

# DICIONÁRIO DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES

DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO

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**Military History Archive (1911- )**

The Republic was responsible for the creation of the current Military History Archive as it is mentioned in in Article 267 in the decree establishing the general organisation of the Army published on 25 May 1911 in the following terms: "The History Archive shall be entrusted with the safe-keeping and catalogue of all historical documents relating to the campaigns in which our army has participated and the colonial wars, as well as all those which, in the future, may be of interest from a bibliographic and military point of view." It further states in its 2nd paragraph: "The organisation of the history archive shall be established in a special decree." Thus, the staff were silent regarding the history archive and the special decree was not issued until 1921 when decree 7723 was published on 4 October as the "Rules of Procedure for the organisation of the Military History Archive." According to these Rules of Procedure, "all the existing historical and military documents in the current archives of the General Directorates of the Ministry of War; in the Army and in any other station dependent on the Ministry of War; in the archives of the Ministry of Colonies or any other Ministry would merge with the History Archive".

In February 1923, a Commission appointed to organise the Military History Archive decided that all the so-called "Master Books" (or Registration Records of the Units of the 1st and 2nd lines of the Army from 1763, the date of its creation, to its end in 1907), the Lists of Companies, as well as the 4,000 records of deceased officers until 31 December 1850 held in the archive of the 1st General Directorate of the Ministry of War would be transferred thereto. On 25 February 1924, a new regulation was published due to the experience of two years having "demonstrated the need and convenience of making several changes to the rules and procedures for the organisation of the Military History Archive" by means of decree 9499. In the same year, valuable documentation that had been removed from the former history section of the General Archive of the Ministry of War to the Military Archive, incorporated into the archive of the Inspectorate General of Fortifications and Military Works, was returned to the Archive, although many of the maps, charts, and architectural drawings were not transferred. All the documentation held in the 3rd Army Division up to December 31 1850, consisting of files and loose documents from the time of the Peninsular War, the Liberal Campaigns, especially the Siege of Porto, and finally, related to various political and military events from 1834 to 1850, was transferred. From



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the Government of the Forte de S. Julião da Barra, documentation covering the period from 1802 to 1850 was collected, although the documentation from the year 1817, related to General Freire de Andrade had disappeared. Also, documentation prior to 1850 and all the Regimental Order Books prior to 1 January 1900, were transferred from the 1st General Directorate of the Ministry of War.

After 28 May 1926, and by decree of 18 December 1928, the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps Archive, which was under the 3rd General Directorate of the Ministry of War, was extinguished, and all the documents fell under the responsibility of the Military History Archive. By determination of the Office of the Minister's Cabinet on 30 April 1930, all photographs of deceased Army officers in the Photographic Archive of the Office of the Minister's Cabinet were sent to the Military History Archive as soon as their death had been published in the *Ordem do Exército* [official bulletin]. In 1948, the so-called Lisbon Military Archive, restored by the Brazilian Government, holding documents from the time of the Count of Lippe, and others from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, which King John VI had taken to Rio de Janeiro, was handed over to the Military History Archive. In 1951, the Military History Archive was transferred from Santa Clara to the premises it currently occupies on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors of the East wing of the Army Headquarters building in Lisbon. Only in 1973 were the new rules and procedures of the Military History Archive approved, by decree 123/74 of 24 March, which adapted the service to the existing military organisation and formalised the establishment of a technical office. It also regulated the annual publication of the *Boletim do Arquivo Histórico Militar* [Military History Archive Bulletin] more precisely.

The documentary collections that had been accumulated by the Ministry of War came from the former Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and War, established by royal charter on 28 July 1736. This institution handled all diplomatic and military affairs. It was headquartered in Paço da Ribeira and therefore its archive lost many of the documents as a result of the earthquake and fire of 1 November 1755, and it is presumed that many others disappeared in the undoubtedly hasty transfer to the Palacete do Pátio das Vacas, in Calçada da Ajuda. Thus, the reordering of what had been possible to save and the formation of the new archive began in 1756, the date on which the current documentary collection at the Military History Archive began. The Charter of 12 June 1822 established the separation of the two Secretariats of State, which were housed in the Palácio da Regência in Rossio, however, due to the inadequacy of these facilities, the archive of both Secretariats remained in the Pátio das Vacas. Nevertheless, it was immediately divided into two separate archives - the diplomatic and the military - which led to some degree of chaos due to the invalidation of the existing inventory. After the conflict of the Liberal struggles in 1834, it was determined that the Ajuda archive should incorporate the "modern archive" of the War Secretariat, corresponding to the period from 1820 to 1833, the "archive of the Liberal War Secretariat" relating to the time of the Siege of Porto (1832-33), the "archive of Terceira" from the period of the Constitutional Government of the Azores, the archives of the extinct General Inspectorates of Infantry and Cavalry, both created in the 18th century, and finally, the archive of the extinct War Council, as will be seen.



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In 1845, the archive housed in the Palacete do Pátio das Vacas was hurriedly and disorderly transferred to the lower floor of the Ajuda Palace and in 1862, to the Botanical Garden building. After the Oficina ou Fábrica de Refinação do Salitre [Refining Office or Factory of Saltpetre] was closed in Alcântara, in July 1877 the Ministry of War decided to use most of the building as the headquarters of the General Archive, immediately determining that the removal should begin with the Archive in the Botanical Garden (the history archive), followed in 1878 by part of the Archive in Terreiro do Paço (the other main part, that was immediately necessary for the service of the War Secretariat, was transferred to the Navy Arsenal building). The incorporation of the administrative archive of the War Secretariat (1833 to 1877) into the important Ajuda Archive (1640 to 1833) occurred in 1878, with no criteria, leading to constant disorder thereafter. With the establishment of the Lisbon to Torres Vedras railway line, the Archive building was sold to the railway company. Due to the urgency of building the Alcântara station, the archive was transferred to the south wing of the former Palácio dos Condes de Resende, in Campo de Santa Clara, beginning on 28 November 1884, with a 10 day deadline. The administrative archive that had been housed in the Navy Arsenal building since 1878 was also transferred to Santa Clara in January 1885. By Decree of 26 December 1891, a Commission was appointed with the task of selecting and classifying historical documents, itemising those that should be kept or discarded, and among the former, those to be published, left in the War Ministry Archive, transferred to the Torre do Tombo, or to other Public Archives and Libraries.

The oldest archive exclusively related to military affairs resulted from the creation of the War Council on 11 December 1640, with the Regulation of 22 December 1643, stipulating that it would deal with military affairs, in particular the organisation of the army and navy, appointment of officers, fortifications, operation projects, military justice, and discipline. After the establishment of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and War in 1736, the importance of the War Council was greatly limited, but it continued to have advisory functions until 1834. However, the War Council archive fell under the State Secretariat and after the 1755 earthquake was housed in the aforementioned Palácio do Pátio das Vacas in Ajuda along with other archives. Following the path of the archives in which it was integrated, the War Council archive only met a different fate when, in 1865, by decree of the Kingdom Ministry of 22 June, work was to begin to inventory and transfer it to the Torre do Tombo. Cláudio Chaby was appointed to carry out these tasks, and the respective documentation was transferred and sent to the Torre do Tombo in 14 instalments between 1868 and 1889, where it remains today.

On 20 July 1802, the Prince Regent, future King John VI, created the position of Inspector of Borders and Maritime Coasts, tasked with "carefully examining the state of the borders and maritime coasts, proposing the most appropriate defence plans, preparing military charts and maps of the forts, towers, and positions ordered." Shortly after, by decree of 4 September of the same year, the Prince Regent established the Military Archive (Arquivo Militar, in the spelling of the time). It is justified by the decree which states that as "it is important that these important works are faithfully and carefully preserved and arranged in the order and method that can best facilitate their use, it is incumbent upon me to create a Military Archive for this purpose, where not only



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all the works that I order to be carried out by the Inspection must be gathered, but also all the existing memories, military charts, and plans, both those related to this Monarchy and its Colonies, as well as those concerning Foreign Countries." Finally, the king adds: "Considering the importance of such a Deposit: I am pleased to create a Director for its management who, besides the distinguished military knowledge and rank that should qualify him for this role, must also possess personal qualities that make him worthy of My Royal trust." Therefore, on 8 September, the king appointed the director of the Archive, with the following justification: "Considering that for a position of such importance, it is necessary for me to appoint a person who, by his qualities, is worthy of My Royal trust, and who possesses distinguished military knowledge, and the constant displays of Honour and Fidelity towards me have been proven by Dom Pedro Vito de Menezes, Marquis of Marialva; as well as his dedication to the studies of his profession, exemplary assiduousness, zeal, and intelligence with which he has engaged in the commissions of My Royal service with which he has been entrusted, and since I expect him to fulfil the duties with which I entrust him to My great satisfaction, I am pleased to appoint him director of the Military Archive." Although the history of the Archive has often diverged from the essential lines thus defined by the king, its documentary heritage has, in fact, been preserved over the years, constituting today an archival asset of incalculable value for the memory of the Army of Portugal, Brazil, the new Portuguese-speaking African countries, and all the territories that were administered by Portugal. The heirs of this rich heritage today are the Military Engineering Corps and the Military History Archive, as its custodians. These two bodies have been committed to preserving, enhancing, and disseminating the documentary collection in their possession, contributing to the knowledge of Portugal's past, its presence in the world, and the relationships established over five centuries with so many peoples and cultures. Among the documents comprising its heritage, a fundamental aspect of the memory preserved by the Army should be highlighted – the memory of military fortification spread by the adventure of the Portuguese to the four corners of the world. As already seen, in 1924 part of the documentation of this valuable collection was transferred to the Military History Archive, however unfortunately, a division was made between the written parts (mainly transferred) and drawn parts (retained), separating the descriptive memories from their respective charts, maps, and architectural drawings. This is still the situation today, as has been highlighted.

The publication of the *Boletim do Arquivo Histórico Militar* began in 1930, under the direction of Colonel Henrique de Campos Lima, with the aim of presenting valuable history and military research works, mentioning documents of greater interest contained in the heritage, and publishing the documentary inventories and catalogues prepared by the Archive services. The first document index was published in the first and second volumes (1930 and 1931) concerning the "Military Diplomatic Correspondence of General Bernardim Freire de Andrade, Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese Army, 1808 Campaign," totalling 117 documents. However, the first catalogue of a complete section would only be published in 1954, in Bulletin no. 24, as the "Catalogue of the Documentary Collection of Brazil, 1st Section of the 2nd Division." Other important works followed, such as the "Map Collection Catalogue," in Bulletin no. 43 of 1973; the "Catalogue of Angola – 2nd



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Section of the 2nd Division" in Bulletin no. 47 of 1977; the "Inventory of the Fortifications Section – 9th Section of the 3rd Division" in Bulletin no. 50 of 1980; and a special inventory on the Marquis of Pombal, as the "Contribution of the Military History Archive to the commemorations of the bicentenary of the death of the Marquis of Pombal," published in Bulletin no. 52 of 1984. Meanwhile, volumes 25 to 40 of the Bulletin, between 1955 and 1970, published the "Decrees Catalogue of the Extinct War Council, 1640-1834," a work based on the original documentation deposited at the National Archive of Torre do Tombo, carried out by Colonel Horácio Madureira dos Santos, who would become director of the Archive from 1969 to 1971. The bulletin also began to include the director's report, allowing for an annual overview of the funds transferred to the Archive, as well as the document processing works conducted. The annual regularity was generally maintained until the beginning of the 21st century, while its publication has currently been suspended. Sixty-six volumes were published up to 2005.

The role of the Military History Commission, created in 1923, should also be mentioned. Its aim was to "promote the research, acquisition, and publication of military history documents." The Commission was composed of "military and civilian staff competent in military history affairs," and its Central Commission included a general officer as president and eight members, four from the Army, two from the Navy, and two civilians, the latter selected from "employees of the Ministry of Instruction." The Commission accompanied the Military History Archive from its creation, using the same facilities but extending its action to the entire country through the corresponding members who conducted research on local history and identified documents of interest to military history, the importance of which would then be analysed by the Commission. Among its first works is the "establishment of a history of military units and their participation in battles and other military actions, in order to establish their captions and insignia." From the first volume of the Archive Bulletin, the Military Commission published an annual report without interruption until 1963, reporting its activities, especially the acquisition and transfer of documents of interest to military history, incorporated into the collection of the Military History Archive. With the creation of the History and Military Service Directorate within the scope of the Army in 1959, the Commission began to lose its role and eventually became extinct while, at the same time, the Portuguese Commission of Military History was established, under the Ministry of Defence, in 1989.

The documentation of the Military History Archive has served as the basis for numerous studies and even academic theses in the field of contemporary historiography. It may even be said that its documentary heritage has progressively served for different purposes, including the publication of works on military history, as well as the illustration of several works in this area. Among all of them, the works conducted by António Pedro Vicente are particularly noteworthy, especially two fundamental texts published in the Archive Bulletin, one in no. 40 of 1970 on "A Soldier in the Peninsular War – Bernardim Freire de Andrade e Castro" and another in Bulletin no. 41 of 1971 on the "Political, Geographical, and Military Memories of Portugal." Also noteworthy



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are the works of Artur Teodoro de Matos, who published his study "The Military Academy of Terceira Island, 1810-1925" in 1980 in volume no. 50 of the Bulletin.

The list of directors of the Military History Archive is as follows: Luís Henrique Pacheco Simões (1921-1925); Henrique de Campos Ferreira Lima (1927-1949); Alberto Faria de Moraes (1950-1957); João Carlos de Sá Nogueira (1958-1969); Horácio Madureira dos Santos (1969-1971); José Rodrigues Raimundo (1971); Luís Mendes (1971-1975); Nuno Bessa de Almeida Frazão (1976-1989).

References: Arquivo Histórico Militar, Lisboa, 1978; Manual dos Arquivos do Exército, Lisboa, Estado-Maior do Exército, 2005; Ordens do Exército, 1ª Série; Coleção do Boletim do Arquivo Histórico Militar, Lisboa, 1930-2005, 66 volumes.

(Electronic refs: Arquivo Histórico Militar / InfoGestNet: Portal Internacional de Informação e Pesquisa Interarquivos – (accessed 14 December 2015)