

Flint Hills Military History Symposium

Panelist Biographies 2026

7/18/2026

A

Dr. John J. Abbatiello earned his PhD from King's College London's War Studies program in 2004. After 18 years of faculty service at the Air Force Academy's Department of History and Center for Character and Leadership Development, he then served as the Training and Education Branch Chief for North American Aerospace Defense Command and US Northern Command. He is the author of *Anti-Submarine Warfare in World War I: British Naval Aviation and the Defeat of the U-Boats* (Routledge, 2006) and a chapter on Lt Gen Lewis Brereton in *The Worst Military Leaders in History* (Reaktion Books, 2022). **September 25, 2026 (Friday) - Session I**

Dr. Jonathan Abel is an Associate Professor of Military History at the US Army Command and General Staff College, where he teaches courses on French history as well as Greece and Rome and wargaming. He received his PhD from the Military History Center at the University of North Texas in 2014, and he is the author of several works on the eighteenth-century French army. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VA**

B

Dr. Geoff Babb was commissioned from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. He served as a US Army Military Intelligence Officer in Washington, DC and after completing education as a China Foreign Area Officer, was then assigned to Joint and Army Headquarters in Hawaii. He later was posted to the Command and General Staff College faculty at Fort Leavenworth where he works today in the Department of Military History. He earned a Masters in East Asian Languages and Cultures, and a Doctorate in History from the University of Kansas. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IIIA**

Dr. Brenden Bliss, Hawai'i Pacific University. Dr. Bliss is a military and naval historian with primary research interests in the 19th and 20th centuries. He graduated cum laude from Andrews University in 2001 with a BA in History. In 2003 he earned a Masters Degree in War Studies with Distinction from King's College London, followed in 2023 by a Doctorate of Philosophy in the same discipline also from King's. His thesis focus was on British naval power and its role in maintaining national influence in the Pacific, with special focus on Hawai'i, from 1800 - 1855. As a staff officer he conducted research, analysis, and provided feedback to military and political senior leaders on various matters including military strategy, capabilities and deployment. **Chair - September 27, 2026 (Sunday) - Session VIIA**

Dr. Lance Blyth, Command Historian, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and US Northern Command & Adjunct Professor of History, Department of History, US Air Force Academy. **Research and Scholarly Interests:** Researching mountain warfare through an examination of the US 10th Mountain Division of World War II and of US efforts towards mountain warfare capabilities after the war to the present day, particularly the impact of civilian skiing and mountaineering techniques and technologies. **Honors & Awards:** The David J. Weber and Bill Clements Prize for the Best Non-fiction Book on Southwestern America published in 2012 awarded by the Western History Association (WHA) and the William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. **September 25, 2026 (Friday) - Session II**

Dr. Michael Bonura is an Assistant Professor of Joint Operations at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff college where he has taught strategy, policy, and nuclear weapons effects and deterrence to mid-grade military officers since 2022. He received his PhD from Florida State University in 2008 and is the author of *Under the Shadow of Napoleon: The U.S. Army's Doctrine, Education, and Theory of Victory from 1814 to 1941*, currently in its second edition. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VA**

Dr. Gates Brown is an Associate Professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His main research focus is the Cold War. He earned his doctorate from the University of Kansas. He served in the United States Army and deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IVA**

C

Dr. Martin G. Clemis is an associate professor at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He is the author of *The Control War: The Struggle for South Vietnam, 1968-1975*, and a contributing author in *An American Lake? The United States, War, and the Environment in the Recent Pacific World*, and *Beyond the Quagmire: New Interpretations of the Vietnam War*. He has articles published in *Parameters*, *Army History*, and *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IIIA**

Ronan Conner, Graduate Student, Kansas State University Department of History **September 27, 2026 (Sunday) - Session VIIB**

Dr. David Cotter (Ph.D. Gratz College) is the Dean of Academics at the Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth. Previously, he held appointments as the Director and Deputy Director of the Department of Military History at CGSC, the Director of the Command and General Staff School at CGSC. A retired U.S. Army Colonel, he was the Director of Logistics, Project Manager MRAP in Bagram, Afghanistan, and the Chief of Staff of the 13th Sustainment Command. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VA**

D

Dr. Robert T. Davis, Associate Dean of Academics, US Army Command and General Staff College. Robert Davis serves as the Associate Dean of Academics of the US Army Command and General Staff College. He holds a BA with Honors in History from the University of Kansas and an MA and PhD in Modern European History from Ohio University. Robert was a Fulbright Scholar in Oslo, Norway. He previously served as Director of the Advanced Strategic Planning and Policy Program (The Goodpastor Scholars), was a faculty member of the School of Advanced Military Studies, and a historian on the research and writing team at the CombatStudies Institute. **September 25, 2026 (Friday) - Session II**

F

Dr. John T. Farquhar serves as a Professor of Military and Strategic Studies at the United States Air Force Academy. With a PhD in American Military History from Ohio State University, Dr. Farquhar has taught courses in military and strategic studies, airpower, strategy, military history, irregular warfare, and joint operations. His publications include *A Need to Know: The Role of Air Force Reconnaissance in War Planning, 1945-1953* (Air University Press, 2004), and chapters in *Educating Air Forces: Global Perspectives on Airpower Learning* (University Press of Kentucky, 2020), *Military Strategy, Joint Operations, and Airpower: An Introduction* (Georgetown University Press, 2018, 2021), and *Kick the Tires and Light the Fires: Foundations of American Airpower* (Air University Press, 2023). **September 25, 2026 (Friday) - Session I**

Dr. Richard S. Faulkner is a Professor of Military History and has taught at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) since 2002. He served 23 years in the U.S. Army and commanded a tank company in the 1st Armored Division during Operation Desert Storm. He is the author of *The School of Hard Knocks: Combat Leadership in the American Expeditionary Forces* (Texas A&M Press, 2012), which was the recipient of the Society for Military History's 2013 Distinguished Book Award. His second book, *Pershing's Crusaders: The American Soldier in World War I* (University Press of Kansas, 2017) received the World War I Association's 2017 Norman B. Tomlinson, Jr. Prize for the best work of history in English on World War One, the

Organization of American Historians' 2017 Richard W. Leopold Prize, and the Army Historical Foundation's 2017 Excellence in U.S. Army History Book Award. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IIIA**

Dr. Jeffrey Foss, MD - World War II operational history; Allied command and control dynamics; U.S. Army leadership in the European Theater of Operations; military medical support systems and casualty evacuation doctrine. Current Research Project - A Study in Command Failure: Investigative research into the operational and psychological collapse of the U.S. First Army and 12th Army Group headquarters during early stages of the Ardennes Offensive, December 1944. This work focuses on the intersection of coalition politics and individual leadership failures under extreme combat friction. Professional Background - Emergency Physician: Medical training and practice provide a unique, practitioner-based understanding of "battlefield" decision-making, triage of crises, and the physiological impact of stress on high-level command and control systems. Ongoing long-form historical writing projects focused on World War II operational narratives, leadership case studies, and unit-level historical reconstruction in the ETO. **September 25, 2026 (Friday) - Session II**

G

September Gering is a Doctoral Student specializing in U.S. Foreign Policy and Security Studies. Crossing over from Classics and Classical Archaeology, she studies the post-Cold War World. Her dissertation topic is America's strategy in the Balkan Wars in the 1990s. Previous degrees are a B.A. in History from South Dakota State University and an M.A. in Classical Archeology from the University of Alberta. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IVB**

Dr. Mark E. Grotelueschen serves as Professor in the Department of Military and Strategic Studies at the USAF Academy. He earned his MA from the University of Calgary and PhD from Texas A&M University. A 27-year veteran of the Air Force, he is the author of *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), and, most recently, the editor of *The Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History, 1988-2017* (Air University Press, 2020). **September 25, 2026 (Friday) - Session I**

H

Orrin Hasal, PhD Candidate, Kansas State University Security Studies **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VIB**

Scott Hedberg, PhD Candidate, University of Kansas **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VB**

Dr. Lori Henning, US Army Command and General Staff College. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IIIA**

J

Lt. Col. Daniel J. Jackson, PhD is an assistant professor of history at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo. He graduated as a distinguished graduate from the Academy in 2009 and served as a pilot and advisor in Air Force Special Operations Command, flying 236 combat missions and 125 combat support missions in support of operations around the globe. He graduated with a PhD in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2025. His dissertation investigated the development of U.S.-allied air forces in Southeast Asia during the Cold War and included field research in Taiwan, Thailand, and the Philippines. **September 25, 2026 (Friday) - Session I**

Kenzie Jansonius, PhD Candidate and Teaching Assistant at Kansas State University **September 27, 2026 (Sunday) - Session VIIIB**

K

Dr. Sean N. Kalic is a Cold War historian. He lectures and publishes widely on topics such as U.S. space policy, the Cold War, the post-Cold War security environment, and transnational terrorism. Prior to CGSC, he taught at Youngstown State University, Kansas State University, and Norwich University. He has presented lectures for the U.S. Naval War College's Fleet Seminar Program, The Slovenian General Staff, The Slovenian Command and General Staff College, The U.S. Army's Futures Command, as well as numerous international conferences. Currently, he is a Professor and the Director of the Department of Military History at the US Army Command and General Staff College, where he has taught since 2004. Book publications include: *Combating a Modern Hydra: Al Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism* (2005); *Thinking about War: Past, Present and Future* (2011); *US Presidents and the Militarization of Space, 1946-1967* (2012); *The Russian Revolution and Russian Civil War: An Essential Reference* (2017); and *Spies: The U.S. And Russian Espionage from the Cold War to the 21st Century* (2019). *U.S. Presidents During Wartime* (2023), and *The End of the Cold War and Its Aftermath* (2023). **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IVA**

CPT Robert Koontz is a military historian and second-year graduate student working to complete his M.A. degree in history at Kansas State University. His research focuses on the modern Middle East, with an emphasis on the role of American foreign policy in shaping Arab diplomatic and military actions in the First and Second Gulf Wars. Rob is an Active Duty Captain in the U.S. Army, currently on leave from the Army to complete his graduate education before teaching military history at the United States Military Academy as an Assistant Professor. He received his undergraduate degree from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, in 2018. He has served in a variety of assignments across the world, with his most recent tour in Vicenza, Italy, from 2022-2025. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VIA**

Nicholas Kramer is a current PhD student, Teaching Assistant, and Student Fellow of the Military History Center at the University of North Texas. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in History in 2019 from St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York where he also played four years of college football. In 2021, he obtained a master's degree in History from the University of North Texas. Nick's main area of research is the French Revolution and Napoleonic military history. He is currently under the guidance of Dr. Michael V. Leggiere. Nick's dissertation focuses on the military career of Marshal Louis Nicolas Davout. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IIIB**

Dr. John T. Kuehn serves as a professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He served as the Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King Visiting Professor of Maritime History at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, in 2020–21. He retired from the U.S. Navy in 2004 at the rank of commander after 23 years, serving as a naval flight officer flying land- and carrier-based aircraft. He has taught a variety of subjects, including military history, at the CGSC since 2000. His books include *Agents of Innovation: The General Board and the Design of the Fleet that Defeated the Japanese Navy* (2008); *Eyewitness Pacific Theater: Firsthand Accounts of the War in the Pacific from Pearl Harbor to the Atomic Bombs* (2008), coauthored with D.M. Giangreco; *A Military History of Japan: From the Age of the Samurai to the 21st Century* (2014); *Napoleonic Warfare: The Operational Art of the Great Campaigns* (2015); *America's First General Staff: A Short History of the Rise and Fall of the General Board of the U.S. Navy, 1900–1950* (2017), and *The 100 Worst Military Disasters in History* (2020), coauthored with David Holden. He has published numerous articles and editorials and was awarded a Moncado Prize by the Society for Military History in 2011. His 2022 article "Zumwalt, Holloway, and the Soviet Navy Threat Leadership in a Time of Strategic, Social, and Cultural Change," published in the *Journal of Advanced Military Studies* by Marine Corps University Press, received the Society for Military History's 2023 Vandervort Prize. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VA**

L

Dr. Xiaobing Li is a Professor of History and Geography and the Don Betz Endowed Chair in International Studies at the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO). Born in Beijing, he served in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) before moving to the U.S. in 1983. He holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon University. Dr. Li joined the UCO faculty in 1993. A noted military historian and expert in East Asian studies, he also serves as the director of the Western Pacific Institute. He is a widely published author, having written and edited numerous books on Chinese military history, the Cold War, and the Vietnam and Korean Wars. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VIA**

Dr. Jessica Luepke earned her PhD in U.S. History from the University of North Texas in 2025. She studies military history with a focus on U.S. martial culture, military interventions and occupations, imperialism, race, and gender. Dr. Luepke's dissertation investigated the occupations of the Philippines (1898-1902), Haiti (1915-1917), and Germany (1945-1946) to uncover why occupations change martial culture. In doing so, she established patterns that were influenced by national imperial aims, racial attitudes, and gender relations. Her future projects include an article for *Marine Corps History* on the occupation of Haiti (1915-1917), an article on how soldiers behaved during the occupation of Germany (1945-1946), and the publication of her dissertation. She is also active in the Society for Military History, an organization devoted to advancing the field of military history. **September 25, 2026 (Friday) - Session II**

M

Dr. Sanders Marble, US Army office of Medical History, U.S. Army Medical Center of Excellence (MEDCoE) / Army Medical Department Center of History and Heritage at Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He holds a Ph.D. in military history from King's College, University of London. Since joining the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) history program in 2003, Dr. Marble has been responsible for chronicling the history, evolution, and operations of the U.S. Army Medical Department. He has extensively authored books, articles, and chapters focusing on military medicine, particularly during World War I, pandemics, and the evolution of combat casualty care. **September 27, 2026 (Sunday) - Session VIIA**

Joseph Martin, Graduate Student, Kansas State University Department of History **September 27, 2026 (Sunday) - Session VIIB**

Dr. David Mills is an associate professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Dr. Mills spent ten years in the United States Army, including service in Desert Shield and Desert Storm, earning a Bronze Star. He was the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship, having taught for a semester in the Russian Federation at Ufa University. He holds a doctorate from North Dakota State University and is the author of three books on military and Cold War history. His current research project examines the effort to feed Germany from the fall of Hitler through the Marshall Plan. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IVA**

Dr. Rich Myrick is a military historian, retired U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel, and was a James C. Carey Research Fellow at the Kansas State University Department of History in Manhattan, KS. He earned his Ph.D. from the university in 2023, specializing in early modern and modern European military and political history. Rich's dissertation focused on the foundation and legacy of a liberal and non-confessional Catholic political party active in France from 1901-1919. The subject fits into his broader interest in political, constitutional, and confessional movements in Early Modern and Modern Europe. He also studies eighteenth and nineteenth century naval history, with a specific research interest in the British and French naval forces of the Georgian Era. Post-graduation, Rich continues to research and write about both political and military history. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VB**

N

Dr. Orly Naum, Purdue Global/United States Coast Guard. Active-duty military helicopter pilot, aeronautical engineer, and aviation leader with nearly two decades of experience operating at the intersection of flight operations, maintenance, and engineering systems. Serves as a Doctoral Mentor and Dissertation Chair, guiding STEM doctoral candidates through research design, data analysis, and scholarly writing. Academic work focuses on aviation safety, human factors, workforce dynamics, and data-informed decision-making in complex organizations. Committed to advancing aviation education, supporting student success, and contributing research that informs both policy and practice across military and civilian aviation systems. Interested in opportunities that bridge aviation operations, research, and education, where applied experience and scholarly insight can inform policy, workforce development, and organizational performance across military, academic, and industry settings. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VIB**

Ryan Neck, Doctoral student and Graduate Research Assistant in American Studies. He holds a B.A. in History from Samford University, and an M.A. in History from San Diego State University. He is also a U.S. Air Force veteran, having served as a Nuclear and Missile Operations Officer. His research interests focus on the intersection between race and empire within U.S. military history. Specifically, his current research focusses on how the construct of whiteness influenced American war plans in the early twentieth century, such as War Plan Orange for Imperial Japan and War Plan Red for the British Empire. In examining military documents, foreign policy documents, and early twentieth-century literature on whiteness, he aims to critically analyze the ways in which the U.S. military took race into account when planning for potential conflict in the early twentieth century. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IVB**

P

Dr. Steven Paget, Angela Ruskin University Peterboro (UK), Senior Development Lead (Research and Knowledge Exchange) Steven is the institutional lead for research, innovation, and knowledge exchange, with responsibility for enhancing the research environment, promoting researcher development, and supporting industry engagement. He specialises in military studies and international security, with a particular focus on air and maritime operations, multinational defence cooperation, coalition operations and professional military education. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IVB**

Dr Jordan Pitt is an assistant professor of history at the United States Air Force Academy. His recently completed dissertation, "The Traumatic Blue Sky: The Psychological Consequences of Aerial Combat in the Twentieth Century," won the Society for Military History's Edward M. Coffman Prize for the best dissertation on military history. In 2022-2023, he served as the American Historical Association and National Aeronautics and Space Administration Fellow in the History of Space Technology. He is also a proud graduate of Kansas State University. **September 25, 2026 (Friday) - Session I**

R

Dr. Ethan Rafuse, is associate professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff college at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His previous books include *McClellan's War: The Failure of Moderation in the Struggle for the Union*, *George Gordon Meade and the War in the East*, and *A Single Grand Victory: The First Campaign and the Battle of Manassas*. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IVA**

Gideon Remez, Associate Fellow (Retired) Truman Institute, Hebrew University of Jerusalem headed the foreign news desk at the Voice of Israel. He is a fellow of the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Following a Bachelor's degree in Hebrew Linguistics and Literature and in Philosophy from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem ('73), Remez received a Master's degree in History of American Civilization ('78) from Brandeis University, Massachusetts. After retiring from radio journalism in 2003, he joined the research project initiated by Dr. Isabella Ginor of the Truman Institute at the Hebrew University on the Soviet military involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict. He was formally appointed a research fellow of the Institute as of academic year 2009; since a change in the institute's

terminology in 2014, his title is Associate Fellow, with no change in status. **September 27, 2026 (Sunday) - Session VIIA**

S

Dr. Jeff Schultz has taught history and political science to community college undergraduates for over twenty years. He earned both an MA in history and another in political science from Central Michigan University. He specializes in military history; in particular, Second World War and the Cold War era. He has presented many history conference papers and is also the author of Chapter 12: 'The Reich strikes back: German victory in the Dodecanese, October–November 1943', in T. Heck and B. A. Friedman (eds), *On Contested Shores: The Evolving Role of Amphibious Operations in the History of Warfare* (Marine Corps University Press, 2020). **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IIIB**

MAJ(P) Charles Sexton – MAJ(P) Charles “Chuck” Sexton is an active-duty U.S. Army Infantry Lieutenant Colonel currently assigned the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command (USASAC) headquartered at Fort Bragg, NC. He has commanded soldiers and other members of the joint force both in the United States and in combat. His combat and operational postings include: Operation Iraqi Freedom/ Iraq, Operation New Dawn/ Iraq, and Operation Enduring Freedom/ Afghanistan. Recently MAJ Sexton distinguished himself as the only American Officer in the storied Alpine Corps of the Italian Army “Alpini’s.” In his capacity as operations officer within the “Julia” Alpine Brigade he organized, coordinated and provided oversight between U.S., Italian, NATO/OTAN, and EU militaries during training and while on operational, peace keeping, and peace enforcement missions in Europe, and the Broader Middle East. He holds both a BA in History and an MS in Adult Education from Kansas State University. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VIB**

Charles E. Sexton – Charles “Chuck” Sexton is a business owner and retired U.S. Army Infantry Colonel with over thirty years of military service. He led and commanded soldiers and other members of the joint force at every level from the squad to the brigade. His combat and operational postings include: Central America, Operation Desert Shield and Storm/ Iraq, Operation Restore Hope/ Somalia, Stabilization Force (SFOR)/ Bosnia, Operation Iraqi Freedom/ Iraq, Operation New Dawn/ Iraq, and Operation Enduring Freedom/ Afghanistan. During his time as a Regular Army Infantry non-commissioned officer and officer he served in numerous command and staff positions including assignments in the Pentagon as a member of the personal staff for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the Chief of Staff of the Army working on the development of the National Defense Strategy. He has earned multiple degrees, including a B.A. in History, and an M.S. in National Security Strategy from the National War College/National Defense University in Washington, D.C. He has completed all course work for a Ph.D. in Military History from Kansas State University and is in the process of completing his dissertation. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VIB**

Dr. Paxton Stover is an Instructor of History at Angelo State University, specializing in Military History. He joined the university's Dr. Arnolfo De León Department of History in January 2026 and teaches courses such as U.S. History After 186. Prior to his current position at Angelo State, he was a Graduate Teaching Assistant and Ph.D. student at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VIA**

W

Zane A. Whitney Jr. (GTA) is a PhD student at Kansas State University. Zane is a Graduate Fellow with the Second World War Research Group, North American Region. At Kansas State University, he currently serves as the Graduate Student Council President (2024-2025). He holds an MA in World War II Studies from Arizona State University and a BA in History also from ASU. His last time on a college campus was 2010 when he graduated with a BFA in Performance from Stephen F. Austin State University. He is a military historian focusing on a unique commando unit of the Second World War. He is also interested in the history of memory, particularly to how nations commemorate WWII. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session VB**

Z

Charles Zambito is a doctoral student in the Kansas State University Department of History specializing in European history. He is especially interested in the long nineteenth century in Western Europe and intellectual and political history in that period. He is currently focusing on national identity during the Franco-Prussian War. His previous degrees are a B.A. in History from Assumption University and a M.A. in History from Clemson University. **September 26, 2026 (Saturday) - Session IIIB**