



Office of the Dean

Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences

East Carolina University • 1002 Bate Building • Greenville, NC 27858-4353

252-328-6249 office • 252-328-4263 fax

MILITARY HISTORIAN AND ECU PROFESSOR AWARDED PRIZE

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CONTACT: Lacey Gray
(252) 737-1754
grayl@ecu.edu

Greenville – Dr. Michael A. Palmer, Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences professor of history and interim chair of the Department of English at East Carolina University, is the winner of the fourth annual Cold War Essay Contest sponsored by the John A. Adams Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Va.

When Palmer was asked about being chosen as the recipient of the award, he said he was, “surprised! While I’ve had a successful career, I have never before won anything of significance.”

As winner of the first prize, Palmer receives an honorary plaque, a \$2,000 monetary award and publication of his article “The Genesis of the Sixth Fleet: The U.S. Navy and Early Cold War Foreign Policy in the Mediterranean, 1946-1948,” in the *Journal of Military History*.

In his article, Palmer describes how the presence of United States naval forces in the Mediterranean in 1946 and 1947 reflected the dichotomy of early post-World War II American foreign policy.

“As Soviet-American relations deteriorated during successive Near Eastern crises—Iran, Turkey, and Greece—the Truman administration augmented the strength of the U.S. Navy in the Mediterranean, but simultaneously, and in seeming contradiction, demobilized the service and disestablished the bases necessary to support a fleet in southern European waters,” Palmer writes.

“The American Mediterranean naval command achieved prominence only in December 1947 with the appointment of Vice Admiral Forrest P. Sherman to command what would soon become the Sixth Task Fleet. Not until 1948 did the Mediterranean command become a career steppingstone, rather than an end-of-career tour for naval officers. The assignment of Sherman to the Mediterranean marked the Sixth Task Fleet as the major American naval force deployed abroad. As Commander, ‘SIXTHTASKFLEET Sherman,’ one of the chief architects of the navy’s and the nation’s postwar strategy, commanded the U.S. Navy’s premier war-fighting force as well as a major diplomatic asset in the Cold War and post-colonial struggles that plagued southern Europe, the Maghreb, the Balkans and the Near East.”

Palmer joined the Department of English as interim chair in Fall 2007. He is a professor of history with the Program in Maritime Studies and serves as Chair of the Department of History. Professor Palmer earned his doctoral degree from Temple University in 1981. His research and teaching interests include maritime, military, and diplomatic history; the founding of the American republic; and involvement of the United States in the Middle East since the eighteenth century.

Between 1983 and 1991, Palmer worked at the Naval Historical Center in Washington, DC. He served as an assistant editor of *The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History* series, and in 1986 he transferred to the Contemporary History Branch. In the summer of 1988, Palmer worked as a field historian in the Persian Gulf, where he focused on the operations of Special Forces. In the fall of 1990, during Operation Desert Shield, Palmer worked in OP-603—the staff of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations’ Strategic Concepts Group in the Pentagon.

Among his many accomplishments and recognitions, Palmer has received the Department of the Navy's Meritorious Civilian Service Medal, the Samuel Eliot Morison Award for Naval Literature from the Naval Order of the United States, and the Moncado Prize from the Society for Military History.

For additional information, contact Palmer at 252-328-6378 or palmerm@ecu.edu.

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