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EESTI SÕJAAJALOO AASTARAAMAT

THE PAST – A SOLDIER'S GUIDE FOR THE PRESENT?

EXPERIENCE, HISTORY AND THEORY IN MILITARY EDUCATION

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Cover photo: Preparations for Independence War exams at the Estonian officers' School in Tallinn, 1939. Courtesy Museum of the Estonian Military Academy

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Introduction

Kaarel Piirimäe

This yearbook is the result of the 9th Estonian military history conference, "The past – soldier's guide for the present? Experience, History and Theory in Military Education," which took place in Tartu in May 2018. It was organized by the Estonian War Museum – General Laidoner Museum in cooperation with the Estonian Military Academy.

While laying the conceptual basis for the conference, we were inspired in part by the success of the 7th conference of 2016, which had explored the ways military organizations envision and predict future wars. At that conference it became clear that, while there has certainly been a fair amount of technological futurism in war preparations, history and experience has always been an important point of reference. But what kind of history? What kind of experience? – this was the moot question.

In his memorable, starkly down-to-earth keynote lecture, Martin van Creveld warned against overemphasizing academic studies in military education:

> War is a practical business – at times, so much so as to discourage abstract thought about it. It has much in common with playing an instrument or, at the higher levels, conducting an orchestra. The objective is victory, not dishing up all sorts of insights. Not even the best theories can save us from the enemy's sharp sword. The best teacher of war is war. Commanders must start by mastering their job at the lowest level. Next, they must proceed step by step until the most competent reach the highest level of all. With each step additional factors enter the picture. Some are military, others political, economic, social, cultural, and religious. At the top, there is hardly any aspect of human behaviour which does not impinge on war's conduct.[1]

[1] Martin van Creveld, "Studying War", unpublished notes for the keynote lecture at the conference "Visions of War: Experience, Imagination and Predictions of War in the Past and the Present," Estonian War Museum – General Laidoner Museum, 19–20 April 2016, Tallinn.

Thus, while discouraging excessive dwelling on academic subjects at the lower levels, Creveld ended by laying great weight on history at higher levels of military education:

> To fire one's weapon, or command a platoon, experience is enough so that little history and theory are needed. But the higher up one gets and the more factors enter the picture, the less we can count on experience and the more important therefore history and theory.[2]

Encouraged in part by Creveld's keynote, we wanted to study in greater depth the role of military history in officers' education and training. We asked scholars to critically consider the following questions: What is the position of history in military pedagogy? To what extent should armed forces, beside tactics, study the political, cultural and social contexts of war-fighting? Is it necessary to understand also the civilian perspective on the conduct of war? How can one assure that history is taught "in width, in depth, and in context", as was suggested by Michael Howard?[3]

The other stimulus for the choice of the topic was the ongoing crisis in the military history discipline in Estonia. As Igor Kopõtin noted in 2016, there was a disagreement between military professionals and civilian historians, as the first doubted in the ability of the second to gain any useful insights from their research into military topics.[4] For example, in 2016 a meeting was held in Tartu between civilian military historians and representatives of the Estonian Military Academy (EMA). An officer from EMA explained the armed forces' point of view, comparing historians to "spies", who similar to historians provide the army with "data". The problem, he said, was that often the military did not know what they needed to know, and when they realised what they needed to know, they needed to know it fast; there was however no use whatsoever in historians offering their "data" to the military by themselves.[5] This conflict, the divergence of

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Michael Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," *The RUSI Journal* 107, no. 625 (1962): 4–10.

[4] Igor Kopõtin, "Sõjaajaloo õpetamisest ja uurimisest," *Sõdur* 6 (2016): 45–49.

[5] Kaarel Piirimäe, "Sõjaajalugu – kellele ja milleks? Sõjaajaloo perspektiivid (III)," *Tuna. Ajalookultuuriajakiri* 1 (2017): 146–149.

views in the armed forces and the civilian world, Kopõtin observed, was not unique to Estonia but had been played out along similar lines in other countries; it was to be regretted that Estonia was not too keen to learn from the experience of others and was essentially trying to re-invent the wheel.[6]

By organizing the 2018 conference, "The past – soldier's guide for the present?", we wanted to inform the Estonian debates by bringing examples from other countries, but also to look into Estonia's own – forgotten and neglected – experience from the period of independence between the world wars. Looking back from the vantage point of 2020, we have not been overly successful – yet – as the crisis in the military history discipline in the Estonian Armed Forces has not abated. Whereas there were three historians on the payroll of the Military Academy before 2016, now there is only one, and the utility of history in (the first and second levels of) officer education is in serious doubt.

Perhaps there is no need to worry? Maybe war is a practical business that does not require "dishing up all sorts of insights," as Creveld said? Still, we prefer take a cue from Creveld's assurance that if a military professional rises higher from the level of firing a weapon and leading a platoon, learning from history becomes a must.

Moreover, this selection of articles – based on the 2018 conference papers – that are presented in this yearbook provides much ammunition for arguing for the practical need of history in military education. Moreover, they give many useful ideas about how to think about the nature of military history, and this is useful for understanding not only military history as part of officer education but for contemplating the discipline of history as such. However, in order to be clear that we are doing it not for the pure pleasure of abstract theorizing, let us end with another dire warning from Martin van Creveld:

> War is the most important thing in the world. When the chips are down, it rules over the existence of every single country, government and individual. That is why, though it may come but once in a hundred years,

[6] Kopõtin, "Sõjaajaloo õpetamisest," 49.

it must be prepared for every day. When the bodies lie cold and stiff, and the survivors mourn over them, those in charge have failed in their duty.[7]

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[7] Creveld, "Studying War."

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The Study of Ancient and Medieval Military History: Benefits for professional military education

Clifford J. Rogers

Abstract. There is broad agreement that the study of military history is an essential component of professional education for military officers. Although many successful modern commanders, including Napoleon and MacArthur, advocated extending their reading back to ancient times, Clausewitz wrote: "The further back one goes, the less useful military history becomes." This essay argues, to the contrary, that officers have much to gain by including pre-modern warfare in their studies. A larger and more diverse data-set of examples and case studies allows for more reliable generalization, gives more opportunities for inspiration, and helps guard against the tempting but unwise assumptions that the next war will be similar to the last one, and the equally tempting and equally unwise presumption that material strength alone will ensure victory. Moreover, historians of ancient and medieval warfare, like officers exercising their core professional responsibility in combat, must grapple with scanty and conflicting evidence. Pre-modern history, like war, is a realm of uncertainty; many of the "facts" can only be known as probabilities. The best preparation for seeing through the fog of war, therefore, may be the exercise of peering through the mists of time.

The question of why military leaders should study the wars of the ancient and medieval periods is a subset of the broader question of why they should study military history at all.

To answer that, we might offer the glib response: "because General Wolfe, Emperor Napoleon, General Jomini, General Clausewitz, Field Marshal von Moltke the Elder, Marshal Foch, General Patton, General

MacArthur, and President Eisenhower all say they should."[1] Patton, for example – in a letter written on June 6, 1944 – instructed his son, a West Point cadet, that "To be a successful soldier, you must know history."[2]

But I need to go beyond such general assertions of utility if I want to argue for the importance and value of studying a particular sort of military history. The question is thus not *whether* the study of past wars is valuable, but rather *how and why* it is valuable to military professionals. Once we have a firm sense of the mechanisms by which this intellectual endeavour helps prepare leaders for the conduct of war, we will be in a position to examine whether there are ways in which the study of pre-modern conflicts would especially well support those processes, or conversely whether the benefits of historical study might be reduced if that study were limited to relatively recent warfare. It should be emphasized at the start that the topic at hand is the *study* of military history – a process – not *knowledge* of military history, which is just one of the valuable results of the process.

In order to recapitulate the basic arguments for why and how officers should study military history, let me begin with some thoughts on the value of studying history in general as part of a well-rounded education, for any student preparing to enter any of the Professions with a capital P (that is, in Samuel Huntington's sense of the word).[3] Next I will turn to the importance of studying military history for military professionals,

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[1] Most of these distinguished soldiers will be quoted below. For the views of Moltke, see Hajo Holborn, "The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff," – *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 289–290. Foch, like Moltke a disciple of Clausewitz on this topic, in his *Principles of War* notes that professional military instruction should be based on application of principles to historical case-studies, "in order (1) to prepare for *experience*, (2) to teach the *art of commanding*, (3) lastly, to impart the *habit of acting correctly without having to reason* [things through]." Ferdinand Foch, *Principles of War*, tr. Hilaire Belloc (New York: Henry Holt, 1920), 11; see also *ibid*, *Precepts and Judgments*, tr. Hilaire Belloc (London: Chapman and Hall, 1919), 170 ("To keep the brain of an army going in time of peace…there is no book more fruitful to the student than that of history."), 184, 222.

[2] George S. Patton Jr., letter to George S. Patton IV, 6 June 1944, in Benjamin Patton with Jennifer Scruby, *Growing Up Patton: Reflections on Heroes*, *History, and Family Wisdom* (New York: Dutton Caliber, 2012), 50.

[3] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 1957).

cribbing liberally from Sir B. H. Liddell Hart and Sir Michael Howard. Finally, I will address my narrower topic.

So why should we study history at all?[4] First, because the rigorous study of history provides the same benefits that can come with any other aspect of a high-quality liberal education: exercise in developing valuable questions; identifying, finding, collecting, and organizing relevant information; assessing the quality of the evidence in light of its sources; analysing that information to identify patterns and gaps; filling in gaps and otherwise solving problems with the available data; refining questions and hypotheses in an iterative fashion as the research develops; reaching conclusions through rigorous thought, taking full account of arguments and facts that line up against your hypothesis as well as those that support it; then employing effective writing – with good structure and clear, concise, correct prose – to communicate your analysis and conclusions in a persuasive, efficient, and hopefully even elegant way. The study of history, moreover, should develop not just the student's mind, but also the student's character. History is a discipline built on the foundation of empathy: historical thinking requires an effort to see different worlds through the eyes of those who lived in them, to consider decisions and actions in the context of social constructions of values and mores that are almost never identical to our own. And to do the job properly, a historian needs to be curious, observant, open-minded, hard-working, humble, and resilient, and willing to learn from mistakes. The value of those characteristics for military officers should be obvious.

Second, because the human world of today is an extension of the human world of the past, and its current structures, tensions, problems, and ruptures cannot really be understood without knowledge and appreciation of their origins and development.

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[4] Although the following paragraphs are based on my own reflection on a quarter-century of teaching military history to West Point cadets, and not at all on Tosh's book, those looking for a thoughtful and concise exploration "historical mindedness" and "applied history" have practical benefits for the development of citizens (and officials) may see John Tosh, *Why History Matters*, 2nd ed. (London: Red Globe Press, 2019). Tosh, however, falls prey to the same sort of emphasis on modern history that can discourage officers looking for "practical" lessons from studying medieval or ancient times – even though he himself also recognizes that "paradoxically the value of the past lies precisely in what is different from our world." Ibid., ix, 26, 128–29.

Third, to quote Sir Basil H. Liddell Hart: "There is no excuse for any literate person if he is less than three thousand years old in mind."[5] There is an old trope that age and experience bring wisdom. That is an oversimplification, of course – we have probably all known old men or women who were not particularly wise, and as Frederick the Great observed, "A mule who had served on ten campaigns under Prince Eugène would not become a better tactician through the experience; and it must be admitted, to the shame of humanity, that on this point of lazy stupidity many old officers are no better than such a mule."[6] Wisdom does not come simply from growing old and gaining experience, but rather from *reflecting* on experience with an open mind and a desire to learn. Gaining wisdom requires us to use the feedback from expectations that prove either justified or unjustified to see more deeply into the complexities of human interaction (including the interactions between individual humans; interactions of individual people with human constructs like governments, businesses, armies, or coalitions; and interactions between one such construct and another). Such reflection can provide a better appreciation not just of *which* factors shape the outcomes of such interactions, but also their relative *importance* and how their weights vary under different specific circumstances.

It is in some ways easiest to gain wisdom from our own personal experiences, which we observe most fully and feel most immediately. But the benefits of reflection on experience are only to a limited extent transferable from one sort of experience to another, and both the brevity of human life and the limits of our ability to observe our present world restrict our ability to gain wisdom through direct experience. From observation of our own daily lives, it can be difficult to gain a sense of how much of the human interaction we witness on a daily basis is shaped by universal (or at least general) patterns and processes, versus ones distinct to our own cultures, times, and circumstances. Moreover, the focal length

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[5] B. H. Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We Learn from History* (London: P.E.N. Books/George Allen & Unwin, n.d., first published 1944), 7–8.

[6] G. A. Büttner, *Mémoires du Baron de la Motte Fouqué… dans lesquels on a inserré sa correspondence intéressante avec Frédéric II, Roi de Prusse*, vol. 1 (Berlin: François de LaGarde, 1788), 45.

of lived experience is short. Many of us live our entire lives without direct observations of the big decisions made by national or world leaders. Even those individuals who reach the pinnacles of power and responsibility often have only a few years operating at that level in which to gain experience of it – and meanwhile little time for to spare for reflection. It follows that if we want wisdom to help us address or understand big problems like whether an international military alliance should be expanded, or whether economic sanctions should be threatened or employed against a rival power, or whether fighting an actual shooting war may be justified, we need to draw on a greater range of experience than our own direct observation can provide, or indeed than we can get from the indirect observation (through the media) of the events of just our own lifetimes.

If it is granted that history as we know it was invented by Thucydides, then it is fair to say that the discipline of history was created as a tool to address just that problem. That is clear enough from Thucydides's own text but is perhaps best expressed by his first English translator, Thomas Hobbes, who considered the Athenian the "most Politique Historiographer that ever writ." Why? "He fills his narrations with that choice of matter, and orders them with such judgment, and with such perspicuity and efficacy expresses himself, that, as Plutarch says, he makes his hearer a spectator. For he sets his reader in the assemblies of the People, and in the Senates, at their debating; in the streets, at their sedition; and in the field, at their battles. So that look how much a man of understanding might have added to his experience, if he had then lived, a beholder of their proceedings, and familiar with the men and business of the time; so much, almost, may he profit now, by attentive reading of the same here written. He may from the narrations draw out lessons to himself, and of himself be able to trace the drifts and counsels of the actors to their seats."[7]

The value of gaining wisdom by studying history, though it applies to all citizens, applies *a fortiori* to leaders, and especially to military leaders. Today, unlike in the days of the Roman Republic or the Hundred Years War, most years in most countries pass in peace, or at least in states of

[7] Thucydides, *Eight Bookes of the Peloponnesian Warre*, tr. Thomas Hobbes (London: Richard Mynne, 1684), n.p. (second page of "To the Readers"); English modernized.

conflict short of actual war. If the core of officership is war-fighting, then, as Michael Howard and others have rightly emphasized, military officers are the only professionals who can be expected to spend years without engaging in the core activity of their profession.[8] In many armies today, even very senior commanders have never seen a full-scale battle – or if they have, it was likely from the perspective of a company-grade officer. So if wisdom about how to fight a division or a corps, to say nothing of a field army or a national or coalition war effort, especially in a general war between peer competitors, could only come from life experience, then it would of necessity be in very short supply when it next proves most needed. It could be gained on the job, but the cost of that is very high. If having wisdom means anything, it means making somewhat fewer mistakes in complex human interactions than are made by less-wise people, and of all human activities, war is the one where a single mistake is most likely to cost many lives, and could even affect the destiny of a nation. It follows that military leaders have nothing less than a *moral obligation* to seek wisdom through history.[9] As Eisenhower wrote to the cadets of West Point: "Through a careful and objective study of [past campaigns], a professional officer acquires knowledge of military experience which he himself could not otherwise accumulate. The facts of a given battle may no longer serve any practical purpose... but when the serious student of the military art delves into the reasons for the failure of a specific attack… he is, by this very activity, preparing for a day in which he, under different circumstances, may be facing decisions of vital consequence to his country."[10]

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[8] Michael Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," originally published in 1962, repr. in *Parameters* 11 (1981), 13; B. H. Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We Learn from History*, revised edition (N.P.: Sophon, 2012), 22–23.

[9] Liddell Hart was being a bit too limited (since we can profit from good examples as well as bad ones) when he wrote that "History is a catalogue of mistakes. It is our duty to profit by them." Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Through the Fog of War* (New York: Random House, 1938), 153.

[10] Dwight D. Eisenhower to the Corps of Cadets, United States Military Academy, 22 April 1959, in *The West Point Atlas of American Wars*, ed. Vincent J. Esposito, vol. 1 (New York: Praeger, 1959), iii. And similarly Douglas MacArthur, "Annual Report (1935)," – *General MacArthur Speeches and Reports*, ed. Edward T. Imparato (Nashville: Turner Publishing, 2000),

I already noted, however, that wisdom gained from one sort of experience transfers only to a limited degree to different sorts of problems or endeavours. Indeed, wisdom gained in one field can lead to worse judgment, rather than better judgment, when applied to a very different area. Does it not then follow that it makes perfect sense to focus officers' historical study on the recent past, which is presumably more like the present and the near future than the distant past is?

Perhaps so, but *not* if that focus is so tight that in-depth knowledge of the last war or the last few wars is pursued to the exclusion of the broader chronological sweep of military history. A general with vicarious experience of high command that stretches back ten, twenty or thirty times as long as his personal experience as a flag officer will surely be at an advantage over one without that historical insight, but such a still-limited chronological scope means knowledge of only a limited number of wars: a data set with a low *N,* which makes false generalizations and bad analogies dangerously likely. As Michael Howard has noted, it is easy to see how wisdom gained by the study of offensive successes of the Franco–Prussian and Russo–Japanese wars might have led to wrong conclusions and assumptions among military planners before the start of the very different First World War, and then in turn how study of the strength of the defence during that war could contribute to a failure to anticipate the full potential of the German *Bewegungskrieg* of 1939–1940.[11] "Must we conclude that [the study of] history has misled us?" wondered a French staff officer on the day of the German entry into Paris in the latter year.[12] If it did, though, it must have been a flawed study of history, too focused on the recent past and not enough on the full chronological sweep of history. A historian who had reflected on the campaigns of Alexander the Great should have been aware that a focused onslaught by a relatively small force of better-armoured, highly mobile troops can break through a seemingly powerful front, causing

107: "Devoid of opportunity, in peace, for self-instruction through the actual practice of his profession, the soldier makes maximum use of the historical record in assuring the readiness of himself and his command to function efficiently in emergency."

[11] Howard, "Use and Abuse," 13.

[12] Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire, ou métier d'historien* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1974), 21.

confusion, then panic, then the dissolution of the opposing force. Students who had examined William the Conqueror's invasion of England in 1066 should have known that contests of grinding attrition are not the only way to win wars. Anyone who had examined the expulsion of the English from Normandy in 1449–1450 ought to have known that even extensive and strong fortifications may not suffice to hold a line if there is not a mobile force capable of winning in open combat to back up the defences. And thoughtful observers who considered these three cases together would have brought home to them that the worst strategic defeats generally arose in part from fractures or fissures in the losing side's body politic.

Moreover, recent history studied in isolation might have been misleading in 1940, but a broader view of the military past makes it clear that it is *not* a fair assumption that the next war will be "like" the last war in what *turns out to be* the ways that matter most, which may well *not* be technology or the structure of military organizations. We don't have to look back to the wars of the French Revolution to realize that. Officers of 1949 who looked only at the prior half-century of conflicts would naturally have been less than ideally prepared for the war of limited ends, means, and methods that was about to break out in Korea. American officers of 1964 who focused their attention solely on the Korean War and World Wars would not have been as wise about the war they were about to enter in Vietnam as they could have been had they stretched their historical literacy back to the Philippine Insurrection, or the successful counter-terrorism campaign of Lewis Merrill in South Carolina in 1871–1873, or Winfield Scott's occupation of Mexico in 1847–1848, or Louis Suchet's counterinsurgency in Aragon in 1809–1810 – or, to my point, Edward I's conquest of Wales in the thirteenth century.[13] That, in a nutshell, is why Howard insisted on the necessity studying military history in *chronological width* and in context, as well as in depth. Those who

[13] Readers for whom the last-mentioned case seems not to fit with the others should see Clifford J. Rogers, "Giraldus Cambrensis, Edward I, and the Conquest of Wales," – *Successful Strategies. Triumphing in War and Peace from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2014), 65–99.

fail to follow that advice may find Clio a deceptive Muse, rather than a source of enlightenment and inspiration.[14]

If you will grant me (and Sir Michael) that point, that still leaves open the question of why it would be valuable to study ancient and medieval warfare, rather than broadening one's vicarious experience to include, say, the most recent past two centuries. Clausewitz, for one, though he had for his day a good knowledge of earlier warfare, wrote that it was only starting with the time Frederick the Great that wars were "close enough to modern warfare to be instructive." "The further back one goes," he continued, "the less useful military history becomes, growing poorer and barer at the same time. The history of antiquity is without doubt the most useless and barest of all."[15] This conclusion rested on two pillars. First, before Frederick's time cavalry was more important than infantry and the use of firearms was much less advanced. Since the relationship among the means of combat was so different, tactics were very different, and since tactics are the means of strategy, war as a whole was very different. Hence, any lessons drawn from the history of earlier eras would be of limited validity. Second, it is unwise to try to draw lessons from any examples that one cannot understand properly in the first place. Due to lack of sources comparable to those available for more recent times, Clausewitz argued, we cannot have for pre-modern examples the "precise knowledge of actual circumstances" that is needed for the proper use of military history as a tool for the development of military judgment.[16]

I don't like to disagree with Clausewitz, since those who do so usually prove to be wrong. But then, Clausewitz didn't like to disagree with Napoleon, whom he called the God of War, and Napoleon advised students of war to "read and read again the campaigns of Alexander, Hanni-

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[14] As John Tosh, author of *Why History Matters*, noted: "There is a great deal of analogical reasoning that is complete garbage. The point about analogy is that it's really completely counterproductive to focus on a single historical precedent....the more analogies one is aware of, the more one's understanding of what is going on in the moment is open to different readings and different understandings." Donald A. Yerxa, "Why History Matters: An Interview with John Tosh," *Historically Speaking* 10 (2009): 26; see also Tosh, *Why History Matters*, 56–70.

[15] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and tr. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1984), 173–74.

[16] Clausewitz, *On War*, 173.

bal, [and] Caesar," as well as more modern generals, later adding as part of his deathbed advice to his son that "this is the only way to become a great commander and to discover the secrets of the art of war."[17] MacArthur, too, despite the much greater technological gap between his day and Alexander's than between Napoleon's and Alexander's, advocated the study of "the dust-buried accounts of wars long past as well as [of] those still reeking with the scent of battle," and condemned as "callow critics" those "who hold that only in the most recent battles are there to be found truths applicable to our present problems."[18] When he harangued the representatives of the Joint Chiefs for hours in order to persuade them of the wisdom of his plan for Operation Chromite (the Inchon landing), he bolstered his case with a slew of historical examples, the most memorable among them (at least for one officer who was present) being the case of Alexander's great battle at Gaugamela.[19]

In fact, despite his own specific conclusion on this point, Clausewitz offers more general observations that suggest why Napoleon recommended that officers study ancient as well as modern campaigns.[20] Clausewitz argued a senior commander's knowledge of war, which had to lead to capability to act rather than an abstract form of understanding, could be extracted "from the phenomena of life, as a bee sucks honey from a flower," "through the medium of reflection, study and thought,"

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[17] "Lisez, relisez les campagnes d'Alexandre, Annibal, César, Gustave, Turenne, Eugène, et de Frédéric; modelez-vous sur eux: voilà le seul moyen de devenir grand capitaine, et de surprendre les secrets de l'art de la guerre." *Maximes de Guerre de Napoléon* (Paris: Anselin, 1830), maxim LXXVIII (p. 46). Luvaas, *Napoleon on the Art of War*, 41. Also *Correspondance de Napoléon 1er*, vol. 31 (Paris: Henri Plon and J. Dumaine, 1870), 365: "la connaissance des hautes parties de la guerre ne s'acquiert que par l'étude de l'histoire des guerres et des batailles des grands capitaines et par l'expérience."

[18] General MacArthur Speeches and Reports, 108.

[19] Interview with LTG Edward Rowny, West Point Center for Oral History, available online at http://www.westpointcoh.org/interviews/a-veteran-of-three-hot-wars-and-a-cold-one, at 1:00 to 1:02. LTG Rowny refers to the battle by its other name, Arbela.

[20] Clausewitz, it should be remembered, was a dedicated educator as well as a practical soldier and a profound theorist, and he employed his penetrating intellect to think deeply about the intersection of his three professions. As Jon Sumida notes, his "special synthesis of history and theory constituted a system...of learning." Jon Tetsuro Sumida, "The Relationship of History and Theory in *On War*: The Clausewitzian Ideal and Its Implications," *Journal of Military History*, 65 (2001): 333–354, at 334.

as well as through personal experience. The purpose was not to know "all the details"; anyone who thought otherwise was a "ridiculous pedant." On the contrary, "great things alone can make a great mind."[21] When we combine those ideas with Clausewitz's observation that "the further one progresses from broad generalities to details, the less one is able to select examples and experiences from remote times," as "we are in no position to evaluate the relevant events correctly, nor to apply them to the whole different means we use today," there is a logical conclusion to be drawn about the inverse: that as one moves from the details to the "great things" that can make "great minds," the difficulties that accompany the study of the distant past become less and less important, and the study becomes more and more valuable.[22] Indeed, the signal-to-noise ratio increases dramatically. The lack of cluttering detail leaves the main lines of the story clearer and facilitates the inductive learning that creates the kind of understanding that becomes instinctive judgment and fuels the capacity to act. Clausewitz himself wrote that "the noblest and most solid nourishment that the mind of a general may draw from a study of the past" is an appreciation of "the importance of moral [that is, non-material] factors and their often incredible effect."[23] I don't know of any modern memoir that serves up that "noble nourishment" better than Julius Caesar's *War Commentaries,* and it is hard to think of a campaign that better exemplifies the power of intangibles to overcome material disadvantages than the one that culminated with Henry V's victory against the "fearful odds" of five to one at Agincourt in 1415.[24]

In the quotations above, Napoleon was directing his advice to study history towards those who aspire to be "great commanders." But the benefits of sound military judgment derived from the study of history (especially a better understanding of the so-called "moral forces," including

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[21] Clausewitz, *On War*, 146, 145.

[22] Clausewitz, *On War*, 174.

[23] Clausewitz, *On War*, 185.

[24] Anne Curry has recently argued for a much smaller numerical disproportion at Agincourt, but I do not concur with her analysis. See Clifford J. Rogers, "The Battle of Agincourt," – *The Hundred Years War (Part II): Different Vistas*, ed. L. J. Andrew Villalon and Donald J. Kagay (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 37–132, at 114–121.

how leaders and soldiers are affected by the strains and circumstances that are inherent to the action of war in any age, yet also absent from peacetime experience in any age) are as great for junior officers as they are for generals. It takes a very large data set of examples and vicarious experiences drawn from widely differing times and places to know what elements of human-nature-in-war are universal and not contingent on particular cultural, technological, or societal contexts. The study of ancient and medieval military history helps provide the breadth of empirical data needed to assess those sorts of questions.

Moreover, although more recent generals and theorists have tended to emphasize the value of historical precedent as a source from which to derive *principles* of war, pre-Napoleonic writers put more emphasis on history as (in Frederick the Great's words) a "storehouse of military *ideas*." General James Wolfe, for example, modelled the training of his light infantry at Louisbourg in 1758 on the methods used by Persian troops against Xenophon; he commented that his fellow-officers were "astonished" by their effectiveness "because they have read nothing."[25] With this in mind, it should come as no surprise that when he compiled a reading list for a prospective officer, Wolfe included Xenophon, along with Thucydides, Vegetius, Caesar, and Polybius, and noted that "there is an abundance of military knowledge to be picked out of" the lives of the medieval commanders Jan Zizka and Skanderbeg, among others.[26] Although, as we have seen, Clausewitz questioned the usefulness of ancient or medieval military history as a basis from which to derive generalizations or principles, he himself noted that there are other valuable ways to use historical examples. He points out that "a historical example may simply be used as an *explanation* of an idea"; this, he says, "generally calls only for a brief mention of the case, or only one aspect of it matters," and the purpose is "to throw the necessary light on [the] idea and to ensure that the reader and the writer will remain in touch."[27] But this method only works if the author and the reader – or commander

[25] Beckles Willson, *Life and Letters of James Wolfe* (London: William Heinemann, 1909), 380.
[26] Ibid., 296.
[27] Clausewitz, *On War*, 170.

and subordinate – share a common understanding of the example, *and* if both can anticipate that that will be the case. Because military history is so expansive, if all students wended their way through it following wherever their interests might take them, an author could not presume his readers would know any particular case. But since the key figures and events of classical military history – principally the events of the Persian War, the strategic development of the Peloponnesian War, the conquests of Alexander, the march up country of Xenophon, the tactical genius of Hannibal and the effective counter-measures of Fabius, and the generalship of Julius Caesar – are limited in scope and are part of the common cultural heritage of all Western and Mediterranean nations, they have for this purpose the advantage over the far more voluminous and far more compartmentalized national histories of modern (or even medieval) times. Or at least they used to, and still should, and will continue to so long as we do not lose sight of the practical value of studying ancient warfare.

Clausewitz also notes that one can "appeal to a historical fact to support a statement. This will suffice whenever one merely wants to prove *the possibility* of some phenomenon or effect."[28] Anecdotal examples, whether from the recent or distant past, can inspire consideration of a wider range of alternative courses of action when faced with an unusual problem, and that is surely a good thing. Here again the *distance and difference* of medieval and ancient military history offers a positive value to the student: what might otherwise seem impossible because it never occurs in recent history may be shown to be possible – and therefore an opportunity that might be worth pursuing, or a risk that might need accounting for – by looking at the pre-modern repository of experience. Clausewitz makes a related point regarding Napoleon's decision to abandon the siege of Mantua to seek battle against Wurmser in 1796: "resisting a relieving army behind lines of circumvallation had fallen into such disrepute and contempt that it occurred to no one. And yet in the days of Louis XIV [or, we might add, Julius Caesar or Edward III] it had so often been successfully employed that one can only call it a whim of fashion that [in 1796] it

[28] Clausewitz, *On War*, 170.

never occurred to anyone *at least to weigh* its merits." Clausewitz goes on to say that "one only has to shed the tyranny of fashion" in order to recognize that as a possible course of action.[29] What he does not add is that it was his own knowledge of the military history of earlier eras that gave him the ability to recognize that the fashion of his own day was neither timeless, nor even normal.[30]

Another way in which the distance and difference of medieval warfare makes its study beneficial is that it offers many examples of asymmetrical warfare; of wars involving sub-state or non-state actors; and of non-binary, non-zero-sum warfare that was resolved by effective political compromises. It used to be thought that medieval warfare was practically devoid of strategy or of strategic lessons, but that very belief was strong evidence of the value of studying medieval warfare, since it arose from an inability to conceive of strategy in non-Jominian terms.[31] In fact, since strategy is essentially the harnessing of military action to political purpose, it should not be surprising that the Middle Ages, when wars were almost always directed at the political level by the same men who led armies into the field and even fought themselves in battle, strategy was in fact quite sophisticated and varied, and can thus be very valuable to study. That is all the more true because in recent years Western military and political leaders have had difficulty understanding or coming to grips with the ways violence and politics interact in areas where the Western-style state is weak or absent, for example in Afghanistan, Waziristan, or Somalia. In the modern period, states have generally raised large revenues through taxes, loans, and expedients in order to fund military operations, but during the Early and High Middle Ages, war-leaders often had to find ways to make war pay for war, through plunder, the distribution of conquered land to supporters, or the exaction of protection money from

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Considering how long ago he wrote, Clausewitz possessed a surprisingly good understanding of how war changed from ancient Greece through the Middle Ages and how those changes related to "the nature of states and society as they are determined by their times and prevailing conditions." See *On War*, 586–93.

[31] See Clifford J. Rogers, "Henry V's Military Strategy in 1415," – *The Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus*, ed. L. J. Andrew Villalon and Donald J. Kagay (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 404–415.

productive citizens under threat of violence.[32] Of course, those methods are not of much use for modern Western militaries: but modern variants of them are used by warlords in failed-state areas today. Understanding how Robert Guiscard ("the Wily") terrorized the inhabitants of southern Italy and Sicily into submitting to his rule could be useful to understanding the strategies employed by strongmen in conflict-prone areas today, and therefore be useful in figuring out how to defeat them. More broadly, medieval wars were fought in a social-cultural-political context in which kin-networks were powerful factors, religion was profoundly important, and both leaders and soldiers actively sought out opportunities to fight in order to gain the martial honour that was perhaps the most valuable coin of social status. Medieval wars were usually very far from the pattern seen in many modern wars, in which the objective of at least one side is the complete defeat and surrender of the enemy, in which a negotiated compromise settlement, if it is the result, emerges only when it becomes clear that complete victory is out of reach. Medieval wars were commonly fought among members of an extended family over the division of an inheritance, or to adjust the terms of power-sharing arrangements between two partners in rule, or both. They could last for decades or even generations, fuelled by cycles of vengeance, deep-seated ethnic antipathies, and shifting allegiances among subordinate actors who did not want to see any individual become too strong. Officers who have studied only conflicts between modern nation-states are missing out on an opportunity to gain a class of vicarious experience that could help them understand the very different sorts of warfare and armed conflict that continue to plague the worst trouble-spots of the modern globe.

In Afghanistan, for example, first the Soviets and then the Americans faced the problem that an invader "can never hope to conquer in one single battle a people that will never draw up its forces to engage an enemy army in the field, and will never allow itself to be besieged inside fortified strong points." The native fighters "do not lose heart when things go wrong, and after one defeat they are always ready to fight again." "They

[32] The implications of this point are developed in Clifford J. Rogers, "Medieval Strategy and the Economics of Conquest," *The Journal of Military History* 82 (2018): 709–738.

are not troubled by hunger or cold, [and] fighting does not seem to tire them." "The entire nation, both leaders and the common people, are trained in the use of arms." When fighting they are accustomed to enduring privation, are skilled in ambushes and hit-and-run tactics, and are at home in the roughest, most mountainous terrain, where heavy armoured forces cannot operate effectively, and they often fight in ways that their enemies consider violations of the laws of war. "Passionately devoted to their freedom and the defence of their country," they "willingly sacrifice, suffer, or die" to throw out foreign invaders, and because it is their homeland, they have the advantage in determination and focus compared to foreign powers, even superpowers, which cannot concentrate all their strength or attention on any one international problem. Of course, neither the Soviets nor the Americans were the first to encounter these difficulties, either in Afghanistan or elsewhere. Had they been truly "prudent and provident," they would have studied earlier examples of similar wars in the past, to "find out what pitfalls are to be avoided, by taking note of the disasters which have befallen others in the same position," as "it costs nothing to learn from other people's experience." That, at least, is the advice of the twelfth-century bishop Giraldus Cambrensis, who in 1194 devised an extremely sophisticated (and ultimately successful) plan to conquer and control the Welsh, the people about whom all the quotations in this paragraph were written.[33]

Let me close with what I think is my strongest argument for the utility of studying pre-modern military history for modern officers – which actually is a benefit that comes from studying any pre-modern history, military or not. In the end, the purpose of studying history is to help officers make better decisions: not just in planning or staff work, but also, probably most importantly, in combat. I have already argued for the value of vicarious experience, and particularly of vicarious experience that extends to before the modern era, for that purpose. But as everyone knows, it is easier to recognize that it is a good idea to decide to attack the enemy on an open flank than it is to have the moral fortitude to make the attack proceed through friction. Even the latter may be easier than seeing

[33] Rogers, "Giraldus," 70–71.

through the fog of war in the first place, to recognize that the enemy *has* an open flank, and to figure out where it is. As Clausewitz emphasizes, one of the things that causes both commanders and armies to fall short of their goals, or even to freeze up in paralysis, is lack of knowledge about the enemy's situation, and knowing, to paraphrase Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, that in addition to the known unknowns, unknown unknowns pose a constant threat.[34] "War is the realm of uncertainty; three quarters of the factors on which action in was is based are wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty. A sensitive and discriminating judgment is called for; a *skilled* intelligence to scent out the truth."[35] It follows that a key part of a military education should be developing the intellectual skills to make judgments about the truth when key facts are not known, but must be guessed at or estimated on the basis of intelligence received, when "many…reports…are contradictory, even more are false, and most are uncertain."[36] The study of ancient and medieval warfare can be an ideal exercise for developing such judgment, since in order to reach conclusion about why events turned out as they did, the historian must begin by establishing the basic facts – *what* happened – based on assessment of the quality of various conflicting and mostly unreliable written accounts, some given by eyewitnesses, more at second or third hand.[37] In the study of modern history, the main facts are usually agreed upon, though interpretations of them vary. That is not the case for ancient or medieval history. Establishing cause-effect relationships or even generally understanding

[34] Clausewitz, *On War*, 140, 101.

[35] Ibid., 101.

[36] Ibid., 117.

[37] For any given battle of the American Civil War or World War Two, there are likely to be thousands of pages of official reports, memoirs, private letters, and other primary sources, making it impractical for the student to grapple with them all. For an ancient battle, there may be just one or two. A number of medieval battles (for example, Hastings, Crécy, Poitiers, or Agincourt) have a golden mean: a large enough number of sources of sufficiently variable detail and quality to make for a good exercise, but a small enough total that it is possible for students to work through them all and, in that respect, to be able to stand on even footing with the historians who themselves debate the facts of the event and also their causal relationships. Students generally will not be able to reach conclusions as solid as the ones they might (given sufficient time) be able to reach regarding a modern engagement, but the point here is about the value of the process, not of the output.

a past event is complicated by having to treat each "fact" as a mere possibility, where the facts shape the pattern, but the emerging pattern can then help judge among sources and therefore determine the facts. Grappling with those problems is an experience that should ideally be part of the wisdom-building of every well-educated officer. To study the battle and campaign of Hastings, moreover, is not just a matter of examining how William the Conqueror overcame problems of incomplete information, politics and strategy, morale, logistics, and terrain to achieve decisive victory in 1066. It is also an opportunity to learn from the ways in which past historians have tackled the challenges of judging between or reconciling seemingly contradictory assertions by medieval authors, and the methods they have used to determine the most probable answers to important questions that no witnesses spoke to directly. Historians cannot observe the human past directly, yet the human past is their topic, so they collectively have spent 2,500 years developing and refining methods to overcome that fundamental difficulty. One of the greatest problems facing military commanders in wartime is that they have to make decisions based on factors that they cannot observe directly (regarding their own forces) and that may be very obscure indeed (regarding the enemy). By the careful study of pre-modern military history, today's officers can not only learn from the leaders of the past the art of command, but also learn from the scholars of the past (and present) the art of rigorously analysing difficult and indirect sources of information. The best preparation for seeing through the fog of war may be the exercise of peering through the mists of time.

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The Alpine Campaign of 1799 as a Stepping Stone to a Doctrine of Mountain Warfare

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Abstract. The Russian Imperial Army fought for the first time in the mountains in 1799, when Alexander Suvorov led his corps from Italy across the Swiss Alps to join the Russian forces at Zurich and expel the French Army from Switzerland. His soldiers were skilled professionals who had won an impressive series of battles in Italy against the French. Suvorov did not anticipate problems in the Alps, being convinced that he would easily sweep away the small French garrisons deployed on his way. Yet, because of inexperience in mountain warfare, Suvorov's corps struggled against enormous strategic, tactical, and logistical challenges, lost half of its manpower and failed to attain its goals. The Swiss trek shows that mountain warfare defies amateurism, dilettantism and spontaneity. Even though mountains are located on the verges of Russia, the Russian and then Soviet armies ignored the peculiarities of mountain warfare and fought every new campaign in the mountains the same way they would fight on the plains, with predictably dire consequences.

Until the end of the 18th century the Russian Army had fought only on plains. The campaign against France in the Swiss Alps launched by General Alexander Suvorov in 1799 was Russia's first action in the mountains. As Clausewitz states, "Historical examples … provide the best kind of proof in the empirical sciences", which "is particularly true about the art of war"; therefore, "the detailed presentation of a historical event … make[s] it possible to deduce a doctrine."[1] This article furnishes arguments

[1] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 170, 171.

in support of this idea and emphasises the value of historical examples for diversifying war practice. It reveals the scope of the strategic, tactical, and logistical challenges Suvorov faced in the Alps and shows the volume of data about actions in the mountains available to the Russian General Staff as a result of this experience. Knowledge distilled from combat reports and numerous memoirs and studies would have been sufficient to assess the peculiarities of mountain warfare and make first steps towards the development of its doctrine, most of which would have been valid even at present. The article also shows how field research can facilitate the critical assessment of data provided by primary and secondary sources. I walked along Suvorov's entire route across the Swiss Alps, and this experiment allowed me to grasp some of the challenges experienced by soldiers, often imperceptible in combat records; it also helped me assess the credibility of the available sources, clarify ambiguous statements and dismiss some allegations; and as a result draw what I would argue are uniquely accurate charts most of which are published for the first time in this article.

Context

In 1792–1797, the French revolutionary armies repelled the invasions of several great powers; the First Coalition admitted its defeat by signing a series of peace treaties. However, a year later France demonstrated its ambitions for a far-reaching expansion by launching an expedition to Egypt and landing in Malta; France then exploited internal turmoil in Switzerland to occupy it. The European monarchs decided to put an end to the atheist troublemaker who challenged the entire order of Europe – the balance of power, the existing borders, the dominant ideologies and the established social systems. This challenge convinced these monarchs that "the revolutionary regime was simply insatiable and that its elimination by military means was the only solution".[2] By January 1799, Austria, Britain and Russia assembled the Second Coalition against France. They

[2] T. C. W. Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars* (London: Arnold, 1996), 228, 229.

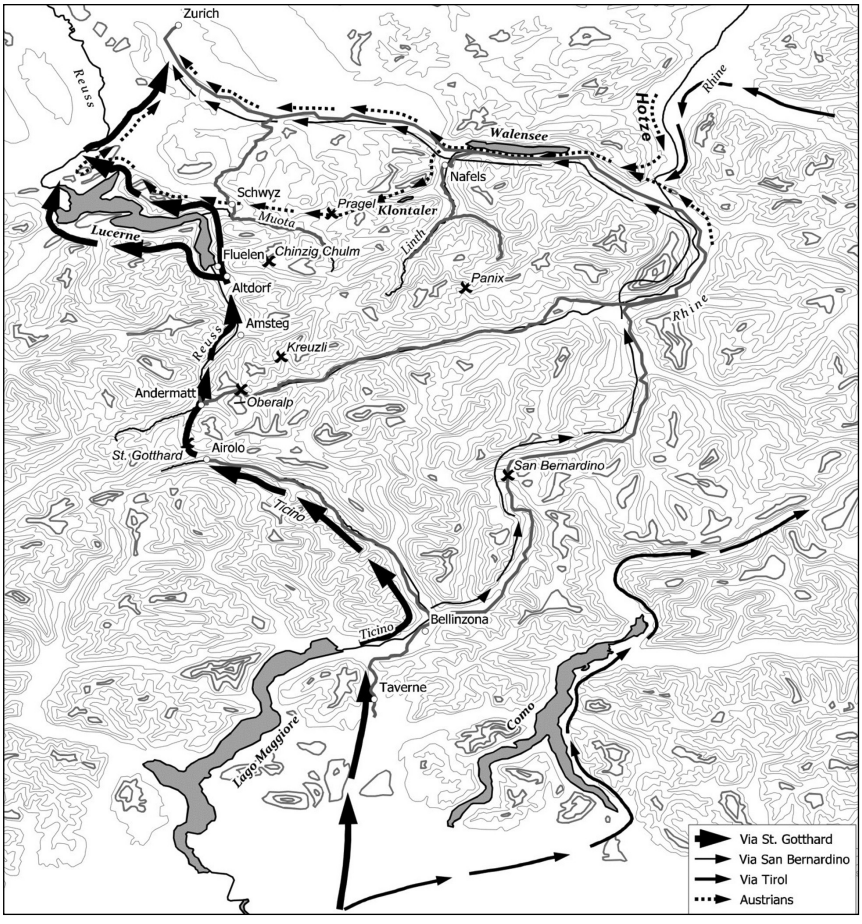

Figure 1. Options examined by Suvorov on the eve of the Swiss Campaign. This and all the other maps are author's original drawings

planned to expel the French Army from Switzerland in the following summer.

The allied forces were split between a Russian corps of 27,116 men, commanded by Alexander Rimskij-Korsakov that had arrived recently to Zurich from Russia, and four Austrian formations, totalling 22,138 men, that were scattered along a 150 kilometre-long crescent between the Walensee and the Rhine valley and were under the overall com-

mand of Field Marshal Friedrich von Hotze.[3] The seven French divisions in Switzerland, commanded by General André Masséna, numbered about 60,000 men.[4] Before launching an offensive against the French, the allies had to fuse their forces.[5] To compensate for the numerical superiority of the French, they decided to bring the Russian corps of 21,286 men[6], deployed in Italy, to northern Switzerland across the Alps. This force, commanded by Suvorov, consisted of professional and battle-hardened soldiers who had scored several victories over the French. Suvorov was to meet the Austrians as his troops exited the Alps in Schwyz, and then the allies would march to Zurich to join Korsakov. He did not anticipate serious problems along this 150-kilometre route in mid-September. He soon learned that the "fog of uncertainty" was thicker and the "friction of war"[7] more severe in the mountains than on the plains.

Plan

Suvorov planned to begin his march at Taverne, a Swiss town close to the Italian border. He considered three routes across the Alps (Figure 1). The shortest way to Korsakov began along a good road in the Ticino valley and then proceeded along a good pack trail that was, however, inaccessible to carts or artillery, across St. Gotthard Pass (2,106 m) into the Reuss valley. A good road led along the valley to Altdorf at Lake Lucerne. From there, Suvorov planned to march along either bank of the lake to Schwyz

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[3] Dmitrij Miljutin (Милютин, Дмитрий), *Istorija vojny 1799 goda meždu Rossiej i Franciej* (История войны 1799 года между Россией и Францией) (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaja Akademija Nauk, 1857), vol. 3, 471. Phipps states that Korsakov's corps had 29,463 soldiers, Ramsay Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980), vol. 5, 127.

[4] Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, vol. 5, 128, 129; M. Bogdanovič (Богданович, М.), *Poxody Suvorova v Italii i Švejcarii* (Походы Суворова в Италии и Швейцарии) (St. Petersburg: Voennaja tipografija, 1846), 152.

[5] V. Lopatin (Лопатин, В.), ed., *A. V. Suvorov: Pis'ma* (*А. В. Суворов: Письма*) (Moscow: Nauka, 1986), 731.

[6] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 476.

[7] Clausewitz, *On War*, 101, 119.

or directly to Zurich.[8] The second route, which crossed San Bernardino Pass, was longer. Although accessible to carts and artillery, it led to the Austrian allies, in eastern Switzerland, rather than to Korsakov.[9] The third route, much longer but easier, led along Como Lake and Tyrol, again to the Austrian allies rather than to Korsakov.

Suvorov chose the first route because he hurried to join Korsakov before the French could concentrate their forces against him. Suvorov knew that no French formations were deployed along the second and third routes, whereas two brigades of the French division commanded by General Claude Lecourbe, with a total strength of 8,000 to 8,500 men,[10] were scattered all the way between St. Gotthard and Altdorf along the first route. However, this did not worry Suvorov because his corps enjoyed an overwhelming numerical superiority, which was further enhanced by two Austrian brigades. One of them, with 4,000 to 4,500 men commanded by Gottfried Strauch, was to join his army at the beginning of the march, while the other, with a strength of 2,000 to 2,500 men commanded by Franz Auffenberg, was to come from the Rhine valley to Amsteg, halfway between St. Gotthard and Altdorf into the rear of the French defenders of St. Gotthard, thus facilitating Suvorov's advance.[11] Suvorov sent all of his artillery via the third route but acquired from Piedmont 25 small two-pounder mountain guns that could be transported on horseback.[12]

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[8] "Dispozicija A. V. Suvorova" – *A. V. Suvorov*, ed. G. Meščerjakov (Мещеряков, Г.) (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1953), 307.

[9] Christopher Duffy, *Eagles over the Alps: Suvorov in Italy and Switzerland* (Chicago: The Emperor's Press, 1999), 158, 159.

[10] The total strength of Lecourbe's division was about 11,800 men, but one brigade, commanded by Gabriel Molitor, stayed far away in the Linth valley and did not affect Suvorov's advance to Schwyz, Miljutin, *Istorija vojny*, vol. 3, 473; von Reding-Biberegg (Рединг-Биберегг, фон), *Poxod Suvorova čerez Švejcariju* (*Поход Суворова через Швейцарию*) (St. Petersburg: T-vo hudožestvennoj pečati, 1902), 13, 14; Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, vol. 5, 129.

[11] Bogdanovič, *Poxody Suvorova*, 153; Miljutin, *Istorija vojny*, vol. 2, 202; Suvorov to Hotze, Linken and Korsakov (5 September 1799), ibid., vol. 3, 478; Hotze to Suvorov (10 September 1799), ibid., vol. 3, 480; von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 12. Phipps assesses the strength of Auffenberg's brigade as 3,180 men, Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, vol. 5, 142.

[12] Nikolaj Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova v 1799 g," – *Aleksandr Vasil'evič Suvorov* (Александр Васильевич Суворов), ed. S. Semanov (С. Семанов) (Moscow: Russkij mir, 2000), 194; "Dis-

Since this march was an impromptu decision, Suvorov had no time to study the region and acquire detailed maps. He and the Austrian commanders exchanged draft plans of their respective marches, but neither the Austrians nor Suvorov commented on the details of the drafts they received from their partner.[13] Lieutenant-Colonel Franz von Weyrother commanded the Austrian staff officers attached to Suvorov; it was probably he who compiled the overall plan detailing the convergence of the allied forces in the Schwyz Canton.

The French Royal Army had, on occasion, fought in the Alps since early modern era: during the War of the League of Cambrai in 1508–1516; the Italian War of 1521–1526; the Nine Years' War in 1688–1697; and the War of the Austrian Succession of 1740–1748. The revolutionary Army of the Alps, raised by the French Convention in 1792, occupied the Duchy of Savoy in the same year, and most of Switzerland in 1798. As Clausewitz observes, "the French, who had [long] possessed these giants reaching to the skies and were quite familiar with these gorges, felt at home in this area."[14] In contrast, the Russian soldiers had never fought in high mountains. Suvorov felt obliged to educate them about the operational theatre they were about to enter. His instructions, ambitiously called *Manual on Mountain Warfare*, were only four pages long and advanced several platitudes: Suvorov informed the soldiers that the progress of supply trains along mountain trails could be slow, emphasised the importance of envelopment as a major manoeuvre in the mountains, and called for occupation of the dominating heights. If the enemy had already occupied these heights, the Russians would have to attack them with cold steel.[15] Armed with the *Manual*, Suvorov's corps confidently headed towards the Alps.

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pozicija A. V. Suvorova," 305, 306.

[13] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 201, 202; Suvorov to Hotze, Linken and Korsakov (5 September 1799), ibid., vol. 3, 477, 478.

[14] Carl von Clausewitz (Клаузевиц, Карл фон), *Švejcarskij pohod Suvorova* (Швейцарский поход Суворова) (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo, 1939), 108.

[15] A. Suvorov, "Pravila dlja voennyh dejstvij v gorah" (20 September 1799) – *Istorija rossijsko-avstrijskoj kampanii 1799 g.* (История российско-австрийской кампании 1799 г.), Egor Fuchs (Егор Фукс) (St. Petersburg: Voennaja tipografija General'nogo Štaba, 1825–26), vol. 3, 319–325. Russian historians grossly overestimate the value of these generalities: they claim that Suvorov "enriched military art … with the first manual on mountain warfare", "devel-

During the year of their deployment in the Swiss Alps, the French established food depots replenished by taxes imposed on the local population. Since the French forces were dispersed in small units in the upper reaches of Ticino and along the Reuss valley, these taxes were bearable. The Russians, as other armies on the march during these times, had to reckon on small amount of supplies carried with them but mainly on living off the land. They decided to take food for only seven days because they planned to cross the Alps in a week. Soldiers carried three days' worth of rations in their knapsacks, and mules and horses hauled the remaining four days' rations, as well as ammunition and mountain guns.[16] No Russian officer was concerned that the soldiers had no clothes other than the summer uniforms they wore on the hot Italian plains.

The Plan Implemented: Breakthrough

Suvorov and his troops arrived in Taverne on 15 September and on 21 September his main forces began the Alpine trek.[17] The Austrian brigade commanded by Strauch joined Suvorov the next day. The Austrians suggested that Suvorov send one division around St. Gotthard via two passes, the highest of which, Oberalp Pass, was 2,046 metres.[18] This division was to strike into the rear of the St. Gotthard defenders, thus facilitating the progress of the main forces. Suvorov followed this advice and detached the 6,000-strong division commanded by Andrej Rosenberg for this mission; the rest of his men marched along the main road to St. Gotthard (Figure 2).

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oped the strategy and tactics of mountain warfare", and thus "opened a new aspect of military theory," L. Lešinskij, "Ital'janskij i Švejcarskij poxody Suvorova," – *Suvorovskij sbornik* (Суворовский сборник), ed. A. Suhomlin (Сухомлин, А.) (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1951), 125, 129; M. Al'tgovzen, "Polkovodčeskoe iskusstvo Suvorova v Šveicarskom poxode," ibid., 151.

[16] "Plan obščej ataki na vystupivšago v malye Švejcarskie kantony neprijatelja" (September 1799), *Istorija rossijsko-avstrijskoj kampanii*, vol. 3, 482, 483.

[17] All the dates mentioned in this article have been converted from the Julian calendar, used by Russian contemporaries, to the Gregorian calendar.

[18] Colonel Strauch (no date), Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 479.

Dmitrij Miljutin, the Russian Minister of War from 1861 to 1881, argues plausibly that Suvorov "had no idea what horrible obstacles he would have to overcome along the St. Gotthard route".[19] The Alps were "terrifying mountain ridges", wrote Suvorov. "Yawning abysses threatened to swallow us at every step through this kingdom of horror. Pitch dark nights, relentless thunderstorms, pouring rains, dense clouds, roaring waterfalls, and rocks falling from the mountains magnified our trepidation."[20] This account, grossly inflating the mountain hazards on Suvorov's way, shows that the sheer view of the mountains frightened Russian soldiers.[21]

When Suvorov and his men arrived at the foot of St. Gotthard on 24 September, they found only two French battalions with 1,861 men defending it[22] against his 19,500 Russian and Austrian soldiers. About 1,900 French were deployed at the northern foot of the pass, 12 kilometres away from its top, and at the neighbouring Oberalp Pass, which was another 10 kilometres away. A good but narrow trail traversed the steep slope towards St. Gotthard, with room enough only for a packed horse. The handful of French defenders, highly motivated revolutionary soldiers, knew the basics of mountain warfare and put up fierce resistance. The valley leading to St. Gotthard was so narrow that its entire length was exposed to musket fire from a dozen terraces towering over each other and offering a number of excellent defensive positions. The Russians did not even unpack their mountain artillery because the slopes leading to the pass were too steep.[23] They attempted to dislodge the French with bayonet charges, in the spirit of Suvorov's *Manual*, but a concerted bayonet charge was impossible on the steep slope. Since Suvorov had had no communication with Rosenberg's division, which was supposed to strike

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[19] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 201.

[20] Suvorov, "Donesenie Suvorova Imperatoru Pavlu I" (14 October 1799) – *Istorija*, Fuchs, vol. 3, 388, 389.

[21] Ja. Starkov (Я. Старков), *Rasskazy starogo voina o Suvorove* (Рассказы старого воина о Суворове) (Moscow, Izdatel'stvo Moskvitjanina, 1847), vol. 2, 185.

[22] Duffy, *Eagles*, 171. Reding-Biberegg states that only one French battalion initially defended St. Gotthard; it was reinforced much later by another battalion, Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 35, 36.

[23] Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 197.

Figure 2. The routes of Suvorov and his baggage train, September – October 1799

St. Gotthard's defenders from the rear, and so had no idea where it was, he sent two columns of six and four battalions, commanded respectively by generals Petr Bagration and Mihail Baranovskij, to envelop the left flank of the French positions at St. Gotthard (Figure 3). The shallow envelopment conducted by Bagration did force the French to leave the foot of the

pass and retreat to higher positions but did not solve the main problem: the French continued to block the way to the pass. While waiting for the second envelopment to bear fruit, Suvorov probed the French defences with several frontal attacks in violation of his own instructions about mountain warfare, which rejected such attacks in favour of envelopments. The Russians gradually pushed the French up the pass, but the advance of the Russian battalions, demoralised both by the staunch resistance and the unfamiliar environment, was slow;[24] the French, who had been reinforced by a battalion from the northern side of the pass, retreated from one terrace to another, inflicting heavy casualties on the attackers with accurate musket and artillery fire.

Meanwhile, the four battalions commanded by Baranovskij were climbing the main Alpine ridge along a broad but steep trail, seeking to envelop the left flank of the French position.[25] The trek was exhausting, and by the time Baranovskij's force finally reached the highest French position at the southern slope of the pass,[26] the main Russian forces had already begun attacking it, having lost 1,200 men, killed and wounded, in

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[24] Duffy, *Eagles*, 175. Most Russian historians attribute the deep enveloping march to the vanguard commanded by Bagration, Aleksej Šišov (Алексей Шишов), *Suvorov: Generalissimus velikoj imperii* (Суворов: генералиссимус великой империи) (Moscow, Olma-Press, 2005), 396; I. Rostunov (*И.* Ростунов), *Generalissimus Aleksandr Vasiľevič Suvorov* (Генералиссимус Александр Васильевич Суворов) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1989), 456, 457; Nikolaj Orlov (Николай Орлов), *Poxod Suvorova v 1799 godu* (Поход Суворова в 1799 году) (St. Petersburg: Stoličnaja skoropečatnaja, 1898), 201; A. Petruševskij (А. Петрушевский), *Generalissimus knjaz' Suvorov* (Генералиссимус князь Суворов) (St.Petersburg: RAN, 2005), 571. In fact, it was the column commanded by General Mihail Baranovskij from the division of Povalo-Švejkovskij, Miljutin, Istorija, vol. 2, 212.

[25] Suvorov, "Dispozicija dopolniteľnaja k ovladeniju" (23 September 1799) – *Istorija*, Fuchs, vol. 3, 336. According to Clausewitz, this climb "across a terrain believed to be absolutely unpassable" was "the most stunning feat undertaken during Suvorov's campaign", Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 108. This claim, picked up by Russian authors (Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 217), is misleading: it is impossible to climb the steep slopes head-on from the village of Airolo at the foot of the pass, nor does it make any sense, because a dirt road, now called Old Canaria Trail, traverses the southern slopes of the main Alpine ridge, gently gaining height from Airolo and leading to the pass above the main valley where Suvorov's army was making its way. No other opportunity to reach St. Gotthard from the east exists. It takes five hours to reach the pass from Airolo. Baranovskij certainly had local guides who led his unit along the Old Canaria Trail.

[26] Suvorov, "Donesenie Suvorova," – *Istorija*, Fuchs, vol. 3, 393.

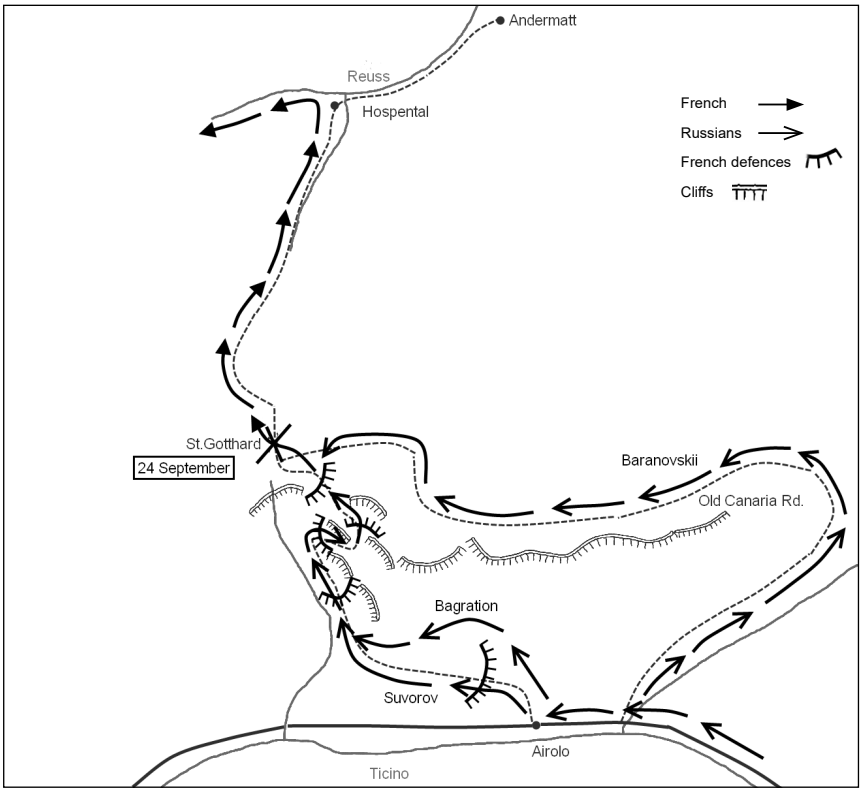

Figure 3. Assault on St. Gotthard

the frontal assault.[27] Baranovskij's soldiers had no chance to engage the enemy because when they suddenly emerged above the French position, the surprised defenders hastily abandoned it. The next day, Suvorov's corps descended into the Reuss valley.

At first, Suvorov believed that his army, rushing across the Alps with limited supplies, could not afford to take enemy prisoners. Captain Nikolaj Grjazev described Suvorov's initial policy: "As for enemy prisoners, we did not take them in this battle; the bayonets and [musket] butts relieved us of the burden of escorting them. Although such brutality contradicted

[27] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 217, 218; Duffy, *Eagles*, 175.

humanist standards, the pursuit of our quest made us ignore this sacred duty and forced us to commit this horrible murder."[28]

Meanwhile, Rosenberg's division, which had been sent into deep envelopment of St. Gotthard, advanced under steady pouring rain along a difficult mountain trail with many fords.[29] On 24 September, the men climbed Oberalp Pass, where they ran into a French battalion blocking the way to the Reuss valley (Figure 4). The French, who had about 850 soldiers against 6,000 Russians, offered stubborn resistance at a position around a lake squeezed by narrows at the top of the pass.[30] Rosenberg sent two regiments along the high ground above the northern and southern banks of the lake to envelop both flanks of the French, while the rest of the division, supported effectively by mountain artillery, launched a frontal assault. The envelopment along the northern bank failed because steep cliffs did not allow the Russians to bypass the French position, while the marsh in front of it frustrated a swift approach. However, the envelopment along the southern bank succeeded after the regiment commanded by Mihail Miloradovič gained about 300 metres in elevation along a steep grassy slope and reached the top of the rocks towering over the lake. This helped them to dislodge the French from the pass; according to Russian estimates, probably inflated, the French lost 400 men killed, wounded, and taken prisoner.[31] The Russian casualties were 150 men killed and gravely wounded.[32]

The Russians drove the remnants of the French defending the right flank of their position to cliffs that seemed impassable, but the French escaped the trap, running down the cliffs "like goats, without slipping; only a few of them fell from the steep slopes."[33] A Russian witness attributed this escape to the crampons worn by the French and left a credible description of the crampons. This was perhaps the first use of cram-

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[28] Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 198.

[29] Starkov, *Rasskazy*, vol. 2, 190.

[30] Duffy, *Eagles*, 171, 181. Another French battalion stayed in Andermatt, a town close to the western foot of the pass.

[31] Suvorov, "Donesenie Suvorova," 401-403; Bogdanovič, *Poxody Suvorova*, 167.

[32] Starkov, *Rasskazy*, vol. 2, 195.

[33] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 495, 496; Starkov, *Rasskazy*, vol. 2, 206.

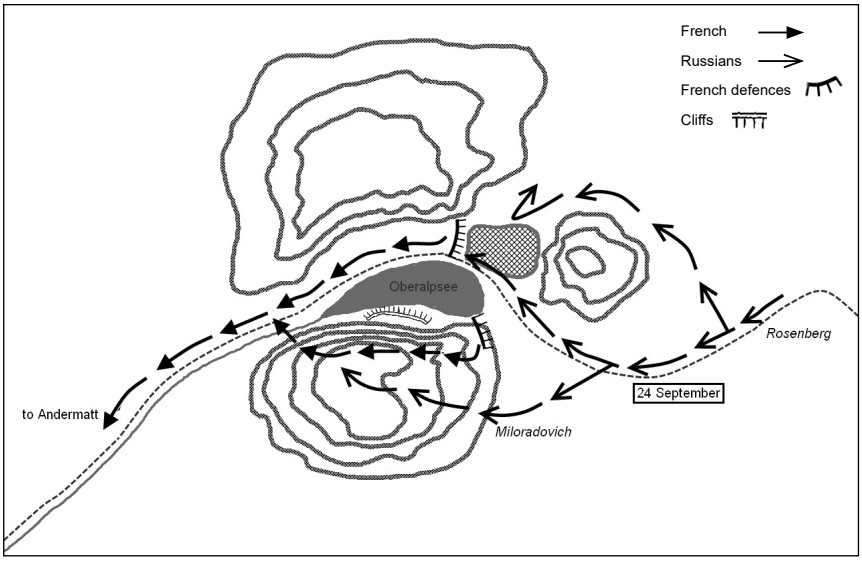

Figure 4. Assault on Oberalp

pons in combat ever recorded.[34] Rosenberg's division descended into the Reuss valley only two kilometres downstream from Suvorov's forces, thus blocking the retreat of the French defenders of St. Gotthard down Reuss and forcing them to march upstream and then across a pass to the Rhône valley. In order to secure the rear of his army from possible attacks, Suvorov had to leave Strauch's brigade at the northern foot of St. Gotthard.[35]

On the next day, 25 September, Rosenberg joined the main forces. His deep envelopment, slowed down by logistical constraints, did not help Suvorov's assault on St. Gotthard, nor did it trap the French defenders – its two primary missions – but it did prompt them to leave the Reuss

[34] According to Clausewitz, when Baranovskij's force climbed the Alpine ridge, it used crampons "manufactured by Austrians in large numbers especially for this purpose," Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 108. However, no Russian contemporary source mentions crampons used by Suvorov's soldiers, Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 495, 496. The Russians could hardly have carried 2,000 pairs of heavy crampons with them when they had limited their food rations below the bare minimum, and the Austrians had no time to manufacture them "especially for this purpose".

[35] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 478.

valley and thus made them irrelevant for the rest of the campaign. The Russians sustained 2,000 total casualties in battles at St. Gotthard and Oberalp[36] – many more than the French.

The next obstacle Suvorov had to overcome was Urnerloch, a 70-metre-long tunnel cut in the rock forming the eastern side of the narrow and deep Reuss gorge (Figure 5). The tunnel ended at a small terrace above a bridge called Teufelsbrücke (Devil's Bridge), where the road crossed the gorge to the western bank of the river. The remnants of the French Oberalp garrison, reinforced by several battalions that had come upstream from Altdorf, gathered near Teufelsbrücke and Urnerloch, planning to block the only way down the Reuss. However, on 25 September, the day when Suvorov's army was approaching Urnerloch, an Austrian brigade commanded by Franz Auffenberg crossed Kreuzli Pass (2,347 m) from the upper Rhine into the Reuss valley and descended to Amsteg into the rear of the French defenders.[37] Although the French easily beat off the Austrian attack, they decided to abandon the position at Teufelsbrücke and retreat to Altdorf to avoid a possible entrapment. They left only a small rear-guard at the bridge. The events developed so quickly that the rear-guard could only damage but not destroy the massive bridge across the deep gorge behind their retreating forces. The Russians pushed through Urnerloch and Teufelsbrücke, but witnesses' descriptions and historians' interpretations of these incidents are strikingly different.

Suvorov's account – subsequently dramatized even further by Russian authors – presented the crossing of Teufelsbrücke as similar to Napoleon's attack on the Bridge of Arcole, which had happened only three years earlier. According to these authors, the Russian vanguard rushing through the Urnerloch tunnel was suddenly hit by grapeshot from a French gun positioned at the tunnel's exit and by musket fire from two French battalions defending Urnerloch and Teufelsbrücke: "Behind every rock, all along the trail, down at the river and up in the mountains – everywhere were muskets delivering accurate fire."[38] On seeing that the attack through

[36] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 222.
[37] Ibid., 228.
[38] Ibid., 227; Rostunov, *Generalissimus*, 458.

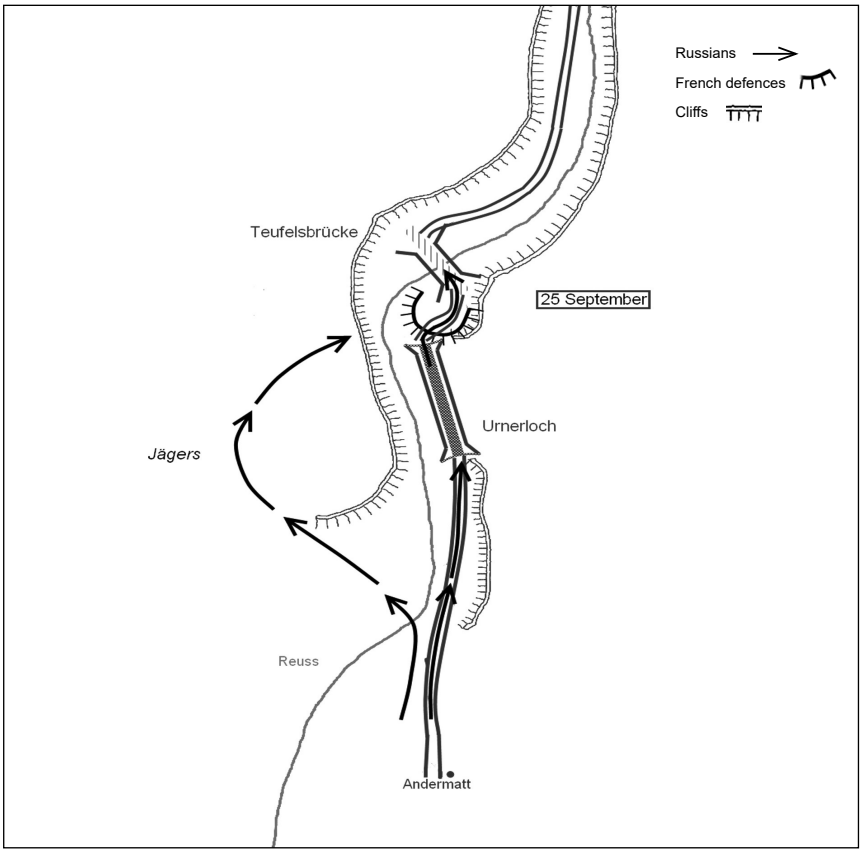

Figure 5. Assault on Teufelsbrücke

the tunnel was impossible, Russian commanders sent 300 musketeers over the rocks of the eastern bank above Urnerloch and a Jäger battalion across the Reuss to its western bank. The battalion forded the 1.5 metre-deep river, struggling against a strong current, and climbed up steep rocks, thus coming to the top of a cliff above and across the river from the small terrace at the exit of Urnerloch.[39] They could not descend the vertical cliff, but they drove away the French defenders from the terrace at the exit of Urnerloch below them with rifle fire, while the musketeers

[39] Bogdanovič, *Poxody Suvorova*, 170; Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 576.

above Urnerloch shot at the bridge defenders below. When the Russian vanguard reached the bridge and found that it was damaged, the soldiers used officers' sashes, in the absence of ropes, to tie together several logs the French had taken off the bridge. They threw the logs across the gap in the bridge's damaged section, after which the French retreated, losing 280 men in the engagement.[40]

Other eyewitnesses and authors dismiss this story.[41] Clausewitz believed that Urnerloch and Teufelsbrücke "were defended by very weak forces or had almost no defenders" and assesses their maximum strength as one company.[42] The French apparently damaged not the bridge itself but only the access to it. Grjazev provides a different description of the Teufelsbrücke crossing; he calls his narrative unexciting but says that it reflects "the events without any inventions and omissions". He acknowledges that the Russians were depressed while moving through Urnerloch, as if they "were entering hell", but denies that they met opposition either in Urnerloch or at Teufelsbrücke.[43] In any case, if the French

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[40] Suvorov, "Donesenie Suvorova", 389, 402–406; Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 224, 227, 228; Bogdanovič, *Poxody Suvorova*, 170; Šišov, *Suvorov*, 398, 399; Rostunov, *Generalissimus*, 460; Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 577.

[41] Duffy, *Eagles*, 189. Even Miljutin questions Suvorov's entire report about the Swiss campaign and admits that it describes events "very vaguely and superficially," Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 492, 497, 498. Miljutin suspects that it was perhaps Egor Fuchs, Suvorov's secretary, who produced the romanticised version of the Teufelsbrücke crossing. Yet Miljutin still offers this version as a fact. No eyewitnesses mention artillery staying at Urnerloch, and as is clear from Suvorov's report, the episode with the gun firing grapeshot at the Russians advancing along a narrow trail towards the bridge happened not at Teufelsbrücke but at another bridge near Altdorf. Suvorov, "Donesenie Suvorova," 407. The terrace at the exit of Urnerloch is so small that it could accommodate only perhaps two platoons rather than two battalions, and the exit of Urnerloch is invisible from any other place. The sketch drawn by Russian contemporaries shows only French pickets on the western side of the river rather than two battalions, Duffy, *Eagles*, 189. No doubt, most of the French forces left Teufelsbrücke before the emergence of Suvorov's vanguard to avoid a possible entrapment by Auffenberg, and a small rearguard had to retreat as soon as the Jägers outmanoeuvred it. The story about musketeers climbing above Urnerloch along the rocks of the eastern bank is an obvious misinformation because it would be impossible to climb those vertical rocks; the musketeers mentioned in primary sources could only climb the 20-metre-high rocky bump after they had exited Urnerloch.

[42] Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 113.

[43] Grjazev refers sarcastically to the romanticised version of the story: "As to our crossing of the miraculous Teufelsbrücke, the inventive genius of mankind displayed a vivid imagination

offered even a token resistance in the tunnel, the Jägers' march across the Reuss and around Urnerloch must have played a crucial role in breaking it.[44]

Having crossed Teufelsbrücke, Suvorov's army marched down the Reuss, sweeping away small French rear guards that attempted to delay its advance (Figure 6). On 26 September, Suvorov, joined by Auffenberg's brigade, reached Altdorf, near the southern shore of Lake Lucerne and on the eastern bank of the Reuss. Lecourbe moved most units of his two brigades, which by this time totalled 5,000 to 6,000 men,[45] to the western bank, destroyed all the bridges across the river, and spread his forces all along the Reuss to prevent the Russians from restoring the bridges.[46] Only 700 to 900 men were left to oppose Suvorov at Altdorf,[47] and the Russians easily drove them out of town.

The Plan Amended: Friction of War

With only 17 kilometres now separating Suvorov from the town of Schwyz at the edge of the Alps, the rendezvous point with the Austrians, he found that the road he had planned to take to reach Schwyz ended at

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and presented a colourful picture to our sovereign: it was claimed … that the officers … tied together partially burned logs with their sashes. I myself was a participant in this crossing, and our regiment was always at the vanguard, but I did not see it. Men sent in advance fixed the partially burned logs and boards and added new ones, and it was possible to cross with due caution," Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 201. Grjazev was, however, in the vanguard of the main forces, while other eyewitnesses state that it was Rosenberg's division that took the bridge, Starkov, *Rasskazy*, vol. 2, 198. The fact that Suvorov was asleep during the "assault" on the bridge indirectly supports Grjazev's version and suggests that no serious engagement took place there, Duffy, *Eagles*, 193.

44 Teufelsbrücke was a poor position: as soon as Russians exited Urnerloch, the defence of the bridge was untenable because its garrison would have found itself at a narrow road carved in the vertical rock exposed to fire from high ground on the opposite side. It was at Urnerloch rather than Teufelsbrücke where the French could have attempted to pin the Russians down, but as soon as Russian Jägers forded the river and climbed the rocks towering over the exit of the Urnerloch, its defenders had to retreat.

45 Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 116.

46 Duffy, *Eagles*, 198.

47 von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 41.

Flüelen, a village just north of Altdorf on the eastern shore of the lake. High vertical cliffs emerged straight from the water on both sides of the lake, precluding any opportunity to climb them and go north along either side.[48]

Even before Suvorov had entered Switzerland, Ferdinand de Roverea, a Swiss colonel, had warned the Russians that the only way from Altdorf to Schwyz would be via Chinzig Chulm Pass (2,073 m) along a difficult trail into the Muota valley, which leads to Schwyz.[49] When Suvorov was approaching Altdorf, he may still have hoped to find a path along Lake Lucerne, but when it turned out that none existed, he was ready for this worst-case scenario and ordered his army to march across Chinzig Chulm. Suvorov left Rosenberg's division at Altdorf as rear guard to protect the passage of the supply train from attacks of Lecourbe's forces and then to march behind the train.

The soldiers spent 12 hours covering the 16 kilometres across the pass. The vanguard began the ascent on 27 September, but it took the entire army, including the slow supply train, four days to reach the Muota.[50] The Russian reports of the march across the Chinzig Chulm maintain that "every misstep threatened death";[51] "many unfortunates died on this torturous way: some from cold, exhaustion, or starvation; many others

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[48] von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 39. Numerous Russian allegations that the Austrians misled Suvorov by telling him about "a narrow path" leading from Altdorf to Schwyz along the eastern bank of Lake Lucerne are false, Lopatin, *Suvorov*, 732; Rostunov, *Generalissimus*, 461, 462; Leščinskij, "Ital'janskij i Švejcarskij poxody," 124; L. Beskrovnyj, "Strategija i taktika Suvorova," – Suhomlin, *Suvorovskij sbornik*, 39; Šišov, *Suvorov*, 393. Miljutin and other Russian historians who imply Austrian treason give no evidence to back their speculations. In fact, the allegation that the Austrians mentioned "a narrow path" comes only from Hotze's letter to Suvorov on the eve of the campaign, in which he simply wrote that Auffenberg rather than Suvorov would "follow a narrow path to Schwyz Canton to join me there," Hotze to Suvorov (10 September 1799), Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 480. He said neither that this path went along the lake's bank nor that it led to the town of Schwyz; he meant only that there was a path to the Schwyz Canton. Such a path did indeed exist across the Chinzig Chulm pass. Both Suvorov and Weyrother may have misinterpreted this incidental remark as a statement that the path led from Altdorf to Schwyz along the lake's eastern bank. In the end, Suvorov took the trail suggested by Hotze for Auffenberg's brigade.

[49] Duffy, *Eagles*, 160, 161.

[50] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 233, 235.

[51] Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 583.

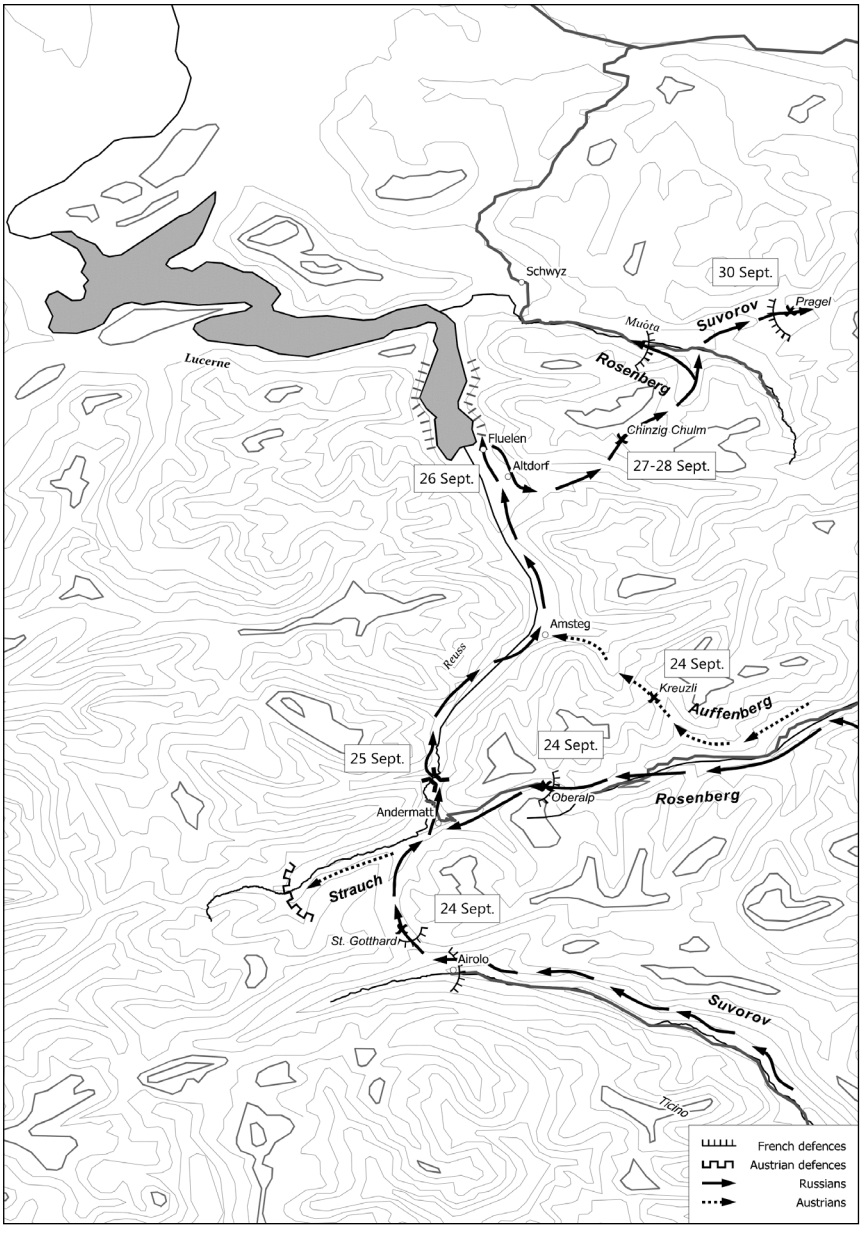

Figure 6. Suvorov's march from St. Gotthard to Pragel

fell from the cliffs and met a horrible death in the abysses."[52] In fact, the trail to the pass is muddy and slippery but absolutely safe; stepping into a cow pat is the greatest danger that a trekker may encounter during the crossing of Chinzig Chulm.[53] It was not so much the actual difficulty of the trek as its perception by the soldiers – strangers to the mountains, weakened by malnourishment, and exhausted by a long march – that was responsible for the overdramatised tales. Many had to spend a night at the pass above treeline, exposed to icy wind and rain and shivering in their soaked summer uniforms around tiny smouldering fires set from the boards of a demolished barn,[54] and many must have caught cold as a result. After descending from the pass, freezing soldiers warmed up by burning any wood they could find in the first village in the Mouta valley – fences, barn doors, and the hardwood floors of homes.[55]

Suvorov knew that mountain regions were sparsely populated and that it would be impossible to requisition anything but hay.[56] The soldiers had already consumed all the rations in their knapsacks by the time they reached Altdorf, and most of their supply train lagged several days behind. Since Suvorov was already one day behind schedule when he arrived in Altdorf[57] and would be delayed even further for his rendezvous with the Austrians at Schwyz, he left for the Muota valley without waiting for the supply train. Rusks carried by those few mules that could

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[52] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 230. According to the Russian authors, the steep snow-covered path went over high cliffs, and the trail "at this time of the year was accessible only to courageous hunters accustomed to climb huge cliffs and remote icefields," ibid; Al'tgovzen, "Polkovodčeskoe iskusstvo," 146. However, in reality, no icefield existed at Chinzig Chulm; eyewitnesses mention extreme fatigue, thunderstorms, and cold winds but no snow on the way to the Muota.

[53] Having retraced Suvorov's route in the late nineteenth century, Rudolf von Reding-Biberegg, lieutenant-colonel of the Swiss General Staff, found that Russian authors "grossly inflate the difficulty of the march. They write about yawning abysses into which horses and riders were falling, horrible gorges, … terrifying rocks and paths at dizzying heights. Anyone who has walked across the pass knows that in reality, … troops could easily and safely cross it, even with horses unaccustomed to the mountains. The best proof of this is the fact that [the local] residents … have been driving horses and cattle across the pass for ages," von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 54, 55. I can confirm that Reding-Biberegg's statement is correct.

[54] Starkov, *Rasskazy*, vol. 2, 205.

[55] von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 56, 137.

[56] Ibid., 134.

[57] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 232.

keep up with the army got wet under frequent rains and rotted. Many pack animals died from exhaustion on the way to the Muota. Many others lost their horseshoes on the granite rocks and moved slowly, overcoming pain. Because of the slow progress of the supply train and its rapid attrition, soldiers' rations were cut after St. Gotthard. They began to suffer from malnourishment during the march to the Muota. Grjazev describes how they chewed roots they had dug. "Meat was so scarce," he writes, "that we were forced to eat such [animal] parts that, at another time, we would have regarded as disgusting; even the cattle hide was used: we cut it up in small pieces, burned the hair over fire after putting it [the hide] on ramrods, grilled it [mainly] in our imagination, and ate it half-raw."[58] Soldiers were so hungry that when they dug potatoes from the fields of local farmers, they could not wait until they were cooked and ate them raw. They slaughtered farmers' cattle and ate raw meat; they also ate candles in churches and picked all the fruit they could find, whether ripe or not.[59] It was still possible to buy cheese from the Swiss but soldiers perceived blue cheese as rotten and did not eat it.[60]

During these unanticipated lengthy, rainy marches along poor trails in high mountains, soldiers began grumbling about Suvorov, "the old man" who "has lost his marbles and has brought us God knows where".[61] When Suvorov heard this muttering, he tried to boost morale with jokes, eccentric manners, and charismatic rhetoric, calling his soldiers "invincible giants" (*čudo-bogatyri*).[62] When flamboyant rhetoric was insufficient to maintain discipline, Russian officers restored it with drastic measures. Maksim Rehbinder, a regiment commander, ordered soldiers to "bayonet the cowards and throw them like scabby sheep out of the flock: cowards can ruin the battle, they are as contagious as plague."[63] Suvorov's methods of morale maintenance, however, still leaned to carrot rather than stick, and they proved to be adequate for this brief campaign.

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58 Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 204, 205.
59 Lopatin, *Suvorov*, 520.
60 Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 205; Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 582.
61 Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 309.
62 Starkov, *Rasskazy*, vol. 2, 256.
63 Ibid., 223.

Having descended to the Muota on 28 September, Suvorov learned that on 25 and 26 September, Masséna had crushed Korsakov's corps, killing, wounding, and taking prisoner 8,000 of its 27,000 soldiers, after which the Russians had fled in disorder to the German frontier.[64] This defeat made Suvorov's march westwards to Schwyz, where Massena was now assembling his main forces, pointless and dangerous.[65] Suvorov began to contemplate advancing in the opposite, eastern direction via the low Pragel Pass (1,550 m) into the Linth valley, towards the Austrian allies, but he discovered that the French general Jean-de-Dieu Soult had defeated Hotze, who was attempting to link with Suvorov. Soult's division, available now for actions against Suvorov, stayed close to the mouth of the Linth River near the northern exit from the Alps, and a part of the French brigade commanded by Gabriel Molitor blocked Pragel and the eastern exit from the Muota valley; Lecourbe's brigades pursuing Suvorov's rearguard sealed the Chinzig Chulm trail, blocking the way to retreat. Suvorov realised that his entire march across the Alps had been futile and that his army was in a mousetrap, surrounded in the Muota valley. At the military council called on 29 September, Suvorov delivered a fiery speech that worked his officers up into frenzy. As Bagration recalled, "I was … in such a euphoric mood that even if myriads of enemies attacked us, I would have been ready to fight them. … Everyone felt the same."[66] Suvorov decided to break through Pragel and then to the northern exit from the Alps at the mouth of the Linth, in the hope of joining the Austrian formations still present in the region.[67] After the arrival of the supply train and some requisitions, Suvorov's army had food for

[64] Duffy, *Eagles*, 220.

[65] Suvorov – and after him, most Russian historians – stated that the five-day delay in Taverne, where the Russians waited for the Austrian-provided mule train, was fatal because Suvorov could not join Korsakov at Zurich before Massena attacked and routed him, Lopatin, *Suvorov*, 730; Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 280; Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 586. In fact, Suvorov would have been too late anyway because he found that the exit from the Muota valley to Schwyz was blocked by Mortier, and his rearguard came to Muotathal village, which was 74 kilometres from Zurich, only in the late afternoon of 30 September, Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 277, 290.

[66] Lopatin, *Suvorov*, 733.

[67] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 513.

five days. The council decided to cut soldiers' rations by half to extend them to 10 days.[68]

The next day, 30 September, Suvorov began advancing towards Pragel, leaving Rosenberg's division as rear guard to cover the march from a French division commanded by Edouard Mortier that was expected to attack from Schwyz.[69] A part of Gabriel Molitor's brigade, numbering 3,500 men,[70] offered stubborn resistance at Pragel to Suvorov's vanguard of 4,200 Russians and Austrians,[71] which continued into the next day, 1 October. At the end of the first day of fighting, the French had to retreat beyond Klöntaler Lake and blocked the only trail, carved into the cliffs that make up the lake's northern bank (Figure 7). The French brigade pinned the Russians down with musket and artillery fire at this position, which seemed impregnable. Russian mountain guns were too short range and small calibre to engage effectively the French field artillery deployed at the plateau behind the narrows.[72] The Russians spent the night near the lake in the open, shivering under the rain and unable to sleep.[73] But they sent two regiments above the rocks that form the northern bank of the lake and another regiment along its southern bank to envelop the French position from both flanks.[74] The southern envelopment failed because a high cliff bordering the lake descended straight into the water, but the exhausting night march to the high point on the northern bank, during which the two regiments had to climb several hundred vertical metres through thick wet woods, brought the soldiers above and behind the French position. The next day, when Russian reinforcements arrived at Klöntaler Lake from Pragel and the French also received some reinforcements, the Russians launched an attack, combining a frontal assault along the trail blocked by the French with a strike from the rocks above the French position. The offensive began before dawn, and soldiers attacking

68 Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 513.
69 Lopatin, *Suvorov*, 359.
70 Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 284. Phipps assesses the strength of Molitor's formation at this time as 2,599 men, Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, vol. 5, 153.
71 Duffy, *Eagles*, 226.
72 Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 211.
73 Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 289.
74 Duffy, *Eagles*, 229.

from the rocks above could not see their way; some of them fell from the cliffs to their death.[75] They still suffered lighter casualties than those who participated in the frontal assault. Grjazev was among the latter, and he recorded that "the whole narrow trail, especially the stretch that exited to the plateau, was covered with the bodies of our men to such an extent that it became impassable. With broken hearts, we had to throw them into the lake to free our way and then stepped on piles of the bodies of our comrades to break through to the plateau."[76] But the flank attack forced the French to abandon their position and retreat down to the Linth valley.

Meanwhile, on 30 September, a French division commanded first by Mortier and then by Masséna came up the Muota and engaged Rosenberg's rear guard. During this and the next day, the rear guard, with about 8,000 men engaged the French forces, which totalled 9,000 to 10,000 men.[77] After several frontal attacks on the French positions failed, on 1 October a Russian envelopment march across a forest along the foot of the mountains that formed the northern side of the Muota valley[78] surprised the French and facilitated a frontal attack that ended in the rout of the French. Many fleeing French soldiers plunged to their deaths during the stampede at the narrow bridge over the Muota River. The French lost about 2,000 men killed, wounded, or taken prisoner, whereas the Russian losses were 500 to 600 men wounded and an unknown number killed.[79] By gaining this victory, Rosenberg shook Masséna off Suvorov's tail and followed the rest of the army across Pragel.

Having realised that his corps, burdened with many wounded and sick soldiers, would be unable to move quickly across the mountains, Suvorov ordered Rosenberg to leave 600 of the wounded and sick, along with 1,000 French wounded prisoners, in the Muota valley with a letter to Masséna in which Suvorov stated that the Russian wounded were

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75 Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 282, 295.

76 Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 212.

77 von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 81, 84; Philip Longworth, *The Art of Victory* (London: Constable, 1965), 284. According to Phipps, this French division had 7,800 men. Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, vol. 5, 149.

78 Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 293.

79 Suvorov to Emperor Franz II (11 October 1799) – *Istorija*, Fuchs, vol. 3, 382; von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 95.

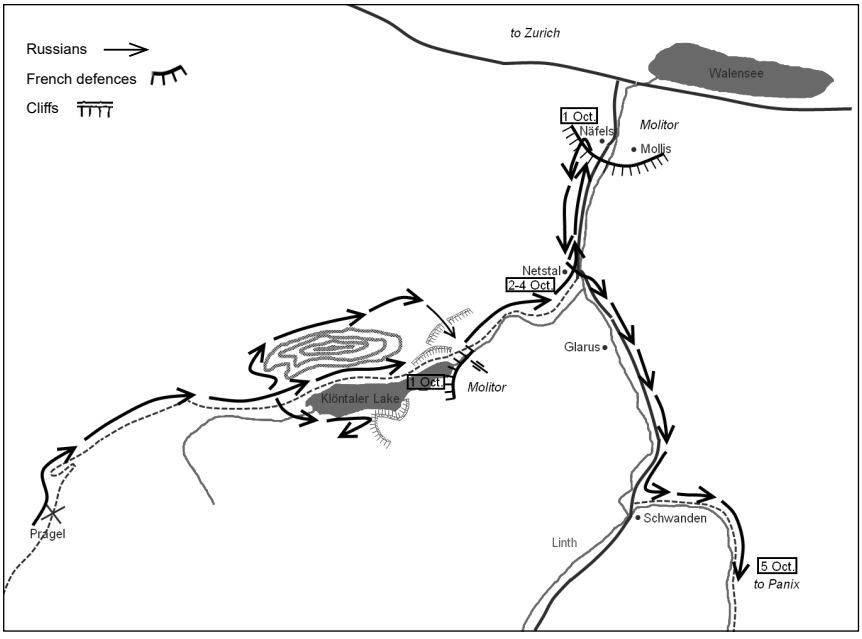

Figure 7. Breakthrough along the Klöntaler Lake and the debacle at Näfels

entrusted to "the humane protection of the French".[80] It was a bold request after the slaughter of all the French who had attempted to surrender at St. Gotthard. Yet the French treated the prisoners humanely and provided medical care.[81]

After arriving in the Linth valley, Suvorov pursued the French down the Linth River to Näfels, a town located at the exit from the Alps, where the French made a stand, blocking the valley on both riverbanks and thus making envelopments impossible. The Russian vanguard and the remnants of Molitor's brigade were of equal strength,[82] but the Russian mountain guns again could not match the French field artillery. In the battle on 1 October, Näfels changed hands several times in a bitter fight

[80] Duffy, *Eagles*, 242; Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 298; vol. 3, 520.

[81] Starkov, *Rasskazy*, vol. 2, 273.

[82] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 518; Duffy, *Eagles*, 241. Phipps states that at that moment 4,700 French soldiers faced about 7,000 Russians, Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, vol. 5, 156.

but in the end, the Russians exhausted their ammunition and could not break through. Given the presence of Soult's division nearby, the inferiority of the Russian artillery, the lack of ammunition, and the pressure of the Grand Prince Constantine, who travelled with Suvorov as a tourist, the military council that was called the next day decided to abandon the attempts to break through and to retreat via the high Panix Pass (2,407 m) into the Rhine valley, which was held by the Austrians.[83] Although all earlier engagements in the Swiss campaign ended with Russian victories, the failure to break out of the Alps at Näfels was a strategic defeat that nullified all those victories because it was the last nail in the coffin of the strategic plan that presumed the cooperation of the allied forces in Switzerland.[84] Before marching to Panix, the Russians again left 400 of their sick and wounded soldiers at the mercy of the French, with the written plea to spare them.[85]

The Plan Scrapped: Retreat

On 5 October, after Rosenberg's rear guard re-joined Suvorov, the march to the Rhine began. The French vigorously pursued the Russians inflicting such heavy casualties on their rear guard commanded by Bagration that its remnants could barely re-join the main forces without being annihilated; they even had to abandon a chest with 30,000 francs.[86] This fighting retreat, according to Weyrother, shattered the morale of the Russians, who were already shaken by fatigue, the failure to break though at Näfels, and the privations suffered in the unfamiliar mountain environment.[87]

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[83] Suvorov to Archduke Carl (7 October 1799) – *Istorija*, Fuchs, vol. 3, 354; Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 521.

[84] Suvorov does not say a word about the battle at Näfels in his report to Tsar Paul, instead presenting his campaign as a series of brilliant victories, although he even contemplated retreat back to Italy, which would have been an admission of total failure, Suvorov, "Donesenie Suvorova," 388–422.

[85] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 302; Bogdanovič, *Poxody Suvorova*, 183.

[86] Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 218; von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 125.

[87] Duffy, *Eagles*, 248.

By this time, the boots of most Russian soldiers were so worn down from the rocky trails that their officers and later observers referred to Suvorov's army as "mostly barefoot", which, while perhaps an exaggeration, still testifies to the poor shape of their footwear.[88] General Rehbinder wore boots without soles; he cut parts of his overcoat and wrapped them around his feet, as did many soldiers,[89] while others took boots from 1,400 French prisoners[90] whom they convoyed across the Pragel and Panix passes, leaving them barefoot. The Russians imposed a contribution of 700 pairs of boots on a Swiss town, and when the residents failed to deliver the boots, the soldiers pulled them from their feet.[91] In addition, the soldiers were weakened by malnourishment: for several days, they had their rations cut to one-quarter of the regular ration.[92]

On 6 October, this barefoot, starving army began climbing Panix. A trail leading to the pass was covered with fresh snow that was half a metre deep.[93] Most of Suvorov's army had avoided snow so far; only the rear guard had crossed small patches of fresh snow at Chinzig Chulm and Pragel.[94] At Panix, however, the deep snow had a grave impact on the outcome of the trek. The path was hard to find because it climbed side cliffs instead of following the bottom of the valley, and the fresh snow obscured the steepness of the slopes. Thick clouds and blizzards obstructed the view.[95]

Russian authors call this trek "Golgotha".[96] Suvorov summarised his impressions of the Panix crossing: "No description would be able to render the horrors of nature. The sheer memory of it torments our souls."[97]

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[88] Suvorov to Rastopčin (13 October 1799) – *Istorija*, Fuchs, vol. 3, 387; Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 205; Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 118, 132; Lopatin, *Suvorov*, 519; Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 585.

[89] Starkov, *Rasskazy*, vol. 2, 251; Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 205.

[90] Longworth, *The Art of Victory*, 288.

[91] von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 68, 108, 139.

[92] Starkov, *Rasskazy*, vol. 2, 254.

[93] Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 219.

[94] von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 72; Duffy, *Eagles*, 242, 252.

[95] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 305; Bogdanovič, *Poxody Suvorova*, 186.

[96] A. Kersnovskij (А. Керсновский), *Istorija russkoj armii* (История русской армии) (Moscow: Golos, 1993), v.1, 191.

[97] Suvorov, "Donesenie Suvorova," 390.

The army began its single-file ascent along the northern slope of the pass at 4:00 a.m. and spent the whole day climbing to its top through the thinning air. Grjazev described how the soldiers marched "along a very narrow icy path that leaned towards the yawning abyss, where a careless or false step could lead to a [deadly] plunge, which is what happened to some". They had to gather all their courage "to defeat the elements, the most terrifying and merciless enemy".

> [The soldiers] were in quite a deplorable state, and this horrific sight caused utmost sorrow. Our entire army and regiments mixed together; each man walked where he chose, … the weakest fell and paid the ultimate price to the elements; those who wanted to rest sat down and fell into eternal sleep; those who walked had to struggle against a bitterly cold wind with freezing rain that covered them with ice. Almost frozen, we could barely move and fought for our lives. There was no shelter or even a piece of wood to make a fire and warm up our frozen limbs. … We threw away or lost everything we carried, even the weapons – the primary protection of a soldier. Everyone looked out only for himself; nobody commanded, and the discipline collapsed.[98]

By evening, only the vanguard had crossed the pass; the rest had to spend the night at the pass above treeline, battered by a blizzard.[99] As Bargation recalled, "The mud and snow were our bed, and the sky showering us with snow and rain was our blanket."[100] When soldiers began freezing, their commanders allowed them to make fires from Cossack spears and the carriages of mountain guns; the guns themselves had to be thrown into an abyss. Thus, Suvorov lost all the artillery with which he had started the march.[101]

The descent from the pass was even more difficult than the ascent, with high vertical cliffs blocking the entire valley. Although the path climbed around the cliffs, the snow had obliterated it. The steep slope, covered with a snow crust, was slippery. Only half of the mules had sur-

98 Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 219–221.
99 Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 305.
100 Starkov, *Rasskaz*, vol. 2, 221.
101 Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 305.

vived the march to Panix,[102] and even those who had come through had lost their horseshoes and could not negotiate the icy slopes. The soldiers had to push them down the cliff one by one, hoping that at least some would survive; most did not.[103] When Grjazev finally descended to the forest, "soaking wet and covered with mud, totally exhausted and tormented by sorrow, I fell on the wet moss, but a terrible cold shook my whole body and forced me to jump up."[104] Sergeant Jakov Starkov believed that the crossing of Panix was more horrific than any battle of the Swiss campaign: "Those damn mountains gave us hell! They tormented us nearly to death."[105] Even a century after the Swiss campaign, the residents of the Panix village located at the southern foot of the pass recounted how the descending Russian mob took all the food and cattle they could find, tore clothes and boots from the villagers, and burned down all the fences and wooden roofs to warm themselves up.[106] During the Panix trek, Suvorov lost over 200 men through freezing to death or slipping into the abyss. Many more were frostbitten and sick from hypothermia, and about 100 soldiers experienced temporary snow blindness.[107] Having crossed Panix into the Rhine valley, Suvorov effectively removed his army from Switzerland, leaving the country to the French. Tsar Paul ordered the return of Suvorov's army to Russia.[108] This was the end of the Swiss campaign, which lasted 17 days, from 21 September to 7 October. During this time, the Russian Army covered 270 kilometres across four mountain passes.

Although Suvorov won a number of victories during the Swiss campaign, this happened in part because the Russians outnumbered or matched the opposing French forces in all the engagements, except the battle of Rosenberg's rear guard at the Muota. In the assaults on St. Gotthard, Oberalp, and Teufelsbrücke and in the small clash at Altdorf, the

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[102] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 298.
[103] Grjazev, "Poxod Suvorova," 219.
[104] Ibid., 222.
[105] Starkov, *Rasskazy*, vol. 2, 255.
[106] Lopatin, *Suvorov*, 520.
[107] Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 133; Duffy, *Eagles*, 258.
[108] Paul I to Suvorov (7 October 1799) – *Istorija*, Fuchs, vol. 3, 360.

Russians grossly outnumbered the enemy, and in the battle at Klöntaler Lake, they still had more men than the French, although the French had a better artillery. Suvorov's army suffered grave attrition, both from combat and from exposure during treks across the Alps. Suvorov maintained that by the end of the campaign, he had retained only about 11,500 uninjured soldiers, or half of those with whom he began the campaign.[109] In addition to the heavy personnel casualties, Suvorov also lost all his mountain artillery, most horses and mules, and many hand weapons. The French assessed their casualties during the 15 days of the Swiss campaign – including the actions against Korsakov, Hotze, and Auffenberg – as 6,000 men killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.[110] This number might exclude the sick, but even so, it is clear that in the Alps, the French lost fewer soldiers in actions against Suvorov than he did.

Most non-Russian scholars, and a small minority of Russian historians assess Suvorov's campaign in Switzerland as a failure[111] but maintain that he escaped annihilation because of his and his generals' talented leadership and the impressive combat skills of his personnel. Suvorov's bombastic reports of glorious victories that he sent to Tsar Paul[112] did not obscure the fact that the Swiss campaign failed to attain its goal – the expulsion of the French from Switzerland. On the contrary, the French crushed Korsakov and Hotze and soon occupied the entire country. Suvorov escaped destruction but suffered so many casualties that, in the words of Clausewitz, they "equalled those in a lost battle".[113]

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[109] Suvorov wrote on 13 and 14 October that he had only 10,000 able-bodied men, "barefoot and naked", which did not include Cossacks, Suvorov to Rastopčin (13 October 1799) – *Istorija*, Fuchs, vol. 3, 387; Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 323. A lieutenant-colonel of the Russian General Staff calculated that less than 1,500 Cossacks remained able-bodied, Bogdanovič, *Poxody Suvorova*, 187.

[110] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 526.

[111] For instance, Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars*, 253; Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, vol. 5, 157; Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 133, 134; Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 604; Miljutin, *Istorija vojny*, vol. 2, 307.

[112] They included the misinformation that Suvorov had taken General Lecourbe prisoner, Suvorov to Emperor Franz II (11 October 1799) – *Istorija*, Fuchs, vol. 3, 382. This misinformation was later repeated by many Russian historians as a fact, Leščinskij, "Ital'janskij i Švejcarskij poxody," 129; Al'tgovzen, "Polkovodčeskoe iskusstvo," 129; Šišov, *Suvorov*, 411.

[113] Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 133.

Scholars of the Swiss campaign put forward two reasons for its failure: flawed strategy and the mistaken choice of route across the Alps. Clausewitz believed that the campaign was doomed from the outset because it presumed coherent actions of several large formations spread over great distances with messengers as the only means of communication; these formations belonged to two allied armies with different cultures, political goals, and strategic priorities. He called the whole idea of the campaign "a giant mistake. Its failure was the result of the strategy on which it was based, and even if no mistakes and no unfortunate incidents had occurred during its implementation, the result could not have been much better. … The fact that this campaign did not lead to an even worse outcome and a complete disaster was due to the courage of the Russians and the grave mistakes committed by the French."[114]

As for the route across the Alps, it is easy to see, in retrospect, that Suvorov's major mistake was the choice of the St. Gotthard trail instead of the roads via St. Bernardino Pass or Como Lake and Tyrol, where no French forces were deployed. His slow supply train and artillery, which followed what was believed to be a much longer Como Lake route, reached the Rhine well ahead of Suvorov's army, with no problems encountered on the way.[115] Genrikh Leer, a major nineteenth-century Russian military thinker, called the choice of route via St. Gotthard "a grave strategic error".[116] While Suvorov later admitted that the choice of route was erroneous, he habitually blamed the Austrians for allegedly suggesting it.[117] Before the start of the campaign, however, he stated that he opted for that route because it allowed him to "go straight to the enemy and engage his weakest positions instead of losing time in a timid effort to join forces via

[114] Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 149, 150.

[115] von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 112.

[116] Orlov, *Poxod Suvorova*, 82.

[117] Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 566. Most Russian historians supported this thesis, and some even interpreted the alleged Austrian advice as treason, Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 3, 477; Lopatin, *Suvorov*, 730. These accusations are groundless: first, von Reding states that Suvorov chose the St. Gotthard route against the initial advice of the Austrians, who suggested the way via San Bernardino; second, as Petruševskij observes, "One cannot attribute perfidy or ill will [to the Austrians] because Suvorov's failure … directly hampered their own strategy," von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 20; Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 566.

long detours."[118] Being inexperienced in mountain warfare, Suvorov, in Petruševskij's words, "erroneously took long for short and complicated for simple"[119] and failed to consider many problems that must have been anticipated. He gravely underestimated the mountain combat skills of the French, as well as the difficulty of marching in the fall season and the potential logistical challenges.[120] The plan to march via St. Gotthard was Suvorov's brainchild, and, as Leer observes, no alleged mistakes of the Austrians "acquit Suvorov: whether the general acts according to his own plan or that suggested by someone else, glory in the case of success and blame in the case of failure are laid at his feet alone, because it was he who was responsible for its implementation."[121]

Nonetheless, even those authors who call the Swiss campaign an unqualified failure pay tribute to the actions of the Russian generals and soldiers who did everything possible to mitigate the dire consequences of a flawed strategy, showing tactical excellence and great endurance.[122] According to Clausewitz, "If the actual outcome of Suvorov's campaign was more a defeat than victory, in terms of morale it was more a victory than a defeat." The Russian soldiers "must have perceived this trek as a raging torrent that swept away all the dams built by the enemy, … and the destruction of any such dam as a victory."[123] Clausewitz's conclusions are supported by a choir of Russian authors claiming that "this failed campaign brought more glory than the most brilliant victory."[124] As one of them put it, "The Leuthen campaign of Frederick II was elegant; Napoleon's Italian campaign was brilliant; Suvorov's Swiss campaign earned eternal glory. No nation and no army have ever gained such a stunning victory of morale over the elements."[125] Miljutin argues that "the Swiss campaign was actually the zenith of Suvorov's military glory",[126] and

[118] Suvorov to Hotze (13 September 1799) – *Istorija*, Fuchs, vol. 3, 290.
[119] Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 565.
[120] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 308; von Reding-Biberegg, *Poxod Suvorova*, 22.
[121] Orlov, *Poxod Suvorova*, 83.
[122] Petruševskij, *Generalissimus*, 604.
[123] Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 133, 134.
[124] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 307.
[125] Kersnovskij, *Istorija russkoj armii*, 1, 192.
[126] Miljutin, *Istorija*, vol. 2, 309.

many authors cite Masséna's apocryphal phrase: "I would have exchanged all my 42 campaigns for Suvorov's campaign in Switzerland."[127] The daring trek across the Alps has stuck in Russian historical memory, and the emphasis on glory has eclipsed its ultimate strategic failure.

Conclusion: Lessons of the Swiss campaign

In terms of strategy, the Swiss campaign showed that the margin of error is inevitably narrower in the mountains than on the plains. The Alpine trek was an impromptu action, and this was the major reason for its failure. Strategy should be simple in the mountains because communication and logistical problems frustrate the coherent actions of large formations scattered at great distances, but it is hard to make it simple because the landscape inevitably splits the armies, and the weather complicates things by adding surprises in addition to those prepared by the enemy. It is easier to surprise and be surprised in the mountains than on the plains because the landscape impedes intelligence acquisition and conceals manoeuvres: Suvorov's army achieved a complete surprise at the approaches to St. Gotthard, Oberalp, and Chinzig Chulm, and the French failed to stop them at any of these excellent defensive positions. But poor weather can disable more men than enemy actions, as Suvorov learned when he calculated the total casualties suffered by his army. Therefore, a serious effort must be invested into the detailed study of a potential mountain operational theatre, including its mapping and the analysis of its climate, before the beginning of the campaign in order to thin "the fog of uncertainty", mitigate the weather factor, and avoid shocking discoveries of the sort that awaited Suvorov at Lake Lucerne when he found no road to Schwyz. Commanders must be flexible enough to adjust not just their tactics but even their strategic plans to realities they had failed to foresee, as Suvorov did in the Muota valley when he completely changed

[127] Beskrovnyj, "Strategija," 39; Al'tgovzen, "Polkovodčeskoe iskusstvo," 151; Šatagin, "Velikij russkij polkovodec," 25; Orlov, *Poxod Suvorova*, 82. No historian references this alleged phrase of Masséna.

the direction of his march; therefore, even strategic decisions should be made by senior field commanders rather than by their General Staff superiors, who are far away and have no adequate picture of either the environment in which their soldiers operate or their morale. Since operations in the mountains presume more physical discomfort than those on the plains, and poor weather has graver consequences, a special effort must be made to maintain soldiers' morale. Furthermore, as Suvorov found out, the mountain environment alone, even in the absence of enemies, distressed professional Russian soldiers; this suggests that units operating in the mountains should ideally be raised from residents of mountain regions accustomed to such an environment.

As for tactical lessons, the Swiss campaign showed that numerical superiority brings fewer benefits in the mountains than on the plains because the mountain landscape often prohibits the concentration of the available units at a certain point and may help a handful of soldiers to pin down a far superior force. Consequently, high mobility and tactical manoeuvres, such as the envelopments undertaken by the Russians during the assault on St. Gotthard and Oberalp and at Teufelsbrücke, at the Mouta and Klöntaler Lake, are a must during an assault on well-entrenched enemy positions, notwithstanding the frequent failures of such manoeuvres due to impassable terrain. Since both sides understand that the mountain landscape can greatly enhance their strength, it is vital to promptly occupy good positions before the enemy does. Furthermore, as Clausewitz observed after studying the Swiss campaign, "Mountain warfare leads to atomisation of military formations; their various elements often fight on their own, which means they have to take initiative. This is true for both … generals and … every private."[128] Infantry must learn the special tactics of mountain warfare, and the individual training of a soldier fighting in the mountains must be more diverse than that of his counterpart operating on the plains. Those who plan to fight in the mountains have to train their manpower in a mountain environment to smooth the "friction of war". Infantry should be backed by mountain artillery, which, although inevitably inferior to regular field

[128] Clausewitz, *Švejcarskij poxod*, 243.

guns, is still able to provide adequate support in a terrain prohibitive for regular cannons.

Logistics is often the focal point of mountain warfare, and the General Staff has to be able to foresee what soldiers can and cannot do in a certain season, given the topography on which they operate. Logistical problems are enormous: marches are slow and exhausting; a shorter but steeper trail often takes more time than a longer but gently sloped one. The scarcity of population in the mountains makes it difficult to live off the land or find accommodation; therefore, soldiers should carry with them tents and food. Since every additional kilo in the knapsack increases fatigue, and the attrition of supply trains is great, a large extra number of pack animals, packs, and horseshoes must be accumulated before the beginning of the campaign. Suvorov's treks across Chinzig Chulm and Panix showed that circumstances frequently force soldiers to spend nights above treeline, where they are exposed to cold, bitter winds and possibly blizzards; consequently, they need warm uniforms to survive in such conditions. They also need sturdier boots than usual. Even if soldiers are dressed appropriately, the mountain environment guarantees that casualties from non-combat causes – disease, frostbite, and injury – will be considerably higher per capita in the mountains than on the plains, and while the number of casualties inflicted by enemy fire will probably be smaller, the transportation of the injured and sick will be an acute problem; their abandonment at the mercy of the enemy can ruin the morale of able-bodied soldiers. Consequently, means of transportation of the injured have to be developed, and a sufficient numbers of pack animals and soldiers must be allotted to this task. The convoying and feeding of POWs increases the severe logistical strain, and commanders have few options as to how to tackle this matter. Failure to anticipate all these problems and find viable solutions may cause far graver repercussions in the mountains than on the plains.

Finally, those who study historical experience in order to draw lessons for future actions should read the accounts of past campaigns with a critical eye, keeping in mind that battles in the austere but beautiful mountain environment provoke more romantic tales than do engagements on the plains. These tales should be identified as such and filtered so that they do not obscure the actual problems.

These lessons would have been relevant to every subsequent campaign that Russia fought in the mountains and could have helped the generals planning actions in such battle environment, had they learned these lessons. However, since mountains were on the verges of Russia and away from the military theatres perceived as most probable, its generals consistently neglected the experiences of their predecessors in such terrain and retained a haphazard approach to mountain warfare. That is why Russia's actions in the mountains were usually marked by high casualty rates from non-combat causes and embarrassing reversals, despite substantial superiority in firepower and numbers over enemy skilled in mountain warfare. This happened during the counterinsurgency in the Caucasus in 1817–1864, the war against the Ottoman Empire in 1877–1878 in the Balkans, the campaign in the Carpathians during World War I, the defence of the Caucasus in 1942, the breakthrough across the Carpathians in 1944, and the fight against Islamic guerrillas in Afghanistan in 1979–1789 and Chechen separatists in 1994–1996.

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A Generational Shift: The military history crisis in the Estonian military education 1919–1940

Igor Kopõtin

Abstract. The article analyses the teaching of military history in the Estonian army in the interwar period. It argues that the basic concepts – the purpose, thematic distribution, teaching methods – were developed by the former professor of the tsarist military academy, Lt. Gen. Aleksei Baiov. Baiov stressed that history, along with strategy, was at the core of military science. However, Baiov and other Russian émigrés came under heavy criticism from the Estonian command, particularly Gen. Nikolai Reek, who thought Estonia was too small to require a school of strategy. In the background, there was the theoretical clash, carried over from the pre-war tsarist Russia, between the old generation of bayonet tactics and the new generation of fire and movement. In 1926, Baiov was fired, but Reek's reforms, which subordinated history to the needs of tactical training, remained incomplete even at the end of the 1930s. A number of questions about the utility and the substance of military history remained unresolved. Indeed, they are still not settled in Estonian officer education today.

How should military history be studied and taught, and what is its purpose? How can we transform the approach to military history so that it is as applicable as possible in military practice? And what part of military science is covered by the discipline of military history? These questions – which were discussed in many European countries more than 100 years ago – are salient in today's Estonia.[1] Even though similar discussions

[1] Igor Kopõtin, "Sõjaajaloo õpetamisest ja uurimisest Saksa Bundeswehri kogemustele toetudes," *Sõdur* 6 (2016): 45–49.

were held among Estonian military historians and service personnel just a few years ago, consensus has not yet been forged.[2] One solution, besides examining foreign experience, would be to take a look at the practices of teaching and researching military history in Estonia between the world wars, to understand how salient these issues were back then and what solutions were found in their regard. As questions of military history have been dealt with to some extent by other researchers,[3] the task at hand now would be to determine how military history was seen back then and identify the principles used to teach military history in the armed services.

In 1923, Estonian military education was consolidated into a single institution that went by the name "Sõjaväe Ühendatud Õppeasutused" (United Military Educational Institutions, UMEI).[4] All institutions in the UMEI system had their own curricula, which contained military history instruction. Historian Andres Seene has done noteworthy work in the study of Estonian military education. Unfortunately, while Seene's research deals quite thoroughly with the activities of the Kõrgem Sõjakool (Officers' School, KSK) and the Sõjaväe Tehnikakool (Military Technical School, STK), treatment of provision of education and various subjects at the Sõjakool (Military Academy, SK) is given shorter shrift.[5]

In the context of this article, one paper that should be considered important is the master's degree thesis defended by Andero Nimmer in 2013, which dealt with the activities of the War of Independence History Committee from 1926 to 1940.[6] Regardless of the fact that Nimmer's research focuses solely on the activities of the History Committee, valuable information can be found on how the commanding officers of the Estonian military viewed military history. It is important to note that Nimmer, at the end of the thesis, concluded that even in the early 1930s,

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[2] Kaarel Piirimäe, "Sõjaajalugu – kellele ja milleks? Sõjaajaloo perspektiivid (III)," *Tuna* 1 (2017): 146–148.

[3] Andero Nimmer, *Vabadussõja Ajaloo Komitee (1926–1940)* (master's thesis, Tartu Ülikool, 2013).

[4] The reason for the consolidation of the schools was lack of resources, especially in specialists and teaching staff, Andres Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride ettevalmistamise süsteemi kujunemine ja areng 1919–1940" (PhD thesis: Tartu Ülikool, 2011), 41.

[5] Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride."

[6] Nimmer, "Vabadussõja Ajaloo Komitee."

broad swathes of the officer corps did not feel a need for research on military history, as they felt it lacked practical value for military training.[7] In this connection, the observation by Kaarel Piirimäe – that the Estonian military command, and specifically Commander-in-Chief Johan Laidoner, did not draw the right conclusions from the War of Independence – seems eminently logical.[8] It is not quite clear in this regard whether this stemmed from lack of strategic thinking on the part of the officer corps, in particular the high command, or whether it was shaped by the inability of military educational institutions to develop the capability of the officer corps to learn from military history. In any case, the present research should help determine the importance of the military history discipline within Estonian military education in general.

The Beginning of Teaching of Military History and the Crisis Concerning the Military History Paradigm

Several researchers have pointed out the significantly large role played by Russian émigrés in establishing the military education tradition in Estonia in the first half of the 1920s.[9] The Higher General Staff Courses launched at Tondi in 1921 (and later held at the KSK) were taught by Russian émigré officers who laid the basis for the teaching of the military history discipline. An extraordinary role in this was played by a professor of the Imperial Nicholas General Staff Academy, the professor and military historian Lt. General Aleksei Baiov, who taught several different subjects

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7 Ibid., 90.

8 Kaarel Piirimäe, "Preparing for war in the 1930s: The myth of the Independence War and Laidoner's 'active defence'," *Estonian Yearbook of Military History* 7, no. 13 (2017): 132–134.

9 Ago Pajur, *Eesti riigikaitsepoliitika aastail 1918–1934* (Tartu: Eesti Ajalooarhiiv, 1999), 153. Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 43. Roman Abisogomjan (Абисогомян, Роман), "Rol' russkix voennyx dejatelej v obščestvennoj i kul'turnoj žizni Èstonskoj Respubliki 1920–1930-x gg i ix literaturnoe nasledie (Роль русских военных деятелей в общественной и культурной жизни Эстонской Республики 1920–1930-х гг. и их литературное наследие)" (Master's thesis, Tartu Ülikool, 2007), 46–54. Igor Kopõtin, "Rahvuslus ja lojaalsus Eesti sõjaväes vähemusrahvuste näitel 1918–1940" (PhD thesis, Tallinna Ülikool, 2018), 239–247.

Aleksei Baiov, Lt. General of the Imperial Russian army and former lecturer at the Estonian General Staff courses. On the photo, taken in 1931, Baiov wears the fourth class of the highest military decoration of the Russian Empire, Order of St. George. Courtesy: Parikas, Estonian Film Archive

at both the Estonian SK and for the General Staff courses. Among other things, he prepared the first curriculum for the General Staff courses and laid down the system for the organization of studies.[10]

In spite of the prolific research and teaching activity of the Russian émigrés and their professionalism, UMEI considered the use of Russians' services a temporary measure in place only until they could be replaced by Estonian teaching staff.[11] The teaching by Russian émigrés was considered outdated due to their traditional teaching methodology, and they were faulted for ignoring the contemporary (the Estonian War of Independence) experience. This led to the cutting of ties with the Russian émigrés in 1923–1926.[12] Nor were the students satisfied with the Russian teaching staff, and the discontent was especially felt among the officers who were assigned to Standing Forces Courses and had fought in the War

[10] Abisogomjan, "Rol' russkix voennyx," 48.
[11] Kopõtin, "Rahvuslus ja lojaalsus," 243, 246.
[12] Ibid., 243–244.

of Independence. One of them called the era "the Russian era" characteristic of the "general staff overtones wanting to force the development into a university with a grand strategy".[13]

It can now be firmly asserted that the harassment of Russian émigrés was, among other things, justified by a policy of fighting back against a "Russian ethos". The émigrés were faulted, with some justification, for being disloyal to the Estonian state and not proficient in Estonian.[14] But can a generational conflict be seen here to some degree as well? The Estonian military cast aside the experience of non-Estonian specialists in the imperial army, unlike the Red Army, where former tsarist army officers (including the Soviet military theoretician Aleksander Svechin, who was also known in the West) were given the chance to shine. For understandable reasons, the principles of military education followed in the Entente powers, above all, France, were preferred in the early 1920s, and an attempt was made to apply these Western ideas in Estonia as well.[15] Probably because of this, the Estonians hastened to rid themselves of the Russians.

The views of General Reek, who was highly influential for the development of the Estonian military and military education and who believed that it was necessary to teach military history, are therefore of interest. In 1921, Reek was the chairman of the Military Teaching Committee and UMEI Inspector. He was considered competent to decide such important assignments because he had military higher education[16] and War of Independence experience as regiment commander and division and frontline chief of staff.[17] Yet the choice of Reek can also be considered problematic, as Reek completed only short courses at the General Staff

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[13] Veste, "Tondil," *Sõdur* 6–8 (1928): 328.

[14] Kopõtin, "Rahvuslus ja lojaalsus," 239–248.

[15] See O.J., "Miks suundume läände," *Sõdur* 9/10 (1928): 410–411.

[16] Andres Seene, "Kindralleitnant Nikolai Reek ja tema sõjakirjanduslik pärand," – Nikolai Reek, *Sõjateaduslik testament*, ed. Andres Seene (Tartu: Ilmamaa, 2015), 9–10. It is worth noting that the peacetime graduates of the General Staff Academy did not accept wartime graduates as equal, calling them "недоучки" (half-educated) or even "недоноски" (premature babies), Andrej Ganin (Андрей Ганин), *Zakat Nikolaevskoj voennoj akademii 1914–1922 (Закат Николаевской военной академии 1914–1922)* (Moskva: Knižica, 2014), 430.

[17] Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 41.

Chief of the General Staff Nikolai Reek was always interested in military education. In this photo General Reek is inspecting the Officers' School at Tondi, Tallinn, in 1935. Courtesy: the photo collection of Igor Kopõtin

Academy and other division and front staff commanders had served in the War of Independence as well. No doubt one reason for the appointment of Reek was the trust and authority he enjoyed among other officers in the 1920s. Reek's views were supported by generals August Traksmaa and Juhan Tõrvand, who called Reek a progressive-minded officer.[18] The later Colonel Elias Kasak also supported Reek's candidacy. Still, Kasak admitted that Reek was a commander with a difficult personality who had extended the invitation for Russian émigrés to teach at the academy but did not create the necessary academic atmosphere at the General Staff Courses and levelled unfair criticism at the teaching staff.[19]

As one of the founders of higher military education in Estonia in 1921, Reek also wrote, even prior to his studies in France – citing Helmuth von

[18] Juhan Tõrvand, "Rohkem objektiivsust ja õiglast analüüsi," *Sõdur* 9/10 (1928): 378–379. See also Elias Kasak, "Mälestusi, II osa," RA, ERA.4996.1.125, 165.

[19] Kasak, "Mälestusi," 159.

Moltke and John Frederich Charles Fuller – that thorough knowledge of military history was a key element of military education, which equal to tactical training had to give commanders the "instinct for mounting major operations". He considered strategy and tactics the main subjects in military science.[20]

After his studies in France, Reek developed a different view of the importance of military history. In an article on officers' education published in the magazine *Sõdur* in 1926, Reek declared that military history was subordinate to tactical education. Reek called for significant cuts to be made to the History of the Art of War syllabus taught at the UMEI. In particular, earlier parts of the history before Napoleonic wars had to be cut, and there had to be near total focus on World War and War of Independence.[21] In other words, he believed general history of the art of war was necessary only insofar as it yielded good tactical examples. He saw two needs for teaching the history of the War of Independence. One was that the war was supposed to get officers into the habit of thinking and acting in the conditions of an independent Estonia, taking into account, in particular, the battlefield experience of the War of Independence and the use of human resources in the Estonian context.[22] Second, the history of the War of Independence was necessary, above all, for training officers.[23] These views probably determined Reek's "reform" in military education and shaped the teaching of military history from that point on.

Teaching of the history of the War of Independence and the synthesis of its lessons for officers were important, Reek felt, as they shaped the understanding of Estonia's military strategy. But precisely this, in the opinion of the historian Kaarel Piirimäe, was the problem, as it led to key miscalculations in the future vision of war. Piirimäe notes that the Russian émigré teaching staff deemed the experience in the War of

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[20] Nikolai Reek, "Ühise sõjalise doktriini väljatöötamise tähtsus juhtide seas," – *Sõjateaduslik testament*, 353, 357.

[21] Nikolai Reek, "Meie kaitseväe juhtiva koosseisu kasvatuse ja väljaõppe alalt," ibid., 391.

[22] Andres Seene, "Kõrgem Sõjakool 1921–1940," *KVÜÕA toimetised* 9 (2008): 37.

[23] Reek, "Meie kaitseväe," 391.

Independence specific, as an irregular amateur armed conflict.[24] Although this opinion in retrospect seems justified, the reason that Russian émigré teaching staff's stint at the UMEI was short-lived was because they did not give the War of Independence its due. Admittedly the problem was not unique, for just like the Estonian General Staff Courses, the Red Army General Staff Academy's old-school teaching staff likewise ignored the experience of the Russian Civil War, considering the conflict to also be an anomalous war.[25]

The fact that the study of recent historical conflicts was preferred over older historical conflicts was not unusual in military education. Furthermore, there is reason to think that it stemmed from the experience of the Nicholas General Staff Academy. After the defeat in the Russo–Japanese War, the General Staff Academy was accused of the inability to provide students truly essential knowledge needed in war. Teaching of military history came under fire, as it was allegedly preferred to teach details of little use regarding the history of the art of war from earlier periods, as the approach to more significant recent conflicts remained superficial.[26] For this reason, in teaching subjects related to pre-1914 military history, the academy focused, above all, on four recent armed conflicts, in which students were expected to be familiar, right down to their intricacies.[27]

In this connection it is important to note that the French model of military education, which was used as a model by Reek in the 1920s, was criticized by member of the War of Independence History Committee Major Oskar Jalajas. He defended a diploma thesis in the KSK,[28] but his ideas also reached a wider audience through articles in the magazine

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[24] Piirimäe, "Preparing for war," 132–135, 129.

[25] Kirill Mereckov (Кирилл Мерецков), *Na službe narodu (На службе народу)* (Moskva: Ast, 2003), 12–13.

[26] For example, Lt. Gen. Gleb Vannovski, who later served as lecturer at the Estonian general staff courses, clearly underestimated Japanese military strengths before the war, for which he was heavily criticised later, Nadežda Brinjuk (comp.) (Надежда Бринюк (сост.), *Nikolaevskaja Akademija General'nogo Štaba 1832–1918 (Николаевская Академия Генерального Штаба 1832–1918)* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrij Bulanin, 2018), 198.

[27] Ibid., 74–75.

[28] Oskar Jalajas, "Sõjakunstiajaloo ja sõjaajaloo uurimise tähtsus ja meetodid" (Kõrgema Sõjakooli lõputöö, 1929), RA, ERA.2124.3.268.

Sõdur, drawing the attention of senior Estonian officers such as Major General August Traksmaa.[29] In addition, the War of Independence History Committee adopted Jalajas's thesis for use in the field of methodology.[30]

In his thesis, Jalajas clearly cited the advantages of learning from German and Soviet military history compared to the French model. Specifically, he criticized the French attitude toward military history, which undervalued the importance of military history in military science. There was lack of a desire to learn from military history, papers on military history were not printed – the desire to save paper was cited – and the practical value of military history in the changing circumstances of warfare was not appreciated. In general, there was the view that winners did not need to learn anything from history.[31] Whether Estonia had a similar winner's mentality due to its victory in the War of Independence, is hard to evaluate.

It is also difficult to say how much the crisis in French military history influenced Reek during his period of study in Paris, but some of his comments do contain ideas characteristic of the French School. This can be sensed in the abovementioned Reek's opinion that the practical value of military history lay solely in the service of tactical education. At the same time, it must be admitted that Reek had also given a high assessment to the Reichswehr's military training and education system, due to which various elements from the German system were adopted in the Estonian military in the 1930s.[32] Yet it cannot be said that Reek turned his back on Russian military theory entirely. For example, in his article Reek quoted classic Russian military thinkers such as Generalissimo Alexander Suvorov, General Genrich Leer, General Mixail Dragomirov, Professor Colonel Alexander Neznamov and Professor Lieutenant Gen-

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[29] Nimmer, "Vabadussõja Ajaloo Komitee," 19.

[30] War of Independence History Committee to the VI department of the armed forces staff, 3 September 1930, RA, ERA.495.12.531, 159.

[31] Jalajas, "Sõjakunstiajaloo ja sõjaajaloo uurimise tähtsus," 7–8. Nimmer, "Vabadussõja Ajaloo Komitee," 19.

[32] Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 46, 49, 51. Reek, *Sõjateaduslik testament*, 404–410. Igor Kopõtin, "Reichswehri identiteedikriis: selle mõjud ja kajastamine Eestis 1919–1934," *Ajalooline Ajakiri* 1 (2016): 118.

eral Nikolai Golovin.[33] Admittedly, the majority of his articles consists of interpretations of quotations from various leading world thinkers and of the evolution of military art.

Major General August Traksmaa, who also taught military history at the UMEI, also saw a deep crisis that arose in the mid-1920s in military history teaching in Estonia. In his view, the factor behind this crisis was that, like the antecedent of the French army, the Estonian military command lost confidence in the military history discipline as a source of truth. The main problem for Traksmaa was not the winner's mentality but rather the low-quality military historical literature published *en masse* after the War of Independence.[34]

Reek associated the crisis in Estonian military education specifically with Russian émigrés, whom he wished to be rid of. Andres Seene uses the term "Reek reform" to denote the changes in Estonian military education in 1926–1927 that followed the dismissal of the Russian émigrés. In his article, Seene indicates that Reek promoted the use of active teaching methods modelled on the French military at UMEI. These were supported by the more progressive part of the Estonian officers, including Traksmaa and Major General Juhan Tõrvand. This was opposed by the older generation of teaching staff, including Major General Dmitri Lebedev, Colonel Artur Salf and several others, who had called for students to memorize, word for word, lecture outlines compiled by the teaching staff as the Russian émigré teaching staff had done previously.[35]

The latter fact, and the conflict throughout its spectrum, can be seen as the influence of the processes occurring at the Nicholas General Staff Academy from 1905 to 1914. More precisely, following the Russo–Japanese War, an acute conflict broke out at that educational institution between teachers representing the so-called "bayonet" generation and the

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[33] Nikolai Reek, "Sõjaväe sõjalise tegevuse juhatamise põhimõtted," – *Sõjateaduslik testament*, 189–190; Reek, "Korralduste andmisest sõjategevusel," ibid., 127. Nikolai Reek, "Ühise sõjalise doktriini väljatöötamise tähtsus juhtide seas," ibid., 343–352. Nikolai Reek, "Sõjaline olukord ja tema hindamine," ibid., 197–198.

[34] Nimmer, "Vabadussõja ajaloo komitee," 19–20.

[35] Seene, *Kõrgem*, 42–43.

newer "fire" generation.[36] Two giants of Russian military theory, Leer and Dragomirov, can be categorized among the older generation; simply put, they backed obsolete bayonet battle theory derived from the art of war in the first half of the 19th century.[37] The thinkers from the older generation included, among others, the historian and professor General of the Infantry Nikolai Mikhnevich and Baiov, who was heavily influenced by the former. Baiov had to defend the entire older generation's theoretical positions against strong criticism after the defeat in the war.[38] Since the younger generation included the capable French-trained professors Nikolai Golovin and Alexander Neznamov, whose convictions were partially vindicated in the First World War, the generational debate carried over to Russian émigrés (Golovin) and the Red Army's General Staff Academy (Neznamov). Among other things, the younger generation called for the modernization of the teaching staff's methods, preferring seminar format to lectures and independent study to rote memorization. As a

[36] Heavy criticism was levelled against the national school of thought represented among others by Leer and Dragomirov, who ostensibly failed to study contemporary military problems as they focused heavily on history. Mikhnevitch and Baiov clearly belonged to that school, see N. Kudrjavcev (Н. Кудрявцев), "Iskušenija russkogo polkovodčestva" (Искушения русского полководчества), *Voennyj Sbornik* (Военный Сборник) no. 4 (1913): 25–31. Mixnevitč argued that Russian military art was equal and even superior to the Western military art; even after the Russo–Turkish war of 1877–1878 he supported the bayonet over fire, Nikolaj Mixnevič (Николай Михневич), *Osnovy russkogo voennogo iskusstva. Sravnitel'nyj očerk sostojanija voennogo iskusstva v Rossii i Zapadnoj Evrope v važnejšie istoričeskie èpoxi* (Основы русского военного искусства. Сравнительный очерк состояния военного искусства в России и Западной Европе в важнейшие исторические эпохи) (Moskva: URSS, 2016), 136–137, 156, 168–169.

[37] Bruce W. Menning, "The Offensive Revisited. Russian Preparation for Future War, 1906–1914," – *Reforming the Tsar's Army: Military innovation in Imperial Russia from Peter the Great to the Revolution*, ed. David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Bruce W. Menning (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press with Cambridge University Press, 2004), 229. Walter Pintner, "Vene sõjaline mõtlemine: Lääne eeskuju ja Suvorovi vari," *Nüüdisaegse strateegia kujundajad Machiavellist tuumaajastuni*, ed. Peter Paret (Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, 2009), 433–437.

[38] Nadežda Brinjuk Brinûk, Èduard Koršunov, Andrej Mixajlov (Надежда Бринюк, Эдуард Коршунов, Андрей Михайлов), "'Celoe bogatstvo voennoj naučnoj mysli…' Ob izdanii 'Izvestij Imperatorskoj Nikolaevskoj Voennoj Akademii'" (Целое богатство военной научной мысли… Об издании "Известий Императорской Николаевской Военной Академии"), *Voenno-istoričeskij žurnal (Военно-исторический журнал)*, 12 (2017): 25–26.

result, the conflict between Baiov and Reek can be placed in precisely this context. Furthermore, the students at the UMEI sensed characteristics of the bayonet warfare generation in the older teaching staff. According to descriptions, they demanded that their students execute a manoeuvre using *udaletskaja taktika*, *švunk* and *armeiskaja konnitsa*, in disregard of modern warfare tactics and the experiences of recent wars.[39]

While still a professor of the Nicholas General Staff Academy, Baiov considered the history of the art of war an important subject in military education. The history of the art of war was intended to help students understand the current situation they and their adversary were in and serve as the foundation for military development. Baiov saw the use of active teaching methods proposed by Golovin and Neznamov (and slightly later in Estonia, Reek) as a risk, meaning that military education could lose scientific and formative value for military higher education and thereby become an NCO school or regiment training squad (as Reek put it, a "vocational school").[40] In this light, the conflict between Baiov and Reek ten years after the clash between teaching staff or schools of thought at Nicholas General Staff Academy seems like a logical continuation.

Another output of Reek's reform was preference for teaching of tactics over strategy. As a result, tactics became a more important subject at UMEI, as other subjects were placed in a merely supporting role.[41] While prior to reform, the main emphasis in military education was placed on strategy, philosophy of war and the theoretical fundamentals of the history of art of war, after 1926, it focused on teaching practical skills needed by junior officers, which allowed them to command units up to the company level.[42] From this point on, it was possible to detect a tendency to organize the entirety of the military training process on the basis of the "vocational school" principles mentioned above.[43] The influence

[39] Veste, "Tondil," 328. *Udaletskaija taktika* meant in the Russian jargon decisive infantry charge using bayonets.
[40] Brinjuk et al., "Celoe bogatstvo," 26.
[41] Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 44.
[42] Ibid., 45.
[43] Ibid., 51.

of the German military education model can be discerned in this shift, as according to it, officers had to acquire knowledge they could apply in practice.[44]

By giving direction to the development of Estonian military education between Western and Eastern warfare cultures, Reek clearly indicated a preference for the West.[45] Baiov, on the other hand, continuing in the tradition of Mikhnevich, considered Russian warfare superior to that of the West.[46] As we will see below, this belief on the part of Baiov was reflected in his years-long teaching stint at UMEI. This fact was yet another cornerstone of a conflict between Baiov and Reek, i.e. the older and younger generation.

What is interesting is that Jalajas chose Baiov's side in this conflict. Jalajas called the changes in Estonian military education in 1926–1927 not an illustrious reform but rather a deep crisis, linking it with the departure of professor Aleksei Baiov. Jalajas noted that Baiov played a key role in teaching military history in the Estonian military, as his authority and influence were instrumental in the teaching of military history as a core subject in UMEI up to 1926. After Baiov was dismissed, the volume of teaching of military history subjects was reduced significantly at UMEI.[47]

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[44] Hans von Seeckt, *Gedanken eines Soldaten* (Leipzig: K.F. Koehler, 1935), 127. See also James S. Corum, *Roots of Blitzkrieg: Hans von Seeckt and German Military Reform* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1992).

[45] General Tõrvand did not think the using of Russian lecturers was "normal" but he compared the situation to the practices of the University of Tartu, which – due to the lack of Estonian teachers – had also hired academics from abroad. Tõrvand did not think everything was bad about the Russian military school, as precisely the Russian military schools had laid the basis for the Estonian success in the War of Independence. Tõrvand thought attacks against Russian emigres were associated not with concerns over teaching methods but rather with "nationalist xenophobia and post-revolutionary radicalism", Tõrvand, "Rohkem objektiivsust," 378, 380.

[46] For example, Aleksej Baiov (Алексей Баиов), "Voennoe delo v èpohu imperatora Pavla I. Očerk ordinarnogo professora Imperatorskoj Nikolaevskoj Voennoj Akademii General'nogo štaba polkovnika A.K. Baiova" (Военное дело в эпоху императора Павла I. Очерк ординарного профессора Императорской Николаевской Военной Академии Генерального штаба полковника А.К. Баиова), – Kap'ëv, E. (Капьёв Е.). *Istorija Russkoj Armii* (История Русской Армии). (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo È, 2016), 169. Cf. Mixnevič, *Osnovy russkogo*, 6, 9, 133–134, 155–157.

[47] Jalajas, "Sõjakunstiajaloo ja sõjaajaloo uurimise tähtsus," RA, ERA.2124.3.268, 79.

It can be presumed that Jalajas was impressed not by Baiov as a personality but rather by the older generation as a whole, as they considered military history the pillar of military science. What is also noteworthy is that Jalajas was one of the first Estonians to interpret – and adapt for Estonian conditions – the ideas of the already renowned Soviet military theorist Alexander Svechin. In Jalajas's interpretation of his most important ideas, military history had fundamental importance in force generation and in military thinking. "If we do not devote enough attention to historical study, we can train only unskilled labourers in the military who are unfit for conscious invention, nor can they understand or apply rapid advances in military science," said Jalajas in his interpretation of Svechin, speaking of the role of military history in training Estonian officers.[48]

In providing evidence for the need for the scientific study of military history, Jalajas saw military history and the history of the art of war as sub-disciplines of the "military history science". The discipline of military history was in turn subordinate to the discipline of the history of the art of war, being the main source for the latter. Jalajas made no bones about the fact that he borrowed this hierarchy from the Russian tsarist army's practice.[49] But Jalajas defined the sub-disciplines of military history based on the German historian Ernst Bernheim's definitions. Paraphrasing Bernheim, Jalajas defined military history as a branch of science that researches and describes the spatial and temporal development of nations and states or parties with a "psycho-physical" causal connection from the perspective of the values of warfare. By "psycho-physical," he meant the object of research via both intangible and tangible factors; and by spatial-temporal development, he meant that the research had to be carried out in the context of societal phenomena. Based on the general definition of military history, the discipline had to focus on the study of a specific war from the viewpoint of values of warfare. The history of the art of war had to focus on the study of all wars from the standpoint of the evolution of warfare.[50]

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[48] Oskar Jalajas, "Sõjakunstiajaloo ja sõjaajaloo uurimise tähtsus ja meetodid," (Kõrgema Sõjakooli lõputöö, 1929), RA, ERA.2124.3.268, 45.

[49] Jalajas, "Sõjakunstiajaloo ja sõjaajaloo uurimise tähtsus," 18–19.

[50] Ibid.," 52–53. Nimmer, "Vabadussõja ajaloo komitee," 47.

It is very likely that this view of military history and its division into two sub-disciplines made the passage from the Russian General Staff Academy to Estonian military education through Baiov in particular. Even as late as in a study published at the Russian General Staff Academy in 1912, Baiov provided a detailed overview of the development of the study of military history in Russia, in which he introduced its principles. Baiov's description of the activity of the council headed by Count Miljutin in 1865 can be considered especially interesting. This council resulted in a definition of the nature of the study of military history, and the goals and methods of teaching it. It was the council that decided to divide the discipline into two branches – history of war as the analysis and description of military campaigns, and the history of the art of war, which was intended to study how methods of warfare changed in history from antiquity to modern times.[51] As we can see below, these principles were also in force in Estonian military education until 1940.

Military history subjects at the KSK

During Professor Baiov's time – up to 1926 – two military history subjects were taught at the KS: the history of the art of war and the history of the World War. Their volume was fairly great, as only tactics and general staff service subjects were even more voluminous.[52] After Baiov left UMEI, Reek shaped the teaching of military history at the KSK. His philosophy was that the teaching of strategic principles at the KSK had to be based on teaching the history of the art of war, which had in turn to consist of four subjects – general history of the art of war, the World War, the

[51] Aleksej Baiov (Алексей Баиов), *Istorija voennogo iskusstva, kak nauka (История военного искусства, как наука)* (St. Petersburg: Suvorin, 1912), 7–8. This principle was later used and developed in the Red Army. For Soviet theorists, military history was supposed to consist of five elements: history of wars, history of the art of war, military organisation, history of military technology, and the history of military theory, Peter V. Vigor, "The Function of Military History in the Soviet Union," –*Transformation in Russian and Soviet Military History*, ed. Carl W. Reddel (Washington: USAF Academy, 1990), 117.

[52] Georg Leets, "Kõrgem Sõjakool 1921–1931." Typed manuscript. RA, ERA.2124.3.588, 33.

War of Independence and the Russian Civil War.[53] In practice, however, only three subjects were taught, as the Russian Civil War was skipped as a separate subject. Thus, starting in 1927, three military history subjects were established at the KSK: the history of the art of war (evolution of the art of war), the history of the World War, and the history of the War of Independence.[54] Since that time, the volume of military history and strategy subjects was reduced to one-third of its former size.[55] But in spite of this, military history was generally considered as one of the core subjects at the KSK after tactics, strategy and staff service.[56]

In general, it was specifically during this time that Reek applied the principles of military education borrowed from France, bringing practical work methods into the study and shifting the main emphasis off strategy to tactics.[57] It seems that Reek's focus on recent conflicts was understood and accepted, especially among Military Academy students, who themselves wanted to know more about the history of the War of Independence and the World War. As mentioned above, the issue of studying conflicts from recent history at the Estonian KSK may have originated from the Nicholas General Staff Academy. In comparison, we can bring the fact that the same kind of question arose in the early years in the Red Army General Staff: what conflicts to teach and in what volume. Whereas the old-school teachers preferred to focus on the earlier history of the art of war, students were always keen on studying the history of the Russian Civil War and the history of the World War.[58] It was the later study and analysis of these two conflicts at the Red Army General Staff and Frunze Academy that became the basis of the renowned deep operation theory.[59] When the Red Army General Staff Academy was reopened in 1936, the

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[53] Nikolai Reek, "Meie kaitseväe juhtiva koosseisu – ohvitseride kasvatuse ja väljaõppe alalt," *Sõdur* 26/27 (1926): 553. Seene, *Kõrgem Sõjakool*, 37.

[54] Leets, "Kõrgem Sõjakool," 64–65. Exam protocol, September 1936, RA, ERA.650.1.1734, 55.

[55] Leets, "Kõrgem Sõjakool," 64–68.

[56] Seene, *Kõrgem Sõjakool*, 38.

[57] Leets, "Kõrgem Sõjakool", 52, 65.

[58] Mereckov, *Na službe narodu*, 74–75. Leonid Sandalov (Леонид Сандалов), *Perežitoe (Пережитое)*. (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1961), 12–13.

[59] Pavel Žilin (Павел Жилин), *Istorija voennogo iskusstva* (История военного искусства) (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1986), 106–107. Frederick W. Kagan, "The Rise and Fall of Soviet

chair of military history was re-established also. This chair principally dealt with the study and teaching of 18th and 19th century history, dealing with the major operations of the 20th century from the Russo–Japanese War, the World War and the Russian Civil War and developed methodology for teaching military history. Although older history was also taught in the context of the history of the art of war, the main emphasis was still placed on study of the World War. These principles in teaching the history of the art of war and military history remained in place at the Red Army General Staff Academy until 1940. At that time, analysis and integration into curricula of the experience of the Winter War and the Lake Khasan and Khalkhin Gol conflicts (which had recently taken place) began.[60]

The history of the art of war was one of the most important subjects at the KSK and was taught from 1927 to 1934 by Colonel Richard Tomberg, commander of the air force.[61] In the mid-1930s, the history of the art of war was taught under the name "evolution of the art of war" (for second year cadets) and its volume was 20 hours of lectures and two hours of practical assignments. In the opening lecture, Tomberg intended to discuss the importance of the evolution of military history and the art of war, and the methodologies and sources for its study. Thereafter, his lessons were to deal with various topics from ancient history to the early 20th century. The range of topics was broad and included a brief overview of the development of warfare in ancient times, knights' forces and mercenaries in medieval times, the reforms of Louis XIV, and the art of war of Peter the Great, Frederick the Great and Napoleon, and the French Revolution. The topics that dealt with the history of the art of war in the 19th and 20th centuries were larger in volume. According to Tomberg's plans, the subject was to conclude with the development of 20th century warfare and discussion over future.[62] In connection with the fact that there were

Operational Art," – *The Military History of the Soviet Union*, ed. Robin Higham and Frederick W. Kagan (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2010), 86–87.

60 Fedot Gajvoronskij et al., (Федот Гайворонский и др.), *Академия Генерального Штаба (Akademija General'nogo Štaba)* (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1987), 33, 42–43.

61 Leets, "Kõrgem Sõjakool," 64–65, 77–79.

62 Colonel Tomberg to KSK, March 1934, course syllabus for the Evolution of the Art of War, RA, ERA.650.1.1707, 36–37.

constant attempts to decrease the volume of military history subjects at UMEI, the subject was entrusted in 1934 to Major Mart Haber (since 1940 Kaerma), a fresh graduate of the KSK; he was willing to teach the course in a volume of only 15 hours.[63]

The problem of the volume of the subject at the KSK also pertained to the history of the World War, with Major Herbert Grabbi being named responsible for the subject starting in 1927.[64] At first, the volume of the subject depended on the existence of the corresponding entrance examination, as independent study by prospective students prior to admission was considered important in acquiring theoretical knowledge in order to gain more time for practical assignments. At the same time, Grabbi found that the 25 hours of lectures and one independent assignment for the winter period contained in the syllabus was too little for passing the subject as the volume did not allow students to complete the lecture material printed by the teaching staff in 1930. This fact forced the lecturer to look for a way out, making the subject more student-centred, preferring active study methods to the lecture format. In Grabbi's opinion, it would be difficult to decide what specific topics could have been discussed in the context of the subject.[65]

Starting in 1927, the history of the War of Independence was taught by Lt. Col. Jaan Maide, who was replaced in 1930 by Colonel Traksmaa. The history of the War of Independence was different to other military history subjects in terms of its larger – 37-hour – volume. The subject was divided into two unequal parts. The first introductory part discussed the impact of the Russian Revolution on Estonia, while the second part focused directly on war events. The thematic structure of the subject was reminiscent of the table of contents of the history of the Estonian War of Independence published by the War of Independence History Committee's working group led by Traksmaa in the late 1930s and focused on describing military and, partially, military-political events.[66] Yet the volume of the War of Independence history subject decreased by an

[63] Ibid.
[64] Leets, "Kõrgem Sõjakool," 64–65, 77–79.
[65] Lt-Col Grabbi to KS, March 1934, RA, ERA.650.1.1707, 83.
[66] Course syllabus, the Estonian War of Independence, academic year 1934–1935, Ibid., 77.

entire 2/3 in the late 1930s. From there on, the subject hinged on only ten lectures.[67]

The strategy subject also had a strong connection with military history disciplines. The teacher of the subject, Maj. Gen. Herbert Brede, integrated strategy very closely with the history of the art of war. During the 1930s, the subject also encompassed the manoeuvres of Frederick the Great and Napoleon, the history of the general staff in the Franco–Prussian War and the World War, and gave an overview of the strategy of the three countries in the World War based on the example of Ferdinand Foch, Erich Ludendorff and Conrad Hötzendorf. The volume of the subject was equal to one history subject, including a total of 20 hours of lectures and an hour of practical work.[68]

Even though there were attempts in the 1930s to reduce the load in the KSK curriculum by reducing history subjects, the military history disciplines were, despite their theoretical nature, represented significantly in the management and staff service course.[69] Furthermore, it can be said that probably due to a need for practical examples, two subjects in the military history field were devoted to recently ended conflicts – the World War and the War of Independence. While the French school's approach to military history can be discerned, it can probably be explained by the fact that the predominant majority of teaching staff who taught military history subjects and strategy – Reek himself and Brede, Traksmaa and Grabbi – had obtained their own military education in France, where they presumably adopted French army beliefs and views on issues concerning military science, strategy and military history.

[67] Course syllabus, the Estonian War of Independence, undated but probably 1935, RA, ERA.495.12.574, 990–991.

[68] Course syllabus, Strategy, probably 1935, ibid., 985.

[69] Situation with courses on 1 February 1935, RA, ERA.650.1.1706, 66.

Military history subjects in the Military Academy

How was the teaching of military history structured in other subsidiary institutions of the UMEI where lower-level leadership personnel were educated? What principles was it based on and what share in the curriculum did military history subjects comprise in the Military Academy (henceforth SK) and the Military Technical School (henceforth STK)?

Statistics on the distribution of UMEI subjects in the years 1925–1926 show that 16 military subjects and 20 general subjects were taught in the SK's officers and cadets' class. By volume, the history of the art of war came second after practical tactics and made up 10 per cent of the total volume of the subjects in the officers' class in the infantry area of study and nine per cent of the artillery area of study. In the senior and junior cadets' class, the history of the art of war made up 10 to 14 per cent of the total curriculum volume.[70] It is noteworthy that besides the history of the art of war, students in the officers' class and the cadets' general class (who were acquiring secondary education) could also take two history subjects among the general subjects. These were homeland history and general history – and the volume was likewise considerable.[71]

The history of the art of war syllabus taught by Baiov in Russian for the officers' courses included 41 topics with a volume of 75 hours and dealt with the art of war from Ancient Greece to the 1914 battles in the First World War. A certain slant toward Russia can be noted in the topics of the art of war syllabus – for example, in shedding light on the Peter the Great and Napoleonic eras – although the syllabus did not cover any Russian art of war in the Middle Ages, and the World War topics focused only on battles along the Western Front.[72] It is now hard to say how much the Baiov syllabus was cut by the administration of the UMEI, but it had several times fewer Russian topics than the Baiov's lecture notes used as study material.

During the Baiov era, the history of the art of war subject at the SK was divided into two unequal parts. In the cadets' junior class, Baiov

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[70] UMEI curriculum, 1925–1926, RA, ERA.650.1.1668, 1.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Course syllabus, History of the Art of War, officers' courses at SK, 1924–1925, RA, ERA.50.1.1668, 14.

taught 10 lectures in 1924 and 1925, which encompassed topics ranging from Ancient Rome to the Napoleonic era.[73] The subject continued in the senior cadets' class with 25 lectures, of which one-third were devoted to the operations in the first year of the World War on the Baltic Sea. The course started with Napoleon's campaigns and included a few of the more famous wars of the 19th and 20th century, which Baiov apparently taught following Mikhnevich's textbook.[74] There were many examination questions and they required a very thorough knowledge of the subject in regard to different armed conflicts.[75] On the basis of these, we can presume that students had to memorize facts in order to pass the course, something that the UMEI administration criticized the Russian lecturers for. It is interesting that the examiner may not have been Baiov, who taught the subject, but someone else. For instance, in 1924, the examinations were accepted by Richard Tomberg,[76] who was still serving as a captain but later took over the teaching of history of the art of war partially from Baiov, and in 1927, Jaan Maide.[77] It is not quite clear what the aim of these substitutions was, whether to check the outcomes of Baiov's teaching activity or whether Tomberg and Maide were serving as Baiov's assistants.

In 1924, as directed by the UMEI administration – probably by Reek – Baiov's thematic plan was cut back in both the cadets and the officer candidates' class. As a result, ancient and medieval art of war were omitted and the course was to start with the Gustavus Adolphus era.[78] In the officer candidates' class, Baiov taught the history of the art of war in

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[73] "Programma istorii voennogo iskusstva na 1924–25 učebnyj god" (Программа истории военного искусства на 1924–25 учебный год), Cadets' younger class, RA, ERA.650.1.1668, 192.

[74] "Programma istorii voennogo iskusstva na 1924–25 učebnyj god" (Программа истории военного искусства на 1924–25 учебный год), Cadets' senior class, ibid., 133. N. P. Mixnevič (Н. П. Михневич), *Vojna meždu Germaniej i Franciej 1870–1871*. Čast' 1. Ot načala vojny do Sedana vključitel'no (Война между Германией и Францией 1870–1871. Часть 1. От начала войны до Седана включительно) (St. Petersburg: Akademija General'nogo štaba, 1897).

[75] Exam plan, History of the Art of War, April 1925, RA, ERA.650.1.1668, 193–196.

[76] Exam plan, History of the Art of War, 1924, RA, ERA.650.1.1670, 24–27.

[77] Exam plan, History of the Art of War, 1926.–1927, RA, ERA.650.1.1039, 33.

[78] Course syllabus, History of the Art of War 1923–1924, RA, ERA.650.1.1670, 30.

1925 based on an abridged syllabus in the amount of 31 lectures. The topics covered were generally the same as in the cadets' class, but the main emphasis was placed on the so-called decisive battles starting from the Ancient Rome up to the WWI battles in Flanders in 1914.[79] In 1925, Baiov submitted the original syllabus prepared in 1922 once again to the officer candidates' class. It was cut back even more, however, and the course was to start from the Napoleonic era. One-third of the subject was devoted to the events of the World War, partly by decreasing the amount of coverage of the Franco–Prussian and the Russo–Japanese War.[80] Despite the cuts, the teaching of the history of the art of war also continued in subsequent years after the departure of Baiov, and largely according to the structure of the thematic plan he had proposed.[81]

From 1927, following Reek's decision the older cadets' class and officer candidates' class at the SK began to be taught a separate subject – the History of World Warfare – integrated with other subjects. In teaching world warfare, the main emphasis was placed on operations that took place during the periods of manoeuvre warfare in 1914 and 1918, with position warfare serving merely as the "connecting link".[82] Because of this the officer candidates and cadets in the oldest class were required to have especially good knowledge of the Marne battles and the Russian invasion of East Prussia.[83] In War of Independence history, taught in 1927 and 1928 by Lt. Col. Maide, the senior year cadets were required to know the most important battles and operations, such as the Battle of Narva, the Pskov and Petrograd operations, the war in northern Latvia and the Landeswehr War.[84] Also in the 1930s, the War of Independence history

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[79] "Programma istorii voennogo iskusstva na 1924–25 učebnyj god" (Программа истории военного искусства на 1924–25 учебный год), Officer candidates' class, RA, ERA.650.1.1668, 296.

[80] Exam plan, History of the Art of War, probably edited by UMEI commander, 1925, RA, ERA.650.1.1668, 331–332.

[81] Entrance exam plan, History of the Art of War, 1927–1928, RA, ERA.650.1.1077, 21.

[82] *SÜÕ Sõjakooli õppekavad*. 2. osa. Kadettide õppekavad [UMEI teaching programme, 2nd part, cadets' programmes] (SÜÕ: Tallinn, 1930), V–VI.

[83] Cadets' and officer candidates' class, entrance exam plan for History of Warfare, 1927–1928, RA, ERA.650.1.1077, 25.

[84] Entrance exam plan, War of Indepdendence, cadets' class, 1927–1928, Ibid., 63.

subject taught in the cadets' class was seen primarily as a continuation of what was taught in the officer candidates' class but in intensified form. Attention had to be devoted to individual battle periods and war events in connection with the political situation.[85]

Military history lessons, particularly WWI and the Russo–Japanese War, were taken into account not only in the military history subjects but also general tactics – but only before 1926.[86] Military history was most integrated with military subjects in the SK classes before the UMEI administration began to intervene.[87] After Baiov and the other Russian émigrés were dismissed, military history became less integrated with other subjects in the SK classes.[88]

The new UMEI cadets' class curriculum approved in 1930 by the Defence Minister recategorized the military history disciplines under general military subjects, the function of which was not only to develop the student's intellect and the general educational level, but rather, together with military subjects, create an integral set of knowledge and skills that was necessary for future officers as leaders and educators. The curriculum declared the military direction of the military history disciplines, such as the history of the art of war and the history of the World War. Together with other general military subjects, military history had to demonstrate to students that "military sciences were just a part of the general sciences".[89] The thesis of the curriculum that stemmed from it was that the evolution of military science and the art of war were closely connected with general cultural development. This showed that the senior officers who were behind the approval of the curriculum and belonged to the military command had developed, by this time, a systematic and comprehensive understanding of military education as a whole, as well as the meaning of military history specifically.

Based on both official curricula and SK's correspondence on matters pertaining to the organization of study, we can say that the teaching of

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85 *SÜÕ Sõjakooli õppekavad*. 2. osa. Kadettide õppekavad (SÜÕ: Tallinn, 1930), VI.

86 Course syllabus, general tactics, 1924, RA, ERA.650.1.1668, 270.

87 *Programma taktiki pexoty na 1923–1924 učebnyj god*, RA, ERA.650.1.1670, 1.

88 Entrance exam plan, infantry tactics, 1927–1928, RA, ERA.650.1.1077, 2–4.

89 *SÜÕ Sõjakooli õppekavad. 2. osa. Kadettide õppekavad* (SÜÕ: Tallinn, 1930), II.

military history disciplines did not change much in the 1930s. Although the volume of military history subjects did decrease slightly, these subjects retained the same proportion to other subjects in the cadets' class curriculum. The distribution of topics was likewise unchanged. In the history of the art of war curriculum, much greater emphasis was placed on 19th century armed conflicts, highlighting the most important military events that had the greatest influence on the development of the art of war. While the history of the art of war was taken by the younger class, the history of the War of Independence and the history of the World War was taken in the senior cadets' class.[90]

The distribution of military history subjects clearly shows the principle declared by Reek in 1926, according to which the SK should focus on study of recent military events, as the older era had to be given only cursory treatment. In the same curriculum, it was recognized, probably on the influence of professor Baiov, that the history of the art of war was one of the oldest and broadest subjects at the SK. In spite of that, the cuts in the subjects were justified by the argument that future officers had to know only a minimum amount of military history events. The curriculum designers deemed it important for students to be able to continue research into the history of art of war independently when serving as officers. For this purpose, the SK was tasked with inciting in the subject and "lead them to the sources for in-depth study of the topic."[91]

The teaching of history at the STK does not deserve much attention, as it operated only for a few years, with long hiatuses, and the education provided at this institution had a clear technical slant. From 1920 to 1923, the STK, similarly to the SK, taught both military history and history for obtaining a secondary school graduation certificate. Military history and other military subjects were taught in daytime format, as secondary school subjects were taught in the evening.[92] After 1936, the SK's military history teacher Maj. Juhan Vermet taught the history of World War and the history of the art of war to third-year students at the STK. The choice

[90] Ibid., V. Distribution of SK courses, 1930, RA, ERA.650.1.298, 22.

[91] *SÜÕ Sõjakooli õppekavad*. 2. osa. Kadettide õppekavad (SÜÕ: Tallinn, 1930), V.

[92] Vassili Villemson, "Eesti Vabariigi Sõjaväe Tehnikakool 1920–1923," *KVÜÕA toimetised* 6 (2006): 59–60.

of topics was similar to that taught at the SK – starting with the art of war in ancient times and ending at the Franco–Prussian War. The history of the World War was a continuation of the history of the art of war and focused on analysis of a number of battles.[93] In addition, the assistant to the commander of the War of Independence History Committee, Captain Edmund Püss, taught the history of the War of Independence at the STK. The topics covered in lessons were similar to those taught at the SK and the KSK.[94] Elements of military history could also be noted in other lessons in the speciality, such as explosives, ordnance and weapons instruction.[95]

Analysing the curricula of SK cadets and officer candidates, Andres Seene noted the tendency of history teaching in Estonia, according to which the selection of subjects taught at the SK and teaching methods had to shape a military mindset in prospective military leaders, allowing him to become oriented and quickly take a decision up to company commander level. Nation-state ideology was considered important in approaching theoretical subjects; in the context of every subject, teaching staff were to develop patriotism, the will to defend their country and a sense of duty in their classes.[96] This largely determined the volume of military history disciplines and the corresponding goal-setting in studies. For example, studies were extended at the KSK in 1938 by one year and the new subjects added included national defence and war leadership as a strategic subject and Estonian history during the early medieval times.[97] This trend showed clearly that the number and volume of military history subjects increased at higher levels of military education. This was quite reasonable, as an understanding of military history was needed more specifically at senior military leadership levels.

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[93] Victor Orav, "Eesti Vabariigi Sõjaväe Tehnikakool 1920–1923," *KVÜÕA toimetised* 6 (2006): 156, 162.

[94] Ibid., 174, 176.

[95] Ibid., 156–158, 174.

[96] Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 54.

[97] Ibid., 61.

Military history teaching staff

The first academic teaching staff member in Estonia can be considered to be the aforementioned Professor Baiov. From 1904 to 1914, he was a professor as well as manager of Nicholas General Staff Academy, being responsible for academy life and research. A number of his former students characterized Baiov as lacking talent, a boring teacher who considered himself an expert on the Empress Anne era (1730–1740) and not interested in modern warfare. On the other hand, he was also considered calm and supportive of students.[98] In spite of his strong academic background and extensive experience, his lectures at the academy were considered boring. A joke about Baiov made its rounds during this time: once Baiov's class awoke because of a sudden crash of something falling. It turned out a rat was running inside the auditorium's ceiling, stopped to listen to Baiov and fell asleep, then fell down.[99] It was probably his outdated, obsolete teaching style that encouraged Reek to look for ways of enriching the teaching process through active teaching methods. In spite of that fact, Baiov's contribution to the development of military education in Estonia should not be underestimated, especially when it comes to teaching military history.

Although Baiov often came under criticism for his outdated teaching methods and use of Russian, he was highly regarded by one student at the General Staff Courses, Elias Kasak. In his opinion, Baiov's lectures were lively and were based on proper lecture outlines he himself had prepared. It can be presumed that Baiov stood out positively from other Estonian teaching staff due to his professionalism, as the calibre of Estonian teaching staff was very low and did not meet the objectives of the General Staff Courses.[100]

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[98] Ganin, *Zakat*, 374–375. Boris Šapošnikov (Борис Шапошников), *Vospominanija. Voenno-naučnye trudy (Воспоминания. Военно-научные труды.)* (Moskva: Voennoe izdatel'stvo ministerstva oborony SSSR, 1982), 125.

[99] Ganin, *Zakat*, 375.

[100] Kasak, *Mälestusi*, 167–168.

After Baiov's departure, Jaan Maide taught the history of the art of war at the SK,[101] Maide being a later colonel and long-serving chief of staff of the Defence League. At the KSK, the history of the World War was taught for a long while by Herbert Grabbi,[102] head of the SK and president's senior aide de camp.

One of the most authoritative military history teachers was August Traksmaa, a long-serving head of department VI of the General Staff, leader of efforts to research the history of the War of Independence, promoted in 1939 to major general. The officer candidates considered Traksmaa to be a great authority as he published a book on the history of the War of Independence that the candidates read and discussed. The history of War of Independence subject was perhaps the one that students viewed most "fondly".[103] Traksmaa was said to have stood out for the objectivity of his lectures. He was said to have also covered mistakes made by Estonians and his "positions were at odds with the exalting braggadocio of festive speeches". He considered moral requirements of the military to be important, and the might of a more powerful adversary had to be compensated by the strong esprit de corps and good training of the smaller military. This, he felt, had led to victory in the War of Independence.[104]

The novels written by the writer Lindsaar, a former student at SK, allow us to conclude that officer candidates trusted their history lecturers and their lectures were convincing and motivating for the candidates. In addition to the lecturer on the history of the War of Independence, Lindsaar also praised the lecturer who taught the history of the art of war – this most likely being the Major General Richard Tomberg – who was likewise said to have cited good examples of how a small army was able to prevail over a larger one thanks to good moral character.[105] At any rate, the idea, cultivated in military education, of a patriotic ideologi-

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[101] Course syllabus, History of the Art of War, 1930, RA, ERA.650.1.298, 27.
[102] Ibid., 28.
[103] Peeter Lindsaar, *…ja sõdurid laulavad*, vol. 2 (Eesti Kirjanike Kooperatiiv: Lund, 1962), 161.
[104] Ibid., 157–158.
[105] Ibid., 156–158.

cal narrative being preferred to military science calculations was indeed prominent in Estonia military thinking.[106]

In general, we see that the officers who taught military history subjects were mainly experienced senior officers of whom most attained the rank of major general. Despite this fact, a number of them were not trained as historians. Here we could cite the thesis advanced by Nimmer – that the officers who served on the War of Independence History Committee and had dealt with military history lacked good career prospects in the service.[107] It was probably because of this that there were no military historians who were professional officers with an academic degree in history. It is likely that the situation was better when it came to teaching military history as opposed to military history research because unlike the War of Independence History Committee, the UMEI employed authoritative senior officers – indeed, the military's intellectual elite of that era – as military history lecturers.

The military history teaching staff at the UMEI can be deemed relatively competent, at least from the military perspective. In Seene's opinion, the fact that a number of UMEI teaching staff had earlier been educated as schoolteachers and thus were interested in pedagogical work education also played a significant role.[108] Yet as Seene rightly notes, the UMEI suffered from a shortage of teaching staff in connection with the dismissal of Russian lecturers that could not be compensated by the senior officers who returned from France. As a result, the SK staffed only two permanent lecturers in 1928, as only temporary staff were left to organize all provision of education at the KSK.[109]

The temporary teaching staff undoubtedly included specialists acclaimed in their field. For example, in the years 1934–1936, General Laidoner, among the temporary teaching staff at the KSK, had to personally teach strategy (the political, "high strategy" part). General Reek taught the practical side of strategy for the Estonian conditions and staff service. He also taught the history subject – tactics of forces in the World

[106] Piirimäe, "Preparing for War," 131.
[107] Nimmer, "Vabadussõja Ajaloo Komitee," 19.
[108] Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 45.
[109] Ibid., 55.

War. The theoretical part of strategy was taught by Maj. General Brede. Colonel Traksmaa, who had dealt thoroughly with the subject, taught the War of Independence, and the evolution of the art of war was taught for a longer period by Gen. Tomberg. Major Mart Haber (Kaerma) taught at least one course, being himself a fresh graduate of the KSK.[110]

Despite the long-standing practice of using temporary teaching staff, in 1936 the UMEI administration reached the understanding that temporary lecturers were so overloaded with direct service duties that they could not prepare well for lessons. Their lessons were often deficient in terms of pedagogy. Nor could they stick to the KSK schedule, as a result of which cancelled classes and relocations were a chronic problem.[111] This leads us to a key conclusion that the noble attempts to enrich studies with active teaching methods and making all of military education better may have collided with serious difficulties due to the shortage of qualified teaching staff. As we have seen, this problem could not be solved in the mid-1930s.

In 1936, the situation probably improved slightly when more permanent teaching staff were included in the SK. At the same time, all military history subjects had to be taught at the SK – the history of the World War, the history of War of Independence and the history of the art of war – by just one teacher, this being Major Vermet.[112] The general trend of having the same teaching staff teach several subjects at several UMEI institutions was seen since the early 1920s. This mainly pertained to SK and STK classes.[113]

Sometimes inspections of the teaching work done by the lecturer were conducted, but only with the permission of the chief-of-staff of the Defence Forces. A committee was formed to evaluate the work of teachers. The committee notified the lecturer that the inspection would take place two days in advance. The lecturer then had to prepare a sample lesson 45 minutes long. In the course of the inspection, the committee evaluated the substantive and pedagogical side of the lesson. In the substantive part, the committee looked at whether the lecturer used language that was

[110] List of temporary teaching staff, SK, 1934–1936, RA, ERA.650.1.1706, 29.
[111] SK activity report, 01.04.1935–31.03.1936, ibid., 153.
[112] Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 79.
[113] Villemson, "Eesti Vabariigi Sõjaväe Tehnikakool," 42, 60.

understandable to the listeners and the right terms and definitions. In the pedagogical part, the committee looked at whether the lecturer was able to provide examples, draw connections between practical and historical examples (if it was a subject different to history), had clear diction and grammatically correct language and syntax, and whether the lecturer achieved the aims of the lesson. Three members could serve on the committee. One was a UMEI representative (generally the head of the UMEI), a representative from the relevant speciality from the Defence Forces staff, and a representative of department VI (training) on the Defence Forces staff.[114] Unfortunately, it has not proved possible to find any of those evaluation reports in the archives. In any case, it can be presumed that the lecturers' work was treated with full seriousness in the Estonian military.

Finally, we should discuss at greatest length the personality of Vermet, with regard to whom his students gave interesting but quite contradictory assessments. Onetime SK cadet Rudolf Bruus considered Vermet one of the best teachers at the UMEI. He was said to have expressed his talents so interestingly that even decades later, Bruus recalled how Vermet had presented the battles of Cannae and Marne.[115] Unfortunately, Bruus' assessment of Vermet diverged completely from the rating given by Victor Orav, who studied at the STK in the late 1930s and remembered Vermet being called "Moltke", as he was not at all a good public speaker.[116] Orav said his manner of presentation in the history of the art of war was dry and left his audience indifferent. Yet Orav noted that this course did not only discuss historical events but also analysed major battles. This was of greater interest to the students.[117] This description and analysis above lead us to a key conclusion that the teaching of military history was often based on personality and depended greatly on the lecturer who taught the course and his ability to get his listeners interested.

Vermet's view of military history and the principles followed in teaching military history subjects can be determined based on a textbook he compiled, in the introduction to which he made a few declarative state-

[114] Lecture inspection, secret report, 02.10.1935, RA, ERA.495.12.574, 214.
[115] Lindsaar, *…ja sõdurid laulavad*, vol. 2, 63.
[116] Orav, „Eesti Vabariigi Sõjaväe Tehnikakool," 162.
[117] Ibid.

ments. For example, Vermet saw the art of war as the ability to make expedient and purposeful use of forces in war. He felt that the history of the art of war had to cover and study the manner in which the armed forces in the history of various peoples had been formed, organized, prepared for combat, supplied and used in combat. In addition, the history of the art of war had to consider the psychosocial, political, economic and historical factors that impacted on war. That is why Vermet, with reference to Svechin, called the history of the art of war a discipline of cultural history.[118] Under the influence of Richard Tomberg and as interpreted by Vermet, the history of the art of war had to discipline the researcher's intelligence, develop a perception of reality in the researcher, accustom them to seeing the big picture, draw connections between events and their causes and teach them to critically view all military history questions.[119]

Teaching of military history at the UMEI

In the early 1920s, the teaching methods of the SK were considered outdated, the method of presentation too theoretical and institutional culture as old fashioned and Russian minded. The fact that lectures were held in Russian exhausted the students in the long term.[120] As mentioned earlier, the Russian émigrés were not taken seriously at the SK and a number of jokes spread among the cadets.[121] But here the question comes up: did the methodology for teaching military history become more effective after the departure of professor Baiov? Andres Seene believes that practically oriented assignments began to be predominant as a result of Reek's reforms. In particular, he cites the staff rides to battle grounds that took place in addition to tactics lessons.[122] Yet it remains unclear how quickly these changes were introduced into military history subjects.

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[118] Juhan Vermet, *Sõjakunsti ajalugu*. 1. osa, Sõjakunsti areng vanade klassikarahvaste ajajärgust Napoleoni ajajärgu lõpuni (Tallinn: Sõjavägede Staabi VI Osakond, 1939), XV.
[119] Ibid., XVI.
[120] Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 42–44.
[121] Peeter Lindsaar, *Värska*. Romaan (Lund: Eesti Kirjanike kooperatiiv, 1977), 18.
[122] Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 48.

In a programmatic article on the restructuring of military education, Reek writes that teaching staff had to apply a greater share of active teaching methods in teaching military history. In the history of the art of war and in particular, in the history of the World War and the War of Independence, the lecturer had to focus on a detailed description of the entire chain of events, not analysis of individual battles. The analysis had to highlight the preparation for battles, leadership in battle, use of equipment and cooperation between branches of the military. To teach the context of events, facts previously presented as text had to be visualized by graphs and tables and posted on the walls of the auditorium. In this regard, the teaching of military history at the UMEI and in particular at the SK had to be completely reorganized.[123]

When Reek's changes were introduced, it was decided in 1927 to make slight adjustments to the SK's cadets and officer candidates' curricula. The attempt to make the curricula in the SK's classes more practical became a goal unto itself. For that reason, the UMEI administration felt it necessary to increase the number of practical lessons and decrease the number of theoretical classroom hours. The necessity of formation training lessons in particular was stressed when it came to practical lessons. Yet the greatest achievement can be considered to be the shortening of the lessons from 90 minutes to 50 minutes.[124]

The course outlines and homework preserved by Maksim Grauer, who was in the cadets' class of 1938–1939, allow a few conclusions to be drawn regarding studies in military history subjects. For example, the subject World War History followed Reek's principle to focus on the manoeuvring stages in 1914 and 1918 as illustrated by a number of operations on the Western and Eastern fronts. On the basis of course outlines, we can say that a majority of the lesson was spent by lecturer Vermet talking about the course of the operation with an accuracy of specific dates, and the second part of the lesson gave a comprehensive assessment of

[123] Reek, "Meie kaitseväe juhtiva koosseisu kasvatuse ja väljaõppe alalt," – *Sõjateaduslik testament*, 391.

[124] UMEI commander's report about SK teaching programme, 1927, RA, ERA.650.1.1077, 87. The tendency to increase practical subjects at the cost of theoretical subjects was also pronounced at the NCO school, Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 53, 55, 69.

the events. The treatment of operations was quite detailed and included data on the manoeuvres that were carried out by units ranging from brigades to the whole army.[125] In the subject history of the War of Independence, attention was devoted – for a majority of the time in the lecture hall – to analysis of battles. On one hand, there were many battles covered, yet analysis of the operations – which contained assessments of the belligerent sides' actions and lessons learnt – allowed cadets more easily to connect what they learned to their own service at platoon and company level.[126]

Recollections published at various times provide reflection on the provision of education at UMEI. Although Lindsaar wrote fiction, his work reflects the atmosphere and background of events at SK to an important degree.[127] He wrote that the relative importance of lectures was quite sizeable. Constant attendance of lectures at SK required unwavering attention and tired the students so that many ended up falling asleep on or under the bench. As the cadets knew the lecturers better than the officer candidates did, they knew exactly whose lectures were safe to sleep in. The self-respect of the lecturers prevented them from reprimanding the sleeping students, which led to awkward situations in the lecture hall. At the same time, it can also be concluded from Lindsaar's description that in spite of it all, the lecturers were seen by the candidates as undisputed authorities because most of the lecturers had fought in the War of Independence.[128]

The subject of history met with lively interest from the officer candidates. Many questions and counterarguments were aired after the lectures, all based on "rumours among the public". For example, the Battle of Tannenberg – the Russian invasion of East Prussia – raised questions. The officer candidates asked follow-up questions regarding the actions of General Samsonov, the commander of the 2nd Army. The Battle of

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[125] Ensign Maksim Grauer's conspectus in the subject History of Warfare, 1938 or 1939, Museum of the Estonian Military Academy (hereafter MEMA), fond 654.1.1, unpaginated.

[126] Ensign Maksim Grauer's conspectus in War of Independence, results of battles, grades and lessons learned, 1938 or 1939, MEMA 654.1.2, unpaginated.

[127] Seene, "Eesti ohvitseride," 34.

[128] Peeter Lindsaar, *…ja sõdurid laulavad*, vol. 2, 16–18, 159–160.

A caricature illustrating the generational chasm in the history lecture in the 1920s Estonia: a professor is imagining the battles of the Great War but the effort just appears as a comical performance to listeners. Source: Sõdur 6–8 (1928): 334

Tannenberg, one of the most thoroughly covered cases, was in fashion and was taught in both the officer candidates' and cadets' class.[129]

The lessons on the history of the War of Independence met with the most interest from students because many of them had personal experience and emotions connected to the war, which occurred during the childhood of the officer candidates and cadets. The officer candidates always tried to supplement the lecturer with personal recollections and shared impressions after the lectures. A particularly substantive discussion started while cleaning rifles, when the officer candidates had time to recall moments from the War of Independence, experiences they lived through, communist atrocities witnessed, finding themselves amidst the fighting, or some remembered song.[130]

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[129] Lindsaar, …ja sõdurid laulavad, 160–162, 231.
[130] Ibid., 161.

A characteristic non-formal way of teaching military history was storytelling around the campfire at training camp (so-called Southern Camp near Petseri). Lindsaar describes how a colonel had recalled his service in the Russian army and participation in WWI and the officer candidates gathered around and listened attentively.[131] Through this activity, teaching staff became closer to the students and probably gained even greater authority.

The writer Karl Ehrmann (Eerme) described in a work of fiction published in 1930, *Sõdurite elu* (The Life of Soldiers), the service performed by officer candidates at the SK in 1928. Just like Lindsaar's work, so, too, was the *Life of Soldiers* autobiographical and related to the author's own personal experience as a conscript in the Estonian military. As for his service in the SK, which he called a "monster hell", he noted that it was the most interesting time of his service. Similar to Lindsaar, he described the emotions of the officer candidates and noted that the studies were organized very well. Still, while Ehrmann said that all conscripts had high enthusiasm for studies when they entered the officer candidates' class, they learned how to slack off once they got used to the new conditions. He noted that the studies were predominantly theoretical and consisted mainly of lectures, which made some of the officer candidates more indifferent and laxer. After a time, the officer candidates had waved dismissively at the "lecturers' pathetic explanations as to how warfare was conducted in Rome" and what they heard in lecture went "in one ear and out the other".[132]

Reek's suggestions for changes seemed sensible and appropriate compared to the Russian older generation's teaching practices. But even though Reek called for use of active teaching methods as early as 1926, the situation had not changed even by 1936 and lectures were still the predominant format of study. Changes in the didactic approach in the teaching of military history became more noticeable at UMEI starting from the 1936/1937 academic year, when the UMEI activity report noted that for the first time, the emphasis in the teaching of military history

[131] Lindsaar, …ja sõdurid laulavad, 245–246.
[132] Karl Ehrmann, *Sõdurite elu* (Võru: Tähe, 1930), 245.

History of the War of Independence was popular among the cadets: here, would-be officers are preparing for Independence War exams at the Officers' School at Tondi, Tallinn, in 1936. Courtesy: Museum of the Estonian Military Academy

was shifted to independent research by students and presentation of their findings.[133] This probably meant that the studies were becoming student-centred.

Considering this, it can be presumed that things had indeed changed by the latter half of the 1930s. Thus, the recollections of Rudolf Bruus, who studied at the SK from 1934 to 1938 were particularly significant. Bruus recalled that the students called the two-storey outbuilding built for lectures at Tondi a "sleep castle".[134] This probably referred to the fact that the theoretical teaching methodology was still one-dimensional, and the presentation style was dry and unappealing to the students. Yet Bruus acknowledged that the military history subjects – the history of the art

[133] UMEI activity report, 01.04.1936–31.03.1937, RA, ERA.650.1.524, 58.

[134] Rudolf Bruus, "Mälestusi Eesti Vabariigi sõjakoolist 1934–1938," –*Mälestusi Eesti Vabariigi sõjakoolist*, ed. Valdur Talts (Tallinn: Eesti Riigikaitse Akadeemia, 1996), 56.

of war, the World War and the War of Independence – were among the most fascinating subjects at the SK. As mentioned above, Bruus associated good teaching of military history subjects with the personality traits of the lecturer who taught them.[135]

A rather interesting practice in the teaching of military history at UMEI can be considered to be the independent preparations on the part of students before tackling the course material. Students entering the KS were required to have thorough basic theoretical knowledge in military history, which was supposed to lay a factual groundwork for the subjects. This allowed the teaching staff to focus more on substantive discussions during the time in the lecture hall.[136] What is noteworthy is that in 1930, prospective students were recommended to read at least three books in the field of military history in preparing for entrance exams: Svechin's *Istorija vojennago iskusstva*, Delbrück's *Geschichte der Kriegskunst* and Professor Baiov's *Istoria vojennago iskusstva*.[137] At the entrance exams in military history, the candidate was required to know the most important historical events and to possess a broad understanding of the importance of individual events and their influence in the general historical context and the ability to draw conclusions from history.[138]

Based on the practice described above, and taking into account the heavy subject volume at that time, Grabbi made a proposal in 1934 to make the history of World War more learner-centred at the KSK and let the students prepare oral presentations on the basis of the existing material. Grabbi felt such a teaching method would develop students' learning ability and speaking skills and that it would also "broaden knowledge of history". Grabbi believed that the 10 lessons called for in the second year of study could be furnished with two case studies – he proposed the Battle of the Ardennes in August 1914 and/or the 1915 winter Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes. To prepare the case studies, Grabbi asked that teaching staff be relieved completely of other duties.[139] It is evident that

[135] Ibid., 63.
[136] Lt. Col. Grabbi to KSK, March 1934, RA, ERA.650.1.1707, 83. See also the chapter on exams.
[137] Books that may be used at entrance examinations at KSK, 1934, RA, ERA.650.1.1706, 17.
[138] Entrance requirements at KSK, 1934, ibid., 18.
[139] Lt. Col. Grabbi to KSK, March 1934, RA, ERA.650.1.1707, 83.

such case studies incited lively interest among the students. In addition, it can be presumed on the basis of the above facts that the use of the active study methods launched by Reek encouraged faster progress, above all, at the KSK and then in the SK classes. In any case, it took no less than eight years to realize Reek's vision.

One output of the active teaching methods was the requirement that students at the KSK work through and prepare presentations on the history of the World War in one specific battle for the case study planned in the second year of study. The Battle of the Ardennes (21–25 August 1914) was picked as the case study in 1934 at the KSK.[140] It is not completely clear why this battle – part of the so-called *Grenzschlachten*, the Battle of the Frontiers – was chosen.[141] It can be presumed that this battle was intended to highlight elements of manoeuvre warfare, which characterized the first battles of the First World War. At the same time, there were other examples from World War where manoeuvres were attempted on both the Western and Eastern Front. The display of preference for the French experience of warfare likely alludes to the fashion in the latter half of the 1920s and the influence of French military education.

The case study was divided into two practical sections. Part A devoted thorough analysis to the strategic and operational aspects of the Battle of the Ardennes, and part B examined the operational and tactical aspects. A general description of the battlefield was provided at the outset, introducing the belligerent parties and the preparation for the operation, and the high command's directives were enumerated, along with tasks for the armies and corps. Then, the situation was run through at the corps, division and regiment level. The battle orders for the action of 22 August 1914 was introduced in detail at the division and regiment level. The case study concluded with drawing of conclusions in regard to engagement and the "reasons for the Germans' tactical success".[142] On the basis of some recollections, it can be concluded that the analysis of major battles

[140] Course syllabus, World War, 1934, ibid., 84.

[141] Ivan Rostunov (Иван Ростунов), *Istorija Pervoj Mirovoj vojny 1914–1918*, vol. 1 (*История Первой Мировой войны 1914–1918.* Т. 1.) (Moskva: Institut voennoj istorii ministerstva oborony SSSR, i-vo Nauka, 1975), 282–283.

[142] Course syllabus, World War, 1934, RA, ERA.650.1.1707, 85.

were of greater interest to students in the 1930s than ordinary theoretical lectures.[143]

An additional outlet for teaching military history was the thematic final theses on military history written by students at the KSK. On the basis of the UMEI documentation of teaching activity, it can be concluded that great attention began to be devoted to the selection of topics for KSK theses and the principles for writing the theses. In 1933, guidelines for writing final theses were drafted for the KSK, being approved personally by the chief of staff Maj. Gen. Tõrvand. Among other things, these guidelines set out that final theses in military history did not have to include a practical part. The researchers writing on military history topics were required to draw "summaries of these conclusions and lessons learned which merit attention from the standpoint of modern warfare above all in our conditions".[144]

How much was written on military history topics at KSK? During the first to fifth class of the KSK, a total of eight theses of 64 were on military history topics (12 per cent). The battles of the Estonian War of Independence and World War were primarily covered. In addition, topics from the art of war were rather popular. In general, it appears that military history aspects were incorporated into nearly all KSK final theses.[145] During the sixth graduating class, four military history topics were added (there were a total of 29 final theses that year).[146] On one hand, this is indicative of low interest in history, but on the other hand, it shows some growth of interest.

Of the 31 final theses in 1936, 11 (35%) were written on military history. All of the topics were related to the lessons learnt from the World War and the War of Independence in the fields of tactical and operational art, supply of forces and use of different types of weaponry.[147] We can presume that the interest of KSK students in military history topics was much higher than it had been in years past.

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[143] Orav, "Eesti Vabariigi Sõjaväe Tehnikakool," 162.
[144] Guidelines for compiling KSK final theses, RA, ERA.650.1.1706, 8.
[145] KSK I, II, III, IV, list of final theses, the 5th Class, 1933, ibid., 1–5.
[146] KSK list of final theses, the 6th Class, 30.03.1933, Ibid., 6–7.
[147] KSK list of the topics of final theses, the 7th Class, 08.02.1936, ibid., 141–143.

The topics of final theses written at Latvian military academy were examined carefully at KSK. In the early 1930s, these included a noteworthy number of history topics (about 30%). The writing was intertwined with strategy, operational art, and the sociology and psychology of war. It is interesting that the history topics chosen in Estonia were constrained to 20th century conflicts, mainly WWI and the War of Independence, while in Latvia some dissertations were in the field of 19th and even 18th century military history. One thesis was even devoted to cooperation between Estonia and Latvia in the case of a potential conflict with Russia.[148]

Knowledge of military history, above all the War of Independence experience, was used in the KSK for tactical excursions by officers to potential future battlefields – as the high command envisioned it, these were the border areas of the Republic of Estonia.[149] For example, in summer 1935, the KSK organized three tactical staff rides to strategic areas, which coincided with the areas where the 2nd Division had fought during the War of Independence – Irboska and vicinity, Laura and vicinity and the Vastseliina and Petseri areas.[150] Victor Orav, who studied at the STK from 1936, mentioned excursions to battlefields in Jõelähtme, Aegviidu, Tapa, Riigiküla and Narva. Unfortunately, the participant remembered only the entertainment aspect of the military history outings.[151]

The UMEI's experience in organizing excursions was also offered for use to military units. In 1935, the commander of the 2nd Division, Colonel Traksmaa (who had been engaged in the study of the War of Independence) proposed to Commander-in-Chief Laidoner that excursions to the War of Independence battlefields be organized for the 2nd Division units on the model of the KSK. The objective of the excursions was to get to know the history of military units. The excursions had to be conducted at the expense of officers' and NCOs' associations and during their free

[148] *Kara akademisko kursu diplomdarbu saraksta*, undated but probably 1933 or 1934, ibid., 11–15.

[149] Piirimäe, "Preparing for War," 133. KSK correspondence, August 1935, RA, ERA.650.1.1715, 291.

[150] Commander of UMEI to the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces, 28 June 1935, RA, ERA.495.12.574, 781.

[151] Orav, "Eesti Vabariigi Sõjaväe Tehnikakool," 148–154.

time – at weekends. The professional cadre of each unit and a few reserve officers had to take part in these outings. During the excursions, presentations had to be delivered at the battlefields. Laidoner wrote "agreed" as his decision on the proposal, apparently concurring with Traksmaa that "military history excursions hold great importance in training our Defence Forces cadre".[152] The geography of the military history excursions proposed by Traksmaa was covered places in Petseri County, Võru County, Tartu County and Viru County.[153]

Conclusions

In conclusion, we can say that the teaching of military history disciplines played a noteworthy role in Estonian military education. The foundation for this was laid by a Russian émigré teacher, the onetime professor of the Russian General Staff Academy, Aleksei Baiov. It is also important to consider changes proposed by Nikolai Reek pertaining to the teaching of military history. As a result of Reek's activities, military history disciplines and their content were reshaped, military history assignments were set out and the relationship between military history and other branches of military science were clarified, subjecting military history to the needs of tactical training.

In founding Estonia's military education system, Reek was forced to use Baiov, like other Russian émigré teaching staff, as ethnic Estonian specialists in this area were still scarce. Despite the fact that Baiov was invited by Reek, a conflict between Baiov and Reek quickly emerged. Although these figures in the military sphere had different academic aptitude and calibre, the conflict can be seen as the legacy of the onetime Nicholas General Staff Academy. On one hand, Baiov stood out in Estonia for his professionalism, but on the other hand, he represented the older generation of Russian military theorists. A positive aspect is the systematic

[152] The commander of the 2nd Division Colonel Traksmaa to Commander-in-Chief Laidoner, 03.04.–06.04.1935, RA, ERA.495.12.574, 4.
[153] Plan of historical staff rides, 2nd Division, 16.04.1935, ibid., 5.

research into and teaching of military history, which was valued by that generation; a negative aspect was that it was relatively unconnected with modern warfare. It can perhaps even be said that Reek played the role of the progressive of the younger generation of Russian military theorists, as he saw a fundamental need to modernize military history and the teaching of military history. In the opinion of Reek, this had to focus more on the study and teaching of modern armed conflicts as the history of the art of war in earlier times was supposed to merely establish the needed context for the knowledge.

One of the progressive decisions made by Reek was to modernize the teaching of military history through the use of active methods, engaging more with the audience. He thus preferred analysis of military history to mere factual knowledge. Still, military history continued to be taught in a lecture format up to the mid-1930s, as not enough resources were allocated to students' independent and group analytical work. In addition, the teaching of military history depended on the lecturer's individual ability to make the subject attractive to students.

The UMEI took a serious attitude toward military history subjects, as its teachers, especially in the KSK, were generally recognized senior Estonian officers who made up the intellectual elite in the Estonian military. Even though some of them had had earlier experience with school pedagogy, none was an historian by training. This fact could have also made it more complicated to plan and carry out teaching activity, to say nothing of developing a conception of the need for military history. Development of military history competency was, among other things, rendered difficult because unlike active duty, military history was not considered a promising area for an officer making a career. Thus, the teaching of military history remained more of a hobby for senior officers.

In general, we can draw a conclusion that regardless of the criticism, the volume of military history subjects in the UMEI did not change over the years. However, the distribution of military history subjects did change. Now it is clear that the principles for teaching military history disciplines were also shaped by Baiov. Although Reek took a stance against Baiov, he did not succeed in changing the principles for teaching the military history disciplines. It can be said that Baiov's – i.e. concepts and frameworks

developed at the Nicholas General Staff Academy – remained generally salient until the disbanding of the Estonian military in 1940. A positive outcome of Reek's work can be considered to be the teaching of the histories of two then recently ended conflicts – the World War and the War of Independence – as separate subjects. Thus, the division of the art of war into three subjects did not change the overall volume of military history in the curriculum but it did raise the share of contemporary conflicts in it.

In the future, it is worth considering the question of teaching of and research into military history in the context of Estonian military planning to better understand the influence it imparted on military planning. Compared to the development of other militaries in Europe, it could be determined how unique the problem of teaching military history was in Estonian military education during the interwar period. A brief digression into the teaching of military history in the Red Army shows that the intergenerational conflict was salient in the 1920s also in the neighbouring Soviet Union.

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Building Military Doctrine based on History and Experience: 20th century examples from Germany, France, Israel and the US

Łukasz Przybyło

Abstract. The paper will address the role (or lack thereof) of military history and past experience in military doctrine building. The analysis will be based on four case studies: the Reichswehr/Wehrmacht 1919–1940, the French army 1919–1940, the IDF 1948–1973, and the US Army 1973–1991. In the synthesis, the author will present the role of military history in building efficient military doctrine on three levels of war: tactics, operational art, and strategy. Several kinds of abuses and misuses of military history will be singled out as a warning sign for contemporary policy and military decision makers.

No war game, exercise or training enables a soldier to practise war. There is no laboratory in which war could be researched or tested. The only guide we have is history. Unfortunately, it offers no clear answers, may be misused and cannot foresee the future. Armies also use their experience of current or already finished conflicts to mould their military doctrines. If correctly applied, militaries may benefit enormously from both types of experience.

The past is not history; what is more, we cannot be sure that we know everything about historical events. Quite the opposite. A good example is the impact of Terence Zuber's research on Schlieffen's plan,[1] which shook well-founded beliefs about German war planning before WWI. For the

[1] Terence Zuber, *Inventing the Schlieffen plan: German war planning, 1871–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Terence Zuber, *The Real German War Plan, 1904–14* (Stroud: History Press, 2011).

purposes of this article, it does not matter whether Zuber was right or not, but that historical events may be reinterpreted, sometimes radically. Additionally, the military history of mankind is so rich that one can almost always find an example to support one's views in an argument. As Michael Howard wrote, history is an "inexhaustible storehouse of events" that can be used "to prove anything or its contrary."[2]

There is also the matter of interpretation. The same events could be seen in radically different light by historians. in his letter to Liddell-Hart, Field Marshal Archibald Wavell wrote: "With your knowledge and brains and command of the pen, you could have written just as convincing a book called the 'Strategy of the Direct Approach.'"[3] This was praise for the writing and intellectual skills of Liddell-Hart, but it clearly shows what an experienced soldier thought about the interpretation of military history.

If that is not enough, Clausewitz informs us that: "Instead of presenting a fully detailed case, critics are content merely to touch on three or four, which give semblance of strong proof. But there are occasions where nothing can be proved by a dozen examples (…) Obviously, this is no way to reach conclusion."[4]

There is also a matter of truth. Napoleon stated: "It is so hard to reach the truth. There are so many of them!" A similar conclusion was reached by General Max Hoffmann after WWI: "For the first time in my life I have seen 'History' at close quarters, and I know that its actual process is very different from what is presented to posterity."[5]

It seems, therefore, that simply quoting historical examples is not a way to prove anything, especially if it is taken out of a historical context, which is always unique. This very common error causes history to be abused in order to prove a predetermined conclusion, the correctness of the doctrine or the truth of the theory. On the other hand, as Goethe

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[2] Michael Howard, "The Lessons of History: An Inaugural Lecture given in the University of Oxford, March 1981," – *The Lessons of History*, ed. Michael Howard (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 11.

[3] Jay Luvaas, "Military History: is it still practicable?", *Parameters* 25 (Summer 1995): 85–86.

[4] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 172.

[5] Luvaas, "Military History," 89.

wrote in one of his poems, one that is not using humankind's experience of 3000 years lives life only day to day.[6]

The real questions are: What do armies think about military history? How do they use it? What about real wartime experience? How quickly does this experience evaporate due to technological/doctrinal change? Are the generals always preparing for the last war?

Case study selection

In this article, four case studies from the period of the last 100 years are presented. All of them show armies preparing for high-intensity war. The top military establishments of all these armies were professional, patriotic, experienced and fully aware that the existence of their states was in their hands. Different approaches to military history and battlefield experience returned different results, although in none of the cases was there one and only reason for victory or defeat.

The first two focus on French and German military doctrines created in the interwar period (1919–1939). In both cases, military history was used as an educational tool but in different ways. The Reichsheer, and later the Wehrmacht, focused on tactical-operational efficiency and quality of the commanders, while the French army decided that strategic level preparations for a long, total war were much more important. Those two approaches show how military history and battlefield experience may impact militaries' short- and long-term ability to win wars.

The third case describes the military doctrine of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) during the Yom Kippur War. The doctrine was founded on battlefield experience of Israeli officers with military history having almost no influence at all. While the IDF succeeded in winning the war militarily, it came at a high cost and ended in a political stalemate at best. Israelis won due to tactical proficiency, talent for improvisation and very high

[6] Johann Wolfgang v. Goethe, *West-Oestliche Divan*, sektion 5 (*Buch des Unmuts*): *Wer nicht von dreitausend Jahren / Sich weiß Rechenschaft zu geben, / Bleib im Dunkeln unerfahren, / Mag von Tag zu Tage leben*.

morale, which was not combined with understanding of operational and strategic dimensions of war that only study of military history can yield.

The fourth case is the US Army in the period of 1973–1991 and evolution of its doctrine from Active Defence to Air-Land Battle. This was a shift from a mechanistic view on warfare to a more balanced view – one that combined introduction of operational level of war, study of military history, new technology and serious tactical training. Such an evolution shows complex interactions between these factors and their impact on battlefield efficiency and ability to win wars.

German army military doctrine building after WWI

Just after the Great War ended, the Reichsheer started to prepare for the "second round". In 1919 general Hans von Seeckt formed fifty-seven committees and subcommittees dealing with a multitude of topics – from weather service and flamethrowers to air war, in which more than 500 officers (130 from air arm) worked to extract experience from the war.[7] What is important is that those committees were set up just after the war while the experience of war was still fresh. Additionally, the high participation rate among officers ensured the best possible result. After two years of research, in 1921, a new field regulation was published under the title of *Leadership and Combat with Combined Arms*.[8] There is a direct link between the work of Seeckt's committees and what was published in the tactical regulation. Although the proverb says that generals always study the last war, the truth is that they rarely do so. It is historically very rare for an army to delve deep into its experience of the last war. This is more probable on the losing side, but one seldom finds examples of such scrutiny as was Seeckt's.

With its 100,000 troops, including 4,000 officers, the Reichsheer was fortunate in many ways. Due to long-term service of its soldiers, it could

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[7] James S. Corum, *The Roots of Blitzkrieg. Hans von Seeckt and German Military Reform* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 37.

[8] *Führung und Gefecht der verbundenen Waffen (F. u. G.) vom 1. September 1921,* D. V. Pl. Nr. 487 (Berlin: Verl. Offene Worte, 1921).

become genuinely professional and was able to practice and experiment on an unprecedented scale. The army did not have to deal with the mountains of rapidly aging weapons. In the late 1920s, when the process of (secret) remilitarization started, the Reichsheer, and later on the Wehrmacht, were able to receive well thought out and modern weapons thanks to the high-quality industrial base. What is more, that equipment was well adjusted to rehearsed doctrine. Thanks to the above, for some fifteen years Germany did not have to spend huge amounts of money on its armed forces, although spending per soldier was among the highest in the world. Of course, at that time, state and army elites did not perceive such a situation as advantageous for Germany – but in the long run, it was so.

Of the 4,000 officers selected for the Reichsheer – most of them were the intellectual elite of Kaiser Army, i.e. officers of the General Staff with the addition of some highly decorated heroes like Erwin Rommel. This was a good blend especially given that these officers had to be extremely efficient due to organizational restrictions resulting from the Versailles Treaty.[9]

Leadership and Combat with Combined Arms was based on the belief that fighting a war is an art founded on a rational foundation, but definitely not a science.[10] First of all, starting from the title, the pressure was behind co-operation of all arms on the battlefield. There were principles of war present in the regulation but no ready-to-apply formulas built into the text. The doctrine was founded on decentralized leadership (*Auftragstaktik*), which meant that all command levels had to display initiative and creative thinking. If there was one theme in *Leadership*…, it was the idea of manoeuvre warfare (*Bewegungskrieg*), which was deemed as the core of successful combat. It is interesting that in spite of WWI experience, firepower was treated seriously as an enabler of movement but not as the central pillar of doctrine. The real difference was that the German Army

[9] Martin van Creveld, *Fighting Power. German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939–1945* (London: Arms and Armour, 1983), 49–53.

[10] This notion was repeated in *Truppenführung* in 1933 which stated in its first paragraph: "The conduct of war is an art, depending upon free, creative activity, scientifically grounded." US Army translation of *Truppenführung* (1936): *Truppenführung = Troop leading*, National government publication (Fort Leawenworth, Kan.: Command and General Staff School Press, 1936–).

understood and accepted the chaotic character of combat, which made the ambition of management-from-the rear futile.

What is obvious is that the army winning the war is not prone to revolutionize its way of doing things – it seems that only adjustments here and there are needed. This is the case for the Western Allies after WWI. Positional warfare and deliberate battle management – this was synonymous with a victory for French and British, but for Germans for the defeat. Doing the same thing once again and expecting different results would be unwise, so Reichsheer leaders decided that they had to avoid *Stellungskrieg* at all cost. Based on their historical background and experience gained during the last war, von Seeckt and his successor thought of positional warfare as an anomaly, not a rule. War of movement on an operational level (*Bewegungskrieg*) lay deep in the institutional history of the German army. It can be traced to the Great Elector in the mid-17th century through Frederic the Great, the Napoleonic Wars, and the wars of German unification up to WWI. One must remember that Kaiser's Army was exposed to many theatres of war and combatants – Russians on the Eastern Front, Serbia and Romania in the Balkans, Italians on the Isonzo or in Africa. That experience, as well as their own military history, gave them a safe distance to evaluate slaughter on the Western Front with a different perspective.

In the early 1930s, due to rapid technological advancements as well as a changing political situation in Europe, the German military establishment decided to reformulate their doctrine. They decided that lessons learned from WWI had been absorbed by the Reichsheer and that new, broader doctrine was needed. A new field regulation – *Truppenführung* – was introduced in 1933 used until the end of WWII, not giving guidelines for action and co-operation but rather constituting a philosophy for combat leadership. Although in 1933, the German army still did not possess tanks and aircraft, in a few years it was able to introduce and organize them in a very efficient way. At that time, the Reichsheer was an organization with huge potential and the entirety of the foundation it needed. The introduction of conscription in 1935, as well as the creation of panzer divisions and the Luftwaffe, was a milestone toward which military-political establishment had been struggling for years. After the Nazi Party

took over Germany, a very important dimension was added – ideology, or as Michael Howard put it: "The kind of war which Fascism glorified was not that fought by masses of hapless conscripts at the behest of generals far behind the lines. It was one which would be conducted by small teams of young heroes, airmen, tank-crews, stormtroops, 'supermen' who by daring and violence would wrest the destiny of mankind from the frock-coated old dodderers round their green baize tables and shape a cleaner, more glorious future. War would, they hoped, in future be a business for elites. They were not altogether wrong."[11]

The German command philosophy created after the defeat in WWI inspired by the stormtroop tactics is of extraordinary importance for military history. It has left its mark on all armies up to the present day. In 1967, militaries across the world were shocked by the Israeli Blitzkrieg, and in 1991 they were talking about the American version of it. The assiduousness with which Reichsheer commander Gen. Seeckt sought to read the lessons of WWI was extraordinary. A great deal of time and energy has been devoted to this. The most important thing, however, was that the Great War of 1914–1918 was first viewed from the perspective of history, and secondly, it was not limited only to the experiences from the Western front. Revolutionary changes in doctrine during WWI itself (i.e. elastic defence and stormtroop tactics[12]) had given German army full ability to build sound military doctrine.

The geographical characteristic of its central position in Europe led Germany to seek operationally based manoeuvre warfare targeted for quick and decisive victories. A long war of attrition was a death sentence, as was clearly shown during the Great War. The four pillars of German military doctrine were:

1. *Bewegungskrieg* – manoeuvre warfare on an operational level,
2. *Auftragstaktik* – an initiative based on mission tactics,

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[11] Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 119–120.

[12] For the process of creation and introduction of new doctrine in German army during WWI see: Timothy T. Lupfer, *The Dynamics of Doctrine. The changes in German tactical doctrine during First World War* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1981).

3. *Cannae* – as an idea of envelopment and decisive victory,
4. *Combined arms* – integration of arms on tactical and services on an operational level.

This doctrine was implemented by constant training on all levels of the hierarchy. The tools were: publications of the commander of the army,[13] military schools of all levels including *Kriegsakademie*, field exercises, war games, and military press. It led to a clear emphasis on cadre quality rather than number. Due to the fact that there was almost no military procurement for more than ten years, Reichsheer commanders could focus on cadre selection and training – which they did and treated very seriously.[14] Field exercises were amongst most important from the doctrinal point of view. They were not only a test for the soldiers and commanders but also a great tool for experimenting with new ideas or technology. In 1932 the Reichsheer took to the field almost 2,500 troops with 80 radio sets in what was called *Funkübung* – Communication Exercise, during which the idea of wireless communication was tested.[15] Then, in 1937, the biggest summer field exercise since the Kaiser era took place.[16] This time the concept of the panzer division was tested and it proved such a success that the shocked Commander in Chief decided to overrule the decision of umpires. Victory went to the side defending against the panzer division. What is interesting is that a scenario for the exercise was planned for seven days but the attack of mechanized troops annihilated the opposition on day three.[17]Additionally, the discussion in the military press was lively and stimulating. It was not strictly controlled by higher authorities, and different points of view were presented.

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[13] E.g. Seekct's *Bemerkungen des Chefs der Heeresleitung.*

[14] In the early 1920s, the young company commander Capt. Erich von Manstein was spending four days a week outdoors, practicing with soldiers in the field. He also wanted all of his soldiers to be trained as leaders able to command at least a level above their current position. Erich von Manstein, *Aus einem Soldatenleben 1887–1939* (here, the Polish translation has been used: Erich von Manstein, *Żołnierskie życie. Moja służba w Reichswerze i Wermachcie 1919–1939* [Kraków: Wingert, 2013], 107–112).

[15] Robert Citino, *The Path to Blitzkrieg. Doctrine and training in the German army 1920–1939* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole, 2008), 234.

[16] 160 thousand troops, 21 thousand vehicles, 830 tanks and 54 aircraft. Citino, *The Path*, 236.

[17] Robert Citino, *Quest for Decisive Victory. From stalemate to Blitzkrieg in Europe, 1899–1940* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 207–208.

The field in which the German army had critical deficiencies was strategy. The *Kriegsakademie* curriculum focused entirely on tactical-operational effectiveness up to the level of corps. The fundamentals of warfare were also strengthened by military history, which was treated as an important introduction to the art of command but also mostly on a tactical level; rarely did it touch on operational art.

Table 1. The curriculum of *Kriegsakademie* (hours in a week) 1934–1938

Course	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Tactics	6	6	6 + 1 additional whole day
Military History	4	4	4
Logistics	–	1	1
Engineering	1	1	–
Panzer forces	1	1	–
Luftwaffe	1	1	1

Source: Manfred Messerschmidt, "German Military Effectiveness between 1919 and 1939" – Allan R. Millet, Williamson Murray (Ed.), *Military Effectiveness*, vol. 2, *The Interwar Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 244.

The American military attaché to Germany, Col. Conger, summed this up with unusual foresight: "I infer that in the next war the Germans will be tactically and technically a most formidable fighting force, but that the leaders of the army, as so far as they are trained in these schools, will suffer from the same defects which nullified to so great an extent the efforts of the German commanders in the field in the world war in that will again lack a correct understanding of the lessons taught by military history and also lack in understanding of the broader principles of modern strategy, including its political and economic, as well as its military, aspects, unless some self-made leader comes to the fore who… gains for himself in some way a correct understanding of war in its broader phases."[18]

[18] Citino, *The Path*, 100–101.

Fire kills[19]– French military doctrine in the interwar period

During the almost twenty-two years separating the end of WWI and the French defeat in 1940, the French army was planning for a war with Germany. First, this task was easy due to Versailles Treaty limitations on the size of the Reichsheer, but with time, especially after Adolf Hitler came to power, it became much more complex.

In the interwar period, French doctrine was stable. Government officials, military establishment as well as society believed it was right. Traumatized by WWI and the price in lives that was paid, the military wanted to be prepared for almost the same kind of conflict as in the past, but without errors committed during 1914–1918. Everyone believed that the next war would be long and total so the full commitment of society was needed. That is why the French government planned for total mobilization of industrial assets and introduced conscription for all able men during peacetime. This was the idea of "Nation at Arms" because: "the very life of citizenry is associated in an intimate fashion with that of the army, and thus the formula for the nation in arms is realized in every aspect… [This] greatly influences the eventualities of war and consequently the formulation of strategy."[20]

Based on WWI experience, it was believed that long military service was not really needed in order to have well-trained soldiers. During the war, a newly conscripted soldier of 1918 received only three months of training and in general was competent in his duties. That is why shortening of compulsory service to 18 months and then to one year was not seen as anything risky. What had worked during WWI did not work in peacetime and French army became a mass of poorly trained reservist citizen-soldiers. Only after the introduction of two years of compulsory service in 1936 did training standards improve. The French military was

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[19] *Le feu tue* – this is what Gen. Philippe Pétain was preaching.

[20] French provisional regulation of 1921 for tactical employment of grand units, see Robert A. Doughty, *The Seeds of Disaster. The development of French army doctrine, 1919–1939* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1985), 16.

not blind to those problems and knew that they would need time for thorough retraining of soldiers before real military operations could start. So, there was a need to buy time in case of war. Hence the idea of building the Great Wall called the Maginot Line.

An insufficiently trained army was not the only or even the main reason for building fortifications on the French-German border. A well thought out set of strategic assumptions was behind it. France would be shielded from a surprise attack; concrete fortifications would save the life of soldiers, and there would be an economy of force principle applied. After WWI, the alliance with Great Britain became much looser. France's aggressive military doctrine would increase the estrangement. Thus, building fortifications and defensive military doctrine made real sense. The Maginot Line was built on the French-German border and it was not built further to the West,[21] Last but not least, French army would have time to mobilize and their best units could enter Belgium and fight Germans there rather than in France.

French military doctrine in the interwar period was moulded by the following assumptions:

1. Because the army was based on short-term conscription, there is a need to conduct battles and operations in a centralized, simple and planned manner. Additionally, the army needs time to retrain its reserves, so that they become fully operational.
2. On the battlefield, firepower rules over the movement.
3. Defence is easier than offense but, in the end, only offensive action can end the war with a victory.[22]
4. Avoidance of chaotic meeting engagements.
5. Need to motorize army, though with certain limitations due to lack of oil sources in France itself.

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[21] The fortifications were not built there, apart from strategic considerations, due to: flat and muddy terrain, urbanization, population density and industrial centres (e.g. Lille) being too close to the border, see Judith H. Hughes, *To the Maginot Line: The politics of French military preparations in the 1920s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 202.

[22] Mythical conviction that French army was not at all willing to attack, believing only in defence, cannot stand the detailed examination, R.A. Doughty, *The Seeds*, 96.

Somua S-35 tanks displayed during a military parade in the 1930s. Those very good tanks failed to make a difference in 1940 due to the poor doctrine of the French army. Copyright: Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe (public domain)

6. *Tactical* usage of tanks is of great importance to the success in battle.
7. Low interest in the air force co-operation in the land battle.
8. Latest war experiences (Spanish Civil War) indicated that mechanized forces are very vulnerable to well-applied anti-tank gunnery and air force attacks.[23]

The French army wanted to defend their country at the start of hostilities; then, after total mobilization of the nation and its resources, the offensive would follow. The field regulation of 1936 clearly stated that such an offensive must be prepared exceptionally well when it comes to war material. Such an offensive would be based on artillery fire combined with a tank-infantry attack with limited goals. Such methodical battle was a reasonable compromise between the strength of defensive fire, mainly

[23] R. Citino, *Quest*, 245–250.

artillery, and the necessity of an offensive in the strategic dimension, which France had to take sooner or later. Its assumptions, i.e. very accurate planning, extensive communication and control system, were necessary instruments in an army of poorly trained reservists. The methodical battle concept ensured the confidence of the commanding staff of the French army that it would not fail in the future war, because the lessons from the previous one were learned.

Although the French army believed in technological progress, it was not very active in searching for new ideas. The air force was used to great effect in colonial warfare[24] but still, the most influential commanders of the army did not think of aircraft as a game changer. In the field regulation of 1936, only four pages out of 177 were devoted to the cooperation of land and air forces. The most interesting part is that the French Air Force ended the campaign in 1940 with more aircraft than on May 10 – at the time of the German attack. Technically, after the loss of about 500 aircraft – they could conduct further operations basically without a problem, having enough staff and material resources.[25] The same attitude can be seen toward tanks and independent tank units. While on the tactical level, armour was seen as a valuable tool, and motorization and mechanization of the army were thought beneficial, there was no effort to check for the utility of tank arm on the operational level in the future war. At the beginning of 1939, the French chief of staff stated: "Just because the Germans have committed an enormous error does not mean we must do likewise. Understand that there will never be a battlefield large enough for several armoured divisions. They can handle local operations, like reducing a pocket, but not an offensive action."[26]

French military doctrine was shaped by military history, but the French army never decided to study the Great War in depth. There was a multi-volume history of that conflict published – but a final synthesis

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[24] Anthony C. Cain, *The Forgotten Air Force. French air doctrine in the 1930s* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2002), 22.

[25] Faris R. Kirkland, "The French Air Force in 1940. Was it defeated by the Luftwaffe or by politics?", *Air University Review* (September-October 1985): 101–118.

[26] Eugenia C. Kiesling, *Arming against Hitler: France and the limits of military planning* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 162.

never followed. While preaching that the source of military doctrine is military history and principles of wars, the French army in reality studied only WWI tactics and operations. French doctrine not only universalized lessons it gathered from one quite short war but also totally shut down any possibility to discuss the founding assumptions. The military press was under the strict control of the Chief of Staff and any deviation from orthodoxy was punished.[27]

The main French military innovation during the interwar period – i.e. the Maginot Line – shielded France, and military commanders were sure that they would have enough time to prepare for operations once the war started. Time was needed for two reasons, to retrain reservists and for mobilization of the nation and industry resources. Powerful allies were also within reach. The French military-political establishment did not see any need for changes in military doctrine.

The Battle of Sedan on 15 May 1940 – application of German and French doctrinal models

On 10 May 1940, armies with quite equal potential and equipment faced each other. If the Allies were able to achieve stabilization of the front, then that balance of forces would make Germany's strategic perspectives look bleak. There was a Soviet enigma in the east and the US, although not in alliance with France and Great Britain, had already started supplying them. If we consider that the Allies knew where the battle would take place, the Wehrmacht's prospects of winning seemed even fainter. However, the German command had a few advantages, which it used to the utmost effect. First, it held some element of surprise, because it could decide when the battle would start. Secondly, it had at its disposal a proven instrument of waging war in the form of armoured divisions and the Luftwaffe, with organizational parameters significantly exceeding similar Allied forces.

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[27] Kiesling, Arming against Hitler, 122–123.

There are three main factors concerning the breakthrough at Sedan which decided the war in the West. First, in May 1940, the Allies blundered with their strategic deployment. Based on intercepted plans of the German invasion in the so-called "Mechelen Incident"[28] they decided to move their strategic reserve, which had been deployed in the area right behind Sedan, to their far-left wing with the mission of going as far as Breda and supporting the Dutch defence in case war started. Removal of the strategic reserve from the area behind Sedan created an operational void, which was the cause of German success after the breakthrough at Sedan, making their push to the Channel uninterrupted and relatively easy.[29] Second, the river crossing battle which decided the war, taking place on 15 May in the area of Sedan, was an infantry battle with the limited use of tanks on both sides. On that day superior tactical abilities, higher morale and the nearly suicidal combativeness of German infantry and engineers with extraordinary leadership and initiative on very low command level (sergeants and lieutenants) won the day for the Wehrmacht.[30] French troops in the Sedan area were of second reserve category (B class division), soldiers were old and insufficiently trained. 55th Infantry Division responsible for Sedan area was deployed in such a way which made efficient command impossible – battalions and even companies from different regiments were mixed among each other. If that was not enough, French soldiers were severely affected by constant Luftwaffe bombing that started in the morning and lasted for several hours.[31] Third, after the breakthrough in Sedan area, after German panzer divisions entered operational space, their attack tempo was such that the

[28] On 10 January 1940, a German aircraft with an officer on board carrying the plans for Fall Gelb crash-landed in neutral Belgium near Mechelen. Belgians notified Allies of their discovery. Captured German documents were describing an operation, in which the main effort was behind an offensive through Belgium.

[29] Robert A. Doughty, *The Breaking Point. Sedan and the fall of France*, *1940* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2014), 107–108.

[30] Karl-Heinz Frieser, *The Blitzkrieg Legend. The 1940 campaign in the West* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 161–172.

[31] French troops, when confronted by Germans in predictable environment, were fighting effectively during the campaign, see Jeffery A. Gunsburg, "Battle of Gembloux 14–15 May 1940. Blitzkrieg checked," *Journal of Military History* (January 2000): 97–140.

French (and British) OODA[32] loop was torn. Allied troops with operational tempo based on methodical battle procedures were simply not able to react quickly enough to changes on the battlefield.

This mix of causes that decided the Wehrmacht's success only partially depended on the German doctrine. In fact, both sides gambled. The Germans with their front-loaded offensive and lack of considerable reserves wanted to achieve victory quickly. The crossing at Sedan was a very narrowly run affair with large amounts of chance and luck. On the other hand, if only the French could stop the Germans and start the well-known game of attrition, then their preparation for a long war and full mobilization would pay off. In the end, the Wehrmacht won, and a new era of mechanized military operations begun. The German army harnessed armour, firepower, radio, and the internal combustion engine to a conception of war grounded firmly in historical experience.[33]

Tankomania – the Israeli doctrinal model in 1967–1973

The foundations of Israeli strategy are still the same as they were in the late 1940s. Israel has to wage short wars as it lacks resources to fight a protracted conflict. The lack of territorial depth makes the IDF fight offensively – if possible, pre-empting the enemy. Due to a geographical characteristic of the Middle East, with its open terrain, air supremacy was extremely important for achieving victory. With demographic imbalance in the region, Israel numerical inferiority is guaranteed. That is why the quality rather than the quantity of soldiers and officers matters for the IDF. Israel cannot lose any war because Israelis are sure that this would mean a second Holocaust for them, so when it comes to state survival they are ready to do anything to save it. From a psychological point of

[32] OODA stands for Observe–Orient–Decide–Act loop, see John R. Boyd, "Patterns of Conflict" (1986), http://www.d-n-i.net/boyd/patterns_ppt.pdf [accessed 15.02.2018].

[33] Williamson Murray, "May 1940: Contingency and fragility of the German RMA," –*The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300–2050*, ed. MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray (Kindle Edition), loc. 2141.

view, such attitude results in a very high morale and spirit of self-sacrifice in the military: "The prospect of the hangman's noose makes for wonderful concentration of the mind."[34]

At its birth, the IDF lacked any coherent military doctrine and the highest level of training provided for officers were platoon and company courses. Some officers with a professional background came from the British, Soviet, Polish, US and even Austrian armies.[35] After the War of Independence (1947–1949) ended, the newly created army focused on managing the huge wave of immigrants, which hampered organizational and educational development.[36] Only during Yitzhak Rabin's tenure as head of the Training Department in 1954–1956 did a full structure for military education crystallize.[37] In the 1950s and early 1960s, the intellectual life of the IDF was quite lively with focus on military doctrine, and history.[38] Many officers attended foreign general staff academies.

Israeli commanders decided to use a quality multiplier: the intellectual, cultural and educational superiority of Israel's manpower over Arabs. General Laskov (Chief of Staff 1951–53) decided to introduce what he called "optional control". It was not new, as the term is easily translated as the German *Auftragstaktik*. Tactical commanders (battalion, brigade) were fully entitled to make a tactical decision based on their knowledge of the end goal of the battle/campaign. Senior commanders (division, area command or GHQ) were of course there to control and guide or intervene in case of failure or changes in goals.[39]

After the Sinai Campaign (1956), the IDF's view on modern combat changed dramatically and transformed from air defence and infantry-based operations to air superiority, mechanized tank operations, and

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[34] Martin van Creveld, *Sword and Olive: A critical history of the Israeli Defence Force* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2008), 167.

[35] Avi Kober, *Practical Soldiers. Israel's Military Thought and Its Formative Factors* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 129.

[36] Ze'ev Drory, *Israel's Reprisal Policy 1953–1956. The dynamics of military retaliation* (London: Frank Cass, 2005).

[37] Creveld, *Sword*, 167.

[38] Measured by percentages of articles in *Maarachot*, the main IDF's military journal, 43,5% of all articles were devoted to military history, Avi Kober, *Practical*, 59.

[39] Edward Luttwak, Dan Horowitz, *The Israeli Army* (London: A. Lane, 1975), 172–173.

Israeli paratroopers during manoeuvres using WWII-vintage M3 half-tracks. Due to IDF's "tankomania" and budget restraints infantry was unable to support modern tanks on the battlefield. Courtesy: Israeli Government Press Office, Moshe Milner

cooperation between the air force and tank units. Tank and supersonic fighter-bombers were seen as the main combat tools. This tendency was strengthened when Gen. Israel Tal was promoted to commander of armoured forces in 1964. Contrary to the well-established view on combined arms mechanized operations which were to include tanks, infantry, artillery, engineers etc. he insisted that due to Israel's opponents and main theatre of operation (Sinai Peninsula), such cooperation was not needed to achieve success in battle. While in Europe with its urbanized, rolling or hilly terrain with woods and rivers, tactical visibility was low and that is why support of other arms was needed. In the featureless, open desert of the Sinai, such support in breakthrough battle or meeting engagement is not a priority, and if one adds air force operating as flying artillery, it is even less needed. General Tal also opted for heavy, well-armoured tanks (such as British Centurion), believing that it was not mere speed that counted, but battlefield manoeuvrability under fire. During his tenure as

a commander of armoured forces, he insisted on excellent gunnery, tactical training, and initiative of leaders on all levels. Due to a high number of accidents, damaged equipment and maintenance problems, he introduced strict discipline and adherence to technical procedures.

In the Six Day War, Tal's concept was an enormous success. Tank battalions and brigades operating semi-independently as armoured fists and with co-operation with an air force (which replaced artillery) destroyed the opposing forces. Excellent gunnery, tactical skills and initiative gave Israelis a huge margin in battlefield effectiveness. In armoured operations, infantry was almost always delegated to mopping-up operations and keeping supply routes open. So not only Tal's concept was proven right, due to the magnitude of the victory, any criticism was easily rejected. Israelis, who tend to value more experience over ideas, were converted to an all-tank army organization. They had not thought such an overwhelming victory over the Arabs was possible due to circumstances not easily repeatable in the future war. Israeli doctrine not only universalized lessons that it gathered from one and short war but also saw no need to discuss its founding assumptions.

The Israeli army was preparing for the next round of hostilities with the Arab states, in such a way as to repeat the success of 1967. The characteristics of the armed forces, which yielded the largest dividend during the Six Day War, were emphasized. More than half of the military budget was allocated for the expansion and modernization of air force. Armoured forces were rapidly expanding but at the cost of the infantry and artillery. The IDF took for granted an intelligence advantage over the Arabs and surrendered to "tankomania". Battalions and armoured brigades became units almost completely devoid of infantry, engineers, and artillery (mortars) and were based only on tanks.[40] This was strange, as during the Six Day War, infantry and paratroopers showed their utility, either in conducting complex combined-arms breakthroughs (Abu-Ageila, Golan Heights) or in urban fighting (Jerusalem). Partly this was because of military budget limitations but also suitable armoured fight-

[40] David Eshel, *Chariots of Desert. The story of Israeli Armored Corps* (London: Brassey's 1989, 1989), 88; interview with Brigadier General Zvi Kan-Tor, Latrun 19 September 2017.

ing vehicles for infantry were not available and artillery tasks were taken over by the air force. In such a situation, investment in even more tanks seemed most economical. At some point, Gen. Tal even tried to propose an all-tank brigade, consisting only of three pure tank battalions as a standard organizational pattern. This "ideal" was quite common in the Yom Kippur War when many Israeli armoured brigades fought with almost only tanks in their order of battle.[41]

Israelis did not pay attention to conducting a war at the operational level and underestimated the importance of this skill. There was an anti-intellectual attitude in the officer corps.[42] General Tal once stated that Israeli officers were promoted by a natural selection process based on their battlefield achievements. The highest compulsory course for officers – the course for battalion commanders. Command and Staff Academy, which was supposed to educate officers from the rank of first lieutenant to lieutenant colonel – was held in low esteem.[43]Additionally, just before the Six Day War, the General Staff Academy, which was meant for colonels and generals as well as civilians dealing with military and security problems, was abolished by Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Levi Eshkol, who deemed it unnecessary.[44] General David "Dado" Elazar was promoted and eventually took over the position of the head of the General Staff without any additional education apart from the battalion commanders' course.[45]

Such attitude narrowed the intellectual horizon of the IDF. It almost stopped studying the theory of war or military history to such degree that Martin van Creveld after lecturing general staff members stated: "I have never met such a bunch of ignorant people in my entire life. In no other state or organization have I seen people who knew so little about their profession and its theory, including the history and doctrine of their

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41 Interviews with General Major Haim Erez, Latrun 8 March 2018; General Major Jackie Even, Latrun 8 March 2018; Brigadier General Zvi Kan-Tor, Latrun 19 September 2017 and Brigadier General Avigdor Kahalani, Tel Aviv 16 September 2016.

42 Creveld, *Sword*, 168.

43 Ibid.

44 Interview with Rear Admiral Ze'ev Almog, Tel Aviv/Ramat Ha'Sharon, 16–19.09.2016.

45 Creveld, *Sword*, 169.

Israeli reservists preparing to enter Golan Heights during the Yom Kippur War (6th October 1973, evening). Reservists were the cushion that mitigated doctrinal and strategic errors of the IDF General Staff. Courtesy: Israeli Government Press Office

own army."[46] Lack of education and knowledge made the higher echelons of the IDF unimaginative, not ready to change their worldview, rehearsing once and again the Six Day War in their "sterile" field exercises,[47] not able to understand war as an instrument of policy or distinguish between tactical, operational and strategic levels of war.

Before the Yom Kippur War, Israeli strategy and military doctrine was based on a set of assumptions. Almost none of them materialized during the war (Table 1).

The Yom Kippur War was Israel's last high-intensity conflict with its Arab neighbours. In the end, the IDF won militarily but not on the strategic/political level. The high number of casualties and lost equip-

[46] Kober, *Practical*, 44.

[47] Amiram Ezov, *Crossing Suez, 1973: New point of view* (Kindle Edition, Tel Aviv, 2016), loc. 974–977.

Table 1. IDF's strategic-doctrinal assumption and the reality of the Yom Kippur War.

Israeli strategic assumption before the Yom Kippur War	**Yom Kippur War**
Intelligence superiority over Arabs. At least 48 hours warning, enabling mobilization before war erupts.	No intelligence superiority. Warning nine hours before the war, mobilization starts four hours before the war.
Pre-emptive attack.	Due to a relationship with the US and dependence on their military aid, pre-emptive attack not possible.
Israeli Air Force able to win air superiority over the battlefield.	Israeli Air Force not able to win air supremacy by its own effort over the battlefield due to SAMs and various defence measurement taken by Arabs (e.g. hardened shelters for aircraft).
No alliance between Arab countries probable.	A coalition between Syria and Egypt.
Israeli doctrinal assumption before Yom Kippur War	**Yom Kippur War**
Low morale of Arab armies.	High morale and cohesion of Arab armies.
The mediocre ability of Arab armies to defend tactically against tanks.	High ability of Arab armies to defend tactically against tanks through widespread use of portable anti-tank weapons and guided AT missiles augmented by tanks and artillery.
The inability of Arab armies to fight offensive mobile armoured operations.	The inability of Arab armies to fight offensive mobile armoured operations.
Availability of IAF to support ground troops.	The inability of IAF to support ground troops in the first phase of the war. Only after ground and/or air force destroyed enemy SAMs, support was given for ground operations.
The purely offensive character of operations. After a short period of defence, reserve divisions quickly counterattack the enemy.*	Protracted defensive operations, failure of reserves to successfully counterattack (Sinai). Even successful counteroffensive in Golan started after two days of defence.
Israeli armour has ability to survive on the battlefield without or with limited support from other arms (infantry, artillery, engineers etc.) in both defensive and offensive operations.	No or limited possibility to conduct offensive operations by armour alone. Medium to high ability to defend without supporting arms.
Utmost importance of tactical skills and mastery of gunnery.	Utmost importance of tactical skills and mastery of gunnery.
Tank divisions under Front (Area Command) command able to conduct operations.	Lack of intermediate level of command (corps HQ) disrupting operations.

* For the seven plans for the defence of Sinai created at the Southern Command in 1967–1973 as many as six ended with the crossing of the Canal by IDF and whatever the force structure (2 brigades or 2 divisions) only offensive on Syria was considered, Williamson Murray, *Military Adaptation in War. With fear of change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 272–273.

ment outstripped any Israeli expectation. Radical criticism of the the IDF's performance and commanders erupted in society. Egypt's war aims were accomplished: the Sinai Peninsula was returned by Israel; the Soviet patron was changed to the American one. Those accomplishments came at a price for Egypt as it had to recognize Israel. In Syria's case, nothing substantial was achieved by both sides; the northern border of Israel stayed a "hot" one.

But why did the IDF win militarily at all, given that almost all of its assumptions concerning future war were invalid? Almost all the answers consider the tactical level:

1. Israel's regular and reserve soldiers were experienced war veterans commanded by very able officers at platoon/company/battalion/brigade level.
2. Their tactical training was exceptional, including excellent gunnery among tank crews.
3. Spirit of adaptation, innovation, and improvisation based on the individual initiative were common across all army.
4. Among all troops, morale, will to fight and unit cohesion was high – this was manifested in many heroic actions and even acts of self-sacrifice.
5. Alliance with the US and their support both in supplying resources as well as in global politics.

Although classroom study of war is still not rated higher than practical experience in waging war, after the Yom Kippur War the IDF changed not only its force structure[48] but also educational policy. For the first time in the IDF's history, integrated officers' courses of different arms made an appearance.[49] The Command and Staff Academy was reformed. The National Defense College for study Israel's strategic and security environment was re-established. When the IDF invaded Lebanon in 1982 then CIC Israeli Navy, rear admiral Ze'ev Almog could: "just take my notes from Naval War College in the US. We studied different operational and

[48] Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Arab–Israeli Military Balance and the Art of Operations* (London: American Enterprise Institute, 1987), 45–53.

[49] Interview with Brigadier General Zvi Kan-Tor, Latrun 19 September 2017.

strategic case studies. I took one on the Inchon amphibious invasion in the Korean War. That was enough to start planning seaborne landing in Lebanon."[50]

Air-Land Battle – American military doctrine building 1973–1991

The long conflict in Vietnam ending in defeat had a disastrous impact on the American army.[51] In addition to the problems with discipline and morale, there were signs that the American army might lose a conventional conflict in Europe. Such predictions were strengthened by the Yom Kippur War. The modern Soviet-made equipment used by Arabs proved to have very good technical characteristics and American equipment did not have a technological advantage which would suffice to fight the numerically much bigger Soviet forces.[52]

The American political-military establishment had to quickly "fix" the armed forces. First, the conscription was suspended. Secondly, the structure of the armed forces changed – among others Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) was created.[53] Thirdly, it was decided to purchase new equipment. The most important change, however, was the change of doctrine. This was accomplished by General William E. DePuy, head of TRADOC, who in July 1976 introduced a new field regulation (FM 100-5 Operations).

The commander of TRADOC focused on a few issues, making a strict selection of priorities. DePuy was convinced that European Theatre of

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[50] Interview with Rear Admiral Ze'ev Almog, Tel Aviv/Ramat Ha'Sharon 16–19 September 2016.

[51] Robert H. Scales, *Certain Victory: The US Army in the Gulf War* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1993), 6.

[52] "Implication of the Middle East war on US Army tactics, doctrine and systems", – *Selected Papers of General William E. DePuy*, ed. Robert M. Swain (Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 75–112.

[53] The Training and Doctrine Command consolidated three logically connected functions under one command: 1) research on new fighting techniques combined with the evaluation of new technical solutions, 2) development of the doctrine and organization of the land army, 3) training of officers and non-commissioned officers.

Operations is the most important for the American army and because of increased tempo of operations and the lethality of modern weapons, the US Army must win the "first battle" through "active defence". Acquisition of new weapons had to comply with doctrinal assumptions. If the new doctrine was to be successful it had to be coordinated with activities and in doctrinal agreement with the most important ally in NATO (Germany) and American air forces. Based on the recent experience from the Yom Kippur War tank was considered the main weapon system in land forces and the military doctrine was developed based on that assumption.

The first stage to change the military doctrine of the United States Army was to write new combat regulations and introduction of the Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP) consisting of a list of tasks that any given unit (from the squad to the battalion) had to perform according to the appropriate standard.[54] This standard was based on Israeli experience of the Yom Kippur War backed up by the assumptions on how Soviet Army conducts war.

General DePuy entrusted writing of a new version of FM 100-5 Operations to General John Cushman – Chief of Combined Arms Centre at Fort Leavenworth. The first draft of the new regulations was rejected by General DePuy in December 1974, the second draft met the same fate in May 1975. General Cushman was considered a military intellectual and his draft of the new regulations of the FM 100-5 was based on the nine principles of war used by the US Army from 1922. He believed that the doctrine should not be authoritative but should help the commander in making the best decisions. Cushman wanted to *teach* officers to conduct a war based on their initiative and knowledge of what usually worked best over the centuries on the battlefield. In his own words: "[doctrine is] the best available thought that can be defended by reason ... [to] indicate and guide but ... not bind in practice...."[55]

It was a concept totally contrary to what Gen. DePuy expected. The TRADOC commander wanted to quickly *train* US Army officers to con-

[54] Paul H. Herbert, *Deciding what has to be done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5 Operations* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1988), 48.

[55] Herbert, *Deciding*, 55–56.

duct mechanized operations on the lethal battlefield using the FM 100-5 regulations. The key to successful training had to be the authoritative war doctrine expressed, among others, by FM 100-5, written in a clear, simple and detailed manner. Gen. DePuy did not think that General Cushman's approach was wrong – only inappropriate at the time. There was no time to slowly teach the principles of war – it was necessary to train officers for a war that could start at any moment. DePuy with a small group of officers wrote the FM 100-5 regulation.

The critique of FM 100-5 started immediately after the document was published on 1st July 1976. It focused on three main areas:

1. Predominance of defensive operations.
2. Mechanistic vision of the battlefield.
3. Europe as one and only theatre of operations.[56]

American officers perceived FM 100-5 as "how to physically destroy enemy forces" with the employment of mobility and attrition, not "how the American army should fight in order to win". Quantitative and systemic analysis, which was the foundation of the FM 100-5, perfectly matched the computer models – it did not consider factors other than material, and these were the ones that most often decided victory in battle. Tactics were limited to the following process: recognize the enemy's main effort – withdraw, delay the attack – mass the reserves (achieve a favourable ratio of forces) – destroy the enemy with fire.[57] The features of the doctrinal document – to facilitate understanding and then its acceptance – turned against it. American officers read and understood the doctrine of "active defence" and then rejected it.

At the end of 1978, when the weaknesses of the FM 100-5 edition of 1976 had been identified, new TRADOC commander General Don Starry established the basic assumptions of the new doctrine in a planning document. Starry was a tank officer inspired by a Patton-like view of battle where DePuy was a classical, scientific battle manager. To increase the understanding of the new doctrine, General Starry called it Air-Land Battle, as it assumed a very strong interaction between

[56] Ibid., 96.

[57] Huba Wass de Czege, L.D. Holder, "The new FM 100-5," *Military Review* (July 1982): 53–54.

land and air forces. This term was also intuitively understood by officers.

FM 100-5 Operations (1982), was based on two foundations: history and principles of war. The text of the regulation included two historical examples, the Vicksburg campaign (American Civil War) and the Battle of Tannenberg (WWI). The first illustrated the value of indirect strategy, the second was about the quick transition from defence to offensive operations. Abundant war quotes (from Sun Zi, through Napoleon and Clausewitz to Patton) were also presented, and the concept of Air-Land Battle was placed in the context of principles of war used by the United States Army. Such an accepted framing of the new doctrine made it universal, it could be used in any conflict – both in Europe and in other parts of the globe. At the same time, the authors did not hide the fact that they were preparing the US Army for a conflict with the Warsaw Pact forces, for a mechanized battle in which the combined arms (and services) played a key role.

Four years after the introduction of the Air-Land Battle doctrine, General William R. Richardson, the successor of General Starry as the head of TRADOC and another infantry officer, decided to introduce another version of FM-105 (1986). This time it was not a revolutionary change, but confirmation of the current doctrinal course and refining the concept in line with criticism of Starry's line.[58]

The evolution of American military doctrine is one of constant evolution. It is interesting that the shock of defeat in Vietnam and the Yom Kippur War happened in the same time, enabling US Army to reengineer its doctrine based on a scientific conclusion drawn from the Arab–Israeli conflict. First iteration – Active Defence was too mechanistic, focusing solely on defensive operations. Second and third iterations – Air-Land Battle added more dimensions apart from material only and were more balanced. Military history, which was absent in Active Defence manual, was integrated directly into text of Air-Land Battle regulations, showing that US Army top commanders understood how important it could be in educating officers.

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[58] William Richardson, "FM 100-5. The AirLand Battle in 1986," *Military Review* (March 1997).

Since the creation of TRADOC, one of the main questions posed by the commanders of this institution was how to pass the knowledge from the regulations to soldiers and officers – in such a way as to create a uniform intellectual discipline in the army. Several institutions were devised to do that, and some old ones were "fixed". At the level of NCOs, the wages and living conditions improved, education was radically improved with Sergeants Major Academy as the final level of professional education.[59] National Training Centre was erected with its technical gadgets enabling testing not only units but commanders at the brigade level. Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) for corps and army level commanders and their staffs were introduced[60] and School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) supplied those staffs with officers understanding the operational level of war and complexities of the modern battlefield.[61]

TRADOC commander General William R. Richardson defined the role of TRADOC in the following terms: "[TRADOC] embraces three distinct elements of [officers'] preparation: intellectual, psychological and physical. Intellectual preparation begins with the textbook in the classroom but moves quickly to the map, to the sand table and then to the terrain. Intellectual preparation provides the mental basis for a broad perspective on warfare by thoroughly and systematically searching military history while simultaneously scanning the future for new technology and new concepts."[62]

Battle of 73 Easting, 26 February 1991

On 26 February 1991 during Operation Desert Storm, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) of the US Army was in the vanguard of the VII Corps on the axis of the main Allied attack. Its task was to find the main Iraqi forces, determine their size and the type of defenses so that the

[59] In 1991, 88% of NCOs from Sergeants Major Academy studied at civilian universities, Scales, *Certain*, 25.
[60] Ibid., 22–23.
[61] Ibid., 27–28.
[62] Richardson, "FM 100-5," 5.

heavy divisions following behind could destroy them quickly. During this reconnaissance mission, three squadrons of the 2nd ACR came in contact with the Iraqi brigade from the Republican Guard division "Tawakalna".[63] In less than 40 minutes, despite the raging sandstorm, captain H.R. McMasters' squadron consisting of 9 Abrams (M1) and 12 Bradley (M3) tanks destroyed 37 T-72 and 32 IFVs. In an hour, after other squadrons joined the fight, the Iraqi brigade was destroyed. American losses were two Bradleys (including one destroyed by friendly fire) and one killed soldier. It was decided to digitalize the battle of 2nd ACR at 73 Easting. Each tank, combat vehicle or truck was virtualized, and all possible sources of information were used to feed the model.[64]

While the outcome of the Gulf War of 1991 was almost predetermined, considering the superiority of resources the Allies had, but the level of casualties and swiftness of operations were a surprise. Official estimates of allied losses prepared before the campaign were more than 200 or 300 times higher than the real figure. A simple explanation of the low allied losses proved difficult due to various factors causing the linear combination of causes to have insufficient "power of explanation". Iraqi morale and skills were at least at the level of the Arab army in 1967–1973–1982, there was no significant gap in terms of training and skills between the US Army and the IDF, but the proportion of American casualties was 10 times lower than Israel's in 1967. Another problem hindering the explanation of low allied losses was the fact that technology on the Kuwait Theatre of Operations (KTO) differed significantly, and the level of losses was equally low everywhere. In addition, the battles with the Iraqi army took place without the significant numerical advantage of Allied forces, and often took the form of a frontal attack.

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63 3rd *Tawakalna ala-Allah* Mechanised Division.

64 Stephen Biddle, "Victory Misunderstood: What the Gulf War tells us about the future of conflict," *International Security*, 21, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 139–179. This article is part of Stephen Biddle's, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). More popular version of events at 73 Easting is presented in Tom Clancy, *Armored Cav: A guided tour of an armoured cavalry regiment* (New York: Berkley Books, 1994).

Abrams tank from 2nd Cavalry, Gulf War 1991. Soldiers of this regiment were achieving 85% accuracy during training – 182 hits for 215 fired shots in the distance below 2000 m. Courtesy: DoD/Spc. David Faas

Stephen Biddle decided to conduct a series of scenario analysis based on the 73 Easting database. There were several strengths and weaknesses defined for both Iraqi and American forces – e.g. thermal sights on Abrams tanks, Iraqi tanks not in hull-down position, an air force advantage for the Allies, etc. During the Janus computer simulation, seven different scenarios were tested, and both Iraqi and American strengths and weaknesses were turned on and off. According to the explanation of the low level of American casualties during the Gulf War proposed by Stephan Biddle, the war saw synergy between most modern technology and the combat skills of US Army troops. It caused a radical reduction of the attacker's losses and exponential growth of losses for the defender, whose grasp of technology and knowledge how to apply it efficiently on the battlefield was lacking. One could argue that the difference in skills and technology created a "technological multiplier" effect.

The Battle of 73 Easting perfectly illustrates the effectiveness of the American "Air-Land Battle" doctrine. The victory of the 2nd ACR was

undoubtedly due to technological superiority, but the most important was the excellent training and combat skills. According to the scenario analysis of the Battle of Easting 73, these two elements are intertwined and created an extremely strong non-linear combination.

Conclusions

Military history's impact on the armed forces cannot be studied on a standalone basis. It is one of many "ingredients" of the mix that armies use for training, war planning and creation of doctrines. Very rapid technological advances make some soldiers think that history is becoming irrelevant, while at the same time, there are pundits who cry about new paradigms like hybrid warfare, the 4th generation of warfare, RMAs etc., which for a military historian are nothing new and sometimes seem like a pure marketing exercise or historically undisciplined theorizing.[65]

All four case studies presented in this paper present a different approach to military history. German Reichsheer focused on the WWI experience at the tactical and operational level. The study of the Great War was very detailed, scientific and serious – something that is rarely seen in the annals of military history – but without including the political and strategic dimensions. Due to change in the military environment caused by technology, the Reichsheer framed those experiences in the broader paradigm of operational war of movement based on military history. But German military focused so much on rapidly winning campaigns against neighbours that it did not create any institutions for education of higher command echelons of the army in the area of grand strategy. Through WWII, the Wehrmacht was an extremely efficient organization on the tactical and operational field but seriously lacking in the strategy field. Whatever military success the German army achieved, Germany's unpreparedness for waging war on a grand strategic level made its downfall certain.

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[65] Williamson Murray, Richard H. Sinnreich, ed. *The Past as Prologue. The importance of history to the military profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

The French army did exactly the opposite. After the carnage of WWI, French generals had thought they found the right formula for victory. They accepted the constraints of the strategic level of war, assuming that the next one would be long and total. Although they were right, it was not they who eventually fought it. The French military was also willing to harvest the dividend of peace, which was possible because Germany was disarmed, which meant a low level of investment in arms and shortened service times for conscripted soldiers. That undermined the army's ability to fight at the tactical level efficiently. French military doctrine was based on fighting techniques developed at the end of WWI, but no thorough examination of battlefield experience took place. Studies of military history turned into studies on WWI as no other campaign seemed relevant for the top military establishment. The French army decided to address its shortcomings by building the Maginot Line. Those fortifications were supposed to shield France from a surprise attack, enable mobilization of national resources and let the army prepare for an offensive. In the end, the Maginot Line held – but the army lost the crucial Battle of Sedan.

The Israelis are on the other side of the spectrum of how armies treat military history. IDF doctrine was almost totally based on battlefield experience, which doomed it to reinvent the wheel again and again. Optional control, i.e. Auftragstaktik or mission command; infantry assault techniques, i.e. stormtroop tactics; reforms of Armoured Corps, i.e. WWII experience – all of this was already on the table. When one adds racial prejudice toward Arabs and hubris after the Six Day War, it was a potentially disastrous cocktail. What saved Israel during the Yom Kippur War were the soldiers, their battlefield experience, high morale, and cohesion as well as the very high level of tactical training. This was the cushion that mitigated all of the IDF's intellectual, operational and strategic errors.

The US Army's doctrinal revolution in the 1970s and 1980s is a model example of how to employ battlefield experience, technology and military history in the creation of military doctrine. It is not an easy process and takes a great deal of time. As Brigadier General Barry B. McCaffrey, the commander of 24th Infantry Division during Operation Desert Storm, put

it: "The Gulf War was not won in 100 hours. It took 15 years."[66] American military changed its doctrine three times during the period 1976–1986 with the pendulum swinging wildly from Active Defence to the concept of aggressive Air-Land Battle, finally settling on a more nuanced and balanced 1986 version. Serious research was conducted on Israeli battlefield experience in the Yom Kippur War and adjustments were made to training with a focus on tactical effectiveness and combined arms. New equipment was rapidly pressed into service. The operational level of war was introduced with FM 100-5 version of 1982, and a further iteration framed it around military history and redefined principles of war. No effort was spared to train armed forces in conducting war with the creation of TRADOC, the revival of the NCO Corps, ARTEP, National Training Centre, Battle Command Training Program and SAMS studies. While the result of the Gulf War was never in question, the speed and low cost of victory were a surprise for almost all military analysts.

Constant historical awareness and education of the officer corps with all width, depth, and context[67] and on the tactical, operational and strategic level is a must.[68] Armies are able to win wars without a high level of expertise in historical matters as the Israeli case study shows, but in the process they face much higher costs in lives and equipment. If armies decide to study military history only partially, as the French and German case study shows, it may radically impact their short- or long-term ability to win wars. Closest to the realization of the above mentioned aim of historical awareness of the officer corps was the US Army in the period 1982–1991, but it did so with an enormous investment into institutions and training.

As General Patton said, "to be a successful soldier you must *study* history," and there is simply no other way. "Study" is a key word as studying of military history should primarily lead to knowledge of not only what happened but should also focus on why and how it happened. General Fuller stated: "The first fact to note is that the study of history possesses

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66 During Congressional hearing after the Gulf War, Scales, *Certain*, 35.

67 Michael Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," *Parameters* 21, no. 1 (1981): 13–14.

68 Robert H. Scales, "The Second Learning Revolution," – *Rethinking the Principles of War*, ed. Antony D. Mc Ivor (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 56–57.

only one true value, the discovery of what may prove useful in the future. The object of the study of history is to prepare us for the next war, consequently, all the ephemeral details (…) should be passed over lightly, and attention concentrated on what is of permanent value in war. What is required is the 'why' and 'how' of success and failure in a series of campaigns, and not the microscopic knowledge of any one campaign."[69]

The key takeaway from this paper is that military history may be an "intellectual multiplier" for militaries. But for it to work, it has to multiply tangible and intangible assets – e.g. equipment; tactical proficiency; high initiative, morale, cohesion; and mastery of weapons. The more valuable the "military portfolio" is, the better leverage for "profit" one can achieve using military history. This may be the difference between winning or losing the next war.

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[69] John F.C. Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War* (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1993, reprint of 1926 ed.), 329.

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Descriptive and Applied Military History – debating the utility of military history in Danish officer education[1]

Anna Sofie Hansen Schøning

Abstract. In the 1970s Danish debates on military history revealed a bifurcated understanding of military history between descriptive and applied military history. Descriptive military history was the study of military history done by academic historians, and applied military history was done by and taught to officers. The divide between descriptive and applied was rooted in the professionalization of history and officer education; it was constructed in order to accommodate the criticism that military history used in officer education did not live up to academic standards. By taking the Danish debates in the 1970s as a point of departure, this article introduces some fundamental challenges regarding the use of military history in officer education. Inspired by the German historian Reinhart Koselleck, the article argues that developments within academic history since the 1970s might have alleviated the conflict between academic military history and the military history used in officer education. Certainly, these new developments have opened up new approaches to military history.

In 1974, a seminar took place in Copenhagen under the name "Where has military history gone? A discussion of military history" (*Hvor blev militærhistorien af? En Diskussion om militærhistorisk forskning*). The purpose of the seminar was to promote and strengthen military history by uniting officers and trained academics within the field of military history. However,

[1] The following article is based on preliminary studies of the author's Ph.D. project analysing the use of history in Danish army officer education.

it soon became clear that bridging the gap between these two parties was not a simple task. Besides the political difference of environment regarding officers and academics, a fundamental question of the character of military history emerged. In particular, the seminar participants disagreed on the purpose of military history as taught in officer education.

In the 1970s, Danish research on military history was scarce, and had been so since the turn of the century. Research into Danish military history was limited to the extent that at times it was synonymous with the work undertaken by a small military history department of the Danish General Staff. Generally, military history in Denmark was written by officers. An aversion to military history had existed amongst academic historians since the turn of the century. The history departments of Danish universities had no chairs, big or small, in military history.[2] The Danish academic disinterest in military history was already clear in 1920 when General Lieutenant and honorary Doctor of History August Peder Tuxen gave a speech at the Nordic history meeting in Oslo. Tuxen expressed his regret that not more academically trained historians did research in the field of military history and furthermore defended the value of some of the publications on military history made by officers.[3] These tendencies are not unique to Denmark. In many other Western countries, academic historians largely shunned military history.[4] At the seminar in 1974, however, the Danish situation was perceived as particularly sombre, as it was expressed that the situation in Denmark was worse than in neighbouring Sweden. In contrast to Denmark, research groups working on research within the category of military history could be found at Swedish universities in Umeå, Göteborg and Lund.[5]

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[2] Claus C. von Barnekow, Kaare E. Janson and Ole L. Frantzen, *Hvor blev Militærhistorien af?: En diskussion om militærhistorisk forskning* (København: HRFV, 1975), 2.

[3] August Peder Tuxen, *Dansk Krigshistorieskrivning i de sidste hundrede aar: Foredrag holdt ved det Nordiske Historikermøde i Kristiania 1920* (København: Vilhelm Tryde, 1921).

[4] See Michael Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," *RUSI Journal* 107, no. 625 (1962): 4–10; John A. Lynn, "Breaching the Walls of Academe: The Purposes, Problems, and Prospects of Military History," *Academic Questions* 21, no. 1 (2008): 18–36; Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich, eds., *The Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[5] Barnekow, Janson and Frantzen, *Hvor blev Militærhistorien af?*, 16.

The differences between academic historians' and officers' approaches to military history became apparent at the seminar, unfolding further in biennial conferences on military history and in articles in historical journals. By taking the Danish debates as point of departure, this article will introduce some fundamental and well-known challenges regarding the use of military history in officer education.[6] The debates on military history that took place in the 1970s Denmark revealed a bifurcated understanding of military history created to accommodate the criticism that military history used in officer education attracted. This article examines this distinction between applied and descriptive military history and how it was rooted in the professionalization of history and officer education. It ends by contemplating whether changes in academic history since the 1970s have somewhat alleviated the conflict between academic history and military history as utilised in officer education.

At the seminar on military history in 1974, the following reasons were given to explain the hardships of military history in Danish historiography: political antimilitarism amongst historians, the professionalization of both history and the military profession, and the non-academic use of military history among officers.[7] These reasons all, in one way or another, relate to the utility of military history. One of the speakers at the meeting, Dr. Carl-Axel Gemzell of the University of Lund, explained the political antimilitarism among academic historians by pointing out that, leading up to and during the First World War, military history was used for propagandist purposes and to encourage armament. Danish historians in the beginning of the 20th century predominantly belonged to the political Party *Radikale Venstre* (Radical Left) that carried very strong antimilitaristic sentiments. Therefore, academic historians did not want to participate in endeavours that could be seen as endorsing militarism.[8] As a result, war was increasingly seen as an abnormality in the course

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[6] See Thomas Kühne and Benjamin Ziemann, eds., *Was ist Militärgeschichte?* Krieg in der Geschichte 6 (Paderborn: Schnönigh, 2000); Ursula von Gersdorff, *Geschichte und Militärgeschichte: Wege der Forschung* (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard & Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1974); Murray, Sinnreich, *The Past as Prologue*.

[7] Barnekow, Janson and Frantzen, *Hvor blev Militærhistorien af?*.

[8] Ibid., 12.

of history and therefore not as something necessary to devote attention to. However, it was not only academic historians' sceptical attitudes that threatened military use of military history. Gemzell points to a bureaucratization process that happened after the Second World War where the academics, who were becoming part of military staffs, did not include historians. Instead, they came primarily from the social sciences, more specifically economists, sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists. With their systematizing and empirically experimental approach they took over tasks that used to be that of the historian, and military history lost its monopoly on creating the empirical foundation for military theory.[9]

Regarding the non-academic writing of military history as a reason for academic historians' disinclinations towards military history, another speaker at the seminar, archivist and historian Hans Christian Bjerg, pointed to the lack of source criticism and sufficient context information leading academic historians to dismiss work written by officers. Paradoxically, the few academic historians who did venture to write military history often received harsh criticism from officers, who argued that the academics lacked sufficient tactical and technical knowledge.[10]

The third reason regarding the professionalization of history as a cause for the hardships of military history concerns the way military history was taught in officer education. Lieutenant Colonel K.V. Nielsen was in 1974 a teacher of military history at the Army Academy (*Hærens Officersskole*) and teacher of strategy at the Royal Danish Defence College (*Forsvarsakademiet*). According to Nielsen, the role of military history was to bind together the three fundamental elements of officer education: operations in war and peace, political science and administration in war and peace, and basic understanding of the conditions on the battlefield. An important function was thereby to introduce the cadets to the Clausewitzian concept of friction.[11] When teaching cadets about friction and battlefield chaos, Nielsen did not distinguish between learning from offi-

[9] Barnekow, Janson and Frantzen, *Hvor blev Militaerhistorien af?*, 13.
[10] Ibid., 6.
[11] Ibid., 28–32.

cial records, personal accounts, or novels. He stated that studying other types of accounts will allow the officer to get closer to reality than field exercises.[12] It is unclear whether it is necessary that the narratives that one learns from are meticulously based on facts about what actually happened, or is it is sufficient that the accounts are realistic. This ambiguity is another reason why military history in this context has been in conflict with academic history.

Overall, Nielsen's view of the utility of military history in officer education aligns with that of the renowned military historian Sir Michael Howard:

> Like the statesman, the soldier has to steer between the dangers of repeating the errors of the past because he is ignorant that they have been made, and of remaining bound by theories deduced from past history although changes in conditions have rendered these theories obsolete.[13]

Nielsen further cited military theorist General Giulio Douhet and his thought that "The preparation for war demands, then, exercise of the imagination; we are compelled to make a mental excursion into the future."[14] Military history in officer education had a clear utility. This utility conflicted with academic history, as I will show in the following chapter.

Military History and *Magistra Vitae*

With the professionalization of history, the notion that it is possible to learn from military history came under attack. In the above quote by Sir Michael Howard from his programmatic article *The Use and Abuse of Military History*, cited by Nielsen at the conference, a clear understanding that studying military history can prepare the officer for future battle is present – learning from the past can make the officer wiser for the future.

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[12] "Militærhistorisk konference '75 – en rapport: København, 15.–16. marts 1975" (København: Hærstabens Militærhistoriske Arbejder, 1975), 54–56.

[13] Howard, "The Use and Abuse," 7.

[14] Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air* (Washington: Office of air force history, 1983), 145.

The notion that it is possible to learn from history was coined in Latin antiquity in Cicero's *De Oratore* as "*Historia Magistra Vitae Est*" – history as the teacher of life. *Magistra vitae* was a guiding principle of history for centuries. A classical understanding of *magistra vitae* in the 18th century was that history should be used as a collection of former actions and ways of life that could provide inspiration or dissuasion and guide people on how to best live their lives.[15] Besides its instructive properties, *magistra vitae* also often had morally edifying qualities. It was considered that the role of the historian was to make clear what model behaviour the reader or listener should follow.[16] History was seen as a field of experience from which one could harvest experience, skipping laborious and time-consuming trial-and-error processes. According to the German historian Reinhart Koselleck: "Thus the writing of history was considered for about two thousand years or so to be a place of learning where one could become wiser without coming to any harm."[17] It is easy to see why this approach to history would appeal to the officer, who, as pointed out in Michael Howard's quote, would likely not have any previous experience of war.

> If there are no wars in the present in which the professional soldier can learn his trade, he is almost compelled to study the wars of the past. For after all allowances have been made for historical differences, wars still resemble each other more than they resemble any other human activity.[18]

The concept of *magistra vitae* becomes maybe even more visible in a later quote by Howard: "Past wars provide the only database from which the military learn how to conduct their profession: how to do it and even more important, how not to do it."[19]

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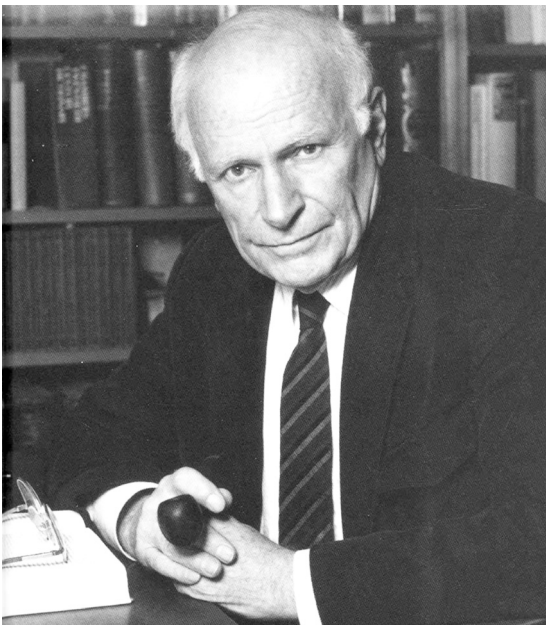
[15] Bernard Eric Jensen, "Using a Past – Magistra Vitae Approaches to History," – *Negotiating Pasts in the Nordic Countires. Interdisciplinary Studies in History and Memory*, ed. Anne Eriksen and Jón Vidar Sigurdsson (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2009), 214.

[16] Anne Eriksen, "Livets Læremester," *Tidsskrift for Kulturforskning* 9, no. 2 (2010): 39–54.

[17] Cited in Jensen, "Using a Past," 205.

[18] Howard, "The Use and Abuse," 7.

[19] Michael Howard, "Military History and the History of War," – *The Past as Prologue. The Importance of History to the Military Profession*, ed. Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13.



Reinhart Koselleck (1923–2006), one of the greatest historians of the 20th century, in his study. Koselleck's novel approach to the theory of history has encouraged the rethinking of the nature of military history too. Courtesy: Wikimedia Commons

However, with the professionalization of history beginning in the late 17th century the *magistra* vitae approach to history was gradually rejected. This rejection can be summed up in the famous quote by Leopold von Ranke: "History has had assigned to it the office of judging the past and of instructing the present for the benefit of the future ages. To such high offices the present work does not presume: it seeks only to show what actually happened [*wie es eigentlich gewesen*]."[20] History should no longer be action indicating, instruct the present and guide the future, but was with its professionalization viewed as a strictly ideographic science, meaning that history became a science about unique events that once were, conducted by professional historians. History distinguished itself from other sciences by its special subject matter – the past – that can never be approached directly, but only indirectly through remnants of the past in the shape of various source material.

[20] Leopold von Ranke, "Preface: Histories of the Romance and Germanic Peoples," – *The Varieties of History. From Voltaire to the Present*, ed. Fritz Stern (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 57.

The rejection of the *magistra vitae* approach to history made it difficult, if not impossible, to use military history in officer education in the way described by K.V. Nielsen, while at the same time adhering to the academic standards of history. The extent of the conflict between academic history and the notion that military history has utility, I argue, depends on how this utility is understood. Inspired by historian and Brigadier General Michael H. Clemmesen, a way to understanding the utility of military history is to distinguish between learning form military history in the way of guidance, and in the way of insight.[21] By military history offering guidance, is meant that it is possible to derive action-indicating principles of war from the past. This is also what Michael Howard has called "school solutions" in his introductory article of the anthology *The Past as Prologue*[22] and what Clemmesen calls "Enlightenment tradition of identifying theoretical patterns and seeking positive guidance from a systematic analysis of the measurable extracts of a significant number of cases."[23] Military history then becomes generalizing and predictive, and therefore clashes with the standards of academic history.

However, if one believes military history only offers general insight from the study of past wars, the conflict with academic history becomes less clear. Defining what is meant by military history yielding "general insight" is more difficult than defining what is meant by "guidance". According to Clemmesen, military history offering general insight entails that "The maximum they [past military cases] can do is to highlight general human and organizational as well as specific cultural frailties that are likely to undermine the effectiveness of preparations for and action in war."[24] However, this does not mean that the past should not be studied or that this kind of insight can be gained once and for all. Rather, gaining insight from military history generates knowledge about human character and life, similar in a sense to wisdom. But, as military historian John R. Lynn points out, "To be sure, there is no guarantee that histori-

[21] Michael H. Clemmesen, "Combat Case History in Advanced Officer Development: Extracting what is difficult to apply," *Baltic Security and Defence Review* 17, no. 2 (2014): 38.

[22] Howard, "Military History and the History of War," 13.

[23] Clemmesen, "Combat Case History," 38.

[24] Ibid., 57.

cal knowledge translates into current wisdom, but knowledge is a better hedge against disaster than is ignorance".[25] With this kind of pragmatic attitude towards military history the opposition to academic history diminishes as the form of knowledge obtained is intangible. The boundaries between insight and guidance are, however, not clear.

When reading different works that touch on the subject of learning from military history, it can be very difficult to discern whether the authors believe it possible to use military history as guiding principles of war, or if they believe it possible only to gain insight of the study of past wars, and exactly how the learning processes take place. Some authors, explicitly committed to Michael Howard's study of history, contradictorily believe in the possibility to deduct positive principles from war.[26] A central question to military history is therefore to what extent it is possible to generalize from past experiences in preparing for the future. Where does guidance stop and where does insight start – are they dichotomic categories or should the two concepts be viewed as poles on a continuum? And does the understanding of learning clash with academic standards of history? I will further elaborate on these questions by returning to the aforementioned debates about the character of military history in Denmark.

Military history – science or art?

At the seminar in 1974, archivist and historian Hans Christian Bjerg expressed his views about how the different goals of the officers on the one hand and the academically trained historians on the other might explain why military history had regressed. He pointed to the lack of the distinction between what he called descriptive (*beskrivende*) and applied (*anvendt*) military history as a reason for this regression:

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[25] John A. Lynn, "Breaching the Walls of Academe: The purposes, problems, and prospects of military history," *Academic Questions* 21 (2008), 22.

[26] Michael H. Clemmesen and Anna Sofie Schøning, "På Vej Til Antologien Og Dette Binds Eksempler," – *Om Læring Og Indsigt Fra Krig. Isted 1850 Til Musa Qala 2006*, ed. Michael H. Clemmesen (Odense: Syddansk Universtitetsforlag, 2018), 11–23.

> I have often speculated if this dilemma has developed because the two categories have very different objectives as to their research and writing – and that it all boils down to the fact that the distinction between what I call descriptive and applied military history has not been made.
>
> It is evident and completely legitimate that officers need to analyse past battles and technologically special military situations with the purpose of gaining experience for future situations. In this case the officer has a clear-cut purpose with his military historical research – or rather, military technical research applied to historical data; it would however be wrong to merely translate this circumstance to being pragmatic history writing.
>
> The academic historian will contrarily rarely have this pragmatic goal for his studies. Maybe this is the reason for the restraining dilemma.[27]

Bjerg first introduced the distinction between applied and descriptive military history when reviewing a book on military history, *Militærhistorie,* written by Lieutenant Colonel Helge Klint, for the history journal *Historisk Tidsskift* in 1971.[28] The book gave a general introduction to military history, and was published in 1970 based on an orientation about military history given as an introductory course for first year history students at University of Copenhagen in the winter of 1967/68.[29] Lieutenant Colonel Klint was one of very few Danish officers who had taught at a university history department at the time. Klint himself used the term "applied history" in his book,[30] but was criticized by Bjerg for not focusing more on the distinction between applied and descriptive military history. According to Bjerg, applied military history is military technical analysis including military theoretical studies, where the main purpose is to provide the officer with knowledge he can use for future situations. What he means by

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[27] Bjerg in Claus C. von. Barnekow, Ole Louis Frantzen and Kaare E. Janson, *Hvor blev militærhistorien af?: en diskussion om militærhistorisk forskning* (Kbh.: [s.n.], 1975), 6f. All Danish translations are by the author.

[28] Hans Christian Bjerg, "Helge Klint: Militærhistorie," *Historisk Tidsskrift* 12, no. 5 (1971): 185–186.

[29] Helge Klint, *Militærhistorie* (København: Dansk historisk Fællesforenings håndbøger, 1970), 109, 5.

[30] Klint, *Militærhistorie*, 11.

descriptive military history is vaguer and is not described further than it is academic historians' historical analysis of military affairs.[31]

Bjerg is himself not quite clear in his definition of the two concepts, as he predominantly addresses instances where the two have been mixed. As long as the distinction was made between these two kinds of military history, Bjerg did not view applied history as problematic – it was simply a form that did not have to live up to the standards of academic history.[32] Conversely, when this distinction was made, historical research was not tainted by a non-academic utilitarian purpose and met academic standards. However, not all historians of the time agreed with this distinction. Contrary to Bjerg, assistant professor and future associate professor at the University of Southern Denmark Knud J.V. Jespersen saw this distinction as highly problematic. This distinction became the crux of a debate on the use of military history that followed the first conference of military history in 1974.

According to Knud J. V. Jespersen, the distinction between applied and descriptive military history could be traced back to an article about military history written by B.P Berthelsens in the Danish Encyclopedia *Salmonsens store illustrerede Konversationsleksikon* in 1900. In this article, it was expressed that military history could either be a purely historical study of the sources – with the purpose of getting as close as possible to the transpired events – or serve educational purposes to officers.[33] Here Jespersen reads Berthelsens' definition of two forms of history as comparable to Nielsen's concepts of descriptive and applied military history. According to Jespersen, this was a widespread understanding of military history around the turn of the century when disciplines were divided into applied and descriptive, inspired by the natural sciences. The task of the historian was to deliver objective and truthful descriptions from which the officer could derive what was generally applicable and useful for the future.[34]

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[31] Bjerg, "Helge Klint: Militærhistorie," 185f.

[32] Barnekow, Janson and Frantzen, *Hvor blev Militærhistorien af?*, 7.

[33] Knud J. V. Jespersen, "Krigshistorioens Lære Og Krigens Historikere," *Historie/Jyske Samlinger* Ny række, no. 12 (1977): 27.

[34] Jespersen, "Krigshistorioens," 28.

This distinction can be traced even further back. In the very first educational plans of the Danish Royal Military Academy from 1830 one can also find this distinction in the form of two different military history subjects: Denmark's Military History (*Danmarks Krigshistorie*) and Campaign History (*Feldttogshistorie*). Denmark's Military History was, judging from the textbook made for the subject and published in 1834, a classical historical subject with a focus on providing the officer with knowledge of Danish military feats.[35] In Campaign History, students analysed one or two campaigns and compared the conclusions of this analysis with the dominant military theory. This course was a development of the course in what was called applied tactics (*anvendt taktik*) and required knowledge of troop movement and the guiding principles of warfare.[36] Even though the concepts of "descriptive" and "applied" history were not used here, the difference in the two subjects can be said to follow the same logic as the distinction between descriptive and applied history: Denmark's military history being a traditional historical past-orientated subject and campaign history being a subject using the past only if it is relevant for the present and the future.

According to Jespersen, the applied version of military history should be avoided altogether. In an article about the battle of Lutter am Barenberg, Jespersen stated that the lessons being drawn from this battle were a poorly made construction. The lessons drawn, he argued, could not be separated from the historical research since they were selected depending heavily on exactly that research. Hence it was a futile idea to divide military history in a descriptive part, which produces objective knowledge of the past, and an applied part, where lessons for the future were drawn based on the descriptive military history.[37] This attitude to military history is supported by Norwegian historian and PhD in Philosophy Lieutenant Colonel Harald Høiback who agrees that the lessons of history are

[35] Anna Sofie Schøning, "Mellem Historie- Og Krigsvidenskab: Krigshistorie i Udbygningen Af Hærens Stabsofficersuddannelse 1830–1920," *Fra Krig Og Fred* (2017), 37.

[36] Schøning, "Mellem Historie- Og Krigsvidenskab," 41f.

[37] Jespersen, "Krigshistorioens," 30.

the lessons of the historian; when one looks for answers in history, one usually finds what one came after.[38]

Therefore, an important question is whether it is at all possible to draw objective knowledge from the past. To Bjerg, who believed that it was in fact possible to have objective historical knowledge, it became essential that the applied and descriptive versions of military history were separated. Jespersen fully dismissed the thought of any lessons learning from military history as he explained it would always be the lessons of the military historian as opposed to lessons from history itself.[39] In another article from 1977, Jespersen delves more into what the distinction between descriptive and applied means for military history.[40] He explained it as a result of military history belonging to the military sciences and therefore was considered an exact science rather than a critical one (as he calls his own understanding of history). In the 1977 article, Jespersen criticized Lieutenant Colonel Nielsen's understanding of military history as it was expressed at the conference in 1974.[41] This led Nielsen to defend his view of military history. Nielsen explained that, due to the limited time to discuss the relevant questions at the army school, it was not possible for the student to conduct any historical research. This does, according to Nielsen, not mean that the way military history is studied at the Danish Army Academy is not serious, or that it did not strive to live up to academic standards.[42] However, Nielsen did not try to hide that he believed that officers can be better prepared for the future by studying military history and that military history can help find what is constant in the conduct of war. On the utility of military history, he writes:

> This is, as I view it, not an antiquated conception about 'the lessons of military history', it is rather a completely viable and highly relevant

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[38] Harald Høiback, "Kan vi Lære Av Historien? En Studie i Militær Kompetansefilosofi," *Forsvarsstudier* 1 (2003): 70f.

[39] Jespersen, "Krigshistorioens," 46.

[40] Knud J. V. Jespersen, "En Militærhistorisk Renaissance?," *Historisk Tidsskrift* 4, no. 13 (1977): 135–142.

[41] Jespersen, "En Militærhistorisk Renaissance?," 140.

[42] Kai Vilhelm Nielsen, "En Kommentar Til 'Krigshistoriens Lære' og Krigens Historikere," *Historie/Jyske Samlinger* Ny række 1, no. 1–2 (1979): 71–74.

> application of illustrative material from history applied in an interdisciplinary education of people in a profession where this kind of illustration can help develop 'versatility, adaptability and flexibility'.[43]

For Nielsen, the study of military history offers guidance as opposed to insight, as previously described. This in turn makes the difference between military history as utilized in officer education seem stronger and makes Jespersen question the epistemology of this kind of military history:

> The question is in other words if military history should be considered nomothetic (generalizing science) or ideographic (individualizing). I am naturally of the opinion that it as an integrated part of academic history is the last. On this vital aspect I am missing a clarification from KVN [Kai Vilhelm Nielsen].[44]

To Jespersen it was unclear what kind of science military history was for Nielsen. The distinction between nomothetic and ideographic that Jespersen used was first coined by German neo-Kantian philosopher Wilhelm Windelband at the turn of the 19th century. A nomothetic science is one that deals with general laws, what is universal, whereas ideographic sciences are concerned with what once was both understood as something particular and as something that was in the past. However, this only describes the treatment of knowledge, not the actual content. The distinction has also been widely criticized and has caused confusion.[45]

The distinction was made to differentiate between the methods of natural sciences on one hand and the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*) on the other, since disciplines like psychology were using methods formerly reserved for natural science while being a science about inner human life. Windelband did not argue that all human sciences were necessarily historical. Therefore, it is useless to operate with this distinction as a tool to separate natural sciences on the one hand and social sciences

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[43] Nielsen, "En Kommentar," 74.

[44] Knud J. V. Jespersen, "Svar Til En Lærer i Krigshistorie," *Historie/Jyske Samlinger* 13 (1979): 76.

[45] Frederick Charles Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 382.

and humanities on the other. However, the question of whether one can derive laws from military history, or one should refrain from making generalizations based on past battles remains a highly interesting question to discuss regarding the use of military history in officer education. This question is also related to the distinction between military history offering guidance or insight.

As I see it, Jespersen could, in the above quote, just as well have asked Nielsen for clarity on whether he saw military history as offering guidance or insight. Military history offering guidance, as described previously, entails the idea that warfare is governed by general laws. However, no such laws can be deducted from military history if it only offers insight. Danish military history in officer education seems to contain a sort of dualism. Different concept pairs have been used to describe this phenomenon. Besides descriptive/applied, ideographic/nomothetic, guidance/insight, the distinction consumer/producer was also used in the Danish debate. Nielsen introduced this distinction at the seminar in 1974 to make clear that he as a military history teacher of the Danish Army College was a consumer of military history rather than a producer. He describes that it is a pity that it is not possible for him as a consumer to get relevant military history that is Danish made.[46] Although these descriptions are different, they are as I view them all attempts to overcome the separation of academic history and military history as taught in officer education that happened with the professionalization of history. Looking further back to the beginning of the 20th century, teacher of military history Rolf Kall used the terms narrative and learning military history to make similar distinctions of military history.[47] This illustrates clearly that it has been a problem for military history. Although I think a lot can be learned about military history from studying these concept pairs, there might be reason to believe that the conflict between academic history and military history taught in officer education – so vivid in the 1970s Denmark with roots dating back to the professionalization of history – has diminished today.

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[46] Barnekow, Frantzen and Janson, *Hvor blev militærhistorien af?*, 28.

[47] Schøning, "Mellem Historie- Og Krigsvidenskab," 77f.

Military history today

It is my impression that since the 1970s, Danish military history as taught in officer education has in many ways followed developments in academic history. The gap between the two types of military history has shrunk in a way that it is questionable whether one even can speak of two distinct types. In a Danish context, the utility that military history offers is predominantly viewed in terms of insight rather than guidance. Additionally, within Danish academic history it has become more acceptable that history has a use.

In the last thirty years in Denmark, a new field of history that focuses on memory and the uses of pasts has been established. This is inspired by an international focus on historical consciousness and cultural memory, building on theories by among other Maurice Halbwachs, which received renewed interest in the 1970s and 1980s.[48] This theoretical field's approach to history opens up the definition of what history is. History is not only the research that takes place in history departments, in universities, and at museums. The scope broadens to include how people outside of academia use history. Following this approach, it is equally if not more interesting how ordinary people view history and how history is used in public institutions.[49] In Denmark, the reason for placing the focus on what goes on outside academic circles was explained by two of the Danish pioneers of this approach to history: history professors Claus Bryld and Bernard Eric Jensen. The two had different ways of explaining the need for academic Danish history writing to be less revolving around itself. Claus Bryld put forth the argument that since history is produced and communicated by so many people other than historians, the focus should broaden to also include how history is used in various institutions and political debates. Bernard Eric Jensen had a different viewpoint, given his history didactic background. According to Jensen, consciousness of history is a human prerequisite. It is not possible to understand

[48] Anette Elisabeth Warring, "Erindring og Historiebrug. Introduktion til et forskningsfelt," *Temp. Tidskrift for historie* 1, no. 2 (2011): 6, 13.
[49] Warring, "Erindring og Historiebrug," 10.

human behaviour without understanding how the human thinks and uses history.[50]

According to Norwegian history theorist Helge Jordheim, looking at how history is understood outside academia makes evident that the *magistra vitae* approach to history is thriving. To most people, the notion that it is possible to learn from history is obvious.[51] Without conscious effort, most people go about their lives with the understanding that it is possible to learn from history. Jensen proves that even within Danish academic history it was difficult to completely abandon the thought. A complete rejection of the notion of *magistra vitae* had not happened in the beginning of 1911 when Danish prolific historian Kristian Erslev published his book on historical method:

> Thus, Erslev was attributing a bifurcated professional identity to the historical profession. When historians were engaged in writing history, they could continue to employ a magistra vitæ approach in order to identify usable pasts. However, when they set out to study the past in a scientific manner, they only had to concern themselves with what actually had occurred and abstain from any attempt at clarifying the ways in which knowledge of the past events could prove useful in a contemporary setting.[52]

Erslev distinguished between history writing and history research in order to include *magistra vitae* as a viable understanding of history. Erslevs successors, however, delivered a more definitive rejection of *magistra vitae*.[53] This distinction can somehow be said to be similar to the one made regarding military history.

Underlining the academic acceptance of history's use in the new historical tradition was an understanding of time inspired by the German history theorist Reinhart Koselleck, which was different from the past fixated understanding of history. With this theoretical approach, history

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[50] Ibid., 8.

[51] Helge Jordheim, "Historia Magistra Vitae i Det 21. Århundrede. Debatten Om Falstad," *Arr - Idéhistorisk Tidsskrift* 3, no. 4 (2009): 26.

[52] Jensen, "Using a Past," 226.

[53] Ibid., 227.

is not a science only about the past, but one that equally concerns the present and the future.

The way Koselleck describes the relation between the past, present and future as interchangeable, not separated, entities generates an understanding of history where it is possible to learn from the past and overcome the question of history being ideographic or nomothetic. Koselleck offers an alternative way to perceive the past. The past is relevant to the present not because history is repeating itself, nor does history have to be a nomothetic endeavour and only a tool to deduce overall and generic principles guiding the world but simply because the concepts "experience" and "expectation", according to Koselleck, "are human conditions that it is not possible to understand history without".[54] Using the concepts "space of experience and "horizon of expectation", Koselleck explains the relation of past, present and future as follows: "Experience is present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered."[55] The past is therefore always present as experience. The military history studied by officers will in this sense be part of the space of experience for those officers. It does not matter if the studied past is first-hand experiences or experiences of others in the form of history. What matters is that it is remembered. As experiences are always present, so are expectations. Expectations are "(…) the future made present; it directs itself to the not-yet, to the nonexperienced, to that which is to be revealed."[56] This understanding of time signifies that learning from history takes place continuously – experience is what we bring with us to the present. Experiences also affects expectations of how the future might unfold, as expectations conversely also effect what experiences are deemed relevant. These are processes that, whether we are aware of them or not, are always part of human life.

The above theoretical approach lays the groundwork for asking exploratory questions rather than correcting the way military history is used in officer education. To the historian of this theoretical observation, it becomes interesting why military history is used as it is used. What

[54] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 257.
[55] Ibid., 259.
[56] Ibid.

pasts are deemed relevant? Why is it possible to learn from some pasts, while not from others? And how are these pasts related to present military strategic situations and future military conduct?

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Which Past for the Soldier?

Military History, Historical Education, and the Ethics of Democracy in Germany Today

Jörg Echternkamp

Abstract. The construction of tradition in the military depends on the meaning given to certain aspects of the past in the light of the present. West Germany's history of tradition-building since 1955 is a case in point. After the end of Nazism, the new democratic armed forces, the Bundeswehr, was supposed to distance itself from the Wehrmacht by emphasizing the "civil" role of soldiers. Communicating historical knowledge became part of their democratic education rather than a guideline for military performance. Institutions such as the Center for Military History and the Museum of Military History, travel exhibitions, as well as popular scientific journals have contributed to an understanding of what is worthy of tradition – in particular the Prussian reforms, the plot of 20 July 1944, and the history of the Bundeswehr itself. Such references to the past – so the argument goes – help soldiers in combat to better grasp the ethical framework of military operations, provide orientation, and support their identity. Whether and how traditions should be adjusted according to changing military conditions remains controversial.

Any reference to the past gives evidence of the present. Starting from this assumption, I will reflect on the German concept of linking military history to historical education and the construction of tradition in the military. This has not only been an academic issue, but also a very salient political problem. The importance of historical knowledge in the German armed forces is reflected by the public debate that led, in March 2018, to new guidelines by the Minister of Defence. Its starting point was a startling scandal.

"We can tolerate many things, but not political extremism, right-wing or religiously motivated extremism," Minister Ursula von der Leyen told the media in May 2017.[1] She was reacting to the strange case of a 28-year-old army lieutenant who led what prosecutors called a "double life", pretending to be a Syrian refugee. He was arrested on suspicion of planning a gun attack which he meant to blame on his alter ego – a fictitious Damascus fruit seller. The scandal widened after media reported the suspect had expressed far-right views in his 2014 master thesis, but that no disciplinary action was taken against him. As a result of this scandal, all barracks buildings were searched for objects, images, symbols referring to Hitler's German Army, the *Wehrmacht*.[2] German soldiers are supposed to cherish tradition, but the military instrument of Nazi dictatorship is not part of this. This leads to the central question in the context of this conference: "Which Past for the Soldier?". The subtitle deliberately points up three aspects: "Military history, historical education, and the ethics of democracy". I will argue that these three elements have been – and will be – inextricably linked when it comes to the use of the past in the German Armed Forces.

Discontinuity and "Innere Führung"

In Germany, military history is primarily marked by discontinuity. The coexistence of two German armies opposing each other until the breakdown of East Germany in 1989–1990 is a more recent case in point. Not surprisingly, West German soldiers generally do not value its former communist counterpart.[3] The history of the National People's Army (NVA)

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[1] Verteidigungsministerium zum Fall Franco A.: "Bundeswehr hat ein Haltungsproblem," *Der Tagesspiegel*, 30.04.2017.

[2] For the chronology of the case see the wikipedia article "Terror Ermittlungen gegen Bundeswehr Soldaten 2017," https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorermittlungen_gegen_Bundeswehrsoldaten_2017, accessed 1.12.2018.

[3] Nina Leonhard, "'Armee der Einheit': Zur Integration von NVA-Soldaten in die Bundeswehr," – *Handbuch Militär und Sozialwissenschaft*, ed. Sven B. Gareis and Paul Klein, 2. Aufl. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 61–71; Ibid., *Integration und Gedächtnis. NVA-Offiziere im vereinigten Deutschland* (Konstanz: UVK-Verlag, 2016).

that goes back 35 years is not a part of today's military tradition.[4] Things become much trickier, however, when it comes to the pre-1945 past. Ever since rearmament in the mid-1950s, references to the years when German soldiers were actually fighting has been problematic because of the history of the Nazi regime and its armed forces, the Wehrmacht.[5] The West German armed forces (*Bundeswehr*), established in 1955–1956 in a democratic state, could and should not simply be considered a remake of Hitler's army. Paradoxically, the Wehrmacht was not the forerunner of its follower. After all, "demilitarizing" the Germans had been a major goal of the Allies' occupation policy in the immediate post-war period. Using military force without issue has ceased to a given. This can be seen in the mass protests against rearmament in the 1950s as well as in the opposition to foreign missions among the majority of Germans in the last decades.

Certainly, the new "democratic" army had to be legitimized by a new culture of leadership. This principle has been called *Innere Führung*.[6] It tries to harmonize the values of democracy and the requirements of a military organization in order to motivate the soldiers and by doing so strengthen its efficiency. "Internal leadership" – as opposed to formal, external leadership – links all military values explicitly to the values and

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[4] Rüdiger Wenzke, *Nationale Volksarmee. Die Geschichte* (München: Bucher, 2014); Ibid., *Ulbrichts Soldaten. Die Nationale Volksarmee 1956 bis 1971*. Militärgeschichte der DDR 22 (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2013).

[5] For a synthesis of research on Wehrmacht see Jürgen Förster, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat. Eine strukturgeschichtliche Analyse* (München: Oldenbourg, 2007); Wolfram Wette, *Die Wehrmacht. Feindbilder, Vernichtungskrieg, Legenden* (Frankfurt am Main: C. H. Beck, 2005). On the debate see Christian Hartmann, Johannes Hürter, Ulrike Jureit, eds., *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht: Bilanz einer Debatte* (München: Beck, 2005). On the role of German veterans see Jörg Echternkamp, *Soldaten im Nachkrieg. Historische Deutungskonflikte und westdeutsche Demokratisierung 1945–1955*. Beiträge zur Militärgeschichte 76 (München: DeGruyter/Oldenbourg, 2014).

[6] Frank Nägler, *Der gewollte Soldat und sein Wandel. Personelle Rüstung und Innere Führung in den Aufbaujahren der Bundeswehr 1956 bis 1964/65*. Sicherheitspolitik und Streitkräfte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 9 (München: DeGruyter/Oldenbourg, 2011); Georg Meyer, "Zur Inneren Entwicklung der Bundeswehr bis 1960/61," – *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik 1945–1956*, Bd. 3: Die Nato-Option, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (München: Oldenbourg, 1993), 851–1162. See Zentrale Dienstvorschrift A-2600/1 "Innere Führung. Selbstverständnis und Führungskultur", 6.11.2017, www.bmvg.de, accessed 14.01.2020.

norms of the German Constitution, particularly to liberty, democracy, and the rule of law. Therefore, in 1956, a school for advanced training was founded, since 1981 named "Centre for Innere Führung".[7] At the core of this culture is the role model of the "citizen in uniform" (*Staatsbürger in Uniform*). The concept is based on the idea of an army in the midst of civil society. It is based on the ideal of officers who get politically involved – not on behalf of one single party (as had been the case in the GDR), but in support of a system of political pluralism.[8] The concept assumes that soldiers are able to decide themselves, by the dictates of their conscience, whether or not an order is in accordance with the Constitution. There is no absolute obedience in the German Army.

However, well into the 1970s this new culture of leadership met with resistance from parts of the Bundeswehr due to the prevalence of so-called traditionalists who were affected by the culture of the Wehrmacht. It was not until the mid-1960s that the concept of Innere Führung was debated inside the Army as well as by the German public. While the traditionalists argued that being a soldier is a profession *sui generis* and grounded in "eternal" military values such as comradeship, reformers insisted on the ideal of a Bundeswehr based on the values of democracy and pluralism. In recent years, against the new backdrop of missions abroad, critics have called for a role model for military professionals that is presumably closer to combat reality. The advocates of Innere Führung, however, underline the fact that finally the concept has been successfully tested. A key component of this concept, however, is historical education.

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[7] Hans-Joachim Reeb and Peter Többicke, *Lexikon Innere Führung* (Regensburg: Walhalla, 4. Aufl., 2014); Hans-Joachim Reeb, "60 Jahre Innere Führung: das Wesensmerkmal der Bundeswehr im Lauf der Geschichte," *Zeitschrift für die Innere Führung: if* 59 (2015), Heft 4: 23–30.

[8] See from a comparative perspective Jörg Echternkamp, "Der politische Offizier als normativer Typus. Zum Verhältnis von Politik und Militär im 'Dritten Reich', in der DDR und der Bundesrepublik," *Tel Aviv Yearbook for German History* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016), 221–250.

The role of historical education

If a soldier's conscience is so important, it is equally important to train the soldier in a way that his value system reflects the ethics of democracy.[9] This has been the fundamental goal of historical and political education in the Federal Republic.[10] One needs historical knowledge if one wants to behave as a citizen. One needs to understand how the values of the legal system have developed and where they originated historically. Also, soldiers have to learn about the past in order to recognize which historical events, persons and institutions would be suitable or unsuitable for their "tradition". The main idea is based on the distinction between education and training, between *Bildung* and *Ausbildung*. Debating the past provides a more general education (*Bildung*) than precise guidelines for military behaviour. Historical education conveys knowledge on the cause and effect of former developments. It explains the development of political, cultural, and military problems of the present. The intention of historical education in this context is a military one. It is historical knowledge that enables the soldiers to critically discuss their tradition, their job as soldiers, as well as their self-image as "citizens in uniform". What is more, knowing about the past, especially the Nazi past and the war of annihilation, helps the soldier to identify with the free and democratic order of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Thus, studying and teaching military history in the Bundeswehr is not merely a useful pursuit during time not taken up by military training. History is essential for the self-understanding of the Army. To be more precise, the adequate understanding of history is essential. Keeping in mind the personal continuity – former Wehrmacht soldiers serving in the West German Army well into the 1970s – it is evident that what

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[9] Klaus Ebeling, *Militär und Ethik: Moral- und militärkritische Reflexionen zum Selbstverständnis der Bundeswehr,* Beiträge zur Friedensethik 41 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006).

[10] For the history of political education see Gerrit Mambour, *Zwischen Politik und Pädagogik – Eine politische Geschichte der politischen Bildung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Schwalbach/Ts., 2007). The current understanding of political education in the German Armed Forces is reflected by the Bundeswehr's Zentrale Dienstvorschrift A-2620/1 (Regulation) "Politische Bildung in der Bundeswehr", www.bmvg.de, accessed 5.11.2018.

was clear in theory did not always work out in practice. Time and again, the military cherished their brave and loyal comrades who presumably did a good job in World War II. So, why not, for instance, name barracks after famous Wehrmacht generals? The Ministry of Defence tried to counter those tendencies and respond to voices of public protest that grew louder in the 1980s and the 1990s. Two "tradition decrees", issued by the Ministers of Defence in 1965 and 1982 respectively, were meant to make sure that any reference to the past in the barracks – from lecture halls and monuments to the naming of buildings – was in line with the political values.[11] Since the mid-1990s, the German Army has reviewed the naming and abandoned various names. The former Dietl-Kaserne of the mountain infantry in the Bavarian town of Füssen is a case in point. Those barracks had been given the name of Wehrmacht Colonel General Eduard Dietl, whom Adolf Hitler himself had called a "true friend". Due to Dietl's role during the Nazi regime and against the backdrop of a critical public debate,[12] Minister of Defence Volker Rühe decided in 1995 to rename the barracks "Allgäu-Kaserne," the new name referring to the Bavarian region of Allgäu.

Communicating historical knowledge

Who is in charge of historical education? Where does historical knowledge come from? How is it communicated to the soldiers? The Centre for Innere Führung, the key institution of political-historical education has already been mentioned. In a narrower sense, it is the Bundeswehr Center for Military History and Social Sciences (ZMSBw) at Potsdam that has

[11] See Donald Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross. The search for tradition in the West German armed forces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[12] See e.g. the article "Des Führers General. Darf eine Kaserne den Namen des Wehrmacht-Offiziers und Hitler-Freundes Dietl tragen?", *Der Spiegel*, 24.05.1993, http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13681952.html, accessed 20.12.2018. Hans-Hubertus Mack, "Vorbilder? Die Diskussion um die Namensgeber für Bundeswehr-Kasernen," *Militärgeschichte Zeitschrift für historische Bildung* 4 (2014): 18–21; Loretana de Libero, *Tradition in Zeiten der Transformation. Zum Traditionsverständnis der Bundeswehr im frühen 21. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006).

been in charge in two ways. On the one hand, it is in this institute, founded in the late 1950s under the name *Das Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt* (MGFA), that historians do research in military history.[13] The researchers are supposed to be part of the academic community to guarantee the scientific respectability of their work. On the other hand, the Center's department of historical education makes use of their colleagues' books and articles, prepares the results didactically, and makes them available to the army. Various forms of communication have developed over the last decades. To begin with, at each school of officers and non-commissioned officers (for the army, air force, navy), there are teachers of military history. Secondly, almost every unit has at its disposal a collection of objects referring to military history, a collection in line with the rules set by the ZMSBw. Thirdly, travelling exhibitions illustrate and interpret important chapters of German military history. Since the 1980s the Center for Military History has organized travelling exhibitions, most notably an exhibition on resistance within the armed forces against Hitler.[14] It ran parallel for a while with the travelling exhibition "War of Annihilation. The Crimes of the Wehrmacht" (*Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht*) produced by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, initiating a fierce debate on the role of the Wehrmacht. A more recent example is the poster exhibition on the sometimes controversial relationship between military and society in both East and West Germany, presenting the two opposing German armies, their social and political roles, as well as their transformation into one army (*Armee der Einheit*) in the 1990s.

Fourthly, military history is on display in the German Army's museums. The most recent one to be established, some say the most spec-

[13] For the history of the institutionalization of military history in West Germany see Martin Rink, *50 Jahre Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt. Eine Chronik*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Berlin: be.bra verlag 2007); Jörg Echternkamp, „Auftrag: Forschung. Die Bundeswehr, das Verteidigungsministerium und die Aufarbeitung der NS-Vergangenheit im Systemkonflikt", in: Zeitgeschichte-online, Juni 2015, https://zeitgeschichte-online.de/thema/auftrag-forschung, 3.11.2018; Dietl und kein Ende, in: Diez Zeit, 3.11.1995, https://www.zeit.de/1995/45/Dietl_und_kein_Ende_Er_war_Nationalsozialist_der, accessed 3.11.2018.

[14] Cf. Thomas Vogel, ed., *Aufstand des Gewissens – Militärischer Widerstand gegen Hitler und das NS-Regime 1933–1945* (Hamburg: Mittler, 5. Aufl. 2000). A more recent example is the exhibition on military and society "Militär und Gesellschaft in Deutschland since 1945".

tacular of German museums, is run by the Army – the Military History Museum (*Militärhistorisches Museum*, MHM) at Dresden. It is not a display of weapons and military power, as some visitors might have hoped. Rather, it confronts the museum-goers with the violent past, especially of the two world wars. It also collects objects from more recent military missions, such as a "Wolf" Jeep damaged in 2004 by an attack in Afghanistan wounding three Bundeswehr soldiers. A branch of the MHM, the air force museum at Berlin-Gatow, is under construction. The MHM is an example of how social and cultural approaches of historiography can form museological concepts. Historical knowledge is also – and this is the fifth point – spread by print media, e.g. the quarterly magazine *Militärgeschichte. Zeitschrift für historische Bildung* (Military History. Journal for historical education), edited by the Potsdam Centre. Also, there are brochures on topics considered particularly relevant, such as the attack on Hitler 20 July 1944. The journal as well as the brochures are also available online. Finally, the Bundeswehr is capitalizing on the so-called new media. The Centre for Innere Führung is currently working on an online platform which provides all kinds of information on military history, including a selection of people and events of the past that could become officially part of a military unit's "tradition".

Teaching, collections, travelling exhibitions, museums, print and digital media: these are the different ways to impart historical knowledge that is considered necessary for the soldier to be a "citizen in uniform". This brings us back to the more analytical question of "Which past for the soldier?"

A political minefield: "military tradition"

It is now clear that the Nazi regime and its military cannot lay the historical groundwork for the German Army. But what are the aspects of the past that soldiers can and should refer to in a positive way? Since its establishment in the mid-1950s, the West German army has referred most of all to three lines of tradition: the Prussian reforms of the early 19th century, the resistance by civilians and officers against Hitler during the

Third Reich, as well as its own past, the history of the Bundeswehr itself. Let me outline these three answers to the question "Which past for the soldier?"

First of all, the so-called Prussian Reforms had changed the military system in the German countries in a radical way. Defeated by Napoleon's army in 1806, generals and top-ranking officials such as Gerhard von Scharnhorst, August Neidhardt von Gneisenau and Hermann von Boyen reorganized Prussia's government, administration, and military based on Enlightenment ideas and in line with reforms in other European nations. Most notably from a military perspective, they adopted the concept of conscription. Every citizen who enjoys his rights, the argument went, should be ready to defend those rights. Citizens were turned into soldiers: this idea matches the key concept of today's Innere Führung. Small wonder that the reformers are regarded as the forerunners of conscription.[15] Thus, it was on Scharnhorst's 200th birth anniversary that the first Bundeswehr soldiers were sworn in. The Iron Cross, a decoration endowed at the time, has been the symbol of the West German Armed Forces ever since (including, however, the years 1933–1945). Reference to the past is always ambivalent, because it is not the past but its interpretation that counts. The Prussian Reform era is a case in point. Not only West Germany, but also communist East Germany made use of this national tradition, naming, for instance, the highest military decoration after Scharnhorst. The idea was similar: to turning the military into a national army as opposed to an instrument of capitalist oppression.

Secondly, the second answer to the central question "Which past for the soldier?" has referred to military resistance against National Socialism, most of all the 20 July plot. On 20 July 1944, Claus von Stauffenberg and other conspirators attempted to assassinate Hitler inside his headquarters in East Prussia. The apparent aim of the assassination attempt was to wrest political control of Germany and its armed forces from the Nazi Party, to make peace with the western Allies as soon as possible, and to spare the German people further violence. However, the underly-

[15] For an early interpretation cf. Hans-Joachim Harder and Norbert Wiggershaus, *Tradition und Reform in den Aufbaujahren der Bundeswehr* (Herford: Mittler, 1985).

ing desire of many of the high-ranking Wehrmacht officers involved was to show the world that not all Germans were Nazis. In other words, the resistance fighters represent what has been called "the other Germany". In terms of tradition building, this intention counts more than the failed attack. Most of all, the plot is the prime historical example of soldiers placing a higher value on their conscience than on the principle of unconditional obedience. As mentioned above, this idea has been fundamental to the West German Army's self-conception.

There is a third answer that has become more relevant over the years. The West German Army is supposed to turn to its "own" past for tradition building. At first glance this seems to be easy. Contrary to pre-1945 military history, there is no contradiction between the positive tradition of the Army and the political system it served. But of course, not every aspect of its own history is exemplary. Again, it is important to decide which events, developments, and people lend themselves to be cherished as "good" German tradition. This focus on Bundeswehr military history is inextricably linked to the problem of how to commemorate the death of fallen soldiers. Monuments and places that were used to remember those "comrades" who died during the Second (and First) World War were also used with regard to those who gave their lives for the army of a democratic state. After controversial public and academic debates,[16] the Bundeswehr erected its own monument, the "Ehrenmal" in Berlin, in 2009. Its inscription reads: "To the Dead of Our Bundeswehr – for Peace, Justice, and Freedom (*Den Toten unserer Bundeswehr für Frieden, Recht und Freiheit*). Contrary to conventional forms of commemoration, the transience and individuality of life are underlined by alternating video projections of the more than 3,200 names. Thus, when it comes to commemoration, the past of the democratic Bundeswehr has been separated by form and content from the times of dictatorship and the Wehrmacht.

[16] Manfred Hettling and Jörg Echternkamp, *Bedingt erinnerungsbereit. Soldatengedenken in der Berliner Republik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

Which past for the soldier? New guidelines for the future of the past

Most recently, the *post*-1945/1955 past has become the central point of reference for tradition in the German Army. Due to the public debate caused by the scandals in 2017, the Minister of Defence has issued new guidelines.[17] This third "decree of tradition" in West German history is the result of four workshops where soldiers of all ranks, veterans, historians, sociologists, political scientists and a broader audience discussed basically every aspect of the problem. For many participants, it was clear that the army needed historical examples for orientation. Less clear, however, was historical orientation itself. Again, the question was "Which past for the soldier?"

The new guidelines underline three principles that will be relevant for the future. First, the function of tradition and historical education is its impact on the present – identity, legitimacy, efficiency are the keywords. Secondly, every reference to the past is indissolubly connected to the values of the Constitution (as opposed to the values of the time and to so-called time-less values). In short, bravery is not enough unless it helped the cause of freedom and democracy. Thirdly, the guidelines substantiate those elements of the Bundeswehr's past that are suitable for tradition building. Let me give some examples: the German Army's contribution to international crisis management, their involvement in international missions as seen as a proof of value; the merits of around 8 million conscripts (until 2011); the "founding fathers" Wolf Graf von Baudissin, Ulrich de Maizière und Johann Adolf Graf von Kielmansegg (despite their career in the Wehrmacht); the integration into multinational structures from the very beginning; the role in the NATO strategy of forward defence during the Cold War; emergency relief in areas of humanitarian catastrophe; the successful integration of former East German soldiers into the West German Army after 1989–1990. Commemorating the 2,500 Bundeswehr

[17] Bundesministerium der Verteidigung: "Die Tradition der Bundeswehr. Richtlinien zum Traditionsverständnis und zur Traditionspflege," 2018 https://www.bmvg.de/resource/blob/23234/6a93123be919584d48e16c45a5d52c10/20180328-die-tradition-der-bundeswehr-data.pdf, accessed 3.01.2019.

members who died while on duty up to 1989–1990 will also be a part of dealing with the past. Finally, there is the concept of leadership itself and its ideal of the "citizen in uniform". It is striking that these elements are not restricted to the soldiers. They also include civilian employees of the armed forces. This is an interpretation along the lines of the Berlin "Ehrenmal" where commemoration includes soldiers and civilians alike – contrary to traditional monuments.

Conclusion

As the German case neatly shows, the past can and should be a soldier's guide for the present – this dovetails with the theme of the Yearbook. It can be a guide in three regards. First of all, in democratic states, military "tradition" (i.e. the repertory of mostly exemplary elements of the past) is inextricably linked to the ethical principles and political values stipulated in the Constitution. Democratic societies want their soldiers to take heed of human rights. Historical knowledge is a crucial tool for a better understanding of the ethical framework of military operations. Secondly, soldiers in combat have to be able to react not just instinctively but also on the grounds of rational reflection. This holds all the more true in the German case of mission-type tactics (*Auftragstaktik*) empowering subordinates at all levels. The past gives no clear-cut instructions to be carried out. However, it does provide orientation in a military context where soldiers need guidance from lasting historical models to adapt their behaviour to quickly changing situations in various cultural contexts and in a time where the security architecture has become scattered.

Third, knowledge of military history supports the soldier's identity, helping to legitimize the military operation and therefore providing the necessary morale. Thus, the importance of military history in military pedagogy can hardly be overestimated. This is the leitmotif of the current debate in Germany. The crucial question, however, remains: "Which past for the German soldier?" For instance, combat experience in out-of-area missions since the late 1990s have raised the question of whether or not one should refer to the experience of Wehrmacht soldiers. In the light of

growing tensions in Eastern Europe, referring to the past of World War II might seem all the more obvious – but should one take Hitler's soldiers as role models for the German army today?

Methodologically speaking, to compare *internationally* the importance of history in military education is the logical consequence of the multinational character of current and future missions. The German example could also make a valuable contribution to the discussion of what I would call historical knowledge transfer in soldiers' education – broadening the military profession's perspective by pointing to European dimensions of military history.[18]

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[18] Jörg Echternkamp and Hans-Hubertus Mack, eds., *Geschichte ohne Grenzen? Europäische Dimensionen der Militärgeschichte vom 19. Jahrhundert bis heute* (Munich: De Gruyter/Oldenbourg, 2017).

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