

January 1999

Preliminary Examination in Military History

Instructions: Those with a major field in military history must answer one question each from sections I, II, and III. Those with only a minor field must answer one question from section III, plus any other two questions on the examination, provided that not all three questions come from section III. Therefore, in a minor field, the individual examined will answer questions from at least two sections, but he/she may avoid either section I or II altogether.

While each answer should make reference to articles and books germane to the question under consideration, in at least one of your answers you must include a major discussion of the relevant historiography.

Section I: Ancient and Medieval (to 1500 AD)

1. In a controversial work, Victor Hanson argues that the ancient Greeks defined a distinct "Western Way of Warfare." Define the elements of this thesis and discuss to what extent it finds support in the more traditional literature about the hoplite revolution. Can other later phases of European tactics be reconciled fully with Hanson's thesis?
2. It has long been believed that the collapse of the Roman Empire, ca. 400 AD, brought with it an utter abasement of the art of war. Bernard Bachrach has challenged the argument that the early Middle Ages witnessed little sophistication in tactics, military organization, and strategy. Consider his arguments and others concerning European military practice within the era before the Battle of Hastings.
3. Consider "feudalism" – defined as the exchange of land (or the use of land and its revenues) for military service – as a common method of raising military forces throughout military history. Discuss its characteristics and consequences in ancient and medieval Western history. Can one find parallels with Western practice in the non-Western world?

Section II: Early Modern (1500-1815)

1. It can be argued that more than anything else, the advent of effective artillery defined early modern warfare. Discuss the tactical, operational, and strategic effects of the big guns, 1450-1815. Did artillery have, as some claim, a political impact as well?

2. It has sometimes been argued that the Americans have actually had two distinct ways of war, one for use against European adversaries, the other for nonwestern enemies like Native Americans. Agree or take issue with this thesis, focusing on the colonial, revolutionary, and (if you wish) early national periods (1607-1815).

3. Over the last twenty years a consensus formed around the works of Bertaud, Scott, Lynn, and Forrest concerning the armies of Revolutionary France. This stresses a highly motivated and ultimately very able soldiery. However, in the last year, two revisionist works have appeared. Paddy Griffith's *The Art of War of Revolutionary France* argues that there was no military revolution during this era and that the French troops were neither highly motivated nor particularly effective, 1792-95, while MacKenzie's *Revolutionary Armies in the Modern Era: A Revisionist Approach*, concedes that certain armies may be highly motivated, but disputes that this has aided their effectiveness in battle. Define and critique the reigning consensus, with or without reference to Griffith and MacKenzie.

Section III: Late Modern (1815-1982)

1. Why did the Confederacy lose the Civil War? Your response should survey the most important explanations offered by historians and offer your own conclusion as to which explanation is the most convincing.

2. "War," Clausewitz tells us, "is a continuation of politics by other means." Using this statement as the basis of your discussion, compare and contrast the grand strategies of any two of the following during BOTH the First and Second World Wars: Germany, the United States, and Great Britain.

3. Warfare since 1945 has stressed the use of "unconventional" forces to frustrate great powers with their extensive, and expensive, armories. Define and discuss the "guerrilla warfare" in military history explaining why and how it has been so prevalent and effective since 1945. After general comments, center in on one of the following conflicts: the Chinese civil war (1934-49), Algerian War of Independence (1954-62), or the Second Vietnam War (1954-75).