

February 2008

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. Theories that generalize about ancient European military practice often posit basic similarities between Greek and Roman military organization and battlefield performance, but is that accurate? Compare a classic polis phalanx, ca. 550 BC, with a Roman legion, ca. 200 BC. Consider the selection, discipline, armament, and tactics of each.
2. Chivalry was both a social and a military code. What were the real and/or apparent contradictions between ideals of chivalry and actual conduct of medieval warfare?
3. We know that great field battles were relatively rare during the Middle Ages in Europe, 1000-1450. What other forms of warfare dominated and why?

Section II: Early Modern (1500-1815)

1. Does the development of early modern European military institutions, 1450-1815, justify the claims of military revolution theorists or does it better fit an evolutionary pattern?
2. Which of the following major rulers ranks as the most successful strategist and why: Louis XIV, Frederick the Great, Napoleon?
3. Many historians want to stress "transnational" factors and movements. To what extent can the development of military institutions and practices across

the globe during the early modern period be described as a transnational process as opposed to simply European imperial domination?

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Section III: Late Modern (1815-present)

1. Is there an American way of war? In answering this question, you should consider the extent to which historians have treated U.S. military history as exceptional and whether you agree with their assessments.

2. Taking histories of colonial wars, imperial conflicts, and counter-insurgency campaigns as your case studies, evaluate how effective military historians have been in writing truly international histories as opposed to ones that privilege the experiences and perspectives of great powers.

3. In a recent review of the state of military history in the *Journal of American History*, Wayne E. Lee asks: "What does a cultural analysis of war entail?" How would you answer that question? And how have cultural analyses affected the field over the last decade or so?

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