



Military Ohio

Learn about the sacrifices and achievements of Ohio's men and women during wartime as well as the effect of war on the daily lives of Ohioans.

Introduction

Between 1650 and 1700, before white settlement of the Ohio Country, which would later be known as the Northwest Territory and then the state of Ohio, the Iroquois claimed the territory to be part of their Confederacy. In what became known as the Beaver Wars (the Iroquois wanted the territory to hunt beaver for trade with the French), the Iroquois forced tribes native to the region to join the Iroquois Confederacy, move westward or be killed. Early in the eighteenth century, France and Britain began a contest for control of the Ohio Country that was not settled until the conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763. Conflicts between American Indians and Europeans continued throughout the 19th century as alliances shifted and waves of settlers hungered for more land.

American Revolution (1776-1783)

The American Revolution established the United States as a nation separate from Great Britain. It began at Concord and Lexington in Massachusetts, and fighting took place along the East Coast, in the Southern states, and in Canada. In the Ohio Country, American Indians and American military forces met in a series of skirmishes. Many of the American Indian groups, including the Delaware, Wyandot, Miami, and Ottawa tribes, joined with the British in hopes of preventing American settlements in the Ohio Country. Troops at Fort Laurens (Tuscarawas County) withstood two joint British and American Indian sieges in 1779 before the fort was abandoned.

In the Battle of Piqua in 1780, George Rogers Clark led a raid on Shawnee villages near present-day Springfield, Ohio. Christian Indians at Gnadenhutten were brutally massacred by a force led by Colonel David Williamson after circumstantial evidence suggested that the American Indians murdered a group of white settlers. Later that year, Colonel William Crawford defeated a British and American Indian force in the Battle of the Olentangy. Crawford's forces were divided, however, and he and some of his men were taken prisoner by a group of Delaware Indians. Crawford was brutally tortured in revenge for the massacre at Gnadenhutten.

The Peace of Paris (1783) formally ended the American Revolution. Under its terms, Britain recognized its former colony's independence, but also kept control of Canada and gave Florida to Spain.

Indian Wars (1790-1794)

As settlers flocked to the Northwest Territory after the Revolution, the British continued to support American Indian tribes in the area. General Josiah Harmer attempted to pacify the American Indian groups led by Blue Jacket and Little Turtle in 1790, only to be defeated near present-day Fort Wayne, Indiana. President George Washington then ordered General Arthur St. Clair, governor of the Northwest Territory, to defeat the American Indians and force them



from southern Ohio. Led by Miami Chief Little Turtle, the American Indians surprised St. Clair and defeated his army while losing only 21 braves. Although St. Clair was later cleared of any misconduct, President Washington ordered St. Clair back to Cincinnati and sent General "Mad" Anthony Wayne to Ohio to defeat the American Indians. Wayne built a series of forts, including Fort Recovery on the site of St. Clair's defeat, on his march northward.

On August 20, 1794 Wayne's army defeated an army of Wyandots, Miamis, Ottawas, Delaware, Seneca-Cayugas, Shawnees, and other Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Wayne then followed the scattered troops to the British Fort Miamis, where British troops refused to help their American Indian allies. On August 3, 1795, the Wyandot, Delaware, Shawnee, Ottawa, Miami, Chippewa, Potawatomi, Wea, Kickapoo, Eel River, Piankashaw and Kaskaskia tribes signed the Treaty of Greenville, limiting their lands to northwestern Ohio in return for a payment of \$20,000 in goods, plus an additional \$9,500 in goods per year.

War of 1812 (1812-1815)

Conflict between the United States and Great Britain did not end with the Revolutionary War. As tensions rose between Britain and the United States, American Indians in Ohio began a revitalization movement. Tecumseh and his brother the Prophet vowed to restore American Indian lands. General William Henry Harrison led an attack on Prophet's Town in 1811 in the Battle of Tippecanoe. Although they were victorious, Harrison's army suffered heavy losses. He later successfully campaigned for political office with the slogan "Tippecanoe and Tyler too!"

The United States declared war on Great Britain in June 1812 in protest of British attacks on American ships and impressments of U.S. seamen into the British navy. The war was fought on land and sea in Canada, the Northwest Territory and the Southern states. Much of Washington D.C. was burned.

Harrison was appointed commander-in-chief of the Northwestern Army. He built Fort Meigs, named after Ohio Governor Return J. Meigs, near present-day Perrysburg. Supplying the fort was difficult, since artillery and food had to be carried through the Black Swamp. Nonetheless, Fort Meigs withstood several assaults by British troops. An attack on Fort Stephenson near Fremont forced Major George Croghan to defend the fort with only one cannon, nicknamed "Old Betsy." In one of the most significant battles of the war, Colonel Oliver Hazard Perry defeated the British at the Battle of Lake Erie in September 1813. The British Captain Robert Barclay surrendered his entire fleet. Harrison learned that Perry had effectively cut the British supply line through Perry's message: "We have met the enemy and they are ours." Peace was established by the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, although fighting continued into 1815.

Mexican War (1846-1848)

The annexation of Texas, American desire to annex New Mexico and California and southern politicians' hopes of expanding slavery led to the Mexican War. Among Ohio Whigs in Congress, opposition to the war and the extension of slavery was strong. In the end, however, around 7,000 Ohioans enlisted in the war. Many of them served under Zachary Taylor in the northern provinces of Mexico and under Winfield Scott in Mexico City. The



Mexican War ended on February 2, 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which set the southern boundary of Texas and gave the United States control of New Mexico and California.

Civil War (1861-1865)

The Civil War began after seven states seceded from the Union, primarily due to conflicts over slavery and sectional differences. Soon after Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter in April 1861, President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers. Within days, more than 30,000 Ohio men responded. Over the course of the war, Ohio provided more troops than any other state in proportion to its population. Camp Dennison (Cincinnati) and Camp Chase (Columbus) trained federal troops for battle.

In 1862, a group of Ohioans volunteered to be part of a secret mission deep into Confederate territory to disrupt transportation and communication lines. The group, later known as Andrews' Raiders, made it half way to Chattanooga from Marietta, Georgia, before they were captured. Eight of them were hanged and the rest were sent to Confederate prison camps.

By 1863, Congress passed the Conscription Act, which required units to draft to fill quotas. In addition, African American men were permitted to serve by 1863, although several had already joined the 54th Massachusetts and other African-American regiments. In July 1863, Ohioans were threatened when Confederate troops led by Colonel John Hunt Morgan crossed into Ohio from Indiana and rode through Ohio's southern counties. After a skirmish near Buffington Island in the Ohio River, 700 of Morgan's raiders were captured. Twelve hundred men were captured near East Liverpool in Columbiana County.

On the home front, many Ohio women struggled with farming, tending businesses and other duties left by soldiers. The first Ohio branch of the United States Sanitary Commission, the forerunner of the American Red Cross, organized in Cleveland in 1861 and others followed. Through the commission, women and men sent clothing, bandages and other supplies to the troops. Women such as Mary Ann Ball Bickerdyke of Knox County and future First Lady Lucy Webb Hayes tended to soldiers in hospitals near the front lines.

In northern Ohio, citizens of Sandusky helped supply the troops tending the Confederate prison at Johnson's Island. Created to hold Confederate officers, the prison housed about 3,000 Southerners between 1861 and 1865. The war ended with the surrender of General Robert E. Lee to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox, Virginia, on April 9, 1865. Five days later, Americans were horrified at the assassination of President Lincoln.

Notable Ohioans in the Civil War

Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885) was born Hiram Ulysses Grant in Point Pleasant, Ohio. A paperwork error at the U.S. Military Academy listed him as "Ulysses S.," a mistake he never corrected. Grant was appointed major general in 1862 and captured Vicksburg. President Lincoln made him general-in-chief in 1864. Grant accepted the surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House in 1865. After the war he served two terms as president of the United States (1869-1877).



Rutherford B. Hayes (1822-1893), a native of Delaware, Ohio, served in the 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry and was severely wounded at the Battle of South Mountain. Although elected to Congress in 1864, Hayes did not take his seat until the war was over. He served one term as president (1876-1880).

James A. Garfield (1831-1881) of Cuyahoga County was serving in the Ohio Senate when the war broke out. He saw action in eastern Kentucky, the battles of Shiloh and Chickamauga. Garfield was president for less than a year (1880-1881) before he was assassinated.

William Tecumseh Sherman (1820-1891) of Lancaster, Ohio, led 100,000 men in the Battle of Atlanta before he commenced on his infamous March to the Sea. Trained at U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Sherman also led troops at Bull Run, Shiloh and Vicksburg.

James B. McPherson (1828-1864), a brigadier general born in Clyde, Ohio, was the highest-ranking Union officer to be killed in the Civil War. He was killed in the opening shots of the Battle of Atlanta.

Philip Sheridan (1831-1888) was born in Albany, New York, and lived in Somerset, Ohio, as a child. He graduated from West Point in 1853 and fought in the West to keep peace between American Indians and settlers. He was promoted to brigadier general in 1863 and is immortalized in the poem "Sheridan's Ride" by Thomas Buchanan Read.

Spanish-American War (1898)

American sympathies for Cuban independence from Spain and a "yellow press" interpretation of the sinking of the battleship Maine led to the Spanish-American War. (The term "yellow press" refers to a style of journalism that sensationalizes news events.) More than 15,000 Ohioans served in the militia and the volunteer army. Of those, few were involved in major action, although 230 died of disease. Many of the enlisted men were stationed at Camp Bushnell in Columbus, Ohio. Under the leadership of President William McKinley, William R. Day of Canton served as secretary of war during the conflict. The Treaty of Paris, negotiated in part by Ohioan Whitelaw Reid, formally ended the war on December 10, 1898. Spain relinquished to the United States control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. Cuba became independent in 1902.

World War I (1914-1918)

World War I, also called the Great War, broke out in 1914 when a Serbian nationalist assassinated Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. Also called the dual monarchies, Austria-Hungary, formed in 1867, comprised all of what are now Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, and parts of modern-day Poland, Romania, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro. The Great War pitted the Allied Powers—Britain, France, Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, Russia, and the United States—against the Central Powers—Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria.



The war differed from all previous conflicts in several significant ways. It involved 32 countries, 28 of which supported the Allies. More than 65 million soldiers took part in the war. Casualties exceeded 10 million, and nearly twice as many people were wounded. Also, there were noteworthy innovations in weaponry, such as machine guns, hand grenades, poison gas and airplanes.

Most fighting occurred on land in trenches, although attacks were also launched by submarines and airplanes. Northeastern France and western Russia were the two primary war fronts, although fighting also occurred in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, where the Central Powers had colonies. In addition, Germany made numerous air raids on England, killing or injuring civilians and damaging property.

During the early years of the war, the United States was not actively involved in combat, although it provided important supplies and economic aid to the Allies. President Woodrow Wilson declared war against Germany in April 1917. The 1917 Conscription Act required men aged 18-45 to register for the draft. More than 150,000 Ohioans were drafted as a result. American participation helped to turn the tide in favor of the Allies even after Russia withdrew from the war in 1918.

Nearly 225,000 Ohioans served in World War I, and 6,500 died. Unlike in 19th-century wars, soldiers were not organized into units by state. Ohioans were members of several divisions including the 37th (Ohio's National Guard unit), 42nd, 83rd, 93rd and 95th. The Buckeye State's best-known World War I hero was Edward "Eddie" Rickenbacker (1890-1973), a member of the 94th Aero Pursuit Squadron. His feat of 26 confirmed victories in air-to-air combat was unsurpassed, earning him the nickname "Ace of Aces." Congress also awarded him the Medal of Honor for his leadership and bravery.

On the home front, the Ohio Industrial Commission worked to ensure that Ohio's factories had enough workers to support the war effort, and Ohio became a manufacturing center for rubber products, construction equipment, and car and truck assemblies. Ohioans also experienced a rising anti-German sentiment due to the war. Governor Cox supported the removal of "pro-German" books from libraries and the city of New Berlin changed its name to North Canton. The Ake Law of 1919, although later ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, banned the teaching of German below the eighth grade in any school in the state. When the National Guard was called to Europe, Ohio organized a Home Guard to secure power plants, railroads and bridges in case of sabotage.

An armistice was signed in November 1918 ending the fighting. By the Treaty of Versailles and other related peace agreements, Germany was forced to disarm, lost some of its territories and overseas possessions, and was assessed reparations for damage caused by the war. Germany was unable to pay the reparations. After the war, Europe was transformed. Boundaries shifted, empires collapsed, and there was much physical and financial rebuilding to be done. Ultimately, the geopolitical, military, and economic conflicts that caused the war were not resolved, and a second international war followed within two decades.



World War II (1939-1945)

World War II was the most devastating war in history. It involved an unprecedented number of nations and caused the deaths of an estimated 55 million people, more than half of which were civilians. That number includes nearly six million victims of the Holocaust. The primary combatants were the Axis, led by Germany, Italy, and Japan, and the Allies, which included Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

War began in 1939 after Germany's fascist dictator Adolf Hitler invaded Poland. The United States did not enter the war until December 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The war was fought on land and sea and in the air at sites around the world. Primary war fronts were in western Europe, the Soviet Union and the Pacific.

On the home front, Ohio's farmers increased production 30 percent during the war. Nonetheless, the nation still faced food shortages, and more than one million Victory Gardens were planted throughout the state to supplement the food supply. Ohio's industries also supported the war effort. Cleveland businesses held over \$5 million in contracts, and the city was the nation's largest producer of war-related products. In Akron, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company produced 4,000 Corsair aircraft for use in the war. In Portage County, 15,000 workers were employed at the Ravenna Arsenal, a manufacturing complex that produced, packed and shipped weapons. Toledo's Willys-Overland company produced the Jeep for use by the military. Ohio's unemployment rate fell to nearly zero, and many women, African Americans, and Appalachian whites took advantage of job opportunities. In Dayton, WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) were part of a NCR (National Cash Register) project to make "Bombe" machines that were used to decipher the German Enigma code.

Ohioans also dealt with rationing of sugar, fuel and other supplies, and purchased Victory bonds to support the war effort. Many communities organized scrap metal drives and blood drives. Enrollment in schools and colleges decreased, as many young people were either fighting the war or working in the factories.

Germany's strategy of blitzkrieg (lightning war) met with early success, but the German army was eventually overwhelmed. As Allied forces neared Berlin, Hitler killed himself. His designated successor, Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz, surrendered. European fighting concluded in 1945. May 8 was declared V-E (Victory in Europe) Day. War continued in the Pacific until the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in August 1945. Paul Tibbets, who moved to Columbus after the war, piloted the *Enola Gay*, the plane that dropped the first bomb. On August 14, 1945, Japan surrendered, bringing the conflict to an end.

The United States, which mobilized 16 million soldiers (including 760,000 Ohioans), lost approximately 400,000 men and women in the war. As a result of peace negotiations, Germany, Italy and Japan were disarmed. The division between East and West Germany was established. In the post-World War II era, only two military powers remained: the United States and the Soviet Union.



Korean War (1950-1953)

Prior to World War II, Japan controlled Korea. Following the war, the country split into two parts. The northern part was occupied by the Soviet Union and the United States maintained a presence below the 38th parallel. In 1948, the two nations were officially established as the Republic of Korea (South) and the People's Republic of Korea (North). Later that same year, the Soviets withdrew from the northern part. When North Korea's army crossed the dividing line, the United Nations resolved to support South Korea. Soldiers from the United States were deployed in 1950, although Congress did not declare war on North Korea. Britain, Canada, Australia and Turkey also sent troops. China joined the war on the side of North Korea. The aim of U.S. involvement was to prevent the spread of Communism.

Casualty rates in the war were very high, particularly among Korean civilians. On the American side, nearly 37,000 soldiers died and more than 100,000 were wounded. Of the Ohioans who fought in Korea, 1,777 died and 4,837 were wounded. Three Ohioans, William Baugh, John Kelly, and Ronald Rosser, received the Medal of Honor for their service in the war. Another well-known Buckeye State native who participated in the conflict was astronaut John Glenn (b. 1921), who flew 63 missions and downed three MIG planes in combat. His wingman was baseball star Ted Williams.

In 1953, after several years of fighting and numerous American losses, the United Nations, North Korea and China signed an armistice. It created a demilitarized buffer zone 2.5 miles wide between the two parts of the Korean Peninsula. South Korea refused to sign, and the conflict between North and South remains unresolved.

Vietnam War (1959-1975)

Vietnam, also called Indochina, was divided into two parts after its successful bid for independence from France 1954. The split was to be temporary, since the country was expected to reunite under a government chosen by the people. Instead, the Communist North Vietnamese fought a long war against the South Vietnamese and the United States. As in the Korean War, the United States sought to prevent the spread of Communism. In 1961, the U.S. began sending military advisors to aid the South Vietnamese. Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in August 1964 in response to attacks on U. S. ships in the gulf near the Chinese border. The resolution gave President Lyndon Johnson authority to wage war. American combat troops arrived in the country in 1965. Fighting was intense and casualties high. More than three million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans (including approximately 3,000 Ohioans) perished in the war.

In 1973, the Treaty of Paris ended the war. Two years later, the South Vietnamese government collapsed, and the country reunited as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Suffering from a U.S. trade embargo and a lack of foreign economic aid, the country declared Communism a failed experiment in 1986. The embargo was lifted in 1994 and in 1995, full diplomatic relations between Vietnam and the United States were reestablished.

On the home front, the war polarized Americans. Protests against the war were common, and at Kent State University in northeast Ohio, one turned deadly on May 4, 1970, when four students were killed by National Guardsmen.



Persian Gulf War (1991)

A coalition of 32 nations, including the United States, Great Britain, France and Saudi Arabia liberated Kuwait in 1991 after Iraq, under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, invaded the neighboring country. Operation Desert Storm lasted less than two months. While it succeeded in forcing Iraqi troops out of Kuwait, the war did not remove Hussein from power or persuade him to cooperate with United Nations weapons inspections. These issues and others resulted in a second war in 2003.

Women in the Military

Although women made important contributions to 18th and 19th-century wars, they were not officially welcomed into the armed services until the 20th century. In 1901 the Army established a nurses corps, and the Navy followed suit in 1908. Approximately 17,000 women served as nurses in World War I. In World War II, women had the opportunity to join branches of the Army (Women's Army Corps, or WAC), Navy (WAVES, or Women Accepted for Emergency Service), Marine Corps (Women's Reserve), or Coast Guard (SPARS, an acronym for the motto Semper Paratus, Always Ready). They performed support functions, allowing more men to take combat duties. An estimated 350,000 women served during World War II.

Despite advances made during World War II, women were barred from serving during peace time until 1948. Since then, opportunities for females have increased steadily. An important milestone was reached in 1975, when women were granted the right to enter United States military academies.

As members of ladies' aid societies and the American Red Cross, women on the home front raised money and organized activities to help soldiers and their families by providing nursing care and supplies. In the 20th century, a large number of women stepped into jobs vacated by men who enlisted or were drafted to fight in World War I and particularly World War II. On the home front, they practiced careful housekeeping habits to do their part, growing Victory Gardens, saving cooking fats, and rationing supplies of food and fuel.

African Americans in the Military

For nearly a century, from 1869 until 1951, the United States military was segregated by race. African American men were officially allowed to join the armed forces for the first time during the Civil War. Beginning with World War II, African American women could join the Women's Army Corps or the Navy WAVES, although there were restrictions on their numbers. President Harry Truman signed an executive order in 1948 outlawing segregation, but until 1951, during the Korean War, they were organized into all-African American units, generally serving under Caucasian officers. The United States Military Academy at West Point accepted African American cadets for the first time in 1870. Ohioan Charles Young (1864-1922) was the third African American graduate. The proportion of African Americans in the military today exceeds their representation in the general population.



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