

# ARMY HISTORY

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# ARMY HISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

## By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

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Chief of Staff

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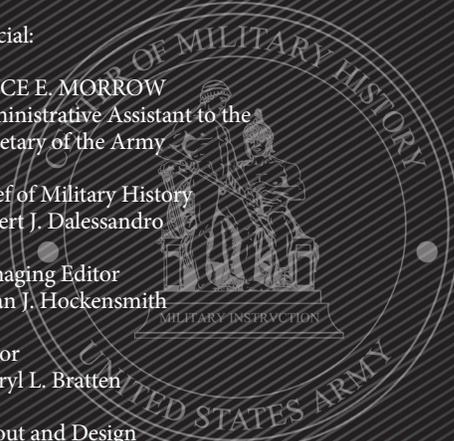
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**Cover Image:** The original caption reads, "In an effort to portray the typical Yank, the U.S. Signal Corps photographed nine American soldiers of various types upon the same plate, and obtained the composite shown. The nine subjects were men of the 35th Division, seven of them from the Mississippi Valley, one from the Atlantic Coast and one from the Pacific. The strains of blood represented are: English, Irish, Scotch, French, German, Russian, Swedish, Jewish and Sioux Indian." /Military History Institute

## EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Last year the nation began commemorating the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War. This year we will be commemorating the bicentennial of the War of 1812, and in just two short years it will be the centennial of the First World War. During this exciting time *Army History* will not only cover these historic conflicts with engaging articles, but will introduce a few new features. One of these is a piece present in this issue, the U.S. Army Artifact Spotlight. Important artifacts and artwork from the Army's core collection will be highlighted to provide a more tangible connection to the historic events we are commemorating as well as to increase awareness of what is undoubtedly the finest collection of Army material culture and artwork in the world. These items now have a permanent home at the Army's Museum Support Center at Fort Belvoir and in the near future will be publicly viewable at the National Museum of the U.S. Army, also at Fort Belvoir, with the opening planned for 2015.

This issue opens with an article by Richard S. Faulkner, a professor of history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He examines the "straggler" crisis that plagued the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. A number of elements, including breakdowns in junior leadership, difficult terrain, hunger, and battle fatigue, caused large numbers of troops to simply leave the lines in search of a hot meal or a place to hide. The resources committed and the disciplinary measures taken to try and stem this tide proved to be only a stop-gap measure as the AEF's senior leadership essentially ignored many of the real causes of this problem. I would like to thank Molly Bompane and John Gus Keilers of the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center for their assistance with the photographs in this article.

Next we feature a commentary by Adam Oler, an officer in the Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps. He argues for an enhancement of war colleges' curricula focusing on the history of Islam, making a case that many military professionals lack a basic understanding of the religion, its foundation, and its historical development.

As always I invite readers to send me submissions, especially articles covering issues related to the current or future commemorations. Topics that seem all too familiar, or have already been covered at length, can often still teach us something new. A reexamination that brings to light a new element can have incredible value.

Bryan J. Hockensmith  
Managing Editor



# THE CHIEF'S CORNER

ROBERT J. DALESSANDRO

## WHAT IS PAST IS PROLOGUE: A LOOK BACK AND THE VIEW FORWARD

**A**s the Army historical community enters a new year, I feel that it is important to reflect on the accomplishments of 2011.

It was an extremely busy year, one that was underpinned by the persistent threat of reductions in resources and budget. However, as in the past, our community has been able to rise above these challenges and to continue to provide the Army and our soldiers the support and context for the vital thread of history to connect one generation to the next.

Last year's achievements were truly outstanding, and I would like to share some of the highlights with you. Please humor me while I brag a little about our Army history team.

Partnering with the Combat Studies Institute, we refined efforts to provide top-level historical support to military operations in theater—including manning and deploying, on short notice, our own Center of Military History (CMH) Military History Detachment to Afghanistan. This effort will yield an important volume on small-unit operations.

Working with a multidisciplinary team, we developed and published a Strategic Plan, which will ultimately return CMH to the basics on which it was founded, consolidating history functions Army-wide and positioning CMH as just that—the Army's Center of Military History. The Strategic Plan, 2012–2017, was distributed with the Winter 2012 issue of *Army History*; it can also be found on our Web site, [www.history.army.mil/html/about/CMH\\_Strat\\_Plan\\_2012-2017-fixed.pdf](http://www.history.army.mil/html/about/CMH_Strat_Plan_2012-2017-fixed.pdf).

In 2011, for the first time, we saw a National Museum of the United States Army (NMUSA) at Fort Belvoir within our grasp—with our senior leaders committed to a June 2015 opening. In concert with the Army Heritage and Education Center (AHEC), we developed an exhibit

at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia celebrating the art of the American soldier, which garnered an American Association of Museums award as one of the top ten exhibits of the year.

We continued our support to the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) task force, first by providing artifact collection at the cemetery and then by developing and staffing the first multifunctional history office at the cemetery. This CMH satellite office now provides historical, curatorial, archival, and cultural resource support to ANC. The Arlington Cemetery Advisory Committee Chair, the Honorable Max Cleland, characterized our efforts as “simply terrific.” CMH's undertakings at ANC were featured above the fold in the *Washington Post* in some of the best press the cemetery has enjoyed in months.

Working with the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), we successfully saved AHEC at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, when it was under threat of closure as part of the Army's ongoing resource reductions, and we continue to work with TRADOC to defend the Army's important historical programs there.

We relocated the Army's central artifact and artwork collections from leased space in Washington, D.C., to our new state-of-the-art facility at Fort Belvoir without any loss, all while consolidating collections Army-wide in support of the NMUSA initiative.

CMH held perhaps the highest quality and most well attended Conference of Army Historians in memory, ending in a flawlessly executed staff ride on the hottest day of the year! I bet few attendees will forget the “Integration Session” at the Willard.

Our publications for 2011 included four spectacular issues of *Army History*, on time, on target, and in living color; *Freedom by the Sword: The U.S. Colored Troops, 1862–1867*, by William Dobak; *Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of*

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**A CRITICAL BUT MISSING PIECE**  
EDUCATING OUR  
PROFESSIONAL MILITARY  
ON THE HISTORY OF  
ISLAM

By ADAM OLER

# NEWSNOTES

## SOCIETY FOR MILITARY HISTORY 2012 ANNUAL MEETING

The seventy-ninth Annual Meeting of the Society for Military History, hosted by the Army Historical Foundation, will be held on 10–13 May 2012 at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia. The theme this year is “The Politics of War,” with occupation and military government, coalition warfare, civil-military relations, and the transitions from war to peace being some of the major topics covered. In addition to the regular annual meeting activities, an outing to the National Museum of the U.S. Navy, located on the historic Washington Navy Yard, is planned. For more information, please visit [www.smh-hq.org/conference.html](http://www.smh-hq.org/conference.html).

## COMBAT STUDIES INSTITUTE ISSUES NEW PUBLICATIONS

The Combat Studies Institute (CSI) Press has released two new publications. The first, *Eyewitness to War*, vol. III, *U.S. Army Advisors in Afghanistan*, edited by Michael G. Brooks, is the third volume in CSI’s Oral History Series. This book includes a wide range of interviews from those in senior leadership positions, like Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, to senior noncommissioned officers and Special Forces soldiers. The interviews were conducted by CSI’s Contemporary Operations Study Team under the Operational Leadership Experience Project.

The second book, *The U.S. Army in Kirkuk: Governance Operations on the Fault Lines of Iraqi Society, 2003–2009* (Occasional Paper 35), by Peter W. Connors, examines the difficult task of introducing representative

government to bring about stability to the city of Kirkuk, Iraq. Internal and external hindrances, along with a lack of preparation and training in civil military lines of operation by the Army units involved, proved almost insurmountable. However, the development and implementation of ad hoc plans provided some success. This study considers a number of lessons learned and provides insight for soldiers who may find themselves in similar future campaigns.

Both publications are available for download in PDF format (hard copies can also be requested) from CSI’s Web site: <http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/cgsc/carl/resources/csi/csi.asp>.

## MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BRANCH COMMEMORATES FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks a number of significant anniversaries in American military history. The United States is observing the bicentennial of the War of 1812 while continuing to remember the American Civil War’s sesquicentennial. The Department of Defense has set up committees to

plan observances of the sixtieth and fiftieth anniversaries of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, respectively. For the Army Intelligence community, however, 2012 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Army’s Military Intelligence (MI) Branch. In addition, 2012 marks the MI Corps’ twenty-fifth anniversary.

To celebrate the golden anniversary as a branch and the silver as a corps, the command historians at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence (USAICoE) and U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) are jointly working on a variety of products, including a commemorative issue of *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, a virtual calendar, a poster set, a wall calendar, a video series documenting MI history, and displays and exhibits. The celebration will continue throughout the year and will work into existing events such as the MI Hall of Fame ceremonies, INSCOM Commander Conferences, and worldwide organizational days.

To distribute these products as widely as possible to the MI forces in the field, the USAICoE historian has

*Continued on page 39*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Dr. Richard S. Faulkner** teaches military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He spent twenty-three years in the Army as an armor officer. During his time in service he commanded a tank company during Operation DESERT STORM and taught American history at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He received a Ph.D. in American history from Kansas State University. His book, *The School of Hard Knocks: Combat Leadership in the American Expeditionary Forces*, will be published by Texas A&M University Press in April 2012.



Soldiers being disciplined on the Meuse-Argonne front

# DISAPPEARING DOUGHBOYS

National Archives

## The American Expeditionary Forces' Straggler Crisis in the Meuse-Argonne

BY RICHARD S. FAULKNER

**O**n 1 November 1918, the American Meuse-Argonne Offensive was in its thirty-seventh day of grinding attritional fighting. With no true hope of dramatic breakthroughs to be exploited by swift maneuvers of cavalry, the First Army had tasked the majority of its cavalymen with the more pressing mission of patrolling the rear area to round up the host of American soldiers straggling from the front lines. While occupying one of the webs of posts that dotted the area behind the front intended to pick up these troops, the soldiers of Troop H, 2d Cavalry, captured Pvt. Raymond Wellman of the 103d Infantry, 26th Division. The troop commander characterized Wellman as a “professional straggler” who had been caught on at least two other occasions. Having been apprehended a third time, Wellman made it clear to his captors that “he didn’t want to go back to his outfit or any outfit.”<sup>1</sup> What is missing from the Wellman narrative is an explanation of what drove him and thousands of other American soldiers to abandon their units and what effect their absence had on the American Expeditionary Forces’ (AEF’s) operations.

The AEF’s problems with straggling were evident from the earliest battles.

Maj. Gen. Robert Bullard recalled that during the AEF’s summer battles between the Marne and Aisne Rivers,

far back behind our lines and camps my provost marshal now began to gather large numbers of American soldiers from . . . various divisions. The French villages were full of them. Relative to the number of American soldiers that had been here, the stragglers were few, but actually their numbers were great. Popular public perceptions to the contrary notwithstanding, we had in our army dead-beats and deserters, evaders of battles and danger.<sup>2</sup>

However, it was not until the Meuse-Argonne Offensive that this problem reached crisis proportions and weakened the effectiveness of the AEF’s units by draining combat manpower. After the war, Maj. Gen. Hunter Liggett estimated that one hundred thousand soldiers had left their units in the first month of the Argonne drive.<sup>3</sup> Between 900,000 and 1.2 million American soldiers participated in the campaign. If Liggett’s estimate is correct, then Private Wellman was one of the roughly 10 percent of the army’s soldiers who

simply stopped fighting and headed toward the rear.

Although historians of the AEF often comment on the Army’s difficulties with straggling, none have tried to untangle the true extent of the problem, its effect on U.S. operations, or the factors that encouraged the American soldiers to flee the battlefield. This article addresses some of these issues or at least opens the topic to further debate and examination. The conclusions, especially those related to the motivations for soldiers to straggle, are of necessity, tentative. The stragglers themselves seldom admitted to their captors the exact reasons they left the fighting. There is, however, enough evidence to identify some of the factors that encouraged this behavior.

The actual extent of straggling during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive must be examined. It is difficult to substantiate the accuracy of Liggett’s claim that the AEF had at least one hundred thousand soldiers absent from the lines during the offensive. However, there is enough evidence to give at least some indication of the scope of the problem. For example, during the Argonne fighting, the AEF inspector general stated that

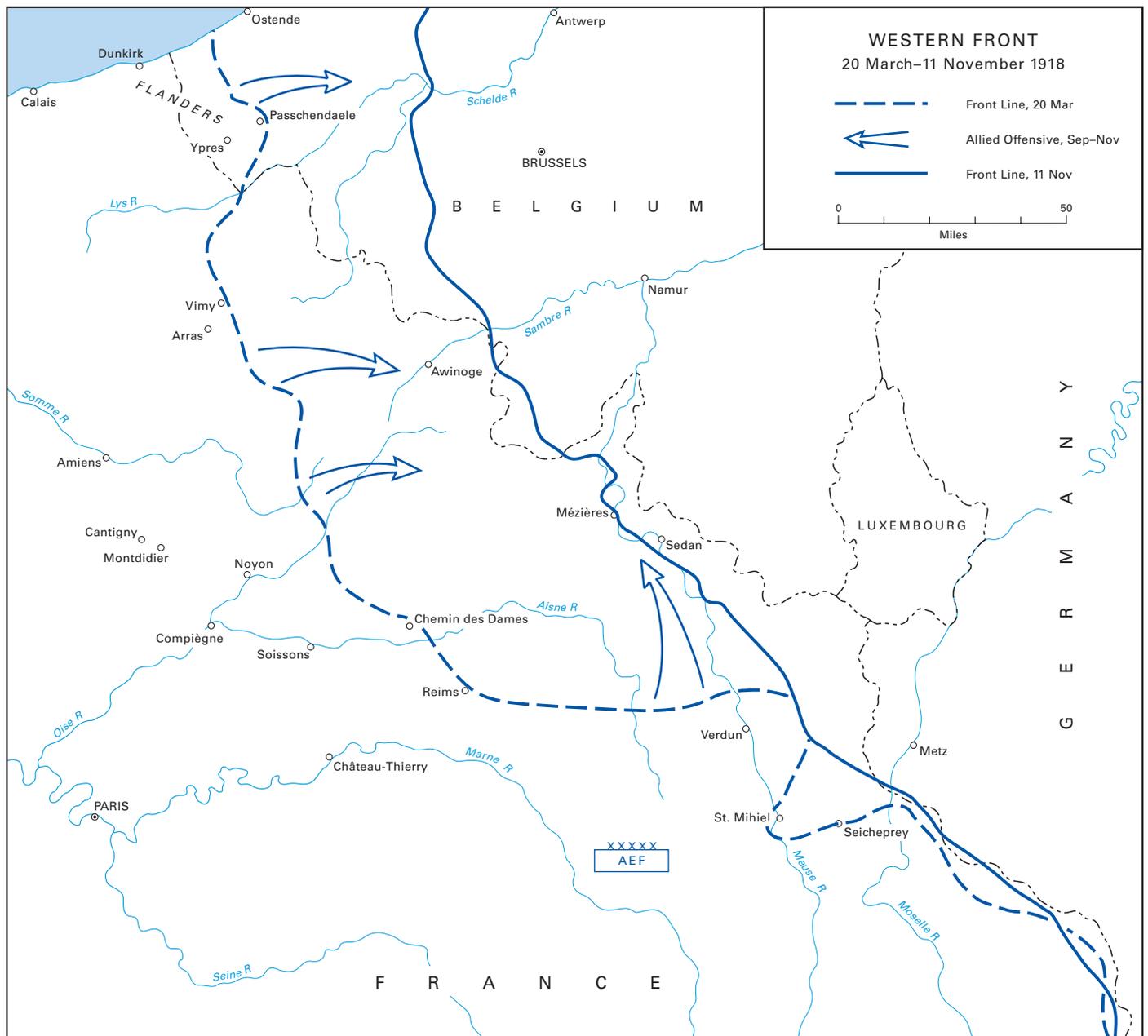
One division reported that it had only 1600 men in the front line including an engineer battalion that had been sent forward. . . . This division was taken out of the line and upon arriving in its rest area it was found that the infantry regiments alone had in them 8418 men not counting the Engineer battalion.<sup>4</sup>

The inspector general concluded that the 6,000 soldiers who appeared in the rest area were stragglers from the division's frontline units. When the 91st Division was pulled out of the Meuse-

Argonne fighting on 4 October 1918, a V Corps inspector reported that in its ten days of combat, the unit had lost 148 officers and 3,197 men killed or wounded. More alarmingly, the officer noted that 7 officers and 2,206 soldiers were missing but added hopefully, "it is expected that this item will be reduced."<sup>5</sup> In Raucourt, the lieutenant in charge of the town rounded up "between 600 and 700" stragglers from the 1st Division on 8 October 1918.<sup>6</sup> Four days later, the 36th Division's military policemen (MP) claimed to have rounded up "500 men of the divi-

sion classed as stragglers."<sup>7</sup> The same month the military police units of the Second Army arrested 439 men for being absent without leave (AWOL) and another 370 men for the same offense in November.<sup>8</sup> Although it is impossible to accurately establish the number of men absent from the AEF's combat units, the figure was clearly substantial.

What was equally clear was that the AEF's senior leaders were cognizant of the dangers that these soldiers presented to U.S. operations. The inspector attached to the 37th Division reported



# In a short amount of time the Hobo Barrage arrested 719 SOLDIERS

that on 2 October 1918 he had found so many stragglers in the unit's rear area that he estimated "that combat troops only had 80% in strength."<sup>9</sup> The division's four infantry regiments and its 134th and 135th Machine Gun Battalions had suffered 3,010 casualties from 26 to 30 September.<sup>10</sup> When this number is combined with the loss of men absent from the front lines, the decrease in divisional combat power was marked.

The extent and influence of straggling on the AEF's combat power were also reflected in the actions that AEF's senior officers took to rein in these disappearing doughboys. Lt. Col. Troup Miller, a I Corps staff officer, stated that

it was found necessary in addition to the line of straggler posts formed by the Division to establish a line in rear of each Brigade in order to reduce to a minimum any attempt at straggling. Troops of this purpose were taken from the reserve.<sup>11</sup>

He noted that the first time men were caught, they were simply returned to their units; the second time, they were turned over to the MPs for trial and put to "the most disagreeable work that could be found." The I Corps also tried to shame the soldiers back into line by making the reprobates wear "a large white placard . . . upon which was printed in conspicuous black letters 'straggler from the front line.'"<sup>12</sup>

The V Corps G-1, Col. A. W. Foreman, stated that by 18 October 1918 the number of stragglers had grown "to such an alarming proportion" in the First Army that the V Corps formed a 4,500-man "Hobo Barrage" to "systematically mop up and thoroughly search all dugouts, houses, hospitals, railheads, Y.M.C.A.'s, etc in the area assigned to them."<sup>13</sup> Additionally, V Corps established three tribunals under the direction of an officer at Re-



Tasked with maintaining order, directing traffic, and handling German prisoners, military policemen were often too few in number, forcing commanders to rely on cavalry troops or other soldiers to man straggler posts.

cicourt, Avocourt, and Montfaucon to interrogate all stragglers brought in to determine if the soldiers caught were truly deserters or had been unjustly arrested. In a short amount of time the Hobo Barrage arrested 719 soldiers and returned over 150 "unauthorized stragglers" to their units.

The commander of the 82d Division, Maj. Gen. George Duncan, noted that after a spike in the number of stragglers from his unit, he was forced to order his subordinates to "post file closers behind each platoon, in addition to the usual straggler's posts" and to direct his MPs continually to search likely hiding or congregation points in the unit's rear. He also required platoon leaders to carry a list of their unit's members that they constantly checked at halts or lulls in the battle to keep an accurate tally of their losses and quickly identify men who disappeared from the lines. By these methods, the division's strength rose by over five hundred "fighting effectives" between 25 and 29 Octo-

ber, not including replacements.<sup>14</sup> In a similar move, on 30 October 1918, the commander of the 89th Division ordered his MPs to move their straggler line "forward to a point three hundred meters in the rear of the front line" and to move forward "in very close contact with the advancing infantry."<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately, these steps were not enough to stem the tide of desertions. In a 21 October 1918 report to the AEF chief of staff, the AEF inspector general, Maj. Gen. A. W. Brewster, observed that despite efforts to halt straggling with patrols and stationary posts, "any quick witted straggler can get through these lines, especially at night."<sup>16</sup> Even when senior officers attempted to rally the troops and send them back to the lines, they met with little success. Capt. Thomas H. Barber noted that one angry brigadier tried to halt the steady parade of "skulkers" going to the rear and even drove some back by threatening to shoot them himself. Barber recalled that "it struck



A III Corps MP directs traffic at a control point in Esnes, 30 September 1918. Most stragglers easily avoided these fixed posts.

me as a very remarkable performance, as the skulkers merely went around and back another route; but at least it seemed to afford the old gentleman considerable satisfaction.”<sup>17</sup>

Contrary to the statements of senior AEF leaders, the U.S. Army was never able to resolve this problem. As late as 9 November 1918, the Second Army provost marshal warned his subordinates that “straggling has been allowed to become a menace to the success of operations” and ordered them to “take such definite, immediate, and aggressive steps as will insure without question the immediate apprehension and return of these men to their proper places in [the] line.”<sup>18</sup> Between 28 October and 1 November 1918, the MP companies operating straggler posts in the First Army sector rounded up 613 AWOL soldiers. On 30 October alone the MPs apprehended 193 stragglers. Those arrested came from twenty-two different AEF divisions, and most were combat soldiers from infantry regiments or machine gun battalions.<sup>19</sup> These apprehensions were likely only a small fraction of the stragglers roaming the AEF’s rear area. If General Brewster was correct, and a “quick witted straggler” was able to avoid arrest, the number of absent soldiers probably continued to number in the thousands.

The greatest difficulty the AEF’s senior leadership faced in halting this problem was simply a shortage of resources. As the number of American stragglers continued to grow at an alarming rate in the second week of the Argonne drive, the 33d Division inspector reported to the AEF inspector general, General Brewster, that “there is but one [MP] company of three officers and one-hundred and forty-four men, covering an area difficult to access in many cases of practically sixteen square miles,” which limited the ability of the MPs to apprehend stragglers and also accomplish their other missions.<sup>20</sup> During the Argonne drive at least two division commanders requested troops of cavalry from their corps commanders to drive these men out of woods and other sanctuaries in the rear.<sup>21</sup>

Author Wendell Westover claimed that much of the problem with straggling and malingering stemmed from the impossibility of having any effective punishment for the reprobates. Even when commanders were successful in bringing charges,

the Court-Martial was so frequently overruled by soft, slab-sided desk hounds . . . that discipline was hard to enforce anyhow. What did they know about the added danger to an

outfit going in, incomplete because some quitter had dropped out with ammunition? What did they know of the instant effect on morale by desertion of just one man at a critical time, to say nothing of the added losses if such spirit was allowed to extend, or the operation was hindered by lack of men?<sup>22</sup>

Senior commanders had limited the ability of their junior officers to punish wayward soldiers in any meaningful manner. Stragglers therefore faced few repercussions; in most cases they were merely returned to their units without further action.

While often depriving junior leaders of much of their coercive power, senior officers were quick to blame these officers and noncommissioned officers (NCO) for failing to maintain discipline within their units. An inspector general investigation of the crisis in the First Army stated the causes for the problem were a “lack of discipline among both the officers and soldiers,” a “lack of personnel and supervision of the men by the battalion and company commanders,” and a “lack of leadership by platoon leaders and sergeants.”<sup>23</sup> The report maintained that one of the primary reasons for the epidemic was that “platoon leaders do not know where their men are” and made little effort to track them down. Given the problems the U.S. Army faced in raising and training its wartime cadre of junior combat leaders, the inspector general’s accusations were justified. However, it was unfair to make junior leaders the scapegoats for the issue. Although leadership did play a major role in creating an environment that allowed straggling to flourish, it was only one of a number of interrelated factors that produced the crisis. Other factors, such as the systemic problems the Army faced in mobilizing a mass army, the shortcuts it took in training and deploying its units, and the battlefield realities the Americans encountered on the Western Front in 1918, also contributed to the problem.

The key question that must be resolved is why did these soldiers

# as the ad hoc unit came under heavy German fire, soldiers began to **MELT AWAY**

straggle from the front lines? Unfortunately, few gave any reason for their absence other than they were lost and became separated from their units. For many soldiers this was an honest and accurate confession. Tactical command and control during World War I was notoriously tricky for those on the offensive. The difficult terrain of the Argonne region, morning fog, and battlefield smoke resulted in a number of doughboys becoming detached from their commands. On 10 October 1918, the 82d Division's inspector general reported that "an unestimated number of men, reported to be considerable, have returned to their regiments during the past twenty-four hours stating that they had become separated and temporarily lost in the woods or during darkness." The inspector remarked that "their present attitudes and desire to fight indicates the truth of most of these statements."<sup>24</sup> Pvt. Ray Johnson, a machine gunner in the 37th Division, noted that during the Argonne drive some men, "being separated from their outfits by chance shellfire or orders to spread out, wandered helplessly about or attached themselves to other advancing units."<sup>25</sup> One such refugee, Pvt. Vernon Nichols of the 91st Division, spent three days wandering leaderless after he and two other soldiers lost contact with their company on the first day that their unit was committed to the Argonne battle.<sup>26</sup> Nichols and his comrades spent their time fighting with whatever American units they encountered and would then leave the unit to find food or attach themselves to another group as the spirit moved them.

In traversing the jumbled terrain of the Meuse-Argonne, the problems with the AEF's junior leaders' ability to command and control their enormous companies and platoons became apparent. The experiences of

Capt. Clarence Minick illustrate the problems that commanders faced in maintaining control of their units. On 29 September 1918, his company was part of the attack by the 91st Division to seize the high ground to the northwest of Montfaucon. After fighting through most of the morning, Minick's battalion halted while the brigade commander attempted to sort out some of the confusion and mix-up of units that had occurred earlier in the day. At 1430, Minick's battalion was ordered forward to seize Gesnes. Shortly after leading his unit forward, Minick discovered that he was missing most of his company. The only elements under his control were one and a half platoons.<sup>27</sup>

Minick later discovered that prior to the jump-off of the attack, a runner from battalion headquarters had given a message to one of his missing platoon leaders that ordered the company to attack immediately. The runner also assured the platoon leader that Minick had been informed of the change in orders. Unfortunately, the

order did not reach Minick for some time, and the platoon leader, who was out of direct contact and sight of the rest of the company, moved forward as directed. Minick confessed that due to this confusion, his company "was pretty badly disorganized." Despite these mix-ups, the captain still managed to take Gesnes but suffered heavy losses in the process. After consolidating his hold on the town, Minick had to give up his hard-won gains after the unit on his flanks pulled back and left his position untenable. Minick was not able to find his wayward platoon and squads until 0700 on 30 September.

Captain Minick's battalion was ordered to attack again on 30 September 1918. The events of this day were as confused and tragic as the day before. The American lines were in such a state of disorder that Minick's battalion and company were filled with soldiers from various units of the 91st, 37th, and 35th Divisions. Officers simply corralled all the soldiers they came across and pushed them forward in the attack. The cohesion of this

**A machine gun platoon advances through a densely wooded area. Terrain like this was typical of the Meuse-Argonne region.**





U.S. soldiers passing through Montfaucon

pickup team was sparse, and as the ad hoc unit came under heavy German fire, soldiers began to melt away. By 1300 the attack had ground to a halt, and the American troops returned to their jump-off line.<sup>28</sup>

In trying to retain control of their units and direct them toward accomplishing the unit's missions, junior officers were often hobbled by their lack of trained and experienced non-commissioned officers. Given the size of the AEF's infantry companies (261 men) and platoons (59 men) and the lack of effective tactical communications, junior officers were dependent upon their NCOs to aid them in leading the extended or scattered ranks. The inability of some noncommissioned officers to step in to their leadership roles led to dire consequences. An infantry battalion commander remembered that after his companies were shelled, the unit lost all order and cohesion. He wrote,

Over the suddenly disorganized mass the mere handful of officers,

without the slightest voluntary aid from the noncommissioned officers, are able to exercise but little control. The battalion is hopelessly scattered in the woods for the time being. All semblance of organization has vanished.<sup>29</sup>

A senior 82d Division officer complained on 7 October 1918 that far too many of the unit's squad leaders had failed to "exercise aggressive control" following the loss of their officers.<sup>30</sup>

In April 1919, General John J. Pershing convened a board of officers to study the AEF's overall lessons learned from the war. This so-called Lewis Board, named after its chairman Maj. Gen. Edward M. Lewis, concluded that combat losses among infantry noncommissioned officers led to a drastic reduction in the quality and reliability of small-unit leaders in the last months of the war. The board maintained that "nearly every survivor who belonged to a rifle company, and who was not a complete mental failure, of necessity had to become a non commissioned officer

in order to rebuild a cadre that could absorb the replacements." This fact, it maintained, led to the AEF having to rely on a group of "poorly trained and rather dull non commissioned officers."<sup>31</sup> Under such circumstances, it was no wonder that American NCOs were often unable or unwilling to exercise the direct leadership required to maintain adequate control of their soldiers.

Officers often compounded their problems with command and control, and further undermined the ability of their noncommissioned officers to operate on their own, by failing to brief their soldiers on the details and intent of their unit's missions. Pvt. John Nell, an infantryman in the 77th Division, remembered of his time in the Argonne region that

we enlisted men never knew much about our movements, only what we were told and what we could see and hear. The woods were so thick; our vision was only in and around where we were standing or walking. We did not know what day of the week or day of the month it was the entire time.<sup>32</sup>

Pvt. Milton B. Sweningsen stated that when it came time for his unit's attacks in the Meuse-Argonne, "I guess the officers knew [the plan], but privates were given no such information."<sup>33</sup> Sweningsen noted the isolation and fear that he felt after being separated from his unit without adequate knowledge of what he was supposed to do. He remembered thinking,

What to do? It did not make sense to me to start attacking alone. This was not a one-man war. I knew that there were no soldiers anywhere I could see, so I guess I started for the rear. Somewhere that morning there had been a rumor that we were

All semblance of organization has  
**VANISHED**

about to be relieved; that may have influenced me to head back.<sup>34</sup>

Without any clear conception of the details of their missions, and cut off from the orders of their officers, soldiers such as Private Sweningsen abandoned their posts simply because they had no clue of what else to do.

The available evidence suggests that the largest number of cases of men straggling from the line was directly related to the failure of junior leaders and their superiors to live up to their end of the social contract. Masses of men simply left the lines because their officers had failed to provide the soldiers' basic needs of food and water. Combat logistics, the forward push of rations, ammunition, and supplies and the rearward movement of casualties, had long been a sore spot in the AEF and the cause of much straggling.<sup>35</sup> For example, during the Aisne-Marne operation, the 2d Division's MPs reported that

the difficulty of getting the food to the troops soon resulted in looting for the men were searching the whole country for deserted chickens, rabbits and scant food supplies left by the villagers. Looting and straggling went hand in hand for it was noticed that in nearly all cases where arrests were made the looter was found also to be absent without leave from his organization.<sup>36</sup>

During the St. Mihiel Offensive the IV Corps inspector general, Col. Edward Carpenter, also noted the difficulty that the units had in getting rations to the frontline troops and that "reserve rations were repeatedly eaten without the orders of the organization's commander and at other than proper time."<sup>37</sup> The problem with getting rations and supplies to the front lines became even worse when the AEF moved into the Meuse-Argonne region. The region had a very limited road network, and four years of fighting and shelling had left large swaths nearly untrafficable for the army's supply wagons and trucks.<sup>38</sup>

Within days of the start of the offensive, soldiers were already complaining about their lack of rations. Officers



### General Pershing inspecting U.S. troops

in the 313th Infantry, 79th Division, noted that during their attack to take Montfaucon during the opening days of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive "it had been nearly impossible to get rations and the food carried in the packs had been consumed . . . and together with the lack of food and rest, the troops were in a pretty exhausted state." Ultimately, the soldiers of the regiment went nearly four days without any food except for their reserve rations.<sup>39</sup>

Between 12 and 14 October 1918, the mess sergeant for Company H, 126th Infantry, was unable to bring rations up to the line. The units made due by having returning stretcher bearers bring hard bread and cans of corned beef. On 15 October the only supplies brought forward were hard bread and bandoleers of ammunition. When the company commander sent back rations-carrying parties on 16 October, the men were "too tired, wary, and weak to

### Traffic jams compounded the AEF's logistical problems.





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Poor road conditions continually hampered logistical efforts.

carry the marmite cans of hot food thru the back area brush and shell holes.” As a result, the only ration the company again received was hard bread.<sup>40</sup> An artilleryman, L. V. Jacks, recalled that despite the best efforts of his unit’s cooks during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the lack of food meant that they “tightened their belts, for downright starvation seemed imminent.”<sup>41</sup> If things were bad for artillery units behind the lines, it was even worse for the infantrymen battling forward.

On 9 October 1918, the inspector general for the 82d Division reported that over one hundred soldiers from the 78th Division had straggled into his unit’s rear area between the night of 8 October and the morning of 9 October. He declared that “all of these men asked for food, stating that none of them had anything to eat since the night of October 7th,” and “some men stated that they had had nothing to eat for a longer period than two days.” All admitted that “no permission had been given to leave their camp,” but their officers had made no effort to account for their men, nor given them any indication when food would arrive. He also noted that “the personal appearance of these men indicated a general disorganized condition, as evidenced by torn and shabby clothing, unbuttoned blouses and overcoats, failure to shave for several days.”<sup>42</sup>

Private Baker admitted that he “went on an exploring trip” from the front line during the Meuse-Argonne fighting but stated that “the pangs of hunger were largely responsible for this.” In his defense, after stealing a large can of corned beef from the field kitchen of another division he returned to the front to share his loot with his comrades.<sup>43</sup> A soldier in the 82d Division recalled that his unit was so short of food on 11 October 1918 that he was forced to rifle through

the pack of a dead German to get the man’s black bread. After two more days without food, he straggled from the lines to find some rations.<sup>44</sup> Sometimes even officers were complicit in this form of straggling. Captain Barber’s company grew so short of food during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive that he selected four men that he “judged good thieves” and sent them to the rear to beg, borrow, or steal whatever rations they could find. Finally, the captain himself left the front with eight men to forage the rear area for food.<sup>45</sup>

Field kitchens located in the rear of the firing lines attracted hungry soldiers like moths to a flame. The problem became so acute that one officer eventually placed a guard on his mess line and kitchen to keep thieves “from sneaking in.”<sup>46</sup> The staff of the V Corps noted, “It was found that permitting the Y.M.C.A. and other canteens to approach too close to the front lines induced straggling. Many men who did not intend to become stragglers slipped away to get a cup of hot chocolate or some cigarettes and were picked up as stragglers.”<sup>47</sup> In some cases the satiated soldiers returned to the front following their repast. One infantryman in the 91st Division apprehended at a kitchen, told his captor that “all of our officers is gone an’ we more or less

Field kitchens were often raided by hungry stragglers.



Military History Institute

shift for ourselves.” He stated that he had come back for “some coffee an’ a night’s sleep” and then planned to return to the fight in whatever place he saw fit. The incredulous officer mused,

They had discovered an excellent arrangement whereby they might commute to the front with their bellies filled with hot coffee. Presently they would be starting for the Front again to take up their jobs where they had left them last night. M.P.s over at Very were beginning to round them up. But they required no persuasion. It was one thing to fight a war on a piecework basis and quite another to quit a job and leave one’s friends holding the sack.<sup>48</sup>

The last line explains much of why these “situational” stragglers continued to fight despite the failure of their leaders to uphold their end of the social contract. However, the desire to not “leave one’s friends holding the sack” could only sustain cohesion for so long, especially when the list of “one’s friends” continued getting shorter.

Shortages of food worsened other problems that wore away the soldiers’ health, stamina, and morale. On 19 October 1918, the First Army’s inspector general reported that the



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The YMCA serves hot chocolate to American soldiers.

91st Division was in dire straits and needed at least seven days’ rest to rebuild its strength. The division surgeon informed the inspector that after nineteen days of fighting and marching “none of the men were fit for duty owing to dysentery, fatigue and stomach trouble.” He also noted that “the 2309 replacements recently received are all contacts with influenza, 40% now being sick with that disease.” Furthermore, the inspector discovered that there were a “consid-

erable” number of stragglers from the unit and 955 men were still reported as missing. The commanders of two of the division’s infantry regiments concurred with the inspector’s grim assessments. The commander of the 361st Infantry stated that “the fighting ability of the men he had left was not over 20% of what it was on Sept. 26,” while the commander of the 362d Infantry “believed he did not have a single man who is an effective in the proper sense of the word.”<sup>49</sup>

There were measures that junior leaders could have taken to lessen some of the physical discomforts endured by their soldiers. The veteran French infantryman-novelist Henri Barbusse observed in combat, “damp rusts men as it does rifles; more slowly, but deeper.”<sup>50</sup> In this environment it was incumbent on junior leaders to see that their men were at least well clothed and equipped to deal with their exposure to the elements. A 32d Division infantryman reported that by 19 October 1918 the lack of basic necessities in his unit was causing great hardship. The soldier was still wearing summer weight underclothes, was suffering from dysentery, and recalled that the “lack of food caused me to be very weak.”<sup>51</sup> Another doughboy in the 82d Division remembered that when the officers failed to supervise and discipline their soldiers, the men

A Red Cross canteen near Senoncourt, 4 October 1918



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# the men are dejected and demoralized and apparently not the subject of any DISCIPLINE

threw away their raincoats and overcoats when they went over the top, so that later they had nothing at all to protect them from the cold and the wet. They went for days and days, sleeping in shell holes filled with ice-water, living on nothing but bully beef and water.<sup>52</sup>

This failure of officers and NCOs to maintain even this level of discipline meant that the health and combat efficiency of the units quickly degraded. During the month of October, the 82d Division's medical staff reported an average of seven hundred soldiers per day in the hospitals suffering from influenza, diarrhea, and exhaustion.<sup>53</sup> Oliver Q. Melton, commander of Company K, 325th Infantry, reported that between 16 and 30 October "everyone was sick and weak, many of the men were on the verge of a nervous breakdown."<sup>54</sup> Although some of these problems were due to the inherent nature of combat, the failure of leaders to be more proactive in ensuring the comfort of their men certainly contributed to the predicament.

The 82d Division was not the only combat unit suffering from the combined effects of high casualties, battlefield exhaustion, and shortages of supplies in the Argonne region. Inspector general reports from other divisions revealed the same poor physical conditions and morale. The lack of strong junior leadership to provide for soldiers' basic needs, build unit cohesion, and reinforce soldiers' morale had striking consequences. After only a week of the offensive, the First Army inspector general reported a disturbing conversation with the 3d Division G-1:

Colonel Stone . . . stated that the 3rd Division relieved the 79th [the] day before yesterday. He says that

the 79th Division was the most demoralized outfit that he had ever seen; that the men had thrown away a great deal of their equipment and that the 3rd Division has equipped a complete Machine Gun Company with the machine guns thrown away by the 79th; that the men are dejected and demoralized and apparently not the subject of any discipline. From his talk with different men of the 79th he was convinced that they were utterly unfit for any further operations.<sup>55</sup>

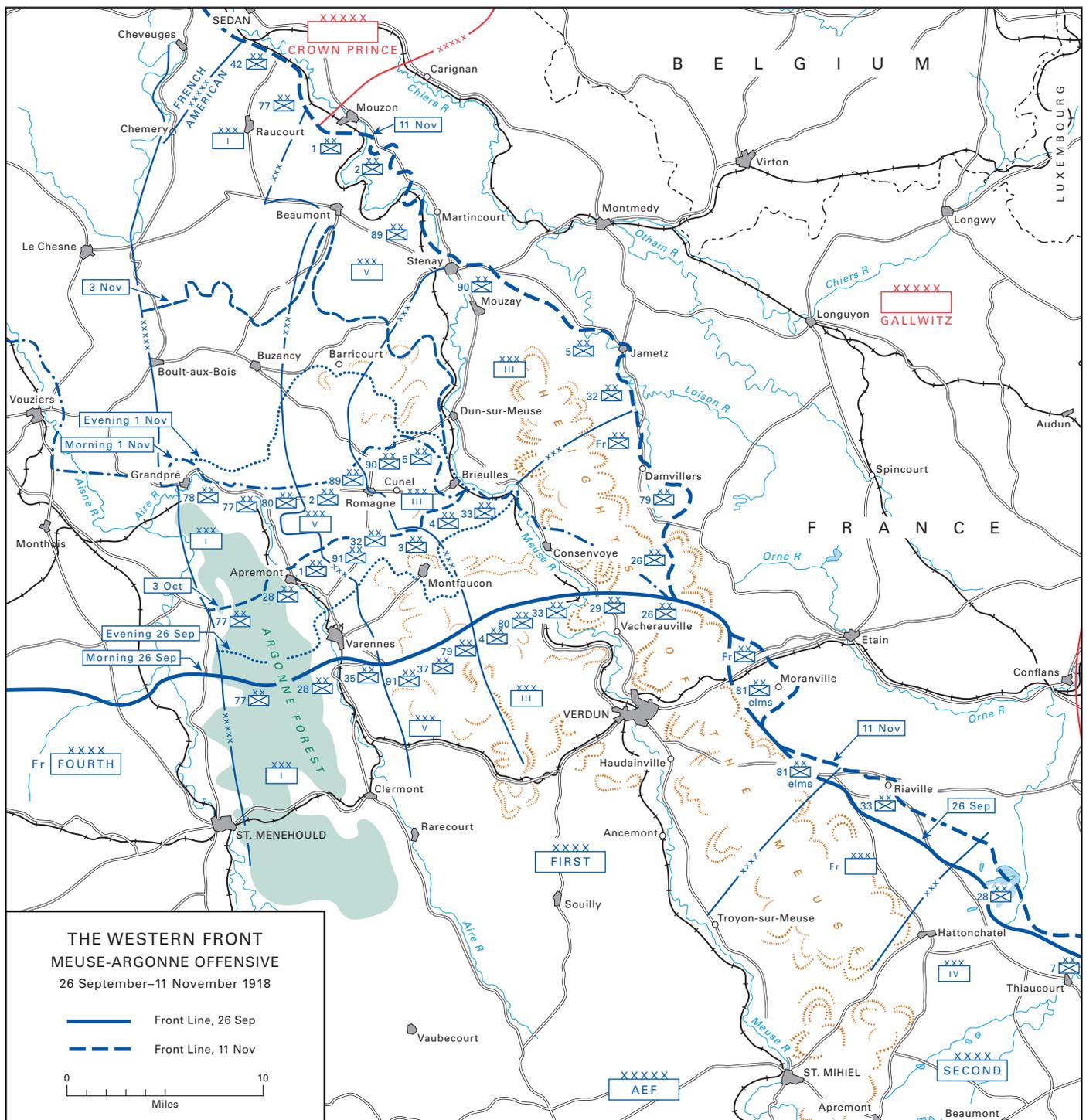
The situation only worsened as the campaign dragged onward. After his unit lost over nine thousand men in two weeks, the 1st Division's inspector general reported on 16 October that "the morale of the unit is not nearly as high as it formerly was. This is shown by the general demeanor of the men and the lack of snap and spirit which formerly prevailed in this unit."<sup>56</sup> After a series of costly attacks, the 3d Division inspector general reported on 15 October that "although I am inexperienced in judging men under battle conditions, I wish to state that those officers and men whom I saw of the 38th Infantry appeared to me, to use a slang term, 'all in.'"<sup>57</sup> The day after this report was made, the MPs rounded up over five hundred stragglers from the division loitering in the rear. Weeks of frontal attacks, combined with the leaders' inability to care for their soldiers, had brought the AEF to exhaustion and the brink of dissolution.

Ironically, although poor oversight by junior combat leaders certainly encouraged straggling, the loss of these key individuals, often poorly trained, added to the problem and resulted in a relative decline of know-how in small units. As military sociologist Darryl Henderson noted, the small unit officers and NCOs played the vital role of

setting and maintaining the behavioral norms of their units and served as the intermediaries between the higher headquarters and the individual soldiers. When these leaders were lost, cohesion and effectiveness declined.<sup>58</sup>

The leadership of the AEF's small units was constantly being rebuilt due to casualties or the loss of leaders to AEF schools or other requirements. Lt. Joseph Lawrence recalled that, of the eleven officers assigned with him to the 29th Division after graduating from the AEF candidates' school in September 1918, seven eventually made it into the fighting in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Of these seven, three were killed in action and two more were wounded and evacuated. Only Lawrence and one other officer survived the battle without a scratch.<sup>59</sup> Lt. Henry Thorn, of the 313th Infantry, 79th Division, reported that his regiment's four-day attack to seize Montfaucon had cost forty-five officers; twelve of whom were killed in action. To make matters worse, as soon as the regiment came out of the line, orders came down to send one officer per company to the II Corps schools. Their positions were filled by a replacement captain and fifteen replacement lieutenants.<sup>60</sup>

The AEF's junior officers came and went in infantry companies with a bewildering rapidity. Company A, 1st Battalion, 308th Infantry, had seven different company commanders from July to November 1918. During the same period, Company B had five commanders, Company C had six, and Company D had four. The battalion's turnover of lieutenants was just as great. Twenty-one officers passed through the ranks of Company C in those same four months.<sup>61</sup> The experience of the 308th Infantry was far from uncommon. In the 107th Infantry, 27th Division, each of the unit's line companies had, on average, over sixteen captains and lieutenants assigned to



them during the course of the war. The regiment's Company A suffered the most changes in its officers, with twenty-five cycling through during the war.<sup>62</sup> Interestingly enough, the AEF General Headquarters had some inkling of the negative effect of these changes. In August 1918, an AEF staff officer observed that frequent

changes in battalion and company commanders in the 27th Division had undermined "discipline and efficiency" within the division's units.<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, this complaint went unanswered.

The negative effect of this revolving door of leaders was the breakdown of the vital face-to-face relationships

between the leaders and the men and degraded the morale and cohesion within the AEF's infantry companies. As his unit entered the Meuse-Argonne region, Pvt. John Barkley noted that "officers were like passing shadows with us now. It hardly paid to try to get acquainted with them" for they generally and quickly became

casualties.<sup>64</sup> The casualties that his unit soon suffered in the Argonne later led him to note, “the regiment was in bad shape. We’d been cut to pieces a dozen times, and the remains reorganized so often that nobody knew what he belonged to.”<sup>65</sup> Following ten days of bloodletting in the Argonne, a soldier from the 312th Infantry, 78th Division, observed,

The previous days of fighting had depleted the numbers until there were left not more than an average of sixty men in each rifle company. No battalion could boast of more than five line officers, while the lack of non-commissioned officers was a serious handicap. A thorough reorganization was necessary, a division of rifle companies into two platoons in place of the customary four and a redistribution of officers to provide at least one to each company—fortunate indeed [was] the company commander who could boast a subaltern to assist him. Hasty appointments of acting non-commissioned officers to lead the subordinate elements followed as a matter of course. *No longer did the officer have an intimate personal knowledge of the individuals under his supervision.*” [emphasis added]<sup>66</sup>

A number of soldiers echoed these sentiments. For example, Private Sweningsen, an infantryman in the 35th Division, reported that this unit was so wracked by the loss and replacement of leaders that “I hardly knew the officers of my own company.”<sup>67</sup>

These losses had an immediate and negative effect on a unit’s performance and cohesion. Pvt. Charles Flacker, an infantryman in the 112th Infantry, 28th Division, recalled that his company suffered so many casualties among its leaders that low-ranking men had to fill the positions. He remarked that it was “every man for himself” in the company.<sup>68</sup> After the near disintegration of the 35th Division in the opening days of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Col. Robert McCormick noted that “casualties among the officers were undoubtedly responsible for a great deal of the dis-



The high casualty rates and subsequent turnover of officers and men resulted in a lack of discipline and accountability.

organization” and that “most of the straggling and confusion was caused by men getting lost and not having leaders, and not from any deliberate design to go to the rear in order to avoid further fighting.”<sup>69</sup>

During the 5th Division’s time in the Argonne, the division inspector reported that due to heavy losses “in some organizations the officers had been on duty for a very short time, and did not know the men, nor did the men know the officers. Apparently a great many men did not know their officers by sight.” This presented insurmountable obstacles to the division’s cohesion and contributed to its lackluster combat performance. The officer remarked that when the 11th Infantry was sent forward to relieve another unit in the line, “it was shelled by the enemy, and the men scattered.” He went on to report that “a great many stragglers resulted from this . . . and the other regiments also lost a large number of stragglers by the confusion caused by the relief.”<sup>70</sup>

While some troops went AWOL from the lines due to being lost, hungry, sick, or leaderless, others left the lines in a calculated effort to avoid combat. Private Baker, a soldier who admitted to frequently leaving the lines, drew a sharp distinction between his actions and those of the soldiers

that he found lurking in abandoned German barracks behind the lines. To Baker, these men “were stragglers pure and simple, willfully playing out of battle, or in stronger terms deserters,” while he was simply out of the lines for a break and always intended to return.<sup>71</sup> Capt. John Stringfellow, an infantry officer in the 80th Division, called these deliberate stragglers “shell-holers”; men “who in an advance got into shell holes and then liked it so well that they stayed there while their comrades advanced unsupported by them.”<sup>72</sup>

The AEF provost marshal also differentiated between common stragglers and “battle stragglers.” A straggler was “a soldier absent from his unit without permission or who cannot produce satisfactory evidence that he is on duty,” while “battle stragglers” were “N.C.O.’s or men who straggle from the immediate fighting line, or from their units, when these units are moving up to the immediate fighting line.”<sup>73</sup> Battle straggling carried the connotation of deliberateness.

The densely wooded Meuse-Argonne region was populated with shelters, dugouts, and barracks that had been constructed by the French and Germans over the previous four years of the war. The natural and man-made features provided a ready

sanctuary for any soldier seeking to escape combat. While troops straggling in the immediate rear of the front lines could offer the excuse that they were lost from their units, men hiding out in shelters and woods far behind the lines could offer no such explanation. Their straggling, more accurately described as desertion, was a premeditated attempt to dodge fighting.

It is impossible to determine how many of these men left the front to avoid combat. However, there is some evidence to show that the numbers were relatively large. The 82d Division's inspector general reported on 12 October that while most of the unit's stragglers were simply lost, "a small minority, difficult to estimate, were undoubtedly, endeavoring to evade their duty and were collected from dugouts in Chatel Chehery and elsewhere."<sup>74</sup> There may have been more cases of combat avoidance than the inspector admitted. On 20 October the division still could not account for 1,019 men and the adjoining 78th Division reported that the woods in its area were "full of stragglers" from the 82d Division.<sup>75</sup>

The 82d was not alone in this problem. In late October Maj. Gen. William Wright wrote that while moving through the rear area he "found a



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**Abandoned German bunkers and machine gun posts provided excellent hiding places for straggling soldiers.**

number of stragglers from the Eighty-ninth, Forty-second, and Second divisions. They were out in the woods and making themselves comfortable in the Boche dugouts and apparently with the intention of staying there."<sup>76</sup> On one occasion in early October 1918, a detail of MPs from the 32d Division searching for stragglers in abandoned shelters found ninety men hiding in one large dugout.<sup>77</sup> These reports indicate that a number of men were

seeking to dodge combat and were doing so with relative ease.

Another indication of the depth of the problem of combat avoidance was the number of men apprehended multiple times for this offense. On 14 October 1918, MPs from the 32d Division complained that they had apprehended a number of stragglers from the 5th Division and returned them to their units, only to find the same men shortly after again hiding out around Montfaucon.<sup>78</sup> These incidents tend to support the point that the AEF had men who were so averse to fighting that they risked capture multiple times and that the fear of punishment in these men was rather small. In addition, despite repeated infractions, their small-unit leaders were unable or unwilling to do much about it.

The acting first sergeant for Company K, 142d Infantry, Archibald Hart, recalled finding a number of stragglers hiding in a German bunker while searching for water for his company. Hart noted that the stragglers had picked a spot near a supply route where they could steal food by night and then "return to their comfortable quarters near the water supply and, undisturbed, catch up on their sleep during the day." The sergeant opted not to report the men for several reasons. First of all, he believed that such

**German shelters like this one in Bois de Montfaucon could accommodate a large number of men.**



Author's Collection



Supply trucks stuck in the mud were easy targets for thieving stragglers.

activities were an officer's purview, and he did not think his new commander would make an effort to follow up on the matter because the soldiers were not from his company. Also, he concluded philosophically, "a cozy hideout, well to the rear and out of harm's way, was a proper place for a skulker," for "he definitely would be a liability in the front line, and his Company would function better if he kept himself out of the way."<sup>79</sup> It is hard to argue with Hart's logic, but if his laissez-faire attitude to straggling was indicative of the opinions of other AEF junior leaders then their inactivity undoubtedly encouraged straggling.

Unlike those soldiers who left the lines because they were lost or hungry, discovering why "battle stragglers" sought to avoid combat is more difficult. Because few admitted their motives, any discussion in this area must be based on the observations of third parties or speculation. Some of the reasons certainly went back to issues with leadership in the AEF's small combat units. For example, Captain Barber attributed much of the straggling to poor leadership and to men becoming "fed up" with the uncertainties and pettiness of everyday military life.<sup>80</sup> In some cases, the junior leaders set such a bad example for their soldiers by their own misconduct that the men were naturally bound to follow. Pvt.

Ernesto Bisogno stated that at Chatel Chehery "some officers ran like sheep" and abrogated their responsibilities by trying to save their own skins.<sup>81</sup> A 28th Division private recalled that soon after his four-man patrol moved forward to scout the German lines on 1 October, "our sergeant deserted us," leaving three privates alone and leaderless in no-man's-land.<sup>82</sup> Lieutenant Lawrence, an infantry officer in the 29th Division, reported that his company's first sergeant deserted the unit in the middle of the Argonne fight, taking with him "several other men of the company." He also noted the poor example set by a company commander nicknamed "Dugout Pete," which reflected his refusal to leave the safety of his bunker during his unit's attacks.<sup>83</sup>

After observing the 5th Division, Col. J. A. Bauer informed his superior that "the officers with the troops of this division appear 'jumpy'" and suggested that this fact explained many of the unit's 2,500 stragglers.<sup>84</sup> Bauer's assessment of the 5th Division was close to the mark. During the 3d Battalion, 61st Infantry's attack on the Bois des Rappes on 15 October 1918, the unit's adjutant broke down after witnessing the death of the battalion commander and two company commanders. When the adjutant "became panicky and departed precipitately to the rear. The few men in his immedi-

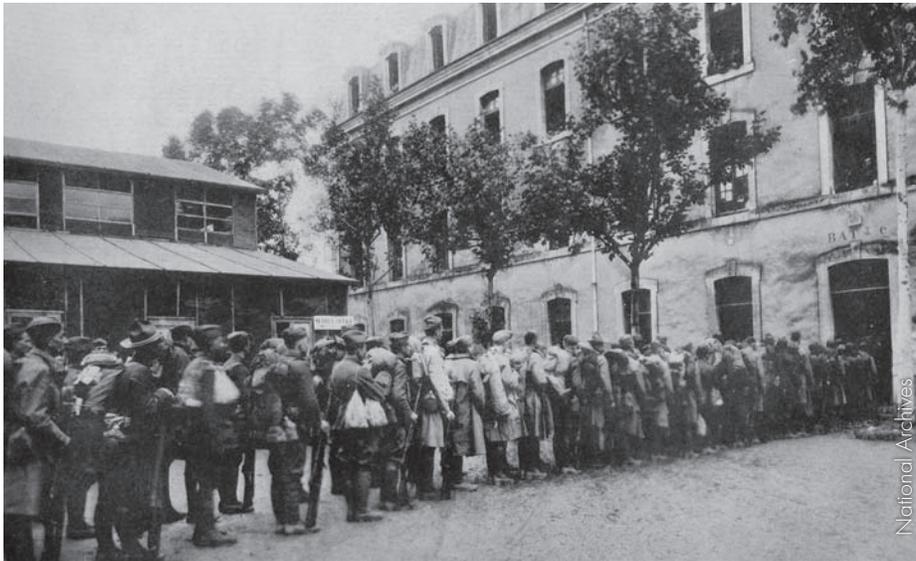
ate vicinity naturally followed." The terror-stricken officer soon reported to the regimental commander that the unit "was all cut to pieces and what was left of it was retreating." This bogus report led to the entire regiment being pulled back from the line, only to suffer heavy casualties over the next two days trying to recover the terrain it had previously taken.<sup>85</sup>

Some of the battle stragglers were simply men who had stayed at the front until they had reached their physical and psychological breaking point. One officer later wrote that after grueling weeks at the front under constant fire, men tried to slip to the rear for "a few minutes of relief from the hell on the line." He recalled that "this kept up all night, making it necessary for me to patrol the line. . . . I would drive one man back to his position and another would try to slip by."<sup>86</sup> One infantryman blamed this type of straggling on the fact that commanders "had forgotten that there is a limit to human endurance."<sup>87</sup>

Other battle stragglers were perhaps motivated to avoid combat long before this "limit to human endurance" was reached due to fear and to the realization that neither their own training nor that of their leaders had prepared them for battle. The AEF's soldiers were "thinking bayonets" who were cognizant of these shortcomings. The fact that the AEF had large numbers of men actively seeking to avoid combat indicates that there were major problems with cohesiveness within the army's small units. In many of the AEF's small units, it was simply the case of the unwilling being led by the unready into the unknown. As soldiers weighed their chances of survival in combat and opted to "vote with their feet," the quality of their leaders was undoubtedly one of the factors that influenced their decision.

Even some of the more reliable soldiers opted to moderate their aggressiveness based on the odds of survival. When Private Baker and his unit were ordered back to the front at 0830 on 11 November 1918, the soldier did not want to risk his life for nothing and decided to hide out for a few hours to see what happened. After a bit of

# it was simply the case of the unwilling being led by the unready into the UNKNOWN



Newly arriving soldiers report to the replacement center in Le Mans on 6 October 1918 for processing and unit assignment. Some officers and noncommissioned officers claimed that untrained replacements lacked basic combat skills and discipline and accounted for most of their units' stragglers.

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moral calculus, Baker decided that if fighting continued after the armistice time of 1100, he would dutifully return to the fight; if the fighting ceased, he figured that no harm was done by his straggling and that he had been right in not tempting fate in the closing hours of the war.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, Pvt. George Dongarra admitted that when his truck broke down on 9 November 1918, rumors of a possible armistice led him and his fellow driver “to linger on the troubled motor” for two days until the fighting stopped.<sup>89</sup>

It is interesting to note that many officers and NCOs blamed the straggler problem on replacements. The AEF inspector general noted that when the replacements consisted of “men who do not know the rudiments of soldiering [they] soon become either ‘cannon fodder’ or skulkers.” A soldier in the 42d Division corroborated this observation by noting that most stragglers from his unit “had been replacements

newly arrived.”<sup>90</sup> Nine years after the armistice, war correspondent Thomas Johnson wrote in his aptly titled *Without Censor* that the war was hardest on those men, usually replacements, who had been shunted off to the front with very little training under their belts. He noted,

We could always recognize them on the roads of the battle area. They were paler, slighter, than the men who had had their proper hardening and had not just come from crowded transports, and they looked about nervously. Who could blame them?<sup>91</sup>

Johnson recalled that “some of the youngest ones, scared boys, drifted to Y.M.C.A. hotels where they were fed and warmed and often got their nerve and went back to the front.”<sup>92</sup>

If replacements did make up the majority of battle stragglers (and this

point is far from certain), they had good reason to flee from battle. An infantry first sergeant in the 32d Division mourned the fact that “replacements get the end of dirty things in the Army. They are shoved from pillar to post and back again. . . . They acquire buddies one day to have them leave the next day. . . . Their A[rmy] P[ost] O[ffice] number is changed before they receive mail from the folks at home.”<sup>93</sup> If these indignities were not enough, in an Army not known for the quality and quantity of its training, replacements were often the worst trained of the lot.

The stories that some replacements had to be told how to load their rifles just before H-hour are far from apocryphal. Once the 83d Division was transformed into the 2d Depot Division, its intelligence officer began to track the level of training of the replacements that arrived in France in the summer and fall of 1918. These reports provide sad evidence of the breakdown of the stateside training of replacements in the last four months of the war. On 12 August 1918, one of the officer’s agents reported that the 2,500 men who just arrived at the division from Camps Gordon and Hancock had “been in the service only a few weeks.” A month later, another agent reported that the 597 draftees that had just arrived from Camps Pike, MacArthur, and Gordon “had all been in the army less than a month and have had little or no training.” The men who reported on 29 October from Camp Pike had only spent one day on the rifle range and had no gas training before being shipped overseas. The men who arrived on the same day from Camp MacArthur were little better off. They had spent one or two days on the range and had been given six hours of gas training just before leaving for France.<sup>94</sup>

One 35th Division replacement had no real training in the thirty-five days



National Archives

Rifle practice at Camp Gordon, Georgia

between the time he was inducted to the point at which he sailed for France and did not even receive his first uniform until he reached the embarkation point at Camp Mills, New York. He recalled,

After we reached France, we were brigaded with English troops and given some training, using our own officers in close order drill. I was on the firing range once. No informa-

Substandard training often meant soldiers had to practice with their equipment whenever possible.



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tion or training was given about extended lines or attack tactics. Now here I was, at the bottom of a hill, in a pit of fog and on the attack. [original emphasis]

He remembered hearing such commands as “deploy as skirmishers” and “advance in squad column” without understanding what they meant.<sup>95</sup> To survive in combat, he simply tried to follow the directions of his squad

A French officer instructing American troops in the use of gas masks near Menancourt



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leader and mimic his actions. Lt. Hugh Thompson found that twelve of the replacements assigned to his company just before the St. Mihiel Offensive had never fired their rifles before, and others “were not very sure of their rifles.” Their only training before going into combat was “each man was allowed to fire a clip (five rounds) into the soggy ground at his feet.”<sup>96</sup>

The commander of the 307th Infantry, 77th Division, Lt. Col. Eugene Houghton, argued that the cohesion and morale of his unit suffered from the influx of new recruits. Of the 850 to 900 men he received just before going into the Argonne battle, “90% of them had never fired a rifle, nor thrown a grenade, nor had they the ordinary close order drill.” He went on to note,

Since the action started it has been frequently reported to me by company and battalion commanders that it was practically impossible to handle these men over the present terrain. They had no idea what it meant to extend [formations] and would have to be led around from place to place. They were continually getting lost and straggling, and their officers and N. C. O.’s were practically strangers to them, it made them very difficult to handle them.<sup>97</sup>



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The 329th Infantry undergoing bayonet training near Le Mans during its first week in France

Sadly, there was little that a company's officers and NCOs could do to address the problems caused by this massive influx of ill-trained men. When his company received thirty exceptionally green replacements, 1st Sgt. Harold C. Woehl was moved to exclaim, "preparing such untrained men for battle was a nerve-wracking job."<sup>98</sup> Although it is unclear whether poorly trained replacements were a major source of stragglers, one could hardly blame these green troops if they realized how unready they were for combat and

opted to leave the lines to improve their chances of survival.

Ultimately, we will never know the exact number of American soldiers who abandoned the lines during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, nor will we be able to determine exactly why large numbers of soldiers deliberately separated themselves from their units in an effort to avoid combat. What we can deduce, however, is that the number of "disappearing doughboys" was a grave concern to the AEF's senior staffs and commanders throughout the operation.

This concern certainly led the AEF to divert a number of resources to stem the tide. These resources, such as MPs and cavalymen, could have perhaps been better employed in tasks such as untangling the massive traffic jams behind the lines that hindered the army's critical logistical functions. On 18 October 1918, General John Du Cane of the British Military Mission to the Allied Armies reported that the disjointed and ill-lead U.S. attacks in the Argonne did nothing but "suffer wastage out of all proportion to the results achieved."<sup>99</sup> Even Brig. Gen. Harold Fiske, General Pershing's chief of training, had to admit that in the final analysis

it must be remembered that to the end most of our divisions were lacking in skill. Given plenty of time for preparation, they were capable of powerful blows; but their blows were delivered with an awkwardness and lack of resource that made them unduly costly and rendered it impracticable to reap the full fruits of victory.<sup>100</sup>

The lost, hungry, or deliberately malingering soldiers that crowded the roads, mobile kitchens, and dugouts in the rear areas certainly contributed to the conditions that Generals Du Cane and Fiske described.



Snarls such as this prevented the forward movement of critical supplies and provided the perfect conditions for stragglers to fade into the lumbering crowd.



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## U.S. ARMY ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT

# THE U.S. ARMY ADDS A NATIONAL TREASURE TO ITS CORE COLLECTION

In 2011, the Center of Military History acquired a significant American artifact associated with the Battle of Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. The sword and scabbard of Capt. John Berry, the commander of the Washington Artillery Battery, 1st Regiment, Maryland Volunteer Artillery, is one of the few surviving objects known to have been carried at Fort McHenry during the battle that inspired Francis Scott Key to write the national anthem.

The Berry sword was made of European and American components for the U.S. market dating between 1783

and 1814. The blade and langets are typical English manufacturing, while the carved ivory grip and pommel suggest the sword was hilted in the United States. Seventeen swords in the U.S. Army museum system date from the era of the War of 1812, but none matches the Berry sword in terms of association with an event that defined the nation and the U.S. Army.

The preservation of the sword and scabbard is achieved by nesting them in acid free Ethafoam within an individual acid free box. No other object fits within the nest, which was

cut specifically for this sword and scabbard. Captain Berry's sword was subsequently carried by a descendent during the Civil War but still retains much of its original gold finish on the hilt and scabbard mounts. The top band includes an inscription to Capt. John Berry. The sword is currently housed in the Army's Museum Support Center at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.



COMMENTARY

# A CRITICAL BUT MISSING PIECE

EDUCATING OUR  
PROFESSIONAL  
MILITARY ON  
THE HISTORY  
OF ISLAM



Adm. Michael G. Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addresses faculty and students at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth.

By Adam Oler

## INTRODUCTION

To someone familiar with the history of ancient Greece, the story will seem at first quite recognizable. In a bipolar world, the two great superpowers of the day wage a decades-long struggle to establish complete hegemony over the other. The conflict ebbs and flows for years, with one side occasionally gaining the upper hand, only to relinquish it later. The belligerents include allies beholden to one superpower or the other, and a great amphibious expedition helps determine the war's outcome. When the fighting finally ends, both superpowers are so depleted by battlefield losses, plague, and spent treasure that neither is prepared to confront a burgeoning superpower emerging on its periphery. This new force quickly expands across thousands of miles, creating a colossal empire and bringing with it sweeping cultural changes that still profoundly shape the world today.

Perhaps surprisingly, this is not the tale of the Peloponnesian War and the ensuing rise of Macedon. Rather, it is the story of the last great war of antiquity, the late sixth and early seventh century struggle between the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires.<sup>1</sup> More notably, it is the story of the great Arab conquests that followed in that war's aftermath and the remarkable creation of an Islamic empire that soon stretched from the Atlantic coast to the Chinese frontier. Thucydides' celebrated history and Alexander's epochal expansion of the Hellenic world certainly merit the close study they receive.<sup>2</sup> Because of its pertinence to our own time, the early history of Islam deserves equal, if not more, attention, ideally in our nation's high schools and colleges. A more acute problem—and one that could be readily tackled—is the absence of this immensely important period from the war colleges' syllabi. If the United States is to ensure its future policymakers and senior joint force leaders are adequately prepared to perform their duties effectively, joint professional military education needs to incorporate an objectively focused block of instruction on the formative

period in Islamic history, beginning with the birth of the Prophet Muhammad in 570 CE, and ending with collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258. In advocating for this course, it is first helpful to recall the exacting price too often paid when strategists fail to consider—or understand—historical matters of context in their planning. A brief assessment of what the proposed block of instruction ought to include demonstrates how this record of past failures can be improved. Understanding Islam's early history is an essential foundation for anyone confronting the Middle East's most enduring challenges, such as the Sunni-Shi'ite struggle, the future of the Saudi regime, and the dispute over Jerusalem. A review of the proposed curricula also helps explain how a proper appreciation of Islam's first centuries helps undercut essentialist, anti-Muslim narratives, thereby inhibiting misguided assumptions. Of course, teaching Islamic history could invite controversy; indeed there is an intense debate among academics about how to approach the subject. Nonetheless, the potential for disagreement cannot become an excuse for avoiding it, even if it does call for an important note of caution.

## WE KNOW WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

Justifiably, Americans are often criticized for their short memories,<sup>3</sup> and their regrettable indifference toward the subject of history.<sup>4</sup> In the field of foreign affairs, the failure of U.S. leaders to sufficiently appreciate the history of other nations is an all too common lament.<sup>5</sup> An appalling misconstruction of Vietnam's history—in particular its ancient, troubled affiliation with China—helped cause the United States to approach that war with an unwinnable strategy.<sup>6</sup> When the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration used the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to overthrow Iran's government in 1953, it gave no heed to that country's proud past and planted the seed for the “first wave” of Islamic revolutions twenty-five years later.<sup>7</sup> In part because they lacked a most basic understanding of the distinction between Shi'ites and Sunnis, the entire American intelligence apparatus in 1979

If you would  
understand anything,  
observe its beginning  
and its development.

—Aristotle



Mark A. Wilson, Professor, Department of Geology, College of Wooster

failed to realize that the so-called Siege of Mecca that year marked the birth of radical Sunni terrorism.<sup>8</sup> As a result, Washington went blindly forward, arming the same Arab Mujahideen who metastasized into al-Qaeda.<sup>9</sup> Astonishingly, some American officials still refer to the attack as “the Shiite assault on the sacred Ka’ba.”<sup>10</sup> More recently, the failure of American planners to grasp the history of Iraq led to major planning mistakes,<sup>11</sup> errors so egregious that by 2005, the United States was on the verge of losing the Iraq war.<sup>12</sup> Then there is the unending war in Afghanistan. Like the Soviets twenty-two years earlier, the United States seemingly entered this conflict without due consideration of the fact that no external power has ever departed in victory.<sup>13</sup> In matters related to

the Middle East in particular, Americans behave like “serial amnesiacs.”<sup>14</sup>

All of these disheartening examples reflect what American leaders have known for over a generation; the United States’ approach to teaching history is not working.<sup>15</sup> Although at least one late-night talk show host routinely jokes about the country’s ignorance of the past, scholarship dating back to the 1980s demonstrates—empirically—that the country’s lack of historical education is also dangerous.<sup>16</sup> Even where military institutions are concerned, the just-cited miscalculations in strategic planning support a belief that history is “treated as a marginal embellishment instead of a core of military education.”<sup>17</sup> The importance of the Middle East to American security is enduring. Therefore, until the

United States’ secondary and collegiate educational systems are fixed, the nation’s future policymakers and senior joint force leaders need to receive appropriate instruction about the region’s history elsewhere. This obligation should be fulfilled by the country’s war colleges, lest it not otherwise occur. Fortunately, envisioning what the requisite block of instruction would entail is quite practicable.

### THE PROPOSED COURSE—ONE VISION

Although the proposed course should address a significant period of time—roughly seven hundred years—instruction can be efficiently covered in four sections. They include the life of the Prophet Muhammad; the almost

## Dome of the Rock as seen from Mount Scopus



equally formative forty-year period that followed; the early empire period; and the “Golden Age.” Several books, some of them quite recent, cover these periods succinctly but effectively, demonstrating that constrained classroom time need not be a limiting factor.<sup>18</sup> In addition, examining several of the possible themes each section might cover provides a preliminary framework for developing the proposed course, while further emphasizing the relevance of Islam’s early history to current and future American strategists.

### THE LIFE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD — MECCA, MEDINA, AND JERUSALEM

Both Christian and Muslim historians agree that the Prophet Mu-

hammad’s life and accomplishments, beginning with his birth in Mecca around 570 CE, are the foundation of the entire Muslim epoch.<sup>19</sup> His experiences and achievements shape the “spiritual, political and ethical vision of Muslims” today,<sup>20</sup> and constitute a “metaphor illuminating the meaning of existence itself.”<sup>21</sup> More than any other facet of Muslim history, the specific events and circumstances of the Prophet’s life merit attention, making the late sixth century the appropriate point of departure for the projected block of instruction. Indeed, the Prophet’s sixty-two-year life presents an excellent initial framework for understanding today’s Middle East in a historical context, to include the reasons behind many of its toughest challenges.

For example, the Muslim world’s great attachment to Jerusalem stems from events that occurred when Muhammad was about fifty. Those shaping U.S.–Middle East policy should be aware that Jerusalem’s famous golden “Dome of the Rock” stands atop the site where Muslims historically believe that, in 621, Muhammad experienced his “Night Journey” where he traveled to Jerusalem and stood on top of the Rock of Abraham.<sup>22</sup> From there, he ascended to heaven, received some of Islam’s most formative revelations, and returned to Mecca.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Jerusalem—known in Arabic as *al Quds*, “the Holy”—has significance for Muslims surpassed only by Mecca and Medina.<sup>24</sup> In a more secular sense, Jerusalem is historically critical for Muslims because the famous golden dome atop the Temple Mount was Islam’s first great edifice, and the dome is the physical manifestation of Muslim society’s initial “emergence as a new polity.”<sup>25</sup> Of almost equal importance is the mosque adjacent to the Dome of the Rock, which was known in Muhammad’s time as “the farthest mosque”—in Arabic “*al Aqsa Masjid*.”<sup>26</sup> During his early life, the *al Aqsa* mosque played a deeply symbolic role for Muhammad’s first followers, and the site remains highly revered by

Muslims everywhere.<sup>27</sup> These are just two of the reasons Jerusalem is such a contentious issue in the Middle East. They help explain—for example—the significance of Iran’s decision to name one of its most elite military units the “*al Quds Force*,”<sup>28</sup> and why some Palestinian militants branded their organization the “*Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade*.”<sup>29</sup>

Consider also that by studying the Prophet’s life, students will attain a fundamentally better understanding of Islam’s holiest sites in Saudi Arabia.<sup>30</sup> Although students will doubtless already know that Mecca and Medina are important, the proposed course would explain why. For example, the shrouded black edifice at the center of Mecca’s Great Mosque, known as the Ka’ba, is the most revered site in Islam.<sup>31</sup> In pre-Islamic, Arab historical tradition, Adam originally built the Ka’ba and his son Seth subsequently rebuilt it. Later, Abraham and his son Ismail rebuilt it again.<sup>32</sup> The Ka’ba thus played a major role in the lives of Arabs even before the Prophet’s birth, and an annual festive pilgrimage (the *Hajj*) to Mecca predated the Prophet by several centuries.<sup>33</sup> Nearby, in 610, the Prophet received his first message from God, delivered by an angel who told him to “recite”; the Arabic word for “recitation” being “*Qur’an*.”<sup>34</sup> Originally, Muhammad directed his followers to pray toward the *al Aqsa* Mosque in Jerusalem; only later in his ministry did he direct they face the Ka’ba and Mecca, a highly symbolic decision reflecting Islam’s break from Judaism and Christianity—and one of the most pivotal moments in Islam’s historic development.<sup>35</sup> Later, when Muhammad cleared the Ka’ba of its pagan idols, it represented his final triumph in securing Islam’s dominance in Arabia.<sup>36</sup> Today, when millions of Muslims visit Mecca during the *Hajj*, they are marking these seminal events in their shared history.<sup>37</sup>

There is equal value in examining the history of Medina, even if only briefly. For instance, U.S. policymakers ought to know that twelve years after receiving his first revelations, Muhammad hastily emigrated north from Mecca to a town called Yathrib.<sup>38</sup> This event is known as the *Hijra*, and the year it occurred (622) marks the start of the Muslim calendar.<sup>39</sup> In



Courtesy of Zenodot Verlagsgesellschaft mbH

Yathrib, Muhammad established a mosque (*masjid*) and built a model society to be emulated by Muslims from then on.<sup>40</sup> As a result, Yathrib's name was eventually changed to Medina, the Arabic word for "city," and historically all Muslims "regard Medina as the model of Islamic perfection."<sup>41</sup> Muhammad is buried there, helping to make Medina Islam's second holiest site after Mecca. Together, Mecca and Medina are so historically significant that the Saudi monarch's official title is neither "King" nor "Sultan," but "Keeper of the Two Mosques."<sup>42</sup>

As these short examples illustrate, policymakers versed on the basic historic events of the Prophet Muhammad's life will be better equipped to develop Middle East strategy than would otherwise be the case.

### LESSONS OF THE GREAT ARAB CONQUESTS

An adequate understanding of the region's historical context cannot end with the Prophet's death in 632

because the next forty years are of near-equal importance.<sup>43</sup> Sunni Muslims, who make up the vast majority of the faith,<sup>44</sup> know the Prophet's four successors—*khalifa* in Arabic—as "the Rightly Guided Ones."<sup>45</sup> Together, they comprise the *Rashidun* who, along with the Prophet, form the core of Islam's founding movement.<sup>46</sup> Their experiences and achievements between 632 and 661 were recorded contemporaneously,<sup>47</sup> meaning the *Rashidun* exist squarely within the realm of history, not legend.

As significant as the *Rashidun* are within the Muslim sphere of influence, their accomplishments continue to have a tremendous impact on much of the rest of the world as well. Because the great Arab conquests occurred under their rule, it is here that the proposed course can deliver some of its most valuable lessons. Between 630 and 750, Muslim generals conducted brilliant military campaigns, capturing territory extending seven thousand kilometers.<sup>48</sup> Just as Alexander spread

Hellenism to the known world in the fourth century BCE,<sup>49</sup> Muslim conquerors extended Arab culture a thousand years later.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the parallels between Alexander's accomplishments and those of the early Muslims merit study. The Arabs' two enemies, the Byzantines and Sassanids, had just exhausted themselves in what was referred to earlier as "the last great war of antiquity."<sup>51</sup> Indeed, their fatigue proved to be "the essential prerequisite for success of Muslim arms."<sup>52</sup> In the decades just prior to Muhammad's death in 632, the Sassanids had conquered most of the Levant, only to have it retaken by the great Byzantine general, Heraclius. Heraclius saved Byzantium from total defeat by conducting a well-conceived invasion behind Sassanid lines, cutting the Persian heartland off from its army.<sup>53</sup> In their famous collective work on military history, the Dupuys go so far as to write that Heraclius is worthy of being ranked in military history alongside "Alexander, Hannibal, and

Battle between Heraclious' army and Persians under Khosrau II. Fresco by Piero della Francesca, c. 1452



Caesar.”<sup>54</sup> Thanks to Heraclious, the two superpowers’ borders returned to the status quo ante, but when the great Islamic conquests began, the Muslims found themselves filling a power vacuum much like the Macedonians did after the Peloponnesian War.<sup>55</sup> In this regard, the story of the early Muslim victories can be used to reinforce some of the key lessons about war and statecraft traditionally taught through the study of Sparta and Athens.

To comprehend the geographic, ethnic, and cultural fault lines in today’s Middle East, strategists also need to be aware of other key facets of Islam’s tremendous expansion during this period.<sup>56</sup> For instance, when the Arabs successfully conquered Byzantine territory to their west, they not only expanded their faith, but the Arab language and culture as well. Therefore, Egypt and the Levant, which were Greek (or etymologically Greek) speaking areas of principally Christian faith in 632, became almost entirely “Arabized.” By comparison, to

the area east of the Zagros Mountains, where the Sassanid Empire lost all of its power and most of its Zoroastrian faith to Islam, the Persian language and culture nonetheless managed to survive.<sup>57</sup> As a result, Iran never became Arab either culturally or linguistically, and Iran’s frontier with the Arab world has been one of the world’s great fault lines ever since. To be clear, the contemporary Persian-Arab divide that is so central to events in the region today can only be fully appreciated if the historical reasons behind it are understood.

### THE SUNNI-SHI’ITE DIVIDE

The third period meriting close examination follows the death of the last “Rightly Guided Caliph” in 661 and continues to the establishment of the Abbasid Caliphate in 750. Although many key developments occurred in this era, the most acutely relevant to our own time is the Sunni-Shi’ite split.<sup>58</sup> Of course, many future policymakers have seen evidence of this sectarian division in violent form. Case in point, the well-known al-Askari shrine bombing in February 2006, a seminal event of the Iraq conflict, brought the Sunni-Shi’ite struggle to the verge of full-scale civil war.<sup>59</sup> A course on the early history of Islam is needed to explain the key seventh-century events that underlie the bloodshed.

To begin, war college graduates should be aware that today’s religious discord began as an entirely political succession dispute.<sup>60</sup> When Muhammad died in 632, he left neither a male heir nor a will. Shortly before his death, he pointed to his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, and stated, “Whoever has me as a master has him as a master.”<sup>61</sup> A minority of the Prophet’s followers interpreted this as an anointment and declared themselves “Shi’atu Ali” or “Shi’ites,” meaning Ali’s partisans.<sup>62</sup> As a result, the first three *khalifa* are not recognized as “Rightly Guided”

by Shi’ites, although all Muslims do accept Ali as the legitimate fourth and final *Rashidun*.<sup>63</sup> After Ali’s assassination in 661, the dispute continued, and, nineteen years later, Ali’s son Hussein confronted a much larger Sunni army at Karbala in modern Iraq.<sup>64</sup> When promised reinforcements failed to arrive, the Sunni forces annihilated Hussein and most of his family.<sup>65</sup>

All Muslims consider Hussein’s death a tragedy, but for Shi’ites it represents the ultimate act of martyrdom.<sup>66</sup> In their view, Hussein died in a noble effort to salvage Islam from its errant practices, making the Karbala massacre the most formative event in Shi’a history since 661.<sup>67</sup> For them, the failure of Hussein’s allies to assist him was an unforgivable sin to be passed from generation to generation.<sup>68</sup> Not long after the battle, Shi’ites began mourning their perceived collective failure by worshiping Hussein and many of his descendants as saints and by participating in what eventually evolved into the highly ritualized (and occasionally brutal) festival of Ashura.<sup>69</sup> It is this religious attachment to Hussein that fundamentally separates Sunnis from Shi’ites, and the reason Sunnis see Shi’ism as a heresy.<sup>70</sup> A sizable portion of the discord and violence across the Middle East today is rooted in these transformational events. Absent an understanding of this historical backdrop, future American strategists’ ability to understand current Sunni-Shi’ite hostility will be jeopardized.

### ISLAM’S GOLDEN AGE, THE MONGOL TRAGEDY, AND THE ROOTS OF ISLAMIC EXTREMISM

A fourth and final era deserving attention is the reign of the Abbasid Caliphs, which stretched from 750 to 1258. In particular, two aspects of this rarely covered period warrant instruction.<sup>71</sup> Because it represents the apogee of the Arab Empire’s accomplishments, the Golden Age of Islamic civilization needs to be appreciated by American strategists.<sup>72</sup> In the words of the West’s leading scholar on the Middle East, Princeton Professor Bernard Lewis,<sup>73</sup> this period marked the “apex of human achievement” to that point in history.<sup>74</sup>

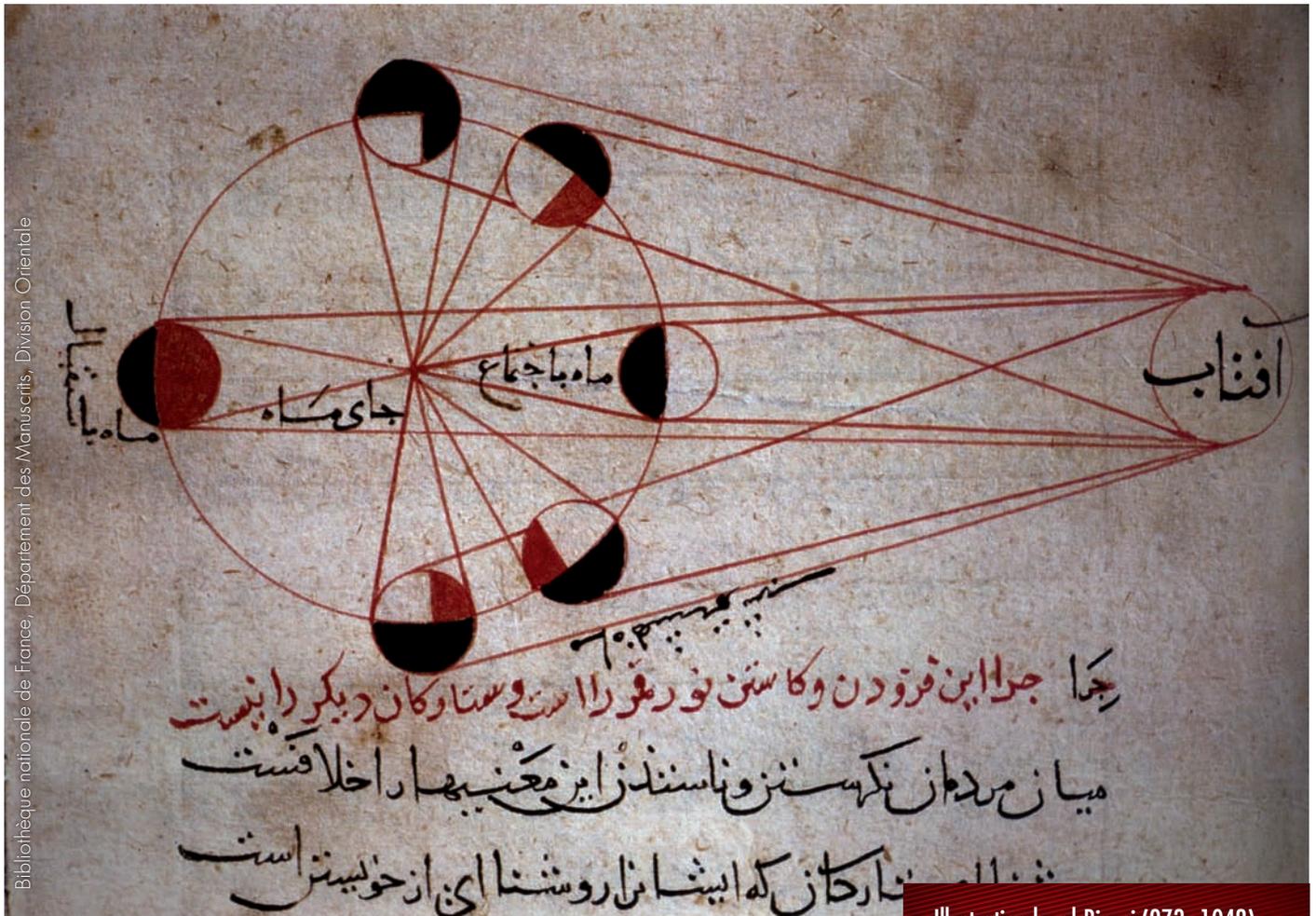


Illustration by al-Biruni (973–1048) showing the different phases of the moon

Under Abbasid patronage, Muslims of the Golden Age invented the algorithm and algebra and created the science of chemistry, musical notation, and the fundamentals of astronomy.<sup>75</sup> Through their work as translators, Muslims produced the “entire corpus” of the “recovered ancient learning” of Greek antiquity that humanity possesses today.<sup>76</sup> It is little wonder that President Barack Obama remarked during his June 2009 speech in Cairo that “It was Islam . . . that carried the light of learning through so many centuries, paving the way for Europe’s Renaissance.”<sup>77</sup> For purposes of public diplomacy, senior policymakers should be able to speak intelligently about the myriad Muslim contributions to human society this great age produced. This is especially so when U.S. officials engage with their Muslim counterparts.

Even more critically, future strategists need to acquire some understanding of the thirteenth-century cataclysm that destroyed vast swaths of the Muslim

world. Though often overlooked, in every sense these invasions constituted a “holocaust.”<sup>78</sup> In 1258, Mongol armies razed Baghdad, destroying virtually every building in the city and killing between 800,000 and 2 million inhabitants.<sup>79</sup> The Mongols also permanently devastated countless other cities and may have murdered as many as 18 million people across the region.<sup>80</sup> The city of Merv in Khorasan, Iran, suffered between 700,000 and 1.3 million deaths,<sup>81</sup> while similarly horrific massacres occurred in Naishapur (1.74 million killed), and Herat (1.6 to 2.4 million killed).<sup>82</sup> As one historian noted, the region around the central lands of Islam “never recovered from the Mongols. Never.”<sup>83</sup> Because of its continuing impact on the world view of Middle East peoples today, this piece of Islamic history needs to be considered when formulating strategic approaches to the region. This is especially so with regard to Iran, where the Mongol invasions “planted in the collective

memory of Iranians an abiding fear of foreign invasion . . . effects [that] linger to this day.”<sup>84</sup>

The historical and philosophical roots of twenty-first-century Islamist terrorism are also directly traceable to the devastation that accompanied the Mongol hordes. The ubiquitously recognized “Godfather of Islamic Terrorism,”<sup>85</sup> Ahmad ibn Taymiyya, lived in the immediate aftermath of the conquests, and the Mongol occupation profoundly shaped his philosophical tenets.<sup>86</sup> Taymiyya is credited with turning the concept of jihad from its traditionally defensive posture into an offensive weapon and devising the theory of Salafism.<sup>87</sup> He thus remains the principal guiding philosopher of the globalized, violent jihadist movements of the last twenty years.<sup>88</sup> Policymakers confronting Islamic extremism must be versed

in this period of history because, in the words of one Muslim writer, “it all started here, in the shadow of the Mongol holocaust.”<sup>89</sup>

## ANTI-MUSLIM NARRATIVES

In addition to providing an essential historic framework, an instruction block on Islam’s first seven centuries will shed much-needed light on a particularly dark aspect of American political discourse. In the decades following World War II, Americans tended to look at Arabs as a “backwards” people, though they did so without much animus.<sup>90</sup> After 11 September 2001, however, a battery of American pundits, high-profile Evangelicals among them, started promoting a virulently anti-Islamic narrative that often cited supposedly historic examples in support of their arguments.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, one of the best-selling books on Islam in the United States, Robert Spencer’s *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)*,<sup>92</sup> maintains that Islam is a religion of war that sanctions lying, theft, and killing.<sup>93</sup> These sources present a starkly “essentialist”<sup>94</sup> view of Islam, one that lacks genuine scholarship. Because such arguments place ideology ahead of history, they risk spreading a “pathology” of false assumptions.<sup>95</sup> Teaching future policymakers about the Golden Age of Islam in particular will help prospective strategists recognize and counter assumptions that are rooted in anti-Muslim rhetoric, instead of historical fact.

Recognizing the reasons underlying the sustained success of Arab armies

during the great conquests would similarly help refute anti-Muslim polemicists. For instance, the Arabs’ achievements largely stemmed from their ability to operate at night, with no supply line, under commanders appointed on merit.<sup>96</sup> They left local governing institutions in place, avoided quartering their forces among the local populace, and did not forcibly convert local populations to Islam.<sup>97</sup> The conquered peoples had to recognize Arab control, but the latest research strongly suggests this was accepted by many local inhabitants anxious to escape oppressive Byzantine rule.<sup>98</sup> Conquered populations paid a poll tax (*jizya*) in exchange for protection from outside threats (so-called *dhimmi* status) but were exempted from military service.<sup>99</sup> Ultimately, the Arabs’ success stemmed from their relatively benign treatment of newly conquered populaces as much as anything else. Evidence of this approach is readily seen, for example, in the Arabs’ decision to let Jews and Christians maintain their synagogues

and churches.<sup>100</sup> In short, teaching the history of the great Arab conquests would refute counterproductive and misleading arguments that Islam is a religion premised on forced conversion, brutality, and violence.

## AN IMPORTANT CAUTION

Establishing a course on Islam’s early history requires consideration of the topic’s controversial historiography. Beginning about thirty years ago, an often acrimonious debate emerged over the treatment of Islam’s past by European and American scholars.<sup>101</sup> The first protagonist in this dispute was the late Edward Said who, in his famous work *Orientalism*, argued that Western historians generally harbored a cultural bias impairing their empiricism irrevocably.<sup>102</sup> One of his chief targets was Bernard Lewis, who responded several years later by refuting Said’s arguments rather effectively.<sup>103</sup> However, as the post-11 September 2001 anti-Muslim narra-

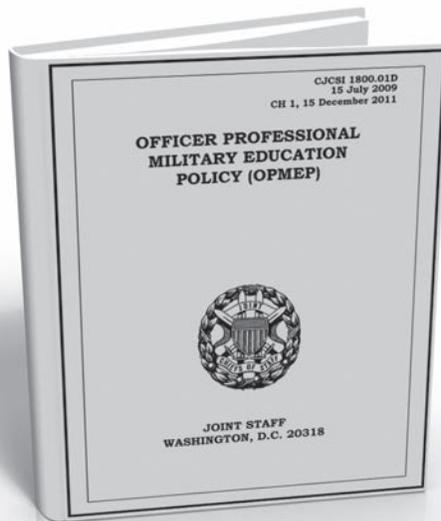


Islamic Celestial Globe, 1630 CE. This brass globe served both as a map of the heavens, as viewed from outside the starry sphere, and as a precision tool for making astronomical calculations. Engraved on its surface are various coordinate lines, constellation figures, and Arabic inscriptions. The stars are made of embedded bits of silver. The globe is hollow and was cast in one seamless piece. It was originally set in a cradle of rings, which depicted the horizon and other astronomical circles.

tive demonstrates, Said's premise still holds merit. In recent years, pundits and new historians have continued the debate,<sup>104</sup> and collectively they provide an important caution about the need to pursue objectivity with determined vigilance. While almost any course benefits from a dialectic approach, course directors and instructors should take care to avoid three areas of prospective contention.

First, the proposed block of instruction needs to focus on Islam in a strictly historical context and should not devolve into a class on comparative religion. Although the "religious" aspect of the Middle East may be of cultural interest and have a contextual role in planning, it should not be allowed to undermine the course's historical agenda. Regrettably, religious comparisons can lead to unhelpful, essentialist "anti-other" narratives like those fostered by Spencer and his supporters.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, religion's traditionally presumptive role as the primary cause of friction in the Middle East is actually starting to come into question. For instance, Graham E. Fuller, a former Vice-Chair of the National Intelligence Council and a senior Middle East expert at the RAND Corporation,<sup>106</sup> recently wrote that Islam, as a faith, matters so little to events in the region that American strategists should "act as if Islam did not exist in formulating policies in the Middle East."<sup>107</sup> This may be an overstatement, but it nonetheless supports the rationality of keeping the course's focus exclusively on matters of historical import.

Second, events of the last nine years demonstrate why the subject of cultural anthropology should also be carefully avoided. In this regard, Raphael Patai's *The Arab Mind* serves as a valuable warning.<sup>108</sup> For years after its publication in 1973, Patai's book received favorable treatment. In the 1990s, a CIA review even described it as a "significant scholarly contribution" to "social science research involving the topics of 'national character' or 'personality and culture.'"<sup>109</sup> Ostensibly, the twin purposes of such research were "(1) the prediction of the type of character that a given society is likely to produce, based upon



the sum total of its culture and social structure and (2) the demonstration of how character or personality, in turn, impacts upon the very culture and social structure which has shaped it."<sup>110</sup>

The positive reviews came to an abrupt halt shortly after the Abu Ghraib scandal broke. Investigative journalists uncovered that U.S. personnel developed the harsh interrogation techniques employed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, by relying on Patai's book and its cultural/anthropological conclusions.<sup>111</sup> The press revelations spurred significant soul-searching in the American anthropologist community and caused one leading academic to note, "It is high time we ask ourselves searching questions. Although Patai's book may not have been used as a torture 'handbook' at Abu Ghraib, it evidently provided an important component in the necessary stereotyping and distancing that underlies this 'culture of abuse.'"<sup>112</sup>

Although perhaps not as perilous as Patai's cultural determinism, matters touching on the subject of epistemology should also be left out of the curriculum. A recent book by former Voice of America Director Robert R. Reilly argues that many of the problems in Muslim society today stem from the historic suppression of Hellenic, rationalist thought by Muslim traditionalists and dogmatists.<sup>113</sup> The argument has merit but would invite a level of controversy potentially counterproductive to the proposed

course's goal of providing students with a useful historical framework for the Middle East.

Fortunately, avoiding all of these distractions is eminently achievable. So long as the assigned readings and lecture presentations remain focused on the region's historical context, the subject of Islam's early history can be imparted in a clear, empirical, and uncontroversial manner. That said, instructors can no doubt still look forward to lively student debate.

## CONCLUSION

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1800.01D mandates that professional military education build officers who understand the strategic implications of their decisions, while the nation's war colleges in particular are charged with ensuring America's future leaders possess the skills they need to assume positions of strategic leadership across the interagency.<sup>114</sup> To meet these requirements, the war colleges' curricula must be enhanced. No senior leader in the U.S. national security establishment shaping strategy in the Middle East should lack a basic understanding of the key events that form the historical narrative of early Islam. When Muslims are asked what the West should do to improve relations, one of their top suggestions is to exhibit a better understanding of Islam.<sup>115</sup> America's war colleges should oblige; ignorance of the region's past is a poor and dangerous alternative to expending the time necessary to teach the history of Islam's first seven centuries. A block of instruction covering the life of the Prophet Muhammad and his four successors, the key events of the early Arab conquests, the original sources of the Sunni-Shi'ite divide, and both the Golden Age of Islam and the reasons for its brutal demise should be a prerequisite for anyone who may someday help craft American foreign policy. Once equipped with this historic framework, American strategists will be far more capable of assessing the innumerable Middle East challenges that are certain to emerge in the coming years, whether political, economic, social, or military. Indeed, those challenges will

only be resolved if they are carefully and meaningfully analyzed through the lens of history.

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# NEWSNOTES

Continued from page 5

created a commemorative Web site ([https://www.ikn.army.mil/apps/mi\\_comm/](https://www.ikn.army.mil/apps/mi_comm/)) accessible through the Intelligence Knowledge Network (IKN). This Web site includes a schedule of events, branding packages, and other materials. More importantly, the Web site provides an avenue for MI soldiers and professionals—past and present—to share their part of the Army Intelligence story with photographs, artwork, and personal experiences.

Collectively, Army Intelligence has never celebrated its shared heritage and history. As the first major milestone observed as a branch and as a corps, the intent is to use the anniversary to highlight not only the past fifty years, but the more than two centuries of dedicated service that intelligence professionals have given to the Army. The command historians and their staffs are searching through the records for significant or fascinating historical documentation and photographs and are making these materials available online at the MI History Web site ([https://ikn.army.mil/apps/mi\\_history](https://ikn.army.mil/apps/mi_history)). This Web site includes the USAICoE MI History virtual tour, a photo and document collection, oral histories, film footage, a link to the MI Hall of Fame site, and an interactive timeline of MI history.

By highlighting the unique contributions of Army Intelligence to the entire Army and to the nation, the 2012 commemoration will help build esprit de corps and camaraderie in the MI Corps and its professionals, both past and present.

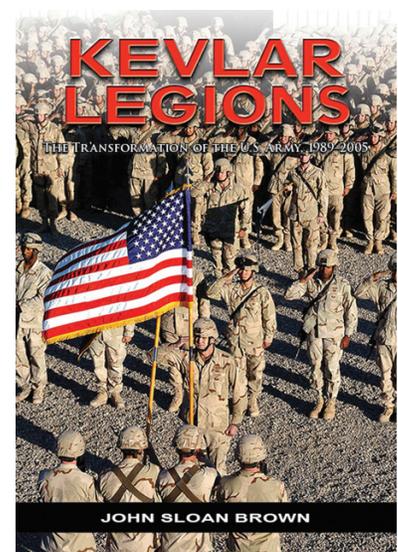
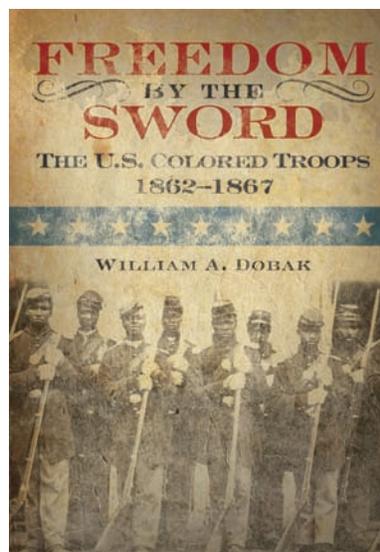
Please contact the committee through either of their Web sites to find out how you can participate. You can also contact them directly via email at [usarmy.huachuca.icoe.mbx.mibranch50th@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.huachuca.icoe.mbx.mibranch50th@mail.mil).

## CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY PUBLICATIONS WIN PRESTIGIOUS BOOK AWARDS

*Freedom by the Sword: The U.S. Colored Troops, 1862–1867*, by William A. Dobak, was awarded the 2012 Richard W. Leopold Prize, which is given by the Organization of American Historians every two years for the best book on foreign policy, military affairs, the historical activities of the federal government, or biography by a government historian. The award will be presented to the author at the organization's 2012 annual meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on 21 April. Dobak retired from the U.S. Army Center of Military History in 2010. He is also the author of *Fort Riley and Its Neighbors: Military Money and Economic Development, 1853–1894* (Norman, Okla., 1998) and coauthor of *The Black Regulars, 1866–1898* (Norman, Okla., 2001).

*Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of the U.S. Army, 1989–2005*,

by John Sloan Brown, received the 2012 Society for Military History Distinguished Book Award in the American Military History category. The award will be presented at the organization's 2012 annual meeting in Arlington, Virginia, on 13 May. Brown was the chief of military history at the U.S. Army Center of Military History from 1998 to 2005. He retired in October 2005 as a brigadier general after more than thirty-four years of service to the United States Army. He is the author of *Draftee Division: The 88th Infantry Division in World War II* (Lexington, Ky., 1986).



*Continued from page 3*

*the Army, 1989–2005*, by John Brown (which was released at the Association of the United States Army's 2011 Annual Meeting to great fanfare); *Then Came the Fire: Personal Accounts from the Pentagon, 11 September 2001*, by Stephen Lofgren; *Engineers at War* by Adrian Traas; Department of the Army Historical Summaries for Fiscal Years 2000, 2001, and 2002; the U.S. Army Chief of Staff's Professional Reading List for General Dempsey, a revision of the CMH Style Guide, the CMH Publications Catalog, the 2011 Army Historical Directory, and *Quarters One*.

We worked diligently with Native American tribal leaders and advocates refining the list of World War I and II Native American code talkers, while staying engaged in the design of the Treasury Department Medal that will recognize their contributions to the Army in both world wars.

CMH was a key part of "Task Force Buckles," the team assembled to coordinate activities related to the passing of the last World War I veteran, Frank W. Buckles, and we remained engaged from his final days through the funeral and associated ceremonies.

We dispersed the Fort Monroe museum collections and transferred the Casemate Museum to the City of Hampton, while providing continued support to the existing museum. Our team is leading the redesign of the United States Military Academy visitor center, transforming the story line from a West Point-centric to an Army-centric exhibit.

We saw our CMH Web site and Facebook page become the second most popular in the Army, with hits only ex-

ceeded by the Army homepage. Our historians and curators worked with media outlets and production companies nationwide to tell our Army's and our soldiers' stories—CMH is beyond a doubt an Army strategic communications giant! And we continue to forge strategic alliances—today we are advising the U.S. Navy on the care and management of its priceless collections.

As you can see, it really has been a productive year, and I commend each and every member of the Army historical community on your many accomplishments. Keep up the fine work!

The beginning of the year is a great time to look back, but most importantly it is a time to look forward. In 2012, the Center continues making progress to refine, realign, and better organize our programs. We are dedicated to providing quality support to history and heritage education and training. Our duty remains clear—we must focus on making leaders and soldiers "history conscious." We must strive to strengthen our history community and achieve indisputable relevance to the Army and the nation. In this way, we add value to our Army historical program and to our soldiers' foundational understanding of where our Army has been, and how our soldiers fit into both our Army's past and its future.

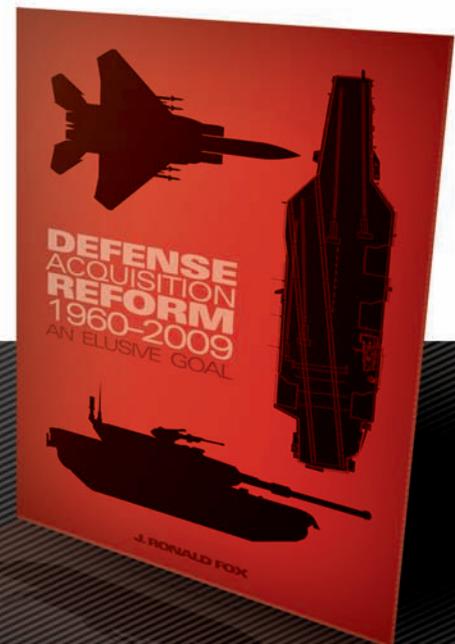
Together, we have accomplished great things in 2011; I look forward to even greater accomplishments in 2012!

Keep Army History Alive.



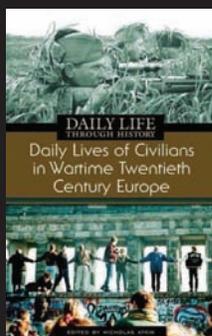
COMING SOON  
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**DEFENSE  
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REFORM  
1960–2009  
AN ELUSIVE GOAL**



# BOOKREVIEWS

## *Daily Lives of Civilians in Wartime Twentieth Century Europe*



Edited by Nicholas Atkin  
Greenwood Press, 2008  
Pp. xlv, 231. \$65

### Review by Andrew T. Wackerfuss

The Greenwood Press series, *Daily Life Through History*, has produced dozens of titles across an impressive array of historical contexts. This work is itself the sixth in a subseries on civilian wartime experiences and as such continues Greenwood's contribution to the field of military social history.

Nicholas Atkin's introduction carefully contextualizes the chapters to follow. His essay traces the intellectual developments that have led military historians to increase their focus on civilians and reminds the reader that, while combat experiences will remain at the center of military history, "new military history" of the past few decades prefers to see war as connected to society rather than isolated from it. Atkin ably outlines the literary and historiographical background from nineteenth-century tropes that insisted on the dramatic separation of home and front, to the collapse of these concepts with the twentieth century's more complex and all-

consuming warfare. He and the other authors, while wisely acknowledging that "total war" is a continuum rather than a sudden innovation, recognize that historical writing must follow a path toward totality as well. In other words, if the European wars of the twentieth century enveloped steadily more aspects of civilian life, then so too must historical writing on those wars embrace the civilian experience.

The book's chapters each present a major European conflict through civilian eyes. Two of these conflicts—World War I and World War II—have motivated much historical research on civilian experiences, and these chapters therefore contain fewer surprises. They are nevertheless still quite successful in their own right and also in highlighting larger themes across the volumes, foremost, that the civilian experience of war can often be boiled down to the general challenges of staying fed, staying warm, and staying out of harm's way. Even World War II, which introduced many unique horrors to the array of wartime perils, was for most civilians a universal experience of physical and psychological displacement. The chapters on these wars, by François Cochet and Nicholas Atkin, focus on evacuated and refugee populations, wartime governance, and the varied experiences of "total mobilization." Here and elsewhere, the authors concentrate on civilian agencies, social adaptation, and attempts to maintain or recover some semblance of normal life during wartime conditions. These are essential elements to include lest civilians become forced into the role of passive subjects of the state's wartime impositions. In European twentieth-century conflicts, civilians were mobilized rather than domineered. Both friendly and enemy governments had come to see popula-

tions as active agents in the twentieth century's "people's wars." Historians must also see them as such.

Chapters on lesser-known conflicts gain the additional strength of feeling closer to the ground, as their authors are able to present detailed and specific descriptions of life during wartime. Sam Johnson's account of the Russian Civil War compiles testimony from famous and anonymous civilians alike, such as Emma Goldman's haunting description of how St. Petersburg had degraded after years of conflict. Urban horror stories explain the considerable flight from Russian cities; yet other sections of this chapter show that existence in the countryside was similarly fraught with famine, forced evacuations, and constant warfare between the new regime and its many enemies. The bleak picture of Russian life during its civil war—and also, unfortunately, before and after it—cannot be discounted or disconnected from the purely military matters.

The same can be said for Michael Richards' chapter on the Spanish Civil War, in which civilians of varying ideological conviction became caught up in state and party political battles over resources and territory. But Richards argues that the reader must resist the urge to see civilians as only subjected to state or military whims. In this case civilian reactions generated increasingly violent means of conflict. Richards pays close attention to the militarization of the civilian mind-sets after the 1936 military coup, particularly the ways in which women, the Catholic Church, and farmers were caught up in this trend. These three groups were seen as traditional pillars of society outside of militant realms of the state, and yet during the civil war they all became both victims of and participants in extreme violence. As

Spanish civilians experienced the same disasters seen in other chapters—famine, disease, displacement, and the demise of public health systems—they began to aggressively target both individuals and social groups for political violence.

Frank Tallett's chapter on life during the Cold War stands out as a refreshing palate cleanser to the depressing parade of twentieth-century wartime horrors. He begins in a more theoretical and historiographical vein than most other contributors and could perhaps have moved more quickly to his central points on the cultural, economic, and consumer facets of the Cold War. While this chapter does not present as many details or specifics as some others, Tallett's synthesis of the Cold War's consumer conflicts would make excellent reading for undergraduate courses and general audiences interested in matching Cold War theory to its cultural and economic practices.

A final chapter by Maja Povrzanović Frykman rounds out the volume with an account of the Balkan conflicts of 1991–1995. As the chronicler of the most recent conflict in this collection, Frykman plows relatively unfurrowed ground compared to the other authors. She therefore is able to provide one of the most original contributions, with haunting descriptions and anecdotes of civilians dodging sniper fire, picking their way through streets torn up by tank treads, and showering with a single liter of water in a plastic bucket. Many of the accounts she describes were written in haste, in short moments snatched between visits to air-raid shelters and underground bunkers. Alongside these vivid descriptions Frykman also mobilizes her own sophisticated readings of the conflict, which question and undermine several myths about "ethnic hatreds" and other supposed roots of violence. The volume thus ends on one of its strongest notes.

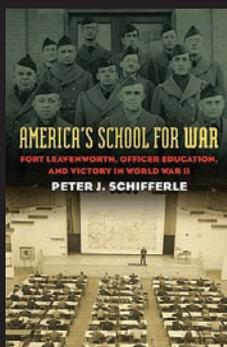
Overall, this work, like the others in this series, makes a valuable contribution to a broadly defined understanding of military history. While operational narratives and specific battles are largely absent, readers concerned with the social aspect of

wartime experiences will find much of interest. Many of Greenwood's books are targeted to advanced students as reference works. This volume is no exception, and it will therefore prove a useful purchase for university libraries and a productive assignment in a variety of classrooms. Interested general readers and military professionals can also approach this work with promise: the chapters provide clear analyses of complicated issues, and a bibliographical essay at the end offers many suggestions for further inquiry. Overall, the volume succeeds in its mission to inform the reader about the complex experiences of civilians caught up in Europe's dire twentieth century.

**Dr. Andrew T. Wackerfuss** is a historian with the Air Force Historical Studies Office in Washington, D.C. He holds a master's degree in European studies and a Ph.D. in history from Georgetown University, where he continues to teach as an adjunct professor.



*America's School for War: Fort Leavenworth, Officer Education, and Victory in World War II*



By Peter J. Schifferle  
University Press of Kansas, 2010  
Pp. xi, 295. \$39.95

**Review by Edgar F. Raines Jr.**

In *America's School for War*, Peter J. Schifferle examines the intellectual and professional impact of education at the Command and General Staff School at

Fort Leavenworth on the generation of Army officers who attended between the two world wars. A retired Army officer, a University of Kansas doctorate in history, and currently director of the Advanced Operational Art Studies Fellowship program at the School of Advanced Military Studies of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Schifferle is particularly qualified to address this topic. He notes that Leavenworth was the only school in the interwar Army "that taught the necessary principles, procedures, and techniques" for the new form of combined arms warfare introduced in World War I (p. 7). According to Schifferle, this new dispensation had three salient characteristics: effective integration of infantry, artillery, armor, and aviation in the battle zone; control of these efforts by a staff; and command by a leader separated from immediate tactical decisions. The officers who devised the Leavenworth curriculum drew directly upon what they perceived as the enduring lessons of the U.S. Army's combat experience in World War I.

In 1918 the American Expeditionary Forces succeeded primarily through massive bludgeoning of the German Army rather than a mastery of technique—although selected formations were gaining considerable skill by the end of the conflict. Their education came with a terrible cost in casualties. Officers from General John J. Pershing down realized that the Army's officer corps had entered the conflict largely untrained in the tasks required to conduct modern war "planning, logistics, organization, and the 'handling of large formations'" (p. 14). During the war, Pershing established a staff school at Langres, France. Initially staffed by British and French instructors, it sought to bring American officers up to certain minimal standards of competence in conducting positional warfare. The curriculum borrowed heavily from the prewar Leavenworth schools, closed in 1916 because of the mobilization on the Mexican border. The instructional approach cultivated at Leavenworth, the applicatory method, became the primary means of explaining the importance of the wartime experience for student officers at Langres. The Langres school, hurried and incomplete

as the instruction at times proved to be under wartime conditions, provided a model for the kind of postwar school system reformers sought to establish for the peacetime Army. The defining event in the creation of this system was a meeting of senior officers at Trieves (Trier), Germany, in the spring of 1919. It sparked “a series of conversations, orders, boards, and meetings that established a new and comprehensive officer education system” (p. 31).

The focus of the Leavenworth curriculum in the interwar period was on preparing commanders and general staff officers for service at division and corps levels. From time to time, senior leaders debated whether the school should focus on either command or staff responsibilities, but by World War II they still had not resolved the issue. Paradoxically, this lack of decision provided great benefits when the Army mobilized after 1939. Leavenworth graduates filled the higher echelon staff positions, but there were not enough graduates to fill all the command and staff slots in the eighty-nine divisions mobilized during the conflict. Most divisions received only two Leavenworth-trained officers—typically the division and assistant division commanders. But because they had mastered both the command and staff portions of the course, they were able to instruct the partially trained and untrained officers who reported to them in general staff duties.

Instruction at Leavenworth in the interwar period emphasized principles rather than technique. The training of officers at Leavenworth thus focused on the stabilized front, the use of combined arms and massive amounts of firepower to achieve penetration of such a fortified position, the employment of mobile combined arms teams to exploit a breakthrough, and the essential staff work to support each of these phases of combat. Schifferle argues that there was much more continuity “than is generally thought” between the battlefields of 1917–1918 and those of 1944–1945. “The use of combined arms, the command and control of divisions and corps, the use of artillery and other fires to reduce the strength of the enemy, rates of casualties, the pattern of the battlefield, and the requirement to create a break-

through were all effectively identical in 1918 and 1944” (p. 180). Technology affected how breakthroughs and pursuits were conducted, but this reflected a change in technique not principle.

Even so, the interwar commandants and faculties were well-attuned to the potential impact of motorization and mechanization. They included notional modernized units in student problems well before the U.S. Army could actually field such formations. By the mid- to late 1930s the school was teaching mechanized operations and “fully integrated air support” (p. 192). Nevertheless, “the base doctrine of the U.S. Army did not change between 1923 and 1945” (p. 193). This meant there was no fundamental difference in approach between Leavenworth graduates of the early 1920s and those of the late 1930s. The result was an officer corps that had a cohesive approach to the worldwide conflict that began for the United States in 1941.

Although Schifferle considers Leavenworth the key factor in the professionalization of the interwar officer corps, he has not written an institutional history of the school—in marked contrast to Dr. Timothy K. Nenninger’s classic study of the pre-World War I Leavenworth schools. Rather, Schifferle has produced what is essentially a sociological history of the Leavenworth faculty, command, staff, and students during the interwar period and into World War II. In the process he addresses such issues as “the great war’s effect on the officer corps”; the American Expeditionary Forces’ consensus on the essence of modern war; the evolving Leavenworth mission, the experiences of the faculty and staff with the applicatory method; the students, the conduct of classes, and the process of evaluation; the role of the Leavenworth schools in World War II; and the impact of Leavenworth graduates on how the Army conducted the ground war. Schifferle has left room for an institutional history of the Leavenworth schools from 1919 to 1945, but his work also suggests the utility of a study similar to his about the pre-World War I Leavenworth schools.

While there is much to admire in his approach and analysis, at times Schifferle mischaracterizes his findings. For example, early on he baldly

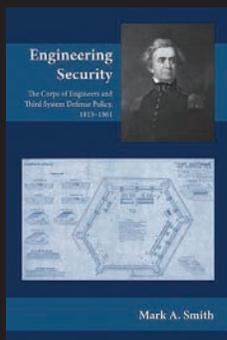
states that “General John J. Pershing had been so unimpressed by the staff work of the U.S. officer corps during World War I that he instituted a training school for staff officers at Langres, France, initially using French and British instructors” (p. 6). This contention is not borne out by the evidence that he subsequently presents. He notes that Pershing was impressed by Leavenworth graduates and that the curriculum at Langres was modeled after prewar Leavenworth. Surely it would have been more accurate to say that Pershing was concerned that the American Expeditionary Forces lacked a sufficiently large cadre of trained staff officers needed to conduct operations on a stabilized front under modern conditions. Because no U.S. Army officers had firsthand experience with war on a stabilized front, Pershing turned to the British and French armies to provide instructors with the requisite experience.

This and other quibbles are only minor detractors from a book that is extensively researched, clearly written, and brilliantly analyzed. *America’s School for War* should be required reading for all students of warfare in the twentieth century, not just specialists in U.S. military history. The University Press of Kansas has published a handsome volume that is the type of thought-provoking book that deserves a wide readership, a very long shelf life, and a second or even a third reading.

**Dr. Edgar F. Raines Jr.** recently retired with over thirty years as a historian with the U.S. Army Center of Military History. He is coauthor of *The Army and the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Evolution of Army Ideas on the Command, Control, and Coordination of the U.S. Armed Forces, 1942–1985* (CMH, 1986) and author of *Eyes of Artillery: The Origins of Modern U.S. Army Aviation in World War II* (CMH, 2000) and *The Rucksack War: U.S. Army Operational Logistics in Grenada, 1983* (CMH, 2010).



*Engineering Security: The Corps of Engineers and Third System Defense Policy, 1815–1861*



By Mark A. Smith  
University Alabama Press, 2009  
Pp. x, 266. \$54

**Review by David J. Ulbrich**

In his book *Engineering Security*, Mark A. Smith adds a much-needed monograph to the limited scholarship on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from the War of 1812 through the Civil War. He argues that, by directing the so-called “third system” of America’s coastal defense fortifications, the engineers created an ongoing need for the corps and played a major role in formulating the national security policy. At the same time, the engineers established a sense of professionalism among their ranks that incorporated what the author terms military and technical expertise. This study of the Corps of Engineers weaves together biography, politics, strategy, technology, and policy. The contextualization of the corps within so many fields makes this book still more welcome in antebellum American military historiography.

Smith begins by examining the third system’s antecedents before the War of 1812. Built by the fledgling Corps of Engineers and Artillerists between 1794 and 1800, the first system’s coastal fortifications could repel localized attacks but did not fit into any coherent national strategy. As hostilities with Great Britain looked more likely after 1807, President Thomas Jefferson and Congress supported construction of a new second system of coast fortifications that could defend key

points against invasions. After being separated from artillery and constituted as a military academy in 1802, the homegrown Corps of Engineers directed the construction of forts based on new designs by Marc René, Marquis de Montalembert. High masonry walls, called casemates, held two or three tiers of cannons firing through openings, called embrasures. Consistent with Jefferson’s desire for a small military and a defensive posture, the second system combined coastal fortifications, shallow-draft gunboats, and mobile militia forces. The War of 1812 demonstrated the viability of forts like McHenry and the inadequacy of the gunboats and militia as defensive measures. For Smith, the second system represented a transitional system that would set the stage for the third system in the years between 1815 and 1861 on which the bulk of his book focuses.

Smith argues that an effective fortification system can give defense forces the following advantages: “By closing off certain avenues of approach they make the assailant’s movement more predictable, limiting the number of routes a defending land force must protect” (p. 21). However, neither the first nor the second system could give the United States these advantages on a coherent national level. The reality was that the United States could not provide adequate defenses for every harbor, river, or low-lying area along the thousands of miles of shoreline. Thus, as the author points out, picking vital harbors or river mouths to defend represented the only viable option. The third system included several dozen forts erected from the Gulf of Mexico through the Florida Keys and northward along the eastern seaboard to Maine. The coastal defenses’ significance can best be measured in relatively generous funding from both Federalist/Whig and Republican/Democratic governments. Smith’s research reveals that, for all but ten years between 1815 and 1861, the third system received average annual appropriations of at least \$400,000 and sometimes in excess of \$1 million. He concludes that those years with lower appropriations occurred more often because of national economic downturns rather than partisan political infighting.

Several individuals played significant roles in steering the development of the third system. Indeed, Smith’s book is as much a collective biography of these men as it is an institutional history of the Corps of Engineers. Early on, the hawkish John C. Calhoun supported the efforts to build coastal defenses in his role as secretary of war under President James Monroe from 1817 to 1825. Calhoun fought to secure funds for the fortifications’ construction and to create a consistent defense policy to be developed for the third system. Another important figure in the early years was Simon Bernard, a French engineer with professional training in France and commendable service under Napoleon Bonaparte. After Waterloo in 1815, Bernard moved to the United States where he took a leading role on the Board of Engineers for Fortifications. According to Smith, President Monroe established this board in 1816 as a panel of experts “to plan a system of coastal defense, and in so doing to define the purposes and goals of coastal defense in America” (p. 39). Herein lay a significant antebellum example of how engineers were seen as professionals with both military and technical expertise that could be used to affect national defense policy. The board’s major report of 1821 influenced the development of coastal defenses for the four decades thereafter. Another charter member of the fortifications board was Capt. Joseph G. Totten. A brilliant young engineer who graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1805, Totten effectively put the ideas of Calhoun and Bernard into practice in the third system. He eventually rose through the ranks to become chief of engineers in 1838 and held that post until his death in 1864. Smith is no hagiographer of General Totten, however, because he believes the myopic Totten increasingly utilized his position to focus the Corps of Engineers’ resources on the third system while neglecting other projects and other military strategies.

In his chapter on the Civil War, the author analyzes how Totten’s third-system forts fared in that conflict. He acknowledges failures of Confederate coastal fortifications as evidence of the third system’s obsolescence. Neverthe-

less, at Charleston, South Carolina, in 1863, Smith shows that the Confederate defenses did not always collapse as expected in a new age of warships with steam engines and long-range, rifled cannons. In this same chapter, his discussion of interior ballistics is especially helpful in explaining why attacking forces gained a decisive advantage in firepower and why the masonry walls of the third system could hardly stand bombardments after 1861.

Smith's *Engineering Security* has many strengths that make it a worthwhile read. The author writes in active voice and supports his arguments with exhaustive research in several personal papers collections and in Record Group 77 in the National Archives. He likewise situates his book within the historiographical landscape. His use of the Corps of Engineers as a case study in professionalism corroborates William Skelton's assertions about growing military professionalism in his *Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784–1861* (Lawrence, Kans., 1992). Within the political context, Smith illuminates a pattern of limited defense appropriations that follows up on arguments advanced by Richard Kohn in *Eagle and Sword: The Beginnings of the Military Establishment in America* (New York, 1975). Beyond these, it is interesting to wonder how the author would have synthesized Brian Linn's *Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007) into *Engineering Security*. Linn spends much of a chapter titled "Fortress America" examining the Corps of Engineers and the third system. Linn and Smith agree that coastal fortifications were part of a defensive strategy to deter foreign aggression and protect the coastline after 1815. In his analysis of subsequent decades, Linn grows increasingly critical of Totten for allowing the third system to slip from an innovative coastal fortification scheme into his narrowly conservative vehicle to maintain the corps' hold on influence and funding. Linn's criticisms of Totten are similar to those in this book, albeit not as in-depth or nuanced as Smith's coverage of the longtime chief of engineers. It is worth

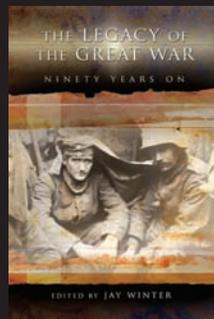
noting that Smith's book was likely in production when Linn's book was released, so it is not plausible to expect to find *Echo of Battle* in the notes.

No major shortcomings or mistakes can be found in *Engineering Security*. It stands as an important addition to literature on American defense policy, coastal fortifications, and the Corps of Engineers in the antebellum period. It should find a place on the shelves of scholars interested in these topics as well as those looking at professionalization in the U.S. Army.

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### *The Legacy of the Great War: Ninety Years On*



Edited by Jay Winter  
University of Missouri Press, 2009  
Pp. xiv, 217. \$19.95

### Review by Brian F. Neumann

With the centennial of World War I fast approaching, it is no surprise to see a volume addressing the war's legacy. But rather than a stale commemorative, *The Legacy of the Great War* shows how the war continues to be a

vibrant and evocative subject. Unlike the Civil War and World War II, which fill bookshelves with increasingly derivative and mundane tomes, scholars of World War I are still debating core issues and opening up new avenues of investigation. This book embodies both of these qualities. Edited by Jay Winter, it is a transcript of a series of "talks" between eminent historians held at the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial and other venues in Kansas City, Missouri, to mark the war's ninetieth anniversary. The five talks seek to answer questions on standard topics (war causation, generalship, soldiers' experiences, the peace process, and memorialization) but to do so from what Winter calls a "transnational approach," in which historians go beyond the nationalistic level to look at issues that impacted friends and foes alike (p. 7). In this vein the work continues the expansion of social and cultural history into the study of warfare but with enough guns and trumpets to satisfy a more traditional military history-focused audience.

The list of participants to the talks is as impressive as the topics discussed are central to understanding the war. The first topic, simply titled "War Origins," brings together heavyweights Niall Ferguson and Paul Kennedy. Ferguson lays out his argument for the war's global nature stemming largely from the British overestimating the German threat. Had Britain abstained from the conflict, as Ferguson argues it should have done, then the Germans would have won but the British would have remained the dominant global power for years to come. Kennedy responds that the war was not so much a mistake as an example of collective lunacy because the military planners failed to anticipate the destructiveness they were unleashing.

The next two chapters focus on military affairs. John Horne and Len Smith debate coercion versus consent as a motivator among the enlisted masses, while Holger Afflerbach and Gary Sheffield discuss generalship in the Great War. The Afflerbach-Sheffield chapter, "Waging Total War: Learning Curve or Bleeding Curve?"

takes the oft-argued point of German efficiency and British incompetency and turns it on its head. Afflerbach points out that the Germans were gamblers rather than innovators and they became increasingly desperate as the war went on. Sheffield, on the other hand, takes a more sober position on British generals, particularly Sir Douglas Haig. Neither an apologist nor scathing critic, Sheffield asks what British leaders thought they could accomplish and what legitimate alternatives were available and evaluates them accordingly. Through this approach he argues that the British improved over time, to the point that they were generally effective by 1918.

Horne and Smith take a more radical departure in their discussion, "The Soldiers' War: Coercion or Consent?" completely throwing out the coercion versus consent paradigm as overly simplistic. Instead they examine how soldiers in both the German and French armies created complex and nuanced approaches to combat, their relations with officers, and their conceptions of duty. Here the transnational approach comes into full display as opposing soldiers dealt with similar issues in remarkably comparable ways. Mutinies occurred on both sides when soldiers considered circumstances and expectations going beyond what they were willing to accept, and more often than not they returned to the trenches on their own accord once the situation improved. What comes through in the discussion is that there was a delicate relationship between leaders and men, in which persuasion is a more appropriate conceptualization of their interaction. Each side influenced the other based upon what they wanted to accomplish and what they were willing to accept in order to succeed.

The historians in the fourth chapter, "Ending the Great War: The Peace That Failed?" continue to get into the minds of the historical actors, this time the subjects being participants at the Versailles conference. Margaret MacMillan and John Milton Cooper differ in their views, the latter being far more sympathetic to President Woodrow Wilson, but both take strides to point out the very real pressures impact-

ing decision makers. Whether it was Wilson's fear of radicalism limiting his idealism or the Europeans' collective desire to gain tangible benefits from the war, the critical point that comes through is the importance of individuals and how they dealt with these challenges.

The final chapter, "The Great War: Midwife to Modern Memory?" is more unapologetically wedded to social history than previous chapters. Robert Wohl and Jay Winter debate whether World War I should be viewed as the watershed moment of the twentieth century. Winter contends that it is; it set in motion the political, social, and cultural movements that have dominated the world ever since. In this he echoes Paul Fussell's landmark work, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York, 1975), which both discussants recognize as a seminal work in the study of the war's impact on social memory. Wohl, however, posits that there was already a rejection of the status quo building across the cultural spectrum prior to the war. New trends in art, music, and culture evidence a rejection of Victorian mores that predate the war and that react to the conflict rather than being born of it. But regardless of their disagreements on the war's impact on modernity, the true value in the discussion is their collective analysis of how cultural history can be utilized and understood.

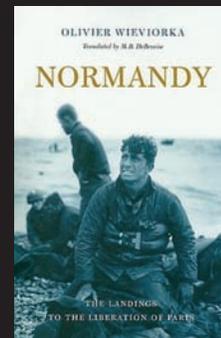
The discussions presented say as much, if not more, about how historians make their arguments than their analysis of the past. Winter provides a solid historiographical section in the introduction, laying out the approaches of previous generations that move from the postwar generation to the revisionists of the 1950s and 1960s and eventually to the "Vietnam generation's" rediscovery of the war as an example of monumental tragedy. Finally, Winter argues that the authors represented all practice a transnational approach that differentiates them from past historians in not only their movement beyond the strictures of national identity but also their ability to avoid the emotional rejection of the war that accompanied earlier efforts at social history. It is a proper introduction, as

the book is as much about the practice of history as it is the war. As such, *The Legacy of the Great War* is a valuable and enlightening read for scholars and enthusiasts alike.

**Dr. Brian F. Neumann** is a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. Previously he taught history at the United States Military Academy at West Point. He received his Ph.D. in American military history from Texas A&M University in 2006. He has written on the United States in the First World War and is currently conducting research on the U.S. Army in Afghanistan.



### *Normandy: The Landings to the Liberation of Paris*



By Olivier Wieviorka  
Translated by M. B. DeBevoise  
Belknap Press of Harvard University  
Press, 2008  
Pp. xv, 446. \$29.95

### Review by Peter J. Schifferle

Yet another book about the Normandy invasion? Is there room for one more appraisal of perhaps the most covered campaign of World War II? The short answer is a qualified yes. But is Olivier Wieviorka's *Normandy: The Landings to the Liberation of Paris* successful as an attempt to rewrite history, to remove the myth and tell the whole story, or in the author's words, to "free ourselves from the hold of

misleading commonplaces mobilized by legend” (p. 9)? His desire is to “recognize the young British, American, and Canadian soldiers who dashed forward onto the beaches of Normandy in the dawn of 6 June 1944 not as demigods, but as human beings” (p. 11). Perhaps a bit breathless and a bit too demanding for a comprehensive history of a massive campaign in 361 pages of text, but Wieviorka deserves praise for crafting a compelling narrative and a useful introduction to deeper study of this campaign and of World War II in general. However, the brevity of the book, and the sheer immensity of the campaign, creates several challenges, only some of which the author surmounts.

Divided into an introduction, thirteen chapters, and a brief conclusion, *Normandy* attempts to be a comprehensive study of the Normandy campaign, from policymaking, through strategy development, to execution on the ground, in the air, and on the sea. Chapters are devoted to global policy development of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States; preparation for war by these three nations and Germany; British and American planning for a second front; immediate logistical and operational rehearsals; deception operations; the German perspective; D-Day and H-hour; efforts to establish the beachhead; and the stalemate of June and July 1944. The author then inserts a chapter on combat exhaustion entitled “Psychoneuroses”; returns to the narrative with the breakout at Avranches; and reverts to a topical structure with a chapter on the Free French and a final chapter on liberated French civilians. Each chapter is the result of extensive research into secondary literature and some archival research, primarily in the American, British, and French archives. Wieviorka attempts, in every chapter, to identify the myths of the campaign and provide fresh insight into the reality of the events. The chapters on deception operations and on Free French involvement are particularly useful. Others are less compelling.

Somewhat disappointing is the author’s treatment of logistics and

its impact on strategy development. He appears to believe that logistics simply support strategy and finds it surprising that logistics actually inhibit and can control strategic options. Most military historians and military practitioners understand that logistics limit and constrain the development of strategies and operational concepts and certainly impact every military execution. This should not be surprising or, even more disturbing, considered a failure or an indicator of incompetence on the part of the Allies—which Wieviorka appears to believe.

Also insufficient for a book designed to shatter myths is the author’s acceptance of Russell Weigley’s thesis from *Eisenhower’s Lieutenants* (Bloomington, Ind., 1981) that the U.S. Army chose mobility over firepower in preparation for World War II. This thesis, significantly modified by John Sloan Brown’s *Draftee Division* (Lexington, Ky., 1986), Peter Mansoor’s *The GI Offensive in Europe* (Lawrence, Kans., 1999), and other recent works, is no longer considered the entire story. Wieviorka appears to be innocent of the developing thesis that the U.S. Army actually took a balanced approach to combat development and indeed relied on combined arms in both the infantry and armor divisions for success, including an appropriate reliance on artillery and aviation firepower. He also accepts the thesis of some of the German way-of-war advocates, including B. H. Liddell Hart, one of his two selected bibliography entries for the German Army, that the German Army remained operationally superior to the Western Allies, even though, as Wieviorka admits, the Germans never motorized more than about 10 percent of their army.

Another shortfall of the book, perhaps due to issues of translation from the original French, is confusing terminology and inaccurate language. The author (or the translator) occasionally uses imprecise terms. One example found early in the book characterizes the American response to the Japanese attacks in December 1941 as “the Americans had no alternative but to designate Japan as their principal adversary.” In the next sentence the

author states, “Washington made it clear that its main objective was Germany” (p. 15). This is not the only instance of confusing terminology or of unclear writing or translating.

Another deficit of the book is disappointing references, especially in relation to somewhat controversial or new synthetic observations. This occurs probably as a result of the author’s desire for a “brief but comprehensive history” of the campaign (p. 11). In one example Wieviorka observes that American women played a “relatively restricted role . . . in the war economy” but that German women “accounted for more than 51 percent of the labor force in the spring of 1944, in the United States it was 35.7 percent” (p. 44). There is no endnote for this statement and no reference in the text to the source of these statistics. Another error is inconsistent information. In one example the author states that the German armor division, *Panzer Lehr*, had 250 tanks (and 150 88-mm. guns!), yet three pages later, addressing the same time period, states that this division had 140 tanks (pp. 205, 208). He also has rather laconic endnotes, frequently citing a reference without annotation or comment. This is sometimes disconcerting when the reference is to an archival document, which itself is not sufficiently identified in context or form for the reader to judge the validity of the author’s use of the source. A reference to “See Medical Historian Papers, Campaign in Northwest Europe, 1944 June–1945 May, n.d. PRO, War Office 221/1496” (endnotes 12 and 26 to Chapter 10) provides little if any context to the value of the original document.

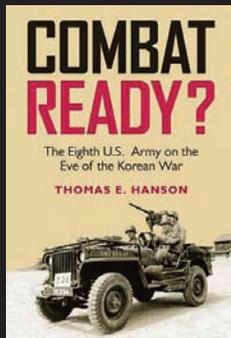
This book is useful as an initial digest of many issues associated with the history of the Normandy campaign, from its political and strategic planning to the effects on the common soldier of the intense fighting of June and July 1944. For the new student of World War II or someone beginning research into the Normandy campaign, this is a useful place to start. Wieviorka is to be praised for attempting a comprehensive narrative of this campaign and for attempting to slay some mythical dragons; however, the student of history will feel

the need to access additional volumes on each of the author's subjects for the detailed and contextual story behind his statements.

**Dr. Peter J. Schifferle**, a retired Army officer, is a professor of history at the School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. His book, *America's School for War: Fort Leavenworth, Officer Education, and Victory in World War II* (Lawrence, Kans., 2010), won the Army Historical Foundation's 2010 distinguished writing award for institutional history. He is researching a book on U.S. Army corps and division operations from 1917 to 1945.



*Combat Ready? The Eighth U.S. Army on the Eve of the Korean War*



By Thomas E. Hanson  
Texas A&M University Press, 2010  
Pp. xviii, 158. \$45

**Review by William M. Donnelly**

In *Combat Ready? The Eighth U.S. Army on the Eve of the Korean War*, Lt. Col. Thomas E. Hanson seeks not only to provide an account of how the Eighth U.S. Army prepared for combat in the year before the Korean War, but also to argue against the “traditional narrative” that condemns the troops of the Eighth Army for the reverses of the summer of 1950” (p. 12). The traditional narrative is that the Eighth Army was

filled with indifferent officers and enlisted men made soft by occupation duty and that their shortcomings were a major cause of these reverses. This narrative—which Hanson labels the “Fehrenbach School” after its most influential presentation, T. R. Fehrenbach’s *This Kind of War* (New York, 1963)—has largely been accepted both inside and outside the service since 1950, aside from a few exceptions such as S. L. A. Marshall. Blaming the soldiers triumphed for several reasons according to Hanson. It deflected blame from senior Army officers and provided Americans with an easy answer for the humiliations of the war’s first six months. Later, it became a useful example to support arguments about preparedness, as was done by Fehrenbach and General Gordon R. Sullivan during his tenure as Army chief of staff. Aside from the U.S. Army Center of Military History team that produced a study of the 24th Infantry Regiment in the Korean War, historians had not properly researched the relevant records on the Eighth Army from the year before the war.

Hanson combines his experience as a career infantryman with research that is both broad and deep. He used relevant primary sources at the National Archives, key secondary sources, and voices of veterans through interviews and memoirs. What he found is that after being relieved of most occupation duties in April 1949, Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker set out to make the Eighth Army a combat-ready force against a set of daunting obstacles. These obstacles and the tough tactical situations the Eighth Army faced are the actual causes of the reverses on the battlefield in the summer of 1950. Hanson suggests that the results would have been far worse had General Walker not been so focused on training for war, and he concludes that “enough units in 1950 possessed sufficient tactical skill to salvage a precarious operational and strategic situation” (p. 4).

The book first outlines the many problems facing the U.S. Army

between 1945 and 1950 and how those problems handicapped readiness. These problems began with the American people and President Harry S. Truman, unsure whether ground forces were a vital element of national security in the atomic age. This uncertainty resulted in inadequate budgets to maintain the Army’s force structure, personnel strength, and materiel. Next the author discusses the numerous obstacles to effective training in Japan, most of which stemmed from service-wide problems. The active Army was an all-volunteer force after early 1949 and the service could not enlist enough high-quality men. This obstacle was compounded by inadequate basic training throughout the post-1945 period. Overseas units suffered from constant personnel turnover that impaired cohesion and collective skills. The Army’s new career management system made it difficult to consistently supply units with sufficient competent leadership. There were widespread materiel shortages and much of what was on hand was worn out from hard use and inadequate maintenance. Specific to Japan, the most important obstacle was the lack of suitable training areas.

General Walker developed a training plan modeled on the system used during World War II for newly activated units: a progressive program from individual skills through each echelon of the unit, with testing done at the end of each stage. This progression concluded in December 1950 with division-level training. At that point the Eighth Army would be ready to defeat an invasion of Japan—its assigned mission in the only contingency American war planners prepared for, World War III against the Soviet Union. To assess the program, Walker directed units at battalion level and above to submit quarterly combat effectiveness reports. Although this plan faced significant obstacles, many combat arms soldiers welcomed the end of constabulary duties and a chance to improve their skills.

Hanson next follows the implementation of this plan in case studies of one infantry regiment from each of the four divisions in the Eighth Army: the 19th Infantry, the 27th Infantry, the 31st Infantry, and the 8th Cavalry. The case studies, which make good use of the quarterly combat effectiveness reports, provide strong support for his thesis. There are detailed descriptions of regimental officers working hard to improve readiness and of how the obstacles outlined earlier impeded their efforts. The author, however, does not explain why he selected these regiments. Most likely the 27th Infantry was selected because it was widely seen as the best regiment in Korea during the summer of 1950. If so, a better choice would have been to contrast this regiment with the 34th Infantry, 24th Infantry Division, rather than the 19th Infantry. The 34th Infantry was widely seen as the worst white regiment during this same period and its performance was considered so poor that the Eighth Army inactivated the regiment and replaced it in the division with the separate 5th Regimental Combat Team.

Three of the case studies end with the regiment alerted for deployment to Korea, yet the one for the 31st Infantry concludes with a brief discussion of the regiment's first combat during the Inch'on-Seoul campaign. Hanson does not explain this choice. Perhaps it is because the 31st, like the other 7th Infantry Division regiments, was ripped apart to provide fillers for the other three divisions as they deployed and then was reconstituted in Japan with replacements from the United States and thousands of impressed Korean civilians. Hanson credits the regiment's success in this campaign to the core of officers left in the regiment who had participated in Walker's training program.

Still, while the intent of the book is to counter the Fehrenbach School and not to analyze the combat performance of the Eighth Army during the summer of 1950, the

author provides an incomplete argument by following one regiment into its first battle but not the other three. Including a discussion of the other regiments' first combat actions also would have linked this book with another important revisionist work, Richard E. Wiersema's 1997 School of Advanced Military Studies monograph, "No More Bad Force Myths: A Tactical Study of Regimental Combat in Korea," which argued that the reverses in the summer of 1950 "resulted from trained professionals in senior leadership positions making decisions based on arrogant assumptions and a failure to understand their own forces or those of the enemy" (p. 46).

Those battles during the summer of 1950 came in a war neither the Eighth Army nor the rest of America had expected to fight. By challenging conventional wisdom with detailed research, Thomas Hanson's *Combat Ready?* is revisionism of the best sort, and he convincingly discredits arguments blaming the disappointments of this unexpected war's first few months on soldiers who failed to take their duties seriously. This is an important addition to the historiography of the U.S. Army and the Korean War and to any discussion about how to create units ready for combat.

**Dr. William M. Donnelly**, a senior historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History, received his Ph.D. in history from Ohio State University. He is the author of *We Can Do It: The 503d Field Artillery Battalion in the Korean War* (CMH, 2000), *Under Army Orders: The Army National Guard during the Korean War* (College Station, Tex., 2001), *Transforming an Army at War: Designing the Modular Force, 1991–2005* (CMH, 2007), as well as numerous articles in the *Journal of Military History*.



### Review by Nathaniel L. Moir

*An Loc: The Unfinished War* is a well-written account of the Vietnam War that focuses on the 1972 Easter Offensive. The author, General Tran Van Nhut, a former South Vietnamese Marine officer (1954–1964) and Army officer (1964–1975), provides both an interesting and informative perspective on the conflict without revisionism or rancor. Significantly, the work sheds light on the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) as a fighting force and the circumstances under which it eventually operated independent of U.S. forces through the “Vietnamization” of the war.

General Van Nhut, with Christian L. Arevian, does not offer an apologist treatise for ARVN, an organization often discussed derisively in some biographical and historical accounts of the war. Rather, he examines factors, both political and military, that led to the North Vietnamese victory. The eventual outcome of the Vietnam War was partially the result of the maelstrom of South Vietnamese politics, the complexities of Vietnamization (again, both political and military), and the U.S. government's “limited war” approach that imposed political constraints on execution of military objectives. These challenges are detailed chronologically through an important point of view, that

of an ARVN officer. Moreover, he provides a frame of reference for the battle of An Loc in early 1972 and helps describe how Vietnamization increasingly left the South Vietnamese to fend for themselves against the North Vietnamese People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) and an array of Viet Cong forces as the United States drew down its ground troops and the provision of airpower.

The first third of the book details the progression of General Van Nhut's military career beginning in 1954 after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu. Interestingly, the general had the opportunity to attend both the United States Marine Corps basic course in 1958 and the Marine command and staff course at Quantico in 1961. Technically precise task organizations and descriptions of tactical and operational maneuvers that are also intertwined with easy-to-read prose reflect General Van Nhut's solid tactical training and background. Further, there are a number of interesting anecdotes that describe South Vietnamese forces' operations against the Binh Xuyen crime syndicate in the Rung Sat swamps southeast of Saigon (detailed in Chapter 3, "Early Assignments"), as well as fighting with the Hao Hoa and Cao Dai religious sects. Chapter 3 provides a firsthand description of the Training Relations and Instruction Mission (TRIM) established by the United States in 1955 as a joint Franco-American effort to train the South Vietnamese. Later in the chapter, insight into the forced implementation and eventual failure of the Agrovillage Program (later renamed the Strategic Hamlet Program) is provided. These all too briefly covered subjects are a highlight for readers wanting to learn more about South Vietnam's armed forces prior to the introduction of conventional U.S. military forces in Southeast Asia in 1965.

After the first three chapters, General Van Nhut describes his participation in the coup against President Ngo Dinh Diem as a Viet-

namese Marine officer. Due to his popularity with his troops and his participation in the coup, General Van Nhut, a field grade officer at the time, was later transferred to the South Vietnamese Army. Ostensibly, this was done to preempt any cabals from forming that might threaten the oligarchy that deposed Diem. What follows are descriptions of the political paranoia that gripped the weak governments struggling to gain legitimacy in South Vietnam. In this regard *An Loc: The Unfinished War* is not for novice students of the Vietnam War, although historians will find much of interest—especially the explication of the 1972 Easter Offensive, the primary focus of the book.

With Vietnamization in full swing, the 1972 Easter Offensive was a tactical victory for the South Vietnamese military, but the offensive also indicated the strength of the PAVN and the resiliency of Viet Cong forces (despite losses during Tet in 1968). Although Vietnamization was a period during which South Vietnamese forces still received support from the United States and other allies, they received reduced assistance that continually diminished in power and consistency. General Van Nhut vividly describes sagging South Vietnamese morale as air strikes against known PAVN forces decreased, were turned off and on again (depending on the status of negotiations), and then finally halted. Regarding support for the South Vietnamese military, he suggests that Vietnamization should have begun in 1960 in order to achieve an independent South Vietnam strong enough to withstand North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. It is certainly arguable that the viability of Vietnamization would have been much greater had it been better planned and given more time; similar arguments have been made regarding the coordination of other programs, such as the pacification program, Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), that was not implemented fully until

1968. Of course, the corruption and unsustainable milieu of South Vietnamese politics, as the author notes, were primary obstacles to more effective courses of action.

While General Van Nhut acknowledges ARVN failures, such as Ap Bac in January 1963, he also discusses the codependent relationship that U.S. forces arguably fostered, intentional or not, as they took over the conflict as their own in 1965. The author would seem to agree with T. E. Lawrence's maxim that, to paraphrase, "the Host Nation doing something tolerably well is better than outside forces doing it for them." If Vietnamization had begun in earnest as early as 1960, the war might, of course, have turned out differently. However, when the reader steps back and assesses the politically confused state(s) of U.S. foreign policy at the time, which arguably drove the implementation of Vietnamization, there is much to reconsider for those who would blame or dismiss ARVN patriotism and capability.

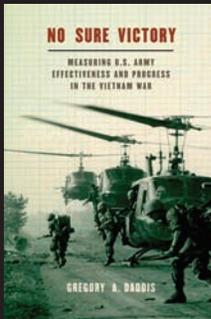
After the tactical success of An Loc, on which the 1972 Easter Offensive was centered (along with Binh Long Province to the northeast of Saigon), the author was promoted to commander of the ARVN 2d Division. The book does not cover the remainder of 1972 or the years of 1973 and 1974 in much detail but rather moves on to the critical early months of 1975. At that point, Van Nhut focuses on events that led to the final collapse of South Vietnam on 29 April 1975, as ARVN units eventually dissolved when faced by PAVN forces' occupation of Saigon.

Historians and students of the Vietnam War will benefit from reading *An Loc: The Unfinished War*. The perspectives offered on the formation of South Vietnamese forces after the 1954 Geneva conference, the 1963 coup, and the 1972 Easter Offensive (with its focus on An Loc), as well as the descriptions of how Vietnamization affected the overall outcome, are worthwhile and contribute to the body of literature on this still controversial war.

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*No Sure Victory: Measuring U.S. Army Effectiveness and Progress in the Vietnam War*



By Gregory A. Daddis  
Oxford University Press, 2011  
Pp. xix, 334. \$34.95

**Review by Andrew J. Birtle**

One of the most perplexing aspects of counterinsurgency warfare is this: how does one know if one is winning in a war without fronts, where the enemy is both everywhere and nowhere, and where the intangible can be as influential as the tangible?

In *No Sure Victory*, Army Col. and West Point professor Gregory A. Daddis examines “how the U.S. Army component of the Military Assistance Command in Vietnam assessed its progress and effectiveness” during the Vietnam War (p. 17). Ultimately, the search for viable metrics proved stillborn, as inexperience with counterinsurgency warfare, institutional biases, muddled

strategic thought, an obsession with statistics, false reporting, overoptimism, bureaucratic inertia, and disingenuous posturing by soldiers and politicians alike doomed efforts to produce realistic appraisals. The consequences, he argues, were catastrophic—misplaced efforts and the projection of an unjustifiably rosy depiction of progress that, when exposed by the 1968 Tet offensive, led to a public backlash that undermined U.S. war efforts.

The author points to some specific weaknesses in the system of metrics used in Vietnam. First, the system focused on data collection rather than analysis. The sheer volume and variety of information collected overwhelmed efforts to make sense of it. By measuring everything, the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), in effect measured nothing. Second, the author indicates that soldiers consistently confused operational effectiveness with progress. The two were not equivalent, Daddis says, for killing did not necessarily translate into winning. Third, the book demonstrates that all U.S. military chiefs in Vietnam, from Lt. Gen. Lionel C. McGarr to General Creighton W. Abrams, wrestled with the exact same problems of measurement and ultimately employed the same (misguided) solutions. Of particular note in this regard, Daddis argues that there was no appreciable difference between Generals William C. Westmoreland’s and Abrams’ systems of metrics. Both failed to produce meaningful measures of progress.

*No Sure Victory* is well researched, nicely organized, and lucidly written. The author backs his arguments with a judicious use of quotations and copious footnotes, and he frequently provides balance by explaining differing points of view. In short, this is a book worthy of serious consideration.

Of course no book pleases every reader 100 percent. There are a few points of interpretation where this reviewer differs with the author, but the discussion is going to focus on some broader, structural concerns.

First, *No Sure Victory* offers a macro view of the subject of metrics in Vietnam. It does not delve into the details of various programs, nor does it cover the important advisory system. Rather, it summarizes the nature of some of the metrics programs and places them into the larger context of the war. How the metrics were used, or abused, in portraying the war to the American public is really the heart of the book. This is an understandable approach, and many will appreciate Daddis’ interweaving of the two narratives—the evolution of the war and the evolution of efforts to gauge it. But the trade-off here is a lack of information on the systems themselves. Readers seeking details about the Pacification Attitude Analysis System and the results it produced will not find them here, nor will they find in-depth examinations of many of the other measurement systems used during the war.

A more troubling issue concerns the author’s tendency to blame MACV—which readers may easily confuse with “the Army” as the author tends to use the terms interchangeably—for deficiencies in measuring progress. In fact, the book wanders far from its declared narrow focus on “the Army component” of MACV. Many of the programs Daddis criticizes were not the exclusive provenance of “the Army component.” Many were either requested, designed, or imposed by the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, the White House, or civilian think tanks employed thereby—but not, to this reviewer’s knowledge, by the Department of the Army. Daddis mentions only briefly Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara’s penchant for numbers and systems analysis. Similarly, though he cites criticisms of MACV’s metrics by such non-Army luminaries as Thomas Thayer, Chester L. Cooper, and the RAND Corporation, he fails to mention that these same critics often helped build the very systems they subsequently would criticize. Consequently, the book leaves the

reader with the impression that MACV, and particularly “the Army,” was primarily to blame for the shortcomings in measurements of progress. True, the author concedes that no individual or agency, either in Vietnam or elsewhere, had developed a viable system for measuring counterinsurgency progress, but this admission is not made nearly as strong as it should be to counterbalance the overall picture painted by the book of unique Army culpability.

An example of the perils of the book’s approach, and particularly that of equating MACV with the Army, can be seen in the book’s recounting of MACV’s effort (unsuccessful in Daddis’ opinion) during the winter of 1963–1964 to develop new progress measurements. Not only was the effort spawned and shaped by non-Army entities in Washington, but the thirteen-man team (known as the Information and Reports Working Group) assembled by MACV to work out the details contained only three soldiers. Six others, including the group’s chairman, were members of the other services, while the remaining four—to include Thomas Thayer—were civilian analysts not connected with the Army. Without knowing these details, readers will mistakenly believe that the unsatisfactory products generated by MACV that winter were yet one more example of “the Army’s” failings. Given the interagency nature of both the war and the evaluation process, the author would have been on firmer ground had he cast his study toward examining the failures of the military writ large or of the U.S. government itself. Men in army green deserve criticism, but America’s inability to create a better evaluation system was not their responsibility alone.

A second troubling aspect of this otherwise well-written book is occasional lapses in word choice that may inadvertently convey a mistaken view. For example, in one passage the author says that MACV focused its energies on “establishing an analytical framework *that would illustrate progress* in the field” (p. 50). In an-

other, he writes, “*Desirous of showing progress, MACV instead* relied on statistics that illustrated effectiveness against the Vietcong. In doing so, more and more weighted their efforts to the military rather than the political struggle” (p. 53). Or, finally, that “the U.S. command *simply gathered numbers to prove* that it was making progress” (p. 41) [emphasis added]. Such phrasing might give the reader the impression that MACV not only sought to emphasize the positive in its *interpretation* of data (a legitimate critique), but that it *purposefully designed* the metrics system to produce positive results even if such results were not warranted. This reviewer does not believe the author meant to convey the latter interpretation, and he certainly does not prove such a view in this book, but the language used is ambiguous.

A final structural issue is that by focusing on the formal statistical methodologies, such as counting men killed or hamlets built, the book overemphasizes these at the expense of other, more subjective analyses. Saigon and Washington were awash, not just in numbers, but in subjective evaluations made by soldiers and civilians of every rank, as well as the press (which Daddis says was no more successful than the government in gauging the state of the war). Some of these subjective evaluations took the form of formal, periodic reports, others were occasional reports, oral testimony, or unofficial writings. All had an impact in shaping the perceptions of policymakers and the public. Clearly the author could not possibly deal with all of these within the scope of this work, but one can argue that subjective reports were just as influential in molding perceptions as the collections of statistics. Many, if not most, individuals distrusted the statistics to one degree or another. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson and other Washington policymakers specifically sought multiple points of view and even sent out special envoys to report back on conditions, in part because they found the statistically based reports unenlightening. Many

soldiers, including General Westmoreland, likewise preferred to rely on the subjective judgments of trusted individuals rather than upon the reams of data generated by MACV computers. Confusion over how to evaluate the kaleidoscopic conflict that was Vietnam engendered the search for measurable, objective metrics, but no one seems to have believed that the systems devised could substitute for knowledgeable judgment, and no one seems to have relied exclusively upon them in making decisions. Hence, we cannot truly evaluate the impact of the formal system of metrics either on perceptions of progress or on formal decision making when so many other sources of information rivaled the statistical reports for influence.

Certainly the United States would have been better off had it developed a universally accepted system that provided unambiguous and insightful information with which to gauge the state of play in Vietnam. Whether such a system was possible and, if it was, whether having such a system would have materially improved the war’s outcome, as Daddis seems to think, are difficult to say. According to the author and others, many of the metrics problems the United States faced in Vietnam continue to bedevil our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. *No Sure Victory* does not provide answers for our current war fighters, but it does illuminate a very important issue, and soldiers, policymakers, and historians alike would benefit from reading this book.

Dr. Andrew J. Birtle is the chief of the Military Operations Branch at the U.S. Army Center of Military History where he oversees the preparation of the Army’s official history of the Vietnam War. He is currently writing a book about U.S. Army activities in Vietnam between 1961 and 1965.



# ARMYHISTORY

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# THE CHIEF HISTORIAN'S FOOTNOTE

DR. RICHARD W. STEWART



## CAREER PROGRAM 61: SETTING THE STANDARDS FOR HISTORIANS, MUSEUM PERSONNEL, AND (NOW) ARCHIVISTS ARMY-WIDE

On 21 April 2011, the Army, for the first time, officially established a Career Program (CP) for historians and museum personnel: CP 61 (archivists were added to CP 61 as of 17 January 2012; they were a logical choice for our CP as opposed to the Information Technology CP where they had been lodged). This change is part of the Civilian Workforce Transformation process started by G-1 a few months back, but it was not certain for some time that we would have our own separate CP under that transformation plan. In fact, we came very close to being rolled up under the Public Affairs CP, and I don't need to tell you what damage that would have done to our community!

For many years we have had a Career Field (CF 61) for historians (0170), museum curators (1015), exhibit specialists (1010), and museum technicians/specialists (1016), but the personnel community had considered our community too small, at around 400 members, to warrant a full CP of our own. However, last year the Army senior leadership directed the G-1 to place all Army civilians into a CP if there was a natural fit, and, if one did not already exist for a particular specialty, it was to create one. After discussions with Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) officials, I suggested that we were not a fit with any other CP and they agreed. As a result, we have our own CP.

The benefits of the move to a full Career Program are many, but perhaps the most important is that our career personnel will have access to the full range of funded professional development opportunities that other career programs have had for years. We can now compete for functional professional development allotments and funds to send our people to civilian schools on a competitive basis to take courses and even obtain advanced degrees in our professions. It will open up the entire realm of funded functional training opportunities beyond those strictly for Army leadership, super-

visory, or management training. It will have, for the first time, a fully functioning career intern program for recruiting, developing, and promoting promising new historians, museum personnel, and archivists. So what is CP 61 and what will it do for us? And, perhaps more importantly to some, what is CP 61 not going to do?

### WHAT IS CP 61?

CP 61 will be a centrally funded, centrally managed (but only to a degree) program that establishes professional standards and career maps for historians, museum personnel, and archivists across the Army. It will establish the basic criteria for recruiting the highest quality personnel, providing them competitive access to the full range of professional development opportunities (funded courses and schooling, civilian education system courses, research fellowships, a career intern program, developmental assignments, etc.) that will allow us to retain and grow these individuals through career opportunities from GS-04 up to the Senior Executive Service.

### WHAT CP 61 IS NOT.

CP 61 will not have a fully manned personnel office that will manage all vacancies Army-wide in the history, archives, and museum program and arbitrarily be able to move individuals from slot to slot according to a master plan. The only career-tracked individuals who will have to move according to any central plan will be those small handfuls of career interns who sign up as new-hires with the express purpose of moving to a variety of assignments. They will sign a mobility and service agreement before entering the program, and they will move to a number of career enhancement assignments in their first three years of service. However, for most historians, museum personnel, and archivists, CP 61 will not direct any moves for the foreseeable future. Thus it will not be analogous either to the more

centrally managed Air Force historian program or will it be anything like the system in place to manage military officers with moves every three years, required schooling, and little or no choice in assignment.

### WHAT CP 61 WILL DO.

CP 61 *will* make vacancies in the history, archives, and museum community more transparent. It *will* provide more visibility for professional development opportunities along with competitive access to funding. It *will* provide a clearer picture of career tracks and career opportunities that individuals and their supervisors can match up with their Individual Development Plans (IDPs). And, it *will* set the professional career and development standards for all members of the community.

### WHAT WILL BE THE COST?

This will not happen without cost. We have never had such a program before and so there is a lot of spade work to be done throughout the Army history program. Working together we will develop the standards for each grade level and each type of position; create a multitracked career map; establish and enter every IDP in the community on a new automated system (Army Career Tracker); match up positions with developmental requirements (both civilian schooling and Army training and education); develop and manage short, mid-, and long-term budgets and place them in the Army Program Objective Memorandum (POM) process; create from scratch a new career intern program; and develop systems to review and approve applications for schooling, training, or internships. It is a long process that will involve active participation from many throughout the Army history program. While it will necessarily be guided by CMH because we are the *Center* of Military History, we cannot and will not develop this new CP in a vacuum. Everyone in the field history, archives, and museum program must help refine the characteristics of CP 61; elaborate the career tracks and maps; revise the Army Civilian Training, Education, and Development System (ACTEDS) for historians and museum personnel (key documents for both communities); develop *ab*

*initio* the ACTEDS for archivists; and help develop the necessary Web sites, processes, and communications strategies to make it all work.

### SO HOW WILL WE CREATE CP 61?

To start with, the Functional Career Chief (FC—the Chief of Military History, Mr. Robert Dalessandro) and the Functional Career Chief's Representative (FCR—the Chief Historian, i.e., myself) have established a Board of Directors including key personnel from the Center, TRADOC, the Corps of Engineers, and other field representatives. This Board of Directors has created several committees and subcommittees to generate ideas and prepare drafts of key documents to implement the program. These key actions and documents (a new basic Army historians orientation course, revised ACTEDS plans for historians and museum personnel, a new plan for archivists, a career intern program guide, and a plan for a better Web site) are critical to establishing the program on firm intellectual and practical ground. All of this, along with other key actions, such as creating and projecting a budget, fighting for training and development slots, and then actually managing the program, will eventually result in a much stronger and more coherent history, archives, and museum community in the years to come. It is not going too far to say that CP 61 will change the face of the Army history, archives, and museum program as we know it.

This is just the start of the journey. In the months ahead I'll provide updates on the Career Program's development at various conferences and in future columns, but you need to be aware of these changes, participate in these committees and subcommittees to the greatest extent possible, provide feedback on whatever products are sent to you for review, and help contribute to the refinement of the new CP. It's a good thing, and *you* need to be a part of it!

As always, I can be reached at [Richard.Stewart2@us.army.mil](mailto:Richard.Stewart2@us.army.mil).





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