

History, Troop Esprit de Corps and Morale

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THE value of history in military education has always been recognized in the armed forces of the United States. It has been at the very base of instruction in the United States Military and Naval Academies and the service schools and colleges since their inception. In this emphasis on the value of history in military instruction, the American armed forces have followed the advice of such great captains as Frederick the Great and Napoleon, as well as others who have more recently made their mark on the pages of history. Napoleon has written, "...the knowledge of the higher arts of war is not acquired except by experience and the study of history of wars and the study of the battles of great captains." General George S. Patton, Jr., one of America's great offensive battle leaders, also emphasized the importance of history. His words, written on the battlefield, were: "To be a successful soldier you must know history, read it objectively—you must (also)

read biography and especially autobiography. If you will do it you will find war is simple."

There are dissenters from this point of view, however. Field Marshal Wavell, for one, holds that the study of psychology and leadership is of greater importance to a military man than the study of operations, contending that Napoleon's military success can be attributed to his knowledge of psychology rather than to his study of rules and strategy. And Le Bon, who was not a military man, has condemned histories on general principle, observing that "They are fanciful accounts of ill-observed facts accompanied by explanations the result of reflection" and that the writing "of such books is a most absolute waste of time."

Notwithstanding these opinions, which are not without value as a challenge to historians, it must be concluded that the study of past wars is fundamental to preparation for the next, for current military problems



Napoleon has written, "... the knowledge of the higher arts of war is not acquired except by experience and the study of history of wars and the study of the battles of great captains." The value of this study has been recognized by the U.S. armed forces.

cannot be solved without an understanding of the past from which they stem. Every individual in the military service will find a knowledge of military history, and especially of American military history, valuable in the solution of problems, both in peace and in war. Heeding the inscription carved in stone at the entrance to the National Archives—"What is past is prologue"—the soldier, sailor or airman must be rooted in the past to understand the present that he may project himself into the future.

Esprit de Corps

The accomplishments of the armed forces of the United States in both peace and war have been so outstanding that every soldier, sailor or air-

man can gain inspiration from the record of the past even though it is still imperfectly told. During the comparatively short span of American history, the Army has fought brave and skillful soldiers of many races and in many lands. These operations have ranged from desperate hand-to-hand engagements with savages equipped with bows and arrows and tomahawks or spears and bolos to vast battle with armies landing in the face of modern forces and driving them back to the center of empire. During the same time the Navy has effectively supported American foreign and military policy, won great naval victories at sea and insured the safety and lodgment of ground forces on many

distant hostile shores. And in later times the Air Force has overcome the enemy in the air and successfully supported both the Army and the Navy. The armed forces have also played an outstanding role in discovery and exploration; in great engineering undertakings that have joined the oceans, developed ports and harbors, harnessed and controlled rivers, and developed the atomic bomb; in medicine and hygiene; and in communications, navigation and aviation. They have also been the training ground of scholars, scientists, administrators, educators, diplomats and statesmen who have made great contributions to every phase of American life.

Clausewitz has said that "One who is seeking a profound understanding of the fundamentals of war ... must understand *esprit de corps*. This spirit is the cement which binds together all qualities which taken together gives an army military value."

A knowledge of their accomplishments can play a vital role in the Army, Navy and Air Force, for as Fortescue, the eminent British military historian, has said, "Without knowledge of military history men are really unconscious of the existence of the most wonderful of moral forces...; and it is not a thing of which anyone can afford to be ignorant." In line with Fortescue's warning the armed forces of the United States have called upon military history in many ways. In the Army, for example, the Information and Education Program includes instruction in

the heroic deeds and accomplishments of individuals and units, and each soldier is furnished *The Soldier's Guide*, containing historical material. In many units mounts and vehicles have borne the names of distinguished soldiers of the past. Army posts are generally named for widely known military men; buildings and streets for others or for military organizations. Army and Marine Corps colors and standards are decorated with streamers carrying the names of battles or campaigns in which the unit has honorably participated. In the Navy many ships have been named for officers and men who have distinguished themselves in the service of their country. The Air Force has also named most airfields for distinguished flyers, many of whom lost their lives as pioneers in the air. For many years *Retreat* has included the *Star Spangled Banner* which was inspired under the "rocket's red glare." Thus



Von Clausewitz



It is not enough to fight. It is the spirit which brings to the fight that decides the issue. It is morale that wins the victory. It is elan, esprit de corps and determination.

it can be seen that the deeds and records of the past have been welded to the task in hand and the forces-in-being motivated to live and function in the best traditions of the past.

Morale

In speaking on morale in modern war General of the Army George C. Marshall once said:

The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end.

It is not enough to fight. It is the spirit which we bring to the fight that decides the issue. It is morale that wins the victory. Morale is the state of mind. It

is steadfastness and courage and hope. It is confidence and zeal and loyalty. It is *elan, esprit de corps* and determination.

It is staying power, the spirit which endures to the end — the will to win.

With it all things are possible; without it everything else: planning, preparation, production, count for naught.

As can be seen, General Marshall's ideas of morale do not include "pie in the sky" or recreation. His thoughts are of the spiritual attributes which motivate individuals who collectively make up a unit and the Army, Navy and Air Force.

General William T. Sherman has given his views on the importance of the spiritual side of the Army in these words: "There is a soul to an army as well as to individual men,

and no general can accomplish the full work of his army unless he commands the soul of his men, as well as their bodies and legs." General Patton, a profound student of military history and leadership, on many occasions during World War II also noted the unit soul physically symbolized by the colors and standards.

It can thus be seen that both Sherman and Patton broadened the concept to include the unit as well as the individual in the broader problems of morale. They thought of the individuals of a unit welded together by a leader and given a common soul. The creation of this unit soul is the continuing problem of all commanders from the lowest to the highest and the problem becomes more difficult when for reasons of economy the props which support a commander are abolished. But, regardless of handicaps, the quality of a leader is the true criterion of the soul of a unit. He is the one who must inspire the individuals of the outfit and weld them into a whole capable of withstanding all hardships and sacrifices, so beautifully illustrated by Captain Nathan Hale as he stood on the enemy's gallows on the morning of 22 September 1776 and said: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

At the very base of the problem of morale is patriotism or love of country—the cement that binds a people together and sustains their fighting men. Without it neither the people nor the armed forces have a

soul. The founders of the Republic laid a solid spiritual foundation for all Americans in two great documents—*The Declaration of Independence* and *The Constitution*. In these fundamental papers are recorded the ideas and principles upon which patriotism in the Republic must be built. Accordingly, every man who enters the military service must swear or affirm that he will defend *The Constitution* against all enemies, foreign or domestic. This solemn ceremony is surrounded with all pomp and circumstance possible under prevailing conditions.

In writing about patriotism General Ian Hamilton of Great Britain said that it is "A plant whose best nutriment are blood and tears: a plant which dies down in peace and flowers most brightly in war. It does not calculate, does not profiteer, does not stop to reason: in an atmosphere



Patton

of danger the sap begins to stir; it lives, it takes possession of the soul." A truly great military historian will attempt to capture and record this spirit which plays such an important role in the outcome of battles, campaigns, and wars. A mere recitation of events will fail to probe the depths of the services and will prove of little value of leaders of men.

Role of Intangible Symbol in Developing Morale

Intangible symbols of the unit's past consist of customs and traditions around which the outfit builds distinctive special observances and practices. Such things can be of great morale value in the armed services. Examples of these are almost endless in number and variety. Some of the most widely practiced are the celebration of important

unit anniversaries, minor distinctions of drill and command, and distinctive greetings and replies. For example, an individual of the 13th Cavalry Regiment on receiving an order or instructions used to salute and reply before parting, "It shall be done." The 7th Cavalry Regiment once included saddled but riderless Comanche, the lone survivor of the Battle of the Little Big Horn, in its parades. In 1922 the 3d Infantry Regiment was granted permission to march on all ceremonial occasions with fixed bayonets in honor of its gallant assault with the bayonet at the Battle of Cerro Gordo on 18 April 1847.

Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, a naval hero beloved by the Army, knew the value of symbolism and history. After building a fleet on Lake Erie during the War of 1812, he named his flagship for an earlier hero, Captain James Lawrence, and put out a blue bunting flag carrying Lawrence's last words, "Don't give up the ship!" With a crew of soldiers and sailors he defeated the British fleet in a terrific battle and sent a laconic message to Major General William H. Harrison, "We have met the enemy and they are ours." Then after transporting Harrison's force across Lake Erie, he joined it ashore and participated in a cavalry charge that clinched an important American victory in the Battle of the Thames. The Army has named a camp in Ohio in memory of Perry. The Navy has named a ship for him, and all entering midshipmen at the United States Na-



Marshall

Congress of THE United States

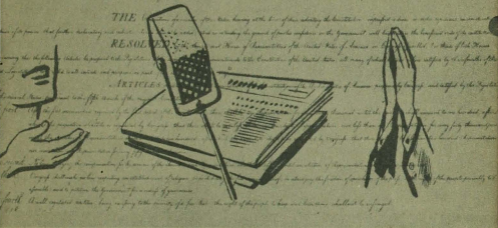
begun and held at the City of New York, on

Wednesday the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine

THE

RESOLUTIONS

ARTICLES



The founders of the Republic laid a solid spiritual foundation for all Americans in two great documents — The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution.

val Academy are sworn in and take their oath of allegiance directly beneath his flag, which is on permanent display in Memorial Hall.

Lieutenant General Winfield Scott was a colorful leader with ability to express himself in words that have become the heritage of units that once served under his command. After the fall of Chapultepec, 13 September 1847, the 3d Infantry Regiment was put at the head of the column making formal entrance into Mexico City. Mounted with his staff, General Scott waited for the procession in the outskirts. When the 3d Infantry came abreast, Scott, in a dramatic gesture, swept off his hat and said to his staff, "Gentlemen, take off your hats to the Old Guard."

This nickname has persisted and is in use today. On the same occasion he addressed the Regiment of mounted rifles (presently known as the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, stationed in Germany) as follows, "Brave Rifles! Veterans! You have been baptized in fire and blood and come out steel." Since that time the Regiment has called itself "Brave Rifles" and its unit insignia is emblazoned with that name.

The 13th Infantry Regiment earned its name "First at Vicksburg" as a result of the gallantry displayed by the 1st Battalion on 19 May 1863. On that day, in a frontal assault the 13th planted and maintained its colors on the Confederate parapet for as long as the attack

persisted. In doing so it lost 43.3 per cent of its men. Authorization for the unit to inscribe this motto on its colors came from a board of officers of the XV Corps on 12 August 1863.

The 19th Infantry Regiment has for its motto, "Rock of Chickamauga." It earned this name while serving in the corps commanded by Major General George H. Thomas in the Battle of Chickamauga. Stationed on the left of General Thomas, line on 19 September, the regiment bore the brunt of the fiercest assaults. The next day, when their ammunition was exhausted, the men held their ground with bayonets. Seventy-five per cent of the regiment were killed or wounded. At length the command devolved on a second lieutenant. To commemorate this incident, it later became the custom for the junior second lieutenant of the 19th Infantry to command the regiment on each organization day, 20 September.

Another example originated with the proud remark of an unknown soldier during the Civil War. During that war certain corps had adopted distinctive badges, a custom which has continued in the United States Army. But the XV Corps, commanded by Major General John A. Logan, had not done so. One of the men of the corps, on being asked what his badge was, replied, "Forty rounds in the cartridge-box, and twenty in the pocket!" On hearing the story General Logan promptly adopted the corps badge.

The unusual form of the Marine

officers' sword stems directly from the scimitar and memorializes the heroic service of a small Marine force in the Tripolitan War.

One of the most effective intangible symbols is a unit march or song, particularly one that has been associated with the outfit for a long time. The 7th Cavalry's *Garry Owen* is an example of a song that has contributed materially to the morale of that regiment for many years. Perhaps the most famous of the Army's branch songs is Lieutenant Edmund L. Gruber's *The Caisson Song*, *Anchors Aweigh!*, the *Marines' Hymn*, and *The United States Air Force Song* are service wide songs that have great morale value. In a much more important way, however, *The Star Spangled Banner* and *Battle Hymn of the Republic* have played an outstanding role in developing morale in the armed forces since they appeared.

Role of Unit History in Developing Morale

The color-bearing units are the military families within which the broader soul of the Army and Marine Corps is built. It is these families which the division commander, without infringing upon subordinates, welds into a composite team. These units are corporate entities having a legal existence even though their actual personnel may vary from war strength when on active service to zero when on an inactive status. Therefore every unit has its own history which is distinct from all others. It may have a history ex-



Col. Dionisio Ojeda

tending back before the founding of the Republic, a brief history, or, in the case of new units, no history at all. In any case, however, each unit shares the broader history of the particular service. Any unit, therefore, can utilize pride in past accomplishments to foster soldierly conduct, pride of outfit and love of country. Newer outfits, like younger brothers, should strive to excel their seniors.

Military Biography and Memoirs and Leadership

Leadership being the very foundation upon which morale, *esprit de corps* and a successful military career must be built, it behooves all officers to study it assiduously, for as Major General Freytag-Loringhoven in his book, *The Power of Personality in War*, has said, "There is no profession in which personality training is more important than the military." The study can best be

undertaken of the general principles of leadership and then by critically reading of biographies and memoirs of military leaders with a view to determining the reasons for their successes and failures. But it should be understood that the qualities and methods of others are unique to the individuals concerned and are not entirely suited to any other. Nevertheless, they can teach an individual of judgment what to avoid and what to emulate, and can help him shape and develop his own qualities for the better. To do so, however, it is essential that the individual and the experiences of others to his own and acquire qualities and methods suited to himself.

Even though there is a paucity of good biographies and memoirs, particularly of individuals in the lower echelons of command, this material is the best available for an understanding of character, of the charac-



Col. Salvador Abcede



Col. Ramon Aguirre

teristics of men, of good and bad leadership and of the influence of eminent personalities upon events. Military works *dealing with the rank and file*, such as Bolton's *The Private Soldier Under Washington* and Willey's *Billy Yank*, should be read with the realization that bad soldiers tend to leave many documents behind them, while good soldiers ordinarily leave only the briefest sort of records or merely a name. For this reason even so-called "factual studies" of the fighting men are usually heavily loaded on the seamy side of life.

If the study of leadership is to be profitable, the student must analyze, evaluate and judge the qualities of both fighting men and leaders, with due regard to the circumstances and conditions under which they worked. But as the British Scholar, Wilkinson, in his book *The Brain of the Army*, has said, "This judgment must never degenerate into mere negative

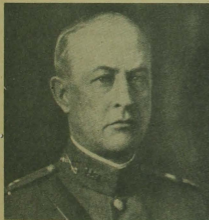
criticism...." It should enable the thoughtful student to determine and to identify in others the desirable traits of soldiers and leaders in both staff and command positions. This should enable a military man to become a practical psychologist and should thus enable him to avoid becoming a mere theorist. As Clausewitz has pointed out, a commander "need not be a close observer of men, a sharp dissector of human character, but he must know the character, the feelings, the habits, the peculiar faults and inclinations of those whom he is to command."

To be of maximum value in teaching military leadership, historical works must be factual and frank. Propagandistic or censored history is dangerous and should not be used, for it can provide no sound lessons or basis of professional training. It leads to false conclusions and fosters one of the worst evils in professional military thinking—self-deception. Histories written during the lives of the actors or too near their era are generally tinged with prejudice, colored by self-interested flattery and influenced by the selective treatment of source material. Histories written too long after the time of the participants are frequently fictional or sentimental. Therefore, history will never be entirely satisfactory for instruction in leadership until it gives a complete picture of the participants — their merits, faults, temperaments and ambitions, their Janus faces, their ability to exercise self-control especially in adversity and their physic-

al and mental conditions.

Although the study of great captains is important to all military men, the study of "followership," as exemplified by subordinate leaders and staff officers, is equally important and perhaps more so because few can rise to the topmost position and even these must pass through the various grades in both staff and command assignments. General Malin Craig, former Chief of Staff of the United States Army, emphasized this aspect of a military career in this advice to a graduating class at the United States Military Academy:

No young officer can be unconscious of the impression he is making on others. He would be wrong to govern his conduct solely by the opinions of others. First of all, he must to himself be true. Fortunately, by a happy paradox of human nature, we best serve ourselves when we think only of



Craig



Col. Nicanor T. Jimenez

serving others. An officer . . . should make it a cardinal principle of life that by no account of commission or omission on his part will he permit his immediate superior to make a mistake. Once an officer establishes such a professional reputation his future is assured. His services will be eagerly sought and his assignment to duties of the highest importance is certain.

A comprehensive knowledge of military history emphasizing both leadership and followership will facilitate mutual respect and understanding in the armed forces; the broad problems of the higher commander will be more readily comprehended by subordinates, and the complex human, material, and physical problems of the soldier and of the small-unit commanders better appreciated by superiors. Such understanding will greatly facilitate good morale in any organization.