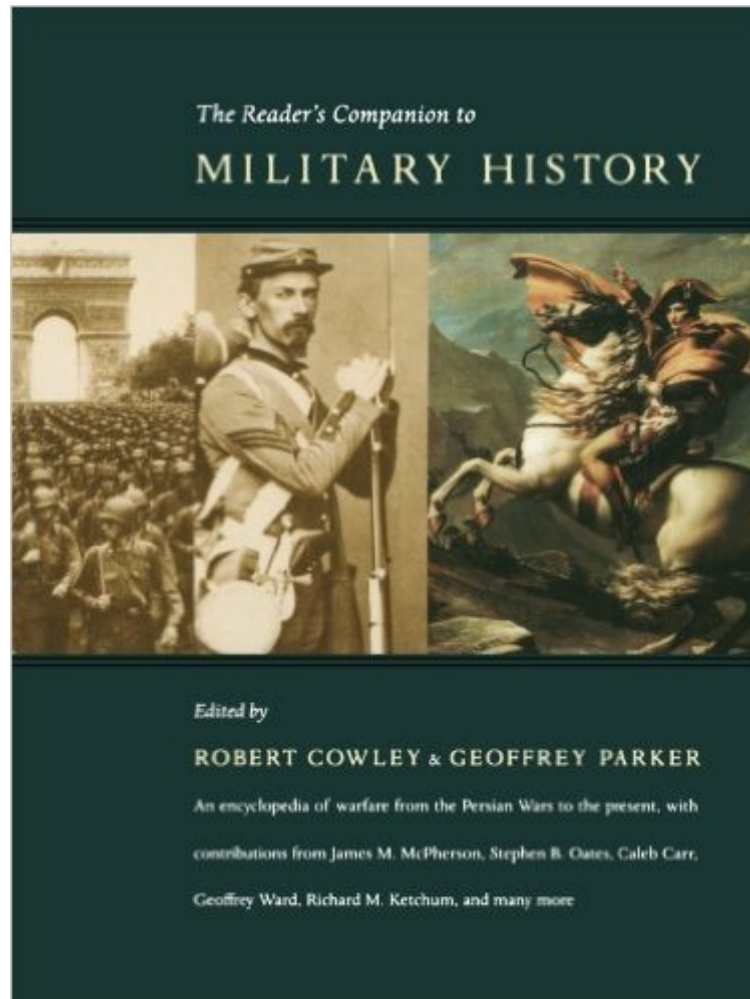


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# The Reader's Companion To Military History



## Synopsis

THE READER'S COMPANION TO MILITARY HISTORY is the first major reference work on military history to represent a global perspective. More than 150 distinguished military historians, biographers, and journalists contributed nearly 600 articles to this remarkable chronicle of warfare that combines compelling historical narrative with the latest in contemporary scholarship. Here is essential information on major events and battles, commanders, weaponry and technology, and strategy and tactics. Other topics include courage, discipline, the effects of weather on warfare, military justice, the role of propaganda, the evolution of uniforms, psychological warfare, and morale. Filled with surprising anecdotes and little-known facts, THE READER'S COMPANION TO MILITARY HISTORY covers not only European and North American military history but that of Asia, Africa, and South America. Never before has a single volume so eloquently addressed the many intriguing aspects of that most destructive, fascinating, and relentless of human experiences -- war.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I originally picked this up at the library, just to browse through, but I stayed up late several nights running, absorbed in the essays and following the cross-references from topic to topic. My wife took pity on me and bought it for my birthday. You needn't be a military historian to understand it and you needn't be an academic to enjoy it. The editors have done a wonderful job of unifying the submissions of a large number of specialists and of controlling the jargon level. The articles also discuss art, philosophy, and other theoretically non-military subjects, as well as weapons and tactics. And the scattered lists -- the 10 best battlefields to visit, etc. -- will get your attention. Very

highly recommended.

This is one of the better reference books I've purchased, for all the wrong reasons. Instead of trying to produce a completely comprehensive encyclopedia of military history (there are already several available) the authors wisely went a different path, aiming the book at an audience that doesn't just want dry facts. Cowley used to edit *Military History Quarterly*, and Parker is a professor in Ohio. Together they collected essays from 150 historians on a range of topics, many of them more vague than descriptions of battles or campaigns. There are also lists of Top Tens, like best commanders, most underrated, decisive battles, etc. The authors said once that the book was intended to be browsed through rather than used as a reference exclusively, and it's very good for either. A fine book, and a good addition to any library owned by a military history buff, enthusiast, or academic.

The contributors are all members of the American Society for Military History. With 150 contributors covering 600 subjects, there will be variation in writing quality, depth of knowledge and evaluation. One of the best articles is on Carl von Clausewitz which highlights the famous book *On War*. The writer is a teacher at the U.S. Naval War College and also offers a critique on Clausewitz. About half the book is on modern western warfare in the last two centuries and there is generous coverage of Americans, such as George Custer, George C. Marshall, William Halsey, Raymond Spruance and Robert McNamara. This reference book has fewer biographical entries and factual detail than many single volume reference works. It has, however, many survey articles that will catch your attention; for example, "Children at war", "Courage", "Friendly fire", "Mercenaries", "Memoirs of war" and "Military slavery". This book was reviewed by the (American) School Library Journal and is suitable for young adults. The failings are: sometimes juvenile writing style, a woefully weak bibliography, insufficient factual detail and evaluations. But for all that, hugely entertaining.

*Reader's Companion To Military History* provides an encyclopedia of warfare from the early Persian Wars to modern times, providing almost six hundred articles detailing major battles, commanders, theories, weapons and strategies. Articles come from military historians, biographers and journalists and provide an excellent set of insights.

The book provides a quick review of key ideas and events in world military history. A good buy!

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