

# Harding Project Research Brief #3

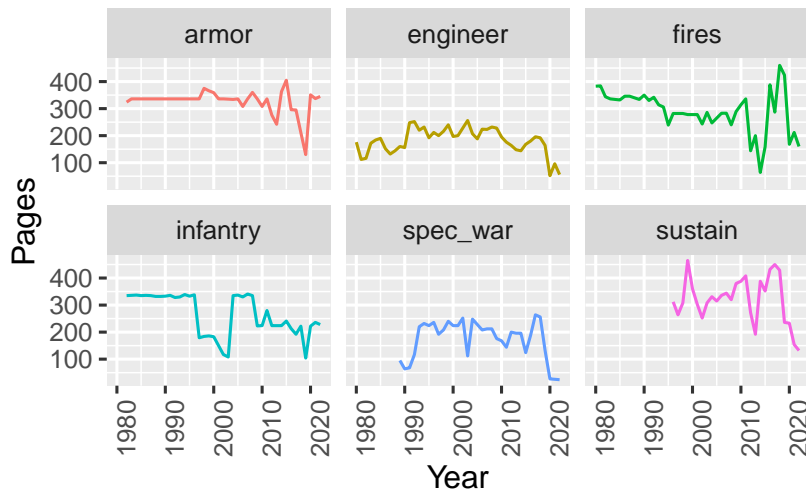
## Decline in professional military content

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The United States Army's professional publications content production has declined. From 1980 to 2022, *Armor*, *Engineer*, *Fires/Fires Bulletin*, *Infantry*, *Special Warfare*, and *Army Logistics* have published fewer pages and fewer issues, more erratically, each year. This is too bad, as **publishing quality content** is the first characteristic of a successful professional military journal and the quality most valued by military authors.<sup>1</sup>

### Fewer pages

Between 1980 and 2022, the average annual pages published fell from a high of 298.25 pages in 1985 to a low of 157 pages in 2022.<sup>2</sup> But this decline is also recent. Average annual pages published dropped from 295 in 2018 to 198 in 2019 and then to 157 in 2022. Figure 1 depicts the number of pages published by outlet by year.



### Fewer issues

Over the same time period, average issues published also dropped. The average number of issues published started at 5 in 1980 and reached a peak of 5.6 in 2007.<sup>3</sup> Mirroring pages published, issues published dropped from 4.5 in 2018 to 3.3 in 2019 to 2.8 in 2022.

Major Zachary Griffiths  
zach@hardingproject.com  
Note this is an independent project and does not reflect the view of the Department of Defense or Army.

<sup>1</sup> See "Research Brief #1: Characteristics of healthy professional military journals" and Zachary Griffiths, "Lowcrawling towards Obscurity: The Army's Professional Journals," *Military Review* 103, no. 5 (October 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Lengths were not available for all publications in all years, so the page numbers provided are the total number of pages in that year divided by the number of outlets for that year.

Figure 1: Decline in annual pages published by outlet.

<sup>3</sup> Issues were not available for all publications in all years, so the issues per year are the total number of issues in that year divided by the number of outlets for that year.

### More erratic

As the number of pages and issues dropped, the publication schedule also became more erratic. *Armor*, *Fires/Fires Bulletin*, *Infantry*, and *Army Logistics* consistently published six issues a year for more about two decades. In the last several years, no outlet has published consistently (see Figure 2).

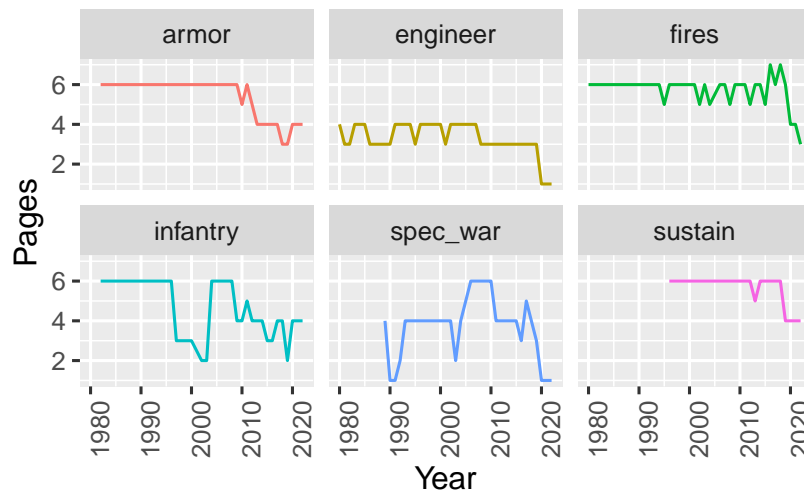


Figure 2: Increasingly erratic issues per year by outlet.

### Implications

Audiences may look elsewhere for professional military materials as content production declines and becomes more erratic. More tightly binding audiences to these outlets through volunteer editorial board or transitioning to a web-first, mobile friendly model may make these outlets more accessible.

### Harding Project Platform

The Army's publications have renewed before. Visit [hardingproject.com](http://hardingproject.com) for more information on these goals.

1. Perfect the policy. Update Army Pamphlet 25-40 to support transitioning professional bulletins to web-first formats with strong social media presence.
2. Improve the archives. Archive our history at the article-level, rather than at the issue-level as currently.
3. Empower volunteers. Volunteer editorial teams could increase capacity, build a capable writer cohort, and connect to the force.
4. Educate the force. Familiarize students with professional outlets by requiring citation of one professional article in all written assignments.