WHY STUDY WAR?

The Importance of Teaching Military History

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U.S. History in a Global Context
Illinois Math & Science Academy
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Who do you most identify with?

Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Douglas MacArthur  
Franklin D. Roosevelt  
George S. Patton

Why?
“...democratic citizenship requires knowledge of war-and now, in the age of weapons of mass destruction, more than ever.”

Military History at York

- Military History (semester elective 11/12)
- Modern Warfare (summer elective)
- Modern Warfare: The Next Four Years (summer elective)
War Generates Great Change

The Top Ten Percent Income Share, 1917 - 2008

Great Depression 1929-1941
Great Compression 1941-1979
Great Divergence 1979-present

Income is defined as market income (and excludes government transfers). In 2008, top decile includes all families with annual income above $109,000.

Source: Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez.
• Requirements teach the economic, political, and social consequences of war.

• BUT the strategy, technology, leadership and logistics of conflicts merit greater attention.
Strategy, Technology, Leadership & Logistics ...

- foster critical thinking skills
- fulfill multiple Common Core/IL Social Science Standards
- tie in nicely to the STEM fad
- produce “Illinois graduates who are civically engaged, socially responsible, culturally aware, and financially literate.” -ISBE
Once dominating the discipline, the study of military history significantly declined throughout the 20th century.

Herodotus
Figure 1. Topic Areas in Which the Share of History Specialists Increased, 1975 to 2015

Source: Tabulations of faculty listings in the AHA Directory of History Departments, Historical Organizations, and Historians (previously called the Guide to Departments of History) in the indicated years. Faculty members can be recorded in more than one specialization.
“Interestingly, military history has a larger share of faculty than it had 40 years ago, but it has experienced a reversal in the past 5 years. After the share of faculty reported in the field increased from 1.8 percent in 2005 to 2.8 percent in 2010, the percentage fell slightly (to 2.6 percent) in 2015. (The share of departments with a specialist in the field held steady at 37 percent from 2010 to 2015.)”

“To write about the economic, social, administrative...and other assorted bases of war is unobjectionable so long as one keeps in mind, with Clausewitz, that ‘the soldier is levied, clothed, armed, exercised...all merely to fight at the right time and place.’”

Americans' Views That U.S. Has No. 1 Military and No. 1 Economy in the World

http://www.gallup.com/poll/204233/americans-say-top-military-top-economy.aspx?g_source=Politics&g_medium=newsfeed&g_campaign=tiles
While academic military history has declined, it has remained immensely popular with the public.
A public increasingly disconnected...

“As a country, America has been at war nonstop for the past 13 years. As a public, it has not. A total of about 2.5 million Americans, roughly three-quarters of 1 percent, served in Iraq or Afghanistan at any point in the post-9/11 years, many of them more than once.”

Military history does not have to...

- be only for boys
- be only conservative
- focus on battlefield minutiae
- glorify war
- whitewash America’s mistakes

Confederate Civil War reenactors at Franklin, April 2010
-The Civil War Gazette
Military history should...

- Acknowledge complexity
- Address different perspectives
- Consider motivation
- Explore the idea of “just war”
- Teach empathy

Recruitment posters calling for Italian and German volunteers in the Civil War. Article, “The Civil War Was Won by Immigrants Soldiers”
“The thing about history is that the longer you teach it, the more content you have to cover.”

–Stan Reddel
“Supporters wait for a procession carrying the remains of Army Pfc. Aaron Toppen to arrive at the funeral home on June 21, 2014 in Mokena, Illinois”

What knowledge of military history would students need to comprehend the following headlines?
“Trump targets F-35, but aircraft means jobs in 45 states”

“Churchill bust takes center stage as Trump, May reaffirm special relationship” Fox News 1.27.17

“Baghdad car bomb claimed by Islamic State kills 45”
ABC News 2.15.17

“Defense Secretary Mattis issues new ultimatum to NATO allies on defense spending” Washington Post 2.15.17

“In significant shift of U.S. policy, Trump backs off two-state solution for Mideast” CBS News 2.15.17

“Russia says Syrian ceasefire allows it to up efforts against Islamic State” Reuters 2.16.17
What will the next four years bring?

NATO & Russia?                China & East Asia?
The Middle East?                   Military Spending?
The Future of Warfare

Disputed claims in the South China Sea

European security order
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs/Drones)

Russian Uran-9 Ground Combat Drone

http://www.popularmechanics.com/military/weapons/a23505/the-us-army-stabilized-weapons/
Chinese DF-21D Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile

https://www.wired.com/2016/03/inside-cunning-unprecedented-hack-ukraines-power-grid/
When it comes to war, what do/should your students know?
Where to go from here...

• Consider proposing a military history elective.
• Incorporate more military history into required classes.
The 1st Division Museum at Cantigny
1S151 Winfield Rd, Wheaton, IL 60189
Guest Speakers...

• Possible sources (if you are having a hard time finding any):
  – Local VFW/ Legion posts
  – Other educators
  – Students’ families, neighbors, friends
They learn it somewhere...

So it might as well be from us.
Contact Info

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

REVOLUTION
• Colonial Williamsburg: Battle Tactics
  http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Winter08/tactics.cfm
• North Carolina Museum of History: Outfitting an American Revolutionary Soldier
  http://www.ncpedia.org/history/usrevolution/soldiers

CIVIL WAR
• Civil War Trust
• The History Channel: Civil War Technology
  http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/civil-war-technology

WWI
• National WWI Museum
  https://www.theworldwar.org/
• World War One BBC
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/0/ww1/25626530

WWII
• PBS The War
  http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at_war_battle_training.htm
• The National Interest: Deadliest Weapons in WWII
  http://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-5-deadliest-us-weapons-war-world-war-ii-12105
RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

COLD WAR
(ARMS RACE/TECHNOLOGY)
- History Channel: Cold War Arms Race
  http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/arms-race
- The National Interest: The Five Deadliest Weapons of the Cold War
  http://nationalinterest.org/feature/5-most-lethal-weapons-the-cold-war-13840

(KOREA)
- Army Quartermaster Corps’ Korean War 50th Anniversary Commemoration
  http://www.qmmuseum.lee.army.mil/korea/
- Australian Government: Korean War Commemoration
- National Archives Military Resources: The Korean War

(VIETNAM)
- Stars and Stripes: Weapons of War
- National Archives Military Resources: Vietnam
RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

MODERN WARFARE
(FIRST GULF WAR)
• The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History: Technology in the Gulf War

(AFGHANISTAN)
• The Christian Science Monitor: How Taliban Tactics are Evolving
• The Guardian: 10 Myths About Afghanistan

(IRAK/SYRIA)
• CNN: Forces-Weapons
• The Conversation: How Syria Is Becoming a Test bed for High Tech Weapons
  http://theconversation.com/how-syria-is-becoming-a-test-bed-for-high-tech-weapons-of-electronic-warfare-48779