

Should We Care that Military History is Neglected in School?

In his book [*Ten Ways to Destroy the Imagination of Your Child*](#), Professor Anthony Esolen relays the following story of two homeschool brothers:

"[They] got their hands on battle plans, pored over them, committed them to memory, and turned the basement into a battlefield. They drew out the woods and hills and rivers in chalk, marked the battalions with counters, and then played a game of strategy with declared decisions and dice, reenacting the battle not as it actually happened but as it might have happened. When they'd made a move or two on the sprawling 'board' of the basement floor, they would then go outside to play it out with their arms and legs and voices."

In brief, the kids exercised their memories, practiced critical thinking through strategy, got their creative juices flowing, and blew off energy through play – four things which experts view as facets of a healthy childhood – *all because they learned a few facts of military history.*

But as historian Dr. Robert Neer recently observed in [*Aeon*](#), military history is rarely taught these days on college campuses. And if it's not taught there, it seems unlikely that the subject receives much attention in grade schools or high schools either.

"This," Dr. Neer explains, "is a tragedy. ... Insofar as we neglect to study our military, we reduce our ability to understand it, and weaken ourselves." Dr. Neer goes on to say:

"US students deserve a chance to learn about the country's

military past, given its immense impact on their lives and those of others around the world. Robust sales of books and movies on military subjects demonstrate strong interest in the subject.”

It's an old cliché that those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it. Are we simply setting ourselves up for failure if the next generation isn't given the opportunity to learn about the conflicts, strategies, and mobilizations which America's military has dealt with over the last several centuries?

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