

# BOOK REVIEWS

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## A WARRIOR'S FAITH

Robert Vera, Thomas Nelson,  
Nashville, Tennessee, 2015, 240 pages

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**A** *Warrior's Faith* is a biography of the incredible life of Ryan Job. It describes in detail Job's training to become a Navy SEAL and his service in Iraq until the tragic day when he was wounded by an enemy sniper. The book tells of his long road to recovery and, more important, how he faced his challenges. It describes the struggles of this wounded veteran, and how his personal relationships and enduring faith in God inspired many, including author Robert Vera, his close friend.

Vera compares Ryan Job's life to that of the biblical character Job. They both endured great loss and suffering but never allowed themselves to be seen as a victim. In fact, Job's struggle increased his faith and transformed his life in an incredible way. Vera goes into detail to explain how Job affected everyone around him with his spirit to live and his commitment to others.

Despite his injuries, which included total blindness, Job climbed Mount Rainer, hunted elk, graduated college with honors, and married the girl of his dreams. A behind-the-scenes message of the book is how Job's life and friendship also transformed Vera's life.

Before Vera met Job, he felt as if his life was drifting. Vera left a successful twenty-year banking career and moved to Arizona. He took a complete leap of faith and decided to start an endurance training company. He wanted to affect people's lives and thought that helping them prepare for triathlons and other personal goals was a good way to start. Job and his wife had moved from San Diego to Arizona because a nonprofit group offered them

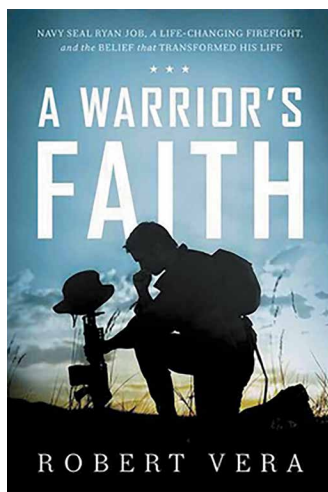
a free apartment while Job completed his undergraduate degree and his wife attended a nurse anesthesiology program. Coincidentally (or not coincidentally), Vera met Job by way of an old friend from his hometown in Boston. This friend asked Vera to train his younger brother, Sean, who had recently left the Navy. As it turned out, Sean attended SEAL training with Job five years earlier and they were great friends. The three got together, and Vera and Job became fast friends. After a short time, Job asked Vera if he would help him train for his upcoming opportunity to climb Mount Rainer, and it marked the beginning of their journey together.

Vera believed he was able to witness God at work through Job's life. He witnessed how the most unlikely circumstances brought the two together, and how both were able to find purpose and strength through their relationship and their relationship with the Lord. Vera's life-long prayer had been that God would provide him a sign that he was on the right path, doing God's will; Job was God's answer to that prayer.

The book encourages the reader to believe that things happen for a reason. Vera repeatedly states that he does not believe in coincidences—they are simply God's

way of working inconspicuously. The message is to have faith: ruthless faith, Job-like faith, faith so complete it transforms your life from ordinary to extraordinary, faith that allows you to press on with the certainty that you are never alone in your struggles. You may suffer great loss, as did Job of the Bible and Ryan Job, but the way you choose to respond can transform your life and the lives of others around you. Two of the lessons Vera learned from Job's life are "No matter how bad life gets, you are never, ever out of the fight," and "Make God your priority and everything else will fall into place."

**Lt. Col. Robert B. Haines, U.S. Army, Retired,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**



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## THIRTY DAYS WITH MY FATHER

### Finding Peace from Wartime PTSD

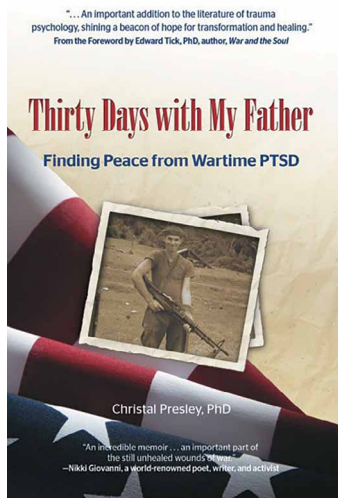
Christal Presley, HCI Books,  
Deerfield Beach, Florida, 2012, 264 pages

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**P**osttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is no longer the hot topic that it was just a few years ago.

Our society tends to focus intently on a crisis for only a relatively short moment, and then it moves on to something else. That is truly a shame, because PTSD is not a here-today, gone-tomorrow type of challenge. Those who have been afflicted can learn to cope, but there is no erasing intense experiences and devastating memories. Some cope well, some not so well, and the difference is not necessarily the intensity of the experience. Much of coping resilience depends on what existed before the experience, what was built into the fabric of a person's personality. The wounds are also not limited to the individual with the direct experience; they can extend to family members—to spouses and children.

This is a story of a woman who suffered from what one might call “generational PTSD.” Her father, a Vietnam War veteran, was one of those whose experiences in Vietnam left him not only scarred but also debilitated for life. That debilitation affected his wife and daughter, and his ability to maintain relationships with others beyond his family. Upon his return from war, he was not only rejected but also vilified by many citizens of the nation he served. We all know the horror stories of returning veterans being spat upon and referred to as “baby killers” or “war criminals” by their contemporaries. What most of us do not know about is the apparent duplicity of the very agency created to assist veterans returning from war, the Veteran's Administration (now the Department of Veteran's Affairs). Vietnam veterans were treated but were the lowest priority, and they often had to fight for



the attention they received from an agency that apparently wished they would simply go away.

While Dr. Christal Presley's father figures prominently in the narrative, the central story is how she finally learned to cope with her own experiences as the child of a veteran with unresolved PTSD. While reading her narrative, it was natural to reflect on what are near-universal experiences of growing up: the highs and lows of a maturing process, including disappointments and genuine heartaches. Maturing from child to adult is hard enough, but when one mixes in the chaos and unpredictability of a parent who is not functioning well, the challenge can become overwhelming and can lead to dysfunctional behavior. PTSD *does* inflict generational wounds. Of course, PTSD is not the only potential source of such dysfunction; the side effects of parental addictions such as alcohol or drugs can lead to similar challenges. Dysfunctional parents tend to raise dysfunctional offspring, although *that is a tendency, not an inevitability*. Presley's narrative of her personal journey is one worth studying. It provides evidence not only that PTSD is generally treatable but also that the generational impacts of PTSD are treatable as well. Hers is a story of frustration, anger, bitterness, and resentment—transformed by an effort to understand, to let go of anger, to forgive, and to love. *Thirty Days with My Father* is a narrative worth reading, especially for those who have experienced PTSD personally.

**Thomas E. Ward II, PhD,**  
**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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## 21ST CENTURY SIMS

### Innovation, Education, and Leadership for the Modern Era

Edited by Benjamin F. Armstrong,  
Naval Institute Press,  
Annapolis, Maryland, 2015, 176 pages

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**G**iven recent Department of Defense efforts to stimulate and foster innovation, *21st Century Sims* is both timely and useful. Adm. Williams Sims is well known in Navy circles as “The Gun Doctor” for his work on improving U.S. naval gunnery practices and technology. Sims, however, did much more, and he should be remembered as an early twentieth-century innovator. Like author Benjamin F. Armstrong's previous book on

the more well-known maritime theorist and historian Adm. Alfred Thayer Mahan, *21st Century Sims* is an edited work that combines selected works by a naval theorist—Sims in this case—with commentary and analysis written by Armstrong. A part of the U.S. Naval Institute's 21st Century Foundations series, the purpose of this book is to

stir professional discourse on theorists of the past and how their thoughts apply to the present and future.

*21st Century Sims* reveals how Sims's value transcends the Navy as an exemplar for successfully meeting the future through innovation, education, and leadership. The main six chapters of the book all address topics along these lines; however,

all point back to innovation. Armstrong writes, "As one of the U.S. Navy's greatest innovators, and as a man who is not afraid to challenge the system, he offers an example that many of us can learn from today." This is a great point and needs to be emphasized, but Armstrong could have discussed Sims's pro-British views in more detail. While fighting against military conservatism is indeed a worthy and necessary endeavor, Sims perhaps went too far on occasion, straying too far into policy matters. In fact, his efforts earned him a reprimand from President William Taft and later caused friction with Adm. William S. Benson, the chief of naval operations. Perhaps, like J.F.C. Fuller, Adm. Hyman Rickover, and other innovators, friction is required—the question is balance.

After the main chapters of the book, Armstrong has a thought-provoking and innovative approach to the conclusion. Rather than including and analyzing another of Sims's articles, Armstrong includes a piece by Capt. Harry Baldrige. The reason this unusual approach works so well is the relationship between Sims and Baldrige. Baldrige's piece, essentially a eulogy to a shipmate and mentor, acts as a superb conclusion to the book, and it emphasizes the importance of mentorship.

Like the other books in the 21st Century Foundations series, this book is worth reading for naval and military audiences, as well as for those who are interested in innovation, especially innovation driven from within a large, established organization. Perhaps one of Armstrong's most

salient points on Sims is that "true innovation and reform are about ideas and people. Reading and learning from past innovation and from reform leaders like Sims can provide both inspiration and important lessons learned for today's officers." Armstrong effectively combines a great selection of Sims's works, contextualizes these works well, and provides insightful commentary.

**Lt. Col. Jonathan Klug, U.S. Army,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

## HAMMERHEAD SIX

**How Green Berets Waged an  
Unconventional War Against the Taliban to  
Win in Afghanistan's Deadly Pech Valley**

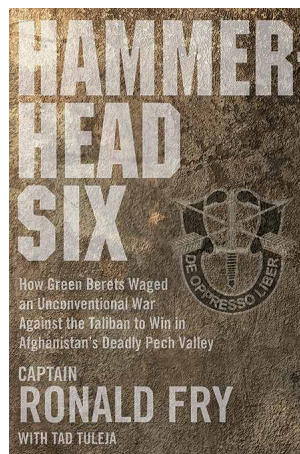
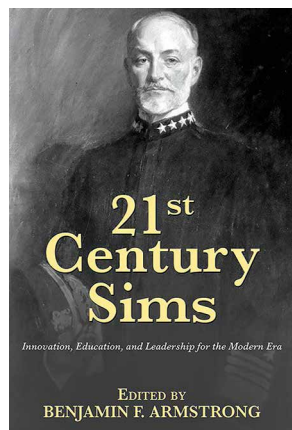
Capt. Ronald Fry with Tad Tuleja, Hachette Books,  
New York, 2016, 400 Pages

Ronald Fry is a former U.S. Army Special Forces officer who commanded an operational detachment alpha (ODA) code-named "Hammerhead Six" in the Pech Valley of northeastern Afghanistan's Kunar Province in 2003 and 2004. In *Hammerhead Six: How Green Berets Waged an Unconventional War Against the Taliban to Win in Afghanistan's Deadly Pech Valley*, Fry

chronicles the challenges he and his highly trained twelve-man team encountered during the early stages of what has become our nation's longest war.

Fry provides an entertaining yet relevant account of his team's exploits while undertaking a "struggle against Al Qaeda and the Taliban for the hearts and minds of the people." He provides an interesting perspective for those unfamiliar with unconventional warfare. Hammerhead Six internalized the Special Forces motto, *De Oppresso Liber* (To Free the Oppressed).

Fry describes his team's effort to build bonds of friendship and mutual respect with the indigenous people of the Pech Valley. He asserts that unconventional warfare is "an emotional as well as a military investment."





Hammerhead Six was a national guard ODA from the 19th Special Forces Group (SFG) that included an intensive-care nurse, a police officer, a gem dealer, an engineer, and several entrepreneurs. The unique occupational diversity of Hammerhead Six provided multiple perspectives to problem solving. Additionally, several members were devout Latter-day Saint adherents who had served as missionaries providing humanitarian aid and community service to foreign communities. These missionary experiences proved to be invaluable with respect to understanding culture and the development of personal and professional relationships with the populace of the Pech Valley.

Fry's detailed and entertaining account of how Hammerhead Six pacified what was to become Afghanistan's "Valley of Death" is provocative. It is an account of the true value of mutual respect, understanding, and the importance of relationships in an effective counterinsurgency strategy.

*Hammerhead Six: How Green Berets Waged an Unconventional War Against the Taliban to Win in Afghanistan's Deadly Pech Valley* details a thought-provoking account of how Hammerhead Six established the first Special Forces "A" camp since the Vietnam War. Their exploits are both educational and entertaining. It is important to understand the perspective from which Fry relates his experiences in the Pech Valley. The Army has since come to take some of Hammerhead Six's tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) as doctrine. However, during the winter of 2003–2004, doctrinal TTP did not exist. Hammerhead Six executed the clear-hold-build methodology before it was routine. The lessons learned by Hammerhead Six remain relevant today. This book is a must read for the professional as well as the enthusiast.

**Lt. Col. Robert C. LaPreze, U.S. Army,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**AFTER APPOMATTOX**  
**Military Occupation and the Ends of War**  
 Gregory P. Downs, Harvard University Press,  
 Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2015, 352 pages

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Over the past century, reconstruction has been approached as political, legal, economic, and, most recently, as social history. In this very

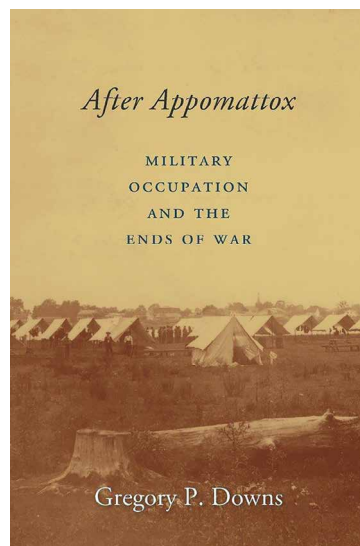
important book, Professor Gregory P. Downs reminds us that it is also military history, because reconstruction was primarily the military occupation of the South. While he does not disregard the vociferous political debates in Washington, Downs puts the Army front and center in the story of reconstruction. In doing so, he goes well beyond merely updating James Sefton's *The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865–1877*. He illuminates the problematic role of coercion in shaping political and social change.

Downs demonstrates that in both legal and practical terms, the Civil War did not end in April 1865. He argues that between "battle time" and "peacetime," 1865 to 1871 was a period of "postsurrender wartime." After Appomattox, both President Andrew Johnson and Congress continued to use war powers to justify reconstruction and its military

intrusion into civil governance in the South. The fight between the president and the Congress over control of the army of occupation resulted in Johnson's impeachment, congressional assumption of war powers, and the continuation of war for three more years.

Downs makes a compelling case that the "war" officially ended in 1871 when Congress permitted the seating of a Georgia delegation, the last representatives from a Confederate state to be seated. White Southern violence of course did not end after 1871, and the Grant administration had to rely on civil-rights legislation and not war powers to enforce federal authority. Federal courts and marshals did not have the same impact as military commissions and martial law on an unreconstructed South. The war continued with peacetime rules, and by 1877, ex-Confederates had "redeemed" the South.

Downs makes an important point that both the size and the disposition of the army mattered. As the Army reduced its strength, especially cavalry, it



consolidated its posts into cities and major towns. Thus, the army ceded control of the countryside to the rebel insurgents. Major violence sometimes prompted an increase of military presence, but rebellions were generally small-scale and short-lived events.

Downs shows that Republicans, in using military coercion to protect the rights of freedmen and women, were mindful of the threat such use of force meant for a republican system of government. As the author observes, "Republicans tried to go beyond the law and yet not risk destroying the law." This dilemma shaped the debates and indecision within the Republican Party. Moreover, with each election, Democratic opposition and Northern public apathy eroded lawmakers' ability to maintain the will and the means to enforce federal authority.

Reconstruction was a long, bloody, frustrating, and unsuccessful campaign against continuing rebel resistance. The conventional war ended slavery, but rebel insurgencies replaced it with "Jim Crow." Downs is skeptical that the Army occupation could have transformed a large, organized, and violently hostile population even with more force. The Army could not remake the South, but it offered some protection to freedmen as they established greater control over their families, working conditions, and churches. Reflecting on the coercion inherent in military occupation, Downs notes that "without reconstruction, the conditions of black people would have been far worse." Reconstruction was a profound tragedy but not a total failure.

Downs acknowledges that war powers, military commissions, and martial law continue to present troubling questions in balancing "dubious means" against "noble ends." Yet, he confesses, "Clean hands may simply preserve an unjust world." Downs reluctantly concludes, "The story of reconstruction's occupation reminds us that the dangerous, coercive tools of government may also—terribly—be the only liberating instruments within reach. Reconstruction serves as a warning that a government without force means a people without rights." This superb book serves as a reminder for military officers of the need for serious study of "military occupation and the ends of war."

**Donald B. Connelly, PhD,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

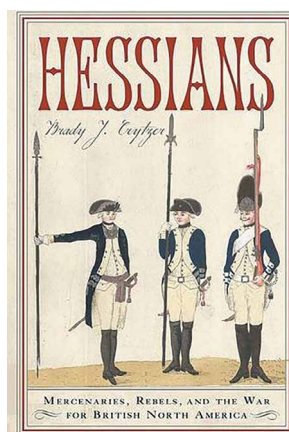
## HESSIANS

### **Mercenaries, Rebels, and the War for British North America**

Brady J. Crytzer, Westholme Publishing,  
Yardley, Pennsylvania, 2015, 296 pages

In 1775, the British Empire was in a crisis. Open rebellion was occurring in the North American colonies. Years of conflict with France exhausted the British treasury and its armed forces, leaving few options to the Crown in addressing the rebellion. Faced with a nearly impossible decision, Britain elected to employ the armies of the Holy Roman Empire to augment its forces in suppressing the rebellion. Labeled erroneously as "Hessians," the soldiers of the Holy Roman Empire came from six separate German states. By 1776, there would be approximately eighteen thousand German soldiers in North America, and by the war's end, there would be over thirty thousand.

Author and historian Brady J. Crytzer explores the German experience in the American Revolution through the lives of three participants from vastly different walks of life. Here are the stories of a career soldier, Johann Ewald, captain of a Field Jager Corps, who fought from New York



to Yorktown; Frederika Charlotte Louise von Massow, Baroness von Reidesel, who traveled along with her children from Europe to Canada to join her husband, Baron Fredrich von Reidesel; and Philipp Waldeck, chaplain in the Waldeck Regiment, who served in Florida and the Caribbean.

Ewald's observations and experiences provide an interesting and insightful look at the American Revolution through an outsider's perspective. While Ewald held Gen. Charles Cornwallis and other British leaders in high esteem, his diary entries expressed disappointment in Britain's hesitant approach in executing the war. He expressed belief that the brutal tactics employed by the British in the Carolinas actually undermined their Southern strategy to regain the South. He held

exceptional disdain for Brig. Gen. Benedict Arnold and his mismanagement of Hessian forces during the Battle of Portsmouth, Virginia.

Crytzer uses the journal of Baroness von Reidesel to provide an interesting account of the role played by Gen. Reidesel and his Hessian force in support of Britain's effort to gain control of the Champlain and Hudson River valleys. Like Ewald, Gen. Reidesel is critical of British strategy and advocates for more aggressive tactics in attacking patriot forces. Realizing the strength of patriot forces is increasing, Gen. Reidesel recommends to Gen. John Burgoyne an immediate withdrawal of British forces back to Canada. Burgoyne's procrastination results in the surrendering of his army at Saratoga. Crytzer describes the lavish lifestyle experienced by the Reidesel family for the remainder of the war.

Finally, Crytzer uses Waldeck's experiences to illustrate the war that took place in the Caribbean, in Florida, and along the Gulf coast. Waldeck's observations of British indecisiveness, disdain, and mishandling of its relationship with local allies, and the lack of a comprehensive strategy, resulted in British defeats throughout the area.

*Hessians* provides an alternative view of the American Revolution from the perspective of German soldiers who participated in it. This book is a must read for students and historians with an interest in the American Revolution. It would make a great companion to Rodney Alwood's *The Hessians*.

**Jesse McIntyre III, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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## **FORTY-SEVEN DAYS**

**How Pershing's Warriors Came of Age to Defeat the German Army in World War I**

Mitchell Yockelson, New American Library Publishers,  
New York, 2016, 400 pages

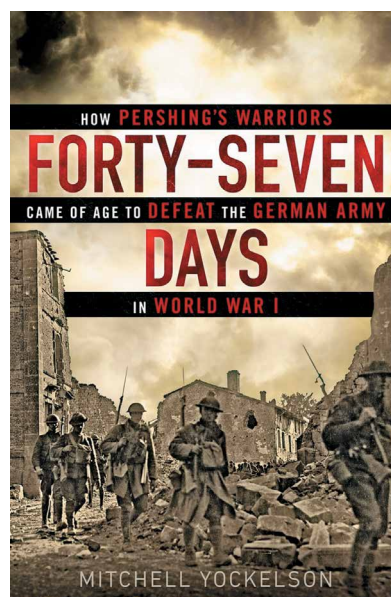
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**F**orty-Seven Days is a historical summary of Gen. John J. Pershing and the U.S. First Army during the final days of the First World War on the Western Front. The book is well researched and written by one of America's preeminent World War I historians. I found the book to be entertaining and filled with interesting side stories of the American Expeditionary Force's (AEF) more colorful characters. The author

used direct sources to highlight the service of famous names such as Douglas MacArthur, George Patton, Eddie Rickenbacker, George C. Marshall, Alvin York, Harry Truman, and many others. This not only made the book more entertaining but also connected the events and people of the AEF to later dramas of the twentieth century.

Aside from the entertainment value of *Forty-Seven Days*, the book clearly outlines the hard-fought bat-

tles of the U.S. First Army and later the Second Army during the Saint Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives. Much attention is given to highlighting the hardship, chaos, and confusion the untested American First Army faced in the summer and fall of 1918. The author uses first-hand accounts to



tell the reader graphic stories of World War I combat and to describe tensions among the senior officers at the division, corps, and First Army levels.

*Forty-Seven Days* does not cover the actions of America's first combat experiences in World War I such as at Soissons, Belleau Wood, and Chateau Thierry. In these battles, the American forces fought alongside French forces to thwart a massive German offensive in the summer of 1918. Instead, the book focuses entirely on the birth and development of the exclusive American Field Army (First Army) that fought as a separate and independent Army under the command of Pershing. Hence, the second part of the title: How Pershing's Warriors Came of Age.

My one critique of *Forty-Seven Days* centers on the book's slant toward pop history. In that, I mean that the author takes several tangents to tell anecdotal stories on some less than key players in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. For example, the author painfully jumps on the Gen. Patton bandwagon, spending more than six pages telling



Patton's life story up to that moment in 1918. Patton was a lieutenant colonel at the time; he was wounded on the first day of the Meuse–Argonne offensive and sat out the rest of the war in a hospital. His contributions to the offensive were insignificant as were those of the lightly skinned and unreliable Renault tanks that he led into battle. The tangent on Patton's life story is somewhat of a distraction and seems out of place when considering the magnitude of the Meuse–Argonne offensive.

More time and research could have been spent on other key players, such as Pershing's corps commanders. Much attention is given to Hunter Liggett, Robert Bullard, and Charles Summerall, but scarce information is provided on the careers and lives of George Cameron, John Hines, and Joseph Dickman. The author also alludes to the interpersonal frictions among the senior AEF commanders but does not stress enough how Pershing's own penchant for micromanagement and interpersonal rivalries plagued the command climate of the AEF.

Overall, this book was entertaining and full of interesting political and military stories, many of which are applicable today. Someone with limited knowledge of First World War history will find it fascinating, and it may lead him or her to a new interest in this often forgotten chapter in U.S. military history.

**Lt. Col. Andrew P. Creel, U.S. Army,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**AN AMERICAN SOLDIER IN  
THE GREAT WAR**  
**The World War I Diary and Letters  
of Elmer O. Smith**

John DellaGiustina, Hellgate Press,  
Ashland, Oregon, 2015, 356 pages

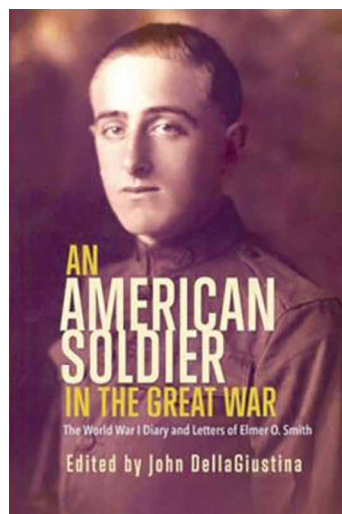
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**R**eminiscent of aspects from such books as *Citizen Soldiers* and *Poilu*, DellaGiustina's *An American Soldier in the Great War* provides a first-hand account of war as seen through the written record of the protagonist, Elmer O. Smith. Few books have covered the life of a soldier from enlisting through combat and back to demobilization as thoroughly as this book, particularly with as much primary source documentation. This is largely due to the familial link between the author and the subject, providing the

former easy access to large amounts of material and people who knew (or heard stories of) Smith.

Aside from its foundation on primary sources, the main strength of this book is the approach DellaGiustina takes to frame each chapter, providing an introduction that places people, contemporary events, and basic explanations of military facts (e.g., ranks, the structure of units, and locations of posts) that are pertinent to the story. This serves to inform the reader of items that Smith would address in his diary and letters, and it improves understanding by providing context. While these items will slow down a reader well informed in the early twentieth century or the military, they are valuable for the uninitiated reader, most likely the author's primary audience.

The author provides a comprehensive look at the entire "war-making cycle" from the viewpoint of a participant in World War I. As a new researcher in the period, I found it valuable to understand mobilization,



training, movement to the area of operations, tactical combat (to include becoming a casualty and medical care), completion of service, and demobilization. Based on my own interests, I especially enjoyed the introductions by DellaGiustina and his subject's letters on the process of mobilization and

training. I imagine other readers would find more value in Smith's experiences in the trenches and fighting the key American battles in France.

The most disappointing aspect of this book stems from its strength in primary source material—the mundane and uninformative nature of most of the letters and diary entries tends to drown out the nuggets of knowledge. Significant portions of the quoted primary sources focus on the subject's health and pleasantries with family, with few insights as to training, combat, or other items that provide understanding as to the events in which Smith was a participant. The author would have been better served to more closely curate the

primary documents within the book to elucidate the historical themes he was trying to get across to his readers.

Overall, *An American Soldier in the Great War* would be an interesting read for those new to World War I and the military that served in that time, especially if a reader is interested in the human aspects from a first-person point of view. For all others, their time might be better served elsewhere.

**Maj. Nathan K. Finney, U.S. Army,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**D-DAY**  
**June 6, 1944: The Climactic  
Battle of World War II**  
Stephen Ambrose, Simon and Schuster,  
New York, 2014, 768 pages

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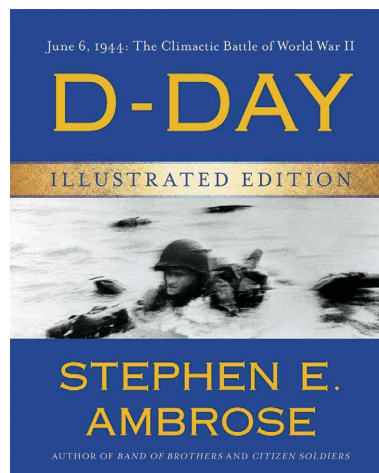
Stephen Ambrose's trademark over many decades has been to incorporate all of the aspects of military operations into his works, and this extensive history is no exception. In addition to his emphasis on individual soldiers, sailors, and airmen and their personal narratives, he weaves in overviews of strategy, tactics, equipment, and organizations from the perspectives of both the Germans and Allies.

This book is no copy of the author's previous works on the same subject. Although readers familiar with him may recognize individuals who appeared elsewhere, those characters are presented in a fresh light, with new perspectives gleaned from over 1,400 exhaustive interviews—a trademark of the author's oral-history approach. In addition, over 150 photographs illustrate this edition, bringing the reader into the face of preparation for and execution of the most enormous military operation ever mounted.

This is not simply a work dedicated to covering the actual invasion events. It also provides a wide-ranging and insightful analysis of the issues facing both the Allies and Germany, such as the strategy and tactics (both offensive and defensive) employed; the preparation and development of specialized equipment to overcome Hitler's Atlantic Wall; analysis of the long-term planning conducted by the Allies beginning after the evacuation of British forces from Dunkirk; an overview of the massive deception plan (Operation Fortitude)

conducted by the Allies, which strategically succeeded in altering both German preparation for and reactions to the Normandy invasion; and detailed characterizations of the senior military leadership on both sides.

And, as in any work by Ambrose, this book includes the perspectives and viewpoints of individuals. For example, he tells the stories of people who were thrust into battle and overcame difficulties such as chemical attacks during planning and execution, or who suffered because of them. The greatly detailed



oral interviews conducted for this book allow readers to fully appreciate the flexibility and initiative displayed by the junior officers and men, which ensured eventual victory. These highly personal stories, interwoven so superbly into the larger stories, make this (and any book by Stephen Ambrose) so well worth reading. Readers can become part of events as they unfolded, gaining an understanding of and appreciation for the enormous scale of events and coming away with a somber realization that, in spite of the great resources and material advantages the Allies held, Operation Overlord was far from a sure thing.

It was America's citizen-soldiers who were thrown into this battle, making their accomplishments seem even more profound. Ambrose once wrote that Hitler was convinced the "amateurs" of the Allied armies could not defeat the professionals of his military. He was once again proven wrong. The soldiers, sailors, and airmen who carried out Operation Overlord were no superheroes, but they proved that with proper training, equipment, and motivation, this mission, as well as the subsequent conquest of Europe, could be successfully accomplished.

This book falls into the category of "must have" not only for the knowledge gained about D-Day and Operation Overlord but also for its relevance to the profession of arms. *D-Day* is a thoroughly researched



and documented history book that also captures the reader's attention and imagination.

**Col. Richard D. Koethe III, U.S. Army, Retired,  
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina**

## THE THAI WAY OF COUNTERINSURGENCY

Jeff M. Moore, Muir Analytics LLC,  
Arlington, Virginia, 2014, 476 pages

In 2005, then-Lt. Gen. David Petraeus led a resurrection of counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine and education due to the worsening situation in Iraq. All but banned by the Army following the end of the Vietnam War, COIN now became the focus of Petraeus's Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate and was immediately integrated throughout the Command and General Staff Officer Course curriculum. However, the historic COIN experiences used to develop the new doctrine and to educate a new generation of officers were overwhelmingly drawn from Western sources. Missing was the non-Western experience; while there are published accounts of non-Western COIN, they are not commonly referenced by Western students and practitioners of COIN.

Dr. Jeff M. Moore's *The Thai Way of Counterinsurgency* fills some of this gap. Moore sets out to write the first objective, detailed, and comprehensive military analysis of the three counterinsurgencies that Thailand has fought since 1965. He differentiates his work by noting that previous analyses examined the Thai COIN fights individually, and they were mostly written by left-leaning academics who frequently used their analyses to criticize the Thai government. Moore wrote *The Thai Way of Counterinsurgency* for U.S. national-security personnel to continue their study of COIN, with the acknowledgement that in spite of the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and the drawdown in Afghanistan,

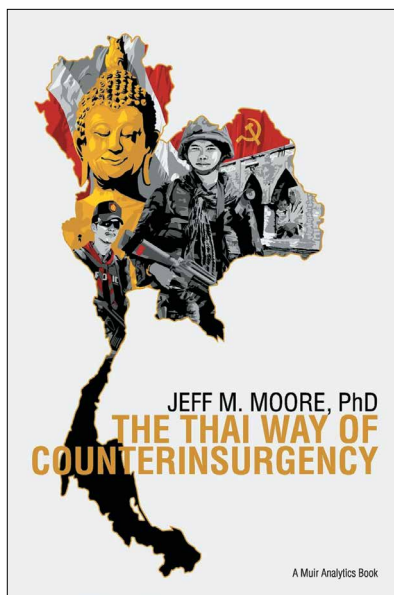
insurgencies around the globe would continue to threaten U.S. interests.

Moore analyzes Thai counterinsurgency techniques through his "COIN Pantheon Model of Analysis," which is adapted from David Kilcullen's "Three Pillars of COIN" model. Moore's Pantheon Model consists of a foundation of *strategy*, upon which is laid a floor of *coordination*, which supports Kilcullen's three pillars (security, politics, and economics). Above the pillars is a ceiling of *insurgent capabilities and intentions*, which is covered by a roof of the *at-risk population*. Problematic in the graphic representation of his model is that the pillars appear to support the "ceiling" of *insurgent capabilities and intentions*, rather than combat them. Since only this section of the Pantheon Model represents the insurgency, it makes more sense to leave that out of the "building" and perhaps represent the *insurgent capabilities and intentions* as an outside force attempting to knock down the structure.

After explaining his model and defining key terms in the introduction, Moore provides Thailand's historical context in chapter 1. Moore then chronologically applies his Pantheon Model to each counterinsurgency in chapters 2–4. He provides an overview of each conflict and then breaks down the insurgency and the at-risk population, followed by details of the Thai COIN effort, explained through the Pantheon Model. The conclusion contains Moore's analysis of the totality of Thai COIN since 1965. Moore compares Thai COIN to the approaches described by "classic"

COIN theorists David Galula and Robert Thompson and lays out his analysis according to his Pantheon Model. In effect, the conclusion is the meat of *The Thai Way of Counterinsurgency*, and all that comes prior is background and supporting evidence.

*The Thai Way of Counterinsurgency* is essential for all practitioners and students of security studies and irregular warfare. Moore's writing is easily comprehended and well paced. It does not delve so deeply into details that the reader would become lost or bored. There are many lessons here that can be



applicable in whole or in part for U.S. forces in current and future conflicts.

**Lt. Col. Andrew M. Johnson, U.S. Army,  
Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

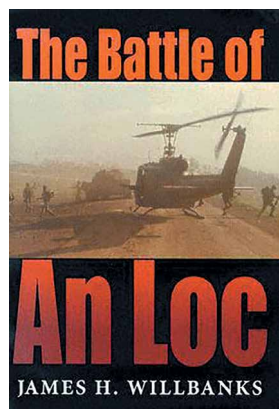
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## THE BATTLE OF AN LOC

James H. Willbanks, Indiana University Press,  
Bloomington, Indiana, 2015, 256 pages

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Many books are written about the Vietnam War, but few are as poignant and relevant to the current global security situation as *The Battle of An Loc*. This well-written account of a style of battle that is playing out every day in the Middle East is relevant for U.S. advisors and our Middle Eastern allies. *The Battle of An Loc* is not just a riveting account of the event itself. James Willbanks's work provides background that enables those without a full understanding of the sociopolitical factors that led up to the battle to appreciate the effect it had on the Paris Peace Accords.



The author explores many topics of concern today, as the U.S. military redeploys to Iraq to battle the Islamic State. One such issue is the often-thorny relationship between the soldiers being advised and their advisors. *The Battle of An Loc* highlights the struggle of the United States

to provide meaningful assistance to allies while simultaneously trying to extricate itself from an unpopular war abroad. The issue was one of maintaining a small troop presence and yet providing a link between U.S. airpower and the Vietnamese troops bearing the burden of the casualties in a seemingly endless war. The tale illustrates the challenges advisors faced in mentoring their allied counterparts, integrating air support into an operation, and propping up the flagging morale of allied troops in the face of overwhelming odds.

Filled with gritty details of sacrifice and bravery, one cannot help but feel immersed in this desperate battle. Unlike other books that are character centric, the author weaves in many details of the tactics employed by both

forces, and he places the reader at the heart of the various commanders' decision-making processes. One example is a detailed account of the responsibilities that were assigned to the various pilots during the defense; from the B-52 bombers attacking marshalling areas to the AH-1 attack helicopters destroying enemy tanks in the city center, the narrative helps readers feel as if they were in the battle. The actions of the brave Vietnamese troops and U.S. Army and Air Force aviators chronicled in this work underscore the great feats that can be achieved with an effective security cooperation relationship.

The volume and depth of the sources that were used in the making of the book were impressive. The author included North Vietnamese and official U.S. Army records to accurately paint the entire picture of the battle, describing the objectives of both forces. Also included are an impressive array of maps and diagrams to assist the reader in understanding the battlefield geometry.

In the end, the author leads the reader through analysis of the strategic-level implications of the battle of An Loc and a judgement on the effectiveness of Vietnamization that, ironically, sealed the country's fate. Willbanks addresses the hazard posed in withdrawing U.S. troops and their awesome firepower out of a country before it was ready to assume responsibility for conducting a war. The underlying message of the book is that the challenges posed by politically appointed commanders, inept leadership, and tactical incompetence at higher levels can all be overcome with American airpower and advisors, tactical leadership, and firepower. This was true in An Loc, and yet the verdict is still out for the similar struggles we wage overseas. A must read for those in the military profession, Willbanks's account of this seminal battle has many facets that are worthy of discussion and emulation.

**Eric McGraw, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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## BLACK CAT 2-1

### The True Story of a Vietnam Helicopter Pilot and His Crew

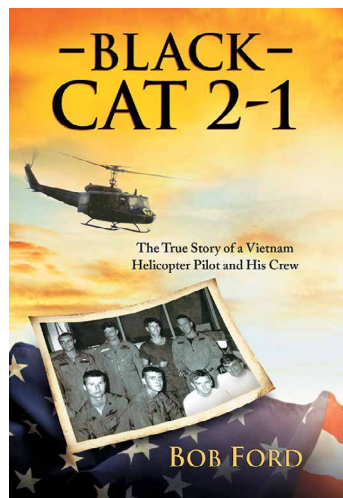
Bob Ford, Brown Books Publishing Group,  
Dallas, Texas, 2015, 276 pages

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The UH-1 Huey helicopter is an icon of the Vietnam War. *Black Cat 2-1* is Bob Ford's autobiography describing his year as a UH-1

pilot in Vietnam during America's war there. Then-Lt. Ford served in the Republic of Vietnam from July 1967 through July 1968, flying out of Da Nang and Hue during his tour of duty.

The book briefly describes Ford's childhood and college years in Oklahoma. It also tells of his time at Fort Wolters, Texas, and Fort Rucker, Alabama, earning his silver Army Aviator wings. This short part of the book provides some background into Bob's upbringing and provides insight into his values and leadership style.



As promised by the title, most of the book focuses on Ford's time in Vietnam. He was assigned to the 282nd Assault Helicopter Company, stationed at Da Nang in I Corps' area of operations. After only six weeks in country, he earned his rating as an aircraft commander and was placed in charge of the company's Hue detachment, described

by Ford as the "further-most northern aviation unit in Vietnam."

Much of the book consists of detailed stories of individual missions that Ford and his detachment flew, including combat assaults, casualty evacuation, VIP transport, and a very interesting recount of a downed-pilot pickup operation. His writing is descriptive and focuses on the people in the story. The book has a lot of military and aviation jargon, but not to the point of distraction. A brief glossary is included.

Being stationed at Hue, Ford had a front-row seat for the siege of Khe Sanh and the Tet Offensive. His accounts of the missions during this time are the most interesting parts of the book. He tells of flying combat assaults and resupply missions into Khe Sanh. He also describes fighting a three-day ground assault at Hue. Although *Black Cat 2-1* is mostly a story about aviation, Ford's story of his participation in the ground combat there is riveting.

*Black Cat 2-1* has several pages of color photographs at the end of the book, with a page or two of photos or maps

dedicated to nearly each chapter. The photos are very useful in helping illustrate Ford's narrative. Although it would have been less distracting to have the photos within each chapter, their quantity and quality are terrific—much better than most combat autobiographies.

Almost anyone with an interest in military history will find *Black Cat 2-1* an enjoyable read. In particular, those with a specific interest in either helicopter combat or the Vietnam War will especially appreciate the book. Ford's presence during a historically noteworthy time and place in that war increases the significance of his story. For these reasons, I highly recommend *Black Cat 2-1*.

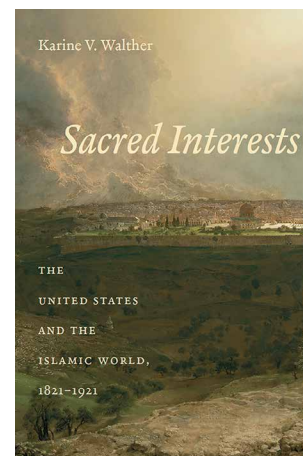
**Joseph S. Curtis, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

## SACRED INTERESTS

### The United States and the Islamic World, 1821–1921

Karine Walther, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2015, 480 pages

Recent rhetoric has brought Islamophobia to the forefront of America's political discourse. In her thorough history of U.S. attitudes toward Islam, *Sacred Interests: The United States and the Islamic World, 1821–1921*, Karine Walther suggests that the hostility has deep roots in the early nineteenth-century history of America. She argues that a combination of renewed religious fervor during the Second Great Awakening, the mythology of manifest destiny, transnational relationships between informal actors, and the United States' initial foray into colonialism in the Philippines as a member of the "civilized family of nations" all combined to shape public and political notions of Islam as diametrically opposed to American values. This essentialist understanding of Islam helped shape a Manichean ideology of a clash of civilizations long before Samuel





Huntington's canonical post-Cold War work of the same name in 1998.

*Sacred Interests* emphasizes three themes. First, Walther builds on the works of Edward Said and Ussama Makdisi, arguing that the United States was just as complicit as Europe in propagating orientalism. Second, she demonstrates brilliantly that the informal power of transnational organizations, such as evangelical societies, was highly successful in shaping public discourse and the United States' actions toward Islam despite a generally noninterventionist foreign policy. Finally, Walther shows that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American discourse on Islam ignored the complexities taken for granted in Western identities, instead simplifying anything involving Islam to a "Muslim question."

Walther organizes her work chronologically, with three main sections. The first part explores the U.S. foreign policy response to the Eastern Question as first Greece and then other regions of the Ottoman Empire sought independence partly based on newly imagined visions of nationalism with Christianity serving as a rallying cry for international support. The second part focuses on U.S. diplomatic relations with the Moroccan government regarding Morocco's treatment of Jewish subjects. The final section examines the United States' initial experiment with settler colonialism and the disparity in policies toward Christians and toward Muslims in the Philippines at the turn of the twentieth century. Throughout, Walther emphasizes the irony of U.S. attitudes toward Islam in the world juxtaposed with internal debates over slavery and minority populations. Ultimately, Walther concludes by suggesting that these early experiences with Islam shaped attitudes and behaviors that endured through World War I and the Cold War, becoming further entrenched globally as the nascent transnational organizations from the nineteenth century became formal instruments of power in the twentieth century.

Overall, Walther's work is innovative in combining a wide range of sources to narrate a complex history of attitudes and beliefs about Islam in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, perhaps due to language limitations, she does not provide the Ottoman Empire or other nations' reactions to American attitudes. Despite this limitation, *Sacred Interests* reinforces the old adage that while history does not repeat itself, it does often rhyme. This is an important read for anyone trying to

understand the relationship between public opinion and strategic policy in the Middle East.

**Maj. Christopher J. Kirkpatrick, U.S. Army,  
Brooklyn, New York**

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## FREDERICK THE GREAT

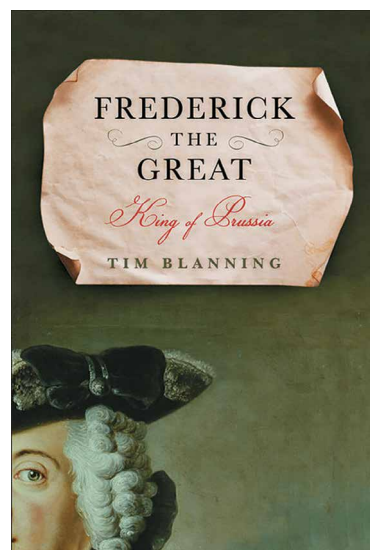
### King of Prussia

Tim Blanning, Random House,  
New York, 2016, 688 pages

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What happens to a military force when its leadership changes from a straitlaced, antiacademic, German man's man to a homosexual son of the French Enlightenment? In Frederick II of Prussia's case, that military force defeated the most powerful armies of Europe, conquered key territories, and changed the balance of power forever in the Holy Roman Empire. Tim Blanning, a noted University of Cambridge historian, has deftly demonstrated great skill in authoritatively writing about a warrior king full of talent and contradictions. His story about how Berlin became the center of the Germanic world is important reading for today's military strategists even if they think Carl von Clausewitz has already had the last word.

Prussia had few apparent resources before Frederick became sovereign in 1740. His father had thought he was effeminate and unfit to rule. Frederick was caught secretly slipping into a red silk dressing gown with gold brocade for private flute practices. Frederick William had his son's favorite friend executed in front of Frederick as part of a plan to mold him into a different sort of man. Upon gaining the throne, Frederick gambled at war and invaded the Hapsburg



Empire in a daring opportunistic move. As the book recounts, he used his advantages of unity of command and superior interior lines time and again against the French, Russians, Swedes, and Saxons, as well as the Hapsburgs. The Prussian Army was a formidable machine capable of performing extraordinary feats for a pragmatic leader who took little stock in the value of titles and other aids for less secure warlords. Frederick may have been forced into an early marriage, but he never allowed his wife into his inner court in Potsdam. He stayed away from the social life in Berlin, preferring to be in the field with his soldiers or talking to his public in their villages. His will and determination were as fierce as his sense of certainty about the sort of world he wanted to create. Prussia emerged as a slashing *Messer* (or knife) in his hand.

The one major irritation I had with the book was its organizational style by topics, which sometimes creates contextual whiplash and repetition of key facts. The content is still always very entertaining, for instance as Blanning describes a German noble who preferred to use the French language although he was far from a Francophile. Frederick colorfully used curse words when giving political directions to his courtiers. He also forced his Jewish subjects to buy royal-made porcelain to build up his national coffers. As a skeptical freemason, his tolerance of other faiths was calculated. He allowed a Catholic cathedral to be built in Berlin while he lobbied to be the defender of Protestant Germans. He ultimately could be as cruel as his father but all in the course of his pursuit of glory. Frederick wanted to teach the world by his example. It would be hard not to admit that Frederick the Great makes a strong case for avoiding lazy stereotypes.

**James Cricks, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

## SALADIN

### The Sultan Who Vanquished the Crusaders and Built an Islamic Empire

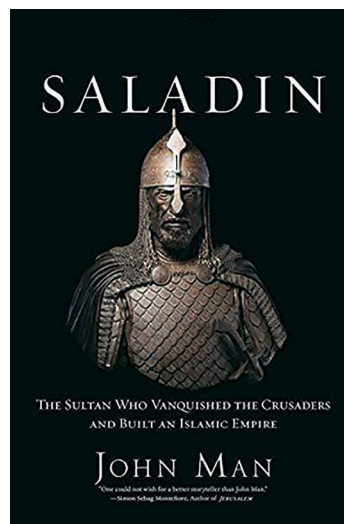
John Man, Da Capo Press, Boston, 2016, 312 pages

John Man is a historian and travel writer. In *Saladin: The Sultan Who Vanquished the Crusaders and Built an Islamic Empire*, not only does he chronicle the life of Saladin, the iconic hero of Islam, but also he provides a thorough historical context of

the twelfth-century Middle East. Man examines the virtues of Saladin the individual, as well as the persona of his iconic status.

Man details Saladin's birth in Tikrit, his rise to power in Egypt, his anticrusader campaigns, and his pauper's death—constantly providing a holistic historical perspective. Man consistently illustrates the ideological and political differences between the

Abbasid (Sunni) and Fatimid (Shi'a) caliphates while demonstrating how the Frankish Palestinian kingdoms and the Ismaili Assassins influenced the region. Man describes in detail Saladin's use of both hard and soft power to gain control and then to render insignificant the Fatimid Caliphate. The book



continues with a description and analysis of Saladin's meteoric rise within the Abbasid Caliphate and his confrontations with the Frankish crusaders, especially his nemesis Reynald de Chatillon.

*Saladin: The Sultan Who Vanquished the Crusaders and Built an Islamic Empire* is consistently footnoted with primary sources and is therefore easily referenced for further study of Saladin or this historical period. I found chapter 16, "A Brief History of Leadership," provided an excellent illustration of the leadership principles internalized by yet another iconic figure—this message resonates today. I found it interesting to read how Saladin was conditioned as a child by his environment, which included effective role models, to become the most significant figure in twelfth century Islam and a celebrated figure today. His ability to resonate with the common person as well as with the elite of his time is a testament to his leadership acumen.

I would recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the Middle East. It provides a solid historical perspective on early cultural and religious fault lines that still exist between Islam and Christianity. Additionally, Man provides the reader with a solid contextual analysis

of the internal political strife that existed within both Islam and medieval Christianity.

**Lt. Col. Robert C. LaPreze, U.S. Army,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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## **BRADDOCK'S DEFEAT** **The Battle of the Monongahela** **and the Road to Revolution**

David L. Preston, Oxford University Press,  
New York, 2015, 480 pages

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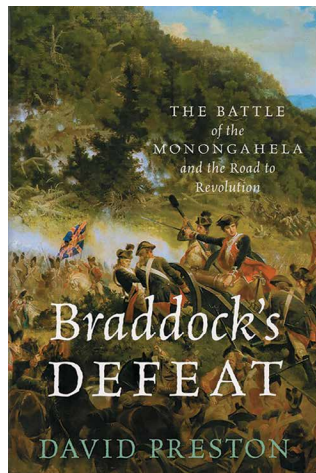
**T**he fight between British forces and French forces with a large contingent of Native American allies along the banks of the Monongahela on 9 July 1755 remains one of the most lopsided defeats in British and American military history. For David L. Preston, professor of National Security Studies at the Citadel, the very name of the battle, *Braddock's Defeat*, used by the British and French (*la défaite de Braddock*) implies that British Gen. Edward Braddock III made errors that led to his defeat. Instead, Preston argues that the battle was more French Capt. Daniel-Hyacinthe-Marie Liénard de Beaujeu's victory than Braddock's defeat. Braddock's six hundred men were placed in an untenable position by Beaujeu from which no commander could have staved off defeat. Preston explicitly expands on Paul Kopperman's *Braddock at the Monongahela* from 1977 by extending the scope of the battle from the origins of the expedition to the consequences of its defeat. He builds on Kopperman's work by incorporating newly discovered accounts, especially from France, and also from Native Americans. He also walked the land, questioning older descriptions of the topography found in most previous histories.

Beaujeu led a relatively small force of French and Canadians augmented by a disciplined force of Native American allies from some twenty nations. Indeed, given the numbers of Native Americans and the importance of the battle to the strategies and politics of their tribes, the question of who was running the campaign and who was an auxiliary is open to interpretation. Preston takes

direct aim at many of the long-accepted interpretations of the campaign, specifically on the character and competence of Braddock, and corrects errors concerning the terrain in key locations. Preston makes a solid case for the professional and even heroic advance of Braddock's column through terrain that the French thought impossible for an army to cross with siege artillery. He argues that Braddock was far from dismissive of his own Native American allies as well as of the colonials.

I find only minor issues to quibble about in this fine book. Preston argues that the Native Americans allied with the French somehow fought as disciplined light infantry and at the same time as individual warriors who followed Native American "captains" only when they wanted to. He claims Braddock was not tied to tactical ideas fitted to campaigning in Europe, but he admits Braddock saw the propensity of colonial soldiers to fight from behind trees as indiscipline. Braddock continued to insist through almost the entire three-hour-long battle that his soldiers fight in massed formations in the open.

*Braddock's Defeat* is part of Oxford University Press's Pivotal Moments in American History series, which takes as its foundation that certain events changed the trajectory of history. For Preston, the defeat of Braddock's expedition to the confluence of the Ohio and the Susquehanna Rivers to wrest it from French control set in motion a series of events and reappraisals that led British subjects on the North American mainland to see themselves as something other than English, with the perhaps inevitable result of the American Revolution. The defeat ended the illusion



of British superiority and birthed a growing sense of "Americanism" among colonial subjects. Such an assessment is at odds with much of the historiography of the last five decades—that of Anglicization, which argued that the colonists were becoming more English, and the revolution was thus at heart an assertion of their rights as Englishmen. Instead, Preston perhaps unwittingly reasserts an older thesis, that by the close of the French and Indian War in 1763, colonists became this new thing called *American*, and thus rule by distant Britain was unnatural and unsustainable.

**Barry M. Stentiford, PhD,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**