

Preface

Both National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) and Center for Military History and Social Sciences of the Bundeswehr (ZMSBw) have the distinction of belonging to their respective ministries of defense, and have played a major role in research, education, and archive management. Through the years from 2019 to 2021, NIDS and ZMSBw have carried out a joint research project on military history in the 20th century. NIDS and ZMSBw held two workshops in Tokyo and Potsdam respectively in 2019 and an online workshop in 2021 under the pandemic of COVID-19. This compilation of essays were originally presented at these workshops.

In spite of the geographic distance, Japan and Germany share a similar historical experience. Both countries emerged as nation-states in the second half of the 19th century and had close military relations. In the 20th century, regardless of their hostile relationship in the First World War, the Japanese military actively sought to incorporate the German military experience into its own institute. On the road towards the Second World War, both countries faced domestic social instability and the emerging Soviet Union. In addition, Germany's post-Cold War experience in revising its self-definition of strategic role and attempting to form a multinational force in NATO may provide useful suggestions for Japan, which is currently facing drastic changes in the strategic environment.

Interestingly, essays in this book clarified differences in research style. Researchers at ZMSBw attempt to grasp the socio-historical aspects, linking the military and society, while those at NIDS focus on specific enquiry into military history. This intersection of perspectives and methods is stimulating and will be a catalyst for further research.

Despite the recent pandemic, it was a great pleasure to conduct the joint research project and have it published both in English and Japanese. We hope that this research can provide not only new perspectives for exploring the past, but also a useful foundation for understanding the contemporary strategic problems.