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Army History Websites

U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH)

www.history.army.mil



U.S. ARMY UNIT HISTORICAL PROGRAMS



WHY DO I NEED HISTORY?

History is a key part of many aspects of a soldier's career from understanding the rich heritage of his or her unit to accessing VA benefits as he or she transitions to civilian life. A unit history program not only helps build esprit de corps, but it helps ensure unit awards and unit campaign participation credit are up to date. Most importantly, history enables soldiers to feel a sense of belonging to an organization and a cause bigger than any one individual, and it provides examples of those who exemplify the Army Values.

Have you ever asked your staff, "Has this happened before?" "How have we handled this in the past?" "Who made the decision to...?" If so, you need a unit historical program.

WHEN I BECAME A GENERAL OFFICER, NO ONE TAUGHT ME HOW TO USE A HISTORIAN.

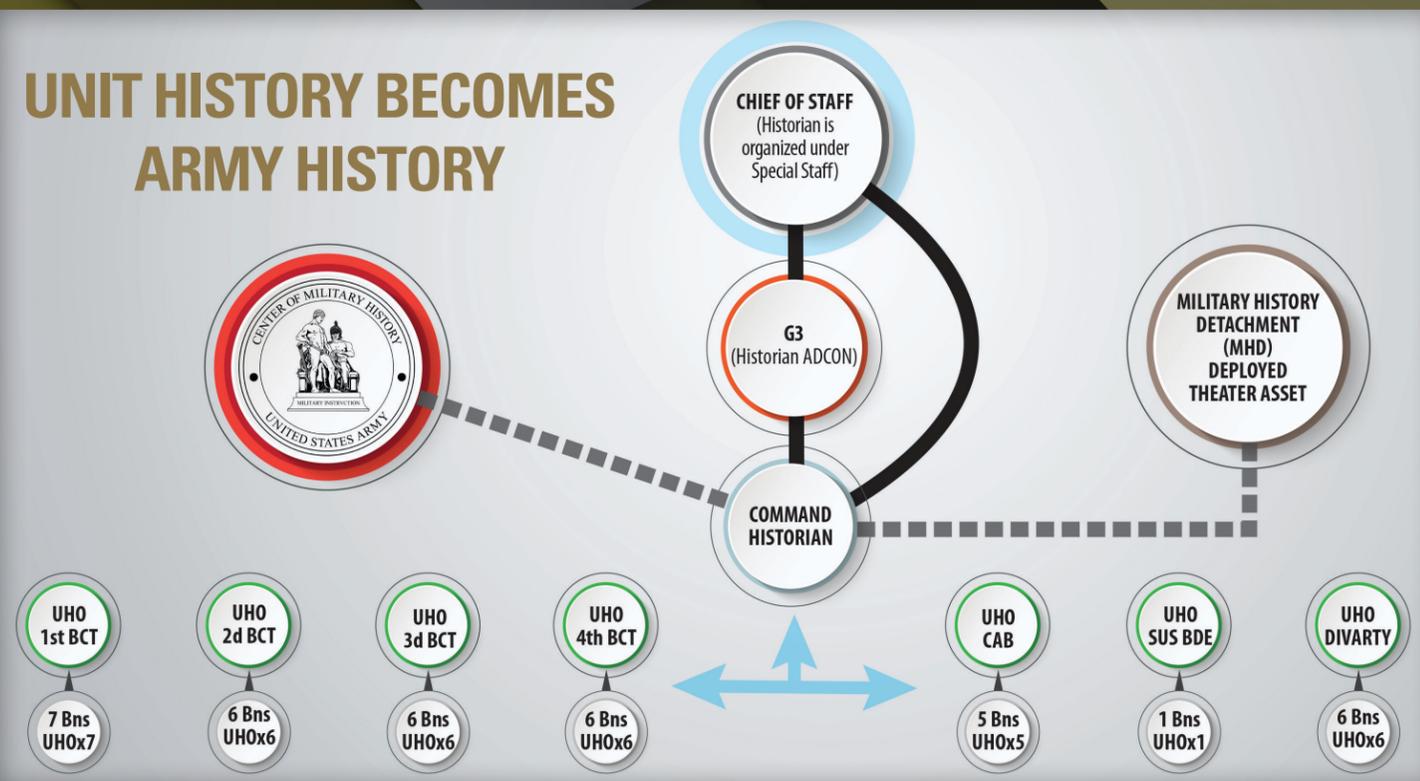
– MAJ. GEN. TODD McCaffrey, U.S. Army (RET.)

WHAT DOES A UNIT HISTORY PROGRAM DO FOR MY UNIT?

4 KEY THINGS

- 1 History Inspires:** It builds unit identity, pride, and esprit de corps and highlights the Army values.
- 2 History Informs:** It hones critical thinking skills and builds perspective through professional military education and leader developmental events, like staff rides.
- 3 History Implements:** It brings historical information into decision making and staff planning by responding to requests for information and researching the right information to help develop viable courses of action.
- 4 History Integrates:** It connects soldiers to their unit through unit activation or inactivations, lineage and honors, unit decorations, and unit heritage.

UNIT HISTORY BECOMES ARMY HISTORY



EDUCATE • INSPIRE • PRESERVE

HOW DO I DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL UNIT HISTORICAL PROGRAM?

There are seven keys to a healthy and successful unit historical program:

- 1** Assign a unit historical officer (UHO) on additional duty orders. Select someone with SI 5X qualifications, history training, or a trusted officer or NCO.
- 2** Unit XO or DCO should deconflict UHO roles with those of the public affairs officer.
- 3** Collect and maintain documents, media, and artifacts for the organizational history file.
- 4** Prepare an annual unit history report and submit it to higher headquarters.
- 5** Use historical material to assist with operational planning and training.
- 6** Utilize history as a professional development tool through LPDs, Sergeants Time, Staff Rides, and unit social media.
- 7** Build a network with other UHOs and CMH subject matter experts.

WHAT IS IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY FILE?

Collecting the following reports, artifacts, and information on an annual basis will ensure a comprehensive historical picture of your unit:

- Statements of primary and secondary missions
- Summaries of unit activities and achievements (AARs are ideal for this purpose)
- Unit and annual histories
- Copy of the unit lineage and honors certificate
- Deployment/redeployment orders and rosters, including dates
- Letters and orders relating to unit status (see AR 220-5)
- Newspaper clippings with sources and dates
- Citations for unit decorations
- Information on flags, coats of arms, and insignia

The organizational history file can be unclassified, classified, or a combination of both.

HOW CAN THE CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY HELP YOU?

CMH has training to assist your unit historical officer offered in two phases: pre-deployment and post-deployment.

Phase I: Pre-Deployment

This initial phase of unit historical officer training instruction includes:

Records management

Preparation of an annual history report

Materiel (artifact) management

Cooperation with the Military History Detachment

Phase II: Post-Deployment

The second phase of unit historical officer training instruction includes:

Completing an annual historical report and after action reports

Lineage and honors determination and certificates

The process for unit awards and campaign participation credit

UNIT HISTORICAL OFFICER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

A625 Field/Unit Historian Distance Learning Course, administered by CAC, allows unit history officers to work toward SI 5X designation

<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Educational-Services/Military-History-Instruction-Support-Team/Army-Historian-Additional-Skill-Identifier-5X/>

2 Day UHO Fundamentals DL Course (coming from CMH in FY 22)

Foreign Disclosure officer training, required for all unit historical officers before deployment

One on One support, UHOs can reach back to CMH for support and additional training as needed

ARMY HISTORICAL PROGRAM REFERENCES

AR 870-5, Military History Responsibilities, Policies, and Procedures

AR 870-20, Army Museums, Historical Artifacts, and Art

AR 870-21, The U.S. Army Regimental System

AR 220-5, Designation, Classification, and Change in Status of Units

ATP 1-20, Military History Operations