, is to help us better understand the present and

gain useful insights into what may be expected in the future. The student therefore must be taught to respect and come to terms with historical knowledge, grasp the meaning of ideas, chart trends, and comprehend the forces that have molded our present environment. As a noted historian once wrote of his own experience as a history undergraduate,

facts there were, plenty of them, and as a matter of course to be known; but that wasn't the end. There was something concealed there, in and behind the facts, some problem . . . waiting to be solved. The implication was that we might, on our own account, turn over the dead facts once more, on the chance of finding something, something the others had missed.

In full dress uniform, this idea found expression in the colorful language of General Douglas MacArthur in one of his annual reports as Chief of Staff:

More than most professions, the military is forced to depend upon intelligent interpretation of the past for signposts charting the future. Devoid of opportunity, in peace, for self instruction through actual practice . . . the soldier makes maximum use of historical record . . . . The facts derived from historical analysis he applies to conditions of the present and the proximate future, thus developing a synthesis of appropriate method, organization, and doctrine. Consequently the Army extends its analytical interest to the dust-buried accounts of wars long past as well as to those still reeking with the scent of battle. It is the object of the search that dictates the field for its pursuit.

The generation that commanded our armies in the Second World War understood this much better than we do; they were on easy terms with history because they had been exposed to what was in effect a graduate seminar in historical analysis while at Leavenworth and the Army War College. They did not turn to military history for ready-made solutions, but rather for insights to help them make clearer judgments on professional matters.

It follows, then, that the primary value of history to the officer is not merely to provide a factual background in the history of the U.S. Army, although he should be expected to know something of the development of modern military institutions and doctrine. Nor should history be made subject to unreasonable demands: the past does not "repeat itself" with any degree of consistency, and to force historical evidence into convenient patterns, particularly in the area of military operations or exhaustive lists of "lessons learned," is also to misunderstand history's nature. History does help to illustrate points of leadership or doctrine and it

may even be useful in teaching young officers the proper military values—but these are collateral benefits.

At every level in the Army school system the objective should be to teach the student ways to approach the study of history, in the hope that he will make use of the subject afterwards on his own. For undergraduates, using civilian instructors in ROTC military history courses is probably the best way to achieve this objective. A conscientious officer will organize the substance of a lesson into a clear presentation, but the emphasis is likely to be on factual information. With a background in the Army school system, the officer ROTC instructor would probably try to *explain* history rather than teach it. Moreover, the civilian instructor is most often an *experienced* teacher of history. For that reason alone he has the best chance to convey a real feeling for the subject. The civilian historian also brings useful knowledge from his own historical specialty, and it is well to remember that most of the official historians of both world wars were civilians with little or no formal training in military history. The chief historian of military operations in France in 1918 was a Napoleonic expert from Harvard, while the gigantic task of supervising the official history of the U.S. Army in World War II was entrusted to a Renaissance scholar from Johns Hopkins. It is also relevant to point out that many of the best and most productive military historians in the Army today were originally trained in European and American history.

I would hope that the instructor of military history for ROTC would not lean exclusively upon a single text, not even upon the Center of Military History's *American Military History*. Textbooks invariably overkill with excess information and tend to impose artificial order on history. More to the point, far too many of them fail to stimulate further interest in the subject—which should be the real purpose of any good undergraduate course. I would issue the text, if only for use as a reference book, but I would also utilize some of the fascinating literature available in paperback. And I would make sure that the titles selected were eminently readable; they don't all have to qualify as great history. The purpose is to induce students to read and teach them how to do it intelligently.

At the next stage I would use the same approach. Whatever is taught in the name of military history at the branch schools, the approach should continue to be to encourage thoughtful reading. Here I would be concerned



about getting students to begin to relate what they read to their own experiences and professional interests. Let them cut their teeth on a good campaign history, read a memoir by some captain—Charles MacDonald's *Company Commander* or Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That* come to mind—and learn something of the evolution of their own branch. By the time soldiers reach this stage, their professional interests should be in sharper focus, which should help; in many ways history is wasted on twenty-year-olds.

Most of the students I have known over the years seem to set aside their academic interests for five or ten years after graduation. They are too immersed in professional studies, careers, and family responsibilities to find either the time or the inclination to do any serious reading. When they first return as alumni, they are more apt to inquire about old friends than new books. In a few years, however, once the pressures of getting established in careers have eased, many will want to return to former interests and expand this dimension of their lives. This is why it is vital that their initial exposure to history be a quality one—and also why many of them will be ripe to continue by the time they reach Leavenworth. They are ready for advanced courses, case studies, and campaign analyses. And by the time they show up at the War College, particularly if they have read some history in the intervening years, they will have come to understand what J.F.C. Fuller meant when he addressed a similar class at the British Staff College some fifty years ago: "All the knowledge in the world is useless unless you can apply it, for it will prove misleading. . . . Until you learn how to teach yourselves, you will never be taught by others."

Napoleon would have agreed. Insisting that "knowledge of the higher parts of war" can be acquired only by the study of history and through personal experience, Napoleon advocated a special school where his officers could be instructed in "the way to read history," which he regarded "a veritable science" in itself. He would also have exposed his officers to historiography, so that they could sort out the good and reliable books from the bad. "I have studied much history," he complained, "and often, for lack of a guide, I have been forced to waste considerable time in useless reading." Time was always important to Napoleon.

The time is ripe to take a good look at the use of history in the Army schools. There are problems. Each situation is unique, class hours are at a premium, and the Army cannot always spare officers who are trained historians and experienced teachers. We need, however, to agree on a common approach to the study of military history in the Army school system. I am concerned more about the *quality* of the experience than the number of history classes tolerated in any particular curriculum. I am concerned that officers learn to ask the right questions of history, that they come to understand that history is—or at least ought to be—an unending dialogue between past and present, and that they develop a historical dimension in their own thought processes as an aid to good judgment.

I have an additional concern. Frederick the Great once called history a magazine of military ideas. That notion is less valid these days, if only because of the rapid pace of technology. What is needed now, however, is a magazine of historical materials—libraries with the latest publications, post bookstores with appropriate items in stock, and some way of assuring that time-tested military narratives and fiction can be made readily available at reasonable prices. For to the student of history more of enduring value can be learned from a good book than from most lectures or presentations, even those punctuated with slides.

Finally, the Army needs to appreciate that history is not for everybody. Some do not like it, others do not find it interesting, and many lack the imagination to make it relevant. No matter. A program in military history should not operate on the convoy system, geared to the speed of the slowest ship, but should be directed at those who are receptive. The others will get by, probably without fatal consequences to their careers. C.P. Stacy, a formidable Canadian Army Historian, told an assembly of military librarians a quarter of a century ago: "I am moderately certain of two things. First, the officers who make serious use of your library will always be a minority. . . . Secondly, that minority is sure to contain a large proportion of the officers . . . who are destined for high distinction." If he is correct—and I would like to think that he is—then we must provide such officers with the incentive and the understanding, that they can better help prepare and condition their minds for their tasks.



## Engineers, From p. 2

rived with his Combat Command B, 7th Armored Division, to stiffen the 106th's front, he sent Riggs forward to defend the eastern approach road to the town. Riggs and his small groups of defenders held out until they were overrun and captured five days later.

Once the program for the Engineer School was set, I proposed to Lt. Gen. E. R. Heiberg III, Chief of Engineers, that it also be presented for the personnel of OCE who would be unable to attend the presentations at Fort Belvoir. He approved the proposal, and we were able to obtain the National Guard Association Auditorium, across the street from OCE's Washington location, for a kick-off presentation and officers' call on the morning of 12 December.

We faced the usual problems attendant to getting a group of this sort together: arranging travel orders and schedules, providing quarters and local transportation, obtaining audio-visual support, and preparing printed programs. Close, careful cooperation between the Engineer School and OCE ensured that each task was successfully completed in time.

Finally, at 0900 on 12 December, General Heiberg opened the first presentation at the National Guard Association Auditorium for the Office of the Chief of Engineers. Charles MacDonald gave his thirty-minute overview of the Battle of the Bulge, and the five who participated in the battle as Engineers gave highlights of their personal experiences in short presentations. Following the program, the battle participants met briefly with the staff of the Center of Military History, whose offices are in the same building as OCE's. It turned out that this program to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge was the only one officially conducted by any U.S. Army element in the Washington area.

That afternoon, a second presentation was given in Humphreys Hall Auditorium at the



*Near the northern shoulder of the German offensive, an Engineer of the 51st ECB checks a TNT charge.*

Engineer School to the officers of the advanced classes, and a third the next morning to the basic class. By the third session refinements along the way had smoothed some rough edges. Almost everyone agreed that the program was profitable. Certainly the Engineer officers at the school gained firsthand knowledge of what they might face in future wars.

The Training and Audiovisual Support Center at Fort Belvoir videotaped both presentations at the Engineer School. The videotapes will be combined into a best-of-the-two record of the proceedings. After the final presentation, Barry Fowle of the Historical Division conducted a fifty-minute taped question-and-answer session with the five battle participants. That session gave each an opportunity to answer specific questions and provided broader coverage of their experiences than the actual program could. With the videotape of the presentations and the group interview, the Engineer School is now able to provide future classes with the benefit of these Engineer veterans' field experiences, and the Historical Division has new and important documentation.

As a result of our experiences with the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the Engineer role in the Battle of the Bulge, the Historical Division and the Engineer School are now developing a joint program to provide presentations similar to this one approximately every six months. A program on the Rhine River crossings in 1945 is already in the planning stages for March 1985. The programs will not necessarily be commemorative; we should soon run out of World War II events to commemorate. The purpose is rather to bring to the Engineer School's students and faculty the wealth of knowledge and experience participants in historical events and specific types of operations and tasks can offer. To maximize the personal learning experience for each student, veteran participants will in the future also meet with class members in small discussion groups. This program promises great rewards for the entire Military History Education Program at the Engineer School because it brings Engineer history to life. Students can meet, question, and learn from men they have already met in books, men who did the jobs the students might have to do in a future conflict. Both the Engineer School and the Historical Division believe that this kind of experience lies at the heart of successful military history education.

*Dr. Greenwood is Chief, Historical Division, Office of the Chief of Engineers, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.*

# MILITARY HISTORY AND THE SOLDIER

## History at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy

L. R. Arms

Since its inception in January 1973, the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy has had the mission of offering a broadly based professional curriculum to prepare selected senior noncommissioned officers for positions of greater responsibility within the Army. More than just a task-oriented minicourse, the comprehensive course the Academy offers is approximately twenty-three weeks in length. Much as those at the senior schools for commissioned officers, this course's length has permitted the academy staff to include in its curriculum the study of military history.

The introduction of military history into the curriculum involves the use of historical examples in lesson material and the utilization of Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer exhibits as teaching aids. To support this program of several blocks of instruction, the academy has collected substantial historical reference and training literature. In the "Leadership" block, for example, group research papers are prepared on selected topics in military history, and the General Ralph E. Haines Award for writing excellence is given to the group presenting the best study. Another block of instruction, "Military Studies," contains a Battle Analysis segment involving the use of military history as an analytical tool. The Fundamentals of Combat segment of the same block provides for study of the World War II battle for Nancy. Before undertaking these historical studies, each NCO student receives for reference and familiarization a copy of the John E. Jessup, Jr., and Robert W. Coakley's *A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History* (Washington: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1979).

The use of the Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer for teaching aids begins shortly after the students' arrival at the academy, when they are briefed on the museum and then tour the facility to become acquainted with its holdings and how they may be studied. The museum's books, documents, photographs, uniforms, weapons, and equipment help illustrate the history of the noncommissioned officer in the United States Army since its beginning in 1775.

The Noncommissioned Officer Museum As-

sociation has recognized the museum's value in noncommissioned officer education by launching a drive to raise funds for expansion of the museum's facilities and collections. The Sergeants Major Academy has meanwhile increased the museum's exhibit area by fifty-seven percent to allow for greater in-depth presentation of artifacts illustrative of the history of the noncommissioned officer. Some new exhibits to be shown as part of this expansion involve noncommissioned officers' duties in the 1830s, their daily lives in garrisons in the 1840s, the effect upon them of the westward migrations, and other aspects of their role in the pre-Civil War Army.

The Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer's recently developed oral history program provides additional support for the academy's program in military history. Selected NCO students and former students are collecting interviews of noncommissioned officers from World War I through Grenada, interviews which include most of the former Sergeants Major of the Army. One of the first interviews in the program was with one of the few surviving noncommissioned officer veterans of World War I, Sgt. John Oechsner, an interview which became the basis of Erwin Koehler's *Kaiser Bill: An Autobiography of El Pasoan John Oechsner, Machinist, Soldier, Aviation Pioneer* (Fort Bliss, Tex.: U.S. Army Noncommissioned Officer Museum Association, 1984). The Sergeants Major Academy hopes eventually to publish the most significant of the interviews in book form. In the meantime, the academy is requesting that general officers nominate outstanding noncommissioned officers as candidates for interviews.

The study and writing of military history at the Sergeants Major Academy is off to a good start. Future development will provide an NCO history for researchers, historians, and noncommissioned officers. The noncommissioned officer corps and the Army will be the beneficiaries of this expanded awareness of the importance of military history to NCOs.

*Mr. Arms is Director of the Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer, Fort Bliss, Texas.*



# AT THE CENTER

## Museum Conference

The Center sponsored the Thirteenth Annual Army Museum Conference on January 14-17, 1985, in San Antonio, Texas. The conference, which had as its theme "Museums in the Service of the Army and the Nation," was hosted by the Fort Sam Houston Museum. Gerry George, executive director of the American Association for State and Local History, delivered the keynote speech.

## New Center Reprints

During the past two years, the Center of Military History has brought back into print a number of pamphlets in the German Studies series:

- DA Pam 20-201 *Military Improvisations During the Russian Campaign*
- DA Pam 20-202 *German Tank Maintenance in World War II*
- DA Pam 20-231 *Combat in Russian Forests and Swamps*
- DA Pam 20-232 *Airborne Operations, A German Appraisal*
- DA Pam 20-233 *German Defense Tactics Against Russian Breakthroughs*
- DA Pam 20-236 *Night Combat*
- DA Pam 20-240 *Rear Area Security in Russia*
- DA Pam 20-242 *German Armored Traffic Control During the Russian Campaign*
- DA Pam 20-243 *German Antiguerrilla Operations in the Balkans*
- DA Pam 20-261A *The German Campaign in Russia: Planning and Operations*
- DA Pam 20-269 *Small Unit Actions During the German Campaign in Russia*
- DA Pam 20-290 *Terrain Factors in the Russian Campaign*
- DA Pam 20-291 *Effects of Climate on Combat in European Russia*
- DA Pam 20-292 *Warfare in the Far North*

In late 1984, the Center also reprinted a paperback facsimile edition of DA Pam 20-212, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945*. The addition of a Center-prepared index makes the information in this large and comprehensive volume more readily accessible to researchers.

The listed Department of the Army pamphlets are in stock at the AG Publications Center in Baltimore. DA Pam 20-212, *History of Military Mobilization*, is also available for public sale from the Government Printing Of-

fice, GPO Stock Number 0820-00515-1. Other paperback reprints expected soon are *Combat Actions in Korea* (CMH PUB 30-2, formerly available in hardback only) and *Utah Beach to Cherbourg* (CMH PUB 100-12), a volume in the long out-of-print World War II Armed Forces in Action series.

## Army Historians Conference

The Sixth Biennial Army Historians Conference will be held at the Crystal City Marriott, Arlington, Virginia, on February 19-22, 1985. At press time, Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh is scheduled to deliver the opening address. Although the theme of the conference is "A Reexamination of the Command History Program," agenda topics are broad-ranging. (More on the conference in the next issue of *TAH*.)

## "Drums and Bugles" Corner

The following excerpt from a lecture delivered February 22, 1873, before the Berlin *Wissenschaftlicher Verein* is offered for the benefit of those who lament the passing of the more evocative forms of military historical writing:

The bullets rained unceasingly into and alongside of the column, and by a chance shot Lieutenant von Helldorf was struck in the breast. To honor the young hero, who died soon after, Colonel v. Roder gently closed his eyes (the young hero's—Ed.), for as yet death could still be appreciated in its full majesty in each individual case. It is a bitter thought that the bullet hastening into space, probably fired by the shaking hand of a weakling, may bring the best hero to the ground, yea it would be a terrible, unbearable mockery of fate, were there not within each brave soldier's heart a comforting voice speaking with convincing assurance that even in the spitting rain of today's mass fire the course of each bullet is guided by Him with whom is each beginning and each end.

Arnold Helmuth, "The Prussian Guard on the 18th of August, 1870," in *St. Privat: German Sources*, trans. by Harry Bell (Ft. Leavenworth: Staff College Press, 1914), pp. 11-12.



# COMMENTARY AND EXCHANGE

## *To the editors:*

I have read with interest the initial issues of *The Army Historian*. You are to be commended for assembling a very beneficial journal for professionals. I hope your readership will utilize to their maximum benefit what is being placed in their hands by you, your staff, and you contributing authors.

In your second issue, Winter 1984, I found your column in the "Editor's Journal" very intriguing. I refer to your distinction between the terms "historical mindedness," and "historical consciousness" and "historical awareness." I would ask how you define these three terms, and what makes them different. I inquire because, depending upon your definitions or commentary, I may incorporate the concept(s) into my program at the Command and Staff College, primarily in my initial classes in our history program as our students embark upon their studies.

LT. COL. DONALD F. BITTNER, USMCR  
Quantico, Virginia

## *The editors reply:*

Your inquiry allows us to put on paper some of the thoughts we have been discussing here at the Center of Military History and our reasons for latching on the concept of "historical mindedness." A bit more than semantic hairsplitting is involved.

By way of illustration in the Marine Corps context, the Parris Island recruit is imbued with a sense of historical awareness. He leaves the Recruit Depot knowing of Tun Tavern, the Blood of Chapultepec, the Mameluke Sword, and Frosen Chosin. The private knows the rudiments of Marine Corps history; he has historical awareness.

The thoughtful junior officer may be conscious of his place in the continuum of military history. Others have come before him, he realizes, and have dealt with problems of leadership and command which will confront him. Others will follow him. He has historical consciousness.

Historical mindedness, as we see it, is almost second nature to a good historian, and goes beyond historical awareness and consciousness. The good historian is able to apply methods of historical analy-

sis to current problems and new situations. It is a way of thinking no less valuable to officers, NCOs, and policy makers. When confronted by a problem, be it tactical, human, policy, or any of a myriad of possibilities, the historically minded person almost unconsciously asks himself the following questions: Has this problem occurred before? How was it dealt with and with what degree of success? How is this problem different and how has its context changed over time? He is aware of history, conscious of his own and his time's place in the stream of history, and applies historical experience to the present.

## *To the editors:*

In the Fall 1984 issue of *TAH* Clarence Wunderlin observes that today's officers don't have time for reflective reading ("Commentary and Exchange"). Although I agree with his analysis that reflective reading probably died as a result of the evolution of "the bureaucratic army with its technocratic mentality," I am reluctant to accept lack of time as a valid excuse for today's officers not reading. Officers find time to engage in a wide range of activities not directly associated with their jobs. The real reason for not reading is more apt to be lack of interest and a perception that reflective reading is not necessary to be a success in a high technology army.

Douglas Kinnard's aim to provide "readable, usable history that not only creates historical mindedness for problem solving, but a desire to read history for its own sake" ("Chief's Bulletin," *TAH*, Fall 84) accurately addresses the problem of reflective reading. The key to reestablishing reflective reading in the officer corps is not for the bureaucratic army to allocate time to that endeavor, but to create the desire for individual officers to find their own time.

*The Army Historian* can be the first step in the return to reflective reading by serving not only as a working journal for professional military historians as suggested in the Chief's Bulletin, but by also providing a forum for historical minded officers to express their ideas on the value of history. By building on the enthusiasm of those officers who presently find time to read history out of personal

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desire, the official interest in military history can be translated into personal interest throughout the officer corps, and we don't have to go back to quitting at noon to do it.

LT. COL. CLAYTON R. NEWELL  
U.S. Army Concept Analysis Agency  
Bethesda, Maryland

*To the editors:*

While reading Captain Matheny's article, "The Battalion Staff Duty Officer Approach" (*TAH*, Summer 84), I was struck by the fact that those of us who have utilized history to form a pedagogy for professional development were not voices in the wilderness. At one time in the not too distant past, I could count on both hands the number of students and advocates outside the Center of Military History and the service academies who actively researched and utilized their historical expertise to develop subordinates. The letters and reports that now appear in *The Army Historian* tell us we were never alone. Your publication provides the needed forum around which we may focus our efforts and a means for critical exchange. Over the years those of us who have been fortunate enough to have the likes of Kinnard, Palmer, Shaw, Greiss, Stofft, *et al.*, as mentors have been only too aware of the void your efforts now fill; all of those and untold others advocated such a publication.

The focus of your effort is "right on!" We 5X's comprehend fully the extent and limitations of your charter and insist that you do not allow these critically few pages to be diluted in an attempt to publish history. What we have advocated for all these years is a forum for intellectual dialogue and professional interaction. Let the professional journals attend to the publishing of military history.

In our battalion in VII US Corps we utilize two forums, "Lieutenants' Day" and "Battle Captains' Call," to cite historical precedent as a prelude to operational military history. These quarterly sessions are hosted by the battalion commander at various unit locations throughout the Corps. The sessions are closed and nonattribution and candor are our key words. Following an approximately one-hour formal presentation, I attempt to steer the group into a discussion of the professional application of the historical imperatives, and withdraw to the role of facilitator. In past sessions, I have utilized some of my old outlines from West Point (where I was course

director for "Military Heritage/Standards of Professional Behavior") to heighten awareness on such topics as "The Profession of Arms," "Professionalism in the Military," and "Our Military Heritage." The next Battle Captains' Call will center on historical analysis of the Battle of Schmidt (4-7 November 1944), followed by a terrain walk—one of the many advantages of being stationed in Europe.

The highlight of previous sessions was the requirement for a book report on a title from the battalion reading list, as well as preparation for selected oral presentations. Not only has this experience enhanced the military and historical knowledge of my junior officers, it has resulted in a historical awareness which appears to have permeated every facet of battalion life. Each commander and staff officer now punctuates major actions with historical precedent. Although I am perhaps being a bit parochial, I believe we are thoroughly enjoying this monster we have created. Research tends to be somewhat limited; I have opened my personal library, and this combined with what our community libraries offer seems to meet our needs. The critical factor in this equation, of which I am the beneficiary, is that a group of young officers enjoys and appreciates history as a professional development tool. Additionally, I come away from each of those sessions assured that at least one battalion in our Army has a positive feeling about the communication abilities of its officers. I might add that the battalion reading list is also an integral portion of our Noncommissioned Officer Professionalism Program.

Again, thank you for serving as a standard bearer. I wish I could convey the number of professional discussions and disagreements generated by *The Army Historian* during its short history within this battalion. Please continue in your already established tradition of excellence.

Lt. Col. Robert H. Taylor  
Commander, 385 Military Police Battalion  
Kornwestheim, West Germany

*Readers are invited to express their opinions on this publication and its featured articles, as well as to share their experiences and views on topics relating to the study, use, and teaching of military history. Correspondence should be addressed to the Editors, The Army Historian, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 20 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20314-0200.*

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