



STUDENT ESSAY

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A SELF-DIRECTED OFFICER STUDY PROGRAM

by

Lieutenant Colonel Paul K. Van Riper, USMC

19 April 1982



US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA

United States Army War College

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Individual Research Based Essay

Colonel Arthur L. Stewart, Jr.

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I

INTRODUCTION

Until you learn to teach
yourself you will never be
taught by others.

J.F.C. Fuller

The Armed Forces have numerous programs for the professional education and training of our nation's military officers. These programs provide courses of instruction at certain stages of an officer's career or before specific assignments. Such courses are conducted at military schools, in civilian colleges and universities, or are provided through correspondence studies. None, however, is meant to fill the need for continuing education. The responsibility for professional development between periods in formal programs rests with the individual officer.

This responsibility does not stem from laws or regulations as it does in some other professions, but is inherent in the nature of the military officer's calling. It is inherent because the body of knowledge which constitutes the art and science of war is not only broad and deep, but is also dynamic. Thus, an officer can never truly complete his education. Learning must be a never-ending process.

This fact is generally recognized by most officers. Senior leaders frequently call attention to the unwritten requirement for self-directed study. Similarly, officers' guides of all the Services discuss the need for each officer to use some of his free time for professional education.

In striving to meet the obligation of professional development during the nearly twenty years of my career, I have often wished for some sort of an outline or guide to help me structure and improve my efforts. Although I have sought such an instrument I have never found one. Recommended

reading lists published by different institutions have been of some help, but they rarely differentiate between the needs of junior, mid-level, and senior officers. Moreover, the majority of these lists are so long and comprehensive that they tend to overawe one and make it difficult to decide where to begin.

Several years ago I distilled some of my thoughts on the subject and sketched out a simple graphic (Figure 1) to portray how an officer might direct his study over the length of his career. While this sketch helped me to understand the problem in a conceptual way, it had little practical utility. Then in September 1981, a letter to the editor of the U.S. Army's professional journal, Parameters, caught my attention and caused me to again consider the need for a continuing education study guide.

Major General David W. Gray, USA Retired, commenting on a recommendation by General Maxwell D. Taylor that "an officer should take 'complete professional fitness' in all its aspects as his permanent goal," suggested:

. . . that each young officer should set forth the guidelines which he intended to follow throughout his career. These guidelines would encompass principles of conduct as well as skills essential to professional fitness, including not only those of a purely physical or technical nature but also those designed to train and discipline the mind. Presumably these skills would be modified or expanded as the officer progressed in rank.¹

Major General Gray, reflecting on the difficulties of following this suggestion continued:

. . . I doubt the ability of most young officers to unilaterally develop a full and effective program. Personally, I am certain that I could now do a much better job than I could have in my early commissioned years when the elements of such a program were at best only dimly perceived by me. For this reason I would think it appropriate for the Army to promulgate general guidelines which could then be used by the individual officer to develop in detail a program suited to his specific needs.²

This recommendation motivated me to undertake the

development of my own guide for "professional fitness" through self-directed continuing education.

A review of various studies on officer education, discussions with other officers, and an examination of articles published in the major military journals over the last ten years provided me with a list of subjects that might be appropriate for inclusion in the guide. From this list I selected those subjects I consider most important and grouped them into three categories; military history, communications, and the humanities. Though I could have properly limited the subjects to those wholly military in character, I believe this to be too narrow an approach. Therefore, while I emphasize military related subjects I include others designed to improve the "whole man."

The sequencing of subjects and categories in this paper is not an indication of their relative importance. The importance of a subject is to be determined by each officer based upon many individually unique factors. As examples, present grade, past and future assignments, the resources and opportunities available at a duty station, or weaknesses identified in a specific field of knowledge are all factors to be considered. An officer stationed in Europe might decide that the opportunities available place travel and language study at the top of his list. Another assigned to an alert crew with many idle hours available might elect to begin a reading program in military history. Still another stationed in a large metropolitan area, might feel that access to the fine and performing arts make it an ideal time for him to expand his horizons in these fields.

The guide for each subject is designed to answer three questions. First, why should an officer study or learn about the subject? Second, what are the important elements of the subject? Third, how can the subject best be studied? A guide for each of the subjects is contained in the next three sections.

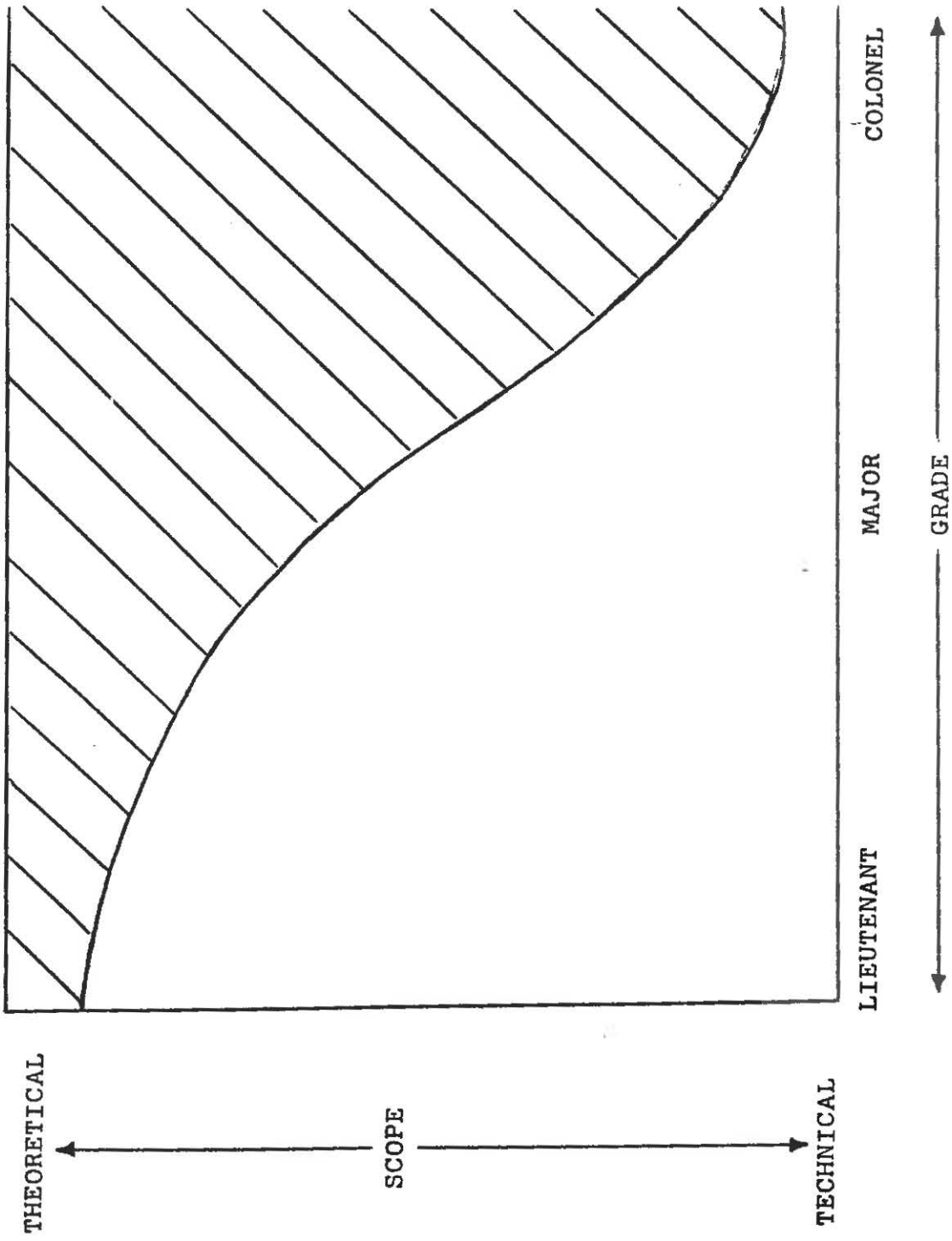


Figure 1
A Career-Length
Professional Study Program

II

MILITARY HISTORY

. . . Our own generation is unique, but sadly so, in producing a school of thinkers who are allegedly experts in military strategy and who are certainly specialists in military studies but who know virtually nothing of military history³

Why Study

With few exceptions, today's military officers have had little exposure to military history in their professional schooling. This contrasts sharply with the situation before World War II when the study of military history was a central feature of nearly all officer education.

What has caused such a dramatic change? There have been many reasons. The primary one, though, is that advances in technology over the past forty years have required officers to learn many new and diverse skills in formal schools at the expense of studying traditional subjects such as history. Also, the time available for self-directed study has decreased as the perceived need to "do" has led to more involvement in activities such as administration and training. Moreover, during this same period some officers and historians questioned the practical value of military history. For example, Walter Millis wrote in 1961:

It is the belief of the present writer that military history has largely lost its function . . . it is not immediately apparent why the strategy and tactics of Nelson, Lee or even Bradley or Montgomery should be taught to the young men who are being trained to manage the unmanageable military colossi of today . . .⁴

An honor graduate of the Naval War College illustrated how wide-spread this feeling is when he said "he could see no sense in studying the Peloponnesian Wars because the means of transport and communication were so different in 1972 from

what they were in 431 B.C."⁵

Today, many contemporary critics are attacking the de-emphasis of military history instruction. Many of these critics attribute the shortcomings and failures of our armed forces during the past three decades to the officer corps' inability to use the "lessons of history" to adapt to the new situations they have faced. Jeffrey Record writes, "Inattention to the history of warfare is perhaps the greatest weakness in the training of American military officers."⁶ Edward N. Luttwak, discussing officer education, states that "military history is treated as if it were a marginal embellishment instead of being recognized as the very core of military education, the record of trial and error on which today's methods can be based."⁷

These and other modern critics need only remind us of the words of the military notables of the past to support their contention that an understanding of military history is fundamental to developing the knowledge an officer needs to be successful on the battlefield. Napoleon, for example, in offering advice meant for his son, said, "Let him read and meditate upon the wars of the great captains; it is the only way to learn the art of war."⁸ And, Jomini observed that "military history, accompanied by sound criticism, is indeed the true school of war."⁹ Writing to his son, General George S. Patton, Jr. said, "to be a successful soldier you must know history."¹⁰

If we look no further than to these few memorable phrases from the leaders of the past, however, the basic question still remains; why, specifically, should an officer today study military history? Fortunately, the words of Napoleon, Jomini, Patton and others have been echoed through the years by numerous military leaders and historians who have given us more particular reasons why the study of military history is important. These reasons can be grouped into

three general categories.¹¹

In the first category military history is considered as the "laboratory" of the professional soldier. As Michael Howard observes, "If there are no wars in the present in which the professional soldier can learn his trade, he is compelled to study the wars of the past."¹² Only through such study can an officer gain the experience, albeit vicarious experience, he must have if he is not to be surprised by the realities of the battlefield. Even the experiences of the most combat seasoned veteran are limited by the obvious fact that he could have been in only one place at one time during any battle, and the number of engagements he could participate in are bounded by the years he lives. Studying military history, however, overcomes most of these limitations, for as Liddell Hart noted, "There is no excuse for any literate person if he is less than three thousand years old in mind."¹³

Thus, through the experiences acquired by reading and study an officer can gain the perspective, inspiration, and wisdom he will need to command and lead men on the battlefield. With perspective he will realize he is not the first to know the anxieties and fears of leading men in combat. And his tasks will not seem so unique. He will be aware that others have faced similar situations in the past and triumphed. The examples provided by those who have been most successful will serve to inspire him. In examining the past he will develop some wisdom concerning the capabilities and limitations of men on the battlefield and an insight on how to lead them.

A thorough review of the various conflicts which have occurred over the ages will enable an officer to isolate those critical variables of which he needs to be aware. He will also be able to distill certain principles and patterns which have remained relatively constant and which he might therefore judiciously apply.

Wisdom in war comes from experience and the greatest source of experience for an officer is military history.¹⁴ This is as it should be, for as Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy observes, "modern warfare always will be an extrapolation from past warfare" ¹⁵

The second category of reasons for studying military history encompasses the intellectual training and discipline it provides. As noted in a recent article on the merits of history, many of the eminent commanders and strategists of the past:

. . . did not consider the tactical schooling of leaders as the most important item of their professional equipment; they esteemed above all an intellectual training derived from a comparative study of the past.¹⁶

Historical study, as a learning activity, will expand an officer's general as well as professional knowledge. His analytical powers will be increased as he recognizes and considers the many diverse ways of approaching military problems. He will also satisfy that natural inquisitiveness in every human to know more about the world, its inhabitants and their ancestors. And the longer he examines the past the more likely it is that he will be able to make judgements and draw conclusions which are of value.

The third category of reasons for an officer to be schooled in military history is for the help it provides in developing and placing into context professional concepts. Fundamentally, the study of military history orients an officer within his calling, instills in him the values of the military institution he serves, inspires loyalty, and reinforces existing traditions.¹⁷ Furthermore, it enables him to see how military affairs have related to the larger concerns of his and other nations throughout the ages. A knowledge of history also allows an officer to understand the interaction of the various forces that have shaped the military profession and permits him to view current problems in

the perspective of decades and centuries rather than months and years.

Perhaps, however, when all is said and done:

. . . the entire question as to whether or not military history remains relevant is misleading and misconceived. Whether we want it or not, that history is with us -- indeed is us -- and molds our every thought and action. If that is not reason enough to study it with the utmost attention, nothing is or can be.¹⁸

How to Study

Having provided to the reader at this point many reasons for studying military history, I must now answer the question of how to approach a study of the subject.

In what has come to be regarded as a classic article, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," Michael Howard in 1961, offered three fundamental rules for the officer who studies military history.¹⁹ The first of these is to study in width. For an officer to comply with this rule he must understand the manner in which warfare has evolved over the centuries. As Michael Howard warns, an officer has to look for the discontinuities so that he will be able to deduce what are the real continuities. He can not allow himself to see only uninterrupted and coherent patterns, for history never precisely repeats itself. Sir Julian Corbett warned of the same thing years ago when he wrote, "the value of history in the art of war is not only to elucidate the resemblances of past and present, but also their essential differences."²⁰

An excellent device to assist an officer in organizing the study of military history in breadth is a conceptual tool known as recurring themes or threads of continuity. The Naval War College and the U.S. Military Academy both organize their study of military history around this device.

These threads and themes enable an officer to consider an aspect of war by placing it in perspective over a period of time. See Appendix A for a listing of recurring themes and threads of continuity.

Michael Howard's second rule is to study in depth. To do this an officer should take one campaign or battle and examine it in minute detail. He should read everything available, "not simply from official histories but from memoirs, letters, diaries, even imaginative literature," in order to recreate the experience for himself.²¹ Simply put, he must try to understand "what really happened."²²

The last rule is to study in context. To meet this requirement an officer must consider military history as only one component of a larger stream made up of political, diplomatic, economic, and social history. Wars are not fought on a separate plane removed from these other environments. To study wars in isolation is to invite errors in the knowledge one seeks to gain.

Beyond the general rules offered by Michael Howard there are more specific recommendations for studying military history. A common, though not universally accepted, recommendation is for an officer to begin with the study of the most recent wars.²³ Today, that would mean the Soviet-Afghanistan conflict and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. The rationale for starting in an order of reverse chronology is the belief that conditions in these conflicts are more likely to be similar to those an officer could expect to meet if his nation went to war in the near future. I would caution against following this recommendation in its most literal sense, for all of history has something to offer the present. Relevancy does not necessarily follow a chronological path.

Regardless of the era an officer selects to study, there seems to be some agreement among historians that he should adopt an approach such as follows:

- (1) Read a general history on warfare.

- (2) Read one "pro" and one "con" account of the leader, campaign, or action under examination.
- (3) Read all other available records. If the records or books have indexes they may be used to save time.
- (4) Do not hesitate to disagree with the conclusions of authors if necessary. It is best to have a critical approach.
- (5) [Be familiar with the political, diplomatic, economic and] social history of the war or period²⁴

Another slightly different plan is to begin with biographies, one "pro" and one "con" if available.²⁵ The originator of this concept cautions against relying on autobiographies because of the great likelihood they will be self-serving. After the biographies, "books by war correspondents and journalists can be of great value if trouble is taken to ascertain the writer's background."²⁶ Also to be considered are historical novels. Finally, are the official histories if they have been written since the end of World War II. Earlier ones are subject to considerable weakness since the building of a myth (national, personal, or unit) often overshadowed accuracy in their preparation.²⁷

In all cases, however:

. . . one must learn to read actively rather than passively; one must learn to formulate questions before one begins reading and to perfect these questions while one is reading. One formulates questions that actively engage the subject matter at hand. In short, to read history effectively is to engage in a kind of dialogue with the written page. Soaking up information like an intellectual sponge is not enough; one may learn a lot of facts that way, but so what? Insight comes when the reader begins to make those facts work at answering the questions he propounds as he goes along.²⁸

Though an officer must formulate his own questions before and during the reading I suggest that he consider some of the following fundamental issues:

- (1) How are armies formed, that is, with conscripts volunteers, mercenaries, or militia?

(2) Why do armies fight? Examples might be religion, nationalism, ideology, or discipline.

(3) How do armies fight; with shock tactics, fire-power, position defense, or maneuver?

(4) What are the relationships between the armed forces? This is often determined by the geographical position of the state as it was for many years when the United States was able to use its navy to provide an off-shore defense while keeping its army relatively small.

(5) Who directs the employment of the armed forces; a soldier-king, chief executive, commanding general, general staff, or legislature?

(6) How are armies sustained?

(7) How are wars ended; through exhaustion; negotiated settlement, surrender, or destruction?²⁹

Even though an officer understands the rules to follow when studying history he must still proceed carefully for "not only is haphazard study of history inadequate, but, as with many other things, a little knowledge can be dangerous."³⁰ In this regard, a series of cautions provided by Professor Jay Luvaas in a recent article can profit the novice as well as the experienced student of military history. The first admonition is to remember "that solutions to problems are not to be viewed as interchangeable parts."³¹ What worked in one situation may not work in an apparently similar one. Erroneous conclusions misapplied could spell disaster.

Similarly, one is cautioned not "to compress the past into distinctive patterns" and not to believe something "is necessarily proven by citing examples from history."³² If an officer is determined to find "lessons" from the past he will contrive the facts until he does so. The results will have no value. Yet, if the originator is convincing enough he may have the unfortunate effect of leading others to believe that what they are studying is history, not history as distilled by

the principles or doctrines he has "discovered."³³

With the above suggestions and cautions in mind and after an officer has selected a battle or campaign to study, the final question is, what methods are appropriate for studying and analyzing the material? Three excellent methods are offered in A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History published by the Army's Center of Military History. Any of the three will lead the student through the battle or campaign in an orderly and logical fashion. The first is to conduct the analysis following the format of the commander's estimate, a format familiar to most officers. The next is to ask and then answer a series of questions designed to lead one through the action: "who was involved? (2) what happened? (3) when did it happen? (4) where did it happen? (5) how did the action develop? (6) why did things progress as they did? and (7) what was the significance of the action?"³⁴ Last, is to take narrative notes organized in the following fashion:

- Evaluation of the strategic situation (period of history; war; international adversaries; principal events leading up to the battle, campaign, or conflict analyzed).
- Review of the tactical setting (location; any terrain advantages held by either antagonist; approximate force ratios; types of forces if relevant; feasible courses of action available to antagonist).
- List of other factors affecting the event (effects of terrain or weather; special advantages or disadvantages possessed by antagonists).
- Synopsis of the conduct of the event (opening moves; salient features; outcome).
- Assessment of the significance of the event.³⁵

What to Study

When an officer is convinced of the value of studying military history and has developed some understanding of how to approach the subject he has only one remaining hurdle --

deciding what to study. Although it would be impossible in this paper to prepare a comprehensive list of books applicable to all officers, some definitive guidance is possible,

The decision of what to study should be influenced by the grade and experience of the officer concerned. As Clausewitz noted, the knowledge that is studied is determined by responsibility, with junior officers focused upon more limited objectives and senior officers upon wider and more comprehensive ones.³⁶ Lieutenants and captains should be more concerned about the tactical and technical aspects in their studies of history while colonels should be concerned about the operational, strategical, and theoretical issues. Majors and lieutenant colonels are transitioning in their concerns, thus they have interests in both areas.

With this emphasis in mind I have prepared suggested reading lists for lieutenants and captains, majors and lieutenant colonels, and colonels as shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4, respectively. There will be many occasions when an officer finds a need to study a book suggested for senior or junior officers. He should not hesitate to do so because of the way I have categorized them. In fact, a senior captain would do well to begin reading those books recommended for majors, and lieutenant colonels those books recommended for colonels. Field grade officers would also profit from re-reading some works suggested for company grade officers, particularly the classics such as those by Ardant du Picq, S.L.A. Marshall, and Rommel. The lists are only used to reflect the emphasis of an officer's study. This is shown graphically in Figure 5, a revision of Figure 1.

A fourth list, Figure 6, contains standard references of value to officers of all grades. Each of the lists has been compiled from recommendations made by experienced officers and noted historians as well as from bibliographies contained in a variety of publications. The books on the

lists should be considered as the nucleus of an officer's professional library. Certainly every officer should strive to add to these lists based on his own needs. He should set a goal to read a minimum of four military history books a year. In all of his efforts, however, he must remember that, "the study of history is not a great search for details in the pages of dusty books; it involves the discovery of knowledge in the broadest sense and the enrichment of the intellect."³⁷

Although the study of history for most officers consists primarily of reading books, there are other aspects to be considered. When original records are near at hand and the time is available some might find research of official chronologies and reports profitable. Others, fortunate enough to be stationed near a college or university that offers courses in military history, might enroll in evening classes. An important adjunct to the study of military history which is available to most officers, but which is often overlooked, is a visit to a battlefield. One should not lose the opportunity to study history "on scene" whenever possible.

Battlefield visits offer many rewards not found on the written page. As a minimum, an officer gains understanding as he walks the ground and surveys the terrain; understanding as to the merits of unit dispositions, the ease or difficulty of movement, and the problems of command and control. On site an officer can "re-fight" the battle in a way not possible for the armchair tactician. The part Clausewitz's "fog of war" and "friction" might have played as units clashed can be more easily visualized.

Every officer should become familiar with those battlefields within a one or two day's drive of his duty station. An officer needs also to be alert to the possibilities of visiting the sites of past battles when he is traveling.

Certain preparations are needed before attempting a battlefield tour.³⁸ The first, and most obvious, is to read and study as much as possible about the battle, as well as the campaign of which it was a part. Next, one needs to find out what condition the site is presently in. For example, have new roads been built, is it more urbanized, or have there been significant changes in the size and location of treelines and hedgerows. Maps need to be acquired, ideally copies of those used during the battle as well as up-to-date versions. In addition to the maps an officer should consider taking a compass, binoculars, and a camera. A favorite book or two which details the identification and movement of units is also of value if one is not familiar with the battle. Proper clothing and footwear also need to be assembled before starting the tour. If possible, plan to visit during the same time of year as the battle was fought to ensure "that terrain and weather conditions will most accurately approximate those that confronted the opponents."³⁹

Some useful references are available to aid an officer in discovering the location of battlefields and determining their condition. Two examples are, David G. Chandler's A Traveler's Guide to the Battlefields of Europe (2 vols.) and Fodor's Civil War Sites.

Following certain rules while at the battlefield site will add to the knowledge gained and make one's efforts more enjoyable. First, do not try to take in too much at one time. Many battlefields, particularly the larger ones, are best studied in repeat trips of one or two days. The interval between visits allows one to digest all that has been observed and to clarify questions with additional reading. To attempt to see all in one trip might cause confusion rather than create understanding. Second, initially observe as much of the field of action as possible from a prominent location to gain a feel for the terrain. Finally, trace the flow of the action in a chronological sequence from the attacker's side

and then from the defender's position.

With relatively little effort a visit to a battlefield "can be made into a living as well as an academic experience, and in the process a great deal of enjoyment as well as valuable experience is obtainable."⁴⁰

Although often expensive, an officer might want to occasionally consider joining an organized battlefield tour sponsored by one of several historical societies. These tours are usually led by a noted military historian who serves as a guide and instructor. Generally, the members of such tours are knowledgeable amateur historians who can add to the learning and pleasure of the tour.

Classics

- Ardant du Picq. Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle.
Translated from the 8th French edition by Colonel John M
Greely and Major Robert C. Cotton. Harrisburg, Pennsylvan-
ia: The Military Publishing Company, 1947.
- S.L.A. Marshall. Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Com-
mand in Future War. Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter
Smith, 1947.
- Erwin Rommel. Attacks. Vienna, Virginia: Athena Press, Inc.,
1979.

Important

- Charles B. MacDonald. Company Commander, Rev. ed. New York:
Ballentine Books, 1961.
- Heinz Guderian. Panzer Leader. Translated by Constantine
Fitzgibbon, New York: Dutton, 1952.
- T.R. Fehrenbach. This Kind of War. New York: MacMillan, 1963.

Background

- Hanson W. Baldwin. Battles Won and Lost: Great Campaigns of
World War II. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.
- J.F.C. Fuller. The Conduct of War, 1789-1961. London: Eyre
and Spottiswoode, 1961.
- Russell F. Weigley. The American Way of War. New York:
MacMillan, 1973.

Figure 2

Suggested Reading List for
Lieutenants and Captains

Classics

- Karl von Clausewitz. On War. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976.
- Edward Mead Earle. Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought From Machiavelli to Hitler. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press (paperback), 1943.
- Thucydides. History of the Peloponnesian War. Translated by Rex Warner. New York: Penguin Books, 1954.
- Sun Tzu. The Art of War. Translated by Samuel B. Griffith. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Important

- Henri Jomini. The Art of War. Translated by Captain G.H. Mendell and Lieutenant W.P. Craighill. J.B. Lippincott and Company, Philadelphia, 1862. Republished as part of the West Point Military Library by Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, no date.
- B.H. Liddell Hart. Strategy 2 ed. New York: Praeger, 1967.
- Alfred Thayer Mahan. The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783. New York: American Series, Hill and Wang (paperback), 1957.
- Mao Tse-tung. On Protracted War in Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung vol II. Translated from Chinese. New York: International Publishers, 1954-55.

Background

- Trevor N. Dupuy. A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945. London: Prentice-Hall, 1977.
- Peter Green. Alexander the Great. New York: Praeger, 1960.
- Jay Luvaas. Translator and editor. Frederick the Great on the Art of War. New York: The Free Press, 1966.

Figure 3

Suggested Reading List For Majors and Lieutenant Colonels

Classics

- Raymon Aron. On War. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1959.
- Bernard Brodie. War and Politics. New York: MacMillan, 1973.
- Ulysses S. Grant. Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant 2 vols.
New York: C.L. Webster, 1885-86.
- Michael Howard. Studies in War and Peace. New York: The Viking Press, 1951.

Important

- Correlli Barnett. The Swordbearers: Studies in Supreme Command in the First World War. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1963.
- Samuel P. Huntington. The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations. New York: Vintage Books, 1957.
- Morris Janowitz. The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait. London: The Free Press, 1960.
- Amos Perlmutter. The Military and Politics in Modern Times: On Professionals, Praetorians, and Revolutionary Soldiers. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.

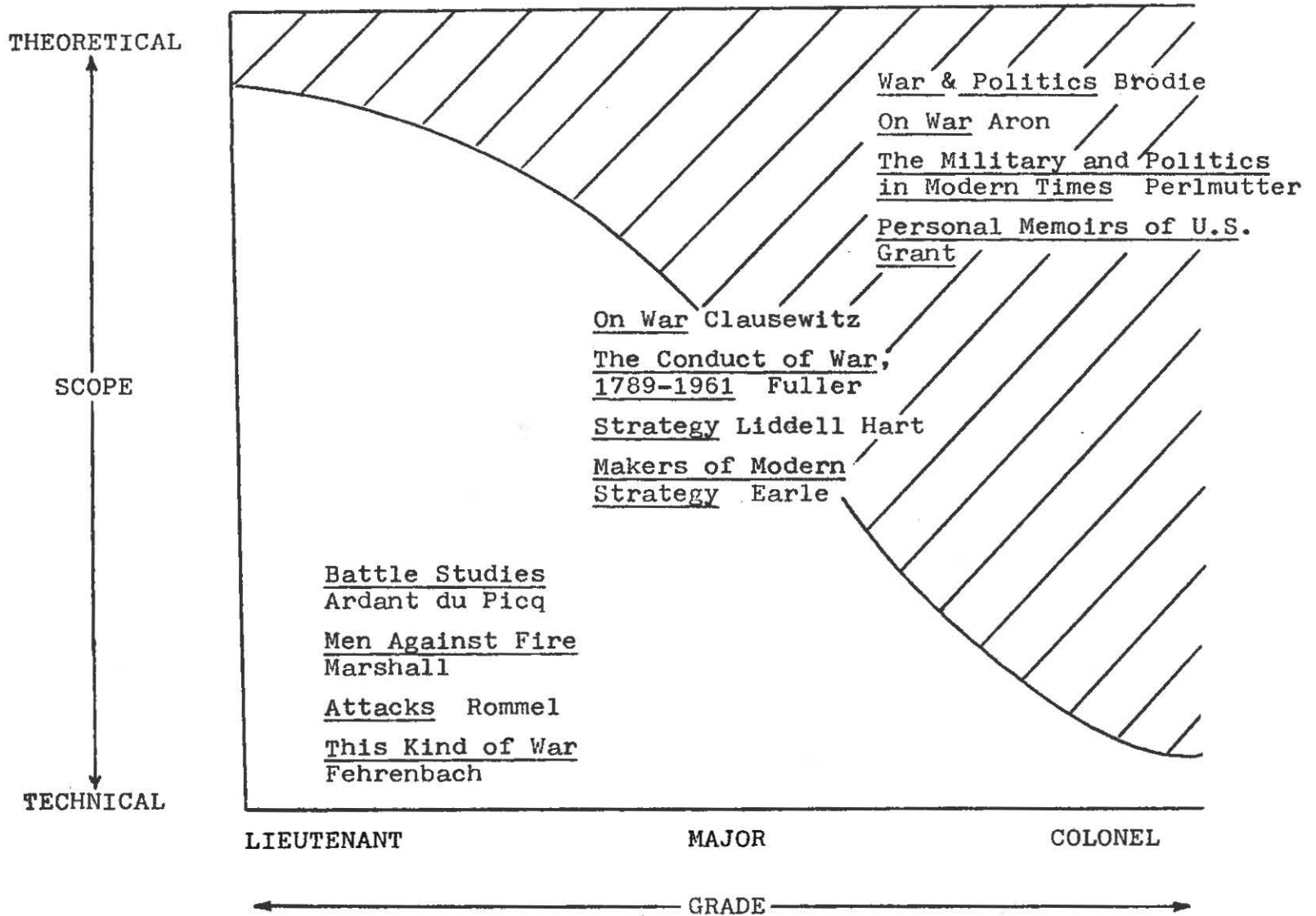
Background

- Douglas S. Freeman. Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command. 3 vols. New York: Scribner's, 1942-44.
- Russell F. Weigley. Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaigns of France and Germany, 1944-1945. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1981.
- Harry T. Williams. Lincoln and His Generals. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1952.
- Peter Wyden. Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979.

Figure 4
Suggested Reading List For
Colonels

A Career-Length
Professional Study Program

Figure 5



Encyclopedias

Ernest R. Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy. The Encyclopedia of Military History from 3500 B.C. to the Present. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.

Atlases

Geoffrey Barraclough, ed. The Times Atlas of World History. Maplewood, New Jersey: Hammond, 1980.

Vincent J. Esposito. The West Point Atlas of American Wars 2 vols. New York: Praeger, 1959.

Vincent J. Esposito and John R. Elting. A Military History and Atlas of the Napoleonic Wars. New York: Praeger, 1964.

Guides

David G. Chandler. A Traveler's Guide to the Battlefields of Europe 2 vols. New York: Chilton Books, 1965.

John E. Jessup and Robert W. Coakley, eds. A Guide to the Study Use of Military History (Center of Military History, U.S. Army). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. no date.

General

Theodore Ropp. War in the Modern World. New York: Collier, 1962.

Quincy Wright. A Study of War. Abridged and edited by Louise L. Wright, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.

Figure 6

Suggested List of References

III

COMMUNICATIONS

The fundamental truth is that every act of leadership is an act of communication.⁴¹

Military officers must be able to read, write, and speak effectively. The first requirement of good leadership is good communication.

Officers, as we are all well aware, have to demonstrate certain reading, writing, and speaking skills before being commissioned. We also know, that at times during our careers service schools work to develop these skills. However, communications skills, like all acquired skills, must be practiced continually if they are to be maintained and improved. Thus, every self-directed study program needs to include a full measure of such skills' practice.

S.L.A. Marshall, in his book The Officer As A Leader, noted the importance of communication to the officer when he wrote:

. . . that superior qualification in the use of the language, both as to the written and the spoken word, is more essential to military leadership than knowledge of the whole technique of weapons handling.⁴²

Reading

Why Read⁴³

Experience may be the best teacher, however, reading can be a more knowledgeable one since all of us are limited in the number of first-hand experiences we can enjoy. For this reason alone, reading is necessarily a major element in all aspects of an officer's personal study program. Stated simply, to read is to learn through the experiences of others.

Reading also provides us with information, some of which we ignore at our peril. For example, America's most powerful potential opponent has revealed much about his intentions, as well as his military doctrine, tactics, and techniques in books, many of which are available in English translations. Unfortunately, This information remains unknown to the non-reader.

All innovations are based on the creative use of information. The widely-read officer faced with a new situation can search his "stored knowledge" to find the concepts or facts and figures he needs to develop a solution. The less widely-read officer will more likely have to resort to a trial and error approach.

In an era when the military is criticized in many forums, officers are ever more frequently called upon to offer an informed opinion. Questioned about the recommendations of the so-called military reformers such as Jeffrey Record or William Lind the well-read officer will not have to respond with "I'm not sure; what did they say?"

How to Read

Every officer, in the literal sense, knows how to read. Many of us are not satisfied, however, with the way we read, specifically we do not read fast enough and we forget much of what we do read. Rare is the officer who has not, at one time or another, complained about the amount of material he is required to read each day. No wonder many of us feel inclined to ignore the advice to include reading as part of our personal study programs.

Fortunately, there are many courses designed to help an officer increase his reading speed as well as comprehension and retention. Some are offered by commercial sources at a modest fee. Base libraries, education offices, and service schools often have similar programs available in a programmed instruction format. These are generally provided at no cost.

The few hours spent on one of these courses will be returned quickly as you complete required daily reading in as little as half the time previously needed.

Reading can be more enjoyable and profitable if you prepare for it. First, eliminate all distractions. Find a quiet place and time to read. For most of us this means a room far from the TV and children, or a period when our families are otherwise occupied, perhaps early in the morning or late in the evening. In any case, don't try to "work through" distractions, the effort is seldom rewarded.

When you find your spot ensure it has adequate lighting and assemble needed materials such as a notebook, pencils, highlighters, maps, a dictionary, and other references. Remember, you are reading to learn and learning is an active process. Therefore, you need to study, researching obscure points and making notes. If the book is your own, marginal notes can prove to be valuable in helping you to later recall important points.

Before you begin to read a new book conduct a survey and an overview. To survey examine four areas:

Preface: Here the author states exactly why and how the book was written.

Bibliography: If the author has researched his book, here is where you get an idea of the range and value of his resources.

Table of Contents and/or Index: These show you the skeleton of the book, the coverage and emphasis.⁴⁴

After you complete the survey, flip through the pages to acquire a "feel" for the book. This is your overview.

What to Read

Even in a lifetime you can read only a tiny fraction of the published works which might be of interest to you. The trick is to avoid those books which would prove to be of lesser value to you. The opinions of other officers or recognized experts can be helpful in this regard. Look over the

book reviews contained in most military professional journals and the current reading lists of service schools and colleges. For non-military publications, examine the best seller lists and the book sections of the weekly news magazines and the larger newspapers.

An exceptional source on some of the best literature is the 21st edition of a book published by the R.R. Bowker Company. Titled Good Reading: A Guide for Serious Readers, this one volume work contains "a highly selective bibliography of about 2,500 books that range across the varieties of literature - 'the literature of knowledge' as well as 'the literature of power.'"⁴⁵ Good Reading's 35 book lists consist "of 10 chapters, classified by historical and regional criteria; . . . 6 chapters . . . arranged by standard literary types; and . . . 13 chapters devoted to various humanities, social sciences, and sciences" and one chapter of basic reference books.⁴⁶

A recent article on the value of reading to a self-directed education program contained a quote which provides a fitting summary on this subject - "show me the books a man reads and I will tell you what he is."⁴⁷

Writing

Why Write

As a military officer, you should write on professional subjects for two important reasons. First, because "there is a welcome forum for your ideas and an ardent desire in other professionals to read what you have to say."⁴⁸ Second, because "writing makes you more effective and publication brings added recognition of your professional effectiveness."⁴⁹

Nearly a hundred defense-oriented magazines and journals are published in the United States. The purpose of more than half is to provide the military writer a means to express his thoughts or to advance new knowledge. Professional journals

depend upon military officers to contribute most of the articles they print. The number and variety of military-related publications are indicative of both the size and interests of the audiences they serve. Yet, editors frequently complain about the serious decline in the quality and quantity of writing among officers.

There are many reasons for this decline but the one officers most often voice is lack of time. When an officer makes this claim "what he really means is that in disposing such discretionary time as he has had, he has accorded professional writing a low priority."⁵⁰

If many officers "choose to play the passive role which the critics say they do, it should not be surprising that the vacuum will be filled by others."⁵¹ Few officers would attribute to those outside the military the experience or knowledge required to write meaningfully on military subjects. Nevertheless, we are beginning to see in our journals an increasing number of articles by non-military writers. We need to reverse the trend. Officers must "write for publication to help maintain the vigor of our military profession."⁵²

How to Write

To be able to write for publication an officer must have something meaningful to say. The best way to ensure your ideas find their way into print is to capture them when they occur and then to expand and refine them over time. A ready notebook and an organized filing system are indispensable to this effort. Jot down your thoughts on future articles when they come to mind. Open a file and collect information on those subjects which seem most promising. As you go about your daily business you will discover a surprising number of items relating to the articles you have under consideration.

After you have developed and organized an idea sufficiently you need to decide what publication it is best suited for.

Think about who would most likely be interested in the article, and the journals and magazines they read. When you make your selection you then need to:

. . . first, familiarize yourself with its recent contents. All journals have an individualism and style of their own, usually reflecting the policy of the incumbent editor. Second, query the editor as to his disposition toward your intended topic. If he has an inventory of articles on that topic he'll tell you, and you can shift your sights elsewhere. Third, ask the editor for an outline of his requirements, such as length, number of copies, format, etc. Most military journals are happy to send you their current writer's guide with this information.⁵³

At this point you are ready to put pen to paper. Though some experienced writers can go from their notes to a first draft, most of us need an outline to organize our thoughts logically. This outline should contain a theme, main topic and sub-topics.⁵⁴ The theme is a brief, direct statement of what you want to say. The main topics are declarative statements which support the theme. Subtopics provide the details or evidence of the main topics. For most writers, an outline will save time in the long run and reduce frustration.

You have now reached the most difficult step in writing - starting. How often we set down with the best intentions only to be overawed by the blank sheet of paper in front of us, The secret is simply to begin. When you put something on that sheet you are on your way. From here on the two keys are revision and reflection. Revise your first draft at least once, going from long-hand to a typed draft if possible. After you finish put the manuscript away for awhile - several days at least. When you look at it next, needed changes will be obvious. Again, revise. Have someone whose opinion you respect read and critique it for you. Revise the article once more if necessary and then mail it off.

Your odds of having the article accepted are good if

you have followed the steps outlined above. But, if it is not, you have the satisfaction of having intellectually disciplined your mind, a benefit only thoughtful writing can provide. Re-work your original article if the editor who returned it has provided suggestions for improvement. If not, start anew on one of your other ideas. Your efforts will come easier now that you have been through the cycle one time.

There are any number of good books to help you improve your writing abilities. One of the best is The Elements of Style by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White. A newer book designed specifically for business and government executives is Writing With Precision: How To Write So That You Cannot Possibly Be Misunderstood by Jefferson D. Bates.

What to Write

You are more likely to be successful if you write concerning those things you are most knowledgeable about or which you have personally experienced. For the younger officer these will generally be in the areas of leadership, weapons, tactics, and techniques. To these subjects the more senior officer can add operations, strategy, and policy.

The subject and the purpose of the article will determine the form (exposition, narration, description, and argumentation/persuasion) you use to write it. The exposition employs a pattern of example or analogy to build a word picture for the reader. Articles explaining new theory or concepts lend themselves to this form. Personal experience, particularly of a historical nature, lends itself well to narration. Description is an excellent form for telling the reader about new weapons and equipment. An appeal to change policy or to adopt new tactics or strategies is best put forth in the form of argumentation/persuasion.

IV

THE HUMANITIES

. . . Among men in public life, it is precisely those whose education in the liberal arts, in the humane letters, ought to be continuous and profound, who are least likely to recognize their value.⁵⁵

Why Study

American military officers have traditionally been ill-disposed toward the study of the humanities in their professional schools. Can we conclude from this observation that such studies are of no value to a soldier? Emphatically not! Yet, because of the demand for observable, skill-oriented results from military education, there is little likelihood our service schools will add any liberal arts to their curriculums. However, the officer who understands, or who can be led to understand, the value of the humanities to his full development can certainly include them in his own program of professional self-directed study.

More than practical knowledge can be gained from the liberal arts. There are three reasons why you should want to devote time to their study. First, and foremost, because they stimulate the mind and create an enlightened curiosity. There is little doubt that great literature, philosophy, and history can excite one's intellectual passion. Moreover, when experienced first-hand the creative arts such as painting, sculpture, photography, and music widen an officer's vision and heighten his imagination.

Second, the liberal arts expose one to the fundamental values of our culture. This exposure enables an officer to develop a much fuller appreciation of what he may be called upon to defend. If he understands our cultural values he will be better equipped to deal with the forces that would destroy

the environment that allows the creation of such excellence.

Third, because the liberal arts are largely concerned with questions of value they are essential to cultivating an officer's standards of criticism. Certain of them can also develop his abilities to analyze problems and to communicate clearly, particularly when writing.

How and What to Study

Fortunately, you can easily incorporate the humanities into your own self-education program. The world-wide travel inherent in the military profession provides tremendous opportunities. One of the most obvious opportunities is the ability to study foreign languages in their native settings. There is also the chance to visit historic sites others can only hope to read about. You need to carefully plan leave periods and travel to include exciting itineraries. In addition, many assignments place an officer near the great art museums of the world; the Louvre in Paris, the Uffizi Gallery and the Pitti Palace in Florence, and the National Gallery in London being examples. These museums represent just a few of the dozens of possibilities. Finally, American officers are frequently stationed near foreign cities where some of the best in classical music, theater, and dance are performed.

Opportunities similar to those described above are also available in the United States. A tour of duty in Washington, D.C., hardly a remote possibility, affords an officer the opportunity to enjoy the performing arts at the Kennedy Center or to visit the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian Institute. From early Spring until late Fall there are numerous outdoor concerts throughout the Capitol, many of them free.

For those with creative instincts, art, music, and

photography beckon. Though often viewed as "hobbies" these activities are arts in the truest sense and possess the distinct advantage that one can participate rather than simply experience them through sight or hearing. This ingredient cultivates creativity which can unleash the imagination in many other fields. These arts also provide excellent therapy as they refresh the mind in an officer's free hours.

Imagination, vision, creativity, an active intellect, a sense of values, and an open mind are characteristics that an officer should possess. He can acquire them if he will incorporate the humanities into his own program of self-study. In doing so he will lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning while becoming a more effective leader.

FOOTNOTES

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²Gray, p. 93.

³Bernard Brodie, "The Continuing Relevance of On War," in Carl von Clausewitz, On War, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 53-54.

⁴Walter Millis, Military History (Washington, D.C.: Service Center for Teachers of History, No.39, 1961), pp. 16-18, as quoted by Martin Van Crevelu in "Caesar's Ghost: Military History and the Wars of the Future," The Washington Quarterly. Winter 1980, p. 76.

⁵Josiah Bunting, "The Humanities in the Education of the Military Professional," a presentation on the panel "Civilian Education for the Military Officer," ISA Conference, Washington, D.C., 1975.

⁶Jeffrey Record, "The Fortunes of War," Harper's. April 1980, p. 19.

⁷Edward N. Luttwak, "A New Arms Race?" Commentary. September 1980, p. 33.

⁸As quoted by J. Christopher Herold in, The Mind of Napoleon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), pp. 255-56.

⁹As quoted by Jay Luvaas in "Military History: Is It Still Practicable," Parameters. March 1982, p. 9.

¹⁰As quoted by John E. Jessup, Jr. and Robert W. Coakley, eds. in the Preface to A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, no date), p. xi.

¹¹These categories are based on similar ones discussed by Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, USA, Ret. in a course "Military History and a Theory of War," taught at the U.S. Army War College in the Spring of 1982.

¹²Michael Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," Royal United Service Institute Journal, 107. February 1962, pp.4-8.

¹³B.H. Liddell Hart, Why Don't We Learn From History (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1946), pp 7-8.

¹⁴James A. Huston, "The Uses of History," Military Review. June 1951, pp. 28-30 and Major H.E.D. Harris, "The Value of History to the Soldier," The Army Quarterly (Great Britain). October 1962, p. 81.

¹⁵Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, USA Ret., The Evolution of Weapons and Warfare (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1980), p. vii.

¹⁶As quoted by Major Terrence P. Murray in "The Merits of Military History," Marine Corps Gazette. November 1981, p. 13 from Charles A. Willoughby's Maneuver in War.

¹⁷Major H.E.D. Harris, "The Value of History to the Soldier," The Army Quarterly (Great Britian). October 1962, p. 79.

¹⁸Martin Van Creveld, "Caesar's Ghost: Military History and the Wars of the Future," The Washington Quarterly. Winter 1980, p. 82.

¹⁹Michael Howard, pp. 13-14.

²⁰As quoted by Major Donald J. Bittner in "On the Utility of Military History," Marine Corps Gazette. May 1978, p. 10.

²¹Michael Howard, p. 14.

²²Michael Howard, p. 14.

²³Commander Barry O'Brien, "History for the Soldier," An Cosantoir (The Irish Defense Journal) February 1968, p. 55. Also an opinion offered by Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, USA Ret. in response to my question on how an officer could best approach the study of military history during an elective course, "Military History and a Theory of War," U.S. Army War College, 23 March 1982.

²⁴O'Brien, p. 56.

²⁵Harris, p. 85.

²⁶Harris, p. 85.

²⁷Harris, p. 86 and Michael Howard, pp. 9-10.

²⁸Major General I.B. Holley, Jr., USAFR, "The Battle of Marathon: or What's a 2500-Year-Old Battle Got to Do With Me?" Air University Review. July-August 1980, p. 47.

²⁹Modification of a list by Lieutenant Colonel John F. Votaw, "An Approach to the Study of Military History," A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, no date), pp. 43-44.

³⁰James A. Carr, "The Danger of Limited Knowledge," Marine Corps Gazette. May 1977, p.

³¹Jay Luvaas, "Military History: Is It Still Practicable," Parameters, March 1982, p. 4.

³²Luvaas, pp. 4-5.

³³Luvaas, p. 5.

³⁴Votaw, p. 52.

³⁵Votaw, p. 52.

³⁶Carl von Clausewitz, On War, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 145-46.

³⁷Votaw, p. 41.

³⁸The information concerning preparations for touring battlefields and the rules to follow during the visit are based on information contained in David Chandler's "Haunted Acres," History Today. November 1976, pp. 743-48 and in Major T.L. Gatchel's, "The Study of Military History," Marine Corps Gazette. March 1976, pp. 58-59.

³⁹Gatchel, p. 58.

⁴⁰Chandler, p. 748.

⁴¹Major George H. Ripley, "A Military Disability," Marine Corps Gazette. July 1966, p. 43.

⁴²Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall, USAR Ret., The Officer As A Leader (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Company), p. 79.

⁴³The ideas and concepts contained in this section are based on those in Lieutenant Colonel Richard W. Smith's, "The Case Against Professional Illiteracy," Marine Corps Gazette. January 1970, pp. 31-34.

⁴⁴Smith, p. 34.

⁴⁵J. Sherwood Weber, editor, Good Reading: A Guide for Serious Readers 21st ed. (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1978), p. xi.

⁴⁶Weber, p. xi.

⁴⁷Smith, p. 34.

⁴⁸Lieutenant Colonel J.W. Hammond, Jr., "The Responsibility To Write," Marine Corps Gazette. January 1970, pp. 28-29.

⁴⁹Hammond, pp. 28-29.

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⁵¹Colonel Edward B. Atkeson, USA, "Army's Military Arts Gap: Few Artists in the House," Army. March 1975, p. 11.

⁵²Colonel William L. Hauser, USA, "Professional Writing: A Professional Obligation," Military Review. August 1974, p. 48.

⁵³Lieutenant Colonel J.W. Hammond, Jr. USMC, "The Responsibility to Write," Marine Corps Gazette. January 1970, p. 30.

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Marine Corps Gazette. December 1976, pp. 49-53.

⁵⁵Bunting, p. 1.

APPENDIX A

Recurring Themes

(U.S. Naval War College)

1. War as an extension of policy by other means: national interests and national policies; war aims and military strategies
2. Civil-military relations
3. Alliances in peace and war: multipolarity and bipolarity; Balance of power; coalition strategies; centrifugal characteristics of alliances
4. Policies of war avoidance: diplomacy, deterrence, collective security, appeasement, arms control, crisis management
5. Limitations on power: legal, moral, economic, and logistic constraints; public opinion; countervailing power; diffusion of power (polycentrism); alliance restraints; friction
6. Domestic influences on policy and strategy: social, economic, political, ideological
7. Strategic theories: classical, nuclear, revolutionary
8. Theories of maritime strategy
9. Naval warfare and sea power
10. Interdependence of land, sea, and air power
11. Strategy and technological change: weaponry, armaments, communications
12. Impact of history on strategy and policy: lessons of the past; historical analogies; obsolescence; continuity and change

Threads of Continuity

(U.S. Military Academy)

1. Military theory and doctrine: ideas about war; a generally accepted body of ideas and practices that govern an army's organization, training, and fighting

2. Military professionalism: an attitude or state of mind distinguishing the expert from the amateur. The military professional is an expert in the management of violence and is characterized by his sense of responsibility to his men and the state.
3. Generalship: the art of command at high levels. Generalship includes both leadership and management (but neither word is a synonym) and many diverse functions involving preparation for combat, supervision during combat, and administration and maintenance of combat strength.
4. Strategy: the preparation for war and the waging of war; getting to the battlefield as opposed to action on the battlefield. Strategy is a changing concept now generally divided into national (or grand) strategy and military strategy (a component of national strategy).
5. Tactics: the preparation for combat and the actual conduct of combat on the battlefield
6. Logistics and Administration: defines the relationship between the state's economic capacity and its ability to support military forces
7. Technology: in a military sense, the application of science to war. Technology includes not only new ideas, techniques, and equipment but also their application.
8. Political Factors: those characteristic elements or actions of governments affecting warfare
9. Social factors: those elements affecting warfare that result from human relationships
10. Economic factors: those elements affecting warfare that result from the production, distribution, and consumption of the resources of the state

The recurring themes were extracted from the U.S. Naval War College's syllabus for "Strategy and Policy"

The threads of continuity were extracted from A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History, pp.47-48.