

Running head: HISTORY STUDY AND RESEARCH

History Study and Research

SGM Kelly R. Agbay

United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

Class 58, R03

SGM Tommy Jackson

March 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	3
I. U.S. Military History	
A. Pre-Colonial	4
B. American Revolution to WW I	4-6
C. WW I	6
D. WW II	7
E. Korea	7
F. Vietnam	7-8
G. Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom	8-9
II. Conclusion	10
IV. References	11

Abstract

Military professionals should not only take time out of their busy schedule to study military history, but it should be incorporated into their busy schedules. Units should identify time on the training schedules to facilitate history study and research. Our Army trains for the most current situations and plans for future situations which may arise, therefore, in order to plan for future situations, we need to take our history into account in order to be effective.

Military History

Pre-Colonial - When the inhabitants of what is now the United States of America landed, they met a totally different kind of warfare from the Indians. The Colonists had to learn to endure “Guerilla” or hit and run tactics instead of the traditional linear battlefields. Prior to the formation of the Army, the Colonists formed a “Militia” which protected their own areas against an Indian attack. These Colonists used European tactics which meant standing in a formation to mass fire power. The Indians did not use these tactics and were hit and run in order to defeat their adversaries. The Colonists adapted to this type of fighting and eventually pushed the Indians westward. The European tactics were “shelved” based on the terrain and enemy the Colonists had to face.

American Revolution to WWI – America had the ability to protect its land using local militias, but when they went to war with the British in 1775, Congress had created the Continental Army. This Army was created using the local militia’s and sorely lacked the training needed to decisively engage the British. The one advantage the Colonist’s had was their knowledge of the terrain. Using tactics learned from fighting the Indians proved efficient in defeating the British.

With the introduction of the Army came numerous problems such as tactics, discipline, and depleting morale. Training in European tactics and guerilla tactics became paramount. Using the terrain to the Colonists advantage and the hit and run tactics depleted the British morale and caused severe losses to the British Army. The Continental Army was no match for a face to face encounter with the British, so they used what they learned from previous battles with the Indians to defeat and demoralize the British.

Upon gaining independence from Britain and becoming a nation, the Continental Army reduced in size and used the idea of local militia's to enhance the numbers if needed for future conflicts. The idea of keeping a large Army in the United States during peacetime seemed a waste of resources throughout our history. The War of 1812 proved that America was not prepared for war. A small Army with the ability to call up militias was not the problem. Building the Army was the problem. Getting people involved, trained and prepared to fight was the problem. Getting the public support for war proved to be difficult. Northeastern states lacked the will to fight a war, but supported the effort based on profitability. The professional Army suffered because they were ill prepared for battle. Militias were the winning players in the War of 1812. After the War of 1812, the United States organized its Army started a "Professional Force". Training and discipline became paramount in the success of the Army and the emphasis placed on these factors by the government proved successful.

With the Mexican – American War, the Westward Expansion up to the Civil War, the military focused on training, discipline and creating a professional force. The Civil War from 1861 – 1865 created an equal adversary for the Army. The Confederate Army leadership had the same training and understood the terrain which they were fighting on. Both had to rely on using militias called in to fight the war. The advantage the Union Army had been its supply system. The emphasis placed on resupply was paramount on winning the battles and the war.

After the Civil War, the Army again became a small force of regulars. As we have in the past. During the Indian Wars, the Army was used to protect civilians moving westward from Indian aggression. Again, the Army had to transition from linear battlefield used in the Civil War to guerrilla type fighting. The Indians were excellent at hit and run tactics. Tactics which

were forgotten about had to be dusted off to defeat the Indians. Again the Army was re-learning how to fight based on METT-C. Being adaptive proved successful.

With the Spanish – American War and the Philippines, the Army had to learn to deploy and fight on another continent. This led to using both the Army and Navy to adjust doctrine to get soldiers to the fight. Fighting in tropical climates and changes in tactics became harrowing. Again, adaptive leadership and change became the key to success. In the Philippines, guerrilla tactics were used and again past history needed to be dusted off to help fight the insurgency.

The ability to mobilize, deploy and fight in another continent and be successful thrust the United States into a global power. Our successes based on tactics used and re-learned since the Army's inception was soon to change in WWI. Modernization of equipment and the industrialization of societies would shape how wars were fought.

WW I

The Army had to transform based on becoming a global power from Indian fighting tactics to a more conventional Army. In 1917, the United States entered the War in Europe and had to learn how to deal with other industrialized Army's. Trench warfare had to be learned and the use of combined arms was elevated. Chemical attacks used by the German's created issues for the Army which was ill prepared for such warfare. Although biological attacks used by Armies were nothing new, but the U.S. Army had to learn to adapt to these war fighting measures. The other issues plaguing the Army were drawdown prior to 1917. Again, during peacetime, the United States scaled back its military to a smaller force. The amount of mobilization and recruiting to deploy to Europe was not thought of prior to having to contend with a war of that size. The modernization of the military during that time and focused placed on war fighting skills and adaptability proved successful during WWI.

WW II

Continuing problems in Europe after WW I did not plague America. Our stance during that time was to stay out of their mess. Not until the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 did the United States decide to enter the war. Mobilizing and deploying forces to Asia and Europe to fight two different types of battles proved harrowing. Technologically, the United States Army was far superior to its adversaries. Tank battles in Europe and Jungle tactics in Asia proved our adaptability. In one arena, we were on a linear battlefield, but in Asia, guerrilla warfare reigned supreme. Again, we had to dust off our lessons learned in order to defeat the Japanese during this conflict. What we endured in Asia was nothing new, but not thought about during this time. Tactics had to be adjusted.

Korea

After the success during WW II, we downsized to an occupation Army. Training and equipment maintenance fell to the wayside. The idea of the United States as a “Superpower” seemed to give the Army a false sense of readiness. This was proved in the start of the Korean War with “Task Force Smith”. The ill preparedness of the Army during this time proved disastrous to the military. Again, in our history, we had to become reactive and change our tactics based on the type of war we were involved with. Emphasis had to be placed on equipment and training.

Vietnam

At the beginning of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the military was still viewed as a superpower and had the illusion that any enemy would turn tail and run. We learned from Korea about our preparedness for war, but were not prepared for the type of war we were getting into in Vietnam. Guerrilla tactics from the enemy was paramount to their success. American public

opinion of the war was already at a low and the emergence of stories displayed to the American public created dissention and a lack of support for the war. We found ourselves in an unpopular war dealing with hit and run tactics which again proved to demoralize the soldiers and the American population. We went there to fight a linear battle filled with might and power, but faced an adaptive enemy which used tactics that we did during our fight for independence. Our enemy knew they could not win battles face to face, but could win by wearing down our support.

Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom

With the fall of the Soviet Union and communism in Europe, the United States was no longer in a “Cold War”. We were viewed as the only superpower left in the world. We could prove our power throughout the globe with little effort. From Grenada to Haiti, Southwest Asia to the Balkans the United States became the world’s police force. Desert Shield and Desert Storm proved so decisive and such a huge military victory that it gave the American public the perception that all wars should be fought and won that quickly. In Somalia, a peacekeeping mission, public support quickly declined at the loss of soldiers. The idea to the American public the loss of any American life is not worth the outcome in countries plagued by insurgency and religious radicals. This proved to be our downfall and led us to where we are at now based on the September 11th 2001 attacks against the United States. We again find ourselves on two different fronts conducting counter insurgency. Both in Afghanistan and Iraq, military power was projected and quickly defeated the enemy’s on a linear battlefield. But after the quick defeats of enemy Army’s, we are again plagued with guerrilla type tactics. The type of tactics we failed to plan for. We also find ourselves losing public support from the American population. Six years in Afghanistan fighting terrorists and five years in Iraq fighting insurgency and terrorists, all with no end in sight, has depleted the public support for these wars. Changing

tactics and becoming adaptive on the battlefield again is proving successful. But as in past wars and conflicts, dusting off the old doctrine or recreating doctrine to deal with situations has been consistent throughout our history.

Conclusion

Since the inception of the Army in 1775, we have had to adjust, readjust and adjust again to conflicts based on tactics, industrialization, modernization, perception, and public support. History has proven that we continue to see our flaws of downsizing the military to mobilizing a military and becoming reactionary based on global situations. The idea of having to continuously recall how we had to fight in different parts of the world and recreating doctrine based on our current threats has proven time consuming and a waste of resources. The military does not put enough emphasis on training its soldiers on military history. Studying our history is a valuable “lessons learned” tool which could help to quickly transition our adaptability on today’s battlefield. Having to recreate doctrine because we forgot about past conflicts or lessons learned is almost criminal. Placing more emphasis on studying our history will help young leaders “think outside of the box” in preparing for combat. Also, studying history will create more of a pride in their service.

References

Sewart, R. (2005). American Military History Volume I. Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington D.C.

Sewart, R. (2005). American Military History Volume II. Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington D.C.