

Dennis Gill

Citino, Robert M. "Military Histories Old and New: A Reintroduction." *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 4 (2007), 1070-90.

With the public's interest in military history popularized by current events worldwide and historical films, many think more about how wars were fought on the battlefield rather actual reasons a war occurred. In Robert Citino's 2007 scholarly article "Military Histories Old and New: A Reintroduction", he explores how military history was viewed over the past hundred years and uses numerous books to support his claim. In order to provide evidence, Citino explores the relationship between the actual military events and the immediate impact by analyzing and commenting on numerous works written and published by his peers before summer 2007. Being a military historian at Eastern Michigan University, Citino writes the article to provide proof to historians (non-military ones in particular) of his claims *that there is more to military history than how a war is fought on the battlefield.*

When critiquing and analyzing the works of his fellow military historians, Citino *focuses on the economic, cultural, and political impacts of war and displays how their important has changed over the years.* One detailed example occurs when Citino states that historiography and social impact of the Civil War (using *Battles of Leaders of the Civil War* by Robert Underwood Johnson (1888) for reference) has changed over the years when it was suggested that the Civil War was more of "a revolution that overthrew the social order of the Old South" than a "mere military conflict" (1072). In his analysis of *Battles of Leader of the Civil War*, Citino stresses the importance of Southern women (who left their domestic lives to lead resistance groups) and slaves (who rebelled against their masters and seized their land) and scolds his fellow historians for not emphasizing the importance of these groups (1072). Similar examples in the article occurs when Citino berates historians for removing the Holocaust from the central European

conflict when examining the Nazi racial policy and when Carol Reardon (author of the 1997 book *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory*) glorifies a defensive stand by the Union Army while removing the other important contributions by both armies during the Battle of Gettysburg. Throughout these critiques, Citino notes that historians exaggerate or embellish details that glorify the battles for their respective audiences instead of looking at the entire picture.

When analyzing *Crucible of War* by Fred Anderson (2000), Citino gives his highest praise and approval to Anderson for ***telling an elaborate military history much more than a "book about war and battle"*** (1071). Citino discusses how Anderson organizes his book by explaining the role "misunderstanding and contingency" played in the French and Indian War and details the origin of the American Revolution in chronological order. After listing the different ways Anderson writes *Crucible of War*, Citino proclaims that Anderson's detailed writing style makes his book "compelling to the elusive 'ordinary reader'" (1071), and "stimulating to the scholar" (1072) without altering or removing important historical details. Out of all the historical literature referenced in his scholarly article, Citino uses *Crucible of War* as his prime example of how a military historian could explore the background and impact of a conflict without overemphasizing the soldiers on the battlefield.

Throughout the article, Citino ***illustrates how military history has changed over the years and wants to change how military history is viewed by his colleagues***. Even though Citino at times harshly chastises authors for omitting important details in their historical works, he compliments his peers for changing the way military history is studied and Citino references numerous historical works to support his claim. In the end, Citino hopes his scholarly article will change the views of non-military historians that believe military history is not a broad subject and in turn change the view of the public.