



# The Oxford Companion to American Military History

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Here is a gold mine of information on American military history, exploring battles and soldiers, ships and weapons, services and doctrines--as well as the social and cultural impact of the U.S. military at home and around the world. *The Oxford Companion to American Military History* boasts over 1,100 entries written by some 500 distinguished contributors. Readers will find Stephen E. Ambrose writing on the D-Day landing, James M. McPherson on the battle of Antietam, John Keegan on the changing experience of combat, Jean Bethke Elshtain on Jane Addams, Mark A. Noll on religion and war, and Robert M. Utley on Sitting Bull. Ranging from brief factual pieces to extensive essays, the entries examine every major war from the Revolution to the Persian Gulf; important battles from Bunker Hill, to the Alamo, Gettysburg, Little Bighorn, Normandy, and Khe Sanh; and military leaders from Washington to Grant, Lee, Eisenhower, MacArthur, Westmoreland, and Schwarzkopf. Moreover, the *Companion* goes well beyond the usual "drum and trumpet" coverage to examine a wide range of subjects you might not expect to find. There are entries on relevant acts of Congress and on diplomatic policies such as the Monroe Doctrine and the Marshall Plan; on peace and antiwar movements; on war in film, literature, music, and photography; and on war viewed through the disciplinary lenses of anthropology, economics, gender studies, and psychology. The result is the widest ranging account compiled in one volume of war, peace, and the U.S. military.

With over a thousand authoritative and vividly written entries, maps of several major wars, extensive cross-referencing, lists of further readings, and an index, this volume is the first place to turn for information on our nation's military history.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Library Journal

This book is big, heavy, and expensive, but as a comprehensive reference of military history it is well worth it. More than 1100 alphabetically arranged entries cover every aspect of American military history--from Bunker Hill in 1775 to the Gulf War in 1991. Using everything from brief entries to extensive essays, this one-volume treasure does much more than list battles and generals; it "explores the changing nature of war and the military." Of course, people, places, battles, and weapons are included, but those expected entries are nicely balanced by entries on logistics, the laws of war, propaganda, anti-war movements, foreign trade, war plans, politics, literature, art, and movies. Essays on the history of land warfare and the disciplinary views of war are particularly good. Chambers (Major Problems in American Military History) has assembled 500 contributors, including noted historians John Keegan and Stephen Ambrose, to provide expert analysis, insight, and understanding of the American way of war. Although the accompanying maps are too few and too bland to be of much use, this book is otherwise comprehensive and lively. Highly recommended for all public libraries.

-Col. William D. Bushnell, USMC (ret.), Brunswick, ME

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From [Booklist](#)

Chambers, along with more than 500 distinguished contributors (among them Stephen Ambrose and John Keegan), has compiled "a comprehensive, one-volume guide to the study of war, peace, and the military throughout American history." According to the editor, most references on military history simply recite information on wars, battles, and leaders. This one follows a truly interdisciplinary approach and provides not only the traditional fare of battles but also surveys such disparate topics as politics, economics, culture, gender, institutions, and theories.

Among the more than 1,000 alphabetically arranged entries are accounts of several hundred historical battles and events. Other articles cover concepts, such as *National security* and *Just war theory*; the armed services (including such entries as *Ethnicity and race in the military* and *Gay men and lesbians in the military*); and histories of weapons and materials. In addition, there are discussions relating to social and economic perspectives, law and ethics, dissent, and popular culture, as well as several hundred biographies. Coverage extends from colonial times to the crisis in Kosovo and Bosnia in 1999. Entries vary from a few hundred words to several thousand words in length. Longer entries, such as *Civil War*, are frequently broken down into chapters.

A typical entry will have asterisks in the text denoting cross-references. Many entries also have *See also* references at the end, as well as bibliographies of current books and an occasional periodical. There are no illustrations. Rounding out the volume are a detailed index and several appendices. The first appendix consists of five line maps depicting the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War II in Europe and the Pacific, and Vietnam. A second appendix contains a table showing casualties in conflicts and major wars and another table showing military ranks.

There is a plethora of references on military history but nothing comparable to the *Oxford Companion to American Military History*. This volume will be useful for students, scholars, and military enthusiasts and should be considered for academic and public libraries.

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## From Kirkus Reviews

Chambers (History/Rutgers Univ.) presents a thoroughly detailed look at the sweep of American military history from the ABM Treaty of 1972 to Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, with an all-star cast of thousands, including contributors Stephen Ambrose, John Keegan, Volker Berghen, James McPherson, and many others. Each concise, dictionary-style entry offers a brief overview of its topic for the experienced historian or the general reader. McPherson's essay on the battle of Antietam is a masterpiece of economy, addressing the causes of the battle, its personalities, its highlights, and its importance in the course of the war in a little more than a column of text. Ambrose's essay on the D-Day landings manages to convey the enormous scope and import of the operation in just a few paragraphs. Although the volume seems to cover every major (and minor) military action in US history, it is in the policies, bills, and personages that it is most valuable. Robert Gordon Kaufman's entry on the Washington Naval Arms Limitation Treaty of 1922 succinctly evaluates world naval growth in the years between the wars and its effect on US naval policy then and in the opening months of WWII. Charles Chatfield's brilliant summary of peace and antiwar movements serves as a drastically compressed history of the subject from New England Federalists opposing the War of 1812 to the grassroots coalitions protesting US involvement in Central America. With extensive cross-references, suggestions for further reading, and well-drawn maps of the major wars with the greatest US involvement, a must-have for any military historian or history buff. (16 pages halftones, 35 maps) -- *Copyright ©2000, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

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