Why Study Air Power History?

The lessons of history are never clear. Clio is like the Delphic oracle: it is only in retrospect, and usually too late, that we understand what she was trying to say.

Michael Howard [1]

‘It’s the steady force-feeding of the same old horse pills of history’

An anonymous naval captain [2]

In his essay on ‘The Use and Abuse of History’, Professor Howard highlighted the problems of drawing from history and either failing to heed the lessons, or drawing the wrong ones. He notes a ‘depressingly close analogy’ between the mistakes made by Austrian commanders in their conflict with Napoleon in Italy in 1796 and those committed by the British in the desert operations against Rommel in 1941; both were overly concerned with security, or what today may be called ‘force protection’ – an analogy with potentially very worrying overtones. The scope for the misuse of history was typified by the classic situation in which the French General Staff applied the lessons of First World War trench warfare in their preparations for their defence against the Third Reich. At first sight this may seem excusable, but a more detailed examination shows that the French actually applied the lessons of 1916 rather than the more relevant ones of 1918. Ironically the staffs of the Wehrmacht and the Luftwaffe had expended considerable energy in the inter-war years analysing the lessons of history, trends in technology and the likely impact on warfare.[3] In some instances their doctrine, such as Blitzkrieg, had been given almost mystical status.

There is a further problem in this area and that is one of causal links. It is very easy to say that because an individual was present at a given juncture of time that he was influenced by it, and this therefore was key to the formulation of future policy. This is particularly relevant to the likes of Trenchard and Harris. It is very easy to draw causal conclusions from the latter’s experiences in colonial policing duties and apply them to the strategic bomber offensive. It may actually be more useful to look at Harris’s experiences operating over Passchendaele, or attempting to shoot down Zeppelins over London. A rigorous historical approach should highlight the truth of the matter; and if this is too optimistic an outlook, then awareness of the pitfalls will at least help.

If the study of history is so fraught with problems, and either so easy to get wrong or difficult to get right, depending on one's view of the contents of the glass, why bother at all? To many military men and women, the benefits of the allied disciplines of doctrine, strategy and military history could either be summarised on the back of the proverbial cigarette packet, or more likely consigned to a broom cupboard at the end of a corridor only to surface when a search is undertaken for some arcane piece of memorabilia that had once been donated by the venerable senior officer now scheduled to revisit the haunts of his former glory. The concept of recording today's events with an eye to the interests of future historians combing the archives seems to many to be preposterous[4] – particularly in an era where capacity for routine staff work is occupied by the latest management fad or the accumulation of apparently meaningless statistics. These practical constraints on the acquisition and retention of primary source material are further exacerbated by the limits on intellectual capacity; the modern serviceman or woman needs an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of everything from their operational systems through to the latest legislation on health and safety or individual rights.

It could therefore be argued that all that is required from history is the accumulation of the recent experiences of the latest operations, detachments and trials. The reality, however, is that this distillation of 'what has worked best' is the seed corn of tactical level doctrine.[5] The same academic approach produces operational doctrine and so on. By stealth, therefore, history, albeit recent history, is an indispensable part of every day military business – even if many would deny their link with either doctrine or study of the past! With the rate of change of technology so marked in the field of air power, it is particularly important that we develop the analytical skills necessary to sort wheat from chaff. Even if we accept the *de facto* omnipresence of military history, is there a requirement to study the discipline more formally? The real danger in not doing so is evident from the transition between the deceptively simple accumulations of 'what has worked best' to the calamitous pitfalls described by Professor Howard.

The question 'Why study the history of a particular campaign or air operation?' or the somewhat broader debate on why we should study military history is of interest to more than just the potential military historian. The question has equal validity for academics across a range of fields, diplomats, officials, journalists and indeed anyone who is likely to cite history, or even a humble precedent, in the course of their routine business. Such a wide-ranging audience is entitled to a comprehensive answer, starting with an examination of why we should study history at all. This paper will then look at the nuances of military history as an extension of the discipline prior to reappraising the benefits and pitfalls of the subject in the wider field of strategy and doctrine. Wherever possible, air power examples have been chosen to populate this paper.

WHY STUDY HISTORY (AND WHAT IS IT)?

This question is at the heart of all historical endeavour and is the essence of the study of the past. At the same time, it is the bane of student historians at all levels; those in schools can attempt to duck the issue by recourse to a dislike of maths or

whatever the alternatives may be. But undergraduates and the vast majority of their more learned peers will have had to give some thought to this issue and the wider discipline of histiography. The literature is inevitably extensive and, almost equally inevitably, much of it is impenetrable on first inspection. Some authors seek to ascertain what history actually 'is'.[6] Others 'pursue' the subject or write 'on history' itself.[7] Yet more actively 'defend their studies' [8] while their colleagues ally history to social theory.[9] An exhaustive review of these theories is well beyond the scope of this paper, with only room for a cursory examination; the curious are recommended to consider the works footnoted as useful starters.

Professor Howard has argued that there is no such thing as 'history'.[10] He contends that the subject is merely what historians have written and that they, by their very nature, are an integral part of the process. This means that no matter how objective they attempt to be, historians imbue their work with their own values and cultural perspectives – and this is before perceptions and prejudices are superimposed. The historiography of the bombing of Dresden is a stark example of this, especially as one of the earliest accounts was published by the now infamous David Irving.[11] There can therefore be no absolute account of history and nor can it be considered to be a closed box. One author has suggested that 'history is an argument without end'. Historical research can be pursued by a logical method in which a thesis is postulated, tested against the evidence, and reviewed if necessary. History is, however, very much a humanity rather than a science, not least because the principle of repeatability cannot be applied; successive generations of scientists should be able to replicate the findings of their predecessors – historians approach what are ostensibly equivalent occurrences from vastly differing perspectives with the ensuing ranges of interpretations. The historian must consider not only what may have happened in the past, but also attempt to infer what conditions were like. In this emerging context, the historian can begin to postulate how the social, intellectual and political structures developed. From this, the logical progression is to begin to analyse why events then occurred. At no stage, however, can the historian actually know what people thought; even supposed contemporaneous diaries are fraught with potential difficulties. But this does not render the process of enquiry any the less worthwhile. An analytical approach is, of course, essential in any academic endeavour; the postulation of a thesis and the subsequent arguing of evidence are fundamental.

Professor Marwick takes recourse in the dictionary definition of history – learning or knowing by enquiry. History is therefore an interpretation of the past in which 'a serious effort has been made to filter out myth and fable'.[12] It should therefore come as no surprise to confirm that not all that purports to be history is any more than myth, fable and legend. It is worth dwelling on the meanings of these terms. A myth is defined as a 'traditional narrative usually involving supernatural or imaginary persons'; a fable is a ' story, especially a supernatural one, not based on fact'; and a legend is a 'traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but unauthenticated'.[13] If we combine Howard and Marwick it becomes immediately evident that some of what we may have solemnly considered to be history is no more than earlier scholars' interpretation of myth and legend – the tales of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table spring instantly to mind, but there are arguably as many legends

emanating from the Strategic Bomber Offensive in World War II or the Vietnam War.[14] Human nature is such that we are intrinsically fascinated by the past, by myths and legends, history and archaeology (or at least as depicted on popular television series).[15] Unless we are content to swallow unthinkingly this diet of what may potentially be fables, we must have recourse to a more scholarly approach to the past.

It is not, however, sufficient to take the works of an eminent scholar down from their dusty position on the library shelves and be confident that we have a work of pure history in our hands – no matter how eminent the historian. In his biography of A J P Taylor, Adam Sisman describes one of the most famous (and controversial) historians of the twentieth century. His subject was the author of major works of considerable learning such as The Struggle for Mastery in Europe (Oxford, 1954); he was also described, somewhat disparagingly, as being the 'star in his studio', referring to his hugely successful television appearances.[16] Taylor also wrote *The Origins of the Second World War;*[17] this was immediately controversial, not least because of its thesis that Hitler had stumbled into his foreign conquests rather than them being part of a pre-ordained plan. The controversy and debate continue today with books reappraising his work.[18] Woe betide the putative history student who only reads one book on a given subject![19]

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The complexities of the discipline should not, however, act as a deterrent. Knowledge of the past is an essential part of our attempts to understand the present. Marwick compares the history of the community to the memory of an individual.[20] In a complex society, the analogy can arguably be extended to a comparison between a sophisticated system of historical analysis and the genetic detail recorded on DNA. The direct implication is that without such collective memory, a society would be little more than an amorphous mass. In the same way that DNA can be 'fingerprinted', so a society, from its earliest beginnings in a cave, will bear the imprints of its collective experience. In its earliest guise this will have been a mix of practical experience on hunting and fire making techniques. These will, in time, have been embellished with superstition, ritual, songs and legends. As society has matured, these have become more complex, with neighbouring clans telling of their conquests, rivalry and battles whilst lamenting hard times and defeats. Some of these have been committed to text, others have been passed down orally, in song and verse.[21] So tradition has often matured into a primitive form of history that has, in turn, served to solidify the fault lines between societies; a glance at the use and misuse of history in the Balkans

highlights the dangers of this process. An understanding of the rifts, nursed grievances and remembrance of earlier glories became essential fodder for the embryo statesmen and warriors. The direct inference, therefore, is that the better an understanding we require of the situation in which we find ourselves depends crucially on our appreciation of the route taken by all concerned. This provides a more than sufficient justification for the study of history as a window on the past through which we can interpret contemporary actions more rationally.

If we hope to take our efforts one step further and learn lessons from history, the study will almost certainly need to be more precise and more exacting. Thucydides apologised for the lack of romance in his history of the Peloponnesian War, pointing out that he would be content if his work was to be 'judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the understanding of the future'; in short, it was to be a possession for all time.[22] The search for lessons from history is almost as frustrating a task as seeking to find the Holy Grail or Camelot. For some students, historical lessons are analogous to a legal precedent that can be applied with precision and certainty. The reality of the technical application of legal precedent, however, shows that this is far from being a simple process. The case has to be studied in full and the judgement analysed to reveal the *ratio decidendi* (that which was decided) and separate this from the clutter of what was also said (*obiter dicta*). The circumstances of the case have to be directly similar and relevant to those on which our learned counsel is seeking to rely. This is genuinely frustrating in law (or highly remunerative depending on one's standpoint), but can be almost impossible in history. One can learn principles of strategy from Clausewitz or Jomini, but the opportunity to replicate Napoleon's victories is unlikely beyond the sand table or the war game.

The Japanese surrender was officially carried out aboard USS Missouri on 2nd September 1945.

Exact comparisons across the decades provide neither a blueprint for action [23] nor precise guidance around the pitfalls to be avoided. But this does not mean that an examination of the processes involved by which a group of nations arrived at the brink of war is not worthy of study. By the same token, analysis of the structure of a society may offer valuable insight into the forces at work that resulted in the events that subsequently evolved. This latter school of thought (known as *Annales* after their Journal) emphasised the importance of the study of humanity and mankind as an intrinsic part of the study of history.

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History may therefore be studied for a range of reasons from the eradication of myth and legend through to the impact of human nature on the development of society. Whatever theory is chosen to justify the chosen course of study, it could be argued that the intellectual exercise is worth the while **in its own right**. In the same way that an athlete trains by running or in the gym, rather than because of a need to get from A to B, so the historian is exercising powers of judgement, analysis and dedication that have relevance both to enhancing our understanding of the past and to improving our appreciation of society. Mankind's continuing reliance on force as an instrument of policy makes warfare as enduring a part of society as economic or social order. Although it is also therefore worthy of study in its own right, it has other claims on our attention.

A Tomahawk missile launched from a US Spruance class ship.

WHY MILITARY HISTORY?

At the simplest level, military history is worthy of study for pure entertainment value alone. A glance through the schedules of even the terrestrial television channels will attest to the popularity of the genre ranging from collections of rare colour footage of the Second World War ('Because war is not black and white') through to reappraisals of key events – often on their anniversaries. Similarly, the local high street bookstore (in the United Kingdom and North America at least – it is less popular in Germany for example) will almost invariably contain well-stocked sections on military history. Specialist military history book clubs flourish and there is a lively trade in second-hand material from enthusiasts' colour guides featuring the camouflage of their favourite aircraft type to the memoirs of Tedder and Douglas. War walks remain popular events as do re-enactments of famous or local conflicts.

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There is a duty beholden to most servicemen to have some knowledge of military history. This can take the form of natural pride in the activities of the regiment or squadron to which the individual has become part. The more cynical approach points out that the occasional passing of examinations may act as a spur for the study of military history. A wider knowledge of that particular form of warfare quickly follows with, for example, considerable study into air or sea power and its application. At its most basic level, this takes the minimalist form of merely knowing the story – in other words, basic narrative history detailing the sequence of events and describing the factors evident to the participants. The newcomer to military history who is seeking to research a given topic may be well advised to seek out an authoritative account to act as a platform from which to branch out.

John Terraine's *The Right of the Line, The Royal Air Force in World War II* [24] is a classic example that has been recommended to generations of staff college students and of course has considerable appeal to a wider readership. An alternative could be the official history written shortly after the event by Denis Richards and Hilary St George Saunders and published in 1953/54 .[25] The virtue in following such a route is that it is often well trodden having served so many as a common starting point.

Military history (and indeed history more generally) can go beyond the entertaining, inspirational,[26] descriptive and informative. It can also be critical, educational and prescriptive.[27] The critical application of history is essential if we are to avoid the myths and legends – or what J F C Fuller referred to as the 'Obsession of Traditions'.[28] Myths inevitably arise for many reasons. On one hand there is a natural reluctance to speak ill of the dead – especially when they may have paid the ultimate cost with the loss of their own lives and those of their colleagues. The counter argument is that some history is written specifically to excoriate the subject (Haig being a prime example). Some myths are maintained as part of either an ongoing, or long expired, information operation (propaganda in old money) or campaign; it may well be that it suits most concerned to continue this as could be argued with nuclear deterrence theory or coercion.[29] Others have arisen from an uncritical acceptance of cinema renditions of famous events such as the Battle of Britain,[30] or more recently, the capture of Enigma machines and codes from German U-Boats.[31] The elimination of myths – past and present – is essential if history is to be used in a genuinely educational sense.

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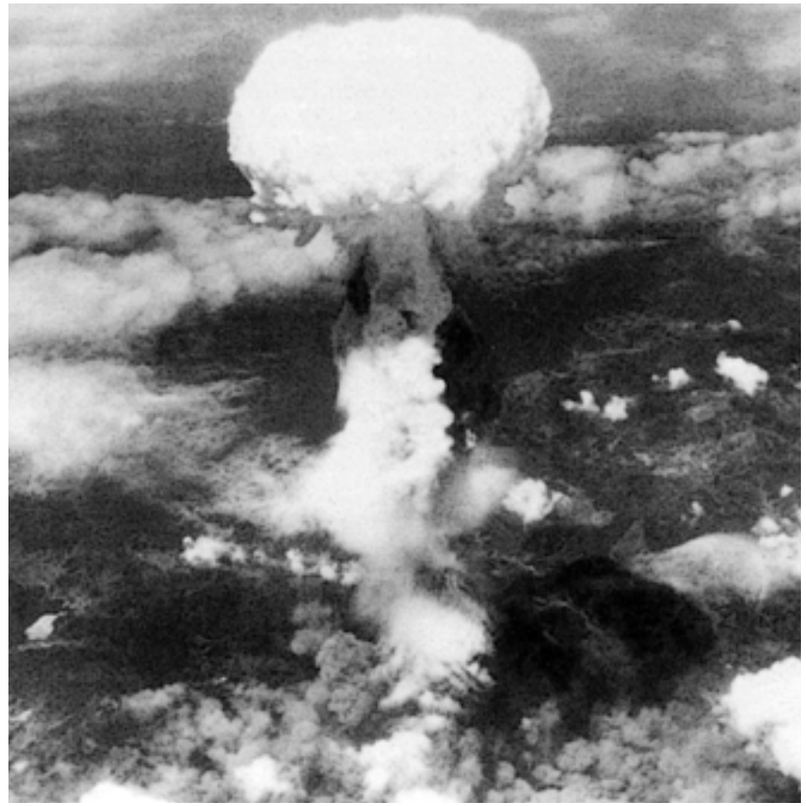
Knowledge of history, or its influence on decision makers, is frequently cited. Churchill wrote, and was in turn influenced by, history. Eden was determined not to follow 'The Appeasers' and this was evident in his approach to Nasser in the lead up to the Suez crisis. Social scientists have developed their theories in the uses and abuses of history in decision making with *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* by Neustadt and May as a classic example.[32] Detailed analysis of a single event (The Cuban Missile Crisis) is painstakingly described in *Essence of a Decision* by Graham T Allison.[33] But this process is fraught with difficulties if the wrong lessons of history are even identified, let alone learned and then internalised. Professor Howard points out the old adage that 'History does not repeat itself – historians repeat one another'.[34] It is also extremely easy for historians to raid 'the storehouse', to use Professor Colin Gray's analogy, in order



Over 73,000 people were killed when the 10,000 lb – Fat Man atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

to locate examples that will immediately support virtually any hypothesis.[35] The controversy that surrounded the publication of Robert A Pape's *Bombing to Win – Air Power and Coercion in War* [36]is highlighted by the follow-on book to be edited by Benjamin Frankel – *Precision and Purpose, Debating Robert A Pape's Bombing to Win*.[37]

The reality is that cause-and-effect is often very difficult to prove with no 'directing staff pink solution' to every episode. Even where linkages appear to be either present or logical, there is a lamentable tendency for historians to join events where none exists. Rather the historian should highlight the dynamic processes where the Clausewitzian frictions of weather, faulty decisions and personalities impact on unique sets of circumstances. That no blueprint emerges does not make the study any less worthwhile. Professor Geoffrey Till has suggested that 'the chief utility of history for the analysis of present and future lies in its ability not to point out lessons, but to isolate things that need thinking about..'[38] A refinement of this view would be to suggest that historical examples can, and indeed should, be used as a set of intellectual tools. These may be pertinent to every putative user of history, but it could be readily suggested that the military practitioner has more need of historical example than most.

In the first instance history, or rather historians, are only too willing to use the discipline to criticise soldiers, sailors and airmen for their failings in battle whether real or imagined. Alan Clark's emotively entitled book of the First World War is a suitable example whereby the British (and Empire) leadership was unfavourably compared with the men 'who fought like lions',[39] but were led by the '*Donkeys*'. The shelves are inevitably full of autobiographies; some are merely bland while many more, equally inevitably, are self-serving. The biographies, with notable exceptions (especially when the subject and his or her immediate family have long departed and are therefore unlikely to be awkward guests at the book launch), tend towards being hagiographies leaving hapless readers to wonder how the War in question was not won earlier by the noble deeds of the subject.[40] Willingness to pronounce on failure is part of human nature. By the same token, it is equally natural to select the lesson from history that supports the chosen thesis. The new recruit at Sandhurst, Dartmouth or indeed Cranwell now that some history has been restored to the syllabus of the latter, is faced with an unenviable morass of material to ingest if all of the collected wisdom is to be distilled into a bedrock of experience.

Most, if not all, military practitioners willingly extol the virtues of both education and training as being necessary throughout their careers. But training will only cover some 80% of the ground as there is no substitute for the 'real thing' with lives at stake and much else to be lost or won. No amount of simulation, special effects or exercise injects can replicate this – no matter how realistic the training may be. Professor Howard equates this to a surgeon whose only operation is a life saving one after a career spent practising on dummies. [41]Although this may seem somewhat far-fetched, he goes on to suggest that fixation on running an army (or elements thereof) may become an end in itself – process becomes all-important. Howard advocates the study of past conflicts as one possible way in which the inexperienced practitioner can prepare him or herself for the acid test. Lieutenant General Dempsey who commanded a corps (and later the second Army in Normandy) under Montgomery was a keen exponent of the battlefield tour who had an extremely well honed sense of the terrain on which he was about fight.[42]

History must be studied in breadth, depth and arguably most importantly in a proper context, not least because conflict is essentially between societies or elements thereof. Even a cursory inspection of the writings of Machiavelli reveals as much about the world in which he lived and operated as it does about his own thinking – the two are totally intertwined.

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A Syrian MiG–17 attacking Israeli ground target during the Middle East wars.

STRATEGY

The inevitable refinement on the use of military history and its influence on operations at all levels is to consider the history of martial thought (as opposed to General Hindsight). In his book, *Studies in British Military Thought, Debates with Fuller and Liddell Hart*, Professor Brian Holden Reid has described the 'gray area' (sic) between military history and the history of ideas.[43] In this chapter, Holden Reid goes on to discuss the importance of Fuller's work *The Foundations of the Science of War* [44]in which the latter proclaimed that the art of war was actually founded on definite principles and laws. This attempt to order the chaos of the so-called 'Great War' was not an isolated phenomenon, with a revival of interest in eighteenth century philosophers as well as relatively original work. Nor was the aftermath of conflict a stranger as a catalyst for thinking on the principles of war. Clausewitz and Jomini both wrote extensively on Napoleon's victories in the years after Waterloo. Their work still repays reading because of the scope and depth of their analysis.

Clausewitz defined strategy as being the 'use of the engagement for the purpose of the war'.[45] He goes on to point out that the strategist will define the aim for the entire operational side of the war. Without either wishing or needing to disappear down the proverbial rabbit hole of definitions, it is worth citing Colin Gray's adaptation of Clausewitz with strategy being 'the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy'.[46] Given the importance of both deterrence theory and coercion in modern warfare the distinction is worth making. What is arguably more important to the scholar and military practitioner alike is the subsequent influence of their writings.

Some scholars, such as Clausewitz and Jomini, have been studied and read by countless generations of students in military colleges and wider academe. It has, however, to be said that few actually read, or understand, the whole works with many content to regurgitate the same old tired clichés – often out of context. Clausewitz's work has been subject to much secondary analysis, and comprehensive treatment of this is outside the scope of this paper. Those interested could do worse than to read

the introductory essays by Michael Howard and Bernard Brodie in Howard and Paret's translation of *On War*.[47] The air power student will be aware of the writings of the Italian theorist Giulio Douhet whose *Command of the Air* is widely considered to have been an influential tome in the inter-war years. Dr Philip Meilinger points out that translations of excerpts of this book were available in US Air Service circles as early as 1923 and that Billy Mitchell (the famous US air power theorist) had met Douhet the year before.[48] *Command of the Air* was, however, never required reading at the RAF Staff College and arguably had no influence on strategic air power thinking in the inter-war years in the United Kingdom.[49] Given the undoubted influence of the Army Staff College at Camberley on its infant sibling (not least the new Commandant's yearning to replicate the stables and opportunities for riding) it is highly likely that Fuller would be at least as widely read at Andover as at Camberley. Fuller's suggestions, in 1923, that henceforth land and sea forces could be used to occupy territory 'after a moral victory had been won on land by aircraft' was an early taste of the strategic bombing debate that continues to arouse controversy.[50] Further discussion on the development of this theory is again outside the scope of this paper, but it is worth differentiating what writing was influential **at the time** as opposed to what subsequent authors have taken from contemporary library shelves and then ascribed to earlier times. The need to situate events in their own context is, after all, at the heart of military history and thinking.

The answer as to why we should study history, military history or strategic thinking varies from an intellectual exercise in its own right, through the need to know the story and on to Dominick Graham's 'spectrum of categories: entertaining, informative, descriptive, inspirational, critical, educational and prescriptive'.[51] If we extend this to encompass the notion of history as an interpretation of the past in which a serious attempt is made to filter out myth and legend, the role of the discipline becomes both more demanding and more necessary. Given mankind's continuing reliance on the use of force as an instrument of policy, our interest in the past is ever more important. We need to shed the myths, fables and legends, of which military history has more than its fair share, if we are to learn anything from history. Tradition and fable have often matured into the fault lines between nations and between peoples. If we are to have anything approaching a reasonable understanding of the complex situations in which we are increasingly likely to find ourselves, dexterity with the analytical tools provided by the study of history is essential.

NOTES

1 Michael Howard, 'The Use and Abuse of History', in *The Causes of War, and other essays*, Temple Smith, London, 1983, page 195.

2 The unfortunate naval captain quoted was a student on the Higher Command and Staff Course at the Joint Services Command and Staff College. The article by Robert Fox 'Combined college launches Forces into a new era', *Daily Telegraph*, February 28, 2001, was published to coincide with the formal opening of the new building by HRH Prince Philip.

3 For a snapshot of the lessons on tank warfare see Alex Danchev, *Alchemist of War, the Life of Basil Liddell Hart*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1998, page 226. On the Luftwaffe see James S Corum, *The Luftwaffe, Creating the Operational Air War 1918 –1940*, University Press of Kansas, 1997, Chapters 1 and 2. See in particular page 58 et seq for the establishment of the air doctrine process.

4 Interview with Mr Seb Cox, Head of the Air Historical Branch for the Royal Air Force. It remains a constant bane of Branch life trying to ensure that RAF Form 540 Operational Record Books are submitted in a comprehensive, timely and useable format. An example that emanates from the other end of the spectrum occurred when this author was specifically tasked with writing the 29 (F) Squadron records when the unit was deployed to the Falklands in 1982.

5 For a more detailed review of The Nature of Doctrine see Peter W Gray, 'Air Power and Joint Doctrine, An RAF Perspective' in *The Royal Air Force Air Power Review*, Volume 3 Number 4, page 5.

6 See for example, E H Carr, *What Is History*, first published by Macmillan in 1961; a second edition followed in 1987 and has been reprinted many times.

7 John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History; Aims Methods &New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, second edition, Longman, London, 1991 and Eric Hobsbawm, On History, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1997.

8 Richard J Evans, *In Defence of History*, Granta Books, London, 1997.

9 Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992.

10 Michael Howard, *The Lessons of History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991, page 11.

11 David Irving.

12 Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History*, third edition, Macmillan, London, 1989, page 3.

13 *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Ninth Edition.

14 For an excellent and scholarly review of Arthur in myth and reality see Leslie Alcock, *Arthur's Britain, History and Archeology AD* 367 – 634, Penguin, London, 1971.

15 Take the *Timewatch* series for example. Alternatively, on the date of writing this piece terrestrial TV broadcast three archaeological programmes, *Meet the Ancestors* (BBC2 22 Jan 2001), and two programmes based on maritime studies highlights the popularity of the genre.

16 These did little to endear Taylor to the Oxford University establishment. The quotation was taken from an article in the *New Statesman* cited in Adam Sisman, *A J P Taylor, A Biography*, Mandarin, London, 1995, page 265.

17 A J P Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, first published by Hamish Hamilton in 1961 and still in print the world over.

18 Gordon Martel (Ed), *The Origins of the Second World War Reconsidered: The A J P Taylor debate after twenty-five years*, Routledge, London 1986.

19 For what it is worth, a better bet on the subject would be either P M H Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe,* Longman, London, 1986 or R J Overy, *The Origins of the Second World War*, Addison Wesley Longman, Harlow, 1987.

20 Marwick, *The Nature of History,* page 14.

21 An excellent example of this genre includes *Beowulf* which was composed near to the end of the first millennium of our era; it is a great tale of epic proportions. An excellent translation by Seamus Heaney was published by Faber and Faber in 1999.

22 Taken from *The Landmark Thucydides, A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War,* Robert A Straser (Ed), Touchstone, New York, 1998, page 16.

23 Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, page 17.

24 Published by Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1985.

25 *The Royal Air Force 1939 – 1945: Vol 1 The Fight at Odds, Vol 2 The Fight Avails, Vol 3 The Fight is Won,* HMSO, London, 1953 et seq.

26 See for example, Air Commodore Graham Pitchfork, *Men Behind the Medals*, Leo Cooper, London, 1998.

27 Dominick Graham, 'Stress Lines and Gray Areas: The Utility of the Historical Method to the Military Profession', in David A Charters, Marc Milner and J Brent Wilson (eds), *Military History and the Military Profession*, Praeger, Westport, page 147.

28 J F C Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War*, Hutchinson, London, 1926, page 24.

29 See the extensive list of air power myths offered by Noel F Parrish in 'The Influence of Air Power upon Historians' in Lieutenant Colonel Harry R Borowski (ed), *The Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History, 1959 –1987*, Office of Air Force History, USAF, Washington DC, 1988, page 31: these myths include Douhet, Dresden, Linebacker Losses and so forth.

30 For a full analysis of this see Tony Aldgate, 'The Battle of Britain on Film' in Paul Addison and Jeremy A Craig (Eds) *The Burning Bluel,* page 207.

31 For an analysis of the former, see Peter W Gray, 'The Battle of Britain – so we already know the story?', *Royal Air Force Air Power Review*, Vol 3, No 3, Autumn 2000, page 17.

32 Published by Free Press, New York, 1986.

33 Graham T Allison, *Essence of Decision: explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*.

34 Michael Howard, 'The Use and Abuse of History', in *The Causes of War, and other essays*, page191.

35 Colin S Gray ‘History for Strategists’ in Geoffrey Till (ed), *Seapower: Theory and Practice*, first published by Frank Cass as a special issue of *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 1994, page 10.

36 Published by Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1996.

37 To be published by Cass.

38 Geoffrey Till, *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age,* Macmillan, London, 1982, pages 224 – 5.

39 Alan Clark, *The Donkeys*, Hutchinson, London, 1961.

40 A worthwhile example of a biography that aimed to balance many years of vilification was John Terraine, *Douglas Haig, The Educated Soldier,* first published by Hutchinson in 1963 and reissued in 2000 by Cassell, London. Andrew Boyle’s biography of *Trenchard* is now very dated and such a worthy subject is due to be revisited. The title alone confirms the trend with Anthony Furse, *Wilfrid Freeman, The Genius Behind Allied Survival and Air Supremacy 1939 to 1945,* Spellmount, Staplehurst, 1999.

41 Michael Howard, ‘The Use and Abuse of History’, in *The Causes of War, and other essays,* page 194.

42 Carlo D’Este, *Decision in Normandy*, Harper, London, page 60.

43 Brian Holden Reid, *Studies in British Military Thought, Debates with Fuller and Liddell Hart*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, page 33.

44 Colonel J F C Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War*, Hutchinson, London, 1926.

45 Carl von Clausewitz, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, *On War*, originally published by Princeton University Press and subsequently included in the Everyman Library in 1993, page 207. This version is used for page numbering and can be recommended for the introductory essays.

46 Colin S Gray, *Modern Strategy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, page 17.

47 Michael Howard and Peter Paret, *On War*, originally published by Princeton University Press and subsequently included in the Everyman Library in 1993.

48 Colonel Philip S Meilinger, *The Paths of Heaven, The Evolution of Airpower Theory*, Air University Press, Maxwell AFB, page 33.

49 Meilinger, ibid, page 32. See also Robin Higham, *The Military Intellectuals in Britain, 1918 – 1939*, Rutgers University Press, 1966 pages 257 – 259 and Wing Commander R A Mason, *The Royal Air Force Staff College 1922 – 1972*, Bracknell Staff College Pamphlet 1972, page 5 in which Trenchard as described as using the words ‘Command of the Air’ in his inaugural address long before Douhet had been heard of in these shores.

50 Colonel J F C Fuller, *The Reformation of War*, Hutchinson, London, 1923, page 148.

51 Graham, ‘Stress Lines and Gray Areas: The Utility of the Historical Method to the Military Profession’, page 147

The RAF took delivery of its first four C-17 Globemaster in May this year. The aircraft are serving with 99 Squadron.