

Running head: The Importance of Military Professionals Knowing Military History

The Importance of Military Professionals Knowing Military History

MSG Mio L. Franceschi

United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

Class 58

SGM Fieck

Group Room L12

18 March 2008

ATSS-BA

8 January 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR Faculty Advisor, Group Room L12, Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

SUBJECT: Military Professionals should know military history. (Importance of Military History).

1. **Thesis:** Military Professionals should know the history of the military, it is why our country is what it is today, it is how we have learned to train soldiers in the field, win wars, learned what works and what doesn't. Military History is what all military professionals should know.

2. **Main Points:** Tactics, strategies, roles, missions and warfare are all part of a collective history of Armies and battles. Post-War experiences can be lessons learned, expanding professional development, all which is beneficial to a soldier in the field. A part of the past that one or many has learned from, taught from, and maybe broadened upon. Who are one's enemies, allies in the past, present and the future? Old wars that lead us to modern war, a modern nation and ones own government; this is all a part of Military History.

3. **Supporting Points:** I will show you why I believe it is important for Military Professionals to know military history by past experiences with the "Transformation Under Fire – Emory Upton's Proposal," "Full Spectrum Operations-Vera Cruz, 1914," "Small Wars Manual."

Mio L. Franceschi
MSG, USA
Student, 411, L12

Abstract

Tactics, strategies, roles, missions and warfare are all part of a collective history of Armies and battles. Post-War experiences can be lessons learned, expanding professional development, all which is beneficial to a soldier in the field. A part of the past that one or many has learned from, taught from, and maybe broadened upon. Who are one's enemies, allies in the past, present and the future? Old wars that lead us to modern war, a modern nation and ones own government; this is all a part of Military History. Military Professionals should know the history of the military, it is why our country is what it is today, and it is how we have learned to train soldiers in the field. Military History is what all military professionals should know.

Thesis

The history of the military is “more than simply the story of armed conflict, of campaigns and battles, it is the story of how societies form their institutions for their collective security and how those institutions operate in peace and war” (Stewart, 2004, Vol. I., p. 1). To gain security and power one must go to war; this is how society formed their institutions and learned how to operate. Presidents, Commanders and Non-Commissioned Officers learned their roles, tactics and strategies from our Fathers before us. They provided us with security and power to form one of the most powerful organizations, the United States Military.

Main Points

Tactics, strategies, roles, missions and warfare are all part of a collective history of Armies and battles. Post-War experiences can be lessons learned, expanding professional development, all which is beneficial to a soldier in the field. A part of the past that one or many has learned from, taught from, and maybe broadened upon. Who are one’s enemies, allies in the past, present and the future? Old wars that lead us to modern war, a modern nation and ones own government; this is all a part of Military History.

Supporting Points

Emory Upton, a General in the United States Army was one that studied military history, which earned him “with a reputation for tactical innovation that he cemented with a publication of A New System of Infantry Tactics. His mission was to study the armies of Asia and Europe which left him especially impressed by the German military system” (Stewart, 2004, Vol .I, p.

310). Upton's tactics were learned by studying other military organizations (Asia, Europe) which brought him success in World War I. Other Generals used Col Upton's tactics then eventually was used by the United States Army for years. Whitaker (2005) wrote the following:

In warfare of the early and mid 19th century, an untrained commander could become well versed in the tactics of the day by gradually observing and learning on the job for a short period of time. Towards the end of the 19th century, tactics became much more complex, until Upton's manual the traditional tactic used by almost all professional military forces was the double lined massed infantry approach. Upton argued for a completely different system. His system was based around groups of four soldiers, which would form a single line of battle and push forward individually. This single rank approach was used partially to maximize firepower and make a harder target. This system was also contingent upon the fact that small unit leaders (company grade officers and non-commissioned officers) took a much more active role in maneuver on the battlefield. This would also imply that professional education would become a much more important part of military leadership.

Upton was in favor of federal control of almost the entire national defense establishment. This is what many interpreted as anti-democratic, which is not at all surprising since the country had just recently fought a war over states rights. Part of this was the fact that some believed Upton wished to do away with the militia entirely. Fitzpatrick shows that while Upton believed the militia to be useless still he recognized that, "The militia is guaranteed to the states by the Constitution, and is an instrument for preserving law and order, is to be maintained by the states." These new systems of tactics combined with the increasingly important areas of military leadership were put to use in the Philippine War 1899-1902. The Philippine War was the first of a series of small wars of American imperialism that would

partially define the military culture of the early 20th century. The U.S. Marine Corps would even write a *Small Wars Manual*. (Section 7-9)

The United States continued to use Col Emory Upton's tactics throughout WWII, and the system was still being used as we entered into Iraq. Emory Upton is just one example of why military professionals should know military history. Studying war tactics brought Col Upton up in the ranks and helped win wars.

The Small Wars Manual is another book based on tactics and strategies that was written for the Marine Corps but is actually used throughout other military organizations. The Small Wars Manual is a collaboration of books which became doctrine. This manual gave and proved tactics that were successful and gave all military organizations a starting point for operations. You can say this manual is a tradition. Tradition that has been applied in wars lets the military know what works and does not work. Knowing what does not work is just as important as knowing what does work, as this manual provides. Studying this manual can provide Officers and noncommissioned officers the wisdom to expand upon the manual, helping the U.S. Military to become more powerful. I can also say that it is as equally important for any rank to know this book; it is important for a soldier to know what and why his leader is applying such tactics in an operation, this builds a soldier.

One small war was in Vera Cruz, Mexico in 1914. A war that "the Army had never bothered to develop plans for the type of limited contingency it faced. It would not be the last time that such operations would be bedeviled by poor civil-military communication" (Birtle, 2004, p.196). As you can see here that the lack of communication in the military and operation planning was not good strategically. "The most important item of tactical doctrine to emerge

from the Army's Mexican sojourn was a pamphlet. The pamphlet prescribed methods for fighting in cities and became the basis for U.S. Army tactical doctrine on the subject for years to come, as the Army periodically reissued the work whenever intervention into a Latin state was imminent" (Birtel, 2004, p.198). Birtel calls this method as "street-fighting doctrine." Although President Wilson's tactics worked, they were not popular. However Wilson applied his tactics he was still known for meddling in communist countries business to support democracy.

The United States does this still today, maybe not in the same way as President Wilson did, but we still support and push other countries to form a democratic country. President Wilson did this just not with Mexico but also with Russia starting in 1917.

Conclusion

History overall has shown us that by knowing and studying military history, leaders can better prepare and plan for future and current operations, allowing us not to make the same mistakes that built our history as a military organization that we have today. Operations our country is conducting today will always have portions of Col Emory Upton and his tactics and techniques, and we'll always have a small portion of President Wilson as we clear the streets during combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Small Wars Manual from 1940 to present has showed us that by writing these tactics, techniques, and procedures we will always be the manual that will establish our doctrine today. Also, it is just as important to not just learn America's history but other countries as well, as Col Emory Upton had. Learning is always important and by writing this paper in its self I have learned a small part of military history.

References

Andrew J. Birtle. (2004). U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operation Doctrine

1860-1941, 196,198

Small Wars Manual. (2004). Retrieved March 7, 2008 from

<http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/swm/index.htm>. section 7-9.

Richard Stewart. (2004). American Military History, Vol I, 1,310.

