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EDITORIAL*

We are delighted to present this Special Issue, edited by James Kitchen and Stuart Mitchell in honour of the late Sir Michael Howard.

Sir Michael's own studies were disrupted by war, serving with the Coldstream Guards in the Italian theatre during the Second World War before returning to complete his studies at Oxford. As Kitchen and Mitchell note, Howard's experience of war was formative in shaping him as a historian and this personal understanding of the experience of war clearly informed the history that he later produced. As detailed by the authors in this volume, Howard's academic and institutional contributions were many, but what bears repeating was Howard's role in establishing the credibility of military history as an academic discipline.

Finally, we are pleased to say that Howard was a key supporter when the BJMH was first proposed, noting that the 'birth of the *British Journal for Military History* will be as welcome as it is long overdue'. This, perhaps, reflected his insistence that military history must engage with broad debates on the study of war and involve the widest range of authors: academic, military and 'amateur'. We feel that he would be pleased that the BJMH not only does this, interpreting military history in the widest possible sense and publishing scholarly articles from authors of all backgrounds, but also engages with an audience far beyond academia.

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Michael Howard and the Historian's Craft: An Introduction to the Michael Howard Special Issue

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ABSTRACT
This introduction to the Michael Howard Special Issue offers a short background to his life, contextualises the themes found across the contributions to this issue, and then provides a more detailed analysis of Howard and his two 'careers' as a Captain and a Professor. Howard's life as a soldier is too often compartmentalised from his work as a historian; this introduction examines where and how Howard's military experiences shaped his later intellectual interests, academic career, and historiographical ideas. It then moves on to look at Howard's landmark lecture and article 'The Use and Abuse of Military History', the influences on his methodology, and two prominent lectures he gave at Oxford as Regius Professor of History. The picture that emerges of Howard is one of a life dedicated to understanding the past and nurturing through good faith the generations that would follow him.

In an academic career spanning most of the second half of the twentieth century, and across a life that reached nearly a century, Michael Howard made a profound contribution to scholarship on the history of war. His published output was vast. It included substantial monographs, such as his account of the Franco-Prussian War or two contributions to the British official history of the Second World War, as well as numerous essay collections and shorter works of synthesis, such as *War in European History*. These not only engaged students of military history but opened up complex topics to a much wider audience. Through his joint translation of Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* with Peter Paret (and the oft forgotten Angus Malcolm), he also helped to reinvigorate the intellectual history of war. Given how avidly this new translation was received by student officers in military academies and staff colleges in the English-

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speaking world, it also served to place his stamp across professional military education and many of its foundational concepts.[1]

Howard's influence on the study of war rested on more than just his published historical output. At King's College, London (KCL) in the 1950s and 1960s he played an important role in the creation of the Department of War Studies and in embedding the subject into the wider academic profession as something worthy of sustained and detailed study.[2] Although its growth into the 'world's leading academic institution for the study of war' was largely a product of the period from the 1990s onwards and thus post-dated Howard's tenure at KCL, he nonetheless provided much of its identity and guiding principles.[3] Through the creation of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in the same period, Howard was also involved in reaching beyond academia to try to broaden the debate on questions of defence and security, engaging with people outside a few corridors in Whitehall. He saw it as an organisation, drawing on US models, that would help to create a "'civil society" of defence intellectuals'.[4] War, in particular the cataclysmic potential of a nuclear confrontation, was a subject that Howard felt must be explored and explained to the general public, as deterrence existed ultimately for their protection.

A grant from the Ford Foundation enabled Howard to travel extensively around the US visiting some of the leading institutions and generating connections that would make him an influential voice on nuclear deterrence and strategic studies on both sides of the Atlantic. In September 1961 he participated in the Pugwash Association's conference at Stowe, Vermont where he and other voices from the humanities, sciences, and politics in both the US and USSR met to discuss arms control. Although the gains that came out of this meeting were intangible, and at best incremental, the

[1]For a short overview of Howard's life, career, and achievements, see Andrew Roberts, 'Sir Michael Howard obituary', *The Guardian*, 1 December 2019: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/dec/01/sir-michael-howard-obituary. Accessed 17 June 2022. For the wider impact of the Howard and Paret translation, see Hew Strachan, 'Michael Howard and Clausewitz', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2022), pp. 143-160. For a general overview of Howard's contribution to military historical scholarship, see Hew Strachan, 'Michael Howard and the Dimensions of Military History', *War in History*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (2020), pp. 536-551.

[2]Michael Howard, *Captain Professor: The Memoirs of Sir Michael Howard*, (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 140-152.

[3]Lizzie Ellen, ed., *War Studies: Celebrating Six Decades of Research and Teaching Excellence in the Study of War, 1961-2021,* (London: Kings College London, 2021), pp. 8-15: https://www.kcl.ac.uk/warstudies/assets/war-studies-at-60-celebratory-publication.pdf. Accessed 18 June 2022.

[4]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 160-164.

Pugwash conferences created enough common ground to continue throughout the Cold War and remain a forum to discuss global affairs to this day.[5] Given the acute tensions of the Cold War in the 1960s, and Howard's stateside political, scientific, and academic connections, it was unsurprising that he was also drawn into what he described as the 'consultant professor' role, advising the Defence Secretary, Dennis Healy, on officer education for the three services, although with limited success.[6] Similarly, in the 1980s Howard would find himself invited to seminars at Chequers to offer opinions on the rising tensions with the Soviet Union. In this instance he found his audience even less receptive to his thinking. He described Margaret Thatcher as 'friendly and courteous', but also as 'not easy company, lacking as she was in any sense of humour and increasingly impervious to new ideas'.[7] The candour with which Howard discusses his engagement with political figures and policy formulation in his memoir perhaps suggests the very real limitations that academics – even those at the top of their profession – can face in shaping public discourse.[8]

Even if his direct engagement with policymakers was not so successful, Howard's professional career as a historian went from strength to strength in the 1970s and 1980s. A move to the University of Oxford saw him become the Chichele Professor of the History of War in 1977 and then the Regius Professor of Modern History in 1980. Howard interestingly wrote that he did not think himself well qualified for the latter post, as he had spent the preceding decades engaged mainly in debates over deterrence and strategy rather than the latest historiographical developments.[9] His final job saw him move to Yale to take up a chair in military and naval history; duly escaping the tortures of Oxford's labyrinthine administration. Any self-deprecation over his historiographical knowledge did not detract from the fact that Howard

[5]Howard would attend five more conferences (12th, 14th, 45th, 58th, and 66th) across the next ten years, see Jeffrey Boutwell, ed., Sandra Ionno Butcher, Sally Milne, and Claudia Vaughn, 'Participants in the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs meetings, 1957-2007', *Pugwash Newsletter*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (October 2007), pp. 26-158. For an account of his experiences at the Stowe conference, see Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 176-179.

[6]Howard described three types of academic: the lofty 'God Professor' managing a department of servile lackeys, the 'Airport Professor' transiting from one international conference to the next, and the 'Consultant Professor' chairing government or public committees. Howard noted that at one stage 'he was developing the worst characteristics of all three'; see, Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 182.

[7]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 193.

[8]Ibid., pp. 192-193. Politicians, of course, still seek advice, and since Howard esteemed historians like Sir Hew Strachan and John Bew have undertaken advisory roles to various governments.

[9]Ibid., pp. 206-210.

repeatedly made significant contributions to scholarship on the history of war. In particular, he covered a number of different typologies of historian. His first work was a regimental history, of his former regiment the Coldstream Guards during the interwar years and the Second World War. He served as an official historian, writing volumes on British grand strategy in 1942-43 and on the intelligence history of the war. His history of the Franco-Prussian War demonstrated a mastery of source material and the ability to use it to construct an argument on the changing character of modern war that linked the battlefield back to the political, social, economic, and cultural contexts of the armies fighting across it.[10]

Howard was also 'the master of the short book' that used fluid prose and a remarkable breadth of knowledge of his subject to draw readers into the analytical complexities of a topic.[11] These shorter volumes remain some of his most thought-provoking works, whether providing a sweeping overview of European warfare from medieval mounted warriors to the push-button age of nuclear annihilation, or trying to introduce the complexities and contradictions of Clausewitz's life and thought, or undertaking the near impossible task of dissecting the First World War.[12] Of these shorter works, it is perhaps his *War and the Liberal Conscience* that remains the most intriguing. It wrestles with the 'liberal dilemma' that, on the one hand, regards war as unnecessary and which in a 'rational, orderly world wars would not exist', but on the other hand accepts that wars may have to be fought in cases of liberation from oppression or for the survival of societies.[13] This was a topic he had originally approached for the Trevelyan Lectures at Cambridge in 1977, but which reflected a deeper intellectual struggle over the use of war by the state. As Hew Strachan has noted, Howard did not see peace as the norm of international relations, but that it instead resulted from the creation of a legitimate order, one that for much of history had been the product of war. Strategy – a topic to which he dedicated much historical

[10]Michael Howard and John Sparrow, *The Coldstream Guards, 1920-1946,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951); Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War,* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968); Michael Howard, *Grand Strategy. Volume IV: August 1942 – September 1943,* (London: HMSO, 1972); Michael Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War. Volume V: Strategic Deception,* (London: HMSO, 1990); Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870-1871,* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1961).

[11]Strachan, 'Dimensions of Military History', p. 550.

[12]Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); Michael Howard, *Clausewitz,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Michael Howard, *The First World War,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[13]Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience,* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, pb. edn., 1999), p. 3.

and contemporary scholarship – was for Howard the means by which war was controlled and restrained, giving it purpose.[14]

The genesis of *War in European History* and *War and the Liberal Conscience* provide an insight into the centrality of lectures to Howard's process of writing history. The Radcliffe Lectures held at the University of Warwick in the spring of 1975 were a proving ground for ideas that would find a more formal written output in *War in European History*, while the Trevelyan Lectures did much the same for *War and the Liberal Conscience*.[15] If the ideas could be successfully communicated to audiences, then they would be suitable for wider general consumption. Howard's first education in the art of lecturing was delivered by the Army Education Corps towards the end of the Second World War; in the post-war world he had many opportunities to refine his methods.[16] It should be no surprise that Howard perfected a written style that favoured brevity and clarity over laborious, unnecessary detail, giving his books an almost unique scope, ambition, and accessibility.

In the foreword to *War in European History* Howard would observe: 'War has been part of a totality of human experience, the parts of which can be understood only in relation to one another.'[17] He would acknowledge that there remained a certain value in didactic, analytic studies, but it was clear that to truly understand the phenomenon the scholar must lift his eyes above the mechanics of campaigns and adopt a much broader view. This has become widely accepted in scholarly circles.[18] More recently though, some commentators have argued that military history and its historians are in some way 'weaponised'. Rather than historians becoming unwitting accomplices to some ill-defined militarist agenda, Howard's intellectual concerns and writing demonstrate a subtle and intellectually rigorous engagement with the realities of war, not from the perspective of its promotion, but from a position of seeking to restrain its necessity.[19] Howard came from a family background in which Quaker and anti-war

[14]Strachan, 'Dimensions of Military History', p. 546.
[15]Howard, *War in European History*, p. x; Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience,* p. 3.
[16]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 114.
[17]Howard, *War in European History*, p. ix.
[18]It is perhaps best exemplified in Margaret MacMillan, *War: How Conflict Shaped Us,* (London: Profile, 2020).
[19]Kim A. Wagner, 'Seeing Like a Soldier: The Amritsar Massacre and the Politics of Military History', in Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless, eds., *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies,* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 25-27. Wagner does not provide any evidence to justify his assertions regarding military history and professional military education in Britain, although he does offer a short critique of four imperial and military historians. This is a rather partial and parochial view of the field, presenting a misleading image of contemporary military history. For

sentiments were prominent, and he himself harboured deep personal fears about the potential of the Cold War to result in nuclear Armageddon.[20] As he noted in his memoir, it was to this 'vast subject' of liberals wrestling with the moral and realist uses of war that he had wished to return in more detail later in life.[21]

In addition to these books, Howard remained a prolific essayist throughout his life, producing succinct arguments that challenged crude assumptions and pushed his readers to think with greater care, calmness, and reflection about complex issues that warranted a fuller and less superficial understanding.[22] Taking his post-retirement output in *The RUSI Journal* alone, these essays ranged widely across topics such as the execution of soldiers for cowardice in the Great War, the terminological imprecision of the 'war on terror', shifting ideas on strategy, and the European Union referendum.[23] All demonstrated a careful and measured approach to thinking about war, its conduct, and its wider historical, political, social, and cultural context.

The pieces assembled for this special issue of the *British Journal for Military History* marking the centenary of his birth aim to engage with a variety of aspects of Howard's scholarship and academic career. To borrow one of his most famous phrases on military history, this special edition examines his contribution to the history of war in width, depth, and context.[24] The articles tackle elements of his shaping of the fields of military history and war studies, as well as drawing on his ideas to think more deeply about historiographical debates that resonate through to today. Following this introduction is a personal essay by Adrian Gregory that looks at the teaching of a

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a more insightful appreciation of the issues involved in delivering professional military education, see Louis Halewood and David Morgan-Owen, 'Captains of War: History in Professional Military Education', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 165, No. 7 (2020), pp. 46-54.

[20]For the influence of his family background, see Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 1-7, 11-20, and 38-41; Strachan, 'Dimensions of Military History', p. 546. For Howard's fears of nuclear war, see Roberts, 'Michael Howard'.

[21]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 205.

[22]Michael Howard, *Studies in War and Peace,* (London: Temple Smith, 1970); Michael Howard, *The Causes of War and Other Essays,* (London: Temple Smith, 1983); Michael Howard, *The Lessons of History,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[23]Michael Howard, 'Condemned: Courage and Cowardice – Introduction', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 143, No. 1 (1998), pp. 51-52; Michael Howard, 'Mistake to Declare this a "War"', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 146, No. 6 (2001), pp. 1-4; Michael Howard, 'The Transformation of Strategy', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 156, No. 4 (2011), pp. 12-16; Michael Howard, 'Better In or Out? The Historical Background', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 161, No. 3, (2016) pp. 4-6.

[24]Michael Howard, 'The Use and Abuse of Military History', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, Vol. 107, No. 625 (February 1962), pp. 4-10.

course at Oxford originally designed by Howard and that sprang out of his twin interests in the liberal dilemma over war and the period from the Franco-Prussian War to the Great War. This was an era that involved profound change in war's conduct and its impact on states and societies in Europe. Gregory points out some of the practical realities of delivering such a course in the context of the early twenty-first century when issues of war and peace again became prominent in international relations.

Vanda Wilcox then examines Howard's magisterial *War in European History* through a European historiographical lens, placing it into wider debates on the history of war taking place in the 1970s and 1980s in France, Italy, and West Germany. The book's *longue durée* perspective highlighted the breadth of approaches that could be encompassed within the 'war and society' school of military history that Howard had been so influential in establishing. As Wilcox highlights, using Umberto Eco's review of Howard, this was also a book that stimulated, and can still stimulate, profound thinking about the relationship of force and power in the conduct of war. Moreover, Wilcox notes a particular trait of Howard's scholarship, which can in light of the 'global turn' make him seem somewhat dated: he was a distinctly *European* historian.[25]

David Morgan-Owen and Michael Finch then provide a careful dissection of Howard's place within the creation of war studies as a separate scholarly discipline, in particular his role in the establishment of the eponymous department at King's College, London. As they illustrate, a degree of myth making has crept into the story of Howard's role. In their retelling a more complex narrative emerges, in which institutional interest in the study of war preceded Howard's tenure at KCL, and the setting up of the department and its courses rested on the enabling activities of other historians often left out of the story. The key part of Howard's legacy for war studies was to establish it as a pragmatic discipline that ranged across a smorgasbord of other academic fields, but within which military history remained the lodestone.

Mungo Melvin then focuses in on what is probably Howard's most important single scholarly contribution: his translation with Peter Paret of Clausewitz's *On War*. This translation wrestled with the difficulties of all translations, between fidelity to the original text and the need to produce an accessible work for contemporary readers.

[25]Howard did make two forays into topics relating to what would come to be termed 'global history', examined via the lens of European imperialism: 'Empires, Nations and Wars', the Yigal Allon Memorial Lecture at the University of Tel Aviv, March 1982, published in Howard, *Lessons*, pp. 21-48; 'Empire, Race and War in pre-1914 Britain', in Howard, *Lessons*, pp. 63-80. For a succinct overview of the 'global turn', see James Belich, John Darwin, Margaret Frenz, and Chris Wickham, eds., *The Prospect of Global History,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

As Melvin highlights, such problems also beset the two earlier English-language translations, although Howard and Paret did produce a text that was both comprehensive and readable. Given the issues of mistranslation and shifting intellectual interests around the study of war, Melvin suggests that it is time for a new translation of *On War*; an argument that resonates with Hew Strachan's calls for a more comprehensive approach to all of Clausewitz's work.[26]

This is followed by Linda Risso's examination of Michael Howard's views on the nuclear deterrence arguments of the early 1980s. She highlights his balanced perspective on the risks of a nuclear clash with the USSR and his desire to get policymakers to think more carefully about the reasoning behind the choices made by Soviet leaders. Howard had little time for the stereotyped views emanating from American 'maximalist' strategic theorists that saw the USSR as a 'cosmic evil'. What emerges is a sense of Howard as a deeply empathetic thinker who argued for a considered and ethical approach to nuclear strategy at a time when such views did not always enjoy support among Western policymakers.

Finally, the collection closes with an essay by Alisa Miller that takes Howard's 1987 essay on 'War and Technology' and uses it as a springboard to explore how narratives of contemporary wars are constructed and presented in the twenty-first century. Even with the promise of digital technologies enabling a broader perspective on who fights, suffers, and documents war, the reality is that the heroic masculine warrior figure still dominates. The essay makes a good case for the enduring power of Howard's thinking on war and military history, which set up ideas that continue to resonate with our contemporary understanding of war.

These articles and essays highlight four key facets of Howard's work and academic career. First, they address his contribution to the historiography around military history and the history of war more generally. Second, they contextualise his position as the 'founding father' of war studies, at least in Britain. Third, they present Howard both as a scholar and as a profoundly important public intellectual. Fourth, they point to the enduring prominence of his scholarship in shaping the study of war and its foundational ideas and texts. Reaching across all these pieces are a series of interconnecting themes. First and foremost is Howard's brilliance as a stylist and writer, able to convey complex ideas in a succinct and engaging manner. When some twenty-first-century writing on war and its history appears to have adopted the worst attributes of the social sciences – language and arguments that can only be understood by, and are of interest to, a handful of fellow academics – it is refreshing to be reminded

[26]Strachan, 'Howard and Clausewitz', p. 144.

of the power of concise and erudite prose.[27] Perhaps Howard teaches that being a historian is, at least in part, about being able to write well. Across all his books, articles, and essays, despite the frequently troubling subject matter, he wrote with great elegance and erudition. He was unmatched in his ability to craft narratives that framed the complexity of problems while observing the salient connections between their multiple elements. When G.M. Trevelyan questioned the very purpose of the discipline of history, he was calling for it to go beyond the dry accumulation of facts and their interpretation in order to elevate itself such that it could explain the '*full emotional and intellectual value* to a wide public by the difficult art of literature'.[28] By these lofty parameters we must surely judge Howard favourably, for he did not just explain matters simply and accessibly, but he also avoided the twin pitfalls of simplism and reductivism. To steal a phrase once more from Trevelyan, Howard's 'magnificent historical narrative educates the mind and the character'.[29]

Howard also emerges from these articles as a historian who valued empathising with historical subjects. As he noted in his memoir, this historical empathy enables people to engage with the diversity of human cultures and thus to avoid misunderstandings such as those of Britain and France with regard to the politics of central Europe in the 1930s and which dogged US policymakers' approach to the USSR during the Cold War.[30] An empathetic historian such as Howard was thus one who thought beyond the minutiae of particular military problems to ask fundamental questions about the politics, societies, and cultures in which these problems existed and were confronted. What is also evident from these articles, is that Howard, despite being a prominent figure in war studies and contemporary strategic thought in the second half of the twentieth century, was by education and temperament fundamentally a historian. He was a scholar interested in change and continuity through time, in asking questions about ideas and evidence, who sought out the contextual complexities to problems, and who identified patterns and processes.

Two aspects of Howard's life and scholarly output are, however, only touched on tangentially in the following articles. Given their prominence to the development of his thinking, the introduction will examine them to draw out the wider influences on Howard's life and, correspondingly, his approach to history. These two aspects

[27]For an example of the complexity of some current writing on war, requiring a six-page glossary of terms to make sense of the language used, see Matthew Ford and Andrew Hoskins, *Radical War: Data, Attention and Control in the Twenty-First Century,* (London: Hurst, 2022), pp. 207-212.
[28]G.M. Trevelyan, *Clio a Muse, and other Essays Literary or Pedestrian,* (London: Longmans Green, 1913), p. 5.
[29]Ibid., p. 54.
[30]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 207-208.

concern his Second World War military experiences and his field-defining lecture and article on 'The Use and Abuse of Military History'. Together, these two elements help illuminate the enduring tensions and legacy of Howard's methodological approach to the study of history, a subject on which he provided further insights in a pair of lectures that bookended his Regius Professorship in the 1980s. The introduction concludes with an examination of Howard's legacy for the military historical profession and a brief personal reflection on his generosity of spirit and good humour.

Wartime military service with the Coldstream Guards in the Italian theatre was fundamental to shaping Howard as a historian and his thinking on war. His memoir makes this clear, dividing his life between his dual identities of captain and professor. It was important not because this service led to his first work of history, a jointly authored book on the Coldstream Guards' war, nor because it gave him credibility at KCL to take on the military studies appointment in 1953. Crucially, service in Italy gave him experience of the sharp end of war, and in one of the conflict's bloodier and more intense campaigns.[31] His memoir was unflinching in describing the realities of infantry combat in Italy, highlighting the confusion of tactical actions and the costs of modern industrialised war, both for the soldiers fighting it and the civilians suffering its fallout.[32] Even his account of the infantry attack on a position known as 'the pimple' at Salerno that won him the Military Cross, is described in a self-deprecating and reflective analytical manner. He noted that his gallantry award was due more to luck than anything else, highlighting three elements to the action. He pointed to the fact that he had few choices about what to do at the time except advance, that his superiors observed it and could thus write him up for the award, and that as it was his first taste of combat he was yet to fully grasp the fear inherent in battle. Howard was brutally frank in describing his actions in subsequent engagements as 'cowardly'.[33] In a later section he devoted much attention to unpicking not the heroism of war but what could go wrong. He described a patrol that he led which ended up stuck in a minefield, resulting in him having to abandon a wounded man who later died of his injuries. Howard wrote of his shame about this incident and noted that after the war

[31]For the strains the Italian theatre placed on combatants, see John Ellis, *Cassino – The Hollow Victory: The Battle for Rome January-June 1944,* (London: Deutsch, 1984); Peter Caddick-Adams, *Monte Cassino: Ten Armies in Hell,* (London: Preface, 2012). For another veteran's experience of the horrors of the Italian campaign, see Spike Milligan, *Mussolini: His Part in my Downfall,* (London: Michael Joseph, 1978).
[32]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 109-110.
[33]Ibid., p. 82.

he visited the soldier's grave.[34] For Howard then, war was not only a subject of academic inquiry but also a deeply personal and troubling experience.[35]

What this experience – reinforced by then trying to construct an orderly historical narrative of his regiment's war – did give Howard was an appreciation of the complexities of understanding war as both participant and chronicler. The sources were often poor or contradictory, especially given the nature of combat accounts such as unit war diaries that were frequently written long after an action had occurred. Details on administration and logistics often dominated over information on operations, and accounts of battle could be distorted by the excitement and fatigue experienced. Thinking of the challenges in weaving together a narrative, Howard observed that 'battle was as difficult to describe as the act of love'.[36] Yet, as Howard knew all too well, fighting was at the heart of war. The organised application of violence by the state to achieve particular ends was what made war a unique phenomenon in history, but also one that resonated across history.[37] It was a historical experience that reflected both change and continuity. His own military and combat experiences in Italy attested to this. Like so many soldiers on campaign before him, Howard became a disease casualty, suffering from malaria at Salerno, bouts of which recurred throughout his campaigning.[38]

Although having served in a major war, which placed him in the same soldier-scholar bracket as Clausewitz, Howard retained an ambivalent attitude to his own military service.[39] At the end of the war he described the figure of 'Captain M.E. Howard MC' with succinct distance: 'it wasn't me.' He also noted how out of place he felt on returning to Oxford to complete his degree, having lost friends killed during the war and having had friendships altered by it.[40] Importantly, Howard did not advocate that

[34]Ibid., pp. 107-109.
[35]Despite witnessing the full horrors of war and the corresponding refugee crises created, Howard would never embrace pacifism.
[36]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 130-131.
[37]Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976) p. 75, unless otherwise stated all references in this article are to this translation; Howard, *Grand Strategy,* p. 1; Howard, 'Grand Strategy in the Twentieth Century', *Defence Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2001), pp. 1-10, especially p. 3.
[38]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 80 and 82.
[39]For an overview of the phenomenon of the 'warrior scholar' and the ideas of such figures in the field of irregular warfare, see Andrew Mumford and Bruno C. Reis, eds., *The Theory and Practice of Irregular Warfare: Warrior-Scholarship in Counter-Insurgency,* (London: Routledge, 2014).
[40]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 123-124.

only ex-servicemen could make good military historians, indeed quite the opposite. He argued that his military service gave him only a limited perspective on one small part of the Second World War, stating that it was 'confined to a worm's eye view' and that being there was a 'dubious advantage'. Moreover, he felt that a good historian could use their own 'imaginative effort' to recreate the atmosphere of a campaign, stating: 'some historians have an astonishing ability to deduce from other people's accounts what things were like and to write as if they were there.'[41] If Howard was a soldier-scholar then it was an identity that contained within it a degree of tension as much as it provided professional validation for him as a military historian who had seen combat.

Howard's personal conflict between his experiences as a soldier at the sharp end and the objective construction of past events as a historian was mirrored in wider changes to the academic study of war. In the 1960s a 'new military history' emerged placing much greater emphasis on cultural, social, gendered, and emotional responses to war. Like all movements this was not initially a conscious collective process but an iterative, cumulative change as the political sands of academia shifted, elevating different approaches, validating some and relegating others.[42] Although Howard would never share in the hostility that would typify some later critics of traditional military history, he should still be seen as a pioneer of the new movement. His advocacy for war studies as a broad discipline, reached well beyond narrow operational accounts of battle. But, as Howard often made clear, war always came back to fighting and the brutal realities that he had known all too well.[43]

As Hew Strachan has noted, the 'new military history' that Howard argued for from the 1960s onwards has often been more concerned with things other than combat. Topics such as disease, identity, economic and social contexts, and cultures have come to dominate, leading to a 'history of war with the fighting left out'.[44] The results are accounts of conflicts that go so far as to dismiss battle as playing much of a role in the outcome. Recent works on the Second World War offer a microcosm of such military historical debates. Phillips Payson O'Brien's history of the Allied campaigns against

[41]Howard, 'Use and Abuse', p. 9.

[42]Joanna Bourke, 'New Military History', in Matthew Hughes and William Philpott, eds., *Palgrave Advances in Modern Military History,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 258-280.

[43]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 130-131 and 145. The importance of thinking about and understanding fighting is at the heart of Howard's influential article on the pre-First World War cult of the offensive, see Michael Howard, 'Men Against Fire: The Doctrine of the Offensive in 1914', *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1984), pp. 41-57.

[44]Strachan, 'Dimensions of Military History', p. 545.

Germany and Japan has most recently pushed this line for the Second World War. As he sees it, this was a war won on the shop floors of industrial plants in Michigan and Manchester, and in the economic strategy planning centres of Washington and London, not on the blood-soaked battlefields of Normandy or Imphal. In contrast, Jonathan Fennell's study of British Commonwealth soldiers and their willingness to fight and die for the cause, offers an alternative approach. By foregrounding morale, something tested and broken in battle, Fennell places the emphasis away from the economic management of the war and back onto how it was fought, how that fighting played out, and then how combat affected the men who had to keep fighting the war. Perhaps, rather than taking an anti- or pro-battle line, future histories might follow the broad approach of Dan Todman in his magisterial two-volume history of the British war effort. This brings together the social, economic, cultural, and military dimensions of the war, coming close to producing a 'total history' of a total war.[45] What this specific debate reflects are the key questions about the writing of the history of war first identified by Howard and with which he too wrestled. In this respect he offers a vital bridge between two, often mutually hostile, methodological camps. He promoted and embraced the broadening of the field, but never completely denounced the value of rigorous studies of campaigns.[46]

One of Howard's most important contributions to military history came in his field-defining 1961 Royal United Services Institution (RUSI) lecture on 'The Use and Abuse of Military History', published in the February 1962 edition of its journal. Although this article is frequently seen as giving military history its professional identity, it is also much misread and misunderstood, reduced simply to Howard's three 'general rules of study' to be applied to military history, that it should be done in width, depth, and context. Yet this call constituted less than a quarter of the article, the other three quarters reflected Howard's deeper scholarly concern with a careful and measured approach to intellectual inquiry more widely.

In particular, the lecture was not addressed to academics but to military professionals. His general rules were to aid officers in their study of military history and to help them avoid some of the pitfalls of taking an overly instrumentalist and needlessly narrow

[45]Phillips Payson O'Brien, *How the War was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Jonathan Fennell, *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Daniel Todman, *Britain's War. Volume 1: Into Battle, 1937-1941,* (London: Allen Lane, 2016); Daniel Todman, *Britain's War. Volume 2: A New World, 1942-1947,* (London: Allen Lane, 2016). For a succinct overview of such military historiographical debates, see Jeremy Black, *A Short History of War,* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021), pp. 233-238.

[46]Howard, *War in European History*, p. ix

approach, concerned merely with tactical and operational 'lessons'. Howard also offered a nuanced critique of regimental history writing, where the institutional historian had to sustain the image of a 'flawlessly brave and efficient' formation.[47] The result was often a form of history that established myths, although he accepted that these could be helpful in sustaining certain 'emotions or beliefs' within military institutions. He contrasted this form of very particular military history writing – a subset of a sub-discipline – with the 'function of the historian proper'. The latter was to engage with 'complicated and disagreeable realities', inevitably resulting in the 'critical examination of the "myth"'.[48] Howard also issued some criticism of amateur historians lacking 'academic training', who read into the past anachronistic thoughts or motives; here he was thinking of military men dabbling in crude historical analogies.

Howard's argument still resonates particularly well with a twenty-first-century audience. Elements of what could be described as post-modernist thinking emerge. He notes that academic historians are aware of studying not what happened in the past but 'what other historians *say* happened in the past'. History is thus fundamentally a construct, rather than a revealed truth, even if it did give rise to the illustration of useful principles and certain insights into the enduring characteristics of the human condition. More importantly, for Howard readers are often presented with an account of past events that is incorrect in its orderliness, a result of the historian's selection and interpretation of evidence. Here his own experience of combat in the Second World War shaped his argument. He points out that military historians have to 'create order out of chaos', and that this process could produce tidy accounts that in some ways were a 'blasphemous travesty of the chaotic truth'.[49]

In his RUSI lecture Howard emphasised, as in much of his other work, the Clausewitzian notions of change and continuity in the history of war. Ranging widely across the history of modern warfare from Napoleon in Italy to the British in the Western Desert, Howard attacked the notion that the lessons of history were clear and easy for officers to divine. Instead, he posited the idea that 'Clio is like the Delphic oracle: it is only in retrospect, and usually too late, that we can understand what she

[47]Howard, 'Use and Abuse', p. 4. For a brilliant dissection of myth-making in the British Army, see David French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People, c. 1870-2000,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[48]Howard, 'Use and Abuse', p. 5.
[49]Ibid., p. 6. History as a construct of historians and the difficulties of using it to provide simple lessons for today's policymakers is a subject touched on by Lawrence Freedman with respect to the Russia-Ukraine War; see Lawrence Freedman, 'Spirits of the Past: The Role of History in the Russo-Ukraine War' (12 June 2022): https://samf.substack.com/p/spirits-of-the-past. Accessed 16 June 2022.

was trying to say'.[50] This led him to set down his three general rules. These in many respects reflected the conceptual approach to military history that underscored his entire academic career. First, that it should adopt a *longue durée* perspective, in part as the only way in which to identify and consider the continuities and discontinuities of military affairs. This was perhaps an unsurprising point for a historian of his generation, with Howard noting the significant influence of the *Annales* school on him in his memoir.[51] Second, that only through a deep study of a broad range of sources could the chaos of war's reality be uncovered. Third, that battles and campaigns could not be studied in isolation and had to be placed in a wider economic, social, and political context. The key point for Howard was that studying military history was, for both military professionals and civilians alike, about intellectual growth; it was not just a means to an end, to make it easier to win the next battle or war, but to build empathy and wisdom.

This central theme was reiterated by Howard in the discussion that followed his lecture; in fact, this part of the published article, so rarely referred to subsequently, offers a vital insight into his thinking on military history and the role of history more generally. Chaired by Lieutenant-General John Hackett, an officer who understood myth-making better than others and would create his own myths around the Soviet threat, the discussion ranged widely across Howard's argument.[52] Questions came, in all but one instance, from serving or retired officers of the three services. Perhaps unremarkably a number focused on his criticism of regimental histories and Howard robustly defended his position on the subjective nature of such historical accounts. More interesting, were a series of questions that focused on the idea of identifying patterns in history and using these as a predictive tool, helping to shape actions in future wars. Howard went further here than in his lecture in drawing a clear distinction between the roles of the 'operational analyst' and the historian. The former was 'action oriented', studying the past merely to discover how to do things better in the present; whereas the latter studied the past for 'more complex reasons'. For Howard, identifying patterns in history was a part of historical practice, but one that was highly subjective. It thus built on his argument about the inherent complexities of historical study in which questioning and criticism were at the heart of the discipline.

[50]Howard, 'Use and Abuse', p. 7.

[51]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 206-207. The influence is also evident in his valedictory lecture as Regius Professor, concerned as it was with questions of processes and structures in history, see Howard, *Lessons*, pp. 188-200, especially pp. 193-194.

[52]Howard, 'Use and Abuse', pp. 8-10; Jeffrey Michaels, 'Revisiting General Sir John Hackett's *The Third World War*', *British Journal for Military History*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2016), pp. 88-104. Howard would later play a pivotal role in the appointment of Hackett to the role of Principal of King's College, London in 1968.

Howard retained a deep scepticism about the utilitarian employment of military history to serve the contemporary needs of the armed forces. In his inaugural address as the Chichele Professor of the History of War at Oxford in 1977 he stated bluntly that 'academic studies can by themselves no more prevent wars than they can teach people how to fight them'.[53] Instead he argued that the study of war provided knowledge, insight, and analytic skills that could inform discussion and then subsequent actions. The point was for military history not to provide crude 'lessons' for officers to then replicate, but to help them better grasp the nature of the problems they faced. Later, during his Regius Professorship's inaugural lecture, Howard recounted his difficulties in trying to identify lessons from the Italian campaign in which he had served when giving a lecture to a less than receptive audience of young army officers. As he noted, they were quite reasonably eager to be shown the direct relevance of this campaign to their careers. Although he suggested there might be some professional value that could be derived from looking at questions of tactics, logistics, intelligence, and morale, he was also acutely aware that the campaign waged in 1943-45 was a unique experience. He argued that it resulted from circumstances 'that would never, that *could* never, be precisely replicated'. Pithily and somewhat mischievously, he echoed Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin's witticism that the only real 'lesson' was not to try to conquer Italy from the bottom of the peninsula.[54]

The most interesting question asked at his 1961 RUSI lecture was also concerned with a didactic reading of the history of war, but in far broader terms. Intriguingly, it was the only recorded question to come from a non-military man: Anthony Verrier, a special correspondent with the *Economist*, *Observer*, and *New Statesman*, who later authored numerous works on military and imperial history. Verrier's question suggested that Howard wrote military history to help soldiers better fight their battles, whereas he, as a journalist, tried to emphasise that war was an aberration that could not last forever. Howard pushed back against this assertion making clear that he did not write military history to aid the services in their conduct of war: 'I write military history because I am interested in military history.' He went further, arguing that 'one cannot deal with the past at all unless one understands the part which military affairs played in it'.[55] In this brief exchange Howard perhaps made his strongest case for why military history mattered, and to which his broad church conception of the 'new military history' was moving the discipline. As Margaret Macmillan has argued, war has infused all aspects of how states, societies, and cultures interact throughout history. It is a pervasive part of life, one framed in paradoxical terms as both inherently chaotic but also among the most organised of human activities.[56] Howard's 'Use and Abuse of

[53]Howard, *Causes*, p. 35.
[54]Howard, *Lessons*, p. 10; Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 155.
[55]Howard, 'Use and Abuse', p. 8.
[56]Macmillan, *War*, pp. 7-11.

Military History' is thus far more than an essay on *how to do* military history, nor is it just for officers to ponder. Instead, it should be read as a succinct treatise on good historical practice in general – surely all historians would agree with the call to width, depth, and context – but also as a defence of military history within and integral to historical studies.

For much of his career Michael Howard wore his methodological influences lightly. While references can be found, he rarely described how those great historical thinkers who went before him affected his own approach in any sort of detail. To be sure, he mentioned figures in passing but Howard's focus on accessibility precluded lengthy detours into the philosophy of the profession. Yet these breadcrumbs, coupled with his public lectures, provide an insight into the figures who shaped his approach. It has already been noted that Howard was, by his own admission, suffused with the principles of the *Annales* school of history, but perhaps less obviously Howard's historical philosophy bears a notable resemblance to the theorist he is most associated with today: Carl von Clausewitz. In Howard's formative years at Wellington College, an elite British public school, he was introduced somewhat unknowingly to some of the battlelines of the philosophy of history: the exploration of the past as an art or a science; as aesthetic or functional; specialist or general. He read Leopold von Ranke's *History of England* and Trevelyan's *England under the Stuarts*. Scholars who, whether he knew it at the time, established the value of the modern interrogation of source material in Ranke's case and the value of accessibility in Trevelyan's. Even his tutors mirrored some of these methodological frictions. Although Rollo Talboys had retired by the time Howard graduated to the Upper School, he still observed how his tutor viewed history 'as a branch of literature and tool for the civilization of the Philistines'. His successor, Max Reese, would take a more pragmatic approach: 'history was not a tool of civilization but a way of getting scholarships.' Howard left Wellington with a thorough understanding of the Tudors and Stuarts but by his own admission his class had been turned into 'specialists before we knew about generalities'.[57] Regardless of whether Howard understood the full weight of these influences, his early education – and indeed his time at Oxford – gave him a certain professional confidence that allowed him to breezily admit to never having struggled through Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and to remark upon the drabness of the Institute for Historical Research before it was lit up by the founding of the journal *Past and Present* in 1952.[58]

[57]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 33-34. His former tutor Rollo St Clare Talboys would later write *A Victorian School: A History of Wellington College,* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1943).

[58]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 136.

Clausewitz is not often thought of today as a historian. As Hew Strachan recognised, Clausewitz's principal ambition – to find a general theory for war – stemmed from philosophy not military history.[59] Nevertheless, Clausewitz wrote extensive campaign histories and recognised that any theory had to be buttressed by real events and experiences. This required him to engage with history. In Book 2 of *On War* Clausewitz explores the difficulties and virtues of history. It is in this that some comparisons with Howard might be drawn. Clausewitz from the outset offers a parallel with his translator, starting the chapter by explaining that he wanted to 'focus attention on the proper and improper use of examples'.[60] He went on to describe four areas where history has distinct utility to the theorist: to explain an idea that is perhaps not easily understood; as an application of an idea which might otherwise lead to inappropriate generalisations; to prove that a phenomena might be possible; or to prove a theory or support a doctrine.[61] Developing these central ideas of utility led Clausewitz, much as it did Howard over a century and a half later, to observe the necessity and limitations of both width and depth. Of width Clausewitz recognised there was value citing a range of events where precise details might be lacking in order to support a given proposition. Yet he also recognised that where the issue in question was hotly contested and counter examples may be produced with similar ease, no firm conclusion could reasonably be drawn. Furthermore, as the critical context of each example gets lost in the collective packaging with others, it becomes 'like an object seen at great distance: it is impossible to distinguish any detail, and it looks the same from every angle'. And so they can be used to support conflicting views. With depth Clausewitz went further than Howard: 'where a new or debatable point of view is concerned, a single thoroughly detailed event is more instructive than ten that are only touched on.'[62]

Subtle differences between Howard and Clausewitz were also present. Clausewitz was chiefly concerned with causality when it came to depth, Howard with the variety and interpretation of source material and social context. Clausewitz thus warned of writers without a sufficient grasp of the events they cite irresponsibly, explaining them as leading to 'hundreds of wrong ideas and bogus theorizing'. The solution, he contended, was 'to show that the new ideas he is presenting as guaranteed by history are indisputably derived from the precise pattern of events'.[63] Howard in his 1961

[59]Hew Strachan, *Clausewitz's On War: A Biography,* (New York: Grove Press, 2007), p. 95.
[60]Clausewitz *On War,* p. 170. Interestingly O.J.M. Jolles translated this as 'the correct use and abuse of examples'; see Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. O.J.M. Jolles, (New York: The Modern Library, [or. 1943] 2000), p. 382.
[61]Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 171; see also Strachan, *Clausewitz's On War*, p. 97.
[62]Clausewitz, *On War* pp. 172-173
[63]Ibid., pp. 173-174.

RUSI lecture went further, explaining that the historian's job was to research in such variety that the 'tidy outlines dissolve and he catches a glimpse of the confusion and horror of the real experience'.[64] In this he articulated a point that the great Prussian would surely have agreed with. Despite these differences in reasoning there can be little doubt that both viewed history in a fundamentally similar fashion. Howard would confirm as much in his memoir. After a tangential reference to Ranke's adage that the historian's job was to find out 'what had really happened', Howard observed:

> Later I was to find in Clausewitz an analysis of the historian's task that coincided exactly with my own experience. First, find out what happened. Then, establish a chain of causation. Finally, apply critical judgement. Before one could interpret the past, one had to recreate it.[65]

As geniuses do, they made it sound so simple, but within this process both men were acutely aware of the dangers and difficulties that the charting and application of past events might pose to the scholar and soldier. Clausewitz was not Howard's only influence, he cited on various occasions Ranke, Hans Delbrück, and Pieter Geyl; he was also evidently shaped to greater or lesser extents by other major historical movements like the *Annales* school, Marxism, and post-modernism. And still, it was in the early nineteenth-century military theorist that we can see some of the clearest parallels to Howard's historical outlook.

Howard did not produce many writings on wider historiographical questions, but as he noted in his memoir, his appointment as Regius Professor required him to reflect more deeply on the nature of his profession.[66] In his inaugural lecture in March 1981, he reiterated many of the ideas that he had raised twenty years earlier in his RUSI talk. In a political and educational climate that was looking for 'relevance' from university disciplines, Howard presented a passionate case for the value of understanding the past. In a nod to Shelley, he described historians as the 'unacknowledged legislators of mankind', whose study of the past is fundamental for informing how societies view themselves and their present.[67] For Howard, the historian's job was in part to ensure that such understanding was not impaired by fraud, prejudice, and error. However, as before, he reiterated the complexities of the historian's task, having to wrestle with too few sources in the case of the medievalist or too many for the modernist who

[64]Howard, 'Use and Abuse', p. 7.
[65]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 130.
[66]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 206-207.
[67]Howard, *Lessons*, p. 13. For a broader argument on the place of history in the English education system, see David Cannadine, Jenny Keating, and Nicola Sheldon, *The Right Kind of History: Teaching the Past in Twentieth-Century England,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

must then resort to careful processes of selection. In a direct echo of comments in 1961 and presumably this time being received by an audience more sympathetic to historical self-criticism, Howard noted that 'there is no such thing as "history". History is what historians write, and historians are part of the process they write about.'[68]

Although aware of the difficulties of historical practice and the need of historians to be able to contextualise their own approaches and to develop new ones, he also pointed to an inherent tension between these professional questions and lay demands on the discipline, which were impatient for 'lessons'. He offered the amusing analogy of historians being like workmen tearing up a perfectly usable road, trying to dissuade members of the public from following the road, and then issuing warnings that the surface they have just laid is only temporary. Worse they do not know when they will finish work on the road, nor where it leads, and that it must be used with caution. Here, perhaps, was Howard reflecting on the value of constant reappraisal from within an academic discipline, but he was also aware, as a publicly engaged intellectual, that from the outside historiographical debates often seemed like navel gazing. In his memoirs, he recalled trying to quickly get up to speed with the cultural turn then engulfing historical studies and advocated by the 'Young Turks in the faculty'. He did not find Derrida and Foucault particularly enlightening texts.[69]

Nonetheless, Howard did use the forum of his inaugural lecture to offer what he described as the four 'lessons' historians were entitled to teach. The first was 'not to generalize from false premises based on inadequate evidence', what he described as an 'austere' lesson. To illustrate this he gave a series of popular and controversial opinions on the Second World War that did not stand up to scrutiny. As historians' writings would eventually find their way into the 'public reservoirs of popular histories and school text books', as well as television documentaries, the 'primary professional duty' of the historian was to ensure the knowledge provided was accurate.[70] His second 'lesson' focused on the need for '*understanding* of the past', grasping the details, mores, and assumptions of previous ages. This required the 'quality of imagination' in order to re-create the structures of beliefs that informed the decisions and actions taken by people.[71] Both these lessons reflect elements of his RUSI talk on military history in 1961, emphasising the particularities of the historical profession and that to prosper as a historian one needed to foster an inquiring and open mind. Here also was Howard making the case for the historian to be a profoundly empathetic scholar.

[68]Howard, *Lessons*, p. 11.
[69]Howard, *Lessons*, p. 12; Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 207.
[70]Howard, *Lessons*, p. 13.
[71]Howard, *Lessons*, p. 14.

His third 'lesson' reached further, challenging what he described as 'boastfully ignorant' new elites who proclaimed their ignorance of the world. Instead, Howard argued that the study of history had a powerful role in helping people to comprehend cultural diversity. He suggested that a failure to understand the historical background to events, the wider cultural context, and the character of foreign societies could lead policymakers to make lethal miscalculations on a grand scale.[72] This was also a very particular attack on the Anglo-centric character of the Oxford history syllabus in the early 1980s, which featured very little European, American, or even Irish history, let alone accounts from further afield. As a historian whose professional interests lay very much in the European history of warfare and who had challenged Basil Liddell Hart's notion of British military exceptionalism, this fostering of a broader cultural understanding as an integral element of the study of history clearly had deep personal resonance.[73] Much of Howard's published work reflected a rejection of an Anglo-centric version of military history and instead embraced a specifically European approach.[74]

His final 'lesson' was a melancholy and sombre one and reflected his deep fears of nuclear escalation in the early 1980s. It was to point out to his audience how vulnerable was the social framework in which they as historians currently operated. Beyond the potential catastrophe of annihilation in a clash with the Soviets, Howard also pointed to the threat that totalitarian regimes posed to the free practice of historical enquiry. He observed that the 'bourgeois liberal societies' that allow historians to publish freely on events in the past were only a few centuries old and could be easily swept away. In consequence he called for historians to engage with the values of the societies they lived and worked in, rather than remaining detached from such debates. As he described it, 'the one "lesson of history" he [the historian] must never allow himself to forget' was that 'he is a member of the polis and cannot watch its destruction without himself being destroyed'.[75] Nevertheless, doing so would be harder in practice than in theory. Howard was acutely aware of the difficulties for historians offering views on contemporary events unfolding before them. Writing of his BBC radio talk on the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, later published in *The Listener*, he commented that it had aroused 'very strong emotions' and as a result 'it was difficult under the circumstances to preserve the kind of academic calm needed for cool judgement'.[76] This was despite the fact that as an event it also neatly illustrated his ideas on the role of force in politics.

[72]Howard, *Lessons*, pp. 18-19.
[73]Strachan, 'Dimensions of Military History', pp. 541-542.
[74]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 145; Howard, *Franco-Prussian*; Howard, *War in European History*.
[75]Howard, *Lessons*, p. 20.
[76]Howard, *Studies*, pp. 17 and 251-259.

Howard's inaugural lecture and its four lessons of history reinforced many of his ideas on the specific practice of military history that he had set out in 1961, but which could be applied more widely. The lineage of his thought is particularly clear in his ideas on the constructed nature of history, the difficulties of actually researching and writing that history, and the need for it to be done with an empathetic and imaginative approach to the past. He did return to historiographical questions in his valedictory lecture at Oxford in May 1989. Here, after lamenting that he had not achieved many of his aims for history at Oxford, Howard presented a wide-ranging overview of historical approaches to structures and processes in history. His talk encompassed thinkers from the Renaissance and Enlightenment through to the great Marxist historians of the mid-twentieth-century British historical profession. Despite the broader range of intellectual subjects, Howard's themes remained constant and were reiterated, presumably for some of the same audience as in 1981. The historian was thus to empathise, in order to understand and explain the past. Howard, though, rejected the notion of the historian as a dispassionate moral relativist, not able to judge the past. He pointed to the example of the Holocaust as an event that pushed historians to judge past beliefs and actions, but which also profoundly challenged the ability to empathise with a society and culture that was so different. What emerges from the lecture is a sense of Howard as a historian who was profoundly interested in questions of how people thought and acted, and of how historians then researched and wrote about these people. As he noted, the study of the past was not meant to be comforting – he had a particular swipe at 'escapist nostalgia' as embodied by the 'Heritage Industry' – but it did offer the only way to discover more about what a society had been, what it currently was, and where it might be heading.[77]

What emerges from the three lectures in 1961, 1981, and 1989 is Howard's musings on the very nature of being a historian. It is of value to engage with the arguments of these three lectures and essays, and not to just reduce them to disembodied, pithy quotations, as it is across them that he made his contribution to defining what he saw as the particular character of and purpose for the historical discipline in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century. Although the first of these lectures was concerned mainly with military history, and Howard is principally famous as one of the founders of the 'new military history' approach, if read more closely it offers a succinct outline of a particular type of historian, not just a military historian, and of the complexities of historical practice not just in the field of studying war. Reinforced by his lectures and essays bookending the 1980s, Howard thus emerges as a scholar deeply interested in the *craft* of history and what defined good historical scholarship.[78]

[77]Howard, *Lessons*, pp. 199-200.

[78]Marc Bloch's unfinished book defending the *Annales* school, *Apologie pour l'histoire, ou Métier d'historien*, first appeared in an English-language translation in 1954 as *The*

There is much merit in historians in the 2020s revisiting not only his ideas on width, depth, and context, but also his ideas on empathy, cultural diversity, imagination, and the fragility of the societies and their associated freedoms that allow historians to scrutinise the past.

As Howard's career attests to, the *longue durée* perspective on the military historical profession in Britain from when he entered it in the aftermath of the Second World War through to today is one that can only speak to progress. No longer is there a need to talk of military historians as establishing the field: that work is done and it is now a core part of historical study. Military history today, a century after Howard's birth, is a vibrant, diverse, intellectually stimulating, and publicly engaged field of study. The stereotype of a male-dominated discipline has been shattered by a bow wave of pioneering female historians. A brief trawl of recent publications on the subject of the First World War makes this abundantly evident, with ground-breaking new works from Vanda Wilcox, Heather Jones, Michelle Moyd, Catriona Pennell, Aimée Fox, and Kate Imy. Between them these historians cover topics as varied as the Italian Empire, the British monarchy, African soldiers, British mobilisation, organisational learning in the British Army, and the Indian Army.[79] For just one conflict to have such a diverse

Historian's Craft. At the time Howard would have been beginning his project on the Franco-Prussian War. Howard and Bloch, a fellow soldier-scholar, shared common questions about the researching and writing of history, as well as the thought involved in studying and constructing it. The debt is clear from Howard's valedictory lecture at Oxford, in which he described the *Annales* as 'the great school of history founded by Marc Bloch'. The choice of *craft* to describe Howard's approach in this introduction is thus a deliberate one. See Howard, *Lessons*, pp. 193-194; Peter Burke, 'Preface: Marc Bloch and the New History', in Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. vii-xviii.

[79]Vanda Wilcox, *Morale and the Italian Army During the First World War,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Vanda Wilcox, *The Italian Empire and the Great War,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Heather Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany, 1914-1920,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Heather Jones, *For King and Country: The British Monarchy and the First World War,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Michelle R. Moyd, *Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest, and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa,* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014); Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Aimée Fox, *Learning to Fight: Military Innovation and Change in the British Army, 1914-1918,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Kate Imy, *Faithful Fighters: Identity and Power in the British Indian Army,* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019).

historiography is testament to the profound impact of the (now not so) 'new military history' since Howard argued for it in the early 1960s.

This does not mean the work must stop. The top ten bestseller lists in bookstores are still too frequently dominated by authors, frequently male, long-established, and often offering little more than elegantly retold stories of broadly familiar subjects.[80] This is not a problem confined to military history. To describe the military historical field as 'parochial' is to take a deliberately narrow view in order to create a straw man, presumably to be burnt down by the supposedly better theorised parts of the historical profession.[81] It is also a perspective that wilfully ignores the fact that all historical subfields contain parochial approaches, a point forcefully argued by Jo Guldi and David Armitage and often derived from the professional focus required of many doctoral research projects.[82] This is, obviously not without its historiographical problems. As Diarmuid MacCulloch has suggested with respect to recent studies of the English Reformation, any account of such a vast and complex topic that involves sifting through and selecting from myriad institutional archives 'must be pointillist in character'. This in itself, however, raises the danger of missing the 'significant shapes that emerge from these myriad individual points'.[83] As this makes clear, the risks of focused studies is not one confined to military history, it is a more deeply embedded problem of much history writing.

Michael Howard represented the highest ideals of the historical profession. He was ferociously intelligent, accomplished, erudite, and assured. His sense of humour shone through and set him apart from many more serious or self-absorbed figures who have

[80]For example, Anthony Beevor, *Russia: Revolution and Civil War 1917 – 1921,* (London: Orion, 2022); Jonathan Dimbleby, *Barbarossa: How Hitler Lost the War*, (London: Viking, 2021). For a particularly egregious oversimplification of a complex subject, see Malcolm Gladwell, *The Bomber Mafia*, (London: Allen Lane, 2021).

[81]Wagner, 'Seeing Like a Soldier'. For the broader debate about military history, especially when examining the European colonial empires of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Kim A. Wagner, 'Savage Warfare: Violence and the Rule of Colonial Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 85 (Spring 2018), pp. 217-237; Huw Bennett, Michael Finch, Andrei Mamolea, and David Morgan-Owen, 'Studying Mars or Clio: Or How Not to Write About the Ethics of Military Conduct and Military History', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 88 (Autumn 2019), pp. 274-280; Kim A. Wagner, 'Expanding Bullets and Savage Warfare', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 88 (Autumn 2019), pp. 281-287.

[82]Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 38-60.

[83]Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'A Monk's-Eye View', *London Review of Books*, Vol. 44, No. 5 (10 March 2022), p. 11.

graced the highest rungs of the profession. Until his last days he was accommodating to those new to the field as well as old friends. In 2014 at the RUSI conference on the First World War, part of Operation Reflect – the British Army's commemoration of the centenary – Michael Howard delivered a paper that was among the most powerfully argued and clearest in its dissection of the conflict's causes. Yet at the following drinks reception he largely shunned the gold-braided generals and VIPs, choosing instead to talk and listen to the young students and early career academics in attendance. He discussed their research ideas, offered insightful avenues for inquiry, but much more amusingly he held the room with his tales of the harmless mischief that punctuated his academic life; stories which never quite made the pages of *Captain Professor*.

As this collection of articles hopefully demonstrates, his work and ideas still provide much to discuss for military historians in the twenty-first century. Indeed, they go further, suggesting that Howard's thinking on the history of war opened questions that lie at the very heart of the historical profession more widely. Our lasting memories are of a kind and generous scholar, fascinated by history, and always eager to learn about new ideas and interpretations. Howard was undoubtedly among the titans of the twentieth-century historical profession, but he was also a model academic citizen.

A liberal tries to be conscientious about teaching war in the shadow of Sir Michael Howard

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Abstract
A reflection on teaching an undergraduate tutorial course that had been set up by Sir Michael Howard and the way that undergraduate teaching of matters of war and peace develops not only in line with developments in historiography but in the mirror of historical events. Professor Howard's writing is useful in making sense of this.

I did not meet Sir Michael Howard until many years after I was appointed to a college teaching fellowship at Pembroke College, Oxford but in some respects his legacy was shaping my teaching practices from my arrival in 1997. It was very much standard practice in the late 1990s for new arrivals In Oxford to take on a 'wide' teaching portfolio and as a result I found myself teaching first year undergraduates a paper entitled 'Theories of War and Peace 1890-1914' from my third term at Pembroke College. There was a general perception in the university that I could take on teaching the 'war stuff'. A paper which was about the intellectual debates about the morality and viability of war in the generation before the Great War seemed an obvious fit for someone who was working on a social/cultural history of Britain during the First World War, and in particular on the issue of public opinion at the outbreak of the war. This certainly meant that I was considered someone who had a responsibility to teach and mark a legacy paper from the time of Michael Howard.

The Oxford 'Optional Subject' is a text-based paper and although I had considerable experience of teaching outline papers in Cambridge in my role there as a Junior Research Fellow, teaching a paper based on close reading was a new experience for me. The particular texts involved were Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion* (1911),

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Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Germany and the Next War* (1912), Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution* (1894), Karl Liebknecht, *Militarism and Anti-militarism* (1917) and Ivan (Jan de) Bloch, *Is War Now Impossible*? (1899).[1] There was also a selection of other documents such as the Stuttgart Resolution, some Italian protofascist/futurist essays in an edited collection and some of the proceedings of the Hague Conferences. Of these I had read precisely one, *The Great illusion,* before getting the job!

This was a challenging set of readings for someone who had serious doubts about their relationship to intellectual history. I had enjoyed studying the early political thought paper in Cambridge, particularly the class which was run by Quentin Skinner but had also found it very intimidating. I had not taught anything quite like it in my five years of teaching as a Research Fellow. This nervousness was compounded by the lack of serious secondary work on most of these authors. At this time there was no detailed study of Norman Angell and I was very surprised to find how little serious work there had been on Ivan Bloch. There were a few glimpses of light. My predecessor as a Junior Research Fellow in Cambridge and my soon to be Oxford colleague, Nick Stargardt had written *The German idea of Militarism* which was a fine study of left/liberal thinking in Imperial Germany.[2] This suggested that the idea of militarism was itself largely a product of the critique of militarism. The study was an invaluable resource when teaching Liebknecht. Paul Crook, as well as writing a biography of Benjamin Kidd, had written the excitingly revisionist *Darwin, War and History*.[3] For Bernhardi, there was the invaluable Roger Chickering, *We men who feel most German* on Pan-Germanism.[4] I also found myself digging back into a much older generation of historiography, particularly Gerhard Ritter's *The Sword and the Sceptre*.[5]

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[1] Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power to National Advantage,* (London: Heinemann, 3rd edn., 1911); Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Germany and the Next War* (London: E. Arnold, 1912); Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution* (London: Macmillan, 1894); Karl P.A.F. Liebknecht, *Militarism and Anti-militarism* (Glasgow: Socialist Labour Press, 1917); Jan Bloch (ed. W.T. Stead), *Is War Now Impossible? Being an Abridgement of 'The War of the Future in its Technical, Economic and Political Relations'*, (London: Grant Richards, 1899).

[2] Nicholas Stargardt, *The German Idea of Militarism: Radical and Socialist Critics, 1866-1914,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[3] David P. Crook, *Darwinism, War, and History: The Debate over the Biology of War from the 'Origin of Species' to the First World War,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[4] Roger Chickering, *We men who feel most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League, 1886-1914,* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984.

[5] Gerhard Ritter, *The Sword and the Sceptre: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, 4 vols. (London: Allen Lane, 1972-73).

A couple of years into my teaching of the paper my then colleague Niall Ferguson published *The Pity of War*.[6] Niall, like other academics who are more disciplined than I am, can be quite parsimonious in connecting his teaching to his writing and the set texts for 'Theories of War and Peace' get a lot of attention in early sections of the book. In particular, his take on Norman Angell as being in essence a navalist Northcliffe propagandist because he was employed by the continental *Daily Mail* is presented. This was a view which I treated with a lot of scepticism at the time and which still does not convince me.

Over the time I taught the paper other useful secondary work began to appear, for example Martin Ceadel's definitive biography of Norman Angell which came out in 2009.[7] The growth of JSTOR allowed new articles to be discovered on a yearly basis but all in all, there was not a great deal of secondary literature to support the primary texts.

What was most lacking though was a key to understanding the paper overall – and indeed an introductory text for my students. This was why I turned to *War and the Liberal Conscience*.[8] It should be said that very little of the text *directly* addresses the era immediately before the First World War. What it did provide was a masterclass in what might be called the conceptual underpinnings of the paper, the long view of the way that liberalism, democracy and nationalism had interacted since the enlightenment. This was the book that most firmly located the paper as a history of ideas and also as part of socio-cultural history. The relevant chapter 'The Coming of the First World War' in particular recognised the degree to which the debate about war and peace had become entwined with the class politics of the era and the responses to mass democracy. It also pointed to the progressive faith that through sufficient education mankind might be persuaded to recognise the folly of faith in violence. But ultimately of course, the chapter was tragic in tone, the war did come, peace was not established and liberals were forced back to square one. This of course was the recurring theme of the book: the ongoing and unavoidable struggle against the darker forces of political life.

So inspired, I set out on a nearly twenty-year struggle with the Optional Subject paper. In terms of teaching, I joined a lecture circus and took on the responsibility of lecturing on 'War and Social Darwinism' which was a chance to set the perspectives of peace biology and dysgenic fears which had been uncovered by Paul Crook alongside more

[6] Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War,* (London: Allen Lane, 1998).
[7] Martin Ceadel, *Living the Great Illusion: Sir Norman Angell, 1872-1967,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[8] Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience,* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), especially pp. 52-72.

conventional ideas about social Darwinism as a driver of militarist valorisation of natural struggle. Tutorial teaching involved single or paired tutorials closely focused on reading the set texts. The students, mostly but not exclusively young men with an interest in military history, generally responded well to this challenge. Sometimes a tutorial would focus very directly on the text and sometimes on the overarching 'spirit of the age' that the text represented.

One self-criticism that seems unavoidable now is that to some extent I conceptualised the era 1890-1914 specifically as that of an armed peace or a 'cold war'. If I was going back to it now, I think I would place much more stress on the relentless imperial wars of the era as the background to these debates. Whether we should reconceptualise the 'Scramble for Africa' as 'World War Zero' is open for debate, but despite the fact that there was a robust liberal critique of imperialism it is difficult to deny that the early twentieth century was an era of compartmentalisation where thinking about 'small wars' differed significantly from thinking about large ones.[9] It is also a shame that the paper did not provide space for an emergent feminist pacifism. One thing that struck me in recent years was that international feminism proved more robust as an anti-war movement in 1914-1915 than international socialism.

Sometimes direct encounter with the texts produced moments of epiphany. The most serious of these was with Bloch. Having read in countless secondary works how Bloch had accurately foretold the nature of the First World War I was genuinely a bit shocked to realise how spurious much of his reasoning had been. Far from being the civilian prophet who exposed the stupidity of the military mind it became clear that his use of data and extrapolations about infantry rifle fire were very largely nonsense. His strategic level predictions seemed just as fundamentally flawed. Whilst he correctly foresaw that strain on the civilian economy would become a decisive element in a static war of entrenchment his confident prediction that Russia would be the inevitable victor of such a struggle by virtue of its agrarian economy seemed seriously at odds with his vaunted prophetic genius! This led to my own speculation (not dissimilar to Ferguson's on Angell) that Bloch might in fact have been serving Russian propagandist purposes to buy time for Tsarist economic development during a window of vulnerability. The larger point of the relationship between Bloch's writing and the Tsar's sponsorship of the Hague conferences would still stand but with a slightly less idealistic underpinning.

[9] For the idea of 'World War Zero', see Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution,* (London: Pluto Press, 2020), pp. 49-56. For the complexities of contemporary thought before the First World War on the differences between 'small wars' and larger, continental warfare, see Daniel Whittingham, *Charles E. Callwell and the British Way in Warfare,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 37-112.

But as much as the texts, it was the times that began to gradually impinge on my teaching of the paper and reshape my thinking. To understand how this was the case it is worth considering the circumstances in which the paper was originally created and the way in which I found myself responding to changed circumstances.

Sir Michael Howard's time in Oxford coincided with the climax of the Cold War from 1977 until 1990, a time when thinking about armaments, deterrence and existential risk was an absolute imperative. Whilst he was a Professor in Oxford, first as the Chichele Professor of the History of War at All Souls and then as the Regius Professor of Modern History, I had been a student CND member engaging in direct action outside USAF airbases. Thinking about war and peace was a deeply serious business in those years and one which was to a large extent unavoidable for Professor and student alike.

I arrived in Oxford in a remarkably different world just seven years later. The post-Cold War conflict in the Balkans was also a very serious business, but it was framed in very different terms – as an issue of humanitarian intervention. Taking military steps was not seen as entering into a war so much as bringing a war to an end. Even the long paramilitary struggle in Northern Ireland had significantly wound down by 1997. The British government had begun to cash in on the 'peace dividend' to reduce military expenditure and free up resources for other purposes whilst at the same time the internal argument within the Labour Party over unilateral nuclear disarmament had been settled in favour of the retained deterrent largely because few seriously anticipated it would actually be needed in a world where multilateral nuclear arms control had actually started to succeed. Although nobody was quite claiming that war had been relegated to the dustbin of history there was a definite sense that it was no longer a pressingly important subject for historical study.

Certainly war was playing a diminishing part on the general syllabus of the Oxford History Faculty. Out of over a hundred full time post holders there were perhaps four who could be described as 'military historians' in the sense of studying operations or strategy, and none of them apart from the Chichele Professor specialised in the post-1850 period.

By 1997 I was probably a fairly mainstream left-liberal, sympathetic after massacres in Rwanda and Srebenica to the idea that western powers should exercise their military might in order to protect vulnerable populations. 'Anti-war' thinking on the left seemed to be reduced to unconditional pacifism which I could respect, hyper-legalistic qualms that often seemed obtuse in the face of war crimes and at worst a knee jerk anti-American 'revolutionary defeatism' on the hard left which was (and remains) simply risible. The anti-intervention arguments from the right which were sometimes

given a veneer of IR realism usually seemed to amount to callous indifference with a leavening of 'lesser breeds' racism.

As we moved into an era of peace promotion through precision bombing, a lot of the old arguments about war and peace seemed to have lost relevance from a liberal standpoint. And initially 9/11 had much less impact on this than we might now expect. The rapid invocation of Article 5 by NATO countries in support of the USA seemed entirely credible from a 'defensive' just war point of view in light of the attack having obviously been planned from Afghanistan by a group that the Taliban government had clearly sheltered. Also, and perhaps equally importantly, the stunning speed of the overthrow of that government initially appeared to reinforce the idea that military intervention could now be conducted in a way that was neither particularly bloody or expensive (even Afghan civilian casualties did not initially seem particularly severe or disproportionate compared to the bloody ongoing conflict in that country before 2001).

Perhaps more surprisingly, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 did not immediately seem a turning point. The initial responses to the invasion still remained mostly within the parameters established in the previous decade. The parliamentary debate revolved to a very large extent around the issues of legality and the use of intelligence. Popular protest was driven by the same combination of routine anti-imperialism and humanitarian pacifism, this time with an important overlap with British Muslim sentiment angered by another western military intervention in the Middle East. Yet the anti-war critique, even though it brought much larger numbers out on to the streets than previous cases was still focused on a fairly narrow set of issues, in particular a revulsion at possible civilian casualties in Iraq. There was little sense amongst either the opponents of the invasion or the mostly reluctant supporters of it that this was an action that would have particularly serious costs for those conducting the invasion.

So for a while the Optional Subject texts seemed to remain firmly within the bounds of historical but not contemporary interest. Of course there were some odd resonances; Bernhardi's insistence that it was the moral duty of a statesman to begin a pre-emptive war before the potential enemy had achieved its full capability and that to not start such a war would be in itself a crime, could not help seem bitterly ironic during the discussions of putative Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). But it took longer for some of the other texts to start to connect.

Bloch's work started to feel less relevant in its specifics and more an object lesson in the problems of military futurism. How does technology *actually* shape the character of wars and can it in a meaningful sense 'abolish war'? The era of Mutually Assured Destruction still applied on one level but it was accompanied by a sense that if anything

technology might make it a little too easy to engage in targeted violence at little cost. Still, even as the Global War On Terror (GWOT) unfolded it was accompanied by punditry about how 'conventional war' was no longer a possibility. Mass conflict between conventional armies on the plains of Eurasia would become a historical footnote.

Norman Angell had never fallen into Bloch's trap of declaring war impossible, but he had clearly identified it as irrational. Going beyond the mid-nineteenth-century bromides about the mutual benefits of free trade he had clearly identified that financial entanglement would create a situation in the early twentieth century where the damage done by conflict to the victor would clearly and massively outweigh any potential gains from conquest. In a broad sense of course, the First World War had proven him right, although Angell, rather like John Maynard Keynes who in some respects reinvigorated the Angell critique in the *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, took the inviolability of private property too much for granted *a priori*.[10]

What Angell never fully addressed was what if people did not behave according to the logic of *Homo Economicus*? His work did recognise the power of emotions of fear and pride but in the end put faith in the ability of rational argument to overcome them. For Angell, war should go the way of duelling – a long accepted but obviously obsolete practice. In that respect Angell felt very resonant with contemporary 'end of history' globalists and in particular the popularisers of 'interdependency' as a cure for war. Thomas Friedman in particular seemed remarkably similar as a journalist, propagandist and pundit.

In some respects, Benjamin Kidd provided exactly the perspectives Angell lacked. The paradox at the heart of *Social Evolution* was that individual calculation of interest would produce a sub-optimum strategy in a competitive world. For Kidd, this provided a rationale for religion as a cultural adaptation that would lead to individuals being willing to sacrifice their individual interests on behalf of a collectivity. This in fact also extended to the social order. Kidd assumed that for most people a radical redistribution of power and wealth would be in their individual interests, but that for society as a whole, this would be disastrous. Religion or something like religion as a 'suprarational' force would overcome this problem. Again, this became interesting in light of the rather different approaches of contemporary 'evolutionist' polemicists who dismissed religion as an unhelpful 'meme'.

Kidd was also the author who directly addressed the issue of imperialism as the central force of his time, particularly the extension of imperial rule to the control of the

[10] John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace,* (London: Macmillan, 1919).

resources of the tropical world. On the whole, Kidd in the 1890s saw this as both progressive and inevitable, but as the challenge of the immediate future. That in turn resonated quite strongly as the critiques of neo-Imperialism gained strength in the early part of the twenty first century.

Over time, I grew more and more to appreciate the critiques of Karl Liebknecht who perhaps saw most clearly the connections between imperial ambitions, domestic political economy, culture and education and war and peace. Although he was responding specifically to the 'ideal type' of the threat that was represented by the specific German version of military predominance in the political system he was clear sighted enough to see variations of the dynamic at work across the world. So the lauding of the Swiss militia system by some on the left struck him as dangerously innocent when the internal class uses of armed force were considered.

Liebknecht's insistence in seeing militarism as a *system* as a threat and a burden which was relevant in times of peace as well as war became perhaps the most resonant of all. As the trillion dollar costs of the GWOT mounted to the benefit of sundry profiteers, as the erosion of trust in government in the aftermath of the search for WMD and the suspension of basic ethical and legal behaviour exemplified by 'extraordinary rendition' and 'enhanced interrogation', and as the ongoing campaign produced increasing blow back in home-grown terrorism, community division, radicalisation, domestic surveillance and the erosion of civil liberties, it became clear that whether a war was formally declared or not was secondary to the way military 'solutions' would manifest thousands of new problems.

So the paper began to take on new life in these shifting contexts. Nevertheless, it was also hard to sustain in a university where relatively few permanent postholders were willing to commit to the teaching, and the paper was examined for the last time in 2010. This allowed the postholders who had been teaching the paper to develop new courses which is always an important part of syllabus renewal.

What did I get from teaching the paper? There was a lot of stimuli from eager students trying to make sense of century old texts both within their own historical context and also in terms of things that interested them in their own world. Most terms I started nervous about teaching the material and ended up glad that I had. But above all it forced me to stand back and think about thinking about war and peace.

This then is where revisiting Michael Howard's work can be so valuable. His ability to show that liberal abstractions about war as a distinct phenomenon from an imagined peaceful normality were always problematic in the past inspires the thought that these abstractions continue to be unhelpful in the present. Furthermore, liberal double think on acceptable uses of political violence can itself ironically lead to valorisation of 'noble

causes' without a clear-sighted view of what that violence really looks like in humanitarian terms. Howard is merciless on the arrogance, ignorance and confusion of liberal thinking. But he is never merely cynical. He also recognises the enormous value in the pursuit of international community in creating standards.

Perhaps the most resonant thing though was the recognition that thinking about war and peace might involve a diversity of values and that liberals should not take for granted that their assumptions about the world were shared by other state and non-state actors. It was far too easy in the late 1990s to assume that peaceful globalisation in the mode of Norman Angell was winning out. Teaching a course on the plurality of ideas about war and peace in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century ought to have been much more of a warning.

To find myself trying to write this piece amid the horrors of war in Ukraine has been a difficult experience. The dilemma of trying to work out the ethics of correct response to a self-evidently 'just war', whilst retaining a proper sense of both prudence and humanity in the face of the enormous destructive potential of modern weapons where a bad actor can make the choice of devastating escalation, is the first obvious problem. So is the enormous difficulty of reconciling a just peace with the hugely divergent perspectives of the combatant parties. Less obvious is the renewed threat of domestic militarisation in the west as a choice when so many other urgent and indeed existential threats also require urgent responses. So many of the problems that Sir Michael Howard spent his life struggling with have re-emerged with tremendous urgency. His view was that peace was not something that would simply happen in the international order, but that there would need to be an active struggle to establish it every single day, and that mankind could not be freed of that inexorable duty.

A European History of Michael Howard's *War in European History*

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ABSTRACT
Michael Howard's War in European History, *published in 1976, was one of his most influential works. This article traces its reception in France, Italy and West Germany, contextualising the book within the post-Second World War development of military history in those countries. The 'war and society' approach for which Howard is celebrated developed along distinctive lines in each, so international scholars focused on different aspects of the book.* War in European History *was also used by Umberto Eco to explore the relationship between force and power. His insights offer fresh ways to examine more recent developments in the field of military history.*

Introduction

In 1961, Michael Howard's first milestone contribution to the European history of war was published: *The Franco-Prussian war: the German invasion of France, 1870-1871*.[1] A standard account of Europe's first modern war, it has been reissued many times, most recently in 2021. Sixty years on, it repays re-reading: eminent Italian military historian Nicola Labanca described it as a 'fundamental reconstruction'.[2] While logistics and supply-chains are critical to the analysis, and the description of operations are masterly, Howard also argued in his preface that a straightforward military history could not do full justice to the significance of this conflict, whose political and cultural legacies were so immense. His close attention to the experiences of ordinary soldiers prefigures the growth in this field in the 1970s (John Keegan's *The Face of Battle* was

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[1]Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870-1871,* (London: Methuen, 1961).
[2]Nicola Labanca, 'Development and Change in the Writing of Military History from World War Two to the Present', Occasional Paper, (International Commission for Military History, 2014).

still fifteen years away). This monograph set out many of Howard's methods and principles: he contextualised technical matters to explain their wider significance. combining operational history with political, social and (some) cultural concerns. He drew almost entirely on French and German-language sources for this work – an approach which might seem obvious today but was sadly not always the case among his contemporaries. Cyril Falls, one of Howard's predecessors as Chichele Professor of the History of War at Oxford, cheerfully wrote a history of the battle of Caporetto without reading a single Italian-language source.[3]

Howard's language skills were one indicator of his mind-set, which was unusual by the standards of British historians of the day, in that he 'saw war in European, if not Eurocentric, terms.'[4] He specifically invoked the historical approach of the great German military historian Hans Delbrück (1848-1929) and regularly drew on the best of European scholarship, such as the copious works of Gerhard Ritter, long before it became available in English. While *The Franco-Prussian War* was undeniably both influential and indicative of Howard's trajectory, it was not translated into other languages. Its influence remained therefore chiefly within the English-speaking world.[5] In 1976, his most important European work emerged: *War in European History*. This was translated into around a dozen languages, first in Western Europe and later in Eastern Europe and beyond.[6]

This article first examines the reception of Michael Howard's *War in European History* in the context of the development of the field of military history in Western Europe. Then it discusses Umberto Eco's reading of *War in European History,* and the insights which Eco's observations – and a re-reading of Howard – might have for historians of European war today.

War in European History and the New Military History in Europe

While *War in European History* took Europe as its subject, it was also a 'European' book in another sense: by the mid-1970s, French and German historians were also exploring

[3]Cyril Falls, *Caporetto 1917,* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), p. 7.
[4]Hew Strachan, 'Michael Howard and the Dimensions of Military History', *War in History* 27, no. 4 (1 November 2020): p. 543, doi.org/10.1177/0968344520915028 Accessed 30 June 2022.
[5]Analysis of the work's citations via Google Scholar, a rough but indicative metric, shows that while it is still regularly cited it appears overwhelmingly in English-language publications rather than those in other European languages.
[6]Translations were published in Danish (1977), Italian (1978), German (1981), Spanish (1983), French (1988), Czech (1997) Romanian (1997), Greek (2000), Croatian (2002), Polish (2007). Outside Europe, it has appeared in Japanese (1981), Hebrew (1985), Chinese (1998) and Korean (2015) editions.

the history of war with related methodologies. The International Commission for Military History's 1977 bibliographic regulations emphasised that military history was not a discipline limited to technical or operational history, but one which included political, social, economic, cultural, intellectual history and more. Every aspect of the war-making capacities of states and peoples, both at war and in peacetime, should be included. In this regard, it was a book whose time had come. As Howard noted himself in the original foreword, as a work of synthesis it drew heavily on the analysis of many other scholars doing the same kind of work (a process he described, with modest disingenuity, as 'putting together in a very superficial fashion the ideas I have gleaned from others').[7] This was the era of the New Military History: to borrow from Clemenceau, a new generation of scholars embraced the idea that military history was 'too important to be left to the generals'. Though some, like Howard, had themselves served, these writers were predominantly academics, not professional military men. Whatever their period or methodology, they rejected the idea that the technical and practical matters of the battlefield were all that mattered in the history of war. Rapid internationalisation of the field within Europe was a major driver of this evolution. Despite this, it was not until the 1990s that military history earned a complete chapter in most historiographical methodological surveys: only once the 'new' military history was well established, and no longer in any sense new, did the wider scholarly community begin to take it more seriously. It is past time to retire the term, since as Joanna Bourke wrote more than fifteen years ago it is already 'distinctly middle aged'.[8] Nowadays, the vast majority of military history draws to a greater or lesser extent on a 'war and society' approach. Even so staunch an operational military historian as the late Dennis Showalter (who sadly died only a month after Michael Howard) spread his interests far beyond the battlefield. His work on the wars of German unification showed how the morale and combat motivation of troops – and thus their battlefield performance – was intimately linked to the social and political structures of each combatant power.[9] Since the 1970s, this unloved stepchild of Clio has increasingly been accepted as a proper discipline within the historical family – though there are still many outside the field who regard it with suspicion. A brief examination of this process in different contexts can be illuminating.

[7]Michael Howard, *War in European History*, Updated ed, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), Foreword.

[8]Joanna Bourke, 'New Military History', in Matthew Hughes and William J. Philpott, eds., *Palgrave Advances in Modern Military History*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 258, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230625372_14. Accessed 30 June 2022.

[9]Dennis E. Showalter, 'A Modest Plea for Drums and Trumpets', *Military Affairs* 39, no. 2 (1975): pp. 71–74, https://doi.org/10.2307/1986931.

France

French military historiography essays – like their counterparts elsewhere – have had a perennial tendency to lament the state of their field. Before the Second World War, military history lacked both prestige and eminent practitioners in France. One review noted that 'the French tradition has nothing to compare to the magisterial works of Hans Delbrück, in German, nor the clear and elegant synthesis of Charles Oman, in English.'[10] In this period, most works were produced by serving or former officers, tending towards a narrow focus and intellectual conformity. Nor did matters improve in the decades immediately after 1945, as post-war antimilitarism helped keep military history unfashionable (as it did elsewhere). But the main problem in the early and mid-twentieth century was that military history struggled to fit in with France's dominant historiographical trends. In the words of Laurent Henninger, 'Without doubt, war has been the historical object which has suffered the most from the renewal of historical study after the appearance of the *Annales* school.'[11] The *Annales* school, especially in its earliest period, focused almost exclusively on the *longue durée* and rejected the 'event' rather contemptuously. Battle was unmistakably and unavoidably an event, even perhaps, as Henninger notes, 'the archetype of an event', and thus insignificant. Operational history, or *histoire-bataille,* was thus openly disparaged by academics – who nonetheless did not hasten to produce any other kind.

Not until the 1970s did this situation begin to change dramatically, when the third generation of *Annales* scholars led by Emmanuel Leroy Ladurie, Jacques Le Goff, Marc Ferro and others moved towards what became known as the *Nouvelle Histoire*. This 'new history' introduced cultural and anthropological methods to what had previously been a quantitatively-dominated demographic and social approach. Now the event was finally permitted to return, not least thanks to the work of medievalist Georges Duby; this could only be good news for the study of war. In 1978 – the same year *War in European History* was published in England – Le Goff was able to write 'there may now be, there is beginning to be a new history of the military phenomenon.'[12]

However, the French approach to the study of war in its social and cultural context did not begin with the modern era. It was medievalists and early modernists who led the way.[13] Nicola Labanca observed that medieval studies 'absorbed […] Febvre and

[10]Philippe Contamine, 'L'histoire militaire', in *L' Histoire et le métier d'historien en France, 1945-1995*, ed. Maurice Aymard, Yves Marie Bercé, and Jean-François Sirinelli, (Paris : Les Editions de la MSH, 1995), p. 361.

[11]Laurent Henninger, 'La nouvelle histoire-bataille', *Espace Temps* 71, no. 1 (1999): p. 36, https://doi.org/10.3406/espat.1999.4066.

[12]Jacques Le Goff, *La Nouvelle Histoire*, (Paris : Editions Retz, 1978), p. 275.

[13]Robert M. Citino, 'Military Histories Old and New: A Reintroduction', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 4 (2007), p. 1077.

Bloch's lesson, as well as of their criticism of the *histoire bataille* that had been advanced thirty years before' in a 'more mature way' than the fields of modern or contemporary history.[14] It was also possible for historians of those periods to free themselves from the interests and priorities of the official histories produced by the armed forces, whereas historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had to contend with institutional gatekeepers who often owned and controlled the archives.

One of the earliest pioneers was André Corvisier, whose 1964 study *L'armée française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul: Le Soldat* drew on the *Annales* tradition of statistical analysis and demographic methods. He used muster rolls to analyse the social composition of the eighteenth century French army, creating an entirely new understanding of the social and regional origins, recruitment patterns and service records of the troops. This was classic *Annales* social history applied to the field of 'military society', and might not have been immediately recognisable to all contemporary observers as military history at all, so innovative did it seem as a way to examine armies. Corvisier concluded that to a considerable extent, the army had professionalised by the end of the century – with important consequences for its performance on the battlefield.[15] In 1976, he expanded his analysis of armed forces and society onto a much grander scale, in *Armées et societés en Europe de 1494 à 1789*. His subject was the totality of military society – recruitment and training, supply, pay, morale and discipline, combat motivation – and its relationship with both the state(s) and the nation(s) from which it was drawn and on whose behalf it fought.[16] Though very different in style and scope to Howard's contemporaneous work, it shared a similar understanding of the boundaries of military history.

In 1972 the medievalist Philippe Contamine published his *Guerre, État et société à la fin du Moyen Âge,* a social and institutional history of the armies raised by the kings of France during the Hundred Years War.[17] It was warmly reviewed in the *Annales* journal for its innovative approach and use of new sources, such as financial documents, receipts and account books.[18] As with Corvisier's work, quantitative methodologies allowed major social changes in late medieval France to be traced through the study

[14]Labanca, 'Development and Change'.
[15]André Corvisier, *L'armée française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul: Le soldat,* (Presses universitaires de France, 1964).
[16]André Corvisier, *Armées et societés en Europe de 1494 à 1789,* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1976).
[17]Philippe Contamine, *Guerre, État et société à la fin du Moyen Âge. Études sur les armées des rois de France 1337-1494,* (Paris: Mouton, 1972).
[18]Bernard Guenée, 'Philippe Contamine, Guerre, État et Société à la fin du Moyen Âge. Études sur les armées des rois de France, 1337-1494', *Annales* 29, no. 6 (1974): pp. 1532–34.

of the royal armies. Contamine followed this in 1978 with *La Vie quotidienne pendant la guerre de Cent ans: France et Angleterre (XIVè siècle),* a ground-breaking comparative study of material culture and the history of daily life, an approach to understanding the Hundred Years' War – and warfare in general – which opened up many new possibilities. The *Nouvelle Histoire* encouraged a focus on all forms of material culture, including the historical developments of technology. But rather than limiting analysis of military technology strictly to its impact on the battlefield, Contamine contextualised it within the complex world of military society. However, this was not to advocate military history with all the battle taken out. In a later essay he wrote:

> Most French military historians would recognise themselves and acknowledge their deep kinship in the well-known formula of [nineteenth century military theorist] Ardent du Picq: 'Combat is the final purpose of armies, and man is the first instrument of combat'.[19]

So, he argued, the study of operations required the context of the political and sovereign power in which they occur and the study of both officers and the rank-and-file, both as military personnel and as part of the general population.

It is clear, then, that France boasted its own emergent 'war and society' school of medieval and early modern European history in the 1960s and 1970s. However, in 1983, the future president of the French Commission for Military History Hervé Coutau-Bégarie was still able to complain that French military history was 'a desert' outside the medieval period, and that operational military history was completely moribund (it remains perhaps the weakest subsection of the field within France to this day).[20] It was in this context that Howard's *War in European History* appeared in French in 1988; perhaps at the behest of the publisher, the title was altered to 'War in the History of the West'.[21] For Georges Buis in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, it was a 'masterwork' in which Howard wrote with 'justified confidence, talent, humour'.[22] As Coutau-Bégarie noted, it was strange that Howard had to wait over a decade for this 'marvellous little book', full of 'discreet erudition', to appear in France. Coutau-Bégarie, an expert on strategy, focused closely on the role of new technologies in his review and paired this 'passionate' read with William McNeill's 1982 book *The Pursuit of Power. Technology, Armed Force and Society since A.D. 1000* (which would not appear

[19]Contamine, 'L'histoire militaire', p. 359–60.
[20]Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, *Le phenomene 'nouvelle histoire': stratégie et idéologie des nouveaux historiens,* (Paris: Economica, 1983), pp. 183–87.
[21]Michael Howard, *La Guerre dans l'histoire de l'Occident*, trans. Didier Sénécal, Géopolitiques et stratégies, (Paris: Fayard, 1988).
[22]Georges Buis, 'La guerre dans l'histoire de l'Occident', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, July 1988.

in French until 1992). He observed that 'whatever the Annales school may say', military history had much more to offer, building on Howard and McNeill's approaches, since war was a subject which could serve as a 'privileged matrix for the history of the West'.[23] What, then, did Howard's book offer that the supposed 'desert' of French military history ignored? A greater focus on war itself, rather than on military societies in peacetime. Equally important, for Coutau-Bégarie, was its ability to bring the new military history into the contemporary field – something which was still then lacking in France.

By 1995, however, a new orthodoxy was emerging in France, as seen in Corvisier's collection of essays entitled *La Guerre. Essais Historiques.* He posited that the essential condition of military history, if it is 'to be of use to military decision makers and also illuminate general history, is the removal of military history from its own enclave, and its opening up to all the domains of history'. He highlighted the numerous 'domains connected to war: psychological, technical, judicial, demographic, economic, institutional, social, cultural, spiritual, moral and political'.[24] This willingness to link military history to the present, and to contemporary military decision makers, shows how completely the field had been transformed.

Italy

Whereas in France the study of war and society was already established by the 1970s, Italian military history had developed along different lines. Its traditions were inevitably shaped by the experiences of fascism; even after 1945, the new democratic Italy's military histories showed a remarkable degree of continuity with the flag-waving style of those produced in the inter-war period. Here the impetus of the international historiography would prove particularly important. In the 1960s and 1970s, an increasing number of major works on the history of war by figures like Fritz Fischer, Steven Runciman, Gerhard Ritter and Marc Ferro were translated into Italian; John Gooch's *Armies in Europe* (1980) received an Italian edition in 1982.[25] Italian scholarly publishing, in other words, closely followed international trends. The contrast with the last decade is marked: during the Centenary of the First World War, Italian publishing houses overwhelmingly ignored contemporary international scholarship in favour of translating or reissuing old classics.

[23]Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, 'Michael Howard. La Guerre Dans l'histoire de l'Occident [Compte-Rendu]', *Politique Étrangère* 53, no. 2 (1988): p. 521.

[24]André Corvisier, *La guerre : essais historiques,* (Paris: Perrin, 2005). New ed. with foreword and conclusion by Hervé Coutau-Bégarie; p. 6, p. 18.

[25]For a review of Gooch and Howard's books together, see Pier Franco Taboni, 'Alcuni studi di lingua inglese sulla violenza e le guerre', *Il Pensiero* XXIV–XXV, no. 1–2 (April 1983).

The first Italian edition of *War in European History* was published in 1978; as it had been in France, the title was altered, this time emphasising 'war and weapons' in the history of Europe.[26] Unlike the English original, the Laterza edition featured 129 black and white images, many previously unpublished, all selected and captioned by the Italian translator Francesco Calvani. The images range from manuscript illustrations of mounted knights and photographs of medieval fortifications, through cartoons and paintings to technical diagrams of modern battleships and photographs of inter-continental missiles. The vast majority focus on technologies of battle, from weapons to defence systems; a few highlight the technologies of armaments production and transport. Like the subtly altered title, the effect is to shift the emphasis of the text onto technology, since the illustrations do not reflect the social, cultural and political effects of military developments.

In a 1979 essay on the New Military History, Francesco Bogliari called Howard's book 'an excellent contribution', with a persuasive methodology. Bogliari hoped that the prompt translation of *War in European History* would offer 'a stimulus for the Italian historiography to turn towards that of other European countries, the protagonist in recent years of considerable progress'.[27] In his view, military history in Italy was almost uniquely prone to 'corporative isolation', long serving as the 'private hunting reserve of professional soldiers or those few scholars who offer reassuring ideological and political guarantees.'

The roots of this problem lay partly in the considerable practical difficulties of accessing the Italian army archives, which endure to this day. These were (and remain) partly due to inadequate funding. There is also the legal requirement that users of the archives sign a document swearing that they will not use any archival materials to 'damage the image or honour of the Italian Armed Forces, or otherwise defame them', a criminal offence dating back to 1930 which today incurs a substantial fine, but which prior to 2006 implied a prison sentence.[28] This law infringes upon academic freedom and specifically on the possibilities of critical military history; in practice, it often meant that only 'sympathetic' histories were produced in the first decades after the Second

[26]Michael Howard, *La guerra e le armi nella storia d'Europa*, trans. Francesco Calvani, (Bari: Laterza, 1978).

[27]Francesco Bogliari, 'I nuovi problemi della storiografia militare', *Ricerche Storiche* IX, no. 1 (1979): p. 197.

[28]Like many fascist-era laws in Italy, which linger on the statute books despite apparently contravening principles of the 1948 Constitution, such as the right to freedom of speech and the press, this law is still in operation. In 2021, Italian rapper and influencer Fedez was charged with defamation against the armed forces over the lyrics of one of his songs.

World War. This in part helps us to understand the 'patriotic paradigm' which endured until the end of the 1960s.[29]

One man has almost single-handedly challenged this approach: Giorgio Rochat. Deeply interested in the political (and to a lesser extent, social) history of the Italian army, in 1967 he published an important and innovative analysis of the army's political role between the end of the First World War and the consolidation of the fascist dictatorship.[30] Rochat saw most Italian military history in this era as featuring 'unilateral nationalism, intolerance towards all forms of dissent, lack of scientific standards and a marked political instrumentalisation'. In a sweeping denunciation, he wrote that the vast majority of Italian military history production from the 1940s to the end of the 1960s was revanchist, lazy, narrowly technical and 'wholly lacking in historiographical value'.[31]

The politicisation of the Italian academy and the persistent refusal of many left-wing historians to study war was certainly one part of this problem. In the late 1960s an important new approach to the history of war began, with the highly innovative work of Mario Isnenghi, a cultural historian with a background in literary studies. His early works on representation, myth and memory were pioneering (it remains an enormous shame that they were never translated, which would have earned them the international attention they deserved).[32] At the same time, Italian social history was flourishing – and soon turned its attention to soldiers as a subset of the working class. The Second World War and the Resistance were particularly fruitful areas for this approach, as for instance in the edited collection *Operai e Contadini nella crisi italiana del 1943-44*, or the influential and innovative oral histories by Nuto Revelli.[33] But the social and cultural histories of war which began to proliferate in the 1960s and 1970s were initially kept – or choose to keep – at arm's length from military history.

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[29]Marco Mondini, 'L'historiographie italienne face à la Grande Guerre : saisons et ruptures', *HISTOIRE@POLITIQUE* 22, no. jan-avr (2014). http://www.histoire-politique.fr/index.php?numero=22&rub=dossier&item=208. Accessed 30 June 2022.

[30]Giorgio Rochat, *L'esercito italiano da Vittorio Veneto a Mussolini (1919-1925),* (Bari: Laterza, 1967).

[31]Giorgio Rochat, *L'Italia nella prima guerra mondiale: problemi di interpretazione e prospettive di ricerca,* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976) Introduction.

[32]Mario Isnenghi, *I vinti di Caporetto nella letteratura di guerra* (Padova: Marsilio, 1967); Mario Isnenghi, *Il mito della grande guerra: da Marinetti a Malaparte* (Bari: Laterza, 1970).

[33]Gianfranco Bertolo, ed., *Operai e contadini nella crisi italiana del 1943-1944,* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1974); Nuto Revelli, *L'ultimo fronte: Lettere di soldati caduti o dispersi nella seconda guerra mondiale,* (Turin: Einaudi, 1971); Nuto Revelli, *Il mondo dei vinti,* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977).

Perhaps the first solid example of Italian 'New Military History' was Rochat and Giulio Massobrio's *Breve Storia del Esercito* (1978). This volume's focus on colonial wars – hitherto almost completely neglected in Italy – helped drive the incorporation of a broader approach, since many of Italy's colonial battles were impossible to analyse without considering social context.[34] Since their conduct made little sense in narrowly military terms, what Bogliari termed the 'disconcerting' outcome of operations had to be explained with reference to social and cultural history, and the history of mentalities.[35] From the 1980s onwards the flourishing fields of Italian social and cultural history of war have gradually come together with more traditional military histories: the landmark history of the First World War co-written by Rochat and Isnenghi in 2000 is an excellent example.[36]

West Germany

War in European History was also well-received in West Germany, with several reviewers highlighting its debt to Delbrück, and a German translation was published in 1981.[37] An early review came from eminent early modern military historian Hans Schmidt, who taught army officers at the Bundeswehr University in Munich. Schmidt saw the book as essentially 'a great essay' written 'in an extraordinarily spirited and stimulating way'. He highlighted two key features: one, the extent to which social and cultural changes might influence technical developments – rather than the other way around – and two, Howard's remarks about the nuclear age. He quoted directly from the conclusion: 'Nothing has occurred since 1945 to indicate that war, or the threat of it, could not still be an effective instrument of state policy. Against peoples who are not prepared to defend themselves it might be very effective indeed.' Endorsing this view, Schmidt criticised 'a dangerous and illusory decline in military readiness, especially in the West, which means a weakening of its political position' as a result of popular assumptions about nuclear strategy. To a scholar involved in professional military education, and concerned about West German security, this seemed one of the crucial aspects of the book.[38] By contrast, French and Italian scholars appeared less interested in the links Howard proposed to contemporary defence policy.

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[34]Giorgio Rochat and Giulio Massobrio, *Breve storia dell'esercito italiano dall'1861 a 1943,* (Turin: Einaudi, 1978).

[35]Bogliari, 'I nuovi problemi della storiografia militare', pp. 206–7.

[36]Mario Isnenghi and Giorgio Rochat, *La Grande Guerra, 1914-1918,* (Milan: La Nuova Italia, 2000).

[37]Michael Howard, *Der Krieg in der europäischen Geschichte. Vom Ritterheer zur Atomstreitmacht*, trans. Karl Heinz Silber, (Munich: Beck, 1981). Reissued 2010.

[38]Hans Schmidt, 'Michael Howard, War in European History, 1976', *Francia. Forschungen zur Westeuropäischen Geschichte* 5 (1977): pp. 814–15, https://doi.org/10.11588/fr.1977.0.48936. Accessed 30 June 2022.

Unsurprisingly, German military historians tended to be greatly interested in the political history of the armed forces. They were concerned about both historical and contemporary national defence policies, and took it as axiomatic that relationships between armed forces and the state were particularly important within totalitarian systems. The need to grapple with the Nazi (and fascist) past was undeniable, but at the same time was often implicit rather than directly addressed. The official Military History Research Office of the German army, the *Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt* (MGFA) was created in the 1950s but not until 1971 did it begin directly to research the Third Reich. Many of its historians, such as Jürgen Förster, were keen to critically examine the political dimensions of the army's wartime actions, but debate over the 'proper' limits of its work was intense.

In the 1980s these discussions became abruptly very public in the so-called *Historikerstreit*, or historians' dispute. This frequently vituperative debate over the place of Nazism and the Holocaust in German national history incorporated multiple strands – ethical, intellectual and political. However, one strand of the controversy contained, at its heart, questions around the relationship between events on the battlefield, and the societies and ideologies engaged in war. Could historians write about the war of 1939-1945 without discussing the Holocaust? Could veterans and their families commemorate that military service, without engaging with the realities of the Nazi regime? Andreas Hillgruber's 1986 work *Zweierlei Untergang* posited that historians ought to 'identify' with the struggles of the Wehrmacht and try to enter into the mentalities and concerns of German soldiers fighting on the Eastern Front in 1944-45.[39] This was certainly not a plea for operations-only *histoire bataille*, but it shared with that approach an unwillingness to confront the wider political and ethical issues around the subject. Other participants in the debate, such as Ernst Nolte, argued that the entire twentieth century was so stained with mass murder, genocidal violence, tyranny and population displacement that there was little, if anything, distinctive about the Nazi regime. This relativist approach opened the context of the German war of 1939-45 so widely as to create an almost meaningless frame of comparison. Such revisionist accounts of the Second World War had clear political implications, both domestic and international. The vigorous responses of Jürgen Habermas and many international scholars soon took the discussion far beyond the scope of military history, but the debate also raised important points for military historians: if we write about war in ways which go beyond the battlefield, what are the consequences? What ethical, social and political responsibilities does a 'war and society' approach entail?

[39]Andreas Hillgruber, *Zweierlei Untergang. Die Zerschlagung des Deutschen Reiches und das Ende des europäischen Judentums,* (Berlin: Siedler, 1986).

The *Historikerstreit* was both a debate about intellectual approaches to the past and a reflection of its particular historical moment. Cold War-era military histories which downplayed the realities of Nazism were not uncommon. J F C Fuller's 1961 survey of warfare since the French Revolution offered an analysis of the relative threats posed by Soviet and German totalitarianism very similar to that of some German nationalist history in the 1980s.[40] Perhaps given Fuller's known Nazi sympathies this should be no surprise, yet the book has been much praised for its strategic insights and continues to be translated (into French in 2007) and reprinted (most recently in 2016 by Routledge). Incidentally, Fuller's book received a highly complimentary cover blurb from none other than Michael Howard himself.[41] Fuller, like many of the old French practitioners of *histoire bataille,* wrote from the perspective of the military itself, with an eye to institutional reform and the future conduct of war. The field of War Studies, which Howard did so much to establish in the United Kingdom, draws at least in part on this outlook. Many practitioners still believe that military history's job is to learn lessons about war the better to conduct it in the future; that the field's purpose is to serve policymakers and the armed forces.[42] Examples include, for instance, the analysis of wars of colonial oppression in order to hone contemporary counter-insurgency strategy.[43] But nowadays both academic military historians and many of those working within the professional circles of the armed forces embrace a 'war and society' approach; the ethical and political questions about the study of the history of war highlighted so clearly in the *Historikerstreit* require consideration by all kinds of military scholars – and are inherently interdisciplinary. Arguably, the recent emergence of the field of Critical Military Studies reflects this idea. Both historical and (especially) contemporary military subjects are scrutinised from ethical and philosophical perspectives, driven by imperatives which have emerged in the twenty-first century's so-called 'forever wars'.[44] The sociological and anthropological perspectives brought to bear in this field show one of the ways in which the 'war and society' approach has fruitfully evolved over the last forty years.

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[40]John Frederick Charles Fuller (Major-General), *The Conduct of War. 1789-1961. A Study of the Impact of the French, Industrial, and Russian Revolutions on War and Its Conduct,* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1961).

[41]Richard J Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow : West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past,* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), p. 176.

[42]Virgilio Ilari, 'Per una epistemologia della storia militare', in *Clausewitz in Italia*, by Virgilio Ilari, (Rome: Aracne, 2020), 246–47.

[43]Frederick H. Dotolo, 'A Long Small War: Italian Counterrevolutionary Warfare in Libya, 1911 to 1932', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 26, no. 1 (2 January 2015): pp. 158–80, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2014.959765. Accessed 30 June 2022.

[44]See the journal *Critical Military Studies* (Taylor and Francis), launched in 2015.

Language, Power, Force

To read *War in European History* more than forty years after its publication is to note anew the qualities first praised by contemporaries – readability, synthesis – while observing how much the field has changed, largely through its omissions (gender, race, the global turn to name just a few). The original bibliography is almost entirely male: today such a book would draw on the scholarship of women too. However, to think more with and about the book today, we may turn to another, perhaps unexpected, contemporary reading of it. Howard's book was discussed by Umberto Eco in his 1979 essay *La Lingua, Il Potere, La Forza* – Language, Power, Force – in the unlikely company of an anthology of Michel Foucault essays and Roland Barthes' *Leçon*, alongside Georges Duby's newly published magnum opus on feudal Europe, *Les Trois Ordres ou L'Imaginaire du féodalisme.*[45] Eco's essay appeared in the launch issue of *Alfabeta*, a high-end cultural magazine edited by avant-garde poet Nanni Balestrini (who fled Italy to escape arrest shortly after the first issue emerged, suspected of being an active sympathiser of left-wing terrorist organisation Autonomia Operaia). It published discursive, highly intertextual review essays, which each analysed three or four books or films (both old and new) to explore a 'field of problems'. Eco's piece exemplified this approach, offering less a book review than a complex and meandering set of reflections on the nature of power and its forms of expression.[46]

In this essay, Eco posited *War in European History* as a book which both reflected and illuminated the contemporary moment. He read Howard as offering both a historical overview of the field of power – specifically, the state's power to enact war – and an insight into the way that field was currently being re-thought and re-interpreted. Of course, Eco's reading was also deeply of its moment in this same way, reflecting the late 1970s preoccupation with the nature of power and its relationship both with individuals and with wider society.[47] Much of the essay concerns the ways in which Foucault and Barthes explored power through language and as a system of symbols. Eco also discussed the ways language, rhetoric and ideology controlled, disciplined and superseded the complex and varied inter-relations of the Three Orders – clergy, nobility and third estate – in medieval Europe, as explored by the eminent *Annalist* Duby.[48] In Eco's reading, the crucial issue in the organisation of medieval European society was the relationship between power and force; language and rhetoric disciplined this relationship, by legitimising some uses of force and criminalising others.

[45]Umberto Eco, 'La Lingua, Il Potere, La Forza', in *Alfabeta (Antologia) 1979-1988*, ed. Rossana Bossaglia et al., (Milan: Bompiani, 2012), pp. 451–72.

[46]Filippo Pennacchio, 'Attraverso campi di problemi. Le "pseudo-recensioni" di "Alfabeta"', in *Leggere per scegliere. La pratica della recensione nell'editoria moderna e contemporanea*, ed. Andrea Chiurato, (Milan: Mimesis, 2020), p.164.

[47]Pennacchio, pp. 167–69.

[48]Georges Duby, *Les trois ordres ou l'Imaginaire du féodalisme,* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978).

He wrote: 'Ideology takes form: its power becomes a true network of consensus from below, because relationships of force have been transformed into symbolic relationships.'[49] However, as he noted, power relations – taken here to mean symbolic discourses in which language names and shapes the relationships of social groups – overlie encounters between forces (social groups, movements, pressures) but are not identical to them. The dual meaning of force is important – both a form of coercive power and a group or entity which can wield that power. But, he asked, why had the relationship between force and power disappeared from contemporary discussions of power, which he found were often 'naïve'? And, critically, what of the most direct form of force, violence?

Here, then, we finally understand the inclusion of *War in European History* in the essay. Eco 'invite[s] the reader to dabble around in this fascinating book at their pleasure' exploring its 'dense anecdotes and unpredictable discoveries'. To illustrate his argument, Eco – a medievalist by training and inclination – drew on Howard's discussion of technology and tactics in the Hundred Years' War. The introduction of the longbow at Crécy led gradually but inexorably to the extinction of the armed medieval knight; a technological change, creating tactical change leading to social transformation. The impact of an arrow on a man on horseback is a relationship of force; soon a whole new power structure would emerge, accounting for a very different kind of army. New symbolic structures of power and domination – with new rhetorics and ideologies – were thus required to account for these new forces. Instead of Crécy, he might just as easily have illustrated this analysis with Howard's account of the effects of firepower as wielded by infantry, or of changing methods of siege warfare on urban structures, or indeed of nuclear strategy on international relations. Eco observed that 'Howard's book seems to proceed in the inverse way to Duby's: starting from force he proceeds, indirectly, to the new structures of power, whereas [Duby] moved from the formulation of the images of power to the relationship between old and new forces which underpinned it.'[50] His focus is the way Howard showed that changes in the relationship between military forces underpinned shifts in power dynamics (social, political and economic).

This insight is important because Eco focuses on an aspect of Howard's work which is easily lost in the generic embrace of a broadly-defined 'war and society' approach to the past. Eco argues that Howard constructs the relationship between force and social change as directional – a vector. Rather than war and society – or war and ideology – broadly and diffusely shaping one another, this reading suggests the use of force in war produces new social and economic structures and, ultimately, the new ideological or symbolic systems to justify and perpetuate them.

[49]Eco, 'La Lingua, Il Potere, La Forza', p. 461.
[50]Eco, p. 462.

In his essay, Eco rebuked Barthes for moving the discussion of power wholly into the linguistic sphere, eliding or ignoring the realities of force altogether. Discourse analysis should not float free from the use of force, which both underpinned and in key ways preceded it. The equivalent is perhaps that variant of the new military history which, in Hew Strachan's words, 'has seemed to be the history of war with the fighting left out'.[51] Dennis Showalter has written, 'This process can represent at least as dangerous a distortion of methods as did the previous limited emphasis on battles, sieges and historic tableaux.'[52] In a perhaps surprising pairing of intellects, Showalter and Eco agree it is essential to analyse force to understand power. That Showalter's warning was published as early as 1975 shows the extent to which military history without battle appeared to be emerging even then. Of course, as Strachan has noted, 'Michael [Howard]'s interest has been too firmly rooted in the phenomenon of war itself for this to have been an attractive route for him go down'.[53] Howard also presented the state's monopoly on the use of force as an essential building block of both the domestic and international order and indeed a necessary condition for the establishment of peace. Eco's observation that analysis of language, symbolism and ideology might lose touch with the concrete realities of force certainly foreshadows some of the debates about the new cultural histories of war in the 1990s and 2000s. His solution was not, of course, to abandon the study of symbols, rhetorical systems and ideology; rather he pushed for a deeper engagement with the interrelationship between the forms of power.

Power vs Force

Just what is the relationship between power and force? At times they have been used interchangeably, even in military history, but Eco is not alone is seeking to distinguish the concepts. American strategist Edward Luttwak offered an interesting definition in an appendix to his highly influential, if much debated, 1979 work, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A.D. to the Third.* This was a military history of imperial Rome, focusing exclusively on its peak, which offered an innovative and provocative take on the strategic thinking of the empire's successive rulers. To do so he offered his own working definitions of power and force, usefully summarised in a review essay on the topic by J C Mann. Luttwak defines Rome's power as 'the ability to enforce obedience, whether on provincials or on others, because the latter perceive that Rome has the means to enforce that obedience simply by the threat to

[51]Strachan, 'Michael Howard and the Dimensions of Military History'.
[52]Showalter, 'A Modest Plea for Drums and Trumpets', p. 72.
[53]Strachan, 'Michael Howard and the Dimensions of Military History', p. 545.

resort to arms'.[54] As Luttwak puts it, power 'elicits responses' from those subjected to it and is 'initially a subjective phenomenon' since it relies on their perceptions; people subjected to it comply because they *believe* that they must.[55] Force, by contrast, is an objective reality directly applied in combat (or through non-combat deployment). Power is not consumed by being wielded – in fact it may be strengthened; meanwhile force is consumed by being used. Power thus relies on force but also needs to conserve it, to deploy it cautiously: no state has unlimited forces nor can afford to waste them. So successful political control – and good strategy – is the ability to wield power while minimising the consumption of force, according to Luttwak.

This definition, coined in strategic terms, may bring us closer to Eco – and to a 'war and society' version of military history – than at first apparent. What makes people believe in, and comply with, the power of a state or regime? The objective reality of the force it can deploy, certainly; but also, the cultural scripts and social practices which encode, transmit and perpetuate the threat of that force. Of course, our ability to estimate the reality of a threat of force is often poor. History is rich with examples of unexpected collapses (of regimes or armies) based on a mismatch between the realities of deployable force and the rhetorics and ideologies around them. Following Luttwak, we need to do more to understand the relationship between (military) force and its cultural and social superstructures.

A history of war that obscures power dynamics and their ultimate reliance on force is deeply unsatisfactory, even paradoxical. During the centenary of the First World War, the wartime contribution of non-white and non-British soldiers to the British war effort began to be celebrated. In a praiseworthy effort to diversify the stories which are told and remembered about the war, many public history outlets began to focus on the experiences of Indian, Caribbean and African soldiers who fought and died for Britain. However, this sometimes slipped into a celebration of multicultural unity which conflated the Britain of 2014-2018 with that of a century before, completely obscuring the realities of imperial power and the brutal force which underpinned it. This ahistorical approach risks swallowing, hook, line and sinker, the wartime propagandistic framing of imperial unity in the name of modern inclusivity.[56] By restoring force to the picture we can more accurately understand the dynamics at play.

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[54]J. C. Mann, 'Power, Force and the Frontiers of the Empire', ed. Edward N. Luttwak, *The Journal of Roman Studies* 69 (1979): p. 176, https://doi.org/10.2307/299068. Accessed 30 June 2022.

[55]Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire: From the First Century CE to the Third,* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2016), pp. 224–26.

[56]I am grateful to Michael Joseph at Cambridge University for these observations.

Power, Force and Coercion

Eco's reading of *War in European History* can offer a useful framework through which to rethink some debates in the historiography of war. Beginning in the late 1990s, French historians of 1914-1918 became very engaged in the question of how and why soldiers endured the horrors of the Western Front: why did they fight on for so long? Why did relatively few desert or mutiny? Two approaches emerged in what has become known as the 'war cultures' debate. One group of historians, loosely associated with the research centre at the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* at Péronne, argued that a vigorous popular culture emerged which so demonised the enemy that soldiers consented to the violence of the war. The French people, in this account, were unified in feeling that they were engaged in an existential struggle against an implacable enemy. Soldiers' violence was justified and sustained by the meanings attributed to the war – which were themselves shaped by brutal violence.[57] A second group of historians, by contrast, has emphasised the intense forces of coercion and constraint to which soldiers were subjected. The disciplinary force which the military justice system brought to bear, along with the moral pressures of the wartime economy of sacrifice, gave soldiers little choice but to participate in the violence whatever their personal feelings. This argument was put forward by scholars linked to the *Collectif de Recherche International et de Débat sur la Guerre de 1914-1918* (CRID 14-18), founded in 2005.[58]

The debate over coercion and consent became, at times, polemical in tone; this has obscured the commonalities shared by the two sides. In reality, both interpretations drew on a similar conception of the history of war since both presented the experiences, beliefs and mentalities of ordinary soldiers as the defining feature of the war.[59] As a result, military technology, tactics, operations, strategy, generalship, command and logistics all faded almost entirely from the debate. In a sign of the total transformation of French history of war, we might call it the anti-*histoire bataille.* However, as Eco observed, a true understanding of the power which resides within systems of language and culture must grapple with the realities of *force,* not just violence. The deployment of the coercive force of the state is an essential part of the

[57]The foundational work here is Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14-18, retrouver la guerre,* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).

[58]See, among others, Rémy Cazals and Frédéric Rousseau, *14-18, le cri d'une génération : la correspondance et les carnets intimes rédigés au front…,* (Toulouse: Privat, 2001); André Loez, *14-18, les refus de la guerre: une histoire des mutins,* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010).

[59]Pierre Purseigle, 'Controversy: War Culture', *1914-1918-Online International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, 2020, https://doi.org/10.15463/IE1418.11457. Accessed 30 June 2022.

wartime realities of power. To discuss the brutalising effects of violence, rather than force in a military sense, ignores Eco's insight that force is directional and embedded within a power relationship. The violence of the trenches is not, therefore, identical to force. At the same time, soldiers were not simply subjected to, or victims of, coercive force by the state. They were themselves agents of military force against the enemy; the rhetorical constructs of cultural power which emerged in wartime, so carefully analysed by the *Historial* scholars, therefore rested on *both* these bases.

Conclusions

The incorporation of social and cultural methodologies and concerns into French and Italian military history has become the norm since *War in European History* was published; in other respects, less has changed. Despite the rise of global history, military history is still overwhelmingly focused on the West, and the end of the Cold War has done little to end Eurocentrism. Military history has certainly opened up towards imperial history in recent years, which is sometimes used as a lazy short-hand for global history. But despite some promising recent signs, a truly global military history is still to fully emerge in European or North American academia. Howard's focus on European history might seem outdated but it is actually much closer to the contemporary approach than some would like to admit.

Reading *War in European History* today one is struck by its scope, ambition, and successful synthesis. By taking a very long view, Howard was able to construct a nuanced and original argument without sacrificing clarity. While some of his peers wrote comparable works in that era, such scholarly syntheses are fewer on the ground today (perhaps owing to contemporary professional pressures which have driven ever greater specialisation). In France and in Italy, the response has been to create ambitious multivolume collaborative histories spanning multiple periods.[60] Nonetheless, these still adopt a national framework, not a European – let alone global – perspective. But just as the turn to global history encourages us to turn our attentions beyond narrow geographical confines, Howard's effort to grapple with big problems outside his own chief period of interest, the better to illuminate his main focus, should remind us that expanded chronologies are also a way to push the boundaries of scholarship. The periodical *Alfabeta* which published Umberto Eco's essay on language, power and force set out, in its opening editorial, a plea not just for reading but for re-reading; for continuing to read and to think about old books, not just new ones, and to address current problems in the light of earlier ideas as well as

[60]André Corvisier, *Histoire Militaire de La France*, 4 vols (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1992); Herve Drévillon and Olivier Wieviorka, *Histoire militaire de la France* (Paris: Perrin : Ministère des Armées, 2018); *Gli italiani in guerra : conflitti, identità, memorie dal Risorgimento ai nostri giorni*, 7 vols (Turin: UTET, 2008).

applying new frameworks to old problems. In that spirit, may we long continue to re-read the classics of military history.

The Unrepentant Historian: Sir Michael Howard and the Birth of War Studies

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ABSTRACT
Sir Michael Howard is widely recognised as the founder of 'War Studies', a Department of Kings College, London, which embodied a new intellectual agenda for the study of war. Yet whilst his influence as a founder was significant, it has been overstated. In this article we contextualise the emergence of War Studies as part of a longer series of attempts to establish war-oriented study at the University of London, and situate Howard's endeavours alongside those of more senior colleagues. In so doing, we also emphasise the limited and pragmatic approach to war studies that Howard developed during this period.

'But I am unrepentantly a historian and not a social scientist. I think in terms of analogies rather than theories, of process rather than structure, of politics as the realm of the contingent rather than of necessity.'

Sir Michael Howard[1]

Introduction

Long before his death in 2019, Sir Michael Howard found himself celebrated as the founder of the Department of War Studies at King's College London, one of numerous achievements that marked him out as a towering figure in the study of war. For many

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[1]Michael Howard, *Studies in War and Peace,* (London: Temple Smith, 1970), p. 13.

years his portrait could be found amongst the procession of notable alumni that lined the route to the Strand entrance of King's College, where War Studies had found an institutional home in the 1950s. The story of Howard's efforts to establish War Studies is familiar to anyone – staff or student, past or present – connected to the department. Its essence runs as follows.[2] At the close of the Second World War, Howard returned to Oxford to complete the undergraduate degree that had been interrupted by active service with the Coldstream Guards. By his own admission, study proved less agreeable to him after this resumption and, graduating with a second class degree, Howard lacked the academic qualification to pursue a competitive tutorial fellowship. Instead, in 1947 he found employment as an Assistant Lecturer in history at King's College London. This led, in 1953, to his appointment as a Lecturer in War Studies, his credentials burnished not only by his recently co-authored history of the Coldstream Guards, but also by the Military Cross he had won during the Italian campaign in 1944. Shortly after taking up his new appointment, Howard arrived at the realisation that the history of war could not be limited to the study of military operations, which apparently formed the mainstay of contemporary 'military history'. Rather, the study of war required 'the study of entire societies.' Equipped with a firm conviction that he needed 'to learn not only to think about war in a different way, but also to think about history itself in a different way', Howard then went on to establish a department wholly devoted to the study of war, which has grown exponentially in the sixty years since its inception.[3] This success stemmed, in no small part, from Howard's inspirational example, and the long shadow he cast in what was, for many years, a relatively small university department. As the Department's 60th Anniversary publication summed up, 'The Department…is the world's leading academic institution for the study of war. Its success owes much to its founder.' His efforts in adopting an 'holistic approach' to war has 'shaped DWS since its creation' and remains responsible for its position of pre-eminence.[4]

This origin story is seductive in its simplicity. It casts Howard as an heroic figure, almost single-handedly shouldering the task of establishing War Studies, and of delivering the study of war from the academic wilderness. It has offered the Department a focal pioneering figure with which to differentiate itself within the University. Yet it is also a story that Howard himself consciously cultivated in response

[2]Howard's own account of his professional and intellectual development can be found in his autobiography, Michael Howard, *Captain Professor: a life in war and peace,* (London: Continuum, 2006).
[3]Ibid., pp. 144-5. See also Michael Howard, *A Professional Autobiography,* (unpublished typescript. Eastbury, Berkshire, 2 October 1991).
[4]KCL Department of War Studies, 'War Studies at 60: Past, Present, Future', 2021, https://www.kcl.ac.uk/warstudies/war-studies-at-60/dws-celebratory-publication, Accessed 25 May 2022, p. 8.

to the institutional and disciplinary imperatives to distinguish his new role as a clear departure from earlier approaches to the study of war at King's. It is, nonetheless, a foundational myth that only partially reflects the circumstances in which the Department of War Studies was founded, and under which an intellectual endeavour called 'war studies' emerged. In this article, we seek to offer a more nuanced account. Our approach focuses on the institutional manifestation of 'War Studies' at Kings, but also seeks to place events within the broader context of the study of war in the mid-twentieth century. We chart the repeated attempts to give a foundation to the academic study of war within the University of London stretching back into the nineteenth century, whilst also underlining the role of other key individuals in advocating the validity of scholarship focused on war, and of historical scholarship on war in particular.

In most writing on Howard, Basil Liddell Hart occupies a pre-eminent position as a mentor and sponsor of Howard's career – a debt which Howard freely acknowledged. Along with so many other young scholars from his generation, Howard described how he was 'willingly bound in an exacting, exhausting, delightful and immensely rewarding slavery' to Liddell Hart from the mid-1950s until the latter's death in 1970.[5] As many commentators have noted, this relationship played an important role in shaping Howard's own thinking about war: first as inspiration, then as a point of departure.[6] In order to cast fresh perspective on Howard's relationship with War Studies, we take some inspiration from Howard's own insistence that his respect and admiration for Liddell Hart ought not to stand in the way of rigorous argument and an exchange of ideas. Thus, in this article we focus in particular on the influence of two senior historians, Sir Charles Webster and Sir Keith Hancock, both of whom were instrumental in providing institutional support for the creation of the War Studies

[5]Michael Howard, *The Causes of Wars and other essays,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1983), p. 198.

[6]Of particular note in this regard is Howard's essay 'The British Way in Warfare: A Reappraisal' in *The Causes of War*, pp. 169-187. For Howard's intellectual relationship with Liddell Hart see Brian Holden Reid, 'The Legacy of Liddell Hart: The Contrasting Responses of Michael Howard and André Beaufre', *British Journal for Military History*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2014), pp. 66-80. Brian Holden Reid; 'Michael Howard and the Evolution of Modern War Studies', *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (2009), pp. 870-904; Hew Strachan, 'Michael Howard and the dimensions of military history', *War in History*, Vo. 27, No. 4 (2020), pp. 537-551; Lawrence Freedman, 'Michael Howard: A Reminiscence' 17 December 2019 https://warontherocks.com/2019/12/michael-howard-a-reminiscence/. Accessed 29 June 2022.

Department during the 1940s and 1950s.[7] By doing so, we can better position Howard's individual achievements in relation to both a longer history of attempts to establish the academic study of war within the university, and the heightened awareness of the importance of that study in the wake of the Second World War. Seen in this light, Howard appears less as a pioneer than a culminating figure, doggedly bringing to fruition a project longer in the making, yet abetted in this task by broader receptivity amongst peers and elders than is often supposed.

Howard's role in the birth and development of the Department of War Studies also affords an insight into his understanding of the parameters and limitations of war studies as an academic subject which challenges some of the ways in which his image has been used subsequently to describe the ethos and success of the Department. Howard articulated a limited conception of 'War Studies' which did not extend far beyond an umbrella grouping that might allow for the co-existence of numerous disciplinary approaches to war. In part, this was the result of a pragmatic approach to the development of the Department in its earliest days that at times came close to 'muddling through', rather than a more programmatic attitude. It was also a consequence of the delineation of Howard's own academic activities, in which the study of history, whether in its own right or as a guiding approach to strategic studies, always drove his thinking and writing. Thus, while Howard understood from the very beginning that 'War Studies' needed to incorporate more than a revivified history of war – that it equally had to be a home for the 'the economists, the international lawyers, the social scientists, the international relations specialists, even, if possible the scientists' – he remained a self-described 'unrepentant historian.'[8]

As demonstrated by his departure from King's College and the department he founded in 1968, Howard was not driven by a desire to foster a distinct disciplinary approach to war studies. As Tarak Barkawi and Shane Brighton note, he 'made no effort to theorise his approach, either in terms of method or a substantive theory of war.'[9] Instead, he followed a path via Oxford and Yale, that took him from the history of war to strategic studies prior to his retirement. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that those who have been most heavily influenced by him have defined his legacy in terms of his contribution as an historian and strategist – areas which are entirely compatible with Howard's inclusive understanding of 'War Studies', but which underline its lack of a

[7]Howard acknowledges both men, along with the economist Lionel Robbins, in his autobiography, although not in expansive terms. Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 140, p. 145, p. 147.

[8]Ibid., p. 147. Howard, *Studies in War and Peace*, p. 11.

[9]Tarak Barkawi and Shane Brighton 'Absent War Studies? War, Knowledge, and Critique', in Hew Strachan & Sibylle Scheipers, eds., *The Changing Character of War,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 529.

programmatic essence.[10] Brian Bond, for example, one of the earliest recruits to Howard's department, whilst emphasising Howard's 'broad inclusive approach to the study of war, with military history as its bedrock' equates war studies closely to the 'War and Society' approach to military history, and further seeks to distinguish Howard's contribution as a 'military historian' from Arthur Marwick's contribution as a 'social historian'.[11] Brian Holden Reid, meanwhile, a later Head of the Department of War Studies and Howard's official biographer, writes that Howard 'helped found, in short, a distinct field of enquiry – war studies, or security/strategic studies, as it is known in the United States; to this may be applied a variety of disciplines in either a "multi" of interdisciplinary fashion.'[12] Such attempts at delineation underline the lack of disciplinary clarity that has always characterized War Studies, for good and ill. Consequently, modern war studies – as encapsulated by the activities of the Department of War Studies at King's College – is driven by disciplinary impulses that are often far removed from Howard's historically shaped understanding. Yet this too can be at least partially attributed to the legacy of Howard and his reluctance to engage in discipline building at the foundation.

The foundations of the study of war at King's

Howard was appointed to the post of Lecturer in Military Studies in the Department of History in July 1953, having spent the previous half decade as a Lecturer in History.[13] Late the following year he admitted that 'it is only some eighteen months since I began to take an interest – a professional interest that is – in military affairs'.[14] Writing at the beginning of what would become a lifelong correspondence with Liddell Hart, Howard was quite clear about the conditions of his appointment: 'I was given this post not as a military expert or military historian, but as a professional historian interested in the general problems which war raises for society.'[15] He recognised that this approach was not an entirely novel one, crediting foreign writers with having appreciated the importance of studying the 'social and economic aspects of war in close connection with studies of military techniques: which the Germans have done for a hundred years (Jähns, Delbrück) and the Americans for twenty'.[16] Yet from the outset he viewed

[10]See Lawrence Freedman, Paul Hayes, and Robert O'Neill, eds., *War, Strategy, and International Politics: Essays in Honour of Sir Michael Howard,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[11]Brian Bond, *Military Historian: My Part in the Birth and Development of War Studies,* (Solihull: Helion & Co., 2018), p. 33.

[12]Holden Reid, 'Michael Howard', p. 870.

[13]King's College archives (hereinafter KCA) KA/FPA 1968. Howard, M. Page 42.

[14]King's College London Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives (hereinafter LHCMA) LH 1/384, Howard to Liddell Hart, 23 Nov 1954.

[15]Ibid.

[16]LHCMA, LH 1/384, Howard to Liddell Hart 10 December 1955.

British military history as lagging behind the example set by foreign scholarship. 'If the word "military" evokes narrow and technical associations', he wrote in an article the following year, 'the fault lies with the type of military history which we have been accustomed to read'. Howard was clear with whom the blame for such problems lay: 'military historians have not always been conscious of this wider conception of their task.' For him, the study of war demanded 'far more than the limited resources and technique of the old-style military historian', and to that end the more inclusive and academically driven 'war studies' approach offered an antidote.[17]

From the outset, then, the institutional mythology of what would grow into the 'War Studies' department was predicated upon a claim of intellectual departure from what went before it. Yet much as Howard contributed to an injection of new life into the study of war in Britain from the 1950s onwards, it is important to highlight that the subject in general, and particularly within King's College and the University of London, had evolved considerably further than this depiction might suggest.

King's College had first established a department of 'military science' in 1848. This venture, undertaken partly in response to the wave of revolutions that year and intended to provide instruction for aspirant military professionals, proved short lived. No investment was made in a library to support the programme, student numbers were low, and the department dissolved before its twentieth anniversary.[18] In so doing, it set something of a precedent, becoming the first in a series of short-lived initiatives related to the study of war at King's that were to characterise the subsequent century. Yet whilst these initiatives did not prove enduring in an institutional sense, they did reveal the development of a more wide-ranging intellectual agenda than is often recognised. By the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, naval history had established a presence in the College under the auspices of Sir John Knox Laughton. Whilst plans for a formal Department foundered after his death in 1915, Laughton did succeed in embedding the study of war more firmly within the College, across the University of London, and within the discipline of history.[19] By opening access to the Admiralty archives and being a founding member of both the Navy Records Society and *The English Historical Review*, he made a significant contribution to bringing the study of warfare at sea into a position of respectability within the broader discipline.

[17]Michael Howard, 'Military History as a University Study', *History*, Vol. 41, No. 141 (Oct., 1956), pp. 185-86, p. 190.
[18]A.M Shadrake, 'The War Studies Library at King's College, London University', *Aslib Proceedings*, Vol. 29, No. 8 (1977), pp. 295-301; Fossey John Cobb Hearnshaw, *The Centenary History of King's College London, 1828-1928,* (London: G.G. Harrap & co., 1929), pp. 176-8, 260.
[19]Andrew Lambert, *The Foundations of Naval History: John Knox Laughton, the Royal Navy and the Historical Profession,* (London: Chatham, 1998), pp. 212-18.

He was also central to early plans for the founding of the Institute of Historical Research and served as the inaugural chair of the University of London's History Board.[20] From the outset of his career as an educator, Laughton's approach to history had reflected the requirements of his previous life as a naval officer. His approach to the 'scientific' study of the past was thus intended to act as a spur to doctrinal development and conceptual innovation within the Navy. Yet his understanding of history was far broader than a simplistic focus upon military technique. He was critical of contemporaries who 'have spoken of the Navy as a mere engine for fighting battles and sometimes for winning victories, glorious, but of no great consequence', and sought to place naval warfare within a wider imperial and international context.[21]

The First World War and Laughton's death curtailed plans to place naval history on a more sustainable institutional basis. The aftermath of the conflict, however, prompted a series of new initiatives related to the study of international affairs and conflict within the University of London. The establishment of The Royal Institute of International Affairs, and the Stevenson Chair in International History at the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1926, reflected a consensus that issues of war and peace were appropriate, indeed urgent, areas of academic enquiry.[22] The Institute of Historical Research acted as a further focal point, with a 1934 report noting that 'the Institute has from the outset made special provision for the study and teaching of war history', including seminar rooms and the nucleus of a valuable library.[23] Supporters of these initiatives pre-empted some of the developments which Howard ultimately oversaw. Writing in 1927, in a volume with a dedication by the former Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, George Aston underlined that 'it is necessary to pay continuous attention to aspects of modern war which affect the lives of statesmen and citizens… It is hoped that these needs will be met in due course by the School of War Studies, which has now been established in the University of London.'[24] King's participated in this process by hosting a new chair in Military Studies to which Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice was appointed in 1927. Maurice, who had been Director of Military Operations in the Imperial General Staff during the First World War, was the principal of the Working Men's College (later Queen Mary University of London) and had

[20]Andrew Lambert, 'Laughton's Legacy: naval history at King's College London', *Historical Research*, vol. 77, no. 196 (2004), pp. 277-78.
[21]John Knox Laughton, 'Historians and Naval History', in Julian Corbett, ed., *Naval and Military Essays*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1914), p. 5; Lambert, 'Laughton's Legacy', p. 278.
[22]David Stevenson, 'Learning from the past: the relevance of international history', *International Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (2014), pp. 5-22.
[23]Institute for Historical Research: IHR 9/3/5, 'War History at the Institute of Historical Research', 1934.
[24]George Aston, *The Study of War for Statesmen and Citizens,* (London: Longmans & Co., 1927), p. *viii*.

delivered the Lees Knowles Lectures on the American Civil War the previous year. For his inaugural lecture, delivered on 14 January 1927, he chose to speak in disciplinary terms 'on the uses of the study of war'. Maurice argued that

> Bitter experience has taught us, what the generation that immediately preceded us did not realise, that a struggle between nations in which vital interests are involved is not merely the concern of professional soldiers, sailors, and airmen but affects directly every citizen, and calls for the whole resources of the nation. We have learned that statecraft, economics, the supply of raw material, science, and industry are factors which are of prime importance to the issue, and we realise that the tendency is for the importance of the last two to increase. Soldiers have long insisted that morale is of supreme importance in armies. We have learned that the morale of the peoples is of even greater importance, and may, with the development of aircraft, become the prime object of attack.[25]

The logical extension of these observations was, he argued, to establish war as a legitimate field of academic enquiry, in order that citizens and soldiers together could be educated in its nature. Any such field ought, he claimed, to have a critical and rigorous appreciation of history as its basis: 'my faith in military history as the foundation of military study remains unshaken, and military history is but a special branch of the general study.' This would require historical rigor, a comparative approach which included the study of both opponents in a conflict, and a combination of civilian and military expertise and knowledge. 'The fact is', Maurice observed, 'that too often sailor and soldier historians have lacked the technique of the civilian historian, and the civilian historian the technique of the sailor and soldier.'[26]

The chair in military studies was charged with addressing these deficiencies, to 'encourage military studies in the university and to create an interest in them amongst the general public.'[27] To this end, Maurice continued a course of instruction for undergraduates within the University of London into the 1930s and the Second World War, before the programme became defunct. He also remained engaged in military education, lecturing at the Army's Staff College, and contributing to debates over the 1929 edition of *Field Service Regulations*.[28] Whilst Maurice did not immerse himself in archival research, nor perhaps fully depart from his association with the Army, the parallels between many of the views he espoused, and those which Howard was to

[25]LHCMA, LH 3/6/19. Maurice, 'On the Uses of the Study of War', p. i.
[26]Ibid., pp. vii-viii.
[27]Ibid., p. xi.
[28]See Maurice, *British Strategy*, p. *v*. and Alaric Searle, 'Inter-service Debate and the Origins of Strategic Culture: The 'Principles of War' in the British Armed Forces, 1919-1939', *War in History*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (2014), pp. 18-19.

champion, are clear. Indeed, Howard used Maurice's inaugural lecture to structure the introduction to his own discussion of 'Military Power and International Order', a lecture delivered in May 1964 to mark his appointment as professor.[29] Yet, as had been the case on previous occasions, the achievements made in the inter-war period proved fleeting. The Military Studies Department was briefly re-named War Studies in 1943, however it was closed in 1948, with the provision offered to officer cadets reverting to the ad hoc arrangements which had existed before 1914.[30]

Webster and Hancock: support for the study of war at the mid-century

When Howard arrived in the History Department in the autumn of 1947, the study of war at King's was thus at something of a low ebb. Given this state of affairs, Howard's major achievement through the 1950s lay in simply keeping military studies alive by his own efforts. Unfortunately, his success came through conflict. In his autobiography, Howard recounted the clashes with his head of department, Professor C H Williams, whom he described as 'a genial little Welshman whose talent for evasion amounted to genius', that followed his appointment to the military studies role.[31] The conflict arose from Howard's insistence that his appointment brought with it the authority to create a new programme in its own right, outside of Williams' control. Although Howard reflected that the spat was an ugly episode that did little credit to either party, it was only through obstinacy that he was able to enforce his will. 'If I took this job I would be my own man', he wrote, 'I could escape from the narrow confines of the history department… I could make something of it, I thought.'[32] Consequently, throughout the rest of the decade he refused to do more within the department than lecture on the history of war. Howard painted Williams as a barrier to the establishment of a war studies programme, however, it is worth noting that Howard's contract from 1953 as 'Lecturer in Military Studies in the Department of History at King's College' did place him under the professor's jurisdiction. Williams' exasperation is, perhaps, understandable.[33]

Moreover, it should be noted that, although Howard was locked in a personal dispute with Williams until the latter's retirement, he was able to bolster his position by capitalising on the pre-existing structures of the military studies programme. These had survived within the University bureaucracy despite the demise of the old department. The Board of Studies for Military Studies continued to function within the

[29]The original text is in LHCMA,LH 1/384 part IV, and it was re-printed in an abridged version in *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (2009), pp. 145-55.
[30]'War Studies 60', p. 10.
[31]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 132.
[32]Ibid., p. 141.
[33]See the contracts in Howard's file in the KCL archives. KCA KA/FPA 1968. Pages 46 and 42 respectively.

University of London, offering a strand of continuity from the old endeavour to the new. This made it easier for Howard to resurrect the curriculum in order to transform it, rather than having to champion an entirely new syllabus. The old course, Howard later noted, retained a 'vocational bias', reflective of its origins as a means to enable 'members of the Officers Training Corps to use the knowledge acquired during their professional military training to gain an academic degree.' In 1954 the board of studies permitted Howard to change the syllabus 'to give it a more solid academic content', although it retained a heavy historical component.[34] By 1955, Howard gained approval from the Academic Council for a new 'War Studies' programme to replace the 'military studies' subject for internal candidates on the B A General Degree. 'Unlike the old 'military studies' programme', Howard wrote, 'this is not a course of semi-technical studies for students with a professional interest in the army. It has been re-designed as a broad survey of the development of military affairs during the past two hundred years.'[35] In the same period, he also organised a lecture series on 'War and Society', which brought a range of inter-disciplinary perspectives to bear on the study of conflict, including contributions from scholars of international relations, law, and political economy.[36] In this manner, 'military studies' began its practical transformation into 'war studies'.

Developments during the 1950s helped pave the way for the establishment of a department in its own right. Nevertheless, full autonomy for War Studies within King's College had to wait until 1961, followed shortly thereafter by Howard's elevation to Professor. The slow pace of change reflected barriers to innovation inherent within university bureaucracy, such that Howard's tenacity was absolutely necessary. Yet he was never entirely isolated in his travails: the move to revive and expand the study of war within the University of London was instigated and lent weight by more senior academics. Howard acknowledged three such figures as particularly important for the institutional support that they provided: Sir Charles Webster, Sir Keith Hancock, and Lionel (later Baron) Robbins.[37] For all three individuals the new 'war studies' was not simply a bureaucratic but an intellectual necessity. In important respects they had already embarked on intellectual trajectories that mirrored Howard's own. This is best exemplified in the case of the two historians amongst them: Webster and Hancock.

[34]LHCMA, 1990/KDW/9. 'War Studies at the Undergraduate Level' M.E. Howard, 16 June 1962. Howard's new syllabus comprised papers on the History of War to 1914, the problems of war and military organisation since 1914, and a choice of either economic aspects of war or legal problems of war.
[35]LHCMA,LH 1/384. 'BA General Degree: 'WAR STUDIES'', 1955.
[36]LHCMA,LH 1/384. 'War and Society' lecture series advert. Many of Howard's collaborators at this time came from the LSE. Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 147.
[37]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 140.

Webster, 'a blunt and massive Yorkshireman', was described by Howard as 'the true godfather of War Studies in London', to whom he even attributed the name of the department. Howard recounted how, in a meeting to decide the matter, Webster struck the table 'with a fist the size of a large ham and demanded: "It's about war isn't it? So what's wrong with War Studies?"'[38] By the time of his involvement with War Studies, Webster's academic career was coming to a close. He had held positions at the universities of Cambridge, Liverpool, and Aberystwyth, before taking up the Stevenson Chair of International History at the LSE, from which he would retire in 1953.[39] A scholar of diplomatic history and foreign policy, Webster was a committed opponent of appeasement during the 1930s who believed that scholars in possession of a better understanding of the international system might work towards the avoidance of future calamities.[40] He combined his academic activities with practical engagement with international affairs during both World Wars, culminating during the second conflict in roles with the Research Department and the Economic and Reconstruction Department at the Foreign Office.

Webster's most direct scholarly engagement with war came only in the last decade of his life. Despite his impending retirement, in 1950 he was persuaded by J R M Butler, chief historian of the British official military history of the Second World War, to take on the official history of the Anglo-American Strategic Air Offensive in conjunction with a much younger co-author, Noble Frankland, a veteran navigator recently awarded a doctorate in air power history.[41] The partnership resulted in four volumes, which were published shortly after Webster's death in 1961. Whilst Webster never became a 'military historian' in the traditional sense of the term – the arrangement he made with Frankland ensured that the younger man took charge of the strategic and operational dimensions of the work – his experience with the official histories convinced him of the relevance and importance of war as a field of scholarship.[42] It also led him to take an interest in resurrecting the dormant Lectureship in Military Studies and in bringing the position to the LSE as the kernel of a new department, not for Howard's benefit but rather for Frankland, then struggling to find a secure

[38]Michael Howard, 'Military history and the history of war', in Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, eds., *The Past as Prologue: the importance of history to the military profession,* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), pp. 12-13; Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 145.
[39]For Webster's biography see George Norman Clark (revised by Muriel E. Chamberlain), 'Webster, Sir Charles Kingsley', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/36807 Accessed 29 June 2022.
[40]Stevenson, 'Learning from the past', p. 12.
[41]A detailed account of the process can be found in Noble Frankland, *History at War: the Campaigns of an Historian,* (London: Giles de la Mare, 1998), pp. 42-59.
[42]Ibid., pp. 82-4.

academic post. When the position went to King's and to Howard, Frankland recalled, Webster was 'very disappointed'.[43] Nevertheless, he threw his support behind Howard once the choice was made.

Like Webster, Hancock's distinguished academic career eventually led to engagement with war as an object of study through involvement in official history.[44] For Hancock, however, this came during the Second World War itself, when in the summer of 1941 he was approached by the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Edward Bridges, with an offer to head up the civil series of the official history of the war. He was eminently qualified to manage such a task, having already produced his three volume *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs* (1937-42). The five years he devoted to the project resulted in in the publication of thirty volumes, including *British War Economy* (1949) which he co-authored with Margaret Gowing.[45] When he joined the University of London in 1949 as the inaugural Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, a post which he held until he returned to his native Australia in 1956, Hancock was no doubt relieved to bring to a close the project that had consumed him for so long. In subsequent years, however, war continued to figure amongst his academic concerns.[46]

Notably, when invited to give the Wiles Lectures at Queen's University Belfast in 1960, established to 'encourage the extension of historical thinking into the realm of general ideas', Hancock chose to speak to the theme of war and peace in the twentieth

[43]Ibid., pp. 136-7.

[44]For concise biographies see: Kenneth Stanley Inglis (revised), 'Hancock, Sir (William) Keith (1898-1988)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/39810 ; Jim Davidson, 'Hancock, Sir William Keith (1898–1988)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hancock-sir-william-keith-460/text22673, published first in hardcopy 2007, Accessed 23 August 2021. See also Jim Davison, *A Three-Cornered Life: the historian W.K. Hancock*, (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010).

[45]Hancock's wartime activities are detailed in his autobiography, William Keith Hancock, *Country and Calling,* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), pp. 178-208.

[46]Hancock's post-war projects included a two-volume biography of the South African soldier-statesman Jan Smuts, completed in the years following his return to Australia in 1957. As well as being involved in the creation of Howard's position, Hancock was one of the electors to the Chichele Professorship of the History War at Oxford University in 1946, choosing Cyril Falls for the chair which had been unfilled since the retirement of Ernest Swinton in 1939, in preference to Liddell Hart. See Hew Strachan, 'The Study of War at Oxford 1909-2009', in Christopher Hood, Desmond King, and Gillian Peele, eds., *Forging a Discipline: A Critical Assessment of Oxford's Development of the Study of Politics and International Relations in Comparative Perspective*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 213-214.

century.[47] He later reflected that the lectures afforded him the opportunity to distil 'the essence of my thought' on the major problems of historical inquiry which had preoccupied him since 1919, amongst which war was one.[48] In the first of his lectures, Hancock considered the changing character of war over a long historical sweep. Beginning with consideration of British strategy stretching back into the eighteenth century, reminiscent of arguments about the British 'way in warfare', Hancock juxtaposed the historical rupture to major war presented by the dawn of the nuclear age with the apparent continuity of irregular war into the 1950s, concluding with a discussion of the challenges of nuclear confrontation. His observations included overt reference to canonical texts including Carl von Clausewitz's *On War*, Charles Callwell's *Small Wars*, and Bernard Brodie's *Strategy in the Missile Age*.[49] The driving question, he wrote in outline notes for his presentation, was 'do the hydrogen bomb and the rocket render the historical study of war irrelevant, or does there still survive some continuity of historical experience?' The answer, he suggested, was that 'a realistic and unemotional study of war is justified not only in itself, but as a necessary preliminary to the more difficult, but more important study of peace'.[50]

The careers and intellectual choices of Hancock and Webster demonstrate the degree to which Howard's approach to the historical study of war echoed convictions held more widely in the scholarly community at large, and within the University of London. For both men the Second World War brought to the fore the significance of war as a subject of historical scrutiny, to be pursued along broad rather than narrow lines. As Hancock had learned when he joined the civil official history project, in the war then in progress

> the armed forces nowadays were no more than the cutting edge of the nation at war and their history had no higher importance than that of munition making and agriculture, of shipping, land transport, mining and all the other civilian activities.[51]

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[47]Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University (hereinafter NBAC): Sir Keith Hancock Research Papers, P96/15/11. Eric Ashby to Hancock, 4 Feb 1957. In response to a request for a list of scholars to be invited to his lectures, Hancock included both Webster and Robbins. See NBAC P96/15/11. Hancock to Michael Roberts, 2 May 1960.

[48]William Keith Hancock, *Professing History,* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976), p. 66.

[49]William Keith Hancock, *Four Studies of War and Peace in this Century,* (Cambridge: CUP, 1961), pp. 1-32.

[50]NBAC, P96/16/18. 'WAR IN THIS CENTURY' outline note.

[51]Hancock, *Country and Calling*, pp. 196-7.

Both scholars also brought to their studies explicit engagement with the past in the context of the present which pre-dated their engagement with official history. Where Webster had made clear his commitment to historical education for the sake of future peace, Hancock reflected that his teaching in 1930s Birmingham on the subject of the origins of the First World War was enmeshed with his overt anti-appeasement stance and carried for his students 'both intellectual and moral relevance'.[52] Howard, then, was a beneficiary as much as he was a proselytiser, offering revelations about the history of war and its contemporary relevance which were more commonly held than is often supposed. Hancock, for example, argued for the contribution of the historian to the study of war in terms strikingly reminiscent of those advocated by Howard in his influential and oft-quoted essay on 'the use and abuse of military history'. He repudiated 'the common reproach against historians – that they are backward-looking people who foster the common human weakness of "preparing for the last war"', arguing instead that:

> The very opposite of this is true, for the good historian knows too much about past events to expect that they will ever repeat themselves mechanically. It is his constant endeavour to discover both the continuing and the contingent elements in human experience. He does not regard recorded history as a lesson book that contains all the answers. He does expect to find in it questions that are likely to be worth asking both now and in the future.[53]

Hancock and Webster thus both did more to aid the institutional revival of war studies at King's than to provide simple bureaucratic weight within the University of London. Their scholarship contributed to the growing academic credibility which the study of war and international affairs enjoyed during the 1930s and 1940s, and their roles in government and the official history programmes catalysed new approaches to the subject based upon extensive engagement with the conduct of the Second World War.

Pragmatic not programmatic: Howard after the establishment of War Studies

The third figure in Howard's triumvirate of influential figures exerted a different kind of influence. Like Hancock and Webster, the economist Lionel Robbins had combined scholarship with government duties during the Second World War, although in contrast to them he had also seen active service in the Great War.[54] Already an

[52]Hancock, *Professing History*, p. 143.
[53]Hancock, *Country and Calling*, p. 205.
[54]For Robbins' biography see Susan Howson, 'Robbins, Lionel Charles, Baron Robbins', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/31612. Accessed 29 June 2022. Also, Lionel Robbins, *Autobiography of an Economist,* (London: Macmillan, 1971)

eminent scholar by the outbreak of the Second World War, after 1945 Robbins' stature grew such that in 1961 he was appointed to chair a government committee tasked with looking at the future of higher education in the United Kingdom. The report that he produced in 1963 laid a foundation for the democratisation of university education in line with rising student numbers, offering recommendations on the form of institutions and the content of courses.[55]

For Howard, the timing of the Robbins report was fortuitous since, he noted, it advocated 'sweeping reform of syllabuses of existing ones [universities], involving the creation of "bold and exciting" new degrees. This was exactly what I had myself been doing.'[56] Yet Howard did not seek to capitalise on the opportunity the report presented to expand and embed war studies at the undergraduate level. Rather, during the same period in which Robbins' committee carried out its inquiry his attitude towards undergraduate study became increasingly unfavourable. In a memorandum written in the summer of 1962, in response to low enrolments and the decline in status of the BA General Degree, he advocated that war studies form part of the BSc (Econ) Degree.[57] He noted that specialising in war studies at the undergraduate level 'seems to the undergraduates to be undesirable too'. As a result, he considered that 'it therefore seemed to me that the place for it was embedded in the International Relations syllabus, among papers which would ensure that the candidates had been grounded in some firmer academic disciplines'.[58] Little had changed two years later when the Academic Board argued that War Studies was 'not suitable for undergraduate teaching, embracing as it does too many disciplines to be properly assimilated by the immature mind'. Instead, Howard proposed a new MA degree by examination, which would replace the existing MA degree by thesis – the only existing postgraduate war studies course, along with the PhD – and allow candidates to choose from a greater range of disciplinary and subject-focused papers.[59] The MA course that began in earnest the following year became, in the words of Brian Bond, 'the core or

[55]Robbins' work with the committee and his reflections on its report can be found in Robbins, *Autobiography*, pp. 272-8

[56]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 148.

[57]LHCMA, 1990/KDW/9. 'War Studies at the Undergraduate Level' M.E. Howard, 16 June 1962.

[58]LHCMA, 1990/KDW/9, Howard to G.L. Goodwin, 1 November 1962.

[59]LHCMA,1990/KDW/1. 'Proposals for an M.A. Degree and an Academic Diploma in War Studies', appended to Secretary to the Board of the Faculty of Arts to Prof Geoffrey Goodwin (copy), 22 July 1964. See also 'Draft Proposals for the Board of War Studies for the Institution of an M.A. Degree by Examination and an Academic Diploma in War Studies', M.E. Howard, 10 Feb 1964.

flagship of our teaching' for the next twenty-five years, bringing with it only graduate students and low numbers.[60]

Thus, while Howard manoeuvred adroitly to give War Studies permanency in the postgraduate sphere, he showed little appetite to take advantage of the Robbins report and subsequent reforms of UK higher education to make War Studies a major undergraduate course. Rather than seek to follow the vision that Aston had articulated in the 1920s, of a programme of instruction about war intended for a broad civic constituency, Howard pursued a more focused approach, which included attempts to revive closer links with the armed forces that presaged larger scale developments in military education at King's some thirty years later. Writing in 1965 he appeared to anticipate that a significant proportion of future MA students would be military officers, noting that Henry Hardman, recently appointed permanent secretary to the Ministry of Defence, was 'quite enthusiastic' about the masters programme, and that 'the services may take this up in a fairly big way'.[61] In part this reflected 'the need to improve the quality of the students taking the course' as 'the younger men coming to the Department shortly after taking their first degree have very much the status of second class citizens as the ablest of their peers go immediately into research.'[62] The legacy of the 'technical' education for those with a professional interest in the military, which Howard had criticised, thus endured.

This focus upon postgraduate instruction reflected a mix of intellectual and pragmatic factors, as well as an inclination towards working with more mature students. Nor was it wholly out of keeping with the tenor of the Robbins report, which placed particular emphasis on the expansion of postgraduate courses.[63] Nevertheless, it reflected the limits of Howard's ambition in pursuing war studies as a disciplinary endeavour, or to make that endeavour a life's work. For Howard 'War Studies' situated war as the referent object of study, but allowed for a disciplinary eclecticism that would build bridges between the traditionally narrow and technical confines of 'military history' or 'military studies' and a wider community of scholars working on issues related to conflict. This made for a 'catholic' approach, in keeping with that

[60]Bond, *Military Historian*, pp. 32-3. Members of the Department of War Studies continued to offer papers for extra-departmental programmes.
[61]LHCMA, LH 1/384, part V. Howard to Liddell Hart, 13 December 1965.
[62]KCA 1990/KDW/9. 'The MA and academic diploma in war studies: some proposals for discussion.' [no date]
[63]See *Report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins 1961-63,* (London: HM Stationary Office, October 1963), Chapter VIII – University Courses, pp. 87-106.
http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/robbins/robbins1963.html. Accessed 29 June 2022.

championed by Robbins and Webster, but it also meant scholarly co-habitation rather than a closer union.[64] As Howard wrote in a draft report for the Social Science Research Council in 1966, war studies was

> not a coherent field of study but a collection of different disciplines, each capable of far wider application. This is obviously true of such subjects as economics and public administration, but no less so of such apparently specialised studies as strategy, conflict studies and operational research, all of which have application in many fields other than international armed conflict.[65]

Howard was entirely comfortable with such an arrangement, not least because it allowed him to prioritise his own research agenda without hindrance. Although he admitted that in pursuing war studies he 'had to skim the surface of many disciplines without having the chance to thoroughly master any one' it was nonetheless as an historian that he continued to see himself and historical projects that he sought to pursue.[66]

Having fought for the institutional establishment of war studies during the 1950s and having overseen its creation during the 1960s, Howard left King's College London before the decade was over, taking a visiting position at Stanford prior to accepting a Fellowship at All Souls.[67] Although his departure in 1968 seemed abrupt to his colleagues, it came as the culmination of years of frustration at the university. Howard later reflected that he had 'acquired a deep affection for King's'.[68] Yet as early as 1961 he had offered his resignation to the College due to the lack of an imminent promotion and his desire to be free of the teaching and administrative responsibilities that prevented full focus on his work on the Official History of the Second World War. He was wary of becoming what he described as the 'God Professor', 'the permanent head of a department who condescended to lecture once a week and whose staff had been hand-picked from a court of dependent servile graduate-students', and by the mid-1960s was still more perturbed by the prospect that he might further climb the administerial ladder. 'If I remained in London' he wrote in his memoir, 'there seemed little prospect of my ever doing any serious work again.'[69] In a letter to Liddell Hart

[64]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 147.
[65]KCA 1990/KDW/3 – Folder: I.S.S. Study Group (Sponsored by S.S.R.C) "War Studies" research projects. Draft: Report of the Social Science Research Council Study Group on War Studies, December 1966.
[66]Howard, *Studies in War and Peace*, p. 12.
[67]The circumstances of his departure are recounted in Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 195-6 and Bond, *Military Historian*, p. 34.
[68]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 195.
[69]Ibid., pp. 182 and 195.

from 1961, he put it more bluntly: 'I have been here for fourteen years, and it really *isn't* the sort of place in which one wants to spend one's life.'[70] Howard was true to his word. After departing King's for his Oxford Fellowship, appointments as Chichele Professor of the History of War and Regius Professor of Modern History, followed by a final move to Yale in 1989, ensured that he did not return to a post at King's College London for the rest of his professional career.

The department that Howard left behind was small, consisting of its new head, the strategist Laurence Martin, the military sociologist Wolf Mendl, the military historian Brian Bond, and the departmental secretary June Walker. It would remain small for the next twenty years, retaining something of the essence of the model Howard had presided over before his departure. During this time Howard maintained direct connections with the department in the form of guest lectures and personal ties. Former graduate students of Howard's from Oxford now came to play a more significant role in the development of the department at King's, such as Beatrice Heuser and Lawrence Freedman. Indeed, it was the latter who took responsibility for, in Howard's words, transforming war studies into 'that vast empire…on both banks of the Thames' during the 1990s, marked at the outset of that decade by the creation of a new bachelor's degree in war studies and compounded by an extension into military education at its close.[71]

By the time that transformation took hold Howard had reached the end of his professional career. Although he would continue to write and publish until his death almost thirty years later, his retirement afforded the occasion to take stock of his scholarly impact. As the editors of his 1992 *festschrift* noted, Howard had maintained interests that were 'exceptionally wide-ranging', further remarking that 'He is unusual among academics in that he has made major contributions to two separate, though related, areas of study.' Tellingly, the authors defined these fields as military history and strategic studies, not 'war' studies.[72] This was an apt conclusion to draw from Howard's scholarly pursuits since the 1960s. Although his first book, co-authored with John Sparrow, had been a regimental history, he went on to publish acclaimed works of military history, the most widely read English language translation of Clausewitz's *On War*, and a number of concise collections of essays such as *War and the Liberal Conscience*. He wrote widely on the impact of nuclear weapons upon strategy and international affairs, was a prolific reviewer of books, and served as an official historian of the Second World War.

[70]LHCMA, LH 1/384, part III. Howard to Liddell Hart, 16 February 1961.
[71]Howard, 'Military history and the history of war', p. 13.
[72]Freedman, Hayes, and O'Neill, *War, Strategy, and International Politics*, p. *v*.

Displaying such range and acuity, Howard's work was frequently lauded as rigorous in ways that were often ahead of their time, as compellingly written and conceived, and as reflecting deep insight. This did not mean, however, that Howard necessarily felt that he accomplished all of his scholarly ambitions. Indeed, throughout the 1960s and 1970s his desire – and part of his motivation for leaving King's – was to secure adequate research time to focus on a significant research project on 'the changing nature of war' during the period of 'transformation which occurred between the battle of Waterloo and that of the Somme a hundred years later'.[73] This agenda, which might have led to a more substantive scholarly treatment of war as a historical phenomenon than Howard produced in his lifetime, was frustrated by new opportunities and diversions that further underpinned Howard's pragmatic approach to scholarship. In terms of historical work, this came in the form of his contributions to the official history of the Second World War, the first volume on grand strategy and the second on intelligence.[74] It was also a consequence of his interest in contemporary problems of strategy and defence. The pursuit of such projects eventually afforded him a means of escape to Oxford as a Fellow in Higher Defence Studies, but the path that led away from the Strand began in the mid-1950s with Howard's willingness to put himself forward as a commentator on issues of the day. Howard's membership of Chatham House led to substantive work in the realm of international affairs, most notably as a founder member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies.[75] Despite this, Howard's identity as a historian underpinned his *oeuvre*, informing his perspective on war from each of the many angles he sought to illuminate the subject. By viewing history as essential to understanding war, Howard established a 'particularly British' approach to contemporary conflict, predicated upon a dialogue between historic and modern war.[76] Yet more united his thought than its disciplinary basis. As Hew Strachan has observed, 'very often the "new" military history has seemed to be the history of war with the fighting left out. Michael's interest has been too firmly rooted in *the phenomenon of war itself* for this to have been an attractive route for him to go down.'[77] Indeed, he retained his belief that war was a vital and coherent object of study into the latter stages of his life. As he argued in a critique of the global war on terror in 2008, 'in international politics "war" has a specific meaning'. He continued, presciently, to reflect on the repercussions of depicting Western actions in the language of war:

> However well they may behave, however many sweets they give children, foreign soldiers can never be very popular, certainly not for very long, and

[73]Howard, *Studies in War and Peace*, pp. 11-12.
[74]Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 150-2, 188-191, Publication of the latter volume was blocked until 1990.
[75]Ibid, pp. 157-165.
[76]Strachan, 'Michael Howard and the dimensions of military history', p. 543.
[77]Ibid., p. 545. Our italics.

> certainly not if they believe they are 'at war' and are therefore immune from normal civil restraints. It then becomes all too easy for their opponents to depict them as the agents not of a global civil society, but of an alien hegemony, and condemn those who support them as traitors.[78]

and

> Thus, however much the agenda of 'broadening' the study of war away from the battlefield was necessary and beneficial, at the center of the history of war there must lie the study of military history – that is, the study of the central activity of the armed forces, that is, *fighting*.[79]

Yet much as this conviction and focus united Howard's own work and thought, it remains far from commonly accepted amongst scholars who work on aspects of conflict, or indeed within the Department of War Studies itself.[80] In the twenty-first century Howard's name is invoked on the one hand by those critical of the suggestion that the history of war constitutes a 'discipline of its own', and on the other by those who contend that establishing a disciplinary basis for 'war studies' is a necessary step in advancing the field.[81] His image supports attempts to sustain the 'broadening' of military history away from the conduct of armies, yet remains cherished by 'operational' military historians.[82] In part this reflects the inherent flexibility, even ambiguity, with which war studies, as department and idea, assumed its modern form and label under Howard in the 1950s. The philosophy of disciplinary inclusivity

[78]Michael Howard, 'Are we at war?' in Michael Howard and Benjamin Rhode, *An Historical Sensibility: Sir Michael Howard and The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1958-2019* (London: Routledge, 2020), p. 371.
[79]Howard, 'Military history and the history of war', p. 20.
[80]On the broader point see Tarak Barkawi and Shane Brighton, 'Powers of War: Fighting, Knowledge, and Critique', *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 2011), especially pp. 127-29. On the Department see Mark Condos and Gavin Rand, 'Coercion and Conciliation at the Edge of Empire: State-Building and its Limits in Waziristan, 1849-1914', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (2018), pp. 695-718; Claudia Aradau, 'Security, War, Violence – The Politics of Critique: A Reply to Tarak Barkawi', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 2012, pp. 112-23.
[81]On the former point see Kim Wagner, 'Seeing like a soldier: the Amritsar massacre and the politics of military history' in Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless, eds., *Decolonization and Conflict: Colonial Comparisons and Legacies,* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017); on the latter see Barkawi and Brighton, 'Powers of War', p. 132.
[82]Website for 2022 KCL lecture series 'New Directions in the History of War and Violence' https://www.kcl.ac.uk/events/series/new-directions-in-the-history-of-war-and-violence. Accessed 29 June 2022.

Howard bequeathed had clear and long-lasting benefits, yet the fact that war studies remains a 'non-discipline' means that the rich variety of outstanding scholarship produced on conflict can often amount to less than the sum of its parts, 'very helpful but a little bewildering' as Howard described the referees' comments on his Oxford *Very Short Introduction to the First World War*.[83]

Conclusion

In this article we have sought to recontextualise Sir Michael Howard's role in the establishment of the Department of War Studies. We have argued that Howard's achievement in placing War Studies on a firm institutional footing needs to be understood less as a revolutionary breakthrough than as the culmination of fitful progress towards similar goals over the preceding century, and that in the aftermath of the Second World War there was significant support for the academic study of war within the University of London. We have demonstrated that Howard's approach to the historical study of war was reflective of ideas held by key individuals who offered him support, notably Sir Charles Webster and Sir Keith Hancock. Furthermore, we have shown that Howard's conception of 'war studies' was always pragmatic, rather than disciplinary – perhaps with the exception of an insistence that history and an historical mode of thought were important to the study of war. Accepting Howard's lack of allegiance to War Studies as an academic project helps explain his willingness to leave the department he founded before the end of the 1960s, to pursue academic projects and hold posts variously focused on defence studies, strategic studies and history.

By proposing such arguments, we have engaged in a conscious attempt to pierce some of the mythology that surrounds Howard and his legacy. Such a course is liable to draw criticism, yet it is also in keeping with Howard's approach to mythology and to his own mentor, Liddell Hart. When Howard began to carve out a unique academic role for himself in the 1950s, Liddell Hart offered crucial guidance. Howard was fulsome in his praise for Liddell Hart, and the two men's correspondence of that era displays a genuine warmth and interchange of ideas.[84] Yet he did not refrain from making critical assessments of Liddell Hart's work and practice. In a BBC interview given whilst Liddell Hart was still alive, Howard reflected that his subject 'does not suffer fools gladly and his definition of a fool is a very catholic one. He is merciless with anything that he regards as cant.'[85] After Liddell Hart's death Howard was still more critical of a number of his ideas, not least the 'British Way in Warfare', which

[83]Howard, 'Military history and the history of war', p. 83.
[84]On Liddell Hart's impact upon Howard see Holden Reid, 'The Legacy of Liddell Hart'
[85]LHCMA, LH 1/384. 'Contribution by Michael Howard to 'Liddell Hart' Feature', undated.

he rejected as 'anachronistic survivals from some earlier and happier age'.[86] Yet if he felt justified in making such strident critiques, it was because he knew that they aligned with Liddell Hart's own insistence on rigour. As he explained, 'Nobody stressed more often the need for ruthlessly dispassionate analysis as a basis for both history and theory; but he himself sought to escape from the dilemma of his generation by what was, in the context of his times, little more than rationalization of nostalgic wishful thinking.'[87]

In attempting to recontextualise Howard's role and activities in the early decades of his career we offer our observations in a spirit which we hope Sir Michael would have approved. Any attempt to re-appraise Howard's influence must acknowledge the towering legacy his life left upon his students, colleagues, and friends. Yet an account of the development of war studies and of the institutional and intellectual approach formulated by Howard during this critical period that accepts uncritically some of the things we think we know about the origins and evolution of war studies would amount to a most inappropriate tribute. In his treatment of the history of war, Howard was keen to underline the persistence of historical myth; of recognising the significance of its function whilst exposing its variance from historical reality. As he observed, 'myth does have a useful social function', but the role of the historian 'must inevitably involve a critical examination of the "myth"'.[88] Such critical examination must surely extend also to the historian, not just the things that they studied.

[86]Howard, *The Causes of Wars*, p. 186.
[87]Ibid, p. 206.
[88]Ibid, pp. 189-90.

Revisiting the Translators and Translations of Clausewitz's *On War*

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ABSTRACT
The English translations of Carl von Clausewitz's On War from that of Colonel John James Graham (1873) through Matthijs Jolles (1943) to the most commonly read today by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (1976) differ in readability and reliability. Although the latter is widely considered as the most accessible and has become accepted as the modern 'standard', it contains a number of unfortunate mistranslations. If On War is to reflect more faithfully what Clausewitz meant while remaining relevant for today it demands a new translation of a text that holds many challenges.

Introduction

In 2014 a remarkable little academic spat between two noted scholars of Carl von Clausewitz and of his most famous work, *Vom Kriege* (*On War*), took place in the pages of the *Journal of Military History (JMH)*. Jon Sumida, author of the enigmatic *Decoding Clausewitz: A New Approach to On War* (2008)[1], offered a comprehensive index of Clausewitz's *On War* in the January edition of the *JMH*.[2] It took the form of a 'concordance', that is, in Sumida's words, a 'list of distinctive phrases or summary statements of particular propositions in Clausewitz's treatise, organized by subject'.[3] These watchwords are cross-referenced to the books, chapters and pages of *On War*

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[1]Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *Decoding Clausewitz: A New Approach to* On War, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2008), references in this article are to the updated paperback edition of 2011.

[2]Jon Sumida, 'A Concordance of Selected Subjects in Carl von Clausewitz's On War', *Journal of Military History*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (January 2014), pp. 271-331.

[3]As explained by Jon Sumida in an expanded online version of the above article titled 'On Indexing on War', available at https://www.clausewitzstudies.org/bibl/Sumida-ConcordanceToOnWar.pdf . Accessed 21 May 2021. p.1.

within the 'standard translation' of Michael Howard and Peter Paret (1976 & 1984).[4] On a very few occasions Sumida noted 'problems … where the result [of translation] is text that misrepresents significantly Clausewitz's position'. Specifically, he called out a 'translation error' concerning the phrase 'mit dem Kriegs- und Feldzugsplan', which Howard and Paret had rendered as 'with the plan of campaign', so omitting the aspect of 'war planning' contained in the word 'Krieg'.[5]

In response, Paret submitted a note, 'Translation, Literal or Accurate', published in the July 2014 edition of the *JMH*.[6] Addressing Sumida's criticism, he stated that Michael Howard and he 'believed that Clausewitz's figurative phrase, which blends war plan and campaign plan, should not be translated verbatim'. Noting that this represented 'a small detail in Clausewitz's long work', it touched nevertheless 'on issues that illustrate some basic realities in the translation of complex texts'.[7] Hence in addition to defending his translation undertaken with Howard, Paret welcomed the opportunity to offer 'some comments on the nature of translating a text that is intellectually demanding and includes syntactically complicated passages'.[8] This observation by the author of *Clausewitz and the State* (1976), an essential text to understanding *On War* in its historical context, is surely one of under-statement.[9]

It has long been recognized that Clausewitz's *On War*, a magnum opus of eight books originally published in three volumes in 1832-34, whether in its original German or in translation, is a 'challenging' work, one that needs to be studied carefully rather than simply read. Phillip Meilinger, for example, describes *On War* as 'a difficult read, partly because it has come down to us as a work in progress', and that the 'bulk of this tome is a rough draft'.[10] Thus it is hardly surprising that Clausewitz's unfinished and unrefined text, for all its brilliant erudition, contains many inconsistencies and apparent contradictions, which remain in translation. Furthermore, as with any historical work, *On War* needs to be placed in the political, cultural and social context of the period in

[4]Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976 and 1984). References in this article are to the paperback edition of 2019.
[5]Sumida, 'A Concordance', p. 327; Howard and Paret, p. 180.
[6]Peter Paret, 'Translation, Literal or Accurate', *Journal of Military History*, Vol. 78, No. 3 (July 2014), pp. 1077-1080.
[7]Ibid., p. 1078.
[8]Ibid., p. 1077.
[9]Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State: The Man, His Theories and His Times,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976). References in this article are to the Princeton University Press paperback edition of 2007.
[10]Phillip S. Meilinger, 'Busting the Icon: Restoring Balance to the Influence of Clausewitz', *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Fall 2007), pp. 118-119.

which it was written, generally assumed to be 1818-30. After nearly two centuries, it remains open to many questions, interpretations and judgements concerning meaning, purpose and influence. An enduring fascination in this work, not least amongst an international academic and military readership, has generated a vast literature.

Lengthy introductions have been added to *On War*, both in German and in foreign language editions. For example, in addition to five pages of 'preliminary remarks', the introduction to the standard German text, edited by Werner Hahlweg, runs to 172 pages.[11] Titled 'A View of Clausewitz Then and Now', it provides a detailed description and analysis of the historical context of, and reaction to, *On War* since its first publication in three volumes in 1832-34 to 1972, the year of publication of the 18th edition. For the 19th edition published in 1980, Hahlweg added an eighty-seven page-long afterword of 'Further Developments and Changes in the View of Clausewitz since 1972'.[12] He also provides sixty-three pages of detailed notes on the text. Hence for those who can read German, the Hahlweg edition remains an essential resource for the detailed study of *On War*.

The Howard-Paret translation is prefaced with three essays, 'The Genesis of On War', 'The Influence of Clausewitz' and 'The Continuing Relevance of *On War*' by Peter Paret, Michael Howard and Bernard Brodie respectively, amounting to fifty-five pages.[13] Sumida's monograph *Decoding Clausewitz* is devoted to offering a 'new approach' to interpreting Clausewitz, one in which 'propositions that at first appear to be contradictory or otherwise anomalous cease to be problematical when they are related to other elements of Clausewitz's wider analysis'.[14] Thus it would appear that *On War* demands an extraordinary amount of elucidation. This requirement may reflect not only the enduring importance and influence of the work, but also, perhaps, indicate the inherent difficulties of the text, such as complexity and a lack of coherence, and those of its translations.

Christopher Bassford's *Clausewitz in English: The Reception of Clausewitz in Britain and America* (1994) provides, *inter alia*, a comprehensive account of Clausewitz's translators and translations. Unsurprisingly, the present article refers to Bassford's scholarship. Amongst the more recent literature on Clausewitz and *On War*, Beatrice

[11]General von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 19th ed., ed. Werner Hahlweg, (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmlers Verlag, 1980). Unless otherwise stated, all references to the German-language text of *On War* are to this edition.
[12]*Ibid*., Werner Hahlweg, 'Das Clausewitzbild Einst und Jetzt mit textkritischen Anmerkungen', pp. 1-172; and 'Nachrede zur 19. Auflage: Weiterentwicklung und Differenzierung des Clausewitzbildes seit 1972', pp. 1253-1340.
[13]Howard and Paret, pp. 3-26; 27-44; 45-58.
[14]Sumida, *Decoding Clausewitz*, p. xiv.

Heuser has helped countless students with *Reading Clausewitz* (2002) and in her introduction to an abridgement (2007) of the Howard-Paret translation of *On War*.[15] Helpfully, the condensed edition includes a set of explanatory notes which are notably absent in the complete Howard-Paret translation. Rather surprisingly, although being remarkably well qualified for the task, Heuser offers few comments on, let alone improvements to, this translation. Yet inaccuracies and infelicities remain. Several of these are analysed by Jan Willem Honig in his insightful chapter in *Clausewitz in the Twentieth-First Century* (2007), edited by Hew Strachan and Andreas Herberg-Rothe.[16] In particular, Honig highlights the 'liberal approach to translating terms' in the Howard-Paret translation, a matter alluded to by Sumida above, and one we shall return to later in more detail.[17] Significantly, in his foreword 'A History of the Howard-Paret Translation' to Strachan's and Herberg-Rothe's work, Michael Howard conceded graciously that 'there still remained problems of translation that we had failed to iron out'.[18]

In his commendably succinct biography of Clausewitz (2008), Hew Strachan added a useful prefatory note on translations before addressing in his main text some of the problems in translating and interpreting *On War*.[19] Donald Stoker's lengthier *Clausewitz: His Life and Work* (2014) not only adds much to our knowledge of Clausewitz's military career, but also provides some valuable commentary on his writing, and specifically on the principal elements of his thinking expressed in *On War*.[20] Stoker, however, does not provide any new opinions on the quality of the translations of Clausewitz's work into English. In a deftly-argued article 'A Criterion for Settling Inconsistencies in Clausewitz's *On War*' (2014), Eugenio Diniz and Domício Proença Júnior, while offering a few observations on translation, focus on another issue.[21] They make a detailed case for dating Clausewitz's *undated* prefatory note to *before* the dated

[15]Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz,* (London: Pimlico, 2002); and Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, abridged with an Introduction and Notes by Beatrice Heuser, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[16]Jan Willem Honig, 'Clausewitz's *On War*: Problems of Text and Translation' in Hew Strachan and Andreas Herberg-Rothe, eds., *Clausewitz in the Twenty-First Century,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 57-73.
[17]Ibid., p. 63.
[18]Strachan and Herberg-Rothe, p. vi.
[19]Hew Strachan, *Clausewitz's On War: A Biography,* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2007), see pp. ix-xi for 'A Note on Translations and Editions'.
[20]Donald Stoker, *Clausewitz: His Life and Work,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), see pp. 262-277 for a summary of the principal precepts of *On War*.
[21]Eugenio Diniz and Domício Proença Júnior, 'A Criterion for Settling Inconsistencies in Clausewitz's *On War*', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 37, Nos. 6-7 (2014), pp. 879-902.

one of 1827, thereby establishing a 'hierarchy of revision' by Clausewitz of his unfinished text. Hew Strachan returned to the fray with the King's College London Annual Michael Howard Lecture for 2020, 'Michael Howard and Clausewitz', which stimulated much of the thinking of the present author.[22]

With this brief bibliographic discourse in mind, this article seeks to offer some observations on the text, translators and translations of Clausewitz's *On War*, noting some of the challenges faced in turning complex early nineteenth-c-entury German into readable modern English. After summarising some of the generic challenges of translating, and more specifically those from German into English, it highlights the accomplishments, differences between, and not least a number of outstanding difficulties in the three main translations still in print. Other than Howard-Paret, these are by Colonel James John Graham (1873), lightly revised by Colonel Frederic Natusch Maude in 1908, and by Professor Otto Jolie Matthijs Jolles (1943). It is necessary to note, however, that these translations are *not* based on the same German edition of *On War*.[23] As Howard and Paret observe, upward of 'several hundred alterations of the text' were introduced in the second (1853) edition of *On War*.[24] As we shall see later, at least one of these emendations adjusted Clausewitz's sense and purpose. It was not until the sixteenth (1952) German-language edition that Clausewitz's *Urtext* (original wording) was restored in full by Werner Hahlweg.

Accepting this important caveat, this article offers some comparative tables of translation, inviting readers to judge for themselves which text offers the best balance between literal accuracy and comprehension. In particular, it demonstrates that the most famous quotation of *On War* – 'War is merely the continuation of policy by other means' – reflects two apparently minor but nonetheless significant mistranslations. By way of a further case study, the article examines a specific term of Clausewitz, namely *Hauptschlacht* (main battle), described in Chapters 9-11 in Book 4 of *On War*, and discusses why Howard and Paret may have missed some of the author's meaning and intention here. The article concludes with a plea for a new translation of *On War*.

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[22]Delivered online on 19 November 2020; see the derived article, Hew Strachan, 'Michael Howard and Clausewitz', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2022), pp. 143–160.

[23]See Hahlweg, pp. 1362-64, for a comprehensive list of the nineteen editions of *Vom Kriege* published from 1832-34 to 1980.

[24]Howard and Paret, p. 608, fn 1. Examples of altered (emended) text are to be found in the 4th Edition of *Vom Kriege*, edited by *Oberst* [Colonel] W. von Scherff, published in Berlin by F. Schneider & Co. in 1880. This useful reference edition of *On War* is available courtesy of the HathiTrust Digital Library at https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015014748928&view=1up&seq=1. Accessed 4 July 2022.

The Challenges of Translation

Within the study of linguistics, the field of translation studies has become a specialist academic discipline and a course subject available at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. As with any other branch of study, it has developed its own particular methodology and terminology.[25] While much of this corpus of learning may be unfamiliar to the general reader of Clausewitz in translation, some of its most important considerations are helpful in describing the difficulties that translators face and in explaining the variations that may exist between different translations of the same text.

The fundamental tests of any translation are its reliability and readability: achieving balance and harmony between both is the goal of the translator. In general, translation can best be viewed as a two-stage process rather than as a singular product. It rests on a translator comprehending the original (source) text and then rendering it into the desired foreign language (target) text.[26] Throughout it requires interpretation and judgement as to how both message and meaning can be transferred as seamlessly as possible from one language to another. Translators seek both *semantic* and *pragmatic* equivalence, addressing content and style respectively, giving due regard to the aspirations of the original author and expectations of the intended readership in translation.[27] Yet, as one specialist work on translation acknowledges, a 'crucial point' lies in 'deciding what constitutes the necessary degree of equivalence or resemblance' between the original and translated texts. Moreover, 'different translation tasks and genres require different degrees of equivalence'.[28] While all serious translators seek to remain as close as possible to the original text, there is a degree of latitude in what represents a 'faithful' or 'loyal' translation, usually expressed as being as either 'literary' (very close or 'conservative') or 'free' (less close or 'liberal').

Translators, however, are torn typically in a Janus-faced manner, drawn backwards towards the source text while simultaneously looking forward to the translation. Hence there are inevitably dilemmas and difficult choices to be made in respecting the original while meeting the demands of the new in all but the simplest of translations. In sum, to produce a 'good' translation, translators need to have 'knowledge of the two languages involved … and of the subject matter, stylistic competence and

[25]The following observations are largely, but not exclusively, based on Sonia Colina, *Fundamentals of Translation,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); and Juliane House, *Translation: the Basics,* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2018).
[26]Colina, p. 4 and House, p. 10.
[27]House, p. 10.
[28]Colina, p. 18.

knowledge of the original author's intention'.[29] Imparting both the sense and spirit of the original author places great demands on the translator's accuracy and fluency in the languages concerned, and due consideration for, if not empathy with, the reader in translation. Any translation, however, is also shaped by function, or what is the translator trying to accomplish. In turn, the process of translation can be guided by 'extra-linguistic' or 'situational' factors, such as the anticipated audience to be addressed, and the motives of the translator(s) for undertaking the translation in the first place.[30] Hence both the source text and the work of translating must be viewed in the contexts of aim, time and place. Thus challenges abound in translating a complex theoretical historical work such as *On War*.

Historically, two Germans have made important contributions to the theory and practice of translation, one from the Protestant Reformation, the other a contemporary of Carl von Clausewitz. In 1530, Dr Martin Luther (1483–1546) published his views on translations. In his famous 'Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen' (Open Letter on Translating) he defended his translation of the New Testament from Latin and Greek into High German against his 'papist' critics who had complained about his liberal approach. While striving to 'take great care to keep close to the [original] text and not to stray so far from it', Luther was not afraid to render his translation into understandable and sensible German vernacular, avoiding a more traditional word-for-word method.[31]

Nearly three centuries later, on 24 June 1813, the German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher gave a long address in the prestigious Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences in Berlin. In his 'Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens' (On the Different Methods of Translating), he articulated many of the problems facing translators. In particular, he described the challenge facing 'the genuine translator', who wants to bring those two completely separated persons, his author and his reader, truly together, and who would like to bring the latter to an understanding and

[29]House, p. 13.
[30]Colina, pp. 43-45.
[31]From a facsimile and English translation by Howard Jones of Luther's 'Open Letter on Translating' available at https://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/taylor-reformation/an-open-letter-on-translating/ . Accessed 17 May 2022. For an alternative translation by Jennifer Tanner and an explanation of the significance of Luther's approach to translation, see Daniel Weissbort & Astradu Eysteinsson (eds.), *Translation—Theory and Practice: A Historical Reader,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) pp. 57-67. For the German original text, see Hans Joachim Störig, *Das Problem des Übersetzens,* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963), pp. 14-32.

enjoyment of the former as correct and as complete as possible without inviting him to leave the sphere of his mother tongue—what roads are open to him?[32]

In response, Schleiermacher explored how might the reader of the translation understand, if not empathise with, the original author. He offered two methods: 'Either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible, and moves the author towards him'.[33] In other words, does the translator associate him or herself more with the author's original syntax and style or with that of his or her reader? Schleiermacher offered two complementary approaches in resolving this dichotomy. The first is to *paraphrase* the source text by expressing the meaning using different words to achieve greater clarity. While this process is presumed often to be one of condensing and simplifying, it is not necessarily so: the translator may also need to expand on the original text in order to make better sense of it in another language. The other approach is to *imitate*: copying as far as possible the cadence and style of the source text in the translation.[34] Both methods require careful interpretation of the original and typically a degree of re-wording in translation.

To the present writer, a crude, but it is to be hoped helpful, analogy comes to mind here. In a similar manner to that observed on stage and in film drama, is a 'foreign' person given an appropriately distinctive accent in the common language being spoken to impart some added authenticity to the character being portrayed? Or do we prefer to hear the spoken word untainted? For all the gaps in context, language and time, can we hear the author such as Clausewitz speaking to us today in translation? Does it sound – or read – 'right' in chosen lexicon, rhythm and tone? Answering that question must depend to some extent on the knowledge of the contemporary reader with

[32]This translation is taken from André Lefevere, *Translating Literature: The German Tradition from Luther to Rosenzweig,* (Assen and Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1977), pp 67-89, considerable extracts of which are reproduced in Weissbort & Eysteinsson, pp. 206-209. This quote is taken from the latter, p. 207. Comparison with the German original reproduced in Störig, *Das Problem des Übersetzens*, p. 47, however, reveals an interesting example of mistranslation. Schleiermacher declared: 'Aber nun der eigentliche Uebersetzer [sic], der diese beiden ganz getrennten Personen, seinen Schriftsteller und seinen Leser, wirklich einander zuführen, und dem letzten, ohne ihn jedoch aus dem Kreise seiner Muttersprache heraus zu nöthingen [sic], zu einem möglichst richtigen und vollständigen Verständniß und Genuß des ersten verhelfen will, was für Wege kann er hiezu [sic] einschlagen?' In this text Lefevere has translated 'nöthigen' (*nötigen* in modern German spelling) as 'inviting' in English, instead of 'forcing', so changing Schleiermacher's original emphasis quite significantly.

[33]Weissbort & Eysteinsson, p. 207; Störig, p. 47.

[34]Weissbort & Eysteinsson, p. 207; Störig, pp. 46-47.

regard to the background and intentions of the author of the source work. Arguably, the greater this understanding, coupled with some awareness of the original language and terminology (particularly for a specialist text), the more familiar and 'friendly' the translated work will appear.

Yet the degree of difficulty in translating also rests on the width and depth of the 'translation gap' to be bridged. Although two languages can be close genealogically, that does not mean necessarily that the grammars, idioms and vocabularies concerned are proximate enough to facilitate an easy literal translation. Both languages may have developed in a divergent manner during the intervening period between the composition in the original language and reading in translation. Translating literary German into English presents its own particular problems. As one specialist teaching text advises, although the two languages share 'many lexical roots as members of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family', German and English are 'syntactically rather different and [one] should be prepared to make a number of grammatical changes in … translations, particularly in relation to word order'.[35] A more liberal translation, however, may involve some more profound deviations from the original that affect adversely its reliability. Therein lies the debate as to what constitutes a really 'good' translation, one, ideally, that is equally sympathetic and 'true' to author and reader alike.

Before we examine the translations of *On War* in any detail, we also need to consider the necessary proficiency or skills required of its translators. Within the field of translation studies, this has become a rather complex area, one based on three 'competencies'. Apart from the obvious and fundamentally necessary linguistic ability, both 'knowledge competence' (understanding the subject matter and background of the source text) and 'transfer competence' (understanding the contextual requirements of the specific translation task at hand) are required.[36] An ideal translator needs to combine a specialist knowledge of the source language, text and context with a more general ability to render it in a readable form for the target audience in another language. Thus to translate *On War* effectively, one should expect the translator concerned to be not only very proficient in German and well-practised in the process of translation, but also to be cognizant of the art and terminology of war. As much has evolved since Clausewitz's period of writing, one largely reflecting Napoleonic warfare, the latter requirement demands both historical and contemporary understanding of military affairs.

[35]Margaret Rogers and Michael White, *Thinking German Translation. A Course in Translation Method: German to English*, (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 3rd edn., 2020), p. 21.

[36]This is a much simplified summary of the topic, one based on Colina, pp. 31-33.

Principal Translators and Translations of Clausewitz's *On War*:
J J Graham (1873) and F. N. Maude (1908)

The first complete translation of *Vom Kriege* to appear in English was that of Colonel John James Graham (1808–83) in 1873, based on the third German edition of 1867/69. Published in London by N. Trübner & Co., all three volumes of *On War* were contained in one work, together with an appendix containing Clausewitz's earlier 'Summary of Instruction' (also known as the 'Principles of War').[37] Apart from a 'Brief Memoir of General Clausewitz' and a few, very brief, footnotes, Graham offered nothing else to guide his readers. One might well ask why and how did this translation come about? Graham's qualifications in German, his previous experience in translation, and prior interest in Clausewitz's work, if any, are unknown. From entering Sandhurst in 1822 until going on half pay twenty years later, his military career, largely as an infantry officer, was undistinguished. He achieved some temporary prominence during the Crimean War when he served in 1855 as the military secretary to the commander of the British 'Turkish Contingent', Lieutenant General Robert John Hussey Vivian. On selling his commission in 1858, Graham left the Army for good.[38] As Christopher Bassford has noted, other than timing, 'which may well be coincidental', there is 'no contemporary evidence … that the translation of *Vom Kriege* was motivated by [recent] German military successes' in the Wars of Unification (1864-71), or through 'the praise of Clausewitz' by Moltke the Elder.[39] Perhaps Graham thought that a translation of Clausewitz would build on his two previous major works, *Elementary History of the Progress of the Art of War* (1858) and *Military Ends and Moral Means* (1864), and so enhance his reputation. While Graham's motivation remains a matter of conjecture, surely he must have been disappointed by the sales of his translation. These were exceedingly small and slow: of the 254 copies printed in 1873 and a further 440 in a reprint of 1877, 572 remained unsold in 1885.[40]

Colonel F N Maude (1854–1933) was another obscure, and now largely forgotten, British Army officer. Commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1870 via the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, he graduated from the Army's Staff College at Camberley in 1891. A more prolific author than Graham, he wrote extensively on military matters. His historical works included a series of studies of the Napoleonic

[37]The first three volumes of Clausewitz's posthumously published work constituted *On War*. *Vom Kriege*, Volume I: Books 1-4; Volume II: Books 5-6; Volume III: Books 7-8 and the 'Summary of Instruction given by the Author to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince in the Years 1810, 1811, and 1812'. All this material was first made available in English in General Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Colonel J. J. Graham, (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1873).
[38]Biographical details from Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, p. 56.
[39]Ibid.
[40]Ibid., p. 57.

Wars, namely regarding the Ulm, Jena and Leipzig campaigns of 1805, 1806 and 1813 respectively. Among his more contemporary books, he wrote: *Voluntary Versus Compulsory Service* (1897); *Cavalry: Its Past and Future* (1903); *Notes on the Evolution of Infantry Tactics* (1905) and *War and the World's Life* (1907). As Brian Holden Reid has noted, Maude's 'prime concern lay in gauging the impact of scientific modes of thought and organization not only on the conduct of war but also on the training of soldiers for it'.[41] Significantly, he acted as a mentor to the young J F C Fuller (1878-1966), later to become one of the United Kingdom's leading military thinkers of the twentieth century, encouraging him to read Clausewitz.[42]

Maude is remembered chiefly for his 1908 edition of *On War*. It is not known, however, what drew him to this subject other than a desire to highlight the importance of Clausewitz's thinking, method and influence at a time of increasing tensions in Europe. In his polemical introduction to *On War*, for example, Maude claimed that Clausewitz's work 'reveals "War" stripped of all accessories, as the exercise of force for the attainment of a political object, unrestrained by any law save that of expediency, and thus gives the key to the interpretation of German political aims, past, present and future'.[43]

In his 'new and revised edition' of *On War*, Maude decided to revert to three separate volumes, thus losing the convenience of Graham's original translation in one. While retaining Graham's memoir about Clausewitz, other than his new introduction he added a set of notes. While the former is only of historical interest today, Maude's observations on Clausewitz's text, although many of which are now dated, do provide the odd flash. For example, in response to Clausewitz's view whether 'combat is to be avoided for want of sufficient force' at the close of *On War*, Book 3, Chapter 8, 'Superiority of Numbers', Maude noted '… we have not yet, in England, arrived at a correct appreciation of the value of superior numbers in War, and still adhere to the idea of an Army just "big enough", which Clausewitz has so unsparingly ridiculed'.[44] Writing only six years before the outbreak of the First World War, Maude's comment was remarkably prescient.

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[41]Brian Holden Reid, '"A Signpost That Was Missed"? Reconsidering British Lessons from the American Civil War', *Journal of Military History*, 70, 2 (April 2006), p. 394. Biographical details of Maude are taken from Holden Reid, ibid, pp. 394-395; bibliographic details are from Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, pp. 56-58 & 81-82.

[42]Coincidentally, Fuller was introduced to Maude around 1908. For Maude's influence on Fuller, See Brian Holden Reid, *J. F. C. Fuller: Military Thinker,* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 20-22 & 89-90.

[43]F. N. Maude, 'Introduction', Gen. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Colonel J. J. Graham, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1908), vol. i, p. v.

[44]Ibid, vol i., p. 198.

For all its merits, an anonymous British Army General Staff reviewer in the *Journal* of the Royal United Services Institution, criticised the Maude edition as a 'hurried reprint of Colonel Graham's work', which 'reproduces even his errors of spelling'.[45] At first sight, apart from differences in layout and typography, the translation looks identical to that of Graham. In fact, this is not entirely the case. A close examination of Chapter 1 (What is War?) of Book 1 (On the Nature of War), perhaps the most important and widely read text of *On War*, for example, reveals a number of changes. Admittedly, some of these are very minor, such as those concerning punctuation and the capitalisation of the first letters of proper nouns such as War, Will and Commander, and the substitution of 'viz.' for 'that is'. Yet Maude was not afraid to modify the text more significantly on occasion, as shown in Table 1 below.

No.	***Vom Kriege* Hahlweg (1980)**[46]	**Translations of *On War* into English**	
		Graham (1873)	**Maude vol. i (1908)**
1.1	Der Kampf zwischen Menschen besteht eigentlich aus zwei verschiedenen Elementen, dem *feindseligen Gefühl* und der *feindseligen Absicht*. (p. 193)	The fight between men consists really of two different elements, the hostile feeling and the hostile view. (p. 2)	Two motives lead men to War: instinctive hostility and hostile intention. (p. 3)
1.2	Wir haben gesagt: den Feind *wehrlos* zu machen sei das Ziel des kriegerischen Aktes, und wir wollen nun zeigen, daß dies wenigstens in der theoretischen Vorstellung notwendig ist. (p. 194)	We have already said that the aim of the action in war is to disarm the enemy, and we shall now show that this in theoretical conception at least is necessary. (p. 3)	We have already said that the aim of all action in War is to disarm the enemy, and we shall now show that this, theoretically at least, is indispensable. (p. 4)
1.3	Jede Veränderung dieser Lage, welche durch die fortgesetzte kriegerische Tätigkeit hervor-gebracht wird, muß also zu einer *noch nachteiligeren* führen, wenigstens in der Vorstellung. (p. 194)	Every change in this position which is produced by a continuation of the war, should therefore be a change for the worse, at least in idea. (p. 3)	Every change in this position which is produced by a continuation of the War, should therefore be a change for the worse. (p. 5)
1.4	Anders aber gestaltet sich alles, wenn wir aus der Abstraktion in die Wirklichkeit übergehen. (p. 196)	But everything takes a different form when we pass from abstractions to reality. (p. 4)	But everything takes a different shape when we pass from abstractions to reality. (p. 7)

[45]Anon., 'Recent Publications of Military Interest' [compiled by the General Staff, War Office], *Royal United Services Institution Journal*, vol. 52, no. 362 (April 1908), p. 585.
[46]A detailed check confirms that the German text of the 4th (Sherff) edition of 1880 remains unchanged in the 19th (Hahlweg) edition of 1980 quoted here except for some updates in German spelling. Hence it is safe to use the latter.

1.5	20. Es fehlt also nur noch der Zufall, um ihn zum Spiel zu machen, und dessen entbehrt er am wenigsten. (p. 207)	20. It therefore now only wants the element of chance to make of it a game, and in that element it is least of all deficient. (p. 10)	20. Therefore, the element of chance only is wanting to make of war a game, and in that element it is least of all deficient. (p. 19)
1.6	21. Wie durch seine objektive Natur, so wird der Krieg auch durch die subjektive zum Spiel. (p. 207)	As war is a game through its objective nature, so also is it through its subjective. (p. 10)	War is a game both objectively and subjectively. (p. 20)
1.7	Die Politik also wird den ganzen kriegerischen Akt durchziehen und einen fortwährenden Einfluß auf ihn ausüben, soweit es die Natur der in ihm explodierenden Kräfte zuläßt. (p. 210)	Policy therefore is interwoven with the whole action of war, and must exercise a continuous influence upon it as far as the nature of the forces exploding in it will permit. (p. 12)	Policy, therefore, is interwoven with the whole action of War, and must exercise a continuous influence upon it, as far as the nature of the forces liberated by it will permit. (p. 23)
1.8	Der Krieg ist also nicht nur ein wahres Chamäleon, weil er in jedem konkreten Falle seine Natur etwas ändert, … (p. 212)	War is, therefore, not only a true chameleon, because it changes it nature in some degree in each particular case, … (p. 13)	War is, therefore, not only chameleon-like in character, because it changes its colour in each particular case, … (p. 25)

Table 1 – A Comparison of Clausewitz's German with the English Texts of Graham and Maude

While Maude has 'tinkered' with Graham's text, his paraphrasing would appear from this particular selection of Clausewitz's text to have added little overall value to the translation. Hence the criticism by the same reviewer in 1908 that Maude had not attempted to 'attract readers by redrafting Colonel Graham's somewhat heavy and closely-following-the-German periods [sic]' seems fair.[47] Notwithstanding the limited scope of Maude's revisions to Graham's work, the English edition of 1908 perhaps should be more properly referred to as 'Graham-Maude'. It is easy to under-rate it as an overly literal and outdated translation that has been superseded by the more recent ones of Matthijs Jolles and Howard-Paret. While Christopher Bassford notes it has 'some obscurities and errors', he observes too that 'at some points it also more accurately reflects the sometimes lurid language of the German original'.[48] Jan Willem Honig is more fulsome in commending the Graham-Maude translation. In his introduction to its latest edition published by Barnes & Noble in 2004, he avers that 'its age makes it nearest in time to the original and thus it most closely approximates the intellectual climate of Clausewitz's world'. Moreover, in his view, the translation is 'faithful to the original in the sense of being literal and consistent in the rendering of Clausewitz's terminology. As a result, the structure and coherence of Clausewitz's

[47]Ibid.
[48]Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, p. 58.

thought come through more clearly than tends to be the case with the more modern translations.'[49] Howard and Paret, however, disagree, stating that Graham's translation 'apart from it dated style, contains a large number of inaccuracies and obscurities'.[50] In so doing, however, they posted a hostage to fortune as their own translation is open to such critique.

Matthijs Jolles (1943)

Another major English translation of *On War* did not appear until 1943. Both its translator and timing are significant. Otto Jolle Matthijs Jolles (1911–1968) was responsible for the first American translation of *On War*. Of Dutch-German parentage, he was brought up in Germany and studied at the universities of Leipzig, Hamburg and Heidelberg, receiving a doctorate in literature from the latter institution in 1933. As Christopher Bassford notes, 'his anti-Nazi politics got him into trouble'.[51] In consequence, Jolles emigrated to the United States via France and the United Kingdom, taking up a teaching position at the University of Chicago in 1938, now married with a British wife. As the Second World War threatened to engulf his new country, the university established an Institute of Military Studies in April 1941. Trusting that a new translation of *On War* would help burnish the university's credentials as a 'key defence industry', Jolles was entrusted with the task. His work was published by Random House in 1943, republished by the Infantry Journal Press in 1950. In 2000 the Modern Library of New York republished it, bundling *On War* with Sun-Tzu's *The Art of Warfare* under the cover title of *The Book of War*. It remains in print.[52]

Although opinions vary as to the quality of the Matthijs Jolles translation, it is generally held to be a distinct improvement over its predecessor. While remaining a literal translation, a simple comparison with that of Graham-Maude indicates it as both more accurate and readable. The Clausewitz Studies website considers Jolles's work to be

[49]Jan Willem Honig, 'Introduction to the New Edition', in Gen. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Colonel J. J. Graham, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004), p. xxiv. Unless otherwise stated, page references to Graham's translation, modified by Maude, are from this edition and referred to as 'Graham-Maude (2000)'.

[50]Howard and Paret (1984), p. xi. On the same page Howard and Paret date J. J. Graham's translation as 1874 when it was 1873, and likewise date incorrectly its republishing in 1909 rather than in the correct year of 1908 – omitting, incidentally, any reference to its editor, F. N. Maude.

[51]Bassford, *Clausewitz in English*, pp. 183-184, on which this biographic summary of O. J. Matthijs Jolles is based.

[52]Unless otherwise stated, all references to Matthijs Jolles's translation are to this 2000 edition.

'by far the most accurate translation of *On War* available in English'.[53] Hew Strachan is equally admiring, declaring it the 'most faithful to the original German'.[54] Yet it is understood that Jolles based his work on the fourth (1880) edition of *Vom Kriege* rather than that of the first. Using a modified version of Clausewitz's text such as this can cause specific problems, as noted by Howard and Paret in the following example, taken from Chapter 6B 'War Is an Instrument of Policy' of Book 8 'War Plans'.

Clausewitz 4th Edition (Scherff, 1880), pp. 569-570	**Matthijs Jolles (2000), p. 937**	**Clausewitz 19th Edition (Hahlweg, 1980), pp. 995-996**	**Howard-Paret (1984), p. 608**
Soll ein Krieg ganz den Absichten der Politik entsprechen und soll die Politik den Mitteln zum Kriege angemessen sein, so bliebt, wo der Staatsmann und der Soldat nicht in einer Person vereinigt sind, nur ein gutes Mittel übrig, nämlich den obersten Feldherrn zum Mitglied des Kabinetts zu machen, *damit er in den wichtigsten Momenten an dessen Berathungen [sic] und Be-schlüssen Theil [sic] nehme*.	If war is to correspond entirely with the intentions of policy, and policy is to accommodate itself with the means available for war, in a case in which the statesman and the soldier are not combined in one person, there is only one satisfactory alternative left, which is to make the commander-in-chief a member of the cabinet, *that he may take part in its councils and decisions on important occasions.*	Soll ein Krieg ganz den Absichten der Politik entsprechen, und soll die Politik den Mitteln zum Kriege *ganz* angemessen sein, so bliebt, wo der Staatsmann und der Soldat nicht in einer Person vereinigt sind, nur ein gutes Mittel übrig, nämlich den obersten Feldherrn zum Mitglied des Kabinetts zu machen, *damit dasselbe teil und den Hauptmomenten seines Handeln nehme.*	If war is to be fully consonant with political objectives, and policy suited to the means available for war, then unless statesmen and soldier are combined in one person, the only sound expedient is to make the commander-in-chief a member of the cabinet, *so that the cabinet can share in the major aspect of his activities.*

Table 2 – An Example of a Significant Emendation of Clausewitz's Text

It can be seen that the change in wording – italicised here in both editions and translations for emphasis – between Clausewitz's original, restored by Hahlweg, and that printed in the second and subsequent editions, reverses the sense of the author. It would appear clear that Clausewitz wished to stress the cabinet's involvement in military matters, and not the commander-in-chief's participation in political ones.

[53]'Which translation of Clausewitz's *On War* do you have and which one should you have?', available at https://www.clausewitzstudies.org/mobile/whichtrans.htm. Accessed 17 June 2021.
[54]Strachan, *Clausewitz's On War*, p. x.

Howard and Paret (1976 & 1984)

Unlike the Graham-Maude and Matthijs Jolles translations, which were derived from the third and later editions of *On War*, Howard and Paret returned to the first edition of 1832-34, 'supplemented by the annotated German text published by Professor Werner Hahlweg in 1952'.[55] So we can regard the Howard-Paret translation as being based on, if not necessarily 'true' to, the original German. Although the now 'standard' English translation of *On War* is attributed to Howard and Paret, another now largely forgotten individual is also associated with it. As the two acknowledged in their 'Editors' Note', the translation was 'initially undertaken by Mr. Angus Malcolm [1908-1971] of the British Foreign Office'. Although he died during the project, Malcolm 'had … already done much valuable preliminary work, for which we are greatly in his debt'.[56] The actual extent of Malcolm's contribution, however, is not known. As he had served as a minister (deputy ambassador) in Austria (1953-1956) it is safe to assume that Malcolm was highly proficient in German and, as Hew Strachan has noted, as 'a retired diplomat [he] had already translated Karl Demeter's *The German Officer Corps in Society and State, 1650–1945*'.[57] Originally published in 1930, this work had gone through several iterations, with the 1962 version forming the source of the English edition of 1965, to which Michael Howard added a foreword.[58] Thus while it safe to assume that Howard and Malcolm worked closely together in translating *On War*, the latter's familiarity with Clausewitz remains open to speculation.

Both Michael Howard and Peter Paret possessed impressive credentials with which to embark on a new translation of Clausewitz. Paret was born in Berlin and a native German speaker before he moved to America in his youth. Michael Howard's mother was German, and combined with his schooling, he too had a good familiarity with the language of Clausewitz. Serving as an infantry officer in the Second World War, and earning a Military Cross for gallantry, Howard had experienced war at its visceral 'sharp end'. In his monumental history of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, published in 1961, Howard had not only referred to 'the Clausewitzian element of friction in war', but also extended his analysis of that conflict beyond its purely military dimension to narrate the resultant peace, judging it to be a 'precarious' and 'uncertain'

[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid., p. xii.

[57]Hew Strachan, 'Michael Howard and Clausewitz', p. 145.

[58]Dr. Karl Demeter, *Das deutsche Offizierkorps in seiner historischen-soziologischen Grundlagen,* (Berlin: Reimar Hobbing, 1930), updated and re-titled as *Das deutsche Offizierskorps in Gesellschaft und Staat, 1650–1945,* (Frankfurt/Main: Bernard & Graefe, 1962). The English edition was published in New York by Frederick A. Praeger in 1965.

one at that.[59] Paret's work *Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform, 1807–1815* (1966) was derived from his doctoral thesis written at King's College London when supervised by Michael Howard, the founding head of the Department of War Studies (1962–68). With their combined knowledge of German, of the development of the Prussian military and state, and of the nature of war more generally, Howard and Paret were ideally placed to generate a definitive translation of Clausewitz's *Vom Kriege* into English, one designed to be both comprehensive and highly readable.

Translations Under Test

An obvious starting point at which to compare and test the three main translations of Clausewitz's *On War* is his most famous pronouncement 'War is merely the continuation of policy by other means'. Yet this much-quoted ten-word translation contains two significant errors and one further difficulty. Clausewitz wrote: 'Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln' as the heading to Section 24 of Chapter 1 of Book 1. He then augmented this statement in the first sentence of the following paragraph, which is far less quoted. This German text (heading and amplification) is compared with the three translations in Table 3 below.

No.	Clausewitz (Hahlweg, p. 210)	Graham-Maude (p. 17)	Matthijs Jolles (p. 280)	Howard-Paret (p. 87)
3.1	Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln.	War is a mere continuation of policy by other means.	War is a mere continuation of policy by other means.	War is merely the continuation of policy by other means.
3.2	So sehen wir also, daß der Krieg nicht bloß ein politischer Akt, sondern ein wahres politisches Instrument ist, eine Fortsetzung des politischen Verkehrs, ein Durchführen desselben mit anderen Mitteln.	We see, therefore, that War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce, a carrying out of the same by other means.	We see, therefore, that war is not merely a political act but a real political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, a carrying out of the same by other means.	We see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means.

Table 3 – Translations of the Opening of Book 1, Chapter 1, Section 24 of *On War*

The first matter to note is that while Graham-Maude and Matthijs Jolles both translate the German correctly to read 'War is *a* [present author's emphasis] mere continuation of policy', Howard-Paret write 'War is merely *the* [present author's emphasis]

[59]See Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870–1871,* (London: Rupert Hart–Davis, 1961), p. 214, for his observation on Clausewitzian friction; for the nature of the peace, see pp. 454-456.

continuation of policy'. In so doing, the latter wording reinforces the following mistranslation of 'mit anderen Mitteln' (with other means). Notably, each of the three translations translate the German 'mit' with the English 'by' in the heading to Section 24. While Graham-Maude and Matthijs Jolles repeat the error in the following sentence, Howard-Paret does not. This matter, however, remains highly important: substituting 'by other means' for 'with other means' in the heading changes its meaning significantly and surely alters how Clausewitz has been interpreted in English. The present writer claims no originality in identifying this inconsistency for many hundreds, if not thousands, of readers of Clausewitz in German and English must have spotted it since Graham's translation first appeared in 1873. James R. Holmes, for example, is a recent critic in this respect. In his article 'Everything You Know About Clausewitz Is Wrong' (2014), he claims a 'botched translation of Clausewitz has had an enduring impact on our thinking of warfare'.[60] Holmes is surely correct in arguing that stating 'war is a mere continuation of policy *"by"*, as opposed to *"with"* other means', implies that the politics stop as war takes over. Such a 'discontinuity' separating 'war from peace', in his view, 'turns the concept Clausewitz wants to convey on its head'.[61]

Indeed, Clausewitz was at pains to explain that political activity should not be suspended on the outbreak of war. In the same chapter of *On War*, he observed in Section 27 that 'war should never be thought of something *autonomous* but always as an *instrument of policy*; otherwise the entire history of war would contradict us'.[62] More particularly, Clausewitz expanded on this theme in Chapter 6B of Book 8, introduced above. Several key passages in this chapter are worth quoting at some length to underline Clausewitz's thinking on the continuity between politics and the conduct of war, and not least the primacy of the former over the latter. For reasons of space, only the Howard-Paret translation is shown here together with the German in Table 4 below.

[60] James R. Holmes, 'Everything You Know About Clausewitz is Wrong: a botched translation of Clausewitz has had an enduring impact on our thinking on warfare', *The Diplomat*, November 12, 2014 https://thediplomat.com/2014/11/everything-you-know-about-clausewitz-is-wrong/. Accessed 13 June 2021.

[61] Ibid, p. 4.

[62] Howard-Paret, p. 88, which in translation paraphrases the German original considerably: 'Wir sehen also *erstens*: daß wir uns den Krieg unter allen Umständen als kein *selbständiges* Ding, sondern als ein politisches Instrument zu denken haben; und nur mit dieser Vorstellungsart ist es möglich, nicht mit der sämtlichen Kriegsgeschichte in Widerspruch zu geraten.' (Hahlweg, p. 212).

No.	**Clausewitz** (Hahlweg)	**Howard-Paret Translation**
	Sechstes Kapitel. B Der Krieg ist ein Instrument der Politik	**[Chapter 6]B. War Is an Instrument of Policy**
4.1	… *der Krieg nur ein Teil des politischen Verkehrs sei, also durchaus nichts Selbständiges*. (p. 990)	… *war is only a branch of political activity; that is in no sense autonomous.* (p. 605)
4.2	Wir behaupten dagegen, der Krieg ist nichts als eine Fortsetzung des politischen Verkehrs mit Einmischung anderer Mittel. Wir sagen Einmischung anderer Mittel, um damit zugleich zu behaupten, daß dieser politische Verkehr durch den Krieg selbst nicht aufhört, nicht in etwas ganz anderes verwandelt wird, sondern daß er in seinem Wesen fortbesteht, wie auch seine Mittel gestaltet sein mögen, deren er sich bedient … (pp. 990-991)	We maintain, on the contrary, that war is simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means. We deliberately use the phrase "with the addition of other means" because we also want to make it clear that war in itself does not suspend political intercourse or change it into something entirely different. In essentials [sic] that intercourse continues, irrespective of the means it employs. (p. 605)
4.3	Daß der politische Gesichtspunkt mit dem Kriege ganz aufhören sollte, würde nur denkbar sein, wenn die Kriege aus bloßer Feindschaft Kämpfe auf Leben und Tot wären; wie sie sind, sind sie nichts als Äußerungen der Politik selbst, wie wir oben gezeigt haben. Das Unterordnen des politischen Gesichtspunktes unter den militärischen wäre widersinnig, denn die Politik hat den Krieg erzeugt; sie ist die Intelligenz, der Krieg aber bloß das Instrument, und nicht umgekehrt. Es bleibt also nur das Unterordnen des militärischen Gesichtspunktes unter den politischen möglich. (p. 993)	That the political view should wholly cease to count on the outbreak of war is hardly conceivable unless pure hatred made all wars a struggle for life and death. In fact, as we have said, they are nothing but expressions of policy itself. Subordinating the political point of view to the military would be absurd, for it is policy that has created war. Policy is the guiding intelligence and war is only the instrument, not vice versa. No other possibility exists, then, than to subordinate the military point of view to the political. (p. 607)
4.4	Also noch einmal: der Krieg ist ein Instrument der Politik; er muß notwendig ihren Charakter tragen, er muß mit ihrem Maße messen; die Führung des Krieges in seinem Hauptumrissen ist daher die Politik selbst, welche die Feder mit dem Degen vertauscht, aber darum nicht aufgehört hat, nach ihren eigenen Gesetzen zu denken. (p. 998)	Once again: war is an instrument of policy. It must necessarily bear the character of policy and measure by it standards. The conduct of war, in its great outlines, is therefore policy itself, which takes up the sword in place of the pen, but does not on that account cease to think according to its own laws. (p. 610)

Table 4 – War described by Clausewitz as an 'Instrument of Politics'

The examples highlighted above also show the extent to which the Howard-Paret translation favours the word 'policy' over 'politics', as in 'War is merely the continuation of policy by other means', quoted in Table 3. Whereas in modern English the two terms can be distinguished broadly as *official* – that is governmental – thinking on one hand, and *party*-political activity on the other, in German, whether in Clausewitz's times or today, the expression *Politik* subsumes both. It remains open to debate whether Howard and Paret (and indeed their two earlier translators) should have used the word 'politics' rather than 'policy'. Yet the context of the work and its

times should inform whether the distinction in translation is relevant and important – after all, the policy, and indeed strategy, of a state (whether that of Prussia on of any other for that matter) is informed by both national (faction or party) and international politics. On balance, one can conclude that Howard and Paret were largely correct in rendering *Politik* as governmental policy in *On War*, as Clausewitz was not referring in that work to party politics.[63]

The crux of the issue here, however, is that the military, and hence either the threat or the application of lethal force, is only one of several potential instruments of power that can be applied in the interaction of nations.[64] In confrontations between, or within, states and peoples, diplomatic, information and economic measures alone may suffice to serve interests and to preserve peace. Ultimately, on occasions war may be determined *politically* as the only viable course ahead. Yet even in conflicts of national survival, there must remain a political rationale for war; and furthermore, its conduct must be subject to overriding political requirements. Clausewitz surely meant this interpretation for he uses Chapter 6B of Book 8 to make precisely this argument. That said, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which he has been misinterpreted either through mistranslation or, perhaps as likely, through selective reading as well.

If the popular 'headline' or leitmotif for Clausewitz's *On War* is in error, then what hope will the author's (let alone any translator's) amplification be read and understood to correct it? Hence let Clausewitz be re-stated in translation in his original sense: 'War is *a* mere continuation of policy *with* other means'.

Main Battle: A Case Study of Mistranslation and Misinterpretation?

Book 4 of *On War*, and more particularly its chapters on 'battle', provides fertile ground for identifying a number of significant problems of translation into English. Although the simple German title of the book, *Gefecht*, appears innocuous enough, Clausewitz's translations vary. While Graham-Maude interpret this as 'The Combat', both Matthijs Jolles and Howard-Paret state 'The Engagement'.[65] There is some difficulty, however, in substituting 'engagement' for 'combat'. Whereas combat – fighting – constitutes the basic act of war, an engagement means usually something more specific, either a local action bound in time and space that forms part of a larger and wider battle, or a particular type of tactical action or manoeuvre. One example of the latter is the 'meeting engagement', when two advancing forces, neither of which

[63]The author is grateful to Hew Strachan for his advice on this point and other related issues.

[64]Modern strategies embrace four instruments of power, namely diplomacy, information, military and economics; hence the acronym 'DIME'.

[65]Graham-Maude (2004), p. 187; Matthijs Jolles (2000), p. 451; Howard-Paret (1984), p. 223.

may be fully deployed, collide and clash.[66] It could be argued that imposing a modern hierarchy of military terms in interpreting *Gefecht* has no place in examining the merits of any historical translation. Yet this example is illustrative of the point that seemingly simple (mis)translations may mask further complexities of the text.

As already trailed, Clausewitz devotes much of Book 4 of *On War* to a detailed description of 'The Battle: Its Decision', as in Chapter 9, and in its continuations, 'The Effects of Victory' and 'The Use of Battle' in Chapters 10 and 11 respectively. Yet he does not only use the word '*Schlacht*' for battle, but also refers repeatedly to '*Hauptschlacht*', which Howard-Paret translate as 'major battle'. Yet anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of German would recognise the term *Hauptschlacht* as 'main battle', similar in form to *Hauptbahnhof* meaning main railway station. So how did the term 'main battle' get lost in translation, and what might be the significance of this lacuna, for surely 'main' is more important than 'major' within the context of a particular campaign or war? Interestingly, when one compares Graham's *original* translation with Maude's later edition of *On War*, the former translates *Hauptschlacht* neither as 'battle' nor as 'main battle', but rather as 'general action'.[67] Although this term, implying a principal event in a campaign or war, had much to commend it, Maude amended Graham's wording to 'battle'.

In a detailed note to the title of Chapter 9, Maude justified not using the term 'main battle'. As neither Matthijs Jolles nor Howard-Paret address the matter, Maude's explanation is worth reproducing in full:

> Clausewitz still uses the word "die Hauptschlacht" but modern usage employs only the word "die Schlacht" to designate the decisive act of a whole campaign—encounters arising from the collision of troops marching towards the strategic culmination of each portion of the campaign are spoken of either as "Treffen," *i.e.*, "engagements" or "Gefecht," i.e., "combat" or "action." Thus technically, Gravelotte was a "Schlacht," *i.e.*, "battle," but Spicheren, Woerth, Borny, even Vionville were only "Treffen".[68]

Maude assumes here that his readers possess a good knowledge of the principal actions of the Franco-Prussian War, noting that 'Treffen' means 'meeting', 'encounter', or 'echelon'. Strangely, however, he does not mention the battle of Sedan (1-2 September 1870), which resulted in the surrender and abdication of Emperor

[66]NATO defines a meeting engagement as 'a combat action that occurs when a moving force, incompletely deployed for battle, engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place' (*Glossary of Terms and Definitions*, AAP-06, Edition 2019, p. 82).
[67]*On War*, trans. Colonel J. J. Graham (1873), p. 141.
[68]Graham-Maude (2000), *On War*, Book IV, Note 12, p. 835.

Napoleon III. Hence most historians would argue that this action was the decisive act of the war rather than the preliminary but largest battle of Gravelotte (18 August 1870). Does Maude's claim with regard to German military terminology stand up? It would appear to do so, as one can search in vain for a reference to '*Hauptschlacht*' in relation to Sedan, or to any other major battle, in Moltke the Elder's History of the Franco-Prussian War (*Geschichte des Deutsch-französischen Krieges von 1870–1871* (1895)).[69]

Returning to translations of *Hauptschlacht* in Chapters 9-11 of Book 4, Matthijs Jolles uses 'battle', 'great battle' and 'main battle' rather inconsistently, noting that while Clausewitz uses the three terms '*Schlacht*', '*große Schlacht*' and '*Hauptschlacht*' respectively, he does so more deliberately and according to context. The question then is how closely does the translator follow the original text and meaning of *Hauptschlacht*. In Chapter 10 of Book 4 Clausewitz is at pains to explain the significance of 'main battle', and its consequences in either victory or defeat, as the following six examples in German show alongside their translations into English by Howard-Paret. Interestingly in Chapter 10 Howard-Paret translate *Hauptschlacht* on one occasion as 'major battle', while in Chapter 11 they adopt another term, 'great battle'. For clarity in this comparison, *Hauptschlacht*, 'main battle', 'major battle' and 'great battle' have been italicised in Table 5 below. The first quotation is taken from Clausewitz's description of the cumulative psychological effect of victories, even modest ones, by the winner against the losing opponent.

No.	**Clausewitz** (Hahlweg)	**Howard-Paret Translation**
	10. Kapitel	*Chapter 10*
5.1	Und nun die Wirkung außer dem Heer bei Volk und Regierung; es ist das plötzliche Zusammenbrechen der gespanntesten Hoffnungen, das Niederwerfen des ganzen Selbstgefühls. An die Stelle dieser vernichteten Kräfte strömt in das entstandene Vakuum die Furcht mit ihrer Expansivkraft und vollendet die Lähmung. Es ist ein wahrer Nervenschlag, den einer der beiden Athleten durch den elektrischen Funken der *Hauptschlacht* bekommt. (p. 464)	The effect of all this outside the army—on the people and on the government—is a sudden collapse of the most anxious expectations, and a complete crushing of self-confidence. This leaves a vacuum that is filled by a corrosively expanding fear which completes the paralysis. It is as if the electric charge of the *main battle* has sparked a shock to the whole nervous system of one of the contestants. (p. 255)
5.2	Hier, wo wir es mit einer *Hauptschlacht* an sich zu tun haben, wollen wir dabei stehen bleiben, zu sagen: daß die geschilderten Wirkungen eines Sieges niemals fehlen, daß sie steigen mit der intensiven Stärke des Sieges, steigen, je	What concerns us here is only the battle itself. Our argument is that the effects of victory that we have described will always be present; that they will increase in proportion to the scale of the victory; and that they

[69]See the description in Graf Helmuth von Moltke, *Geschichte des Deutsch-französischen Krieges von 1870–1871*, (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1895) of the 'Schlacht von Sedan' (Battle of Sedan), pp. 63-73.

	mehr die Schlacht *Hauptschlacht*, d.h. je mehr in ihr die ganze Streitkraft vereinigt, je mehr in dieser Streitkraft die ganze Kriegsmacht und in der Kriegsmacht der ganze Staat enthalten ist. (p. 465)	increase the more the *battle is a major one* – that is, the more the army's full strength is committed, the more this strength represents the total military force, and the more the latter represents the whole state. (p. 256)
5.3	Eine andere Frage ist es, ob durch den Verlust einer *Hauptschlacht* nicht vielleicht Kräfte geweckt werden, die sonst gar nicht ins Leben gekommen wären. Dieser Fall ist allerdings denkbar, und er ist bei vielen Völkern wirklich schon vorgekommen. (p. 466)	It is another question whether defeat in a *major battle* may be instrumental in arousing forces that otherwise would have remained dormant. That is not impossible; it has actually occurred in many countries. (p. 256)
	11. Kapitel	*Chapter 11*
5.4	Nur in einer *Hauptschlacht* regiert der Feldherr das Werk mit eigenen Händen, und es ist in der Natur der Dinge, daß er es am liebsten den seinigen anvertraut. (p. 467)	Only in a *great battle* does the commander-in-chief control operations in person; it is only natural he should prefer to entrust the direction of the battle to himself. (p. 258)
5.5	… aber im allgemeinen bleibt es vorherrschend wahr, daß *Hauptschlachten* nur zur Vernichtung der feindlichen Streitkräfte geliefert, und daß diese nur durch die *Hauptschlacht* erreicht wird. (p. 468)	But in general it remains true that *great battles* are fought only to destroy the enemy's forces, and that the destruction of these forces can be accomplished only by a *major battle*. (p. 258)
5.6	Die *Hauptschlacht* ist daher als der konzentrierte Krieg, als der Schwerpunkt des ganzen Krieges oder Feldzuges anzusehen. (p. 468)	The *major battle* is therefore to be regarded as concentrated war, as the centre of gravity of the entire conflict or campaign. (p. 258)

Table 5 – Examples of Differing Translations of *Hauptschlacht* in Book 4, Chapters 10 & 11[Italicisation by the present author]

Apart from displaying varying translations of *Hauptschlacht*, these short quotations also demonstrate how the Howard-Paret edition departs from Clausewitz's original in some of his most important statements as to the role of battle in war. Most notably, and rather confusingly, the translation of the second quotation in the table above renders '*Hauptschlacht*' in the first instance as merely 'battle', while stating 'major' battle in the second. Throughout Chapters 10 and 11 of Book 4, and as exemplified by the final quotation in Table 5, Clausewitz is referring to the principal battle of an entire war (*Krieg*) or of a campaign (*Feldzug*), two terms which should not be elided as the latter is a component of the former. Hence there is little doubt in the present author's opinion that *Hauptschlacht* should be translated accurately and consistently as 'main battle'. To do otherwise is to take a careless if not distorting liberty with the original text and meaning, however accessible a translator strives to make his or her work.[70]

[70]A similar point is made by Hew Strachan, 'Michael Howard and Clausewitz', p. 146.

Conclusion

This article sought initially no more than to scratch the surface of the English translations of Clausewitz's *Vom Kriege* in an exploratory effort to compare and contrast them. It has revealed, however, various inconsistencies and some mistranslations, not least in the most popular, that of Howard-Paret. Yet there are also a number of interesting differences between the earlier translations of Graham and Maude, often supposed to be essentially the same work. Matthijs Jolles' version, while closer to Clausewitz in many places than Howard-Paret, is not without its own limitations. Thus it might appear reasonable to conclude that no translation to date hits the mark. Yet such an observation would be grossly unfair to the translators of Clausewitz who in their own ways have met the diverse challenges of translating a complex and challenging text, one replete with its own difficulties as it was never fully revised and finalised by the author. Furthermore, a successful translation requires not only building a bridge between two languages, but often, as in the case of *On War*, also spanning an arc of changing context between the original author and a modern reader. Hence translations (and, equally, their translators) are very much the products of their times. The success of the Howard-Paret work speaks for itself: for all its imperfections, it has revealed Clausewitz's *On War* to a large audience in the English-speaking world, stimulating widespread interest and a vast literature in the process.

That said, it is important to stress that Clausewitz's most famous work, arguably one of the most important contributions to military thought ever conceived, demands a *new* translation – one that is not only readable, reliable and relevant, but also one that corrects the most basic errors of translation. It would also be very helpful if a new translation were to be accompanied by comprehensive notes on the text of *On War* in the manner of Hahlweg's German editions, thus filling a significant gap in the work of Howard-Paret. While many readers may not care about whether the translation of *Hauptschlacht* is either 'major battle' or 'main battle' (although the present author does), it is surely imperative to translate '*Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln*' as 'War is *a* mere continuation of policy *with* other means'. This simple example epitomises why rendering the German correctly and consistently matters, and fundamentally so. To do otherwise risks the widespread misinterpretation, if not misuse, of Clausewitz.

To re-quote Clausewitz, 'it is policy that has created war'.[71] Taking one contemporary case in point, arguably the ongoing conflict in Ukraine is but a manifestation of a much wider and potentially longer confrontation between the Russian Federation and the West, driven by President Vladimir Putin's political quest – continuing the execution of a policy crafted over many years – not only to redraw international boundaries,

[71] *On War*, Book 8, Chapter 6B; Howard-Paret, p. 607.

unifying Russia and Ukraine, but also to restore Russia's place in the world.[72] In so doing, the world order is being upset, and most probably irretrievably so. Ultimately, international politics as much as the outcome of battle will bring an end to the conflict, of which we have only witnessed the opening campaign. Furthermore, Clausewitz surely would have recognized its early dynamics: Russia's initial onslaught aroused bitterness and defiance within the Ukrainian people in equal measure. Hence for Ukraine, rather than for Russia, in many respects it is becoming a people's war (*Volkskrieg*) in which resistance to the foreign invader and occupier may grow with each engagement and every atrocity, whether alleged or proven.[73] Hence if there was ever a time over the last half century to revisit Clausewitz since the publication of the Howard-Paret translation, then it is the present.

Ideally, a new translation of *On War* would be the product of a small multinational partnership building on the model of Howard and Paret, blessed not only with the necessary linguistic skills and academic prowess to undertake such a work, but also with sufficient military exposure to appreciate the nature and nuances of conflict. After all, it should be recalled that Clausewitz was the epitome of a soldier-scholar. He was a General Staff-trained officer with considerable operational experience during the Napoleonic Wars who thought, taught and wrote about his profession of arms. He was an individual who had witnessed war first-hand with all its proximate dangers, frictions, uncertainties and vagaries from battlefield bivouac through march column to bayonet point. Yet Clausewitz was as much at home with the higher direction of war and campaign from the cabinet table to the general's planning map at field headquarters. While the technologies and tactics of war have evolved considerably over the past two centuries, the fundamentals of strategy and the policy considerations that drive it have largely endured. That is why *On War* remains so relevant for the present day, and why it demands careful study and application, recalling that war is but 'an instrument of policy'.[74]

Moreover, the abiding value of *On War* lies not as much in the answers it gives, but much more so in the issues it raises and the questions it poses as to the planning and conduct of war within a policy context and continuum. There would be no more timely tribute to Carl von Clausewitz, and indeed to both Michael Howard and Peter Paret,

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[72]See Vladimir Putin, 'On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians' (July 12, 2021), available at http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181. Accessed 3 June 2022.

[73]Although a discussion of 'People's War' – or 'The People in Arms' – lies outside the scope of this article, it is worth noting that Clausewitz devotes considerable attention to the subject in an eponymous chapter in *On War*, namely Chapter 26 of Book 6, Defense.

[74]C.f. *On War*, Chapter 6B of Book 8, War Plans.

than the appearance of a new English translation of *Vom Kriege* for the twenty-first century. It should form an essential primer for a new generation of politicians, generals and students of war while being read and appreciated by a wider public. Captain Professor Sir Michael Howard would surely have wished it so.[75]

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[75]See Michael Howard, *Captain Professor: a Life in War and Peace,* (London: Continuum, 2006) – his remarkable autobiography.

Deterrence & Reassurance: Sir Michael Howard and the Nuclear Strategy Debate in the 1980s

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ABSTRACT
In the 1980s, Michael Howard took an active part in the debate about nuclear strategy. He used his historical expertise, his personal military experience, and his links with academia and government to offer a balanced analysis of the nature, risks and ethical implications of the use of nuclear weapons. This article examines the debate among security experts when rapid technological advances, and a tendency to over-estimate the nuclear capability of the Soviet Union, increased the risk of miscalculations and accidental nuclear annihilation. As this article demonstrates, Howard's contribution stands out for his unique ability to bring together multiple dimensions in a balanced and considered approach to nuclear strategy and to its ethical implications.

Introduction

In the late 1970s, diverging conceptions of détente started to merge. Western Europe was keen to play an active role through its new foreign policy cooperation strategy via the Helsinki Process. This was, in their view, an opportunity to encourage the Soviet Union to engage with an expanded concept of security that included human rights. The United States, on the other hand, pursued bilateral superpower relations and a strengthened deterrent posture to force the Soviet Union to engage in arms control negotiations. The breakdown of Bretton Woods and the aftermath of the oil crisis with consequent diverging policies in the Middle East led to further fractures in the western security architecture.[1]

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[1]Leopoldo Nuti, ed., *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985,* (London: Routledge, 2009); Odd A. Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times,* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005); Andreas Wenger, Christian Nuenlist, Anna Locher (eds), *Transforming NATO in the Cold War: Challenges beyond Deterrence in the 1960s,* (London: Routledge, 2006).

As far as nuclear deterrence was concerned, the West's approach did not change in the 1970s and 1980s. NATO's nuclear deterrent continued to remain anchored to the principle of Flexible Response as outlined in its Fourth Strategic Concept.[2] Yet, the narrative and the conciliatory attitude that had characterised the previous decade was replaced by more confrontational tones. In December 1979, the US and NATO offered talks on mutual limitation of medium-range ballistic missiles and intermediate-range ballistic missiles. If this offer was rejected by Moscow, then NATO threatened to deploy more medium-range nuclear weapons (Pershing II) in Western Europe. This approach became known as the Dual-Track Decision as NATO was strengthening its deterrent strategy as a leverage to force the Soviet Union to engage in arms reduction talks.[3]

At the same time, technological advances allowed for higher accuracy, fast response, and smaller nuclear yields. In other words, it had become possible to carry out limited nuclear strikes. In other words, it had become possible to carry out limited nuclear strikes that could hit exclusively counterforce targets that could be used in a retaliatory nuclear response. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter adopted the new countervailing strategy (Presidential Directive 59), whereby a response to a Soviet nuclear attack was no longer to target the Soviet population centres but to focus instead on Soviet leadership, and military targets. This led to the idea of the possibility of conducting a limited nuclear war, which could be won without mutual annihilation.[4]

More than just counting beans

Michael Howard, who in the early 1980s was Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford, took an active part in the debate on nuclear strategy and

[2]MC 14/3, January 1968 and MC 48/3, December 1969.

[3]Christophe Becker-Schaum, eds, *The Nuclear Crisis: The Arms Race, Cold War Anxiety and the German Peace Movement of the 1980s,* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2020); M. Schulz and T.A. Schwartz, eds., *Strained Alliance*: *U.S.-European Relations from Nixon to Carter,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 333-354; Kristina Spohr Readman, **'**Germany and the politics of the neutron bomb, 1975-1979'**,** *Diplomacy & statecraft*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2010), pp. 259-285; Kristina Spohr Readman, 'Conflict and Cooperation in Intra-Alliance Nuclear Politics. Western Europe, the United States, and the Genesis of NATO's Dual-Track Decision, 1977–1979, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 13 (2011), pp. 39-89; Henry H. Gaffney, 'Euromissiles as the Ultimate Evolution of Theatre Nuclear Forces', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Winter 2014), pp. 180-199.

[4]Walter Slocombe, 'The Countervailing Strategy', *International Security*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Spring 1981), pp. 18-27. Steven E. Miller, ed., *Strategy and Nuclear Deterrence,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Colin S. Gray, 'Nuclear Strategy: The Case for a Theory of Victory', in Miller, *Strategy and Nuclear Deterrence*, pp. 23-56.

deterrence. He was aware that the implications of scientific and technological breakthroughs on strategy were not fully grasped by the public and often not even by many political leaders. Scholars – in Howard's view – had a duty to weigh in and support the debate by giving historical context, asking difficult questions, demonstrating fallacies, and arguing against lazy historical equivalence.[5]

In his autobiography, Howard recalls that his initial position on nuclear deterrence was shaped by the writing of P M S Blackett, Sir John Slessor and Basil Liddell Hart, who warned of the implications of nuclear strategy in terms of miscalculations and potential accidental self-annihilation.[6] These readings stirred Howard towards a cautious approach towards nuclear deterrence and towards the need to understand the difference between the possibility of a Soviet nuclear attack and the probability of it. It was therefore essential to acquire an in-depth understanding of the applications of the new technological breakthroughs, an honest appraisal of the Soviet Leadership's concerns and appetite for risk, and finally an assessment of the ethical implications of the use of nuclear weapons.[7]

In addition, Howard himself came from an Anglican family with strong anti-war and humanitarian traditions. His aunt, Elizabeth Fox Howard, was a Quaker.[8] By Howard's own admission, his family and his own experience in the Second World War shaped his relatively cautious approach to nuclear strategy.[9] Throughout his life, Howard was alarmed by the risk of nuclear annihilation. In writing Howard's obituary, Adam Roberts revealed that Howard had confessed to him that in 1958 he had obtained by unofficial channels two suicide pills, as a precautionary measure because of his concern

[5]Michael Howard, *Studies in War and Peace, (London: Temple Smith, 1970);* Michael Howard, 'War and Technology,' *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 132, No. 4 (1987): 17–22; Michael Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War,' in Howard, *The Causes of War,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); Michael Howard 'The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy,' *Foreign Affairs* 57 (Summer 1979), pp. 975–86; Howard, 'Surviving a Protest,' 116–33; 'On Fighting a Nuclear War,' in *The Causes of Wars,* 133–50.

[6]Sir John Slessor, *The Great Deterrent,* (London: Cassell, 1957); P.M.S. Blackett, *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy,* (London: Turnstile Press, 1948); Basil Liddell Hart, *The Revolution in Warfare,* (London: Faber and Faber, 1946).

[7]Michael Howard, *Captain Professor: A Life in War and Peace,* (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 193-195.

[8]'Three Remarkable Women of the Twentieth Century: Joan Mary Fry, Elizabeth Fox Howard and Francesca Wilson', 23 March 2016. https://quakerstrongrooms.org/2016/03/23/three-remarkable-women-of-the-twentieth-century-joan-mary-fry-elizabeth-fox-howard-and-francesca-wilson/ Accessed 3 May 2022.

[9]Howard, *Captain Professor,* Prologue.

about what to do in the event of a nuclear war. He indicated that his worries had probably resulted from a combination of factors linked to the fluctuating East-West tensions and the technological advances. In the 1980s, at the time of controversies about nuclear missiles at Greenham Common, he was again very worried.[10]

Not surprisingly, therefore, Howard worked tirelessly to bring historical context, cultural understanding, and nuance to the table. He was close in temperament and in approach to the nuclear strategic thinking of Bernard Brodie, the father of American nuclear strategy who had passed away in 1978. A historian by training, Brodie had dedicated his work to understanding the strategic and ethical implications of nuclear weapons.[11] In one of his writings, often quoted by Howard, Brodie argued that due to the unprecedented devastation caused by nuclear weapons, the role of military leaders and security experts had changed forever. 'Thus far, the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose.'[12]

As early as 1957, Howard argued in a lecture at the Royal United Service Institute that political leaders had to strive to keep up with the pace of technological advances and to understand their impact on military and security strategy without losing sight of the ethical implications.[13] Similarly, in his 1981 lecture 'The Causes of War', Howard conjured up the hellish scenario in which a nuclear power unleashed a preventive nuclear attack to stop an adversary from growing their nuclear arsenal and thus becoming an unbeatable opponent.[14] The lecture articulates effectively the concern felt by the peace movements, who protested the deployment of Pershing II missiles in Western Europe. The lecture also gave a detailed examination of reasons for concern felt by Soviet leaders and caution against unnecessary nuclear threats.[15]

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[10]Adam Roberts, 'Sir Michael Howard Obituary', 1 December 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/dec/01/sir-michael-howard-obituary Accessed 3 May 2022.

[11]Bernard Brodie, 'The Development of Nuclear Strategy', in Miller, *Strategy and Nuclear Deterrence*, pp. 3-22; Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon,* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983).

[12]Bernard Brodie (ed)., *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1946), p. 76.

[13]Michael Howard, 'Strategy in the Nuclear Age', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 102, No. 608 (1957), pp. 473-482.

[14]The text was printed as the first chapter in Howard, *The Causes of Wars*, (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1983).

[15]Beatrice Heuser, 'The Soviet Response to the Euromissile Crisis, 1982-83', in Leopoldo Nuti, ed., *The Crisis of Détente in Europe: From Helsinki to Gorbachev, 1975-1985,* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 137-149.

Howard expanded his thinking in 'On Fighting a Nuclear War' (1981), 'Deterrence, Consensus and Reassurance' (1983), and 'War and Technology' (1987).[16] In these essays, Howards put forward a robust criticism of the tendency of western – particularly American – security experts to adopt double standards when comparing the deterrent measures adopted by the West and those put in place by Moscow. For example, in 'On Fighting a Nuclear War' Howard focuses on perceptions surrounding civil defence: while preparations in the West are described by western security experts as sensible and pragmatic, similar measures taken by the Soviet Union are seen as evidence of the Soviet preparations for an imminent nuclear attack against the West.[17]

Throughout his career, Howard rejected the black and white vision of the Soviet Union as 'hostile and ruthless, bent on world conquest' promoted by experts like Albert Wohlstetter.[18] A mathematical logician by training, Wohlstetter was at the time the reference figure among the American security experts. His *The Delicate Balance of Terror* (1958) had been highly influential in shaping the thinking of the Washington establishment, particularly because of its emphasis on the looming threat of Soviet attack. Wohlstetter and his supporters at RAND (and later his students at the University of Chicago) were convinced of the vulnerability of the US to Soviet nuclear attack and argued that the only solution was a massive increase in expenditure to strengthen the American nuclear capability, which should be integrated in an aggressive deterrent posture.[19] Howard, who had met him in person on several occasions, noted

[16]Michael Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War,' in Howard, *The Causes of War,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); Michael Howard, 'Deterrence, Consensus and Reassurance in Defence of Europe' *Adelphi Paper*, No. 184 (1983), reprinted in *A Historical Sensibility: Sir Michael Howard and the International Institute for strategic Studies, 1958-2019* (London: Routledge, 2020). Michael Howard, 'War and Technology,' *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 132, No. 4 (1987), pp. 17–22 https://doi.org/10.1080/03071848708522802 Accessed 1 July 2022; See also, Howard, *Studies in War and Peace.* Michael Howard 'The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 57 (Summer 1979), pp. 975–86; Michael Howard, 'Surviving a Protest', first published in *Encounter* (1980), reprinted in Michael Howard, *The Causes of Wars,* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1983).

[17]Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War', pp. 6-7.

[18]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 192.

[19]Fred Kaplan, *The Bomb: Presidents, Generals, and the Secret History of Nuclear War,* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020); Albert Wohlstetter, 'The delicate Balance of Terror', *Foreign Affairs,* 37, 2, (January 1959), pp. 211-234. Albert Wohlstetter et al., *Selection and the Use of Strategic Air Bases: A Report Prepared for the United States Air Force Project RAND,* R-266, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, April 1954); Albert

in his memoirs Wohlstetter's 'ferocity in conducting his arguments, inherited by some of his students'.[20]

Hence, while Howard appreciated Paul Nitze's efforts in arguing the case for a detailed examination of the Soviet military might, he called for caution against Nitze's maximalist approach to US nuclear capability and strategy.[21] At the time, Nitze was US President Ronald Reagan's chief negotiator for the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and was later Special Advisor to the President and Secretary of State on Arms Control. During this time, Nitze consistently argued that the Soviet ultimate objective was to establish a pro-Soviet global system through the nuclear obliteration of the West.[22] Nitze was notably behind the US assessment that the Soviets had developed an aggressive military strategy and had obtained nuclear superiority. Although this assessment was criticised at the time and was later proved flawed, it did allow several security experts to justify the countervailing strategy and the idea of a winnable nuclear war.[23]

Contrary to Wohlstetter's and Nitze's approach, Howard invited experts to understand the Soviet position and to gauge a precise sense of their appetite for risk and war. Howard consistently argued that after the stabilisation that followed the foundation of NATO and of the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union did not seek further expansion in Europe as it already had substantial difficulty in controlling the existing satellites. Of course, Howard acknowledged, Soviet leadership would always support emerging socialist countries because it was for them a moral imperative to support what they considered a just cause. However, Howard strongly believed the Soviet

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Wohlstetter et al., *Protecting the US Power Strike Back in the 1950s and 1960s: Staff Report*, R-290, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, September 1956).

[20]Howard, *Captain Professor* p. 173; in 1964, Wohlstetter joined the Political Science Faculty at the University of Chicago, where he trained numerous students including Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle. He continued to engage in classified research and to advise government agencies about US national-security strategy.

[21]Howard, 'Deterrence, Consensus and Reassurance'.

[22]Paul Nitze, 'Deterring our Deterrent', *Foreign Policy,* No. 25 (Winter 1976-77); Paul Nitze, 'Living with the Soviets', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (Winter 1984), pp. 360-374; Paul Nitze. 'Military Power: A Strategic View', *The Fletcher Forum*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Winter 1981), pp. 152-162; Paul Nitze and Willard C. Matthias, 'Confronting the Soviets', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (Winter 1980), pp. 422-425.

[23]Richard Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence: Knowledge and Power in American National Security,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan and the History of The Cold War,* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009); Slocombe, 'The Countervailing Strategy'.

leaders would do so only if their own interests and security were not at risk and that the annihilation of Western Europe was not on their horizon.[24] In his view,

> the leadership of the Soviet Union, and any successors they may have within the immediately foreseeable future, are cautious and rather fearful men, increasingly worried about their almost insoluble internal problems, increasingly aware of their isolation in a world in which the growth of Marxian socialism does little to enhance their political power.[25]

Howard was puzzled by many security experts' tunnel vision and inability to produce a nuanced assessment of the Soviet Union's geopolitical outlook. Too many experts, he argued, invariably saw the Soviet Union as 'cosmic evil whose policy and intentions could be divined simply by multiplying Marxist dogma by soviet military capacity.'[26] Howard was concerned by the inability of key government advisors, particularly in Washington, to think that the Soviets had 'fears and problems of their own derived from past history and present weakness and who might be dealt with as rational adults'.[27] Crucially, he expressed concern about the tendency among several American security experts 'to reduce the infinite complexities of world affairs, in particular of relations with the Soviet Union, to "bean counts" of nuclear weapons'.[28]

It was easy, Howard warned, to fall into the temptation to consider primarily or even exclusively the opponent's capabilities, as they were calculable in a way that political intentions, cultural assumptions and appetite for risk were not.[29] Yet, Howard pushed experts to go beyond the mere comparison of number of warheads, nuclear yield, efficiency of delivery, and target acquisition capability. It was essential to acquire an in-depth understanding of the opponent's views, plans and fear as well as a realistic assessment of the value of the nuclear deterrent at a time in which western society was growing critical of the use of nuclear weapons. In Howard's own words, 'The problem of deterrence […] is not fundamentally military or technological. It is political and psychological'.[30] Hence, in his view, nuclear strategy *per se* did not provide necessarily a clear path to victory and posed new – yet unexplored – problems about

[24]Michael Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War', *International Security*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Spring 1981). Howard, 'Deterrence, Consensus and Reassurance'.
[25]Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War', (1981), pp. 7-8.
[26]Howard, *Captain Professor,* p. 167.
[27]Ibid., p. 167.
[28]Ibid., p. 173
[29]Howard, 'The Future of Deterrence', p. 6.
[30]Ibid., p. 3.

the conduct of war and the nature of victory.[31] Deterrence, in other words, must not be conceived exclusively as nuclear deterrence and must be bound to a wider defence approach which include the diplomatic, political and economic dimensions.[32]

Howard shared Dimitri Simes's invitation to attempt a more nuanced approach to the understanding of Soviet Leadership, who firmly believed that a nuclear war is unwinnable. For both Howard and Simes, it was essential to move beyond the simple comparison of nuclear warheads and yields and to move the analysis towards the assessment of the Soviet mentality.[33] Simes's suggestion to contextualise the attitude of Soviet Leadership to deterrence within the history of Russian militarism was a valid one and it echoed Howard's comments about the need to think about the Soviet attitude to risk in the historical context.[34]

This more nuanced approach was supported by Henry Trofimenko, who in the pages of *International Security*, argued for a less ideologically-driven approach to the study of the Soviet nuclear strategy. [35] Writing in support of the arguments put forward by Simes and Howard, Trofimenko invited security experts to distinguish between myth and reality and to refer to the official position of the Soviet Leadership as articulated in the Declaration adopted by the Summit Anniversary Conference of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member states in May 1980 according to which the Soviet Union rejected the idea of a first nuclear pre-emptive strike as part of their strategy.[36]

Howard warned against the risk of mirror-imaging and tunnel vision when assessing the intention of the Soviet leadership.[37] Howard was particularly critical of the idea that Russians would ever be receptive to Western values. In Howard's view, Cold War tensions aside, Russian culture and society offered no fertile ground for western values as 'Russians see the West, with all its material advantages, as deeply corrupt and implacably hostile; an adversary with whom peaceful co-existence is possible, but

[31]A similar point has been recently discussed by Francis J. Gavin, *Nuclear Weapons and American Grand Strateg,y* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2020).
[32]Howard, 'The Future of Deterrence' and Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War'.
[33]Dimitri K. Simes, 'Deterrence and Coercion in Soviet Policy', *International Security*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Winter 1980/81), pp. 80-103; and Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 173.
[34]Dimitri K. Simes, 'The Military and Militarism in Soviet Society', *International Security*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (Winter 1981/82), pp. 123-143.
[35]Henry A. Trofimenko, 'Counterforce: Illusion of a Panacea', *International Security*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Spring 1981), pp. 28-47.
[36]*Pravda,* 16 May 1980, as quoted in Trofimenko, 'Counterforce'.
[37]Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War'; Howard, 'Deterrence, Consensus and Reassurance'; Howard, 'The Future of Deterrence'.

no more'.[38] In this context, even if a countervailing strike was successful, how would the West ensure that the new Russian leaders would be able and willing to adopt 'western values'? in addition, Howard was profoundly sceptical about the ability of the West to be able to destroy the Soviet leadership apparatus without wiping out millions of Russians in the process. Certainly, in Howard's view, inflicting massive physical and human destruction as a foreign power would likely enhance Russian cohesion and support for their leadership and would lead to a total rejection of 'western values'.[39]

Colin Gray agreed with Howard on the need for further nuance when examining the nature of Soviet strategic culture and argued the need to build on the work of Ken Booth and Jack Snyder.[40] However, Howard and Gray disagreed on the responses that the West should consider. Following the thought of Nitze and Wohlstetter, Gray argued forcefully in favour of a nuclear strategy aimed at obliterating the Soviet centre of military and political power and to inflict an enormous shock on the Russian population to create the condition for the emergence of a new order compatible with western values.[41] Howard, on the other hand, was critical of this approach and was appalled by the relatively easy dismissal of millions of Russian casualties.[42] He disagreed with Gray's suggestion that a targeted nuclear attack against the Soviet Union with the intent to remove its top echelons would likely inflict a limited number of casualties and quotes 20 million as an approximate figures.[43] While 20 million may be better than the 180 million often quoted at the time when discussing an all-out nuclear attack, it was still an unacceptable number. In addition, as Howard argued convincingly, these figures referred only to the immediate casualties, leaving out those dying later due to radiation, and it would not include the trauma, material destruction and devastation that such a 'limited' attack would cause.[44] In such a scenario, survival first, and revenge

[38]Howard, 'The Future of Deterrence', p. 4.
[39]Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War', pp. 10-11.
[40]Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: implication for Limited Nuclear Operations* RAND Report R-2154-AR (September 1977); Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism,* (London: Routledge, 1974); Colin S Gray, 'National Style in Strategy: The American Example', *International Security*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Fall 1981), pp. 21-47; Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style,* (Lanham, Md: Hamilton Press, 1986).
[41]Colin Gray, 'Nuclear Strategy: The Case for a Theory of Victory' *International Security*, Vol. 4, No. 1, (Summer 1979), pp. 54-87; Colin Gray and Keith Payne, 'Victory is Possible', *Foreign Policy*, No. 39 (Summer 1980).
[42]Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War'.
[43]Colin S. Gray, 'National Style in Strategy'; Colin S. Gray and Michael Howard, 'Perspectives on Fighting Nuclear War', *International Security*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Summer 1981.
[44]At the time, the extent of such devastation had been modelled by the US Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 'The effects of nuclear war', 1979; see also the much

later would become the new Russian priorities and there would be certainly no fertile ground for 'Western values' to take root. Crucially, Howard argued, a nuclear attack on the Soviet Union would have a massive political impact on the West too as its moral and political consequences would push towards political extremism and authoritarianism.[45]

While this assessment clearly belongs to the field of guesswork, it is undeniable that Howard saw a nuclear war as a totally new dimension of war, with yet unpredictable ramifications and consequences not only on the battlefield but also on society, culture and politics. Consequences that were to be felt across the globe. Hence, Howard rejected the idea of a limited nuclear war and of a winnable nuclear war and he indefatigably pushed for caution and reflection. Quoting Brodie, Howard argued that nuclear weapons' primary function was to deter. In case this function failed, the West should 'retaliate in kind.'[46] Howard put emphasis on 'in kind' and always rejected a maximalist approach as strategically unsound, politically counterproductive, and ultimately unethical.[47] Similarly, Howard argued the need to consider all dimensions of deterrence – nuclear, political, economic – not only in times of crisis but also in the strategic planning process both in terms of examining the level of threats and appetite for risk of the opponent in the early stages as well as in developing the conduct of war once hostilities have begun.[48]

It should not be forgotten that while in his writing Howard was critical of the maximalist approach of the American security experts, he was equally concerned about the lack of expertise and the tendency to excessive alarmism of his colleagues in the UK. He lamented that outside the armed force themselves there is no community of well-informed laymen capable of or interested in developing any kind of expertise on the subject [of defence]. Public debate is left very largely to passionate but ill-informed ideologues on the left, and equally passionate and barely better-informed supporters of government policy, often themselves retired service-officers, on the right.[49]

For this reason, he was one of the founders of the Institute for Strategic Studies (today IISS) precisely with the intent of stimulating and sustaining an informed debate on

older but still relevant, 'Implications of Nuclear Weapons on Total War', RAND Memorandum, p. 1118, July 1957

[45]Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War', p. 14; Gray and Howard, 'Perspectives on Fighting Nuclear War'.

[46]Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War', p. 15.

[47]Ibid., pp. 15-17.

[48]Gray and Howard, 'Perspectives on Fighting Nuclear War'.

[49]Letter to *The Times* published in Howard, *Captain Professor*, pp. 160-1.

nuclear strategy, which – in Howard's view – should not be left entirely to officials at the UK Ministry of Defence and Foreign Office.[50] Interestingly, Howard recalls how the bleak title of the new institute's journal , *Survival,* 'indicated our view of the seriousness of the situation' and reminded readers of what was at stake when discussing nuclear strategy. [51]

Howard also noted that – paradoxically – Europeans seem less scared of the Soviets than the Americans. In Howard's view, this was due to geographical proximity, which brought the necessity to work towards better understanding and the ability to see the Soviet leadership and the Russian people as humans with similar concerns and fears.[52] In discussing the position of the non-nuclear NATO allies, Howard remarked that the nuclear deterrent has a second – not less important – role to play: to reassure all NATO allies that the UK and the US would include the western European region in their nuclear strategy.[53] The positive role of reassurance could be compared, in Howard's own words to, 'the kind of reassurance a child needs from its parents or an invalid from his doctors against dangers which, however remote, cannot be entirely discounted'.[54] There was no doubt that nuclear reassurance was working. It was working so well that the western European partners had progressively become reluctant to contribute effectively to their own defence and had grown over-reliant on the American – and to a certain extent British – nuclear deterrent.[55]

Howard's approach requires strategists, military leaders and heads of state to strike a sensible balance between the possibility of a nuclear attack and the probability of it. Deterrence comes at a cost and enacting it requires the transfer of huge resources as well as political and social capital to create and to maintain it, hence, Howard warns again, planning for the worst-case scenario as the only option as – in his view and based on his understanding of the Soviet Leadership's position – this was an improbable scenario. The Soviet Union may indeed have the capability to annihilate most of western Europe, but what is the West's assessment of its intention to do so? Due to its political, economic and social costs, deterrence must be fully endorsed by the society it is designed to defend. Ultimately, Howard argued, the final position must not be based purely on military analysis but on political judgment.[56]

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[50]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 161.
[51]Ibid., *Captain Professor*, p. 161.
[52]Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War', p, 8.
[53]Howard, 'The Future of Deterrence', p. 6.
[54]Howard, 'Deterrence Consensus and Reassurance', p. 253
[55]Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War' and Howard, 'Deterrence Consensus and Reassurance'.
[56]Howard, 'The Future of Deterrence' and Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War'.

Howard and the maximalists agree on the importance of distinguishing between short-term intentions and long-term goals. The former – of both the West and the Soviet Union – change regularly depending on small changes in the geopolitical context and micro-decision of all parties involved. The long-term goals however are much more permanent and determine the political and military responses in time of crisis. The difference between Howard and the maximalists is that Howard never thought that the Soviet Union's ultimate aim was to militarily annihilate the West via an all-out nuclear attack.[57] In his own words: 'The Soviet leadership is certainly Clausewitzian: it regards the use of armed force as an entirely legitimate instrument of policy. But there is no evidence that the Soviet Union is a militaristic society which considers war to be a noble activity in itself.'[58]

Hence, when Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher gathered a group of experts to discuss the future of British nuclear deterrent strategy, she called Michael Howard too.[59] In Washington, the Committee for the Present Danger was led by several of Wohlstetter's supporters and not surprisingly it argued sternly in favour of massive rearmament and against any arms control talks with the Soviet Union.[60] Howard continue to express support for the need to preserve a credible nuclear deterrent but thought this possible without accepting the worst-case analysis being put forward by Paul Nitze and by the Committee on the Present Danger. Thatcher, who was sensitive to the American approach to nuclear deterrence, seems not to have been receptive to Howard's invitation for caution and Howard immediately felt side-lined.[61]

Public fears and peace movements

By the early 1980s, pacifism and neutralism were on the rise on both sides of the Atlantic and the anti-nuclear movement was vocal and well organised. In the 1980s, the peace movements in Western Europe and North America tried to bridge across the iron curtain and to bring about a wider movement to feed into the international talks between the two blocs, in what has been called 'détente from below'. This new phenomenon found its most important institutional expression in the European Nuclear Disarmament (END) movement, an association of individuals and groups on both sides of the Curtain for a 'nuclear-free Europe from Poland to Portugal'. In

[57]Howard, 'The Future of Deterrence'. Howard, 'On Fighting a Nuclear War'; Howard, 'Deterrence, Consensus and Reassurance'.
[58]Howard, 'The Future of Deterrence', p. 4.
[59]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 192.
[60]Justin Vaïsse, 'Chapter 5: Nuclear Alarm: The Committee on the Present Danger', *Neoconservatism: The Biography of a Movement,* (Harvard: Belknap, 2010).
[61]Howard, *Captain Professor*, p. 192.

October 1983, nearly 3 million people across Western Europe protested nuclear missile deployments and demanded an end to the arms race. [62]

The emergence of vocal peace movements affected the credibility of the nuclear deterrent. Military leaders and security expert recognised that the western nuclear strategy could only be maintained if the western public approved the basic tenets of this strategy and would allow the use of nuclear weapons. The protest movements that developed because of NATO's Dual-Track decision have often been examined within the paradigms of the Cold War and therefore there has been a tendency to focus primarily on the role of ideologies. More recent works have however underlined the need to undertake a more holistic approach that includes important sociological, cultural and religious elements and to place the protest movements within larger shifts in international relations and domestic politics in response to the breakup of détente. These studies show that the peace movement had a significant impact in undermining the nuclear deterrent strategy from within and ultimately opened a space for diplomatic dialogue about arms control and arms reduction.[63]

Contrary to many colleagues who dismissed the peace movements either as naïve flower-waving youth or as ideological zealot in the service of Moscow, Howard engaged with their arguments and understood their stance. In the heated debates about nuclear strategy and disarmament, Howard argued that ultimately Whitehall and the military had the same goal as the anti-nuclear campaigners and peace protesters: to avoid escalation and to prevent World War III. The disagreement was about how to do it. The anti-nuclear campaigners focused on the ever-present danger of war and stressed the risk of nuclear escalation by accident or miscalculation.[64] The supporters of nuclear deterrence — and Howard counted himself as one of them — argued that nuclear weapons make major war an impossible rational choice and that the West

[62]Among the most relevant contributions: Henry Richard Maar, *Freeze!: The Grassroots Movement to Halt the Arms Race and End the Cold War,* (Cornell, University Press, 2021); Christophe Becker-Schaum et al, eds., *The Nuclear Crisis: The Arms Race, Cold War Anxiety and the German Peace Movement of the 1980s,* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2020); Jeremy Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the rise of détente,* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Cortright D., *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 148

[63]Maar, *Freeze!.* Becker-Schaum, *The Nuclear Crisis; f*or an excellent example of this approach applied to a case study: Eirini Karamouzi, 'Out with the Bases of Death': Civil Society and Peace Mobilization in Greece During the 1980s', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (2020), pp. 617-638.

[64]Michael Howard, *The invention of Peace and the Reinvention of War,* (London: Profile Books, 2002).

would not be in a position to negotiate disarmament if the Soviet Union had undisputed nuclear superiority. As he put it in 1981,

> Society may have accepted killing as a legitimate instrument of state policy, but not, as yet, suicide. For that reason, I find it hard to believe that the abolition of nuclear weapons, even if it were feasible, would be an unmixed blessing. Nothing that makes it easier for statesmen to regard war as a feasible instrument of state policy, one from which they stand to gain rather than lose, is likely to contribute to lasting peace.[65]

As he argued in 'The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy', Howard explored all dimensions of strategy: historical, operational, logistical, tactical, and technological and how they mutually influence each other and how they develop over time.[66] Howard pushed further and laid the groundwork for the expansion of the 'war and society' approach, which is now well established across the field of war studies. Whether examining the origins, conduct or aftermath of war, Howard stressed the importance of societal, political, and cultural factors. In his memoir *Captain Professor*, Howard spelt out his philosophy of military history,

> The history of war, I came to realize, was more than the operational history of armed forces. It was the study of entire societies. Only by studying their cultures could one come to understand what it was they fought about and why they fought in the way they did.[67]

While this is now a well-established approach and it would be unthinkable to study war without understanding its social and cultural dimension, it was a novel approach at the time which required a multidisciplinary study of a layered phenomenon in all its complexity. In a similar vein, it is not possible to speak about nuclear deterrence without speaking about the risk of miscalculation and annihilation and therefore one cannot speak about the strategic choices of the 1980s without considering the peace movements and the campaigns for nuclear disarmaments.[68]

In one of his last public appearances, at a conference at the Royal United Service Institute in 2014 marking the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, Howard again explained the need to understand the social and moral factors that shaped European society's response to war in 1914 and which impacted on its

[65]Michael Howard, *The Lessons of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 11.
[66]Howard 'The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy'.
[67]Howard, *Captain Professor, p.* 145.
[68]Ibid., p. 145; Howard, *The Causes of Wars*, pp. 90-103.

conduct and outcome.[69] Today, the 'New Military History' – which is no longer 'new' – is well established and it would be unthinkable to write the history of a conflict excluding the study of the relationships between military institutions and armed conflicts without an analysis of the societies and cultures that created them.[70]

Conclusion

In the debate on nuclear deterrent strategy, Howard's approach stands out for his ability to bring together a wide breath of issues ranging from the complexities of the most recent technological advances in military technology to a balanced assessment of the intentions of the Soviet Leadership. Howard did not limit himself to high-level strategic analysis and he did not shy away from engaging with the concerns of the peace movements and discussed the ethical implication of the use of nuclear weapons. Howard used the analogy of a drunk man who lost his watch in a dark alley at night and was found looking for it under a streetlamp because 'that is where there was more light'.[71] Similarly, the light provided by western technological capabilities and western sophisticated strategic analysis can be dazzling as well as hypnotic. Howard reminded his colleagues that 'it is in our knowledge of social development, cultural diversity and patterns of behaviour that we have to look for answers.'[72]

Howard was aware of the potential for abuse of history and of the inability of making predictions based on what has happened in the past.[73] However, he believed that history can provide historians with patterns and trends and may allow those who study it to identify structures and processes of human interactions and that these may allow scholars to anticipate important patterns of behaviour. As new evidence emerges,

[69]Michael Howard 'The Great War and the Mentalité of 1914,' *RUSI Journal* 159, 4 (2014), pp. 14-16.

[70]Tami Davis Biddle and Robert M. Citino 'The Role of Military History in the Contemporary Academy,' Society for Military History White Paper, Sept. 27, 2018; on the meaning of the 'new military history,'; see also, Joanna Bourke, 'New Military History,' in Matthew Hughes and William J. Philpott, eds., *Modern Military History*, (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 2006); Robert M. Citino, 'Military Histories Old and New: A Reintroduction,' *American Historical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 4 (October 2007), p. 1071.

[71]Howard, 'The Future of Deterrence', p. 10.

[72]Ibid., p. 10.

[73] Michael Howard, 'The Use and Abuse of Military History,' *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 138, No. 1 (1993), pp. 26–30; Michael Howard, 'Military History and the History of War', in Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, eds., *The Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); see also, Howard, *The Lessons of History*.

historians re-evaluate and re-calibrate their understanding of the past, they ask new questions according to what is relevant at the time in which they are living.[74]

Howard always remained open to criticism and to new ideas and approaches. He constantly pushed for precision in language and argument. His approach was always one of avoiding outrightly offending an adversary, rather seeking to persuade and to stimulate further thinking and reflection.

As a historian, Howard thought that the best contribution he could make to the debate on nuclear strategy and deterrence was to place these issues issue in their wider context, to highlight synergies and patterns as well as frictions and misunderstanding. Crucially, he never lost sight of the ethical dimension and of the need to foster understanding of the opponent's position and of their interests, fears and concerns. He invited colleagues to differentiate between long-term strategy and short-term objectives both for the West and for the Soviet side. Crucially, he was also always very careful to distinguish the will, goals and responsibilities of the Soviet leadership and the broad need to protect the Russian people as much as the western population form the devastating effects of a nuclear war.

Howard's call for an informed and articulated approach to the study of nuclear strategy, and the need for historians to engage effectively with security makers and policy-makers is as important today as it was 40 years ago.

[74]Howard, *The Lessons of History*, pp. 188–200.

War, Technology and Narrative Hierarchies

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ABSTRACT
This article considers some of the ways communications technologies have shaped narratives of war. It touches on different military cultures and how they contend with imposed and implicit hierarchies. It then goes on to briefly discuss the ways these hierarchies are expressed in various analogue and online media, both as a reflection and a potential subverter of cultural expectations about who participates in conflicts, and how.

Introduction

Carl von Clausewitz's trinity of passion, reason and chance may forever exist in a dynamic balance, forming the basis for conflict, but militaries are, of course, hierarchical institutions.[1] They are also embedded in their particular societies and cultures that, perhaps even more so in times of conflict, engage in formal and informal sorting processes. This in turn is mirrored in the narratives that emerge out of wars. Broadly speaking, war writing creates hierarchies of experience and suffering. At the apex is the soldier and veteran who has experienced active combat, who direct and absorb firepower, and whose accounts of war and sacrifice are so often presented in print and increasingly online across a variety of media as the authentic voice – and face, and the supreme narrator – of war. Depending on the scale of mobilisations, the mass of any given society serving in ancillary roles, however vital these might be to soldiers and civilians alike, sit somewhere beyond or below this elite core, as do those who passively suffer the consequences of violent political interventions.

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[1] See Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, ed. & transl., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

And yet something has, perhaps, subtly acted to shift perceptions of military hierarchies and narratives about war over time that has been under-appreciated in debates about political, societal and cultural change and how they inflect conflicts, especially when considering continuities between how war is portrayed off and online as a historical subject and as – for too many – an ongoing, lived reality.

In small, self-contained military units, hierarchies develop in response to technological change. Michael Howard, in considering the rapid shift from shock to fire that occurred in the West from the Renaissance on through the present day, and accelerated from the end of the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries, noted the psychological shift away from 'the display of spectacular individual courage', towards 'professionals…whose standards of behaviour were shaped by his function'.[2] At the institutional level the cultural practices that both create and reinforce military identities in peace and wartime are 'manufactured',[3] for example in the British army through the regimental system, which in the wake of the Second World War faced a conundrum of squaring class assumptions and the resultant cultural and training practices with the need to professionalise the officer corps.[4] Reflecting from a different Western military perspective, Samuel Hynes, the historian and writer who served as a pilot in the Pacific during the Second World War, published his memoir of the same war in 1988. At the same time the racial segregation of the US military was systemic and broadly accepted; in his memoir Hynes writes from a personal perspective about a different form of hierarchical sorting: the informal self-segregation at the micro level that organised people according not only to heroism but skill: 'The pilots in the flight who couldn't fly – who were too stupid, too clumsy, or too frightened – became outsiders and enemies.'[5]

Such dynamics create concentric circles of experience, authenticity and value, with implications for which war narratives are deemed culturally important, and which are shrugged off as peripheral. What is often most valued in war writing is access, as opposed to stylistic innovation (although these are not mutually exclusive): 'proximity to the experiences of war' is what elevates soldiers' and veterans' life writings. They enable the reader to 'achieve the idealised end held out to them',[6] and to comprehend

[2]Michael Howard, 'War and Technology', *The RUSI Journal*, 132, 4 (1987), pp. 17-22 (p. 17).
[3]David French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People c. 1870-2000*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 6.
[4]French, *Military Identities*, pp. 320-1.
[5]Samuel Hynes, *Flights of Passage: Reflections of a World War II Aviator,* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988), p. 96.
[6]Hope Wolf, "Mediating War: Hot Diaries, Liquid Letters and Vivid Remembrances," *Life Writing* 9, 3 (2012), pp. 327–36 (p. 328).

war as a complex human tragedy that is the result of a breakdown – or to express it within a more positive Clausewitzian framing, an extension – of broader geopolitical systems and social institutions.

Memoirs written for more general audiences that narrate mobilisation and combat often occlude professionalism as it relates to control or mastery of war technologies, instead recounting common tropes: encounters with superiors and the military hierarchy; first reactions to combat and death in war; mental and physical exhaustion; camaraderie and unit cohesion; and strange and surreal encounters with transgressive spaces that evoke past peacetime existences. Sergeant and sniper Bella Isaakovna Epstein, writing about fighting in Belorussia and Germany during the Second World War, addresses these, but she also includes accounts of being warned about sexual promiscuity and rape within the Soviet forces by her commanders.

Describing her first experience of being bombed, she writes that: 'planes flew over, I crouched down and covered my head with my hands, then I thought, and what about my poor hands? I wasn't ready for death yet.' She pays specific attention to the detail of her 'poor hands' as a proxy for fear of bodily injury as well as death. Later, she relates the surreal experience of being billeted in a castle, trying on the beautiful, abandoned clothes, and being so overcome with exhaustion that she and her fellow fighters 'fell asleep at once. I lay in that dress and the robe on top of it.' Coming across an abandoned milliner's shop and sleeping in a hat before putting back on her uniform: 'We never took anything. On the road even a needle is heavy. A spoon tucked into the boot top, that's all.'[7]

While this account is emblematic, the voice delivering the narrative of fractured impressions of military life and combat is, broadly speaking, exceptional. It is included in a composite biography collecting stories about the one million women who served in the Soviet Army. In her introduction to *The Unwomanly Face of War* (1985) author and editor Svetlana Alexievich addresses her approach as a reader as well as a writer and compiler of stories: 'I am writing a book about war...I, who never liked to read military books, although in my childhood and youth this was the favourite reading of everybody. Of all my peers'. She looked around at the 'village of women' she grew up in, which led her to write a women's history of a war whose nationalist memorial narrative was almost entirely masculine.[8] Women were presented as relatively passive participants: they acted as workers, survivors and victims, but not in any recognised way, as professional warriors and national saviours. Often their experience and hence their accounts detailed only limited engagement with military technologies and

[7]Bella Isaakovna Epstein, quoted in Svetlana Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, (London: Penguin, 2017), pp. 191-2.
[8]Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War*, pp. xi-xii

firepower. Note again Epstein's fixing of her war experiences to her vulnerable body – her hands – as well as quotidian, civilian objects: a needle and a spoon.[9]

Alexievich's collected stories complicate and expand upon national narratives that promote the male combat soldier and veteran as the hero and articulator of conflict narratives with all their requisite societal veneration. These are collected in a collected print edition, whereas increasingly such accounts are captured and 'archived' online (see for example Soviet-Afghan War veterans use of social media platforms such as Odnoklassniki[10] to locate one another and recount war experiences); Alexievich's multi-narrator collections were delayed in Russia because the realistic, detail-driven accounts she had included led to accusations that she was a pacifist, even as she celebrated arguably the Soviet patriotic touchstone: military service in the Second World War.[11]

The act of recasting war stories through a gendered lens has occurred off and online for centuries, across cultures, with some notable exceptions. This is what the writer Chimamamda Ngozi Adichie spoke about in her 2014 TED talk, 'The Danger of the Single Story', which relies on repetition achieved through a variety of mediated accounts of war: 'So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, again and again, and that is what they become.'[12]

With respect to narrative tropes, alongside the narrative voice the related representative 'face' of the soldier as presented by organising information technologies remains by default male, even for individuals for whom algorithms should, theoretically, anticipate and cater to an interest in disruptions to this established narrative. For me, for example, among a substantial number that turned up images of male soldiers one exceptional search produced a *Times of Israel* profile by Josefin Dolsten on Debbie Zimelman who, as a photographer, spent five years chronicling the lives of women serving in combat units with the Israeli army, which began integrating women into forward positions in the 1990s.[13]

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[9]Bella Isaakovna Epstein, quoted in Svetlana Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War*, pp. 191-2.

[10]https://mobile.ok.ru. Accessed 25 May 2022.

[11]Meredith Tax, "Introductory Note to Svetlana Alexievich, Keith Hammond and Ludmila Lezhneva, "I Am Loath to Recall': Russian Women Soldiers in World War II'," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 23, 3/4 (1995), pp 78–84 (p. 79)

[12]Chimamamda Ngozi Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story," (March 4, 2014) https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en. Accessed 25 May 2022.

[13]Josefin Dolsten, "A Photographer Explores What It's like to Be a Female Combat Soldier in Israel," *Times of Israel*, May 29, 2019: https://www.timesofisrael.com/a-

Offline memoirs offer some expansion of the image that all soldiers are men, that the most compelling and important writers about conflict must be male veterans, and that military professionalism in relation to advancing technologies is purely masculine.[14] However, they still preference a particular military experience: that of the elite combat veteran, who embodies Howard's hero *and* his professional fighter.[15] This figure still dominates across institutional news platforms, which interact with and draw material from mobile technologies and social media as emerging narrative platforms, as well as in offline memoirs. Lauren Katzenberg, editor of the *New York Times 'At War'* forum spoke in 2018 about when, on the day the site featured a story about NATO security forces that were training women to join the Afghan security forces, the *New York Times Magazine* offered the majority of the homepage time to a photo essay on American special forces.[16] The former story offered a new or at least under-reported story, written by a woman who had embedded with female troops, about how the war was shifting ideas about women could do in times of conflict. And yet the *Magazine* focused on the familiar. Katzenberg recalled that 'It was like 17 photos of American bearded dudes with guns, patrolling around the valley of Nangahar and it was like, we haven't seen enough of those yet?'[17]

The extent to which these online examples provide outlets for new stories that can challenge and complicate broader cultural assumptions about who narrates war, or whether the sheer quantitative weight of existing material, reinforced by mysterious, proprietary algorithms and search engines, steers writers and readers down existing paths, remains to be seen. Both may be possible at the same time, on different scales, and scale is the key to success in the digital space, determining findability, relevance, and audiences. The mediatisation performed by platforms in combination with mobile devices incentivises modes of representation built around familiar and established, as opposed to necessarily accurate narratives about war.

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photographer-explores-what-its-like-to-be-a-female-combat-soldier-in-israel/. Accessed 11 July 2022.

[14]For example, Kayla Williams' *Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the US Army,* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), which Amazon's 'customers...also viewed' algorithm recommends for purchase along with Gayle Tzemach Lemmon's *Ashley's War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Opps Battlefield,* (New York: Harper, 2015); Mary Jennings Hegar's *Shoot Like a Girl: One Woman's Dramatic Fight in Afghanistan and on the Home Front,* (New York: Berkley Books, 2017) and Anthony Swofford's *Jarhead: A Marine's Chronicle of the Gulf War and Other Battles,* (New York: Scribner, 2003).

[15]Howard, *War and Technology*, p. 17.

[16]https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/atwar. Accessed 25 May 2022.

[17]Interview with Lauren Katzenberg, interview by Alisa Miller, 5 December 2018.

Despite social media's futurist and transformative promises, information technologies may actually curtail our understanding of the changing character of war by playing down the relationships between technology and war, and in the example explored above by preselecting gendered narratives that continue to advance the image of the male hero. Ultimately this narrowing poses a challenge to historians to consider new ways of overlaying frames and perspectives – technological, narrative, gendered, etc. – when analysing the changing climate and the enduring nature of warfare. For as David J Lonsdale has observed in considering war, technology and Clausewitz, 'Although it will be shown that certain elements of the climate of war are not always directly in play during any particular conflict, they are always waiting on the side-lines ready to be reintroduced.'[18]

Michael Howard and his collaborators illuminated for the English reader Clausewitz's natural components of warfare, expressed as they are in the humble and considered register of the dialectic. Even as Hew Strachan has noted Howard's achievement in focusing attention on the practice of war, rendered as 'dialogue between one soldier and another', *On War* invites these broader questions about continuities and ruptures, about what changes and what stays the same.[19]

[18]David J. Lonsdale, *The Nature of War in the Information Age,* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 203.
[19]Hew Strachan, 'Michael Howard and Clausewitz', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2022), pp. 143-60, especially p. 148.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES (July 2021)

General

The British Journal of Military History (the BJMH or Journal) welcomes the submission of articles and research notes on military history in the broadest sense, and without restriction as to period or region. The BJMH particularly welcomes papers on subjects that might not ordinarily receive much attention but which clearly show the topic has been properly researched.

The editors are keen to encourage submissions from a variety of scholars and authors, regardless of their academic background. For those papers that demonstrate great promise and significant research but are offered by authors who have yet to publish, or who need further editorial support, the editors may be able to offer mentoring to ensure an article is successfully published within the Journal.

Papers submitted to the BJMH must not have been published elsewhere. The editors are happy to consider papers that are under consideration elsewhere on the condition that the author indicates to which other journals the article has been submitted.

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Following peer review and any necessary revision by the author, papers will be edited for publication in the Journal. The editors may propose further changes in the interest of clarity and economy of expression, although such changes will not be made without

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The BJMH also welcomes the submission of shorter 'Research Notes'. These are pieces of research-based writing of between 1,000 and 3,000 words. These could be, for example: analysis of the significance a newly accessible document or documents; a reinterpretation of a document; or a discussion of an historical controversy drawing on new research. Note that all such pieces of work should follow the style guidelines for articles and will be peer reviewed. Note also that such pieces should not be letters, nor should they be opinion pieces which are not based on new research.

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The Journal's Editorial Team is responsible for commissioning book reviews and for approaching reviewers. From time to time a list of available books for review may be issued, together with an open call for potential reviewers to contact the Journal Editors. The policy of the BJMH is for reviews always to be solicited by the editors rather than for book authors to propose reviewers themselves. In all cases, once a reviewer has been matched with a book, the Editorial Team will arrange for them to be sent a review copy.

Book reviews should generally be of about 700 words and must not exceed 1000 words in length.

A review should summarise the main aims and arguments of the work, should evaluate its contribution and value to military history as broadly defined, and should identify to which readership(s) the work is most likely to appeal. The Journal does not encourage personal comment or attacks in the reviews it publishes, and the Editorial Team reserves the right to ask reviewers for revisions to their reviews. The final decision whether or not to publish a review remains with the Editorial Team.

The Editorial Team may seek the views of an author of a book that has been reviewed in the Journal. Any comment from the author may be published.

All submitted reviews should begin with the bibliographic information of the work under review, including the author(s) or editor(s), the title, the place and year of publication, the publisher, the number of pages, the ISBN for the format of the work that has been reviewed, and the price for this format if available. Prices should be given in the original currency, but if the book has been published in several territories including the UK then the price in pounds sterling should be supplied. The number of illustrations and maps should also be noted if present. An example of the heading of a review is as follows:

Ian F W Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms: The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*. Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press, 2018. Xviii + 350pp. 3 maps. ISBN 978-0806161716 (hardback). Price £32.95.

The reviewer's name, and an institutional affiliation if relevant, should be appended at the bottom of the review, name in Capitals and Institution in lower case with both to be right aligned.

Reviews of a single work should not contain any footnotes, but if the text refers to any other works then their author, title and year should be apparent in order for readers to be able to identify them. The Editorial Team and Editorial Board may on occasion seek to commission longer Review Articles of a group of works, and these may contain footnotes with the same formatting and standards used for articles in the Journal.

BJMH STYLE GUIDE (July 2021)

The BJMH Style Guide has been designed to encourage you to submit your work. It is based on, but is not identical to, the Chicago Manual of Style and more about this style can be found at:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html

Specific Points to Note

Use Gill Sans MT 10 Point for all article and book review submissions, including footnotes.

Text should be justified.

Paragraphs do not require indenting.

Line spacing should be single and a single carriage return applied between paragraphs.

Spellings should be anglicised: i.e. –ise endings where appropriate, colour etc., 'got' not 'gotten'.

Verb past participles: -ed endings rather than –t endings are preferred for past participles of verbs i.e. learned, spoiled, burned. While is preferred to whilst.

Contractions should not be used i.e. 'did not' rather than 'didn't'.

Upon first reference the full name and title of an individual should be used as it was as the time of reference i.e. On 31 July 1917 Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), launched the Third Battle of Ypres.

All acronyms should be spelled out in full upon first reference with the acronym in brackets, as shown in the example above.

Dates should be written in the form 20 June 2019.

When referring to an historical figure, e.g. King Charles, use that form, when referring to the king later in the text, use king in lower case.

Foreign words or phrases such as *weltanschauung* or *levée en masse* should be italicised.

Illustrations, Figures and Tables:

- Must be suitable for inclusion on an A5 portrait page.
- Text should not be smaller than 8 pt Gill Sans MT font.
- Should be numbered sequentially with the title below the illustration, figure or table.
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Footnoting:

- All references should be footnotes not endnotes.
- Footnote numeral should come at the end of the sentence and after the full stop.
- Multiple references in a single sentence or paragraph should be covered by a single footnote with the citations divided by semi-colons.
- If citation management software is used the footnotes in the submitted file must stand alone and be editable by the editorial team.

Quotations:

- Short (less than three lines of continuous quotation): placed in single quotation marks unless referring to direct speech and contained within that paragraph. Standard footnote at end of sentence.
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- Punctuation leading into quotations is only necessary if the punctuation itself would have been required were the quotation not there. i.e. : ; and , should only be present if they were required to begin with.
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- For journals: Author, 'Title in quotation marks', *Journal Title in Italics*, Vol. #, Iss. # (or No.#), (Season/Month, Year) pp. #-# (p. #).
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- Ibid., with a full stop before the comma, should be used for consecutive citations.

Examples of Citations:

- Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 21.
- Michael Collins, 'A fear of flying: diagnosing traumatic neurosis among British aviators of the Great War', *First World War Studies*, 6, 2 (2015), pp. 187-202 (p. 190).
- Michael Howard, 'Men against Fire: The Doctrine of the Offensive in 1914', in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 510-526.
- The UK National Archives (TNA), CAB 19/33, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Sclater, evidence to Dardanelles Commission, 1917.
- Shilpa Ganatra, 'How Derry Girls Became an Instant Sitcom Classic', *The Guardian*, 13 February 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/feb/13/derry-girls-instant-sitcom-classic-schoolgirls-northern-ireland Accessed 20 April 2019.

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