

Historic american wars through the ages

War



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In this research paper, the various wars that America has taken part in are discussed and dissected to identify the root causes for the wars, the actual incidents which transpired and the final consequences in the aftermath of the said wars. Evolution of the Militia System in the Colonial Times The militia is recognized as the local able-bodied force which the British created in order to protect its vested interests in the colonized regions when its own military was insufficient to contain the military responsibilities (Telzrow, 2006).

The responsibility of the militia in the case of the United States was to basically suppress the native population and safeguard the British interests in the geographical region. The militia was basically equipped and trained along the regular army lines and were to act as the front runners in any altercation. Evolution The movement of the English into the region previously dominated by the Indians was seen as an act against the locals as they were maltreated and they began to become increasingly hostile.

Aside from the local threat, the British were paranoid due to the presence of the Spanish, French and Dutch who were located all around the United States. The requirement for the militia units were that the person should be able-bodied and lie within the age of 15-60 (Telzrow, 2006). The leadership was often bestowed to wealthy families and people who were politically strong. These armies comprised of locals of the surrounding areas and rarely went into battles in distant places as their primary objective was providing security to their own locality.

The militia was also restricted due to labor demands since most were common villagers who had some military training. So when the harvesting

season was upon them, the militia was understaffed. Eventually the volunteer militia was created which consisted of militia members who voluntarily made the militia and were responsible in procuring their own equipment and weapons. This militia had a more military and social background than the regular militia. Importance

The population of the army in the United States was not sufficient enough to provide internal security as well as address the problems with the expanding Dutch, Spanish and French empires (Cooper, 1997). The local militia provided the British with a constant supply of soldiers and they would handle the internal conflicts and handle security issues. The militia provided villages and towns a means of defending themselves against neighboring areas and it was the militia which provided the Civil War with able-bodied men to defend their rights.

British View of the Militia The British viewed the militia as a reserve unit for their disposal. Even though the militia was trained under the army, they were rarely taken for any expeditions far from their localities. Since most of the militia members were farmers and villagers they weren't taken far from their responsibilities. It was this short-sight which eventually cost the British, as the militia was the fundamental force behind the Battle for Independence in which the British lost against the united Americans.

The militia was led by a trained contingent of professionally trained soldiers and the concept of a dual army was born which existed in the War of Independence. The War of 1812 The War of 1812 was fought between the United States of America and Great Britain. The war lasted from 1812 to

1815. Causes The causes for the war could be traced to the United States frustration towards the British navy and its actions conducted in the sea.

During this era, the British were searching for men who they could use as seamen and for this purpose they would stop and search for deserted sailors on ships headed towards the United States and departing from it. The British did not hesitate in hassling Americans in the process (Galafilm). The British were also pressing for the United States to quit trading with France, since France was at war with Britain. This was during the Napoleonic era. These strict regulations and haughty attitude eventually frustrated the United States to such an extent that they took notice of these acts in the United States Congress.

The United States felt that their rights on the seas had been violated. The United States felt that if it tried some economic approaches then under the pressure the British would fold but their attempts at constraining the economic activities across the sea routes proved ineffective and they eventually declared war against Great Britain on June 18, 1812. Conduct of the War Responding to the call for war, the United States decided to win over the Canadian region occupied by the British. The United States launched a three pronged attack in 1812 which failed.

During the year however the Americans were able to win a series of single-ship engagements and were able to harry British shipping. In response to these actions the British tightened the coastlines and created blockades. The outcome of this was that the American trade suffered, and their finances were weakened, and the entire coastline was exposed to attacks from the British. In 1813 the Americans attempted to take over Canada again. Yet

similar to past expeditions, this attempt failed at once. 1814 however proved to be the decisive year, as the British had won over the French.

They began concentrating their attention towards the United States front and began harrying troops along to the States in order to suppress the American revolt. They concentrated on attacking on 3 major fronts; New York, New Orleans and Chesapeake (Berton, 1988). The British were able to gain victory in all 3 places and the Americans were barely able to resist the forces. Consequence In 1815 the Battle of New Orleans took place in which the British's superior forces were unable to overpower the lesser American force.

Using strategic miscalculations on the part of the British, the Americans were able to defeat them in the historic battle. The end of the war was marked by the Treaty of the Ghent, in which none of the problems were resolved. Winners or Losers The War of 1812 did not provide any conclusive winners or losers as both sides suffered many losses economically and with respect to lives. The period from 1812-1815 marked an economical decline for America and it did not help the United States as such. The Mexican War of 1846

The Mexican War was fought between the United States and Mexico from 1846 to 1848. Causes After the annexation of Texas, Mexico appeared claiming Texas as part of its own geographic boundaries (Son of the South, 2003). This came as a surprise to the Americans as Mexico was already a recognized state with its own geographic borders clearly identified by the United States of America, England, France and other governments. The Mexicans were also causing trouble since the Republican government had

succeeded in their country and they were a constant thorn in the side of the United States.

The state of Mexico would replenish its treasury and gather funding by plundering United States vessels in the Gulf of Mexico. Upon the United States complain, the governments formulated treaties yet they were never acted upon and the plundering continued to transpire unabated. The War In 1845, President Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor to occupy a position near the Rio Grande, as a precautionary measure since both sides were becoming increasingly hostile towards each other.

During the expedition moving closer to Rio Grande, General Zachary began the construction of Fort Brown, which was later targeted by the Mexicans as a point to be recognized and neutralized. The first battle was at Palo Alto, after the Mexicans began gathering around the Fort Brown and it appeared as if it would fall. In this battle the United States won against the gathered Mexican forces. In the month of May 1846, both sides openly declared war and urged their states to take the neighbor as a recognized threat.

What followed later were a number of expeditions across Texas into the state of Mexico, with the generals defeating the local forces and extending the United States controlled territory. Matamoras, Monterrey, Veracruz, Cerro Gordo, etc. were majorly all successful campaigns conducted by the U. S. generals. During this war California also gained independence as the locals declared the said independence after the Mexican forces were repelled from the state. The northward expedition by General Scott of the United States forces was undeterred and in September 13, the city of Mexico had fallen to the U.

S. government and the Mexicans were ultimately defeated. A reason which could be attributed to the constant defeat by the Mexicans against the Americans could be that the Mexicans at the time were locked in internal conflicts as well, which resulted in their inability to unite against the foreign threat (Soto, 2006). Consequences of the Mexican War After the Mexicans were defeated in battle, in February 1848 the Mexican Congress agreed to establish a treaty of peace with the United States generals at Guadalupe Hidalgo. Both sides ratified to it on July 4 of the same year.

The stipulation of the treaty was that Mexico would be evacuated of American troop's presence in 3 months and payments worth \$3, 000, 000 in hand and \$12, 000, 000 by the United States to Mexico over a period of 4 installments would be paid for the development of New Mexico and California which had become U. S. territories. A major consequence of the war was the distinguishing of the boundary dividing Mexico and the United States. When the treaty was ratified in 1854, the treaty of 1848 was revised and the boundaries were fixed and the United States agreed to pay \$7, 000, 000 to \$10, 000, 000 as a consideration to Mexico.

The conditions set under the peace treaty were all complied with and peaceful relations have existed between the two nations since then. The Spanish American War The Spanish American War was a brief yet conclusive battle which lasted from April 1898 to July 1898, during which time the Spanish Empire was destroyed and offering the United States with several new possessions in the Caribbean and the Pacific (Department Of The Navy -- Naval Historical Center, 1998). Causes What basically marked the

beginning of the war between the Spanish navy and the United States navy was the attack on the battleship Maine.

This was an unprecedented attack on U. S. property and it incited the United States to go to war. Even though it has yet to be proven that the attack on the battleship was Spanish inspired (Buscheni, 2000), the U. S. newspapers used their influential position to paint a grim picture regarding the Spanish. Appeals placed in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines all made it appear as the regions were under Spanish oppressive rule and helped precipitating the war and providing tender to the flames.

The newspapers in the United States were seeing a boom as they were the major source of information for the populace. Using their position, newspapers began writing pieces by which their sales would be maximized disregarding the truth and how events had really transpired (Buscheni, 2000). Incidents After the sinking of the battleship Maine in 15 February 1898, the Americans launched an attack in May of the same year in Manila. The battle of Manila Bay was between the Spanish fleet positioned there against the United States Navy.

The battle was one sided as the Spanish fleet comprised of large wooden ships whereas the U. S. Navy consisted of smaller steel vessels. After the firing from the U. S. Navy, led by Admiral George Dewey, the Spanish fleet situated in Manila was completely destroyed. This was one of the most successful campaigns undertaken by the United States as the only casualty during this campaign resulted from sunstroke and not actual combat (Independence Hall Association). Another expedition was launched in Cuba

under the command of General William Shafter, who led a force which was vastly outnumbered 7 to 1.

The true glory of the Cuban expedition is accredited to a group of fighters referred to as the Rough Riders, who comprised of cowboys, adventurous college students and ex-convicts who had volunteered for the cause. The Rough Riders, Shafter's forces and 2 African American regiments all collaborated in charging up San Juan Hill and bottling the Spanish in the Santiago Harbor. The Spanish lost this war when the Spanish fleet was destroyed by the American forces. Consequences

The United States received the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico after the Treaty of Paris was signed which basically awarded the victors. Cuba attained independence after this war and Spain was given \$20 Million to recover its losses from these battles. Yet however, the key consequence of the Spanish American War was the proof of the strength of journalism in the United States. The effectiveness of the newspapers to influence the populace into thinking about right and wrong and coming up with conclusions based on what they wished to happen was evident in this war.

Another consequence of this war could be the realization of the expanding American empire, as the desire to " free" Cuba from oppressive Spanish rule was replaced by the occupation of Puerto Rico and the Philippines by the United States. The U. S. sentiment supported the expansions and it is evident to this day of the urge of United States to occupy other countries to provide " peace" and " freedom". Jomini and Clausewitz Fundamental Principles of War Swiss wrier Antoine- Henri Jomini and Prussian Carl von

Clausewitz were military theorists who became popular during the era of the French Revolution and Napoleon.

Both have been highly influential in framing military thinking. The theories presented by both Jomini and Clausewitz are seen as either exact opposites of each other or as identical in most respects. The reason behind such a conflicting view is due to the similar background shared by the two theorists. Both had a common historic interest in the campaigns led by Frederick the Great, both shared long personal experience in the Napoleonic wars (even though both were on different sides), and both read each other's books.

After taking into account the mentioned reasons it comes as no surprise as both theorists saw war in the same light, just from different angles (Bassford, 1993). Fundamental Differences between the two theorists In its most basic form, both theorists were on opposing sides of each other during the French Napoleonic era. Jomini acted as an interpreter and general for the French forces, while Clausewitz had fought numerous times against the French being in the Prussian army. Both held a differing perspective regarding the concepts related to the history and role of the military.

Clausewitz book, *On War*, clearly indicated that history was a dynamic process and it should not be looked upon with a static world view as values, standards and situations differ with respect to the context of the times. His theories bring to light a concept which states that war can vary its form depending on the circumstances in which it is being fought, hence the nature of the policy and the society within it is waged is crucial to take into account and should not be overlooked as a constant. On the other hand, Jomini's views regarding war were simplistic in nature and were static.

He recognized war as a battle of superior minds, in the form of military generals and heroes, and reflected that war was beyond normal people's comprehension. He referred to war as a "drama" with differences in wars arising due to differing technologies, political motivations and people involved. His work was thus more appealing to military educators as its purpose was to teach practical lessons to officers of a superior grade. Even though the philosophies of both theorists differed, both discussed the same materials in their works which were practically applicable to scenarios which may arise during wars.

Similarities and Sharing of Opinions Initially Jomini appeared to be a role model for Clausewitz, as in Clausewitz first book "Principles of War", we can see the references and acknowledgements Clausewitz aimed towards Jomini (Handel). Both also shared a lot of similar concepts and terminologies which reflected on their acceptance of the others opinion. The fundamental Jomini theory related to warfare which lies in accordance with the theory proposed by Clausewitz was the concept of the centre of gravity.

Both theorists shared the opinion that all armies have a central point where if they were attacked then the outcome would turn in favor of the attacker. Yet in due time Clausewitz began to think otherwise. His argument was that Jomini did not take into account the external variables which could not be calculated such as the morals of the soldiers, the level of motivation, and other psychological factors. These arguments were however unjust as Jomini identified morale of the soldiers and other such concepts in his work the "Summary of the Art of War".

Yet this was published after Clausewitz' death and were after Jomini had read " On War". Relevance to Today's World In truth the theories discussed by Jomini are more popularly enforced in today's world rather than the works of Clausewitz which is in one way a disadvantage as war has become overly simplistic in nature not taking into account values and other humanistic factors. Becoming purely mathematical and artistic in nature has cost us humanity's values. In today's volatile environment we find coexistence between the two approaches.

We can find instances where the Clausewitz approach is applied where wars are fought along the grounds of being righteous and to further humanistic elements (such as the Afghan war and Iraq invasion), whereas other times we find the human element entirely lacking (the Turks and Kurd war). Both the theories are applicable as taking into account the Clausewitz belief that wars should be taken in context to the situation and not as a point in time, the theories adapted by leading strategists fall into a category which is a mixture of both the theorists views.

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