



# **For God, Gold, and Glory: A History of Military Service and Man's Search for Power, Wealth, and Adventure**

*Martina Sprague*

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Not for nothing did Napoleon say, "Give me enough medals and crimson ribbon and I will conquer the world." Soldiers fight for a variety of reasons: a sense of patriotic duty, the lure of financial gain, or the desire for honor and glory. Some want a bit more than what life has to offer. Others feel that war is their destiny; they can see the writing on the wall and know they must be part of it.

It has been said that wars are fought for God (and country), gold (power and wealth), and glory (honor and heroism). Beneath these identifiers are several subcategories that explain the reasons why governments send troops to war, and why men and increasingly more women voluntarily enlist in the armed forces and fight for their country (or for somebody else's). This book sheds light on those individuals who commit their lives to armed service for reasons related to patriotism, financial gain, adventure, and heroism. Although the focus is the armed forces of the United States and the staffing of the military since the birth of our nation, the recruitment practices of other countries are also explored from ancient to modern day to illustrate the continuity that runs through thousands of years of world history.

In his classic, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph*, T. E. Lawrence says, "All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity. But the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible." *For God, Gold, and Glory: A History of Military Service and Man's Search for Power, Wealth, and Adventure* is of interest to military and social historians, as well as armchair warriors dreaming of the glory that "mischance" prevented them from obtaining. The book comprises approximately 350 pages of text and 15 photographs and covers the following topics:

1. Patriotism
2. Family Tradition and Kinship Obligation
3. Revenge, Social, and Political Pressures
4. Poverty and Military Enlistment
5. Financial and Material Incentives
6. Mercenaries and Volunteers in Foreign Armies
7. The Ennui of Everyday Life
8. War and Recruitment Propaganda
9. Once a Soldier, Always a Soldier

10. Membership in an Elite Society
11. Military Training as a Pleasant Pastime
12. Growing Fond of War
13. Ninety Percent Boredom and Ten Percent Action
14. Desertion and Disillusion
15. Finding the Holy Grail

War volunteering is an aspect of military history that has received surprisingly little academic attention. In 2007 at the University of Tübingen's Heinrich Fabri Institute in Germany, scholars engaged in what is believed to have been the first ever international discussions on the subject of war volunteering in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Although this book by no means is conclusive, the hope is that it will provide a solid base upon which further research and study can be built.

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