



# **William Harding Carter and the American Army: A Soldier's Story (Campaigns and Commanders Series)**

*Ronald G. Machoian*

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In this first full-length biography of William Harding Carter, Ronald G. Machoian explores Carter's pivotal role in bringing the American military into a new era and transforming a legion of citizen-soldiers into the modern professional force we know today.

Machoian follows Carter's career from his boyhood in Civil War Nashville, where he volunteered to carry Union dispatches, through his involvement in bitter campaigns against Apaches in the Southwest, to his participation in the Indian Wars' tragic final chapter at Wounded Knee in 1890.

Carter's life and work reflected his times—the Gilded Age and the Progressive era. Machoian shows Carter as an able intellectual, attuned to contemporary cultural trends and tirelessly devoted to ensuring that the U.S. Army kept abreast of them. In collaboration with Secretary of War Elihu Root, he created the U.S. Army War College and pushed through Congress the General Staff Act of 1903, which replaced the office of commanding general with a chief of staff and modernized the staff structure. Later, he championed the replacement of the state militia system with a more capable national reserve and advocated wartime conscription.

Since his death in 1925, Carter's important contributions toward modernizing the U.S. Army have been overlooked. Machoian redresses this oversight by highlighting Carter's contributions to the U.S. military's growth as a professional institution and the nation's transition to the twentieth century.

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