



2011-033

James C. Bradford, ed., *A Companion to American Military History*. 2 vols. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2010. Pp. xxvi, 1080. ISBN 978-1-4051-6149-7.

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Military history has long been viewed as the red-headed stepchild of the broader history profession. Though its demise is often predicted, it has proven resilient and persistently vigorous. The result is that, as Robert Citino has written, “Military history today is in the same curious position it has been in for decades: extremely popular with the American public at large, and relatively marginalized within professional academic circles.”¹

This continuing popularity stems in part from the fact that the history of the United States is substantially one of war and warfare. Including internal conflicts, such as with Native Americans, undeclared interventions, as in the Caribbean and Central America in the 1920s and 1930s, and the global “war on terror,” US forces have seldom not been engaged somewhere in the world. Not surprisingly, then, American military history has generated countless books,² including a number of encyclopedias, handbooks, and “companions.”³ These volumes normally feature material ranging from brief synopses of battles and biographies of commanders to longer essays on wars, campaigns, and other topics. Their organization may be purely chronological or topical. They are routinely touted as “essential” or “must-have” for students and scholars. What then, does still another such volume have to offer? What could be missing from the existing literature?

A Companion to American Military History [CAMH], part of the Blackwell Companions to American History series, in fact proves to be a worthwhile undertaking. The sixty-seven essays that comprise its two volumes surpass the typical handbook by a beneficial emphasis on the historiography⁴ of each topic. As James Bradford states in his Introduction, the essays “are designed to provide basic information about their subject, but just as importantly to assess the historiography of the topic. They are not meant to be bibliographical in the sense of listing all books, not even all valuable books on a topic, but to identify the major areas of interpretive discussion” (3).

CAMH appraises the whole of American military history, from the Colonial era to the “long wars” in Afghanistan and Iraq. Contributors range from well-known military historians to specialists on particular topics and emerging scholars. Although the individual historiographical reviews concentrate on the writings of academic military historians, as opposed to those of popularizers or military professionals, the more comprehensive chapters embrace serious work by various civilian and military leaders as well as individual participants in various campaigns and battles. Many of the essays pinpoint subjects in need of further investigation. In selecting topics, priority goes to “military institutions and practices, the conduct of operations, and links between American service personnel and civilians,” not to “topics such as the causes of war and the impact of war on American society...” (3).

1. “Military Histories Old and New: A Reintroduction,” *American Historical Review* 112 (2007) 1070.

2. Classic one-volume treatments include Russell Weigley’s *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (NY: Macmillan, 1973) and Allan Millett and Peter Maslowski’s *For the Common Defense*, rev. ed. (NY: Free Press, 1994).

3. See, e.g., John Whiteclay Chambers II, ed., *The Oxford Companion to American Military History* (NY: Oxford U Pr, 1999); Jerry K. Sweeney, ed., *A Handbook of American Military History: From the Revolutionary War to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: U Nebraska Pr, 2006); Spencer C. Tucker, ed., *Encyclopedia of American Military History* (NY: Facts on File, 2003).

4. That is, “The study of the way history has been and is written—the history of historical writing... When you study ‘historiography’ you do not study the events of the past directly, but the changing interpretations of those events in the works of individual historians”—Conal Furay and Michael J. Salevouris, *The Methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1988) 223.

While the volumes aspire “to make the subfields of military history accessible to a broad audience” (4), their distinctly historiographical focus makes the essays more interesting and helpful to students and scholars than to the general public. Moreover, *CAMH*'s staggering retail price—\$410⁵—will confine it to the shelves of research libraries.

Readers may question the rationale for the inclusion or exclusion of topics as well as the relative allocation of space to those that made the cut. For example, despite the ongoing debate over treatment of enemy combatants or prisoners of war by the American military, the editor eschewed an essay on this important topic.⁶ Nor is there a separate chapter on the vital subject of logistics.⁷ While the Confederate Army of the American Civil War receives a mere six pages (454–59), music in the armed forces garners eight (833–40). Moreover, *CAMH* affords an army-centered view of the American military. The history of the Air Force, from its origins in World War I, gets only ten pages (444–53), and the Coast Guard, an admittedly understudied branch of the armed services, rates fifteen (429–43). Certain subjects are touched on in several essays, compelling the reader to resort to the (thankfully) detailed index (1045–80). The pattern is not always logical. For example, besides the essay exclusively on the Air Force, literature on that service's performance and role is also considered in the essays on World War I, World War II, and the Korean War, but, inexplicably, not Vietnam (163–64, 180–81, 184–85, 187, 207–8, 233–34).

Volume 1 is organized mostly chronologically, part I moving from colonial times to the Global War on Terror. Part II examines the regular armed forces—Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard—but also the military forces of the Confederacy; the Militia, National Guard, and Reserve; joint commands and operations; and mercenaries, private military contractors, and other non-traditional forces.

Volume 2 (parts III–VI) delves more deeply into selected subject areas. Part III (“Foreign Military Operations Short of Declared War”) takes up the Interwar Years of the 1920s and 1930s in Asia, Central America, and the Caribbean; the post-World War II occupations of the former Axis powers; and military operations during the past thirty-five years. Part IV covers “Homeland Security,” including early American insurrections such as the Whiskey Rebellion; post-Civil War reconstruction; and civil disorders and natural disasters. Part V treats military specializations, including intelligence, education and training, chaplain work, communications, special forces and covert operations, war planning, military justice, and music. Finally, Part VI addresses the military in relation to society and culture: the “American Way of War”; civil-military relations; women and minorities in the military; veterans' movements; the military and the media; war and memory; military ethics; sports and the military; and care for the remains of service personnel killed in action.

I will briefly evaluate selected chapters to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of *CAMH*.⁸ Award-winning historian John Grenier, in the first essay, deftly recounts the long story of “Warfare during the Colonial Era, 1607–1765” (9–21). As he points out, although colonial military history is now usually rather neglected, it was not always so. “Antiquarian historians produced a detailed historiography of the pre-1765 Indian and Imperial Wars” (10). He reviews these early histories and shows their relevance to present-day studies. He then considers military histories of the colonial era written in the last sixty-five years, from revisionist attacks on Francis Parkman's *A Half Century of Conflict*,⁹ to studies of specific conflicts, biographical writing, and notable cultural and societal histories. He reflects that “because of the richness of its historiography, few eras in American history as the colonial period are bettered [*sic*] poised for students and scholars who hope to understand war in all its varied dimensions” (17). Grenier's bibliography is as comprehensive as

5. Or \$332.99 at Amazon.com.

6. See, e.g., Robert C. Doyle, *The Enemy in Our Hands: America's Treatment of Prisoners of War from the Revolution to the War on Terror* (Lexington: U Pr of Kentucky, 2010), and Paul J. Springer, *American's Captives: Treatment of POWs from the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror* (Lawrence: U Pr of Kansas, 2010).

7. See, e.g., Steve R. Waddell, *United States Army Logistics from the American Revolution to 9/11* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009).

8. For a complete table of contents, see Appendix below.

9. Boston: Little, Brown, 1892.

his historiographical review, listing not only books but also important scholarly articles. This initial chapter thus well exemplifies *CAMH*'s stated goals.

The essays do not all cover such a vast period. Some consider only a few years of history. As Graham Cosmas states at the beginning of his chapter—"The Spanish-American and Philippine Wars, 1898–1902" (138–52)—"The Spanish-American War of 1898 was a small war with large consequences" (138). Indeed, it launched the United States on its path to world-power status, revealing the need to modernize and improve the capabilities of both Army and Navy. Cosmas covers the literature, including diplomatic histories, on the causes and the inception of the Spanish-American War. His narrative draws on the writings of the era to describe the profound strategic, technological, and organizational innovations going on at the turn of the century and the deficiencies in the American military that the war revealed. He then turns to the Philippine Insurrection and War, discussing its origins and the ultimate success of the Army's counterinsurgency operations. His bibliography provides a full listing of the scholarly literature.

Moving ahead another fifty years, James Matray tackles the Korean War (222–56) in the book's longest essay. In his skillful, coherent, and comprehensive review of the literature, he shows that this "forgotten war"¹⁰ has in fact attracted significant and consistent consideration by military historians. He begins with a historiographical review of Korean War literature, then moves to the scholarship on the post-World War II US military and Korea. Next come official histories and writings by such leaders as Gen. J. Lawton Collins (Army Chief of Staff during the Korean War), Gen. Matthew B. Ridgeway, and General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. Matray proceeds to a thorough review of campaign, battle, and unit histories, and the stories of individual participants, including the important (often inaccurate) accounts of African-American soldiers' conduct during the war. Nor does he ignore the other services: the recently-independent Air Force, the Navy, and the Marine Corps all receive due attention. Matray also surveys the writings of war correspondents and studies of the negotiations that ended the conflict with an armistice rather than a peace. The extensive bibliography lists many scholarly articles as well as books. Very good use indeed is made of the extra space allotted to the Korean War.

In Part II ("The Armed Forces)," Kurt Hackemer's chapter on "The US Navy, 1860–1920" (388–98) covers a period of vast technological and philosophical change. Hackemer reviews the literature on the Navy during the Civil War and the transformation the conflict wrought in the service's structure and weaponry. Publication of Alfred Thayer Mahan's classic *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783*¹¹ in 1890 altered how nations thought about their fleets and ushered in an era of naval expansion for the United States and other countries. After discussing works on the development of the Navy up to World War I, Hackemer usefully identifies post-Civil War naval history as needing further research to bring "a new round of synthesis that melds recent scholarship in strategic thinking, professionalism, social history, the evolution of technology, and the economic impact of naval expansion with existing institutional and operational history" (395).

Some topics in *CAMH*, however, deserved more than a single chapter. For instance, Jon Hoffman, a former deputy director of the Marine Corps History and Museums Divisions, strives to review of all the literature relating to the over 235-year history of the Corps in an essay of eighteen pages (411–28). He stakes out four areas: comprehensive histories; wars and battles; specialized studies (for example, of weapons and war-time behavior); and biographies. Though he confines himself to books, he misses some important ones, such as Max Boot's *The Savage Wars of Peace*,¹² which features ample discussion the Marine Corps's role in various "small wars." Hoffman also omits rich and vivid memoirs of Marines like William Manchester¹³ and E.B. Sledge,¹⁴ who served in the Pacific Theater of World War II, as well as books by war correspondents like

10. See Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: American in Korea, 1950–1953* (NY: Times Books, 1987).

11. Boston: Little, Brown.

12. Subtitle *Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (NY: Basic Books, 2002).

13. *Goodbye, Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980).

14. *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1981).

Robert Sherrod¹⁵ and Richard Tregaskis.¹⁶ Granted, the announced focus of *CAMH* is the scholarship of academic historians (2), but most of the essays rightly take account of memoirs and journalism as well. The more comprehensive a historiographical essay, the more useful it surely is.

CAMH's general editor, James C. Bradford, contributes an essay on "The Citizen Soldier in America: Militia, National Guard, and Reserves" (472–96). Citizen soldiers have long been a vital component of the military, supplying much needed manpower from the colonial era right up to today's deployments of militia, National Guard, and reserve forces. Bradford duly points out the deficiencies of these units when called to active service, but provides an astute overview of their history and their essential role in America's ongoing global conflicts. Most of the literature is devoted to the Army's reserve and National Guard units and their organization, leaving much to do with respect to the other uniformed services' reserve systems.

The essays in volume 2 are generally shorter and more narrowly focused than those in volume 1. For example, in Part III, Anne Venzon's essay "Interventions in Central America and the Caribbean, 1900–1930" (536–53) covers a pivotal period when the United States emerged as a world power. She reviews material on the many campaigns of the US military—especially the Marine Corps and the Navy—during this era, as well as various policy-level studies and analyses of the role of individual presidents in the growth of American power from 1900 to 1940. As she concludes, although much has been written on conflicts and crises in Latin America and the Caribbean, "numerous opportunities exist for additional studies of specific interventions and occupations, comparative studies of multiple operations, and particularly of the experience of the soldiers, sailors, and marines who participated in the operations and of the people of the areas involved" (549–50).

Complementing Venzon's chapter is Stephen K. Stein's essay on "Military Intervention in Asia, 1899–1927" (554–63). Stein briefly canvasses the literature on the Philippine War (covered in much greater detail by Graham Cosmas), US Pacific policy in the first decades of the last century, and Theodore Roosevelt's decision to send "The Great White Fleet" on its circumnavigation of the globe in 1907–9. Most of his chapter examines US military operations in China and intervention in Russia after World War I. He correctly concludes that "More detailed examinations of military operations in the fractured and weakened states of China and Russia in these years would ... be welcome" (561).

Dale Floyd covers his specialization, "Coastal Defenses" (662–80), in Part IV. This topic is much more critical in military history than it might seem, for the US Army and Navy were preoccupied with America's coastal defense and fortifications for more than a century after its founding. Floyd discusses the various boards and studies that kept the Army's Corps of Engineers at the forefront of the military services for decades as well as the literature showing how the Civil War rendered antebellum fortifications obsolete. After looking at the modernization and refocus of the Army and Navy at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, he surveys writings on the pre-World War II coastal defenses at home and abroad that proved so inadequate during the global conflict. Floyd's seven-page bibliography attests to the substantial interest in the subject.

An essay on "Military Intelligence" (695–708) leads off Part V ("Military Specialties"). David F. Trask, acknowledging an extensive contribution by Bradford, describes the use and development of military intelligence services since the War of Independence. He reviews the literature on espionage and intelligence gathering by both sides during the Civil War, the postbellum decline of such activities, and their reinvigoration in the twentieth century, particularly during and after World War II. Indeed, Trask devotes most space to the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, which have seen considerable growth in the intelligence community, especially in past decade.

Practicing lawyer Mark Weitz's chapter on "Military Justice" (802–14), also in Part V, helpfully surveys an important but, until recently, rather neglected topic in military history. He canvasses the literature chronologically, noting that "military justice finally takes its place in the larger field of military history" only

15. *Tarawa: The Story of a Battle* (NY: Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1944).

16. *Guadalcanal Diary* (NY: Random House, 1943).

in the post-Vietnam War period (809). The Civil War and Vietnam get the lion's share of Weitz's attention. This essay would have benefited from the inclusion of scholarly articles in its bibliography.

Antulio J. Echevarria's "The American Way of War" (843–55), leading off Part VI ("The Military, American Society, and Culture"), is a tour de force and should be required reading for anyone desiring an introduction to the significant literature and debate on the topic. It starts from Russell Weigley's controversial thesis¹⁷ of a single American way of war in the conflicts since Independence. Echevarria reviews various criticisms of Weigley's theory, for example, Victor Hanson's arguments for a larger "Western Way of War"¹⁸ and Max Boot's complementary claims for a "small-wars" American way of war.¹⁹ He concludes with recent literature on a "new" American way of war and the discussions arising out of operations during the Global War on Terror.

The pages devoted to some topics in Part VI, however, would have been better apportioned to other subjects. Joseph G. Dawson's chapter on "The Military, the Cinema, and Television" (918–40) begins with a review of feature films and television programming on American wars up through the early twentieth century. A section on "Military Comedies" highlights films like the Marx Brothers' classic *Duck Soup* and television's *Gomer Pyle, USMC*; *Twelve O'Clock High*; and *Combat!* Dawson then covers various documentaries on (mostly) twentieth-century wars through Vietnam. While films, scripted television programs, and documentaries have certainly presented the military from a variety of perspectives, very few are historically accurate and their claim on our attention is not convincingly stated. And, too, the topic ill accords with the editor's announced focus on work by academic military historians.

The last chapter in *CAMH* is one of three joint efforts in the two volumes. Constance Potter and John Deeben, both of the National Archives and Records Administration, in "Care for the Military Dead" (1034–44), address the growing area of research on war and remembrance. How a society remembers and memorializes conflicts, those who served, and those who died certainly deserves serious analysis. But Potter and Deeben only scratch the surface, concentrating on how those killed in action are identified, buried, and remembered by both their survivors and their grateful nation. While many "opportunities exist for research in American care for its military dead" (1041), a broader essay on the literature on war and memory would have better served students and scholars.

Collectively, the essays in *CAMH* do indeed convey a sense of "the healthy state of military history scholarship and bear witness to the fact that military history continues to attract numerous fine historians who employ a variety of methods to approach the field from numerous perspectives" (4). Even if one may nitpick over the choice and distribution of topics, its deliberate convergence on historiography makes *CAMH* a most informative and valuable reference tool for students of military history. The essays both offer a bird's-eye view of past and current scholarship and perceptively distinguish areas in need of additional research. One hopes the healthy state of the military history field will overcome the obstacle posed by the daunting price of these volumes as it has many others over the years.

17. See note 2 above.

18. *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (1989; 2nd ed. Berkeley: U Cal Pr, 2009).

19. See note 12 above.

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