



Why Don't We Learn from History?

B.H. Liddell Hart

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Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart (31 October 1895 – 29 January 1970), commonly known throughout most of his career as Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, was an English soldier, military historian and military theorist. He is often credited with greatly influencing the development of armoured warfare.

Why Don't We Learn from History? Details

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From Reader Review Why Don't We Learn from History? for online ebook

Jor? Astrauskait? says

Wars have always been part of history that disinterested me most, but this book gives good points of why they are worth more attention. I've enjoyed the topics on loyalty, obedience and tradition of faking history in the military but some parts didn't hold my attention at all. Maybe because names of the generals and references to famous fights just don't ring the bell - due to my lack of education, probably.

I'm not sure if he gives a clear answer of "why don't we learn from history", but he clearly communicates all the reasons why we should. And in 2017, it somehow sounds as a very relevant advice.

Gemma Milne says

This was a fascinating read - I wrote all over it as was having so many different ideas and thoughts as I read! It's so true that history always stays relevant. Only bit I didn't like was his bit about religion but you have to bear in mind when it was written. Highly recommend.

Vladimir Boronenko says

Really enjoyed it, great stuff. An extremely thoughtful book, and very readable, neatly divided into short easy-to-digest chapters. The subject matter is "the art of war", the author being a historian of war. He took a practical part in historical events, and saw how history was made - as well as how it was falsified. Many remarks of his - on compulsion in world affairs, on democracy and dictatorship, on irregular warfare, for example - are quite relevant and timely now (written over 50 years ago). Maybe sometimes uneven in style and presentation, but that can be attributed to the genre of free-style reflections.

Steven says

And insightful little book about the lessons we often fail to learn from military and political history.

I feel the book made some unwarranted leaps (based on his personal views which, however much I agree with them, were largely unsupported by the text). In general, I thought he could've spent a bit more time on specific examples and especially on the 'what is to be done?' aspect, which gets scant treatment beyond the idea of a super-national body (like the UN). It could've been 150 pages or 200 and had more impact than it did as a shorter work.

Still, very good points made throughout, and it was an easy read, assuming one knows enough of the relevant history (which ties back into my only real criticism).

Ajay says

The first.... 85% of this book maybe, is worthy of five stars, the rest is rather.... odd. Nonetheless, I do recommend the first 85% to most most people, especially after the events of this year (2016). We need a refresher on what Hart set out to teach us in this book.

Rohit says

Mostly insightful stuff, looking forward to his other book on military strategy.

Isaac says

Excellent look behind the dates and locations of history to motivating factors and root causes. An illustration of what the study of historical events is meant to bestow on the student, not a list of dates, places, and names but an understanding of why, and whether or not the outcome was worthy of pursuit.

Tanner says

Interesting musings

A book about politics, power, history, and religion. I thought it had some insightful thoughts on history. Short, easy read.

JP says

An incisive look back from a guy who saw a lot and thought it might help to jot down a some notes that might help people in the future. Insightful and pithy on subjects as diverse as lunch, religion, and nonconformity, but follows a common thread in its intense interest in human nature - which is Hart's dismal answer to the question his title poses. He hopes his readers, at least, can learn.

Mike says

I give it around 3.5 stars. This book is about why we don't learn from the history of war. Liddell argues that the history of war is the most important of all history and should be studied more in depth by universities. It is easy to see as the world would be very different if someone else had won or lost a war. I have to admit it's not an easy read, but what I did understand I liked a lot. I will definitely read it again and my rating will most likely go up when I do. Even though the book is decades old you can see things coming to fruition that he

mentions in his book. Things like dictators, and the strategies they use and the loyalty of the people that give them their power. The entire book is only 95 pages.

Erik Graff says

I picked this up from a friend who had obtained many copies of relatively old British books, a friend who later helped me get a job working nights at the emergency room of Evanston Hospital while I was just starting, part-time, as an administrator at Loyola University Chicago. That was back in 1983. It sat in my shelves until, having learned something about its author, the military historian, I wanted something serious I could read in a single sitting.

Ryan Young says

Military Historian laments humanity's lack of respect for history. Not only that, but he acknowledges how difficult it is to get a clear view of history, in order to learn from it. We need legions trained in the pursuit and communication of historical truth, else humanity will never grow up. Imagine waking up as a 7 year old with no memory of your previous years? You might age, but you won't grow. Not unless you can draw on your own history. Aristotle said that people acquire traits by exercise of habit, and you cannot develop a habit without a memory. history is humanity's memory.

John Coe says

Profound perspective from a British historian who served in WW1 & wrote this in the 1960s. His question is relevant today, as we still wage war without reflecting on history's lessons.

Rob says

Fascinating book. Mainly written in the aftermath of WW2, it offers an enlightening look at history and how wars have successively taught us nothing.

What's also striking is how pertinent a lot of the writer's observations are based on the current political climate.

Hard going at times, but I enjoyed it.

Ben Bartlett says

I'm surprised this book isn't more popular in conservative circles. Hart makes an excellent case for history as a powerful guide to simple principles for life... seek and speak the truth, live with ambition and self restraint, interact with self sacrifice and consistency of ethics. Fascinating read which I expect to return to.

