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Research Guide Series

The Staff Ride

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The Staff Ride

The aim of the staff ride is to provide, through military historical example using a battlefield or other relevant site, a practical focus for the study and analysis of the command, planning and execution of an historic battle or campaign, usually in order to draw lessons for future operations. The staff ride differs from a battlefield tour in that it requires the participants to study the battle before arriving at the location and then to contribute to the learning experience, either in the field or in a follow-up report. It is a more formal event than a battlefield tour and should have a number of learning outcomes. It was once a very popular teaching method and has in recent years seen a resurgence of interest thanks, in part at least, to the increasing academic and professional input from staff at the Defence Academy. This expertise and experience has filtered down to other organizations and the staff ride is now regaining its popularity and enriching the learning experience at many levels throughout the armed forces.

Although mostly confined to land operations, the Royal Air Force, Royal Marines and Royal Navy have in recent years followed the lead of the British Army and have adopted the staff ride concept by conducting visits to theatres such as Normandy, Sicily and the Western Front.

This JSCSC Library Bibliography is intended to list only those items of general interest in relation to staff rides or battlefield tours. It is not intended to cover staff rides to individual battlefields or theatres, although subsequent bibliographies may address these in the future. Many of the items listed in this guide will be of use in explaining the rationale for staff rides as well as giving practical information regarding their successful planning and execution.

This bibliography has been designed to provide a guide as to where to find information on the Staff Ride. Please note that the list of references below is a selection of the more relevant titles and information on the subject. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive but is an introductory guide to some of the resources available.

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<http://www.bcmh.org.uk/>

Paul H Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (good definition & rationale of a staff ride)
<http://www.sais-jhu.edu/academics/functional-studies/strategic/about-staff-rides.htm>

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