

Examination in Military History as a major field

Preliminary Examination in Military History

As you compose each answer, make reference to major works in the field in order to convey your understanding of the bibliography surrounding each question.

I. Ancient and Medieval, to 1550 -- Choose one of the following:

A. Discuss the relationship between citizenship and the warrior role in either 1) ancient Greece, 1300-300 BC, or 2) republican and early imperial Rome, 509 BC-100 AD. To what extent did armament, tactics, strategy, and military organization shape the political institutions of the polis or Rome.

B. Write an essay describing the physical structure and strategic importance of permanent fortifications in Medieval and Renaissance Europe, 1000-1550 AD. Consider both the defense and attack of fortresses and walled towns in western Europe. Were there any special political implications to positional warfare?

II. Early Modern, 1550-1815 -- Choose one of the following:

A. Describe and comment upon British naval policy in the 18th century, 1715-1815. Consider questions of strategy, finance, naval construction, etc.

B. Compare and contrast the impact of armies with that of navies upon the states and societies that maintained them in Europe, 1609-1799.

III. Late Modern, 1815-1975 -- Choose one of the following:

A. Write an essay describing and commenting upon the naval strategy of the United States (the North) in the American Civil War.

B. Chronicle and criticize one of the following three operations in World War II:

- 1) the fall of France in 1940;
- 2) the Russian Front, 1941-1945;
- 3) the U.S. naval offensive in the South and Central Pacific, 1942-1945.

You may choose to emphasize one adversary's plans and actions over the other, if you wish, in this operational-strategic question.

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Choose one question each from sections I, II, and III. In composing your answers, remember to discuss the bibliography relevant to each question.

I. Ancient and Medieval History

1. "The warfare around the borders of the Mediterranean, 700 BC-180 AD, stressed combat on foot and relegated horsemen to a secondary role." Discuss this generalization. In your treatment, be certain to compare the armament and tactics of the polis army of hopelites (ca. 600 BC), the Macedonian phalanx (ca. 330 BC), and the Roman legion (ca. 100 BC). Beyond their military efficacy, what were the political and social implications of each of these three styles of forces.

2. While the image most often associated with medieval warfare is that of the knight, infantry also played a role, albeit one less understood and less discussed. Consider the salient characteristics of infantry combat on the European continent and on the British Isles, 1000-1450 AD.

II. Revolutions in Early Modern Warfare (1495-1815)

3. Date and define the "Military Revolution," both as it has been by leading scholars and as seems best to you. Is this a useful or misleading term?

4. It can be argued that the army of the French Revolution, 1789-1794, was the first true revolutionary army. Debate this notion pro and/or con. In your answer be sure to compare it to the forces raised during the English Civil War and the American War of Independence. To build your case, you may bring in revolutionary armies of later eras as well.

III. Warfare at Sea During the 19th and 20th Centuries

5. Outline the key changes in naval technology from the War of Austrian Succession through World War I. To what degree did naval technological development dictate strategic and imperial policy during this era? Please consider the cases of Britain, France, Germany, and the United States in your discussion.

