

# ARMY HISTORY

Fall 2008

PB 20-08-4 (No. 69) Washington, D.C.

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# ARMY HISTORY

The Professional Bulletin of Army History

## By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

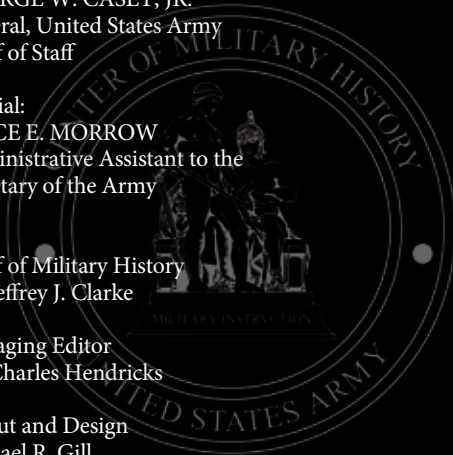
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The U.S. Army Center of Military History publishes *Army History* (ISSN 1546-5330) quarterly for the professional development of Army historians and as Army educational and training literature. The bulletin is available at no cost to interested Army officers, noncommissioned officers, soldiers, and civilian employees, as well as to individuals and offices that directly support Army historical work or Army educational and training programs.

Correspondence, including requests to be added to the distribution of free copies or to submit articles, should be addressed to Managing Editor, *Army History*, U.S. Army Center of Military History, 103 Third Ave., Fort Lesley J. McNair, DC 20319-5058, or sent by e-mail to [charles.hendricks@hqda.army.mil](mailto:charles.hendricks@hqda.army.mil).

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**Table of Contents Photos:** (*top*) Senior coast artillery noncommissioned officer Orville K. McCombs stands next to his quarters at Fort Warren, Massachusetts, with his wife (right), her sister, and the McCombs children, c. 1910; (*center*) Sgt. Richard Boone of the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, accompanies a Stryker armored vehicle during a June 2007 exercise in Australia; (*bottom*) Soldiers of the 2d Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, search an abandoned building in Mosul, Iraq, after receiving sniper fire on 12 April 2007.

## EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Army field historian Lt. Col. John A. Boyd opens this issue of *Army History* with an analysis of how two Kentucky militia organizations formed at or shortly before the start of the Civil War overcame secessionist impulses in that state and enabled it eventually to stand with the Union. He demonstrates how Kentucky Governor Beriah Magoffin and Kentucky State Guard Inspector General Simon B. Buckner, both of whom sympathized with the Confederacy, worked to keep Kentucky neutral at the start of the war but hoped that aggressive and unpopular Unionist moves would ultimately lead the state to align with the secessionists. The supporters of the Union organized their own militia organization in Kentucky, but they did not there alienate the public by attempting preemptive military action, as they had elsewhere, so support for secession in Kentucky waned. Buckner and other Southern sympathizers in the Kentucky State Guard were thus forced to take up the cause of the Confederacy as individuals, lacking state support. Boyd shows that, as militias have sometimes done in contemporary international affairs, Kentucky's militias helped determine the outcome of a state's deliberations on its wartime loyalty.

This issue then presents two commentaries on current topics of interest to Army historians. The Center of Military History's William M. Hammond rebuts the critique of his organization's approach to writing contemporary Army history that was presented by Gregory Fontenot in the Spring 2008 issue of *Army History*. Hammond analyzes the way in which the Center has approached the task since World War II and describes the range of support the Center has recently provided to the Army to enhance its ability to profit from the lessons of its past, explaining how the Center has chosen to direct its resources. We next print an essay that retired Marine Corps Lt. Col. Frank G. Hoffman prepared for the Foreign Policy Research Institute that calls for a more historically grounded approach to U.S. civil-military relations and proposes the development of a new code of military ethics that will better define obligations of loyalty, obedience, and dissent. Such a code, Hoffman argues, should permit military officers to use their expertise to contribute effectively to the policymaking process.

This issue also features a review essay by Timothy K. Nenninger of Edward M. Coffman's groundbreaking study of life and service in the U.S. Army from 1898 to 1941, *The Regulars*, and a review of a book on the Mexican War authored by Army field historian Sherman L. Fleek. It presents news of recent developments in the Army Historical Program and timely comments from the chief of military history and the Center's chief historian.



# THE CHIEF'S CORNER

DR. JEFFREY J. CLARKE

Over the past months our Army Historical Program has grown stronger, with Lt. Col. Shane Story at Multinational Force–Iraq and Lt. Col. Jerry Brooks at Multinational Corps–Iraq providing critical oversight for the Army (and Navy) historians that are supporting Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) in theater. Twice a year, with the Center of Military History's direct participation, Lee Harford's staff at the U.S. Army Reserve Command continues to train these military history detachment (MHD) historians, some of whom, before deploying, have obtained final training at the Center. Video teleconferences have linked our OIF theater historians on a regular basis with their colleagues at the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), and U.S. Army Reserve Command history offices and at the Center of Military History, thereby supplementing the robust electronic (phone and email) communications systems that by themselves would have made our World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam era historians envious.

The Center's IMA (individual mobilization augmentee) reservists working at the headquarters of Third Army/ARCENT (Army Central Command) in Kuwait have also visited the forward-deployed historians, and the Center is preparing to send more civilian historians to Iraq for shorter stays. Elsewhere, the 102d Military History Detachment left the Center on 8 July bound for Afghanistan, where it will replace Maj. David Hanselman's 305th Military History Detachment in support of the 82d Airborne Division. When he is released from reserve duty, Hanselman will return to his position as director of our U.S. Army Transportation Museum at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

At this year's Army History Council meeting at Carlisle Barracks, attended by representatives of all the history offices of the Army's major commands, we adopted the discussion format familiar to Department of the Army Historical Advisory Committee members in lieu of the traditional program briefings. Focusing on topics recommended before the meeting, we had spirited discussions of such specific interest areas as the National Security Personnel System (NSPS), strategic plan actions, museum-historian relationships, and history office TDAs (tables of distribution and allowances). Evaluations solicited by the Center appear to favor the new forum model, and

FORSCOM's Charles E. "Chuck" White is vowing to lead a session next year on overhauling elements of the Army Historical Program.

We are committed to keeping you informed and updated. You will soon be receiving more information on NSPS evaluations from our chief historian, Richard W. Stewart, who in November will lead the NSPS paypool for managers in the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, of which the Center is an element. We also are preparing more complete wiring diagrams and contact lists for all Army command history programs so that the Center and other program hubs can touch all those assigned historical duties with products like this publication.

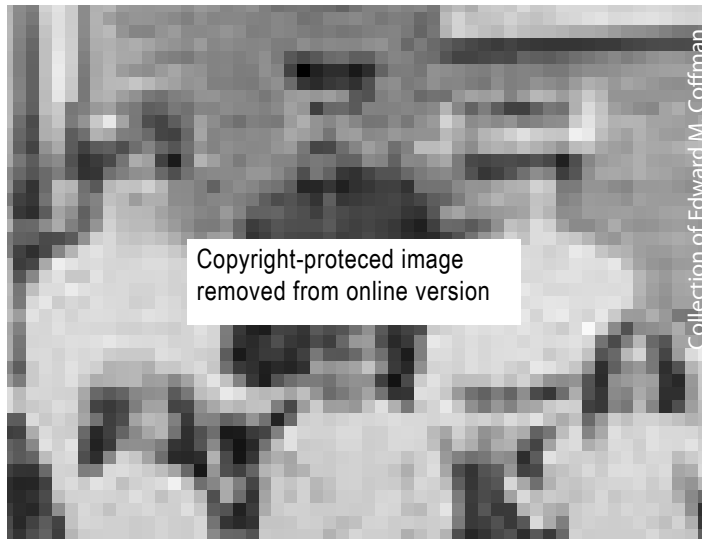
Finally, kudos must go to Col. Timothy R. Reese and his Combat Studies Institute (CSI) team for the publication and distribution of *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign, The United States Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, May 2003–January 2005*, which continues the OIF story from the end of the drive on Baghdad (treated in *On Point*) to the Iraqi elections in January 2005. It is a heavy, thick tome that reads well and handles many sensitive issues in a forthright professional manner. Not surprisingly, as the draft had caused a stir at higher Army levels, the work was quickly featured in the *New York Times* and other media and since then has engendered much commentary on Internet blogs across the nation. The CSI team must be commended for its initiative in taking a hard and daring look at what is an extremely difficult and complex subject.

CSI's next contemporary history, "A Different Kind of War," will chronicle the first four years of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan. It is targeted for release in 2009. "On Point III" (up to the surge) and "On Point IV" (the surge) will appear subsequently. This fall Colonel Reese will deploy to Iraq to undertake another extremely critical task, command of an Iraqi division advisory team, but he will leave knowing that he has served the Army exceedingly well, rebuilding Leavenworth's publication program stronger than ever before.





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INTRIGUE: THE  
MILITIAS OF  
KENTUCKY, 1859-1861

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DERELICTION OF  
DUTY REDUX?

By FRANK G. HOFFMAN



# NEWSNOTES

## COMBAT STUDIES INSTITUTE PRESS ISSUES NEW HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS

The Combat Studies Institute (CSI) of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, has issued three new works: the second volume of its study of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, covering the twenty-one months from the end of combat operations against uniformed Iraqi forces to the Iraqi elections of January 2005; a booklet that analyzes military efforts to stabilize the nation of Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002; and an account of the development of reconnaissance units in modern armies.

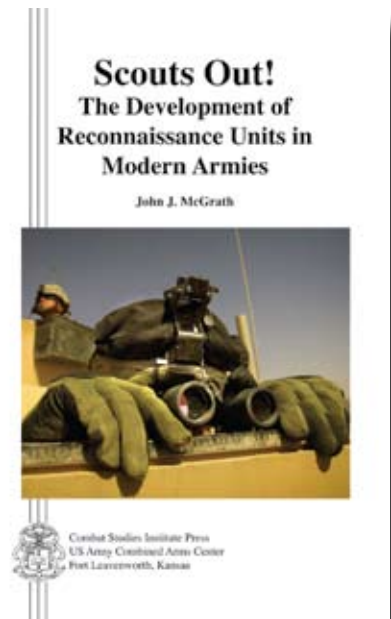
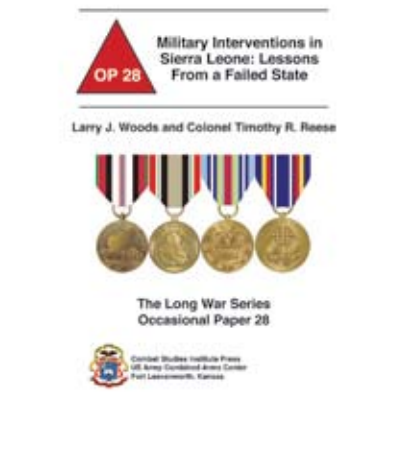
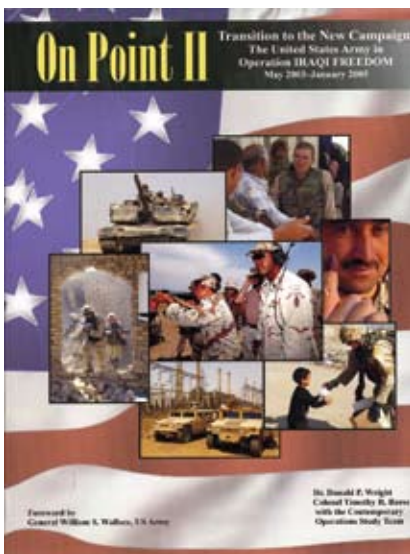
***On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign, The United States Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, May 2003–January 2005***, by Donald P. Wright, Timothy R. Reese, and CSI's Contemporary Operations Study Team, is a 696-page account of the U.S. Army's initial efforts to help stabilize and reconstruct Iraq after the overthrow of the regime of Saddam Hussein. The book discusses the rise

of an Iraqi insurgency, the large-scale combined arms operations the Army conducted in Iraq in this period, efforts by U.S. Army intelligence assets to target enemy groups, the Army's work to counter the use and effectiveness of improvised explosive devices, Army detainee operations, the Army's involvement in reconstruction projects, the early training of Iraqi security forces, and the logistical sustainment of American forces. Discussing the Army's efforts in the context of overall national goals and decision making relative to Iraq, the book's authors observe that "out of necessity, the US Army made an astonishing number of transitions between May 2003 and January 2005" (p. 7), and they attempt to evaluate their impact. Dr. Wright, the lead author, has been chief of CSI's Contemporary Operations Study Team since 2006. Colonel Reese, an active-duty armor officer, has been director of the Combat Studies Institute since 2005. The U.S. Government Printing Office is offering the book for sale for \$35.

***Military Interventions in Sierra Leone: Lessons from a Failed State*** by Larry J. Woods and Timothy R. Reese is the most recent title in the Combat Studies Institute's Long War series (Occasional Paper 28). It is a 115-page account of the dozen violence-plagued years experienced by that nation beginning in 1991, when a rebel force supported by the Liberian Charles Taylor entered Sierra Leone. The subsequent fighting involved military interventions by a South African mercenary group, soldiers from the Community of West African States, United Nations troops, and British forces in successive efforts to restore peace and effective government to this poor West African nation, a former British colony.

***Scouts Out! The Development of Reconnaissance Units in Modern Armies*** by John J. McGrath analyzes the elements of modern armies assigned to gather battlefield intelligence on enemy dispositions and contested terrain. In this 253-page

*Continued on page 40*



Kentucky Governor Beriah Magoffin

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Lt. Col. John A. "Jay" Boyd** is the command historian of the 81st Regional Readiness Command in Birmingham, Alabama. An Army infantry officer, he served as the command historian for the Multinational Force–Iraq from 2005 to 2006. He is currently commander of the 20th Military History Team, which trains Army military history detachments for deployment. Colonel Boyd holds a doctorate in the history of the Civil War era and the history of the Middle East from the University of Kentucky. This article derives from his doctoral dissertation, "Neutrality & Peace: Kentucky and the Secession Crisis of 1861."



# INTIMIDATION & CONSPIRACY PROVOCATION & INTRIGUE



## THE MILITIAS OF KENTUCKY, 1859-1861

By John A. Boyd

**M**ilitias are paramilitary organizations that have made international headlines, their actions covered during the breakup of Yugoslavia, during the famine and civil crisis in Somalia, and during the ongoing coalition operations in Iraq. They brought death to untold thousands in Rwanda and are now active in the Darfur region of Sudan. In Iraq, few have not heard of the Badr militia of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq or Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's militia of the down-trodden masses, the Jaysh al-Mahdi. Militias today invoke a certain sense of fear and dread, as well they should. To modern Americans, they now symbolize death squads, fanaticism, anarchy, and destruction. However, for better or ill, loath them or embrace them, militias have had their uses.

During the secession crisis of 1861 prior to the outbreak of the American Civil War, the militias of Kentucky—variously pro-Union, pro-Southern, and even pro-neutral—played a pivotal role in determining whether the Bluegrass State would stay out

of civil war or enter the conflict on the Union or Confederate side. Implausible as it may seem, they did this without firing a shot.

The militias of Kentucky cannot be understood properly without understanding the martial heritage of antebellum America in general and of Kentucky in particular. Schoolbook histories in 1860 immortalized a republic born in blood, dwelling on the rattle of musket and the clash of bayonet in the founding of free institutions. A war record could turn a backwoods politician into a president, and, at least in the South, the readiness to use violence to vindicate one's honor actually improved many a statesman's standing. What was true elsewhere held truer still on Kentucky's "dark and bloody ground." Statues in Daniel Boone's honor showed him, quite uncharacteristically, as an Indian fighter, and legends about him coated him in the glamour of a bloodlust utterly foreign to the man himself. Kentucky still had its veterans of the War of 1812, and every town could point to its old-timers raised in the days of the Indian

Wars. If backwoodsmen looked on the landed gentry with suspicion, one reason was their suspected lack of fighting qualities. Four-term Senator John J. Crittenden repeatedly reminded voters of his actions at the Battle of the Thames during the War of 1812, for "to have fought at the Thames was the 'open sesame' to public and political honor." Mexican War veterans won the same acclaim if not notoriety in the politics of the 1850s.<sup>1</sup>

In peacetime, even with the Indian Wars receding into the distant past, Kentucky could boast of several well-trained prewar militia companies, among them John Hunt Morgan's Lexington Rifles and Simon B. Buckner's Louisville Citizens' Guard. No patriotic celebration was complete without a turnout of the local militia. Spectators could watch close-order drill, rifle volleys, and mock battles, and, from the size of the crowds that turned out, they thought it was very good theater. Throughout America, "in the everyday life of the city, private military clubs ranked first among the street performers." The public con-

sidered Morgan's Lexington Rifles the best and demanded its attendance at holiday occasions like Washington's Birthday or Independence Day. Sometimes the Rifles' best performances at resorts like Paroquet Springs and Crab Orchard lasted a full week.<sup>2</sup>

That meant less and more than it might seem. The prewar militia, as Morgan's own contingent showed, was primarily a social organization. Young men were eager to join. Membership gave them a chance to parade in splendid uniforms and to perform elaborate maneuvers with sabers and rifles in front of a vast audience, including eligible young ladies. Militia companies also sponsored charities and dances. They staged shows for worthy civic causes. And finally, to their members, they offered all the benefits of a fraternal society.<sup>3</sup>

Militia membership gave many a young man a sense of belonging. Most military companies had fewer than fifty members. A company was built on a common culture, shared interests, and a general sense of brotherhood. It encouraged political fealty and social cohesion, especially when, as often happened, the men elected their own officers or were recruited by the man who paid the organization's bills. Long before the war the loyalty of Morgan's men to their leader was well known throughout Kentucky, as was their slogan: "Our laws, the commands of our Captain."<sup>4</sup>

Most active militia companies in the 1850s were inclusive by being exclusive. Their sense of belonging rested on being separate from those outside. "[These] citizen soldiers were in their conceit and imagination very important and consequential fellows," an ex-lieutenant later wrote scornfully of the Flat Rock Greys. "Invited to all the noted gatherings and public affairs of the day, dressed in gaudy and flashy uniforms and flying plumes, filled with pride and *conceit*." For obvious pocketbook reasons, poorer men rarely joined such units. Panoply did not come at cut rates. The Lexington Rifles wore duty caps with the seal of the state of Kentucky and paraded in bearskin grenadier-style hats. Another company used the tricorn hat of the

American Revolution. Typical styles of the day included elaborate tunics, buttons, ribbons, buckles, and belts.<sup>5</sup>

The fraternal benefits of militia membership, then, gave members psychic rewards, but they were far from the universal service—the kind of citizen armies that Americans liked to think would save them from foreign foes in wartime. They were more for play than work because there was not much work for them to do. Theoretically, they stood ready to keep the civil peace and maintain order. A few actually served that purpose. Lawyers outraged at an outbreak of vigilantism in Louisville in 1857 formed Buckner's Citizens' Guard. At one point, Louisville's fire chief led a company of militia that stood prepared to help on-duty firefighters if an emergency arose. (Curiously, there is no record of any militia company created in the 1850s specifically to forestall slave revolts.) But all these were rarities.<sup>6</sup>

Conceivably, Kentucky could have created a state militia to go along with all these private companies, one open to all citizens. Such a system had existed once. But with no Indian menace requiring a citizen army, it seemed an anachronism. The state legislature allowed the militia system to become dormant in 1854. The commonwealth dropped requirements for regular militia musters. It had passed out weapons but lost track of where they had gone. Those arms remaining were outdated muskets, usually in such poor repair as to be practically worthless. "There is in fact, no organized militia in the State," a governor summed up in 1856.<sup>7</sup>

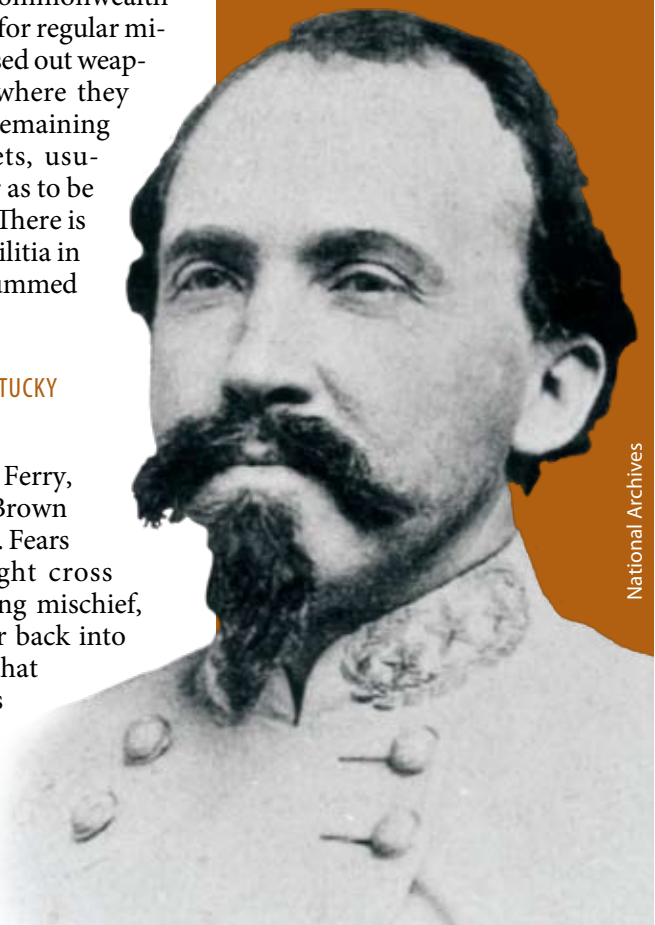
### THE CREATION OF THE KENTUCKY STATE GUARD

The raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, led by John Brown in 1859 changed all that. Fears that abolitionists might cross into Kentucky spreading mischief, if not murder, went far back into the state's past. Now that a group of abolitionists had attacked Virginia, a sister border slave

state, an attack on Kentucky would inevitably follow, or so most men believed. It seemed obvious to Governor Beriah Magoffin. Kentuckians had no way of knowing "at what moment we may have need of an active, ardent, reliable, patriotic, well-disciplined, and thoroughly organized militia," he informed the legislature in December 1859. If "some of the most distinguished leaders and ministers of the Abolition and Republican party" did not plan Brown's invasion, they surely knew of it, approved it, and helped it out. Of course, Magoffin erred. No Republican leader was involved, and the event shocked even radicals like Pennsylvania Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, who remarked, "You hung them exactly right, Sir," to a Virginia representative after Brown's execution. But Magoffin had made a convincing point to quite receptive lawmakers.<sup>8</sup>

In planning for a revived militia, the governor turned to 37-year-old Simon

Morgan in a Confederate uniform



National Archives



B. Buckner, a West Point graduate and Mexican War veteran living in Louisville. Buckner quickly submitted a proposal for reorganization so detailed that it even prescribed how many ostrich plumes the governor ought to wear, not to mention their color. The legislature gave swift approval, bringing a new militia—the Kentucky State Guard (KSG)—into existence.<sup>9</sup>

To command it, Magoffin appointed Buckner himself to the office of state inspector general with the rank of militia major general. The appointment gave Buckner considerable powers and responsibilities. He could activate the militia in any emergency and for an indeterminate period.

Buckner had the energy and enthusiasm for the task. At once he set to work scouring state records for weaponry to arm his forces. By early 1861 he could report that the state owned 11,283 muskets, 3,159 rifles,

2,873 cavalry arms outfits, and 53 field pieces—more weapons than the state of Ohio controlled at the onset of the Civil War. Around him he gathered a talented staff, among them Abraham Lincoln’s brother-in-law, Ben Hardin Helm, a U.S. Military Academy graduate who became assistant inspector general. He chose surgeons, commissary officers, quartermasters, and even chaplains considering both their military capacity and the attendant political ramifications. The choices proved effective ones.<sup>10</sup>

Buckner found much of his army ready-made. Existing companies quickly joined the Kentucky State Guard, with Morgan’s Lexington Rifles among the first officially mustered in. Other militia units, organized in reaction to John Brown’s Raid, did the same. By August 1860 Buckner oversaw a force of forty-nine militia companies—some 2,500 men. That month, he put them on display, ordering a week-long training encampment near Louisville, which became a highly publicized event. Seeking a tactically proficient force, the inspector general reserved the first three days of training at the newly christened Camp Boone for officers only.<sup>11</sup> One could, perhaps, see it as a rebel army in embryo, but the striking thing about the occasion was how much the Kentucky State Guard fit the social character and behavior of militia companies from times past. Alcohol flowed freely. Soldiers also made money. One Sunday, 3,500 guests paid a 25-cent fee to watch a mock battle.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, upon closer inspection, the Kentucky State Guard had gone beyond people playing soldier—the politics of Union or secession had intruded. For some men, among them visiting secessionist Blanton Duncan and Maj. Thomas H. Hunt, commander of Louisville’s KSG regiment, the encampment gave them their first opportunity to exchange views and forge secret alliances with militia leaders from all over the state. With the 1860 presidential campaign in full swing, it is

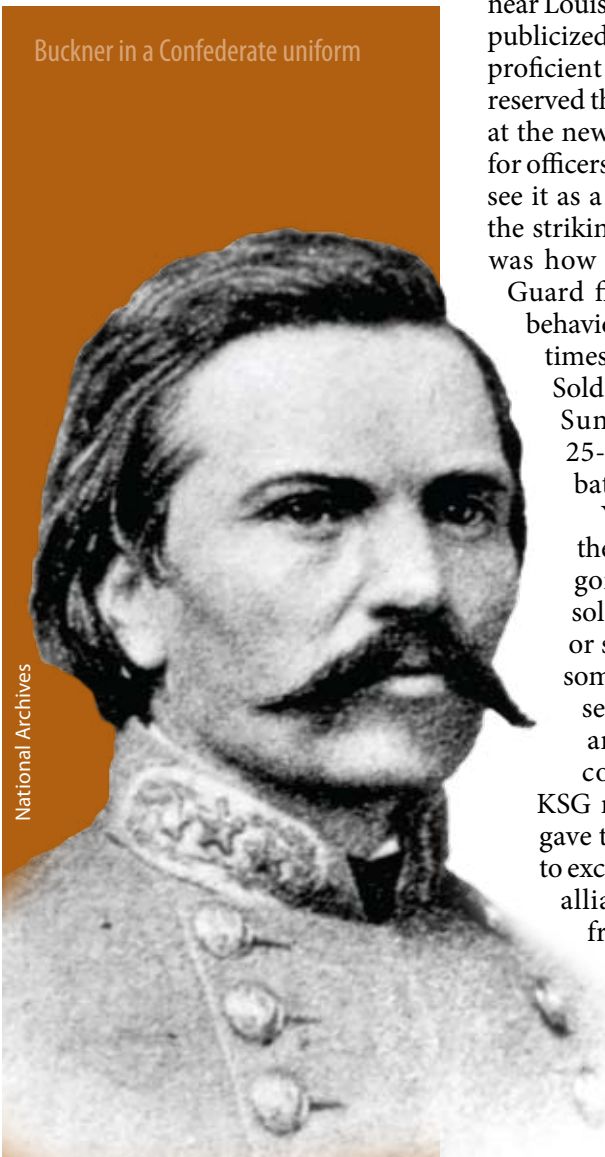
reasonable to speculate that, around campfires and over drinks, talk may well have turned to politics and what Kentucky would do if worst came to worst. The induction of the governor and many KSG officers into the “ske-tie-tu-rus” society (code for state rights) may have been as much a burlesque as it seemed, but what did it mean when select officers became members of the Knights of the Golden Spur? Was this mysterious order a thinly disguised surrogate of the Knights of the Golden Circle, an organization dedicated to the conquest and creation of an American empire for slavery?<sup>13</sup> No hard evidence has survived, but, quite possibly, that August 1860 encampment served as a school for political education for those willing to listen.<sup>14</sup>

Certainly Buckner created a military force loyal to himself and ready to follow his commands—one with a professional officer corps that placed personal loyalty above political disagreement. Officers like Morgan, Helm, Hunt, Lloyd Tilghman, and Thomas L. Crittenden (the senator’s son) owed first allegiance to Buckner, whatever their own views of the rights and wrongs of the sectional conflict. That loyalty mattered; without it, Buckner’s leadership during the secession crisis of 1861 would not have proved so consequential.

Just as important, most KSG officers plainly held to the Southern rights position. That did not make them disloyal to the Union in 1860. Southern sympathies, fealty to Kentucky, and allegiance to Buckner were perfectly compatible with love for the Union at that time. But when sectional and national loyalties began to pull men apart, Buckner’s influence provided one of the strongest forces to hold them together and to keep men of Union and secessionist sympathies working together for the longest possible time.

Finally, an effective Kentucky State Guard just may have given Governor Magoffin more confidence in taking the political positions he did. The Kentucky Constitution of 1850 had made the governor a near-figurehead, drastically trimming his powers of

Buckner in a Confederate uniform



National Archives

patronage. But no provisions tampered with the governor's powers as commander in chief. Now Magoffin had something worth commanding, an army eventually numbering 4,000 men that might conceivably seize the Bluegrass State in a secessionist coup.

## THE SECESSION CRISIS, 1861

Lincoln's election and the secession of South Carolina shattered and realigned the political parties of Kentucky beyond recognition. During the 1860 presidential campaign, Kentucky's Democratic Party had split into a pro-Union group behind Senator Stephen A. Douglas and a pro-Southern element that supported the candidacy of Vice President John C. Breckinridge. Meeting in private after Lincoln's election, leaders of the old pro-Union Whig party and pro-Union Democrats joined forces early in 1861 to form a Unionist party officially named the Union Democracy (UD). Pro-Southern Democrats countered this Unionist realignment several months later, creating the Southern Rights Party (SRP). Locked in a political struggle to determine Kentucky's allegiance to North or South, the Union Democracy and the Southern Rights Party competed feverishly for the hearts and minds of Kentuckians.

These political maneuverings and machinations left the commonwealth's Governor Magoffin almost as a man without a country; he had lost his formerly unified Democratic party and, with it, his legislative majority. While Magoffin publicly espoused only Southern rights, in his heart he favored secession. But he understood better than most that loyalties in his state divided evenly and that his beloved commonwealth could rapidly disintegrate into anarchy and chaos.

Lexington Rifles in camp



Kentucky Army National Guard

He feared that Kentucky—a border slave state—would be ripped apart and destroyed due to its geographic proximity to both sides, as well as consumed in an internecine civil war.

And so Magoffin sat on the fence. He attempted to ride the crisis out, hoping for a sign and waiting for some indication of which side Kentucky should take. After all, many pundits predicted a short ninety-day war. He had everything to gain and nothing to lose by waiting it out. He resisted President Lincoln's calls for troops after Fort Sumter had been fired upon, saying Kentucky would not supply soldiers for the "wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern States," but at the same time he spurned Southern commissioners and troop requests from the newly formed Confederate States.<sup>15</sup>

The aftermath of Fort Sumter tested the loyalties of the newly minted KSG militia. Secessionist Blanton Duncan and other radicals had perfected a

scheme to muster rebel troops. Duncan recruited a regiment of Kentuckians for immediate Confederate service and, before the firing on Fort Sumter, had arranged that the rebels gather in Louisville for transfer south whenever he gave the word. "I have tendered to Genl Davis a regiment of 1,000 men well drilled and prepared to march at a moment's notice," Duncan misinformed Senator Douglas in March 1861. "Of course you will keep this private."<sup>16</sup>

Acting on Duncan's plan after Sumter, the first rebel volunteers started arriving in Louisville on 12 April. Local authorities worried, and Unionists openly charged, that their real aim was to take over the city. Word

soon spread that Buckner himself had arranged with Duncan to keep his soldiers home a little longer, "in the event that their services may be needed for the defense of Kentucky from Northern aggressions." "Our city is assuming a decidedly military aspect," one Louisville man noticed. "The tread of armed men is heard in our streets every day and night."<sup>17</sup>

Alarmed, Louisville Mayor Thomas Crawford had earlier asked the governor to place a KSG company at his disposal in the event of trouble. Buckner now obliged, ordering Major Hunt to have a company report to newly elected Mayor John M. Delph. On 18 April Buckner detailed the Citizens' Guard as a special police, ordering them to guard the city battery throughout the night. All that week, KSG companies shared the task of guarding the city. When a hundred-plus Confederates under Joseph Desha arrived from Cynthiana, Delph ordered state guardsmen "to be in their armories ready at a moment's notice," for "trouble might ensue." But calm prevailed. When Duncan's Confederate regiment, now four hundred strong, marched to the

Louisville & Nashville railroad station for the journey south, they furled their banners, except for Captain J. B. Harvey “who flung his to the breeze.” The city fathers must have breathed a sigh of relief, and they were right to do so. The departure of Duncan’s Confederates erased the most serious threat to the internal peace of Kentucky for the moment, and the Kentucky State Guard had proved loyal to the commonwealth in its first test.<sup>18</sup>

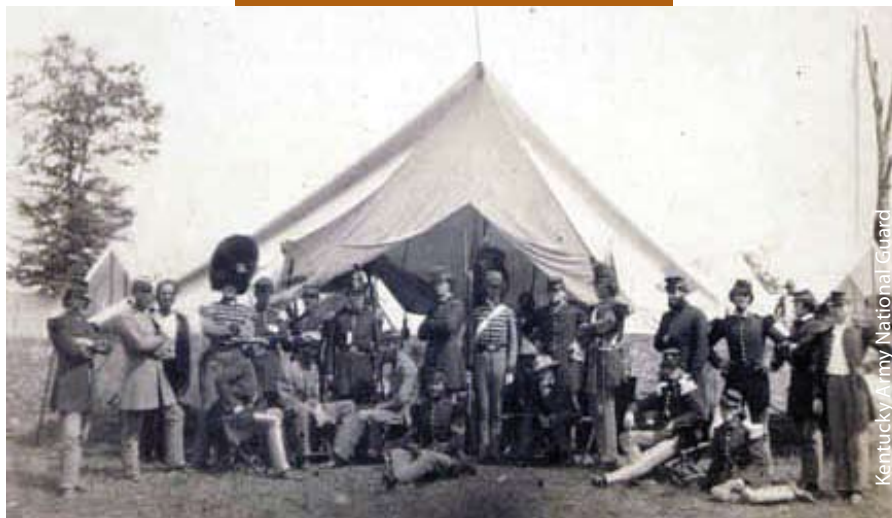
## THE UNION HOME GUARD

If Buckner and his cohorts did not see the issue clearly at first, Unionists of the new Union Democracy party did. To save Kentucky for the Union, they must defeat or disarm the pro-Southern Kentucky State Guard. The belief in a secessionist plot to seize the state was fixated in the minds of Union-loving men. According to the *Louisville Journal*, they saw daily indications that “the secessionists of Kentucky are moving in a secret conspiracy to take the State out of the Union by a sudden, violent and if necessary, bloody process.” Unionists needed military force to guard against this, and it could not, due to political sensitivities, be a force of federal soldiers. Consequently, the Unionists created local Union Home Guard militias.<sup>19</sup>

The presence of well-trained, active KSG militia companies, consisting of Southern sympathizers, intimidated the Unionists. Carrying muskets and bayonets, forty to fifty men chanting secession slogans had the ability to frighten average citizens who had never seen large armed formations. Mexican War veterans—men such as Buckner and Morgan—knew better. They understood that the Kentucky State Guard and its tiny battalions could not effectively seize and hold

the commonwealth. But to the average Kentuckian, a militia company of forty armed men seemed a mighty host. One Unionist complained that the organization was “daily becoming insolent and overbearing and disposed to violence.” Another attacked the KSG, saying “the thing they most respect is the strong arm with a weapon at the end of it.”<sup>20</sup>

Unionist Garrett Davis was convinced that the military situation in Kentucky was at a flash point. “The Union men of Kentucky express a firm determination to fight it out,” reported his contact, Union Maj. Gen. George McClellan. “Yesterday Garrett Davis told me ‘We will remain in the Union by voting if we can, by fighting if we must, and if we cannot hold our own, we will call on the General Government to aid us.’ He . . . convinced me that the majority were in danger of being overpowered by a better-armed minority.”<sup>21</sup>



Kentucky State Guard officers gather after parade.

To counter the Southern Rights Party, the Union Democracy immediately called for the creation of local Union Home Guard militias to protect hearth and home. These independent companies—in reality, political militias—were organized and equipped by prominent Union men in Kentucky’s major cities and towns. On 25 April Louisville opted to recruit two regiments of “police” and designated the new pro-Union mayor John Delph as the commander in chief. “We are in favor of the Home Guards,” trumpeted the *Frankfort Yeoman*, “and in favor of distributing arms judiciously among them, for local defense of the counties.”<sup>22</sup>

The elderly John Crittenden, a veteran of the War of 1812, captured headlines when he announced his membership in the 162-member Frankfort Home Guard. One can only imagine the impression it made upon Kentuckians seeing the ancient former senator, rifle in his hands, but the message was manly and clear: the Union men of Kentucky would fight, and the Bluegrass State would go down in blood should secession be attempted.<sup>23</sup>

## COVERT OPERATIONS

Like their KSG counterparts, the chief problem for Unionists was finding weapons with which to arm themselves. Fortunately for Kentucky Unionists, a covert operation under the direction of Navy Lt. William “Bull” Nelson came to their rescue. Nelson, stationed at Washington, D.C.,

met secretly with President Lincoln and proposed smuggling guns to Union men. Using Lincoln’s close personal friend, Joshua F. Speed, as his point of contact in Kentucky, Nelson met secretly with key Union leaders—James Harlan, Charles A. Wickliffe, Garrett Davis, Thornton F. Marshall, and John Crittenden—in Frankfort on or about 6

May. They founded the Union Defense Committee. All were of the “profound conviction that the guns were necessary to the salvation of the state.”<sup>24</sup> And guns they would get—the “Lincoln Guns, . . . neutrality with a vengeance.”<sup>25</sup>

Bull Nelson signed for his first consignment of Lincoln Guns (5,000) at Cincinnati on 5 May, just days after his conference with Lincoln. He then shipped part of the consignment to Jeffersonville, Indiana, where 1,200 rifles were quietly issued by his agents to the Louisville Home Guard. Following this, Nelson put part of his Cincinnati cache on board Kentucky Central trains (17 May) and shipped them to Paris and Lexington, saturating the Bluegrass counties. Having exhausted his initial supply by 5 June and promised an additional 5,000 rifles by Lincoln, Nelson continued his weapons operation from Cincinnati. In all, Nelson oversaw the distribution of 23,000 rifles in Kentucky.<sup>26</sup>

Once the smuggled arms were in the hands of Union Home Guard men, the news was leaked with great fanfare and effect. Southern Rights Party leaders protested that the Lincoln Guns were designed to “begin civil war in Kentucky.” Under a headline reading “The Conspiracy,” the Southern Rights Party accused the Union Democracy of duplicity, crying, “Companies of home guards . . . have driven every Southern man from their ranks.” The Southern Rights Party also exaggerated

the number of weapons, severely damaging its own cause; at one point, it overestimated the 2,500 rifles as 15,000. A Unionist later quipped, “Each gun was thus made to have the moral effect of three or four.”<sup>27</sup>

The psychological effect of militia weaponry made a significant impact upon friend and foe. It tipped the balance in favor of the Union. Watching men parade down Main Street in Danville with their new Lincoln Guns, Speed S. Fry was amazed at public reaction. “It would be impossible,” Fry observed, “for any one to describe, in language sufficiently strong, the consternation

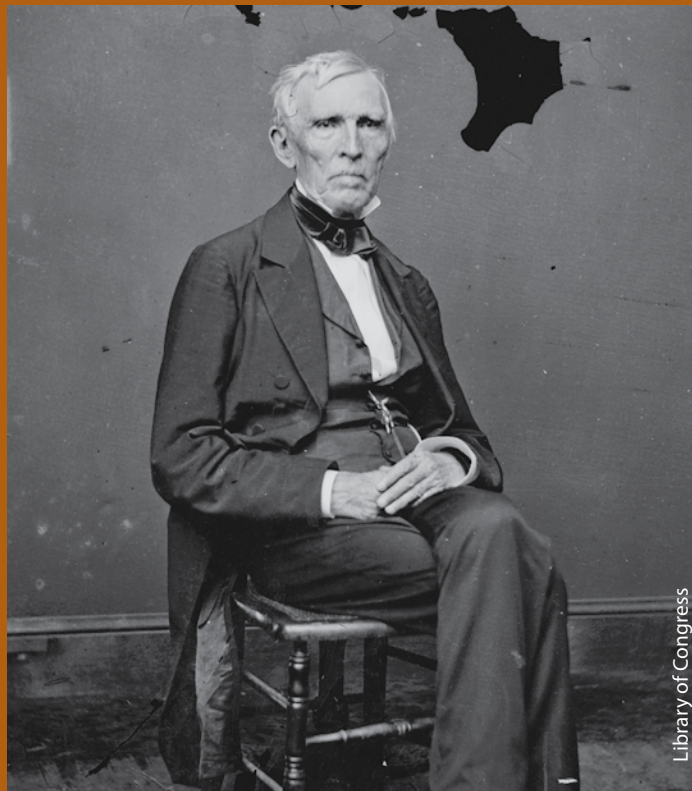
expressed in the countenances of these people, when they beheld my company of a hundred men file down Main street, with bayonets glistening in the sunlight, pointed above their heads, and nodding to and fro as they ‘kept step to the music of the Union.’” Guns, in the opinion of most Union men, “had a wonderfully quieting effect in the communities into which they were introduced.”<sup>28</sup>

### A NEUTRAL REGIME?

With KSG and Home Guard companies threatening and taunting each other, Governor Magoffin—sometimes derided as His Hesitancy—worried that Kentucky teetered dangerously on the brink of destruction. In one of the most extraordinary actions of the Civil War, he proclaimed the Commonwealth of Kentucky neutral on 20



Militiamen of the Kentucky State Guard relax after parade; (bottom) John J. Crittenden, c. 1861



May 1861. In his proclamation, the governor urged Kentuckians “to refrain from all words and acts likely to engender hot blood and provoke collision.”<sup>29</sup> He failed to mention his intention to mobilize units of the Kentucky State Guard to enforce neutrality throughout the commonwealth.

The recent crisis in Missouri—a bloody day in St. Louis on 10 May that sparked internal civil war in that state—plus public knowledge of Nelson’s smuggled Lincoln Guns resulted in special KSG military orders.<sup>30</sup> Buckner, with Magoffin’s concurrence, determined to field a pro-neutral thousand-man militia army. In addition, Buckner sent orders to the Lexington Battalion (Roger W. Hanson commanding) to activate a camp of instruction on 20 May (the same day as Magoffin’s proclamation). Rumor had it that Lincoln’s troops would attack the Kentucky State Guard on 21 May. Was it all just coincidence? That same day, the Louisville KSG battalion was ordered by KSG headquarters (Louisville) to activate a camp for six of its companies (to meet 21 May). The KSG actions had two purposes: first, to guard against Union military actions as had just occurred in St. Louis; and second, to ensure public tranquility as the neutrality proclamation became known.<sup>31</sup>

Working together, Magoffin and Buckner now attempted to restructure the commonwealth into an armed neutral, positioned to repel any invaders from the North or South. Under Magoffin’s direction, his state government energetically launched a neutral “foreign” policy, sending emissaries to President Lincoln and Confederate President Jefferson Davis as well as to Union and Confederate military commanders. Two-man diplomatic teams, consisting of a pro-Union and a pro-Southern

negotiator who had pledged to promote Kentucky’s neutrality and interests, enjoyed initial successes, securing guarantees that Kentucky would not be invaded by either side.<sup>32</sup>

## Columbus, Kentucky, a hotbed of secessionist sentiment, threatened to destroy

However, by June, the situation in Columbus, Kentucky, a hotbed of secessionist sentiment, threatened to destroy Magoffin’s and Buckner’s attempts to enforce neutrality. The town boasted a number of Confederate flags and banners that invited Union gunboats to threaten the town with naval gunfire. Outside observers labeled Columbus “Kentucky’s

Charleston.” To quell secessionist sentiment, Buckner, on 10 June, in the most unusual act of his KSG inspector generalship, ordered six companies of the 4th Battalion (KSG troops from Paducah) to deploy to Columbus to pacify secessionists and to enforce state neutrality.<sup>33</sup> He placed Lloyd Tilghman in command and ordered Capt. Henry Lyon of the engineer corps to join them. Buckner had been busily engaged throughout western Kentucky at this time. Prior to his activation of the KSG troops, he had persuaded Confederate Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow to cancel a planned Kentucky invasion, but Columbus’ problems and the threat from Union gunboats required decisive action. According to Buckner, “the highly excited state of the citizens of Columbus and vicinity, and the indiscretion of many of them, at every moment imperiling the peace of the Commonwealth, induced me to . . . call into the field a small military force [to] quiet the unhealthy excitement.”<sup>34</sup>

Buckner clearly stated that his purpose in activating the Kentucky State Guard was to “protect all citizens” and to “carry out the obligation of neutrality which the State has assumed . . . , restraining our citizens from acts of lawless aggression.” One newspaper was shocked, asserting that the troops had been called out

“to protect Union men.”<sup>35</sup> In ordering this most peculiar of actions, Buckner, a Southern rights man, had deployed pro-Southern militia units to quell secessionist sentiments and uphold Kentucky neutrality! Why had he done this, and to what purpose?

### SETTING TRAPS

Unionists believed, and Buckner’s actions and those of his subordinates seem to suggest, that secessionists desired to keep Kentucky neutral as a first stage or half-step to disunion until a major-



Kentucky Army National Guard

Governor Magoffin visits Major Hunt at encampment.

# privately whispered to take Kentucky out

ity of Kentuckians finally made up their minds that their true destinies lay with the South. Conversely, Buckner and other disunionists must have been extremely discouraged as they witnessed the creation of opposition Union Home Guard militias comprised of loyal Union men equipped with thousands of Lincoln Guns. How could they dare hope, as many privately whispered, to “take Kentucky out?”

Providentially, the overt and aggressive actions of Union Capt. Nathaniel Lyon at St. Louis on 10 May provided KSG conspirators with a usable template for revolution. An incident similar to St. Louis, if it were to occur somewhere in Kentucky, would allow disunionists to rally an outraged Bluegrass state to the Southern side. “If Unionism means such atrocious deeds as I have witnessed in St. Louis, I am no longer a Union man,” a Missourian who had strongly opposed secession exclaimed. Many citizens of Kentucky shared his thoughts on the subject. Kentuckians were edgy.<sup>36</sup>

Could Kentucky Unionists be provoked, trapped, or manipulated into perpetrating an act of violence on Kentucky soil? Southern sympathizing military men hoped so. For years, Kentuckians had heard that the “Black” Republicans were aggressive abolitionists who would stop at nothing. Following St. Louis, the belief that federal usurpations formed part of a

larger Republican conspiracy to subjugate the border slave states gained dominance. Alfred Pirtle’s friend Cabell from St. Louis believed,

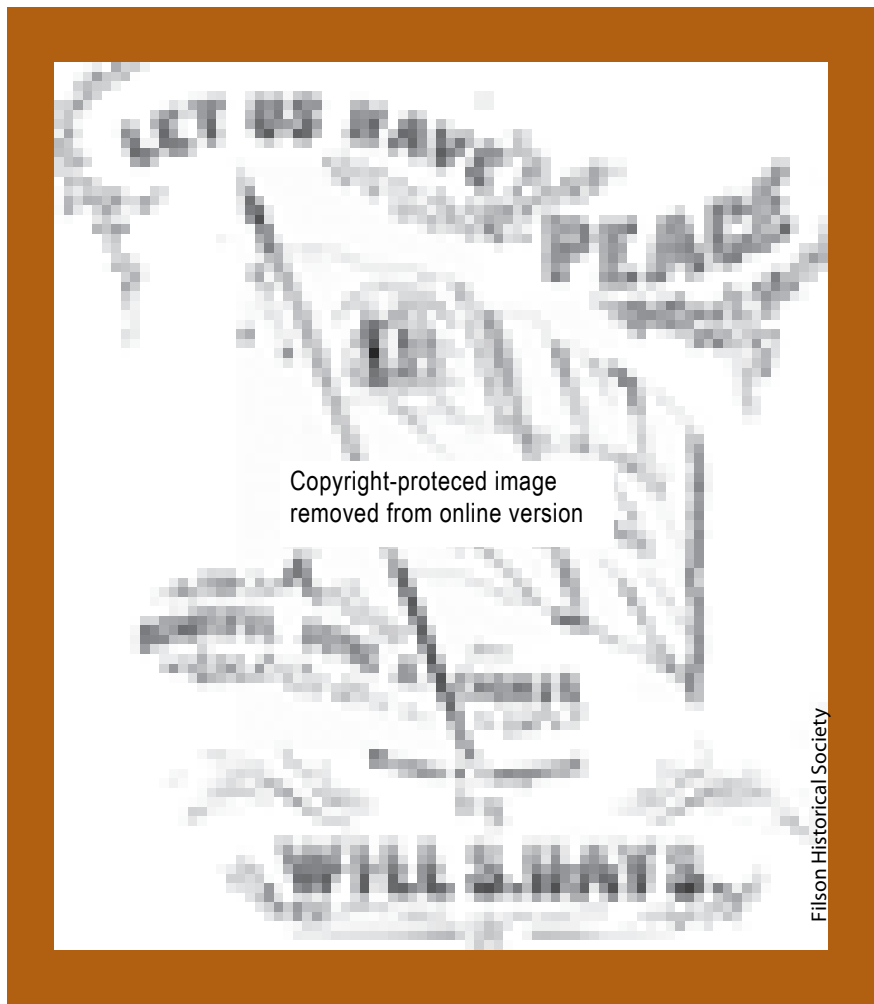
that [Missouri] will be changed by these high-handed actions into secession and then the Federal government having succeeded in their object of precipitating the

State will throw so many and such large bodies of troops into the State that the citizens of Missouri will find themselves overawed and held in check by the hands of hireling Abolitionists. . . . He sees in the Administrations [*sic*] movements towards our Commonwealth [Kentucky] indications of such proceedings here.

Pirtle, although he later became a Union army officer, shared the same outrage and conspiracy beliefs as most Kentuckians, commenting, “We hope the time will not find us so unprepared as Missouri was.”<sup>37</sup>

Believing Lincoln and Republicans to be aggressive by nature, Buckner and his KSG cohorts believed that all they needed to do was to set the traps. And so, beginning in May 1861, this is exactly what they attempted to do. Buckner ordered the KSG militia into a number of camps across the commonwealth in hopes that Unionists would launch an attack against at least one of them.

One Union attack on a KSG encampment, regardless of the military outcome, would act as a catalyst for revolution. “Indeed, the Secessionists of the State Guard, if there be any, went out on purpose to be taken, perhaps,” an embedded reporter observed. “They will hold Lincoln to be meaner than ever if he doesn’t accommodate them in this cherished wish of their gizzards.” Still, “it is rather ominous that a cause needs blood to give it vitality.”<sup>38</sup>



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Filson Historical Society

Cover to an 1861 song for peace by a Louisville songwriter

With a potentially hostile Union army camp just across the Ohio River from Louisville (Camp Joe Holt), KSG Lt. Col. Thomas H. Hunt carefully chose an exposed campsite. Expecting a federal attack, Hunt decided to train his battalion at Shepherdsville, 30 miles south of Louisville. Positioning his camp at a bend on the south side of the Salt River, Hunt began training his men in six-day iterations. He named the site Camp Shelby. The Paroquet Springs resort, conveniently at hand, lent this encampment the same social-military atmosphere that had prevailed at the previous year's outing.

Hunt went into camp with six companies of his regiment on 21 May for one week of training. He expected the Kentucky Rangers (cavalry) and the Citizens Artillery in a few days. To read Citizens' Guard soldier Pirtle's account of camp life, one would think that the entire enterprise consisted of sheer boredom: "The hours are spent reading, writing, card-playing, rowing on the Salt River." In fact, "reading and lounging around is the order of the day."<sup>39</sup>

Magoffin and Buckner perhaps thought otherwise. Convinced that Unionists were about to move, they awaited action. Receiving what later proved to be false reports, Magoffin informed Buckner that he believed a Union force from Cincinnati would attack Camp Shelby between 21 and 26 May. Events in Missouri filled everyone's minds. Rumors of an imminent attack circulated. "It has been softly whispered," wrote reporter Charley Kirk, "that if this camp is continued (and the probability is it will be for some time) the 'Abolitionist Administration' will adopt the same measures in regard to it that they did so effectually with the St. Louis Brigade. . . . We have an eye to this."<sup>40</sup>

Buckner arrived at Camp Shelby to take command on 26 May, and the following scene ensued: "Last evening was one of excitement in our little camp. A rumor was set afloat that dispatches of great importance had been received at Headquarters [and when] orders to sleep on arms and 40 rounds of cartridges were issued the boys gave vent to their feelings in three



A soldier of the Louisville Citizens' Guard in 1858, as depicted on the cover of a march written in the unit's honor

cheers. Picket Guards were posted last night."<sup>41</sup>

Forty rounds of ammunition was standard combat issue in 1861, so for Hunt's battalion state neutrality had become mighty peculiar. But the awaited Union attack never came; the KSG's traps had all been set in vain. Union leaders of Kentucky had also observed the events in Missouri and had learned the appropriate lessons. Kentucky Unionists opted to await events while building a Union Home Guard as a deterrent force. Meanwhile, they sought bloodless ways to eliminate the Kentucky State Guard.

### DISMANTLING THE KENTUCKY STATE GUARD

The end of the Kentucky State Guard came about by cutting off funds, redistributing weapons, and requiring loyalty oaths. Suspicious as ever, the UD-dominated Kentucky General Assembly demanded access to Magoffin's correspondence and transactions with the Confederate government and insisted that all KSG militiamen take an oath of loyalty to the United States. It also arranged to divide the weaponry between KSG and Home Guard units. Finally, on the last day of the May session, the legislature set up a five-member military board to oversee the arming of Kentucky. "Humiliating as it is," an SRP supporter noted, this creation stripped Magoffin of "all his military power."<sup>42</sup>

The results of the UD-dominated military board's decisions did not take long to effect a change. Secessionists in the KSG, tired of marking time while war raged about them, slowly but surely left KSG ranks and went south to join the Confederate Army, many of them turning over their arms to Home Guard units in their communities. A lack of funding would force the closure by mid-July of Camp Joe Daviess, a permanent training camp established by Hunt in early June atop Muldraugh's Hill, and of other places like it.<sup>43</sup>

The Union loyalty oath proved to be most deadly. The insistence of Southern rights men upon a code of honor was admirable but naïve for

revolutionaries. They again played into Unionist hands. In this instance, Kentucky Unionists understood Southern rights men better than Southern rights men understood themselves. The insistence on a Union loyalty oath led pro-Southern members of KSG units to quit their ranks in large numbers.

Lucas G. Hughes informed Governor Magoffin, “The members of the Hancock Rifle Company K.S.G. in the 2nd Saturday in July 1861 at their Company meeting, after reading of the General Order No. 4 refused to take the oath required . . . having thereby become disbanded.” His letter was one of many. Submitting his resignation, M. S. Kouns admitted that his company strength had fallen to seventeen members: “Some have Vol[unteered] in the Federal Army & Some have gone to parts unknown.”<sup>44</sup>

To most modern observers, the oath appears trivial; to many men of 1861, however, matters of principle and honor were essential to one’s self-respect. Pirtle understood the issue and was alarmed. He worried that if the oath was insisted upon, “the only arm the State now has would be disbanded.”<sup>45</sup>

A few pro-secessionists dodged the oath. They understood the object of Unionists and urged their comrades not to feel obligated by having sworn. Pirtle was not impressed when one of Buckner’s aides-de-camp, Maj. Alexander Cassidy, dropped by the Citizens’ Guard to administer the oath. “A great diversity of opinion exists as to the obligation imposed by the oath, some taking it very lightly,” Pirtle noted. “The officer administering it, Cassidy [*sic*] said he would be willing to take it every morning before breakfast thus speaking lightly of the oath.”<sup>46</sup>

Money, state armaments, and loyalty oaths—none of this eventually mattered. On 21 July, as the news of the Battle of Bull Run became known, Buckner and his personally loyal but pro-Southern officers resigned their positions in the Kentucky State Guard and headed south to join the Confederate Army. The Kentucky State Guard was at an end. Union Home Guard militias now held the high ground, for they had saved Kentucky for the Union.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Kentucky State Guard’s contribution to Kentucky in 1861 was significant in many respects. Buckner later argued that his pro-neutral militia had delayed a Union and Confederate invasion while preserving the peace of Kentucky. The record shows that Governor Magoffin forcefully advocated the use of the Kentucky State Guard as an instrument of neutrality, despite the fact that he was initially, at best, a secret secessionist. Over time, however, events seem to have forced Magoffin to evolve into a sincere neutralist.

Almost as importantly, the Kentucky State Guard recruited Kentucky secessionists and held them in check. It inadvertently paralyzed the revolutionary zeal of men ready to join the rebellion and force Kentucky out of the Union at the point of the bayonet. While bivouacked at the training camps, they dreamed of secession and glory and waited for orders and military action that never came. The Kentucky State Guard saved Louisville from a possible Blanton Duncan secession plot in April, and in June it pacified the would-be secessionists of Columbus. When Southern rights men burned a Kentucky Central railroad bridge near Cynthiana to stop the southward movement of Lincoln Guns in August, Magoffin granted Thomas Crittenden permission to call out a KSG company if needed. At every turn, the Kentucky State Guard, despite its pro-Southern proclivities, had helped preserve the hegemony and peace of Kentucky.

The KSG’s second contribution was strategic. Albeit unwillingly at times, it backed state neutrality with force. The presence of a well-armed pro-Southern militia willing to back neutrality also kept Unionists temporarily off-balance. Tacticians on both sides had to abide by neutrality rather than risk a bloodbath. As long as a sizable portion of the Kentucky State Guard remained in Kentucky and loyal to Magoffin and Buckner, neutrality stood a chance. Buckner fully understood the Kentucky State Guard was the only force in Kentucky that included pro-Southern, pro-Union, and neutral men in its ranks.

Only with the KSG’s dismantling could the commonwealth take a decisive stand for the Union. Meanwhile, the hollow force stood as a potential nuisance to invaders—perhaps just enough of one to discourage belligerents early in the war.

The KSG’s third contribution was political. KSG companies bolstered and supported the Southern Rights Party at meetings and political gatherings. Without KSG protection, Union men might have broken up SRP meetings. The odds are that SRP leaders would have been subjected to arrest or forced to flee Kentucky much sooner than September 1861. In this sense, the Kentucky State Guard added to the longevity of Kentucky’s Southern Rights Party, giving it backbone and allowing the debate over North or South to continue well beyond that of any other border state.

Finally, the Kentucky State Guard and Union Home Guard made possible a more peaceful process of polarization between UD and SRP constituencies. Unionists joined Home Guard units, while SRP men joined KSG companies. Kentuckians sorted themselves out peacefully, and over time the extremists of both sides were siphoned off to rival Confederate or Union armies gathering on the commonwealth’s borders instead of fighting it out inside the state. The Kentucky State Guard, in ways unique and unforeseen, had helped assist in preserving state hegemony, internal peace, and political freedom. Be it Kentucky 1861 or Iraq 2008, peaceful or violent, militias have their uses.



## NOTES

This article is a revised version of a paper read at the conference of Army historians held in Arlington, Virginia, in August 2007.

1. Albert Kirwan, *John J. Crittenden* (Lexington, Ky., 1962), pp. 25–26, quote p. 25. See also John Hope Franklin, *The Militant South, 1800–1861* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956).

2. Susan G. Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theater in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia*



- (Philadelphia, 1986), pp. 49–53, quote p. 49; James A. Ramage, *Rebel Raider: The Life of General John Hunt Morgan* (Lexington, Ky., 1986), pp. 35, 41–42.
3. F. C. Harrington, *Military History of Kentucky* (Military Department of Kentucky, 1939), p. 141.
  4. William Henry Perrin, ed., *History of Fayette County* (Chicago, 1882), p. 444.
  5. L. D. Young, *Reminiscences of a Soldier of the Orphan Brigade* (Paris, Ky., 1918), p. 11–12, quote, p. 12; *Lexington Observer and Reporter*, 16 Sep 1857.
  6. Prior to John Brown's Raid, Kentuckians had little reason to fear slave revolts—there had been none. After the raid, they effectively expelled abolitionist John G. Fee of Berea and others without incident.
  7. Richard G. Stone, *A Brittle Sword: The Kentucky Militia, 1776–1912* (Lexington, Ky., 1977), p. 59.
  8. *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Kentucky . . . , 1859* (Frankfort, Ky., 1859), p. 40, initial quoted words; Fawn M. Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens: Scourge of the South* (New York, 1959), pp. 133–34, final quote.
  9. An Act for the Better Organization of the Kentucky Militia, approved 5 March 1860, in *Acts of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky Passed at the Session Which Was Begun and Held in the City of Frankfort on Monday, the Fifth Day of December, 1859 and Ended on Monday, the Fifth Day of March, 1860* (Frankfort, Ky., 1860), pp. 142–71.
  10. Harrington, *Military History of Kentucky*, p. 147; Stone, *Brittle Sword*, p. 62.
  11. The camp was set up at the fairgrounds of the Southwestern Agricultural and Mechanical Association, of which secessionists Blanton Duncan and Thomas H. Hunt were members. See *Sketches of Camp Boone: The First Encampment of the Kentucky State Guard* (Louisville, Ky., 1860), pp. 15–20; *Louisville Daily Courier*, 27 Aug 1860.
  12. *Louisville Daily Courier*, 28 Aug 1860; *Sketches of Camp Boone*, p. 25.
  13. The Knights of the Golden Circle, led by founder George W. L. Bickley, constituted a secret military society dedicated to the expansion of slavery throughout Latin America. The primary goal of the organization was to annex northern Mexico and create a new slave state.
  14. Ltr, Blanton Duncan to Stephen A. Douglas, 7 Mar 1861, in Stephen A. Douglas Papers, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.; Basil W. Duke, *History of Morgan's Cavalry* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1867), p. 36.
  15. Magoffin to Secretary of War Simon Cameron, 15 April 1861, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1880–1901), ser. 3, vol. 1, p. 70.
  16. Ltr, Duncan to Douglas, 7 Mar 1861, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago. Duncan is apparently referring to Confederate president Jefferson Davis, who held the rank of major general in the Mississippi Militia.
  17. *Louisville Daily Courier*, 13, 18, 20 Apr 1861.
  18. Kentucky State Guard (KSG) Special Order (SO) 56 (initial quoted words), Personnel Records, Kentucky National Guard (NG), Frankfort, Ky.; Alfred Pirtle Journal, 20 and 22 Apr 1861, Alfred Pirtle Papers, Filson Historical Society (FHS), Louisville, Ky.; *Louisville Daily Courier*, 20 Apr 1861.
  19. *Louisville Journal*, 8 Jun 1861.
  20. *Ibid.*, 2 Jul 1861.
  21. Ltr, Maj Gen George McClellan to Lt Col E. D. Townsend, 17 May 1861, *War of the Rebellion*, ser. 1, vol. 51, pt. 1, p. 381.
  22. *Frankfort Yeoman*, 16 May 1861.
  23. *Ibid.*, 30 Apr 1861. The willingness of Crittenden and other Union elders to shoulder a musket for their cause conjures up the image of revolutionary Iranian mullahs who, circa 1979, were no less determined.
  24. Kirwan, *Crittenden*, p. 436; Daniel Stevenson, "General Nelson, Kentucky, and Lincoln Guns," *Magazine of American History* 10 (1883): 121–22, quote, p. 122.
  25. Ltr, R. H. Stevenson to T. B. Stevenson, 18 May 1861, T. B. Stevenson Papers, Cincinnati Historical Society, Cincinnati, Ohio.
  26. Stevenson, "Nelson, Kentucky, and Guns," pp. 119, 123–25. Most of the July consignments (13,000 rifles) were stored for issue to Tennessee units, which would be recruited in August.
  27. *Louisville Daily Courier*, 20 May 1861, first quote; Stevenson, "Nelson, Kentucky, and Guns," pp. 122–23, 126, second quote, p. 126.
  28. Stevenson, "Nelson, Kentucky, and Guns," p. 131, first quote; Thomas Speed, *The Union Cause in Kentucky, 1860–1865* (New York, 1907), p. 109, second quote.
  29. Speed, *Union Cause in Kentucky*, pp. 47–49. The legislature had also passed a neutrality resolution on 16 May.
  30. On 10 May 1861 the Missouri State Guard was surrounded and captured by Union Capt. Nathaniel Lyon. No shots were fired and no resistance offered, but when a local column of Union Home Guards marched the 892 prisoners through St. Louis, an angry crowd gathered. Shooting began. Twenty-eight people were killed and seventy-five wounded. This incident, or "massacre" as pro-Southerners called it, set off Missouri's civil war. See Duke, *History of Morgan's Cavalry*, pp. 44–50; James W. Covington, "The Camp Jackson Affair: 1861," *Missouri Historical Review* 55 (April 1961): 197–212.
  31. *Paris Western Citizen*, 31 May 1861; KSG SOs 126, 127, Personnel Records, Kentucky NG.
  32. Interested in buying additional weapons, Magoffin also sent purchasing agents to the North and South.
  33. Buckner activated four infantry, one artillery, and one cavalry company to move from Paducah to Columbus.
  34. *Louisville Daily Courier*, 12 Jun 1861.
  35. *Ibid.*, 15 Jun and 1 Jul 1861.
  36. Christopher Phillips, *Damned Yankee: The Life of General Nathaniel Lyon* (Columbia, Mo., 1990), p. 193, quote; Pirtle Journal, 11 and 15 May 1861, FHS.
  37. Pirtle Journal, 15 May 1861, FHS.
  38. *Daily Louisville Democrat*, 28 May 1861.
  39. KSG SO 127, Personnel Records, Kentucky NG; Pirtle Journal, 21 and 15 May 1861, quotes, FHS.
  40. *Louisville Daily Courier*, 27 and 30 May 1861.
  41. *Ibid.*, 28 May 1861.
  42. Pirtle Journal, 10 May 1861, FHS; E. Merton Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1926), p. 87; *Louisville Daily Courier*, 22 May 1861; *Frankfort Commonwealth*, 29 May 1861, quote.
  43. At first, \$5,000 in training funds had been authorized (15 June), and \$30,220 for powder, caps, muskets, balls and shot, lead, and musket repair. By July the military board would undo this decision.
  44. Ltrs, L. G. Hughes to Magoffin, 21 Sep 1861, and M. S. Kouns to Magoffin, 3 Sep 1861, Governor's Military Correspondence, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Ky.
  45. Pirtle Journal, 18 May 1861, FHS.
  46. *Ibid.*, 3 Jun 1861, FHS.

# COMMENTARY

## “THE U.S. ARMY AND CONTEMPORARY MILITARY HISTORY” Some Further Considerations

By WILLIAM M. HAMMOND

In a commentary entitled “The U.S. Army and Contemporary Military History” that appeared in *Army History* in spring 2008, Gregory Fontenot takes issue with a winter 2006 *Army History* review by Richard Stewart of three books including one, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Washington, D.C., 2004), that Fontenot coauthored. In a number of places, Fontenot makes good points that deserve consideration. In others, however, he is well wide of the mark, and at times he is downright disingenuous.

Stewart, who was chief of the Histories Division of the Center of Military History when he wrote the review and has since become the Center’s chief historian, prefaced his piece, entitled “‘Instant’ History and History: A Hierarchy of Needs,” with some thoughts about what he termed “instant” history. Using Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War* as an example, Stewart observed that excellent accounts of contemporary events have been written. Even so, he said, they are difficult to do well because it is hard for even a careful writer to attain the perspective of historians who approach a subject after the passage of time. This is particularly so for the authors of official histories working in today’s security-conscious environment. In distinguishing fact from fiction, they often need to examine a broad range of sometimes highly classified documents, sources to which they encounter difficulty gaining access while a war is in progress and that

can be almost as hard to use long afterward because of their security status. In all, Stewart argued, it may take a generation to produce a final history. *On Point* was in print just a year after the events it describes, and Stewart concluded that it was more a well prepared after-action report than a formal history. Finding it a good beginning, he added that it will serve the Army well until the Center’s historians can fill in with a more comprehensive and detailed treatment of the subject.<sup>1</sup>

Stung by Stewart’s remarks, Fontenot responds by asking why the Army sponsors history at all: “Is official Army history about the record, or is it about serving the need of the Army to garner insight from its own experiences?” He answers the question by asserting that if Thucydides had written contemporary history, as Stewart had said, so had the Center when it was founded. In that light, the Army’s historians should return to their roots by writing for soldiers in the field. Anything else risks rendering their work irrelevant to the institution they serve. The Army, Fontenot concludes, “does not need a Center of Military History that exists to produce seminal works.” Academics are willing to do that in about the same time it takes the Center, or even sooner.<sup>2</sup>

Fontenot is correct in his assertion that the Center’s predecessors—the Historical Branch, G-2 Section, War Department (1943–45); the Historical Division, War Department (1945–47); the Historical Division, Department of the Army (1947–50); and the Office of the Chief of Mili-

tary History (1950–73)—were created to write contemporary history. The American Forces in Action series comes immediately to mind. It consists of thirteen detailed operational studies and an anthology of four shorter accounts that the historical offices of the Army’s major field commands initiated during World War II and that the Historical Branch and then the Historical Division enhanced and rushed into print. The Historical Division turned the final two monographs prepared for this series into the first two combat volumes of its landmark series *United States Army in World War II*.<sup>3</sup>

What Fontenot fails to see is that within official history a tension between quickly produced contemporary accounts and more time-consuming definitive works has always existed and that both products are essential to the Army as a fighting force. The difference is much like the relationship between knowledge and understanding. Short-term studies pass along to soldiers and commanders alike information and lessons learned through experience. Longer-term studies fill out the structure of the events that the earlier works have outlined and crystallize the wisdom the institution acquired by reflecting upon the implications of what happened. Contemporary histories serve the immediate needs of the Army as a fighting force, while the context and insights conveyed in the more elaborate histories help to round out the Army as an institution.

This very issue arose during the spring and summer of 1945, when the

World War II series was taking shape. The planners responsible for defining the series at first envisioned a quickly written ten- to fifteen-volume history of the war that would become widely known and read—a post-World War II equivalent, if you will, of *On Point*. It soon became clear, however, that the war was so vast that a history of that sort would leave out much of the detail that the Army would need to educate the next generation of officers. The chief historian of the Historical Branch, G-2, Walter Livingston Wright, insisted, moreover, that “military history as conceived by the modern historian is not merely an account of battles and campaigns, but of a whole national society organized for war, using all of its resources both human and material. Within the larger picture of American society at war, the mission of the Historical Branch is to record that part of the war effort which is under the direct or effective influence of the War Department.” It was not a work that could be done in a day. The scope of the project would be “enormous,” but Wright insisted that the final product “must be well done or another generation may be left to repeat the same mistakes.”<sup>4</sup>

In saying this, Wright came closer to Thucydides than either Stewart or Fontenot. For if *The Peloponnesian War* started out as a work written in the context of a contemporary event, its author was still at work on it some thirty years later, well after the conflict had ended. As historian M. I. Finley noted in his masterful introduction to the book’s 1972 Penguin edition, the author’s renditions of the funeral oration delivered by Pericles in the first year of the war, 431 B.C., and

of the general’s last speech in 430 were both composed in the light of Athens’ complete and unnecessary defeat.<sup>5</sup> As for writing current history for the benefit of his own times, Thucydides was adamant that “it will be enough for me . . . if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past

determined by future historians. It would be a reference work that, while neither final nor complete, could still provide a firm foundation for further research and study. Although they would strive to publish the volumes as quickly as they could so that the Army could use them in its schools, the planners admitted that “some of the work would take years to complete.”<sup>7</sup> The final volume in the series appeared in 1998.

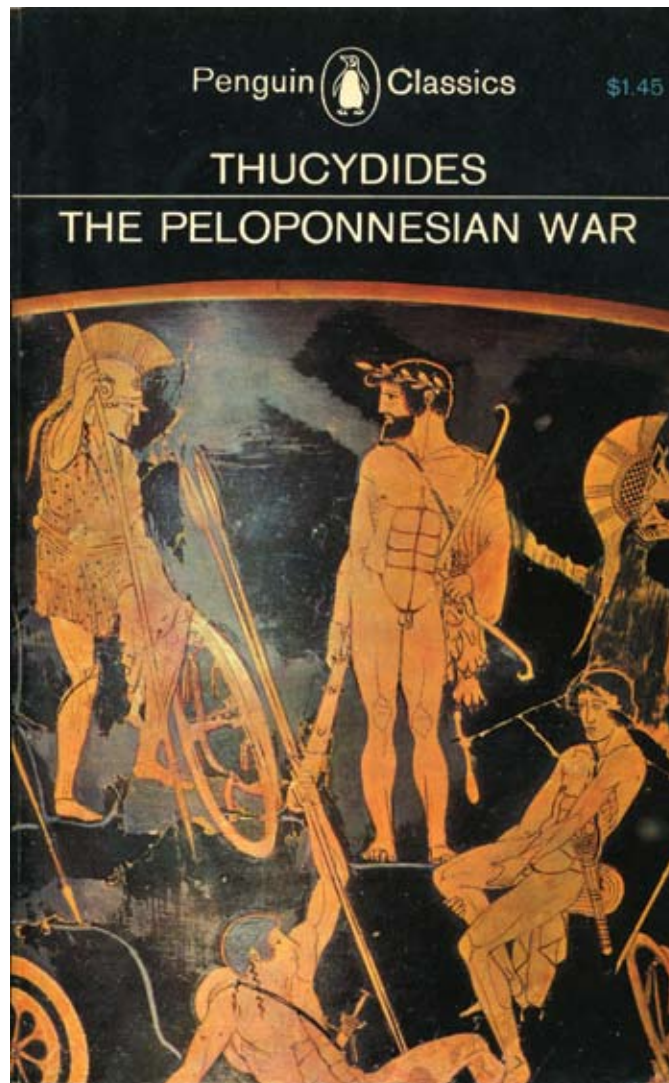
Reflecting Wright’s line of thinking, the Center has always sought to record the Army’s recent history while also amassing the details and providing the analyses needed to produce works useful for the long term. That the two goals have been complementary goes without saying. In 1957, for example, the Office of the Chief of Military History assigned historian Robert Coakley to temporary duty with the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, where he collected the documents he would need to author a contemporary account of the Army’s role in the school integration crisis at Little Rock, Arkansas. This work later evolved into the Center’s three-volume series on the Army’s role in civil disturbances. The final volume in that trilogy, Paul Scheips’ *The Role of Federal Military Forces in Domestic Disorders, 1945–1992* (Washington,

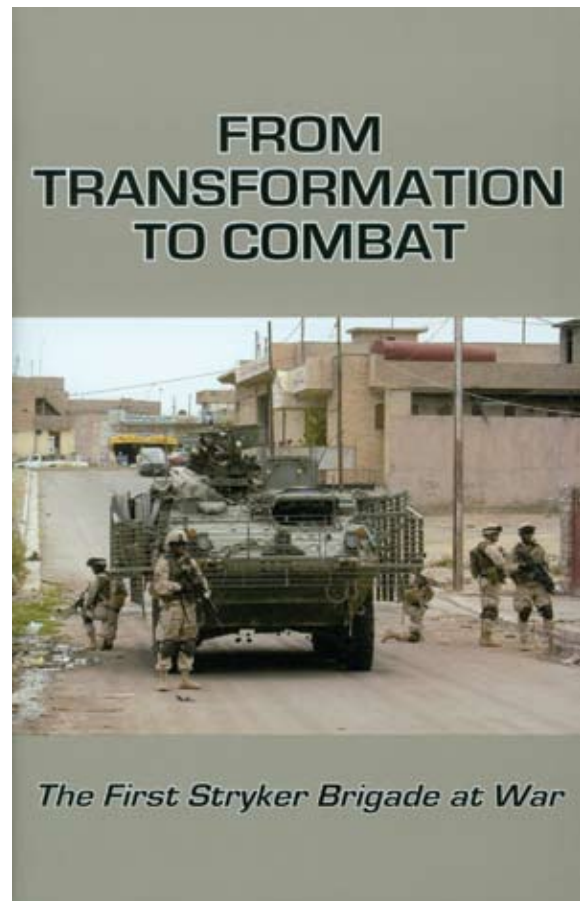
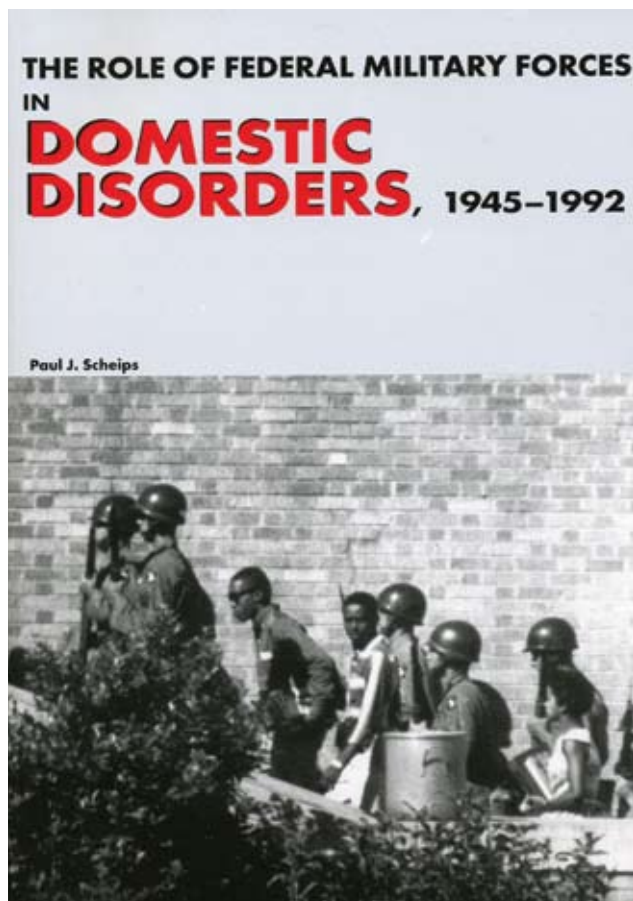
D.C., 2005), provided the Office of the Chief of Staff with significant assistance after Hurricane Katrina on issues ranging from Army relations with state governments during a civil emergency to the extent of federal military assistance allowed under the Posse Comitatus Act.<sup>8</sup>

During the 1960s and 1970s, as the Vietnam War ran its

and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future. My work is not a piece of writing designed to meet the taste of the immediate public, but was done to last for ever.”<sup>6</sup>

In the end, the plan Wright and his associates conceived included some 101 volumes with another 20 to be





course, the Office of the Chief of Military History coordinated the work of military history detachments in the field, provided more than a hundred studies on a wide variety of war-related topics to the Army Staff and Secretariat, and reviewed and transferred to the National Archives a vast assemblage of war-related documents. Consisting of studies, oral history interviews, unit histories, backchannel messages, and various other materials, this collection stands at the core of the Center's current Vietnam War histories.<sup>9</sup>

During the 1980s and 1990s the Center's historians served as members of a number of important Army and joint special study groups, among them the Commission on Roles and Missions; the various Quadrennial Defense Reviews; the Headquarters, Department of the Army, Realignment Task Force; and the Army chief of staff's working group on gays in the military.<sup>10</sup> While responding to the Army's immediate needs, all of

this work may likewise contribute to future histories.

As for the current Army, the Center has thus far helped train more than thirty military history detachments, most of which have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. The documentation and oral histories they have gathered will be of prime importance to future histories of the Global War on Terrorism. In addition, between April 2007 and April 2008 alone, the Center produced fifty-seven information papers of up to twenty pages in length, often for the chief of staff himself, and twenty-three longer research reports for the chief of staff and commanders in the field, and it dispatched two senior historians to Iraq to collect records and prepare narratives about current operations. At the same time, it published two important monographs on the Army's transformation program, Mark J. Reardon and Jeffery A. Charlston's *From Transformation to Combat: The First Stryker Brigade at War*

(Washington, D.C., 2007) and William M. Donnelly's *Transforming an Army at War: Designing the Modular Force, 1991-2005* (Washington, D.C., 2007).<sup>11</sup>

Fontenot observes that the World War II historians produced books at a rapid pace. Within thirteen years of the war's end, he states, the Office of the Chief of Military History had thirty-eight of its volumes in print. Eleven more were in publication, and four were in editing. The authors of those works, he continued, had confronted and solved all the problems that Center historians of today face but had done the job in much less time.<sup>12</sup>

There were good reasons for this. Just as the Historical Division was hitting its stride in the summer of 1947, the Army announced a 25-percent reduction of the office's staff. In response, the division's leaders, with the assistance of high-ranking officers in the Pentagon who wanted the story of their war told, secured

access to a nonappropriated fund of some \$4 million drawn from surplus wartime Army Post Exchange profits. This money freed the World War II project from the constraints imposed by the government's annual appropriations process, allowed the office to hire junior historians as research assistants and to obtain translators for the trove of German, French, and Italian documents Allied forces had amassed, and funded the publication of most of the books to which Fontenot referred. By 1951 the Office of the Chief of Military History had a staff of some 220, including 30 writing historians.<sup>13</sup>

Beyond independent financing, the World War II project also had the advantage of having many authors who had served as uniformed historians in the European or Pacific theaters. Those individuals had helped organize the records they would use and had written monographs applicable to their subjects while the fighting was still in progress. They thus knew what issues would be important for the works they were beginning. Adding momentum to this head start, the Army initially stored the records those historians needed in a former torpedo factory conveniently located in nearby Alexandria, Virginia. Archivist Edward Reese, who started his archival career with the Army, later related that the historians from the Historical Division worked on little tables in the facility's stacks. They brought their typewriters, desk lamps, and family photos with them and set up shop there for months on

end, pulling the records themselves and searching through them. To appreciate the advantages this environment conferred, we need only contrast it to the limited pull times, restricted hours, and reduced staffing that researchers endure at the National Archives today.<sup>14</sup>

If it is true that the more people and money you have, the faster you



can work, it is also true that nothing lasts forever. In the case of the World War II series, after ten years of high productivity, reality intruded. In 1957, with the nonappropriated fund virtually depleted, all of the office's historians came under the Civil Service System. Shortly thereafter, its staff of writing historians declined from 30 to 17 because of Army-wide budget cuts. The reduction by half

was even more drastic than it seems, for the number 30 represented not just authors but teams. Meanwhile, those who remained were individual writers standing alone. The shortage of production funds that accompanied the changeover complicated matters further. From then on, as a result of Army-wide stringencies, the office often had no funds in its budget for printing. On those occasions, year-end closeout surpluses from other Army agencies often subsidized whatever publishing it could do. This meant that projects had to be prioritized. Important manuscripts would languish in the queue, while other items that individuals high in the Army command structure wanted to see in print took precedence.<sup>15</sup>

The net result was that production of the World War II history slowed drastically. "It takes a long time for us to prepare and publish a book," Stetson Conn, the office's chief historian between 1958 and 1970, conceded in 1965, "as illustrated by our last three publications, each of which had been fifteen years or more in the making, although these are extreme examples. We have

realized, of course, that few of our published works would be put to immediate Army Staff or even Army student use. Our target has been the longer range one of insinuation . . . of providing a detailed scholarly account that will enter the distilled stream of general historical knowledge and understanding."<sup>16</sup>

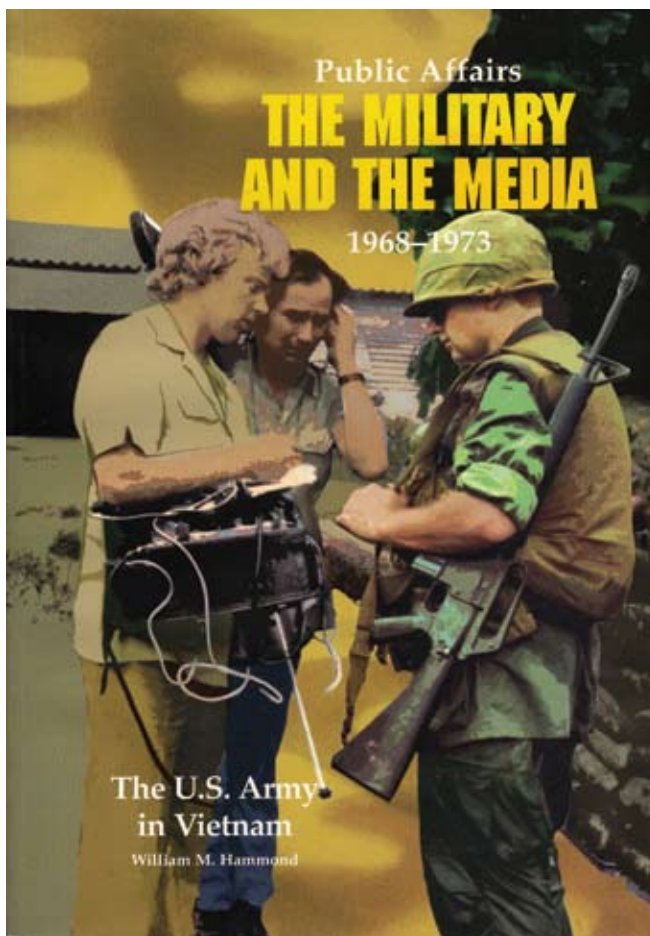
This state of affairs is apparently unacceptable to Fontenot, who as-

serts that it may render the Center of Military History “irrelevant to the institution that it serves.” He offers a case in point from his own experience. In 2002, as commander of a group that had the task of conducting seminars on urban combat for divisions slated for operations in Iraq, he sought historical examples that could serve as illustrations. He thought of the Battle of Hue during the Vietnam War, only to learn that while a number of unofficial works existed, thirty years after the event the Center’s official history of the Tet offensive had yet to be written. That work, he adds, is still pending, as are several other volumes in the Center’s United States Army in Vietnam series, a clear indication, in his view, that the Center’s priorities have become irrelevant to the Army’s needs. “Our military practitioners want and need a more responsive Center,” he wrote, “and, I believe, on the basis of recent evidence (*On Point* and successor efforts), that the Army will invest in such a Center.”<sup>17</sup>

Fontenot’s beliefs about the Center’s lack of concern for contemporary history notwithstanding, the Combat Studies Institute of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, already exists to produce analyses that use recent military history to teach lessons that are important to today’s warfighters. This takes some of the pressure off of the Center of Military History to do the same thing. *On Point*, moreover, is hardly the exemplar Fontenot imagines, for it was the product of a massive effort that used a study group of ninety-four members linked into a network of sixty computers to produce just a single volume.<sup>18</sup> As with the World War II series, it also had the backing of high-ranking Army generals who had fought a successful

campaign and wanted to have their story told.

Fontenot is on much stronger ground when he speaks about the Center’s United States Army in Vietnam series, which has had its problems, but once again he tells only that part of the story that fits his preconceptions. In fact, a number of the works in that series came to print within fifteen years of the war’s end: Ronald H. Spector’s *Advice and Support: The Early Years, 1941–1960*,



in 1983; John D. Bergen’s *Military Communications: A Test for Technology* and Joel D. Meyerson’s *Images of a Lengthy War* in 1986; Jeffrey J. Clarke’s *Advice and Support: the Final Years, 1965–1973*, in 1988; and my own first volume, *Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1962–1968*, also in 1988.

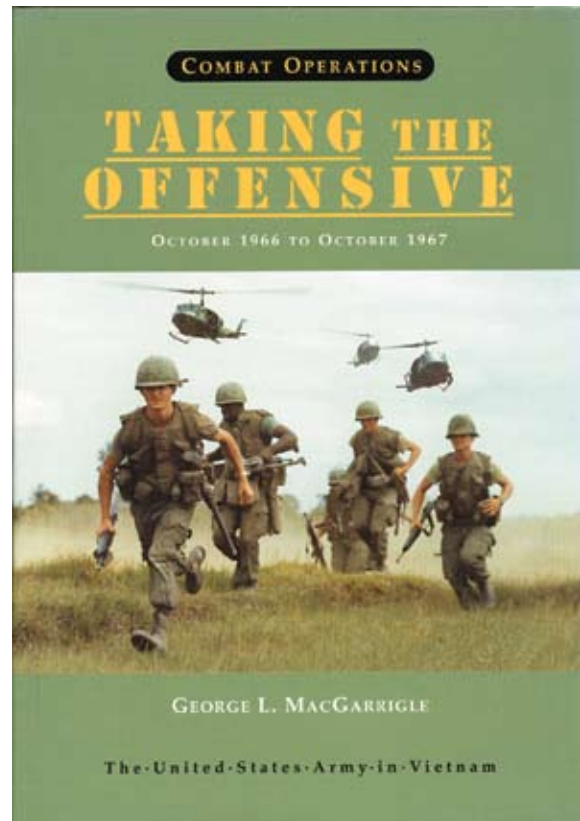
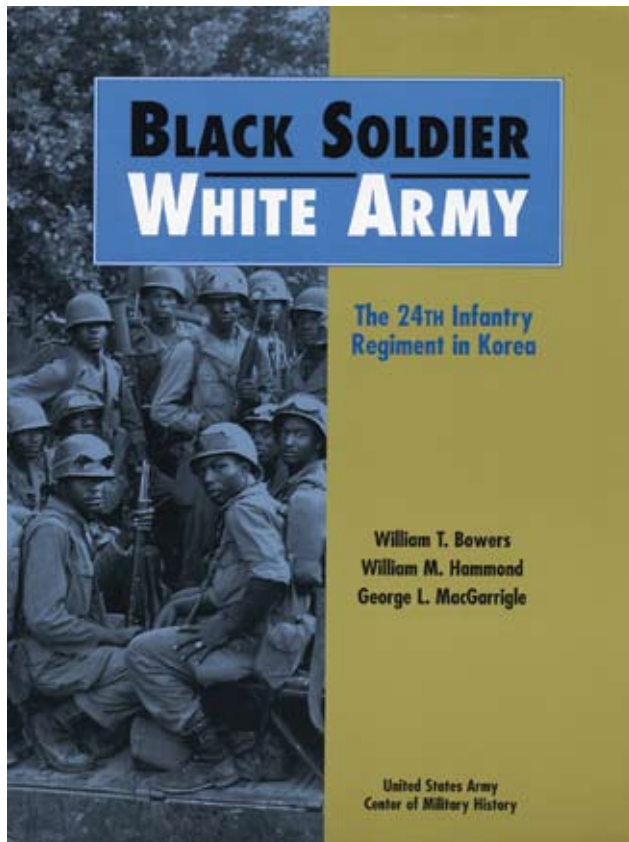
The texts of each of the aforementioned works were completed years before they appeared in print, my own in 1985. The delays were the

result in part of production problems that occurred when low-bid contractors came face to face with high-end expectations. A much larger factor, however, was the government’s insistence upon thorough, impeccable security reviews. *The Military and the Media*, for example, had to be cleared not only by the Army but also by the State Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Marine Corps, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Council. I

had completed my second volume, covering 1968 to 1973, by the time the first was in print. Then the process began again. Every volume in the series has run a similar gauntlet.

What about the books in the series that have yet to be completed? Quite simply, the Center will only begin a book when it can assign an author qualified to do the job, and it will only publish work that is, as Conn put it, “accurate, objective, relevant, thorough, and well written.”<sup>19</sup> If the absence of qualified writers has delayed some works, however, the Center’s efforts to fulfill the Army’s more current needs has often also played a role. Upon completing a draft of his United States Army in Vietnam series volume, *Combat Operations: Taking the Offensive, October 1966 to October 1967* (Washington, D.C., 1998), for example, George L. MacGarrigle became

a coauthor of *Black Soldier, White Army: The 24th Infantry Regiment in Korea* (Washington, D.C., 1996), a book to which the Army’s leaders at the time gave a higher priority than the volume on the Tet offensive that MacGarrigle had begun. When he finished the Korean War project, MacGarrigle retired. Erik Villard, who came to the Center in 2000, eventually assumed authorship of this volume. Meanwhile, Dale Andrade had nearly completed the



narrative of the last four years of the war when in 2008 he was assigned to write a contemporary history of the 3d Infantry Division in Iraq. Although this project will delay the Vietnam volume by at least a year, it should produce an important study that will undoubtedly complement a new series on the Global War on Terrorism that the Center already has in prospect.

Finally, I believe that Fontenot's assertion that academics can produce the Army's big histories better and faster than the Center's historians is simply wrong. The rule has always been that the agency's historians will only do projects that no one else can do better. As the Historical Division's first chief historian, Kent Roberts Greenfield, put it, "Whenever possible military history should be written by private enterprise."<sup>20</sup> This being the case, if academics often have an interest in writing war stories, few show any concern for the mundane operational subjects that comprise the flesh and blood of the

military art: logistics, communications, medical support, doctrine, and organizational structure. As historian Gordon Wood remarks in his new book *The Purpose of the Past*, rarely do academic historians undertake the sort of narrative history that can pull so many disparate themes together. Constrained by tenure requirements, most confine themselves to monographic analyses of topics that can be researched from a manageable pool of sources and written in three or four years. Some of the works that result are marvelous, but each stands alone. What narratives there are come mostly from journalists, who have a nose for a good war story but little training in history and almost none in the operational art.<sup>21</sup> As Stephen Ambrose observed in a conversation some years back, even those historians who are serious about the history of the U.S. Army and write in a narrative vein lack the time, the oral history resources, and the high-level security clearances necessary to do a thorough job. They

rely upon the Center's historians and their big books not only to provide essential context but also to break open the classified document collections they need.

Why write the large, detailed narratives that are the Center's specialty? Wood says it as well as anyone. Observing that "the problems and issues of the present should be the stimulus for our forays into the past," he adds that this is still only a beginning, for the past has an intrinsic meaning of its own. To be able to see the people of earlier eras "in the context of their own time, to describe their blindness and folly with sympathy, to recognize the extent to which they were caught up in changing circumstances over which they had little control, . . . to realize the degree to which they created results they never intended," and to be able to relate all this "without anachronistic distortion to our present is what is meant by having a historical sense."<sup>22</sup> "We Americans," Wood concludes, "have such a thin and meager sense of history that we

cannot get too much of it. What we need more than anything is a deeper and fuller sense of the historical process, a sense of where we have come from and how we have become what we are. This kind of historical sense will give us the best guide we'll ever have for groping our way into an unpredictable future."<sup>23</sup>

In the end, Fontenot's criticisms are hardly new. They bring to mind an early critique of the Center's predecessor in the nineteenth century, the Army Historical Office. That agency had spent thirty-seven years preparing *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Beginning in 1864 and employing a staff of 123 at its peak in 1893, that effort had cost the princely sum for its time of \$3,158,514.67—some \$78 million in today's dollars—and had ended only in 1901. Fifteen years after its completion, the editors of *Military Historian and Economist*, Capt. Arthur Conger and Harvard professor Robert Johnston, complained bitterly in the scholarly journal's pages that the project had been "a botched job from beginning to end." They credited only five writers with having made any intelligent use of it.<sup>24</sup>

As with Fontenot's remarks, Conger and Johnston's criticism had considerable merit. The project could have been better organized and the final work's index is worse than wretched. By the 1960s, nevertheless, scholarly opinion had turned. The historians who compiled the centennial bibliography of the Civil War ranked the work as "the major source of Civil War research material and absolutely indispensable to the serious student."<sup>25</sup> Indeed, day after day, our nation's soldiers and officers still tramp the great battlefields at Gettysburg, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and elsewhere, seeking insights into those campaigns that can benefit contemporary military operations. When they do, they rely upon books and articles that take their beginnings from the military details recorded in *The War of the Rebellion*. Most of these works were written by academics and journalists, but none would

have been possible in the absence of the Army's decades-long effort to record the facts. No one else had the time or the resources necessary to do what needed to be done. Much of the material would otherwise have been lost or scattered. The Army's historians did the job then, and they continue to do it now.



## NOTES

1. Richard W. Stewart, "'Instant' History and History: A Hierarchy of Needs," *Army History*, no. 62 (Winter 2006), pp. 30–32.

2. Gregory Fontenot, "The U.S. Army and Contemporary Military History," *Army History*, no. 67 (Spring 2008), pp. 26–27.

3. Edgar F. Raines Jr., "Beyond the Green Books: A Prehistory of the U.S. Army in the Cold War Series," in *International Cold War Military Records and History: Proceedings of the International Conference on Cold War Military Records and History, 21–26 March 1994*, ed. William W. Epley (Washington, D.C., 1996), p. 406.

4. Stetson Conn, *Historical Work in the United States Army, 1862–1954* (Washington, D.C., 1980), p. 116.

5. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner, rev. ed. (New York, 1972), p. 13.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

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8. Raines, "Beyond the Green Books," p. 419.

9. Memo, Raines for the author, 21 Mar 2008, author's files, Center of Military History (CMH), Washington, D.C.

10. *Ibid.*

11. "Histories Division Quarterly IPR," 8 Apr 2008, slide 6, author's files, CMH.

12. Fontenot, "The Army and Contemporary Military History," pp. 29–30.

13. Conn, *Historical Work in the Army*, pp. 139–41; Raines, "Beyond the Green Books," p. 418.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 407–08; Reese account as related in Memo, Raines for the author, 21 Mar 2008, author's files, CMH.

15. Raines, "Beyond the Green Books," pp. 418–19; Memo, Raines for the author, 21 Mar 2008, author's files, CMH.

16. Stetson Conn, "The Pursuit of Military History," p. 17 (Conference Paper, Annual

Meeting of the American Historical Association, San Francisco, Calif., 29 Dec 1965), file HRC 350.001 (vault), Speeches, Stetson Conn, Historical Resources Branch, CMH.

17. Fontenot, "The Army and Contemporary Military History," p. 27.

18. Gregory Fontenot, E. J. Degen, and David Tohn, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Washington, D.C., 2004), p. vi. See pp. 438–39 for the list of study group members.

19. Conn, "The Pursuit of Military History," p. 14, Historical Resources Branch, CMH.

20. *Ibid.*, quoting Greenfield.

21. For a discussion of the decline of narrative history in the academic world, see Gordon S. Wood, *The Purpose of the Past: Reflections on the Uses of History* (New York, 2008), pp. 40–44.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

24. See Arthur L. Conger and Robert M. Johnston, "Comment: Official Records of the War of the Rebellion," *Military Historian and Economist* 1 (April 1916): 199–200.

25. Allan Nevins, James I. Robertson Jr., and Bell I. Wiley, eds., *Civil War Books: A Critical Bibliography*, 2 vols. (Baton Rouge, La., 1967–69), 2: 31.

**Dr. William M. Hammond** has been a historian at the Center of Military History since 1972 and chief of its General Histories Branch since 2001. He is the author of two volumes in the Center's history of the Vietnam War, *Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1962–1968* (Washington, D.C., 1988) and *Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1968–1973* (Washington, D.C., 1996). His condensed version of these volumes, *Reporting Vietnam: Media and Military at War* (Lawrence, Kans., 1998), won the Organization of American Historians' Richard W. Leopold Prize in 2000. Hammond is also a coauthor of the Center's *Black Soldier, White Army: The 24th Infantry Regiment in Korea* (Washington, D.C., 1996). He held a research fellowship from Harvard University's Joan Shorenstein Center for the Press and Public Policy in 1999. On the side, he serves as a Senior Lecturer in University Honors at the University of Maryland, College Park, where since 1990 he has taught courses on the Vietnam War and the military and the media in American history.



# COMMENTARY

## DERELICTION OF DUTY REDUX?



By FRANK G. HOFFMAN

It is clear by now that the protracted war in Iraq uncovered fissures and dysfunctional elements in American civil-military relations. Indeed, there has been a dangerous undertow in civil-military discourse for some time. Before the war, Dr. Richard H. Kohn of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill concluded that relations were “extraordinarily poor” and that a tear in the national fabric existed.<sup>1</sup> One could argue that the fabric is now completely rent, but we can hope it is not beyond repair. The war has exacerbated the situation appreciably, enough to suggest that a sequel to Col. H. R. McMaster’s classic book *Dereliction of Duty* is in order.<sup>2</sup>

The nation’s leadership, civilian and military, needs to come to grips with the emerging “stab in the back” thesis in the armed services and better define the social compact and code of conduct that governs the overall relationship between the masters of policy and the dedicated servants we ask to carry it out. Our collective

failure to address the torn fabric and weave a stronger and more enduring relationship will only allow a sore to fester and ultimately undermine the nation’s security.

“Civil-military relations” is exactly what the term suggests, a relationship between two institutions or parties. Civil-military relations are *not* a function of power or about control. Civilian control is not at issue, but civil-military relations, properly understood, *are*. Civilian control is constitutionally, structurally, and historically well grounded in America, but civil-military relations and effective strategic performance are not. History is replete with cases of strategic defeat attributable to dysfunctional relationships between statespersons and their generals. Iraq adds another case study to a long history.

Arriving at sound policy requires discipline, deliberate process, and interactive and continuous discourse. During recent conflicts, neither the climate nor the context for rigorous discourse was established or maintained. Required and necessary inputs were ignored,

muzzled, intimidated, or cut out of the debate. This failure has cost this country dearly in terms of lost standing among the nations of the world, treasure wasted, and most importantly, by the ultimate sacrifice of many young Americans.

The growing narrative in the military pins the blame solely on poor, if not arrogant, civilian planning. Most of the blame in this tragedy is saved for former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. He made it clear from his arrival in December 2000 that he wanted to be in control; in fact, he was extremely sensitive to challenges to civilian authority. He came to the Pentagon armed with an agenda to transform the U.S. military, which struck at specific institutional interests of the services.

Secretary Rumsfeld challenged the status quo at every turn, insisting on applying his own theories to military operations. He challenged the Joint Staff’s planning efforts and its process for deploying military units to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in March 2003. This micromanagement frustrated military commanders in Washington



Brigadier General  
William "Billy" Mitchell  
by Robert Schaar.

Mitchell was an early advocate of a well-funded separate air force who in the 1920s made prescient prognostications of the future importance of airpower. Sometimes intemperate, Mitchell was found guilty of insubordination by a court-martial.

Department of Defense

and at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in Tampa and resulted in low troop levels and all the related occupation problems in Iraq.

The flip side of the indictment involves the professional competence of senior military advisers, who failed to provide candid military counsel because they were intimidated "yes-men" or failed to recognize the complexity of the war. General Tommy Franks, the CENTCOM commander in 2003, is accused of having been too deferential to Secretary Rumsfeld. This deference allowed Rumsfeld's perspectives on force levels to prevail, although they were at odds with the prevailing military doctrine of overwhelming force. The U.S. military is blamed for producing what Thomas Ricks has described as "perhaps the worst war plan in American history."<sup>3</sup> Senior generals are painted as pliable yes-men, incapable of standing up to senior civilian masters, or incompetent officials who failed to plan past the initial battle and bring about the political end-state sought by policymakers in the White House.<sup>4</sup>

Because we lack objective historical evidence, it is difficult to judge the indictment and allocate blame for a war that has appreciably hurt U.S. security interests far beyond Iraq. But we need to examine the interaction of viewpoints involved in the strategy development process and resolve longstanding but now widening fissures in the ethical foundation of the military establishment.

The war has stimulated a needed debate on civil-military relations and the moral guidelines of our military. One scholar recently suggested that we return to the classical school of separate spheres. This compact, or division of labor, defined by Samuel P. Huntington in his seminal *The Soldier and the State*, grants military professionals control over the operational and tactical sphere in return for their subordination and loyalty to policy and strategic decisions made by civilians. Michael C. Desch contends in an article in *Foreign Affairs* that separate spheres are "conducive to good civil-military relations as well as to sound policy decisions." He sees incessant and "relentless civilian questioning of military poli-

cies" as the problem, not the solution to effective strategic performance. Desch places the blame for the situation in Iraq today on the "willful disregard for military advice." He also argues that the alternative approach advocated by Eliot A. Cohen in his *Supreme Command* is intrusive and bound to exacerbate friction.<sup>5</sup>

The problem with Desch's argument is that it presumes away several egregious examples of narrow military perspectives and bad advice about U.S. interventions ranging from Vietnam, Panama, and Somalia to the end game for Operation DESERT STORM. The bargain Desch advocates is counterproductive, as it separates a holistic appreciation for the nature of war and offers a linear and mechanistic alternative that has little relationship to the constant and iterative interaction between policy and strategy that should characterize the conduct of war. Worse, it continues the mythology and extends the American military's greatest professional blind spot: operating in what Professor Hew Strachan has called "a politics-free zone."<sup>6</sup> Separating policy from strategy is simply an extremely poor alternative to the intense and admittedly uncomfortable interaction of policy desires and military realities that Cohen called "an unequal dialogue."<sup>7</sup>

The separate-spheres argument also distorts the provision of military advice during the invasion and rewrites the history of CENTCOM's planning failures during 2002 and 2003, as well as the conduct of postconflict operations in 2003. Desch would have us believe that the Joint Chiefs, left entirely to themselves, could have planned the drive to Baghdad and knocked off Hussein, while precluding the emergence of any insurgency. He rightfully believes that, left to their own, the Chiefs would have authorized more troops but exaggerates what those troops could have accomplished. He wrongly presumes that the Joint Chiefs would not have mishandled Phase IV postconflict planning by themselves. Additionally, he neatly overlooks how U.S. forces failed to combat disorder and looting in the aftermath of the conflict

and their utter lack of doctrine and preparation for any form of postconflict problems or the subsequent insurgency.

There is little history to support Desch's argument from the past, and his reading of the current conflict also falls short. Junior officers see this stab-in-the-back thesis for what it is: a limp attempt to deflect blame. They have openly criticized their military leaders for trying to pin all the responsibility on Pentagon civilians "while we in uniform are depicted as the luckless victims of poor policy."<sup>8</sup>

We need to reject an outdated concept of civil-military relations in favor of a more historically grounded model that accounts for the overlapping and reciprocal interrelationships

of ends, ways, and means that lead to strategic success. We need to establish new norms that set up expectations for a decision-making climate that encourages candid advice and the rigorous exchange of views and insights. It is the duty of civilian leaders, in all branches of government, to establish that climate, and it is the moral obligation of military professionals to honestly and clearly present their best advice. This generally unequal and always uneasy dialogue needs to ensure a tight correlation between ends, ways, and means.

When civilian policy masters do not establish the necessary conditions for strategic success, military officers can retire, resign, or request reassignment. Those who stay in their posts

without providing candid advice fail to meet their obligations to their immediate superiors and are guilty of dereliction of duty to the president, the Congress, and their subordinates.

We need to clarify these expectations for the future civilian leaders, the armed services, and their ultimate client, the American people, who sustain them and provide the resources.

## SOLUTIONS

Repairing the rent fabric of America's relationship with its military servants will require a sustained and comprehensive effort. Some have offered structural solutions, recommending that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff be appointed as member





General Tommy R. Franks, commander of U.S. Central Command, listens as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld briefs reporters in Tampa, Florida, on 27 November 2001 as U.S. Army special forces and Afghan allies battle Taliban and al Qaeda elements in Afghanistan.

of the National Security Council or placed directly in the chain of command. These structural proposals might prevent civilian policymakers from playing off the views of the Chiefs against the theater commanders, and they might buttress a chairman who suffers from an overbearing secretary of defense, but we cannot legislate moral character or spine.

Part of any effort will have to address the professional education of the military, which does not adequately instruct in this area. *The principal thrust of any solution set must lie in codifying and enforcing the foundations of a professional military.* The normative values and ethics embodied in any profession are supposed to define its role and frame its purpose and limits. The military defines itself as a profession and meets all of the characteristics of a profession, with the exception of a code of ethics. The professional military ethic that used to be implicitly operative in the officer's corps has faded from its collective memory. In

particular, the guiding principles and obligations requiring selfless service and apolitical behavior have eroded. Recodifying professional military standards and incorporating them in today's professional military education system are vital.

This new code should define the fundamentals required of a professional officer dedicated to this nation's values and institutions. It should distinguish between the professional military and our citizen-soldiers in the National Guard and define the rights, privileges, and obligations of retired senior officers. It should also define the expectations for loyalty, obedience, and dissent in clear terms. This code should also clarify the need for both elected branches of government to maintain the institutional integrity of the armed forces above reproach. The military should not be used as a passive or implied prop for political consumption. Once the new code is defined, our military and citizenry must be taught this ethic, our senior officers must model it, and Congress and the profession writ

large must enforce it.

Thus, a national commission or task force on the American military ethic is needed. This task force should be established by Congress, with bipartisan and joint representation. In addition to crafting a formal code, the commission should be charged to produce a set of detailed case histories on policy and strategy development to illustrate how policymakers and military professionals should ideally interact. These cases would be offered to the country's civilian and military institutions of higher learning. The new professional military ethic will help define society's expectations for its uniformed military and the case histories will highlight the benefits of extensive and, if necessary, intense interaction. These lessons need to be incorporated into the educational programs that prepare both civilian and military leaders for future crises.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the grave concerns noted by many scholars over the past decade, we

have not paid enough attention to the topic of civil-military relations. Unless serious efforts are made to rectify all the components that constitute the relationship between the nation and its uniformed servants, expectations for improved performance will remain low. More fundamentally, the likelihood of greater volatility among the institutions of our government will be high.

War is an audit of national will, institutions, and leaders. It is difficult not to conclude that our leaders failed us in the planning and conduct of the current conflict. If we continue to ignore the difficulty inherent to the unequal dialogue that supports the ultimate decision regarding war and fail to educate future leaders about duty and professional obligation, we will continue to pay a high price. That would constitute a true dereliction of duty—by all of us.

AH

## NOTES

This article is an edited version of a copyrighted essay that was distributed as an enote in November 2007

by the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) and was posted on the institute's website, <http://www.fpri.org>. The piece is derived from the author's presentation at a conference on American civil-military relations held in Washington, D.C., on 15 October 2007 under the cosponsorship of FPRI and the Reserve Officers Association.

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4. Mark Follman, "More Top Brass Blast Rumsfeld," 25 Apr 2006, at <http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2006/04/25/rumsfeld/index.html>.

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*Relations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957); Michael C. Desch, "Bush and the Generals," *Foreign Affairs* 86 (May/June 2007): 106–07, quotes; Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York, 2002).

6. Hew Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," *Survival* 47 (Autumn 2005): 47.

7. Cohen, *Supreme Command*, p. 209.

8. Daniel L. Davis, "To America's Generals," *Washington Times*, 22 May 2007, posted at <http://www.washtimes.com/news/2007/may/21/20070521-091720-6604r/>. When he wrote, Davis was a major.

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Army General David Petraeus, commander of Multinational Force–Iraq, answers reporters' questions at the Pentagon on 26 April 2007, a day after he briefed lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

Department of Defense

# REVIEW ESSAY

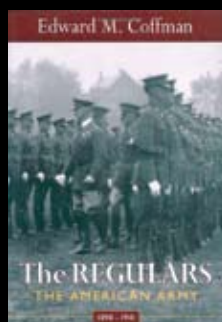
## THE REGULARS: THE AMERICAN ARMY, 1898–1941

### REVIEW ESSAY BY TIMOTHY K. NENNINGER

Edward M. Coffman, now professor emeritus of history at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, in 1929. He graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1951 with a degree in journalism and a Reserve Officers Training Corps commission as an infantry second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He served with the 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, in Korea during the latter stages of the war. “President-elect Eisenhower and I arrived in Korea on the same day in December 1952,” he declares; “I stayed longer.” Following Army service he returned to his alma mater to pursue a doctorate in American history, which he completed in 1959, having studied with Professor Thomas Clark. From 1957 to 1959, he also served as an instructor at Memphis State University. Then for a year he worked as a research associate for fellow Kentuckian Forrest C. Pogue, who was in the beginning stages of his

### *The Regulars: The American Army, 1898–1941*

By Edward M. Coffman



Harvard University Press, 2004, 519 pp., hardcover \$35; paperback \$21.95

four-volume biography of George C. Marshall, and Pogue mostly assigned Coffman to examine military records at the National Archives. In 1961 he joined the History Department at the University of Wisconsin at Madison,

where he taught until he retired in 1992. His first research seminar in American military history convened in the fall of 1966.

For over forty years Coffman has been a stalwart of the academic military history community in the United States and a strong supporter of the military services' historical programs. He has been a visiting professor of history at Kansas State University, the Military Academy, the Air Force Academy, the Army Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College. He served as a member of the Department of the Army Historical Advisory Committee and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and from 1983 to 1985 he served as the president of the American Military Institute (now the Society for Military History). Coffman has been honored for his efforts. In 1990 the Society for Military History presented him with the Samuel Eliot Morison Prize for outstanding contributions to military history. In 1991 the Department of the

Members of a Signal Corps balloon detachment, c. 1907



Army awarded him the Decoration for Distinguished Civilian Service for his extensive contributions to the development of the Army Historical Program. A year later, upon his retirement from Wisconsin, the university recognized his long and distinguished service as undergraduate teacher and graduate student mentor by conferring emeritus status. And in 1995 his name was added to the Hall of Distinguished Alumni of the University of Kentucky.

This personal background serves to emphasize that people recognize Coffman as an open, personable, generous, and engaging gentleman. Those qualities are reflected in his scholarship, particularly in *The Regulars*. He is interested in other people's stories. Because of the sort of person Coffman is, people are anxious to tell him their stories and for him to convey those stories to others.

Coffman has published three previous major works in American military history. His expanded dissertation, *The Hilt of the Sword: The Career of Peyton C. March* (Madison, Wis., 1966), is a detailed biographical study of a senior military officer who is now generally recognized as having energized the War Department General Staff during his service as Army chief of staff from 1918 to 1921. Coffman's *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (New York, 1968) remains the best single-volume military history of how the United States organized, planned, and fought in World War I. His *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784–1898* (New York, 1986), is a social history that focuses on the people of the Army.

*The Old Army* and *The Regulars* examine many similar topics, including how soldiers, officers, and Army families lived and interacted. Both books address such crucial questions as why these people were part of the Army and why they stayed with the service in peacetime, particularly when many Americans questioned the need for a standing body of trained professionals charged with protecting the United States from often seemingly nonexistent threats. But *The Regulars* and *The Old Army* are also different in a number of respects. *The Old*

Pvt. Mansfield Robinson, 24th Infantry, 1902



Collection of Edward M. Coffman

*Army* was a groundbreaking contribution to the study of the history of the U.S. Army. By a number of standards, however, *The Regulars* is an even more significant contribution, and its value is enhanced by the fact that relatively few published historical monographs cover the subjects it addresses. Although both books are well grounded in solid primary research in published, archival,

and manuscript sources, *The Regulars* provides an added dimension: interviews and correspondence with a few hundred officers, soldiers, wives, and children. Coffman weaves their stories throughout the book, providing the reader with intimate insights into the society that was the pre-World War II Army.

*The Regulars* consists of a prologue, ten chapters, and a postscript that chronicle the evolution of the U.S. Army from a frontier constabulary, to a colonial garrison force, and then to a mobilization army preparing for global war. In the course of describing this evolution, from the turn of the twentieth century to the eve of Pearl Harbor, Coffman addresses such fundamental issues as the changing character of warfare, the growing role of the United States in world affairs, and how the Army embraced new technologies and a global strategy to reflect the new realities. A brief characterization of each of the ten chapters should provide some sense of the breadth and depth of Coffman's coverage of these issues.

The first chapter, "The Army Begins a New Era," addresses the early stages of the process by which the service transitioned from a frontier constabulary to the army of a nation with recently accumulated overseas possessions, competing against other imperial pretenders, and on the verge of becoming a world power. Coffman discusses organizational and manpower issues—the expansion of the Regular Army and the use of wartime volunteers in both the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War—as well as the changes required in national strategy and military policy. But principally, he personalizes the discussion. In this chapter he introduces characters who play a role in the subsequent narrative and describe how changes within the Army affected their lives.

Mansfield Robinson, a black enlisted man, joined the Army in 1889 and served in Cuba and three tours in the Philippines, before retiring to western Kentucky in 1913. Growing up in Hopkinsville, Coffman became

acquainted with Robinson, and in the 1950s interviewed him extensively about his service and the experience of blacks in the Army. In 1898 Benjamin Foulois served as an enlisted man in a volunteer engineer unit in Puerto Rico. He enjoyed this service, joined the Regular Army in 1899, and was later commissioned; his experience as one of the Army's first aviators, as chief of the Air Service in France (1918–1919), and as chief of the Army Air Corps in the 1930s figures prominently in subsequent chapters. Adelaide “Benny” Poore was born into an Army family at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, in 1899, while her father was in the Philippines. She clearly is Coffman's favorite character. She later married Charles L. Bolté, an officer with a long and distinguished career who retired in 1955 as a four-star general, having served as vice chief of staff of the Army. Over four hundred pages later, Coffman concludes his narrative and postscript by describing Benny Poore Bolté's pleasant memories at age 97 as a daughter, wife, and mother of regulars.

Chapter Two, “The Colonial Army,” provides an overview of the Army between 1899 and 1916, particularly those elements deployed overseas. Overall Army strength fluctuated greatly—64,000 in the fall of 1899; 54,000 in 1907; and 107,000 in 1916. But throughout the period a significant percentage of the Regular Army was overseas, mostly in the insular possessions acquired as result of the War with Spain. In 1900 it was nearly 75 percent; until World War I it was at least 25 percent annually. This chapter discusses why and how troops were stationed in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Panama, China, Hawaii, Alaska, and particularly the Philippines. What sort of troops? How many? Why were they there? What did they do? And what problems—military, political, and social—did they face? About half of this chapter deals with the Army in the Philippines and describes in

some detail the variety of service in the islands.

For some soldiers, service in the Philippines consisted of often pleasant but boring garrison duty in or near Manila. Unfortunately, the variety of terrain, climate, and other conditions made life for others exceedingly unpleasant. Also challenging were the dangers of combat—against insurrectos in the early years of the occupation (1899–1902) and against Moros in the southern parts of the archipelago for more than a decade thereafter. Without actually providing a campaign history, Coffman describes the routine of the fighting and particularly the troops' reaction to the experience and their opponents: “Initially Foulois was not much impressed by the Moros,” observing that “they have very few firearms, and are a cowardly lot of savages” (p. 45). More often than not, however, such dubious first impressions were replaced by more profound lessons, both personal and institutional. Coffman summarizes the experience: “As it had in the Indian Wars, the Army generally treated the insurgencies in the Philippines as

aberrations. Yet these conflicts were a crucible for the officer corps, and in particular for the sizable group of new officers who entered the Army in the four years after 1898. . . . These young officers at the start of their careers had to make the difficult decisions demanded by combat and the onerous responsibilities of isolated command” (p. 53).

The third chapter, “Life and Training in the Philippines,” makes clear the book is not just about soldiers but about Army families as well. The experience of travel to and life in the islands made as big an impression on wives and children as it did on the troops. In the early twentieth century, just getting to an overseas posting could be an adventure. As Benny Poore Bolté put it in 1971, “The greatest advantage is travel and, at the same time, the greatest disadvantage is travel. I mean, it isn't easy” (p. 55). Getting to the Philippines in the early days took over a month. Keeping occupied, perhaps more importantly keeping children occupied, on such lengthy journeys required effort and imagination. Games, cards, plays, musical performances, and just plain socializing were part of the experience. These carried over to everyday life when the trans-Pacific travelers reached the Philippines. With a great eye for detail, Coffman describes the day-to-day routine, the frequent boredom, and the physical effort (such as battling tropical heat) required of Army families living in the islands for two- or three-year tours.

In this chapter, Coffman also describes the life of Regular soldiers in the Philippines. He focuses on both training and recreation, the latter all too often involving alcohol and encounters with women of questionable character. On occasion, indiscipline was a serious problem. Around the turn of the century the number of sick call cases attributed to alcoholism was, on average, 27 per 1,000 troops. In 1912, however, discipline improved when a law took effect that stopped the pay of individuals on sick call because of liquor, drugs, or venereal disease.

An Army truck carries children to school at Jefferson Barracks, Mo., 1932



Collection of Edward M. Coffman



Because of the immediate threat from the Moro bands, plus the more distant yet still perceptible threat from Japan, military training in the Philippines before World War I was a disciplined and structured program that usually involved tactical exercises, not the simple close-order drill found at Stateside garrisons. Units in the Philippines were usually larger and would likely be more fully manned than at other Army posts. Tactical training, therefore, tended to be taken seriously.

Coffman introduces Chapter Four, “Enlisted Men in the New Army,” with an epigraph from a former enlisted man, Gilmer Bell, who exclaimed that upon his enlistment his middle-class parents “thought I had gone to Hell” (p. 96). Much of this chapter explores both such perceptions and the realities of soldiering. Even an Army promotional booklet for recruiters noted in 1904 that in some quarters soldiers were thought to be “in a position which is below that of an ordinary citizen, and which entails duties or labors degrading to an American” (p. 96).

At the turn of the century the normal period of enlistment was three years. In 1912 this was extended to seven years—four years on active duty and three years on furlough in the Army Reserve, subject to recall to active duty by the president. As enlistees, the service throughout the period sought unmarried men, aged twenty-one to thirty-five, who had “good antecedents and habits and [were] free from bodily defects and diseases” (p. 96). In fact, between 1900 and 1916 the annual rejection rate was between 70 and 80 percent of all applicants, many because they were illiterate or noncitizens. Others were rejected who lacked legal, mental, moral, or physical qualifica-

tions. Nevertheless, the Army recruited between 20,000 and 30,000 annually, so the service clearly appealed to some young men, and the author relates the stories of a few—why they joined, what their families thought of the Army, what recruit training was like, and where they served.

Coffman has an eye for the interesting situation and for individuals who make the most of their opportunities. For example, Clarence R. Huebner,

who had grown up on a farm near Fort Riley and thus knew about soldiers. His parents were religious and very antimilitary, so he deferred pursuing his ambition [to become an officer]. After a couple of years in high school, he went to a business college and got a job as a secretary-stenographer in a business in Nebraska. There was a nearby cavalry post, and he saw a good deal of the troopers. “I liked what I saw and I was not particularly enamored with being the secretary type so when I got old enough to be my own boss, I enlisted.” (p. 100)

Huebner was an enlisted soldier for nearly seven years before being commissioned in 1916; served as a company, battalion, and regimental com-

mander; earned two Distinguished Service Crosses and a Distinguished Service Medal in World War I; and during World War II became a division and corps commander.

Throughout this chapter Coffman offers insights on soldier life, such as the importance the Army placed on cleanliness and attention to detail, as well as the pivotal role that frequent inspections played. He also discusses differences in pay, discipline, and military justice between the Army and Navy and between the U.S. Army and foreign militaries. This chapter includes lengthy passages concerning minority soldiers and why the Army discouraged soldiers, other than senior noncommissioned officers, from having wives and families.

Coffman begins the fifth chapter, “The Managerial Revolution,” with a succinct description of the Army reforms implemented by Secretary of War Elihu Root from 1899 to 1904. In part, these reforms stemmed from perceived shortcomings in organization, planning, and mobilization during the War with Spain. Root based his effort on two premises: “‘The real object of having an Army is to provide for war’ and ‘the regular establishment . . . will probably never be by itself the

whole machine with which any war will be fought” (p. 142). The secretary sought to improve the existing system and infuse it with simplicity and effectiveness. Among other fundamentals, he called for organized planning and study to solve military problems, keeping up with technology, an emphasis on merit in the officer corps (vice seniority), the enhancement and coordination of the Army’s professional education and training, and a more coherent relationship between the Regular Army and the citizen soldiery.

With this background, Coffman ex-

Cavalry Detachment polo team  
West Point, N.Y., c. 1930



Special Collections and Archives, U.S. Military Academy

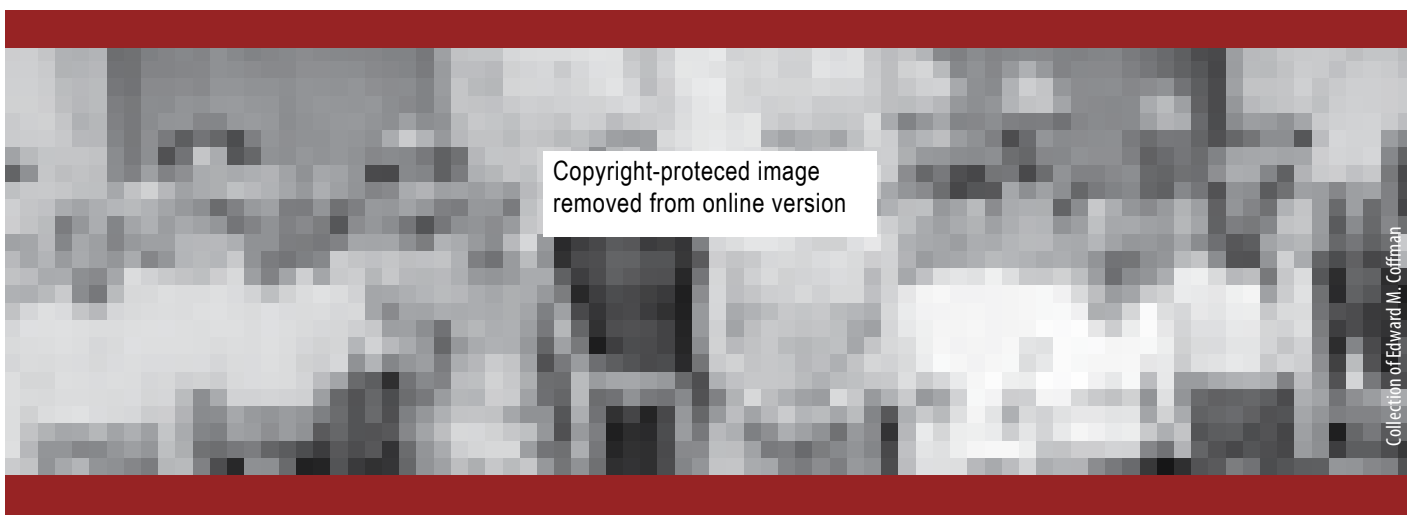
plores how individual soldiers adapted to a changing Army and changing career patterns as the reforms took hold in the fifteen years prior to the entry of the United States into World War I. The vehicle he uses is a series of anecdotal character studies, concentrating in particular on three members of the West Point class of 1909—George S. Patton Jr., who was commissioned in the cavalry; Jacob L. Devers, an artilleryman; and William H. Simpson from the infantry. Individually, they had more than usually successful careers—in World War II Patton and Simpson were army commanders and Devers was an army group commander. Equally important, great source material exists for all three, and Coffman had personally interviewed and corresponded with Devers and Simpson. *The Regulars* ex-

frequently, the narrative moves along easily. This is in part because Coffman has a fine eye for an interesting vignette or a good quotation to make a larger point. Consider the choice an artillery lieutenant had to make in 1907, when Congress passed legislation separating the Artillery into two branches—Coast and Field:

The increasing sophistication of weaponry and technique in both kinds of artillery made it more difficult for officers to move from one to the other. . . . At this point, officers had to choose. First Lieutenant Beverly F. Browne . . . asked his former commander, Major Peyton C. March, for advice on this crucial decision. March replied that he preferred the branch “that went to *meet the enemy* rather than the one that . . . *waited for the enemy*.” (p. 152)

when the United States declared war in April 1917 to nearly 4 million as of the Armistice in November 1918. But despite its scale, as Coffman makes clear, American participation was limited in duration and impact—eighteen months overall but less than six months in major combat.

Coffman’s account of the expansion of the Army officer corps during the war, especially the infusion of non-West Pointers such as Bolté and Lucian K. Truscott Jr., is particularly well written. Destined for combat command and flag rank in World War II, Bolté and Truscott are key sources in subsequent chapters. Their service was also representative of the diverse World War I experience of regular officers (although initially both held reserve commissions). Bolté went to France and was severely



amines their family backgrounds; why they were attracted to the service; how they performed at and what they got out of West Point; what influenced each in choosing a branch of service upon graduation; how changing military technology impacted the cavalry, artillery, and infantry and in turn affected the young officers’ careers; what each did to seek unusual assignments and to pursue opportunities for military education; and, in general, how they attempted to gain experience and knowledge in their profession.

Throughout this chapter, although topics, scenes, and personalities change

Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing and other officers of the Department of Mindanao with the sultan of Sulu and his delegation, 1911

That Browne liked horses and field artillery was a mounted service also made his decision somewhat easier.

The sixth chapter, “The War to End All Wars,” links many of the aspects of the managerial revolution, including Secretary Root’s efforts at reform, to the Army’s performance in World War I. Little of the previous thinking and planning, however, anticipated the huge scale and rapid pace of Army expansion during the war, from about 200,000 men (including 67,000 National Guardsmen) on active duty

wounded while leading an infantry company in the 4th Division during the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

By contrast, Truscott never went overseas but spent the war patrolling the Mexican border in Arizona with the 17th Cavalry. He was not unique in that experience, as such World War II luminaries as Dwight Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, J. Lawton Collins, and Matthew Ridgway did not go overseas in World War I either.

Although he principally examines the main war effort in this chapter, Coffman also includes discussions of the Punitive Expedition in Mexico (1916–1917), the interventions in

North Russia and Siberia (1918–1919), and the American occupation of the Rhineland (1919–1923). The sections on regular soldiers in World War I portray quite well the wartime experience at a personal level, particularly in the new combat arms such as the Air Service and the Tank Corps. Coffman covers the impact of war and separation on wives and families in a very poignant segment on “good-byes.” The chapter’s conclusion describes the rapid postwar demobilization. Although regular officers generally lost considerable rank and responsibility from their wartime positions, most decided to remain in the service.

Chapter Seven, “The Army in Limbo,” is arguably the most important chapter in the book because it describes the nadir of the U.S. Army’s existence during the twentieth century. Its opening paragraph pretty much captures the essence of what follows:

During the Roaring 1920s and the Depression-ridden 1930s, public desire to cut government expenditures and traditional antimilitary attitudes combined with the dominant isolationist mood to reduce the Army to the point that it was negligible as a world power.

Cadet George S. Patton Jr., 1909



U.S. Military Academy Archives



U.S. Military Academy Archives

Cadet William H. Simpson, 1909

Tight budgets year in and year out meant under-strength units, slow promotion, and restrictions on virtually any activity beyond maintenance of the status quo. At least from 1921 to 1939 the Army was more at peace than ever before in its history. There were no conflicts: no fighting Indians as before 1898 nor, as later, fighting Filipinos, Moros, and Mexicans. These years were marked by increasing professionalism in the form of emphasis on the advanced schools and the opportunities they provided officers to prepare for future possibilities. (p. 233)

This chapter describes how provisions of the National Defense Act of 1920 and tight budgets affected soldiers and their families. It is mostly about officers, whom *Fortune* magazine characterized in a 1935 article as “a queer mixture of the clergy, the college professor, and the small boy playing Indian” (p. 239). Low pay, slow promotion, and small budgets seemed to cause both the Army and its members to stagnate. But much of Coffman’s discussion makes the point that while the service was in limbo, innovations in combat arms equipment, organization, and doctrine were under way. By comparison with the other

branches, the Air Service did particularly well, especially after passage of the 1926 Air Corps Act that renamed the branch and led to its expansion, which incidentally came mostly at the expense of other branches of the Army. Coffman devotes about half of this sixty-page chapter to a discussion of how the service used professional military education as a surrogate; without enough troops, fully organized units, or adequate quantities of modern equipment, officers had few other means to practice their profession. The epigraph for the chapter quotes J. Lawton Collins saying, “It was our schools that saved the Army.”

Chapter Eight, “Soldiering in the 1920s and 1930s,” covers much the same ground as Chapter Four but in the context of declining numbers of troops and shrinking budgets rather than the expanding levels of the pre-World War I era. Here Coffman again discusses recruiting, pay, barracks life, sports, and even daily rations and how one noncommissioned officer ran a mess hall.

Between the two world wars, on average 27 percent of the Army was serving overseas, principally in China, the Philippines, Panama, and

Cadet Jacob L. Devers, 1909



U.S. Military Academy Archives

Hawaii, and this service is the subject of Chapter Nine, "The Army in Pacific Outposts, 1919–1940." This chapter is particularly good on life in Hawaii, the keystone to American defense in the Pacific. During most of the period, the island of Oahu was home for 14,000 soldiers, and by 1940 their number had swelled to 25,000. The huge post at Schofield Barracks was headquarters for the Hawaiian Division, the largest tactical formation at this time and the one most nearly organized for war. Oahu also had two Army airfields, three coast artillery forts, a large supply base, and a department headquarters.

Most soldiers and their families considered duty in Hawaii ideal. At times, some even thought it resembled a resort. Just the arrival from the mainland could be unforgettable. Lieutenant Truscott described his 1919 arrival: "There is one thrill that can come only once in a lifetime . . . the first view of Diamond Head against the blue Hawaiian sky, the entry of the ship into Honolulu harbor . . . the gaiety and excitement of ship and shore as the ship is edged into her berth . . . bands playing . . . friends on shore greeting arrivals on shipboard . . . flowers and leis" (p. 355). Truscott's words give some sense of the richly textured scenes Coffman describes in this chapter. His accounts of Hawaii and Schofield often read like descriptions from James Jones—Army life as depicted in *From Here to Eternity*. Drill, road marches, field training, sports (especially boxing), and even the bars and brothels of Honolulu are all vividly depicted in this chapter.

In Chapter Ten, "Mobilizing for War," Coffman tells the story of the Regular Army from the outbreak of the war in Europe on 1 September 1939 (incidentally, the date George C. Marshall was sworn in as Army chief of staff) to 7 December 1941. For the Army it was a period of remarkable growth, as the author documents with a few pertinent statistics. During the summer of 1939 the Army included 170,000 men, three half-organized divisions, two mechanized cavalry regiments, and fifty-six air squadrons. By November 1941 the Army had grown

to 1.6 million men, twenty-nine infantry divisions, five armored divisions, two cavalry divisions, and almost two hundred air squadrons. The Air Corps alone grew from 19,600 men and 1,700 aircraft in January 1939 to 292,000 men and 10,000 planes by November 1941. Military spending went from under \$500 million in fiscal year 1939 to \$3.7 billion two years later.

Coffman uses statistics and detailed factual passages sparingly because his focus is on the people of the Army, their experiences and stories. But the factual context for the stories emanates from his thorough research not only in primary published sources—he has read all of the annual reports of the secretary of war and chief of staff from 1898 to 1941—but also in War Department archives and significant manuscript collections. The final chapter addresses all the critical aspects of the mobilization prior to Pearl Harbor, including peacetime conscription, the creation of an armored force and parachute units, the establishment of a General Headquarters (GHQ) to oversee the tactical training of ground units and to plan for the defense of the continental United States, the conduct of large-scale maneuvers in Louisiana and the Carolinas, and the drafting of strategic and mobilization plans. Coffman stresses the role of significant personalities during this period, men like Lesley J. McNair and Mark W. Clark at GHQ and Albert C. Wedemeyer, who drafted the Victory Plan outlining the Army's manpower and logistical needs. The result is a fine portrait of how the Regular Army was changing on the eve of war and how the changes affected the people involved.

## CONCLUSIONS

Is *The Regulars* a military classic? It is probably too soon to say, but the book certainly is distinctive and it is not likely to be replicated or surpassed anytime soon.

It is distinctive in a number of ways, notably how it differs from other works of social history, particularly military social history. Coffman has long been known as one of the purveyors of the "new" military history. These

historians have gone beyond examining battles and leaders and put the development of military institutions into a broader societal context; they described both how societies affected the military institutions they created and how those institutions organized and functioned. This approach to military history was initially well received. More recently, however, some historians have criticized "new" military history for too much ignoring battles and leaders, which are still fundamental to understanding military activity.

But such criticism does not stick on Coffman or his body of work, including *The Regulars*. He does look at the Army as a unique, if somewhat closed, society, but he certainly does not ignore the consequences. The book contains numerous vignettes about the effect of separations and war on soldiers and their families. Moreover, Coffman does not come to the subject with some preconceived theory or social science construct on how organizations and people function. Fundamentally, he puts the "story" back into history. And *The Regulars* is nothing if not great stories about the people of the Army and about how these people adjusted to change.



This essay is based on the reviewer's Military Classics Seminar presentation on 15 May 2007 at Fort Myer, Virginia.

**Dr. Timothy K. Nenner** is chief of the Reference Section, Textual Archives Services Division, National Archives at College Park. He is the author of *The Leavenworth Schools and the Old Army: Education, Professionalism, and the Officer Corps of the United States Army, 1881–1918* (Westport, Conn., 1978), and coeditor of *Soldiers and Civilians: The U.S. Army and the American People* (Washington, D.C., 1987). He has written several essays on the U.S. Army in World War I, including "John J. Pershing and Relief for Cause in the American Expeditionary Forces, 1917–1918," which appeared in the Spring 2005 issue of *Army History*. He was president of the Society for Military History from 2001 to 2005.

# BOOK REVIEW

*History May Be Searched in Vain:  
A Military History of the Mormon  
Battalion*



Sherman L. Fleek  
Arthur H. Clark Company, 2006, 414  
pp., \$37.50

REVIEW BY ADRIAN G. TRAAS

Shortly after the United States declared war on Mexico in May 1846, President James K. Polk sought volunteers to man a rapidly expanding American army. Among the volunteer units he called to the colors was a unique 500-man organization known as the Mormon Battalion. The battalion served honorably for one year, and in July 1847, following a grueling 1,900-mile march from Fort Leavenworth in Indian Territory (later in Kansas), most of the remaining 350 troops were discharged in California. Manned predominantly by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the battalion remains the only military unit in American history that has been mustered into federal service with a religious designation. While volunteer officers commanded the majority of volunteer regiments and battalions, Army officials mandated that Regular Army officers command the Mormon Battalion. The church's leader, Brigham Young, appointed the battalion's remaining officers and its noncommissioned officers at a time

when the men in other volunteer units elected their officers.

Sherman Fleek, a Mormon and a career military aviator who retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel, recounts the story of this battalion in *History May Be Searched in Vain*. In the preface to this book, he recalls flying a training mission in an AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter northwest of Fort Bliss, Texas, in 1985, when his fellow pilot, a non-Mormon, pointed out that they were hovering near the adobe ruins of an old fort and that the Mormon Battalion had camped at this very spot during its march to California. The author writes that years later he followed the entire route of the battalion's march in his pickup truck.

Several histories have been written about the Mormon Battalion, portraying its members as a group of pioneers rather than soldiers. The battalion's trek was one of the most demanding marches in American military history, with twenty-two men dying of various illnesses, but the unit did not engage in combat with Mexican forces. Fleek, nevertheless, approaches the subject as a military history. He attempts to evaluate the battalion's combat effectiveness, and he examines the conflicts that sometimes developed between military and religious authorities. He also considers the relationship between the battalion's service and both the Mormons' movement to the Great Basin and the use made by other settlers of the route the battalion traversed.

A considerable part of the book sets the stage before the battalion began its march. Fleek briefly discusses the basic causes of the war—the dispute over Texas and its acceptance of statehood. The idea of a Mormon volunteer unit came at a propitious time, for the Mormons had suffered years of persecution amid government indifference. Mormon settlements from Ohio to Missouri had to be abandoned. In 1842 the Mormons' religious leader, Joseph Smith,

and his brother had been arrested in Nauvoo, Illinois, and murdered when a gang stormed the jail. After Brigham Young assumed the leadership, he saw a need to move west to safeguard the church. The exodus into Iowa and the establishment of camps there began in February 1846.

In June 1846 President Polk concurred with the idea of raising a Mormon battalion. Organizing a Mormon volunteer unit fit into Polk's plan to conquer the Southwest, including California. Polk also recognized that, because thousands of American and British Mormons appeared ready to migrate to California, the United States would do well to gain their loyalty, particularly in light of the nation's ongoing dispute with Great Britain over Oregon. The War Department authorized dragoon Col. (later Brig. Gen.) Stephen Watts Kearny to raise Mormon volunteers, so long as these did not number more than one-third of his force. The orders, however, were somewhat ambiguous, and this led Kearny to muster the Mormon volunteers while they were still in the Midwest and not later in California as Polk had intended.

Kearny ordered one of his Regular Army officers, dragoon Capt. James Allen, to direct the mustering of the Mormon Battalion at Council Bluffs, Iowa, and to take command. By 16 July enough volunteers had filled the ranks of four companies and part of a fifth for Allen to muster them into federal service, whereupon he became a lieutenant colonel of volunteers. He also recruited about a dozen female laundresses, typically wives who could accompany their husbands while receiving Army rations, and he permitted other family members, including many children, to join the march. By 20 July Allen had five companies totaling over 500 men. Although still lacking uniforms and weapons for the volunteers, Allen then led the newly

formed battalion on a 150-mile march to Fort Leavenworth.

The Mormon Battalion reached that post on 1 August, but Kearny's 300-man Army of the West had already departed for Santa Fe, Mexico, in late June. At Fort Leavenworth, the battalion received its military equipment and a clothing allowance in lieu of uniforms. The soldiers donated a substantial portion of the allowance to their church, helping to finance its subsequent move westward. After nearly two weeks, the unit resumed its march along the route taken by Kearny. The great trek started, however, without Colonel Allen, who had fallen ill and would soon die. Despite the protests of some Mormon soldiers, Dragoon First Lt. Andrew Jackson Smith, a Regular Army officer and strict disciplinarian, assumed temporary command. Smith, while taking stock of the fitness and effectiveness of his temporary command, was especially struck by the many extra baggage wagons, the sick and lame, and the numerous women and children. He decided to send some of the women and children with a small escort to a temporary Mormon settlement at Pueblo in what would become Colorado. Despite the low respect the Mormons had for Allen, they obeyed his orders because they had little choice. Smith divided his command and advanced the main body by force march. Reaching Santa Fe on 9 October, he met the deadline set by General Kearny and saved the battalion from possible discharge from volunteer service.

Kearny had pushed on from Santa Fe on 25 September. A week later he ordered dragoon Capt. Philip St. George Cooke to return there, take command of the Mormon Battalion as a volunteer lieutenant colonel, and march it to the Pacific along the route Kearny would follow. Cooke further weeded out sick men and families and sent them to Pueblo. On 19 October he led a reorganized battalion on its remaining 1,100-mile march to California. Only four women remained to complete the trek. Cooke further slashed his caravan by returning ox wagons with excess camp and cooking equipment to Santa Fe, keeping only a minimum number of wagons and mules. Cooke

then received word to follow a more southerly route through the Guadalupe Mountains, because Kearny considered the route he had taken too difficult for wagons and the land too dry for a force the size of the Mormon Battalion. Cooke's course later became a stagecoach route used by the Forty-niners. On 16 December the battalion passed through the Mexican town of Tucson, from which its garrison had withdrawn to a nearby mission without testing the Mormon Battalion's combat readiness. The battalion then rejoined the trail taken by Kearny along the Gila River, which it followed to the Colorado River. It finally completed its long march at San Diego on 29 January 1847.

By then California had been conquered and a Mexican-Californian uprising had been put down. After learning that California was under American control, Kearny reduced his little army to about 100 men and sent the rest back to Santa Fe. Now he faced the threat of another rebellion and a confrontation with Capt. John C. Frémont, the famed and audacious Army topographer who led American settlers in the Bear Flag revolt. Notwithstanding that Kearny was the senior U.S. Army officer in California, Frémont declared his intention to be military governor. Kearny deployed the Mormon Battalion in occupation duties and positioned the companies to best support his goal to gain the governorship. The dispute was resolved when word arrived that Kearny was military commander and military governor. Frémont would return to Washington to face court-martial charges.

Meanwhile, Cooke set up the unit's first real training program and rigidly enforced discipline. The men finally got uniforms, albeit a New York militia version. In July 1847 the Mormon Battalion was discharged from active military service. Because the war was still in progress, eighty-two of the veterans reenlisted for an additional six months of service and became a company-size unit designated as the Mormon Volunteers. They were finally discharged in March 1848, some six weeks after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican War. Fleek does not detail the subsequent adventures of the bat-

talion's veterans in California and Utah but notes briefly that "they became pioneer and Mormon heroes over the next few decades" (p. 316).

Fleek's book is well researched and written. There is an extensive bibliography of primary sources, manuscript collections, contemporary government publications of journals and reports, and autobiographies, memoirs, diaries, and edited accounts. Also included are appendixes containing the 1846 Army pay scale, rosters of commanders and staff, and a thorough index. Maps help the reader follow the progress westward to California. Although Fleek provides a chronological account, he includes some flashbacks and repetition, but this is not distracting. Overall activities of the Mexican War—the politics at Washington level, strategy, and military operations south of the Rio Grande, the occupation of California, and the march to Mexico City—are inserted at proper places in the book. In all, this book is highly recommended to students of the Mexican War and readers interested in a little-known story of that conflict.



**Retired Lt. Col. Adrian G. Traas** served in a variety of command and staff positions as an officer in the Corps of Engineers from 1957 to 1989. He was executive officer and commander of the 64th Engineer Battalion (Base Topographic) in Italy, Ethiopia, Liberia, and Iran and served two tours in Vietnam. Prior to his military retirement, he served in administrative positions and as a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. He authored *From the Golden Gate to Mexico City: The U.S. Army Topographical Engineers in the Mexican War, 1846–1848* (Washington, D.C., 1993) and contributed to *The Story of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps* (Washington, D.C., 1989) and *The United States and Mexico at War: Nineteenth-Century Expansionism and Conflict* (New York, 1998). He currently holds the title of visiting professor at the Center of Military History, where he is completing a volume on Army engineer operations in the Vietnam War.

# New CMH Publications

## MOBILITY, SHOCK, AND FIREPOWER

THE EMERGENCE OF THE U.S. ARMY'S  
ARMOR BRANCH, 1917-1945



Robert S. Cameron

## THE U.S. ARMY AND IRREGULAR WARFARE

1775-2007



*Selected Papers from the*  
*2007 Conference of Art and Letters*

Edited by [Name]

## THE U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN PANAMA

ORIGINS, PLANNING, AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT,  
JUNE 1987-DECEMBER 1989



LAWRENCE A. YATES

# NEWSNOTES

Continued from page 5

book, McGrath describes the wide range of ground and air assets developed by different major powers for this function after horse cavalry proved ill-suited for it during the first months of World War I, and he discusses their use in operations. McGrath concludes, however, that wartime commanders often chose not to employ these specialized assets for their intended purposes, preferring to assign reconnaissance missions that required direct contact with enemy forces to their general combat units. He finds that these commanders preferred to retain heavy reconnaissance forces for combat missions and doubted the survivability of lightly equipped reconnaissance assets. McGrath has been a CSI historian since 2002.

Digital copies of each of the publications mentioned in this news note may be downloaded from <http://cgsc.leavenworth.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/csi.asp>.

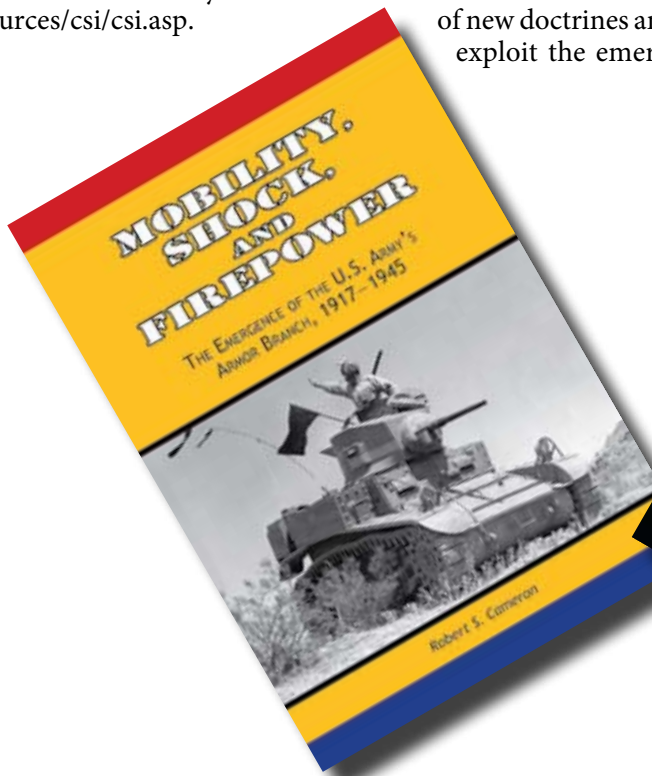
## NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM THE CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

The Center of Military History is pleased to announce three new historical publications—a book on the evolution of the Army's tank forces from 1917 to 1945, a book on the origins of the 1989 U.S. military intervention in Panama, and an anthology of selected papers presented at the Conference of Army Historians in August 2007.

***Mobility, Shock, and Firepower: The Emergence of the U.S. Army's Armor Branch, 1917–1945***, by Robert S. Cameron, traces the evolution of the U.S. Army's armored warfare capability from the employment of light, experimental armored vehicles during some infantry attacks in World War I to the development of powerful armored divisions capable of operating with considerable independence on the battlefields of World War II. The book addresses the development of new doctrines and organizations to exploit the emerging armor tech-

nologies and capabilities. Dr. Cameron has been the U.S. Army's armor branch historian since 1996. His book is available in paperback (CMH Pub 30–23–1).

***The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama: Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management, June 1987–December 1989***, by Larry A. Yates, examines the growing dispute between the United States and the Panamanian government of General Manuel Noriega during the thirty months prior to the American intervention in Panama in December 1989. The book carefully explores the complex relationships between General Frederick F. Wornor of the U.S. Southern Command and his military and civilian superiors in Washington, including Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William J. Crowe and Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney. Dr. Yates was a historian at the Combat Studies Institute of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort





Leavenworth, Kansas, from 1981 to 2005. His book is available in hardback (CMH Pub 55-1) and in paperback (CMH Pub 55-1-1).

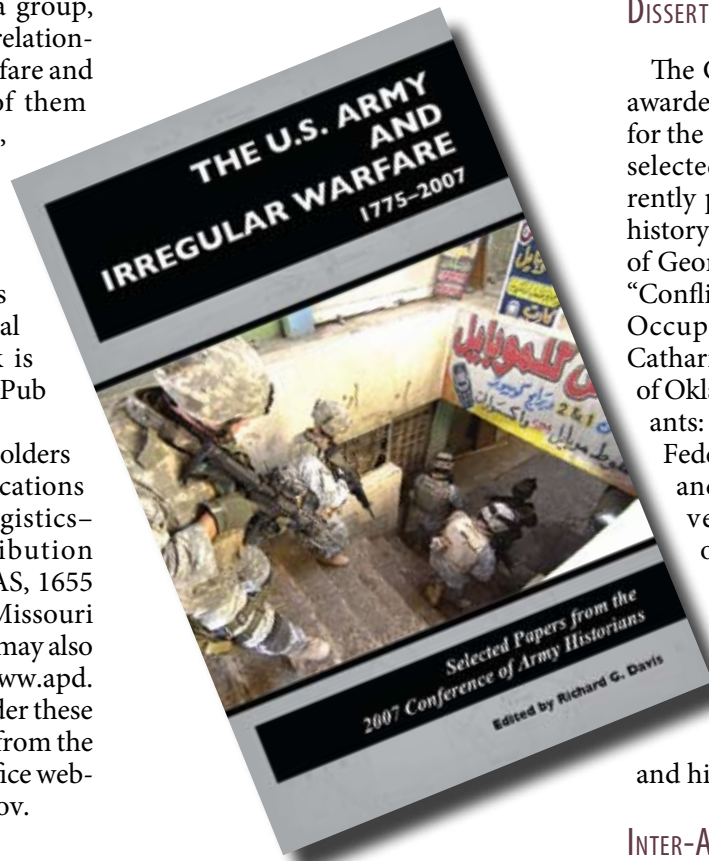
***The U.S. Army and Irregular Warfare, 1775-2007***, is a collection of fifteen papers presented at the 2007 Conference of Army Historians in Arlington, Virginia. The papers examine irregular warfare in a wide range of circumstances and eras. As a group, the papers demonstrate the relationship between this form of warfare and political extremism; many of them show that, at different times, Americans have fought both as insurgents and counterinsurgents. The papers were edited by Richard G. Davis, chief of the Center's Field Programs and Historical Services Division. The book is available in paperback (CMH Pub 70-111-1).

Army publication account holders may obtain these new publications from the Directorate of Logistics-Washington, Media Distribution Division, ATTN: JDHQSVPAS, 1655 Woodson Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63114-6128. Account holders may also place their orders at <http://www.apd.army.mil>. Individuals may order these and other Army publications from the U.S. Government Printing Office website at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

### ROTC OFFICER PROCUREMENT DEVELOPMENTS

*The History of the U.S. Army Cadet Command: Second Ten Years, 1996-2006*, authored by Arthur T. Coumbe, Paul N. Kotakis, and W. Anne Gammell, is now available. A sequel to the account of the command's first ten years that was issued in 1996, the new 414-page book traces the significant developments experienced between 1996 and 2006 by the Army's Reserve Officer Training Corps program for acquiring officers. Coumbe, the study's lead author, is the Cadet Command's historian, and coauthors Kotakis and Gammell worked for the Office of Public Affairs of the Cadet Command when this book was written. Kotakis now leads that office. Requests for cop-

ies of the book should be directed to Arthur Coumbe at the U.S. Army Cadet Command, ATTN: ATCC-H, Fort Monroe, Virginia 23651-5000. Dr. Coumbe may also be reached by email at [arthur.coumbe@monroe.army.mil](mailto:arthur.coumbe@monroe.army.mil) or by phone at 757-727-4608.



### DISTINGUISHED WRITING AWARDS

As part of its annual awards program, the Army Historical Foundation recognized a book and an article published by the U.S. Army Center of Military History in 2007 for outstanding writing on the history of the U.S. Army. *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Withdrawal, 1968-1973*, by Graham A. Cosmas, won the foundation's award in the Institutional/Functional History category. The book appeared in the Center's United States Army in Vietnam series. Cosmas began the book at the Center, where he worked from 1979 to 2001. Since 2001 he has been deputy director of the Joint History Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

An article by Mitchell Yockelson that appeared in the Fall 2007 issue of *Army History*, "We Have Found Each Other at Last': Americans and Australians at the Battle of Hamel in July 1918," won the foundation's award in the Army Professional Journals category. Yockelson is an archivist at the National Archives at College Park.

### DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIPS

The Center of Military History has awarded three dissertation fellowships for the 2008-2009 academic year. The selected graduate students are currently preparing dissertations on the history of land warfare—Sara Berndt of George Washington University on "Conflict and Change during the U.S. Occupation of Cuba, 1898-1902"; Catharine Franklin of the University of Oklahoma on "Sherman's Lieutenants: The Army Officer Corps and Federal Indian Policy, 1862-1890"; and Abbie Salyers of Rice University on "The Internment of Memory: Forgetting and Remembering the Japanese-American Experience during World War II." Each of the fellows will receive a stipend of \$10,000 and have access to the Center's facilities and historical expertise.

### INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS

Bradley Lynn Coleman, command historian of the joint U.S. Southern Command, has authored *Colombia and the United States: The Making of an Inter-American Alliance, 1939-1960*. This study, published by the Kent State University Press in March 2008, explores how shared material interests and ideological approaches led the governments of these two nations to strengthen their diplomatic and military ties during World War II and the early years of the Cold War. The press is offering the book for sale in a cloth edition for \$45.95.

# THE CHIEF HISTORIAN'S FOOTNOTE

DR. RICHARD W. STEWART



## OFFICIAL HISTORIES “DESIGNED TO CONCEAL REAL DISASTERS”?

In a recent interview of the lead author of *On Point II* Don Wright of the Combat Studies Institute, of retired General Barry McCaffrey Jr. and of retired Col. Douglas Macgregor, Ray Suarez of the *News-Hour with Jim Lehrer* on PBS asked Colonel Macgregor a question. He asked if it was significant that *On Point II*, already noted for its criticism of several key events and decisions during the planning and conduct of operations in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, showed that criticism was coming from “the Army itself.” Macgregor’s response is worth quoting in its entirety:

Well, the United States Army has a long history of publishing things like this by official historians [true so far!] reaching all the way back to World War II. The problem with most of them is that we normally print histories that are designed to conceal real disasters, don’t go into much detail, especially about general officers commanding forces in the field where serious mistakes were made. If you go back and read something about Kasserine Pass, it gets one sentence in the official history. You say the same thing, you know, about Anzio.

Well, I frankly don’t know whether to laugh or cry. Macgregor’s thoroughly uninformed comment raises the issue, again, of what many think official histories are and are not. Let me take a moment to discuss just

how wrong Colonel Macgregor is about World War II official histories, and then how he is also wrong on the wider issue of official histories as little more than cover-ups for general officers.

First (and this is the easy part), it is obvious that Macgregor has never read the official histories of World War II and the stories of U.S. Army operations in North Africa or Italy. In George F. Howe’s *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West*, the story of the battles of Sidi Bou Zid and Kasserine Pass takes up most of three chapters and over eighty pages (hint: more than “one sentence”). It is unsparing in its chronicling of poor U.S. planning and coordination and clearly discusses the command squabbles that resulted in the relief of the II Corps commander, Maj. Gen. Lloyd R. Fredendall. Similarly, Martin Blumenson in his masterful official history volume *Salerno to Cassino* lays out all the problems of the Italian campaign from the series of failed attacks on San Pietro to the miscalculations at Monte Cassino and the fiasco of the Rapido River crossings (with all the failings of U.S. and Allied generals plain to see). Blumenson’s coverage of the planning for and conduct of the Anzio landings takes up no less than fifty-six pages (second hint: more than “one sentence”) of detailed narrative. It includes a thorough narrative of the relief of Maj. Gen. John P. Lucas as VI Corps com-

mander and his replacement by Maj. Gen. Lucien K. Truscott that alone covers five pages. This is certainly a strange way to “conceal” a disaster or to protect a general officer. And if Blumenson were alive today I’d like to see Doug Macgregor try to tell *him* that one of *his* histories was “designed to conceal real disasters”! It wouldn’t be pretty.

Neither did Macgregor look at some of the other official histories of World War II that are part of the Center’s famous “Green Books” series. Louis Morton devoted an entire volume, *The Fall of the Philippines*, to the command failures at the opening of the ground war in the Pacific and the resulting sufferings at Bataan and Corregidor. The book is unsparing in its details. And Samuel Milner in *Victory in Papua* not only relates in his book our ultimate victory in the first ground battles fought by the Army in New Guinea but also the months of command and supply failures that led to the relief of Maj. Gen. Edwin F. Harding and several regimental commanders. The Center’s tradition (indeed its *mandate*—as laid out at its inception by Army Chief of Staff General Dwight D. Eisenhower—to call the shots as they saw them) continued with Roy E. Appleman’s *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, the first official history volume in the U.S. Army in the Korean War series. Appleman’s critical analysis of Task Force SMITH, the long-hard

retreat to the Pusan Perimeter, and the overzealous race to the Yalu regardless of intelligence warnings was clear and accurate. The official histories of the Vietnam War, as controversial a war as we have had lately, are likewise unsparing in telling the whole story in as much detail as possible even if some egos are bruised in the process.

In short, the authors of the Center's official histories—then and now—have always tried as hard as possible to be scrupulous in their judgments about what happened and why, regardless of personalities or agendas. Very seldom have senior officers attempted to “guide” our products. In each such case, their opinions are given due consideration (they were, after all, often principal witnesses to the events), but their testimony alone has not overcome hard historical evidence where it exists. Center historians try to gather *all* the evidence, weigh *all* the facts, look at issues from *every* angle—especially angles not apparent or even known by some participants in the events—to come up with as objective an account of the Army's story as possible. The Army deserves no less.



## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

**A***Army History* welcomes essays not to exceed 12,000 words on any topic relating to the history of the U.S. Army or to wars and conflicts in which the U.S. Army participated or by which it was substantially influenced. The Army's history extends to the present day, and *Army History* seeks accounts of the Army's actions in ongoing conflicts as well as those of earlier years. The bulletin particularly seeks writing, including commentaries, that presents new approaches to historical issues. It encourages readers to submit responses to essays or commentaries that have appeared in its pages and to present cogent arguments on any question (controversial or otherwise) relating to the history of the Army. Such contributions need not be lengthy. Essays and commentaries should be annotated with endnotes, preferably embedded, to indicate the sources relied on to support factual assertions. Preferably, a manuscript should be submitted as an attachment to an email sent to the managing editor at [charles.hendricks@hqda.army.mil](mailto:charles.hendricks@hqda.army.mil).

*Army History* encourages authors to recommend or provide illustrations to accompany submissions. If authors wish to supply photographs, they may provide them in a digital format with a minimum resolution of 300 dots per inch or as photo prints sent by mail. Authors should provide captions and credits with all images. When furnishing photographs that they did not take or any photos of art, authors must identify the owners of the photographs and art works to enable *Army History* to obtain permission to reproduce the images.

Although contributions by email are preferred, authors may submit essays, commentaries, and images by mail to Charles Hendricks; Managing Editor, *Army History*; U.S. Army Center of Military History; 103 Third Avenue; Fort McNair, D.C. 20319-5058.



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