
Ralph R. Williams

English For Careers

The Language of the Army in English





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FOREWORD

This book is one of a series called *English for Careers*, intended to introduce students of English to the language of a number of professional and vocational areas. The careers covered are those in which English is widely used throughout the world.

Each book in the series serves a dual purpose: to give the student of English terminology and information about the field in which he or she is interested, and to improve the overall use of this language. This book examines the history, organization, equipment, and future of the United States Army but its information can be related to the army of any nation. It is important to note that this is not intended as a definitive study or a training manual, but as an overview of how an army is organized and how it functions.

With respect to language learning, these books are intended for students at the high intermediate or advanced level who are acquainted with most of the structural patterns of English. The principal goals of the learner should be mastering specific vocabulary, using normal language patterns, and improving his or her ability to communicate effectively in English, especially in the particular career area.

This book meets these needs. Each lesson begins with a glossary in which specific words and terms are defined and discussed. This is followed by a section providing opportunity for vocabulary practice. The special terms are used again in the context of an informational unit. This reading is followed by exercises for discussion and review, which give the language student an opportunity to use ideas, special terms, general vocabulary, and structural patterns. Each lesson ends with comprehensive vocabulary review and/or conversational and writing practice. The book ends with a partial list of occupations and job descriptions, a glossary of Army abbreviations, and an index of special terms for easy review and reference.

viations, and an index of Special Terms for easy review and reference.

Much successful language learning comes from interest and experience that is not fully conscious. In offering this book, it is hoped that the English student's identification with the army will enhance his or her ability to communicate easily in this language.

The opinions expressed in this book are my own. They do not represent the policies of the United States Government, the U.S. Department of Defense, or the U.S. Department of the Army.

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RALPH R. WILLIAMS
New York, N.Y.

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UNIT ONE

WHY AN ARMY?

Special Terms

Army: The land military forces of a nation.

Tactical: Pertaining to the employment of military units in combat.

Technical innovation: In this sense, the new or unusual application of engineering principles to produce equipment with desired military characteristics.

Legion: A military force or army.

Mercenary: A soldier paid to serve in the army of a foreign country.

Volunteer: A person who joins an army of his or her own free will.
(See Conscription below.)

Weapon: Any instrument used in combat.

Smoothbore: Any gun or firearm whose bore (the interior areas of a gun barrel) is not rifled, or grooved.

Artillery: Projectiles fired by cannon or missile launchers. Field artillery cannons are classified according to caliber as "light," 120mm and less; "medium," 121-160mm; "heavy," 161-210mm; or "very heavy," greater than 210mm.

Active duty: Full-time duty in the active military service of a nation.

Reserves: Those members of a military force who are not in active service but who are subject to call to active duty. In another sense, a portion of a body of troops which is kept to the rear, or withheld from action at the beginning of an engagement.

Conscription: The induction, or drafting into military service, of persons without their consent; the opposite of volunteer service.

Reconnaissance: A mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other means, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or potential enemy.

Shell: A hollow projectile filled with explosive, chemical, or other material as opposed to *shot*, which is a solid projectile.

Tank: A fully armored (metal plate) combat vehicle providing mobile firepower and crew protection for offensive combat. The armaments on tanks vary, but usually they have a turret-mounted gun and one or more machine guns.

Barrier: Any of several types of obstacles such as barbed wire or concrete blocks, designed or employed to channel, direct, restrict, delay, or stop the movement of an opposing force.

Machine gun: An automatic gun capable of rapid, continuous fire.

Mobility: A quality or capability of military forces which permits them to move from place to place while retaining the ability to fulfill their primary missions.

Landing craft: A vehicle specifically designed for carrying troops and equipment, beaching, unloading, and retracting on both land and water.

Atomic bomb: A nuclear weapon in which the explosion results from energy released by reactions involving atomic nuclei. This can be caused by fission, in which the nucleus of an atom splits, releasing substantial amounts of energy, or by fusion, in which the nuclei of light elements combine to form the nucleus of a heavier element. The result is a violent outburst of explosive power.

Stockpile: A store of nuclear weapons or major assemblies for nuclear weapons. In another sense, a quantity of supplies and equipment for use in time of emergency.

Conventional ground forces: Those forces capable of conducting operations using non-nuclear weapons.

Vocabulary Practice

1. What are the land forces of a nation called?
2. What does *tactical* mean?
3. In the military sense, what does *technical innovation* mean?
4. What is another name for an army?
5. What is the difference between a *mercenary* and a *volunteer soldier*?
6. What instruments are *weapons*?
7. When is a weapon called a *smoothbore gun*?
8. What are the four classifications used to describe *artillery*?
9. What is the difference between an *active duty* soldier and a *reserve* soldier?
10. What is the difference between a volunteer army and an army formed through *conscription*?
11. Why does an army use *reconnaissance*?
12. What is the difference between *shell* and *shot* projectiles?
13. What are the armaments normally found on a *tank*?
14. Why does an army use *barriers*?
15. How is a *machine gun* different from a single shot or semi-automatic rifle?
16. What is *mobility*?
17. For what purposes are *landing craft* used?

18. What is the difference between a fission and a fusion *atomic bomb*?
19. What is a *stockpile*?
20. When is an army a *conventional ground force*?

Why an Army?

It has been said by some historians that only about 268 years of the last 3400 have been free of war. Faced with the recurring nature of war, the ancient Romans are reputed to have said that if you want peace, you must prepare for war.

Today an *army* is generally thought of as a group of men armed and trained for the purpose of conducting warfare on land—usually in defense of its country. However, throughout history the character and purpose of armies have changed, reflecting the social and political aspects of individual nations or states. Some armies have been built around men or machines. Some have been composed of amateur, citizen soldiers, while others have used only professional soldiers. Some armies were built to conquer and plunder while others have fought for patriotism and freedom.

No one knows when the first army was formed. Many countries organized armies as they struggled to exist. Ancient nations—such as Babylonia, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, and Greece—arose and sustained their greatness because of the power and protection of their armies. It was the Romans, however, who began the long process of *tactical* and *technical innovation*. As a result of their impressive contributions, much of today's military vocabulary can be traced directly to the Romans.

Through a highly systematic and effective army, Rome ruled virtually the entire civilized world of the West, thus allowing its own people to enjoy generations of peace. For centuries, the Roman *legions* kept nomadic, warlike tribes from entering Roman territory. After hundreds of years, the Roman government and army became weak; the stability Rome had given the world began to crumble. Barbarian tribes eventually plundered Rome and a new order arose.



Most of the 18th century English army was recruited from among the poor. Above, an etching of English officers training new recruits outside a tavern.

Many kingdoms were created within the borders of the old Roman Empire, but most of them enjoyed only a brief existence. Those that did survive found it difficult to maintain any government organization beyond the local level. But through the protection of an army, some became secure. As time passed, feudal societies evolved and established the basis of many modern nations.

England is one of those which became a world power. In creating its empire, England built a great army to maintain and protect it, just as the Romans had done. The men of the English army included citizen soldiers, aristocratic officers, and the unwary poor recruited in taverns or on wharves. In the eighteenth century, the English soldier formed a special class, apart from the rest of society. Highly trained and professional, he lived in great forts and wore the brightly colored uniforms which prompted the American colonists to call him a "redcoat." While soldiers in many armies around the rest of the world had little national feeling, English troops developed a popular nationalism towards their country and their king. Even so, half of the British Army was made up of *mercenaries*—Hanoverian or other German regiments hired and paid to fight for the English.

At first, only a few American colonists thought the mounting quarrels with the English Government would lead to revolution and independence. But they were angered by the English policy of hiring foreign mercenaries to fight Englishmen in America. The movement for political separation from England slowly grew, and in 1775 the American Continental Congress established an American Army which would later prove to be superior to the well-trained British redcoats.

The American Continental soldier was poorly uniformed. Those first *volunteers* dressed in a strange array of hunting jackets, homespun pants, and semi-uniforms. Each patriot who volunteered for the Army had to find his own *weapon*—resulting in the use of a wide variety of hunting weapons. The most common gun of the time was the *smoothbore* musket which could fire three shots every minute if the soldier was proficient and his powder stayed dry. The only additional firepower an early colonial soldier had was some *artillery*, most of which was captured from the English.

After the American Revolutionary War, the American Army was reduced to caretaker status; for a time it had only eighty men.

Amerikaner Soldat.

*Accurate Vorstellung eines Amerikanischen Soldaten, von einem Bayreuthischen Offizier welcher sich
 da malen in America, in Engl. die Dienst befindet, gezeichnet und heraus geschickt worden. Ihr
 Claudius v. von Zwick, ich habe lange Gewehr und Bayonet, und sehr dauerhaft u. gesund.
 Joh. Mart. Willenc. aus Vord.*

Courtesy U.S. Army

The American Continental soldier in 1775. The German engraver's legend is translated as follows: "Accurate representation of an American soldier, sent by an officer from Bayreuth presently serving with the English in America. His clothing is made of coarse linen, he has a long musket and bayonet, and is of robust health and endurance."

The American colonists distrusted the idea of a large standing army; it was too much in the British tradition. This distrust continued well into the twentieth century. Americans felt secure with two oceans isolating them from would-be enemies. They knew there would be serious logistical and time problems if an enemy army would try to cross the seas.

In Europe the pattern was quite different. The Germans had a large professional army. Every man in Germany was required to serve on *active duty* for not less than three years. Then each soldier was placed in the *reserves* for periodic training. Actually, during the period preceding World War I, most European nations increased the size of their standing peacetime armies, usually through *conscription*. The only power in Europe to refrain from adopting compulsory service was Great Britain. Like the United States, England maintained an army recruited by voluntary enlistment. In addition, since England was basically a sea power, its Navy took first priority on manpower.

World War I was the most massive and industrialized conflict ever seen. A new invention—the airplane—was used for *reconnaissance* and small bombing missions, for directing *shell* fire, and for scattering leaflets. *Tanks* also made their first appearance during World War I. They were used to provide cover for advancing soldiers, to remove barbed wire barriers, and to destroy *machine gun* nests.

In great measure, World War II began where World War I ended. Germany was again the aggressor, and central Europe was again the main battlefield. But now the foot soldier had more *mobility*. Besides walking, he was transported in ships, *landing craft*, tanks, trucks, and aircraft. Moreover, no longer did the fighting services—the army, navy, and air force—engage in separate warfare. Air and naval operations became tightly interwoven with land warfare. On June 6, 1944, known as D-Day, the mightiest invasion force in the history of the world assaulted Nazi-occupied France. In less than a year the Nazis surrendered unconditionally and the war in Europe ended. But World War II was not over. In the Pacific theater, another new weapon—the *atomic bomb*—was released over two Japanese cities, forcing the Japanese to surrender. The War had ended but a new age in warfare had begun.

From the end of World War II to the late 1950s, the United States had an overwhelming superiority of nuclear weapons. This

FIRST TO FIGHT



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U.S. MARINE CORPS

JOIN NOW AND TEST YOUR COURAGE
REAL FIGHTING WITH REAL FIGHTERS

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24 EAST 23RD STREET, NEW YORK CITY

Courtesy Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

Recruiting posters like the one above were effective aids to voluntary enlistment in the United States Army during World War I.



U.S. Coast Guard Photo

American soldiers aboard a U.S. Coast Guard craft, crossing the English channel on D-Day in 1944.