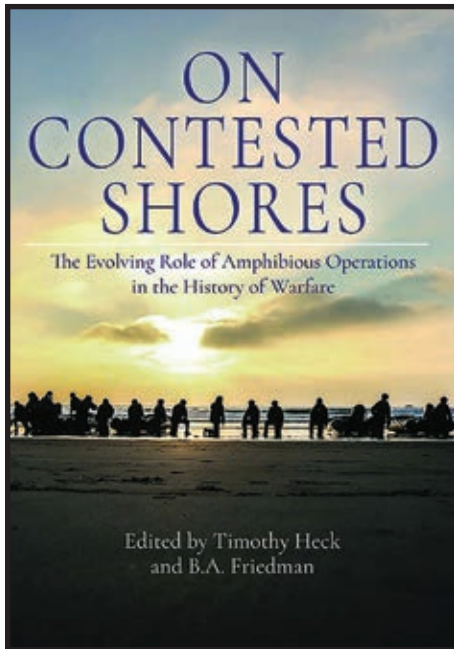


BOOKREVIEWS



ON CONTESTED SHORES: THE EVOLVING ROLE OF AMPHIBIOUS OPERATIONS IN THE HISTORY OF WARFARE

EDITED BY TIMOTHY HECK
AND B. A. FRIEDMAN

Marine Corps University Press, 2020
Pp. xix, 430. Free Download

REVIEW BY JAMIE L. H. GOODALL

It is no secret that the United States faces an ever-evolving threat landscape that appears to be accelerating at an unprecedented pace. Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas identified the emerging threats to be “revolutionizing technological innovations, growing political and economic instability, widening wealth inequality, a rapidly changing climate, increasingly aggressive nation states, emerging infectious diseases, and other forces.”²¹ Every branch of the U.S. armed forces is working to define their place in and strategize for this complex and diverse threat landscape. The U.S.

Army has its “The Army of 2030” vision, and the U.S. Navy has “Force Design 2045.” Even the U.S. Coast Guard has its “Ready Workforce 2030.” However, the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), serving on both land and sea, has one of the most challenging futures.

Marines traditionally have been responsible for conducting expeditionary and amphibious operations. However, the terrorist attack against the United States on 11 September 2001 shifted the focus of many military forces—the Marines among them—from traditional force models to counterinsurgency. With the apparent conclusion of the Global War on Terrorism, the USMC has begun to return to its amphibious roots, sparking a lively debate on the relevance of amphibious operations. Some argue that these operations are “obsolete” or “dinosaur[s] which had outlived [their] usefulness” (7). Some have declared the age of amphibious assault over, arguing that an “atavistic insistence on building capabilities geared towards the now infeasible amphibious landing operations . . . will feed the very premise that animates political skepticism regarding the Marines’ utility by presenting the corps as a force built for battlefields that no longer exist.”²²

It is within this context that Timothy A. Heck and B. A. Friedman conceptualized *On Contested Shores*. Self-described as “career Marine officers, who spent very little time at sea,” Heck and Friedman had “long been concerned that the Marine Corps was becoming too land-centric, heavily reflecting the characteristics of a second land army” (5). It was an anxiety that the then-Commandant of the Marine Corps General David H. Berger shared, tasking the Marines “with a return to the sea” (4). Reflecting on Lt. Col. Merrill L. Barlett’s *Assault from the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare*, the editors realized that it had been nearly thirty years since anyone had taken on the broader history of amphibious

operations. An update to the scholarship was overdue.

In their research, Heck and Friedman identified a gap in our understanding of amphibious operations born of three interrelated issues: confusing amphibious assaults with amphibious operations; a narrow focus “on the drama and significance of” famous assault operations (such as Operation NEPTUNE in Normandy); and a failure to address both historical perspectives and future conceptualization (5). *On Contested Shores* is designed to tackle these problems and fill the knowledge gap. The editors sought to develop a diverse collection of essays (in terms of author and subject). They were particularly successful in the breadth of topics, covering the five types of amphibious operations: assault, withdrawal, raid, demonstration, and support of other operations.

The collection comprises twenty-three essays that work in concert to provide lessons from the past, evaluations of the present, and considerations for the future of amphibious operations. The first seventeen chapters cover amphibious operations spanning five centuries from a historical perspective. From Jacopo Pessina’s essay on the sixteenth-century nighttime assault and twenty-four-day siege of Porto Ercoletto during the Italian Wars (1494–1559) to Serhat Güvenç and Mesut Uyar’s study of Turkey’s amphibious operation YILDIZ-70 ATMA 4 (Star-70 Drop 4) in Cyprus in 1974, the majority of chapters examine the most studied type of amphibious operation (assault). However, several essays share lessons learned from the other four. For example, Samuel de Korte investigates the Pyrrhic victory resulting from the Dutch amphibious withdrawal at Leiden in 1574, and Gregory Liedtke evaluates how German naval evacuations on the Eastern Front between 1943 and 1945 prolonged German resistance despite its declining military fortunes. Edward J. Hagerty provides a look into Confederate Brig. Gen. Richard H. Anderson’s near-disastrous raid against U.S. troops at

Fort Pickens on Santa Rosa Island, Florida, in 1861; Benjamin Armstrong offers insight into how the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps used peacetime amphibious operations to facilitate diplomatic negotiations with Korea in 1871; and Eric A. Sibul considers how the Estonian military used not only amphibious raids and assaults during the Estonian War of Independence (1918–1920), but also demonstrations to “throw the Bolsheviks off balance and disrupt their communications” (133).

The remaining six chapters use such historical lessons to evaluate present-day amphibious operations and offer ruminations on the future of these operations. For example, Kevin Rowlands uses the evolution of the United Kingdom’s approach to amphibious operations over the last seventy-plus years to demonstrate that different does not mean less specialization or abandonment of doctrine but an opportunity to become a more effective fighting force. Sulakshana Komeranth argues that to gain strategic advantage in the great power competition, Naval Special Warfare must reevaluate its mission and capabilities from the last twenty years and refocus on enhancing its “amphibious, more unconventional capabilities” (339).

Ellen A. Ahlness’s essay, which uses Russia’s historical and current engagement in amphibious operations to ponder the future, is a prime example of how the editors envisioned this book as creating a conversation between the past and the future. As climate change is one of the critical elements shaping the threat landscape, Ahlness seeks to move beyond a focus on Pacific littorals and equatorials when the Arctic region, which may be open for commercial shipping as early as 2050, is a “bellwether . . . for changing geophysical realities” (340). Given the possibility of future exploitation of the Arctic’s natural resources as a source of contention and Russia’s propensity for deceptive amphibious military strategies, Arctic states with accessible coastlines may find themselves vulnerable to an assault (351–52).

In total, the editors masterfully selected essays that not only demonstrate how the “history of amphibious warfare is one of both continuity and change,” but also the sheer “diversity of forms the subject assumes” (393). The result truly speaks to the collective labor involved in creating an edited collection. Although the editors were successful in the diversity of the sub-

ject matter, they were less so in terms of authors. Out of twenty-three essays, only two are by women. The editors note that the “community of interest around amphibious operations . . . remains quite homogenous in English-speaking militaries” (xiv). Although this may be true, databases such as Women Also Know History or Jacqueline Whitt’s (U.S. Army War College) crowdsourced list of women military historians might yield a more gender-diverse lineup. For example, Kunika Kakuta’s research on the Imperial Japanese Navy or Classical Athenian Navy, Anna Brinkman’s scholarship on eighteenth-century Anglo-Spanish maritime history, or Jennifer L. Speelman’s work on the military and maritime strategic importance of the Panama Canal could lead to fruitful discussions about the history and future of amphibious operations.

On Contested Shores is an essential update to the broader history of amphibious operations that expands our collective understanding of the subject and provides ample space to continue the conversation.

The book is available for free download at: https://www.usmcu.edu/Portals/218/OnContestedShores_web.pdf.

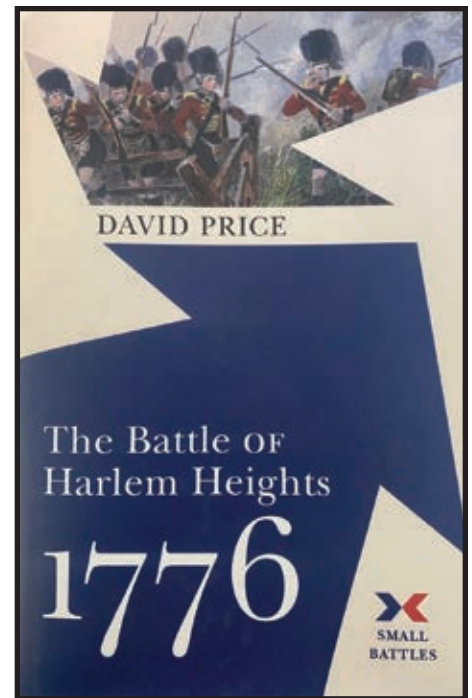
Dr. Jamie L. H. Goodall is a historian in the Field Programs and Historical Services directorate at the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH). She holds a PhD in history from the Ohio State University, specializing in early American, Atlantic World, and military histories. Her publications include a National Geographic bookazine on global piracy, three regional histories of piracy in North America with The History Press, and a history of the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army with CMH.

NOTES

1. Alejandro Mayorkas, “Tackling an Evolving Threat Landscape—Homeland Security in 2023,” remarks to the Council on Foreign Relations, Washington DC, 21 Apr 2023, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2023/04/21/2023-state-homeland-security-remarks-tackling-evolving-threat-landscape-homeland>.

2. Jack Watling and Sidhartha Kaushal, “Amphibious Assault is Over,” RUSI combat experience for the ill-trained, novice army and, perhaps more importantly, a desperately needed win against

[publications/rusi-defence-systems/amphibious-assault-over](https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/rusi-defence-systems/amphibious-assault-over).



THE BATTLE OF HARLEM HEIGHTS, 1776

BY DAVID PRICE

Westholme Publishing, 2022

Pp. xvi, 164. \$28

REVIEW BY ANN M. BECKER

The Battle of Harlem Heights, 1776, by David Price, offers a comprehensive and thought-provoking overview of this pivotal but little-known Revolutionary War battle. Well-written and engaging, this meticulously documented book provides insight into the challenges faced by General George Washington as he engaged the British in battle for the first time. Price details the significance of this battle and its implications for the future success of the Revolution and brings to light the importance of Lt. Col. Thomas W. Knowlton’s efforts to provide badly needed intelligence for the commander in chief.

As the first successful battlefield outcome for Washington’s troops and closely following the devastating loss at the Battle of Brooklyn, Harlem Heights provided American soldiers with crucial combat experience for the ill-trained, novice army and, perhaps more importantly, a desperately needed win against

the professional British army they opposed. Price effectively argues that the Americans, invigorated by the small victory, were more confident and cohesive at this crucial battle. This success also demonstrated to the British that their disdain for the rebellious American Army was perhaps misplaced, as the resistance they encountered was much stiffer than anticipated (xvi). The loss in Brooklyn, retreat, and debacle at Kip's Bay crushed the morale of the rebel troops. Their successful stand against the British at Harlem Heights proved they could resist effectively and demonstrated that Washington's Army, though untrained, could hold their own against their foe.

Price provides a solid overview of the New York campaign and emphasizes the initial confusion among the Americans. Washington changed commanders three times just before the Brooklyn battle, split his forces, and sorely lacked the intelligence he needed to plan effectively (7). Confronting an overwhelming British flotilla armed with thousands of professional British and German troops, the general faced an almost insurmountable task as he prepared to defend New York (4). The book describes the American attempts to fortify the city and anticipate the invasion. It credits British General Henry Clinton's intelligence about the geography of Long Island with his ability to crush Washington's forces there. After Washington's escape, the Continental Army, retreating north, withdrew to Harlem Heights and attempted to secure that location while planning defensive actions. Price provides maps and careful descriptions of modern locations throughout *The Battle of Harlem Heights*, allowing his readers to picture the events and battle movements he describes with ease.

An important aspect of the book focuses on Colonel Knowlton of Connecticut, who is revered as the father of military intelligence and led Knowlton's Rangers, an intelligence and reconnaissance unit. Knowlton was present at the Harlem battle, where he and his Rangers encountered the British while attempting a flanking movement, which initiated the battle. Price argues that Knowlton, who was killed during his early engagement at Harlem Heights, deserves recognition for his courage and valor as a soldier. He seeks to raise Knowlton's profile by

detailing his military career during the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. Knowlton first enlisted in the Connecticut militia in 1756 and served until 1763. He became known for his leadership abilities during his time in the militia. Price highlights Knowlton's experiences alongside Robert Rogers's Rangers as providing Knowlton with knowledge about the specific tactics and equipment useful in scouting, reconnaissance, and special operations. All were used during the New York campaign and at Harlem Heights (45–46).

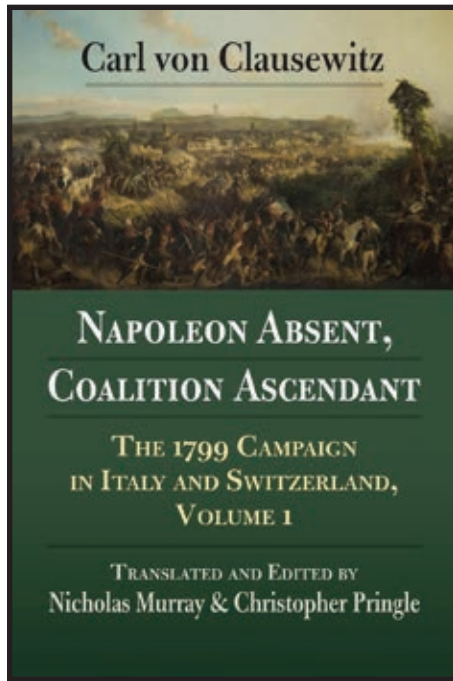
Knowlton returned to active service at Cambridge, Massachusetts, after Lexington and Concord and before his deployment to New York. He fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill, serving as a rear guard for the retreating Americans, earning him high praise and a promotion to major (60). In January 1776, Knowlton led a successful raid on Charleston and destroyed several homes there, preventing the British from using them, with no loss of American lives. Soon promoted again, Colonel Knowlton formed a new contingent of 130 New England soldiers as Knowlton's Rangers. Essentially a light infantry and skirmishing force, the Rangers provided desperately needed intelligence about British troop movements for the commander in chief and often engaged in hazardous duty and missions that required individual initiative for success (64). Throughout the book, Price emphasizes that the lack of military intelligence proved disastrous for Washington and his Continental Army. He argues that Knowlton had a pivotal role in reversing that trend through his scouting expeditions and other harrowing duties.

Price's analysis of Knowlton's untimely death in the battle focuses on its significance as a pivotal win, and importance to the ultimate success of the Revolution. He argues that by ordering Knowlton to move on the British at Harlem Heights and, in effect, poke "a stick in a hornet's nest" (109), Washington perhaps risked the loss of his Army to compensate for the embarrassing losses in Brooklyn and Kip's Bay. Citing his inexperience as a commander and his combative temperament with this decision, the author argues that Washington made mistakes during this engagement. However, Price believes that the victory at Harlem Heights,

though it did not change the outcome of the campaign and caused the loss of Knowlton and other valued military leaders, gave the Americans a boost to morale and an important psychological advantage they had not had before. The cause of rebellion was rejuvenated as the Continental Army successfully stood up to the British army, which was no longer seen as invincible, and the American soldiers gained valuable combat experience, which served them well for the remainder of the Revolutionary War (110–11).

Dr. Ann M. Becker is a professor of historical studies at (SUNY) Empire State University and received her PhD from Stony Brook University. Her areas of interest include the American Revolution, with a focus on the impact of smallpox, as well as Revolutionary War pensions and prisons. Her book, *Smallpox in Washington's Army: Disease, War, and Society during the Revolutionary War*, was published in 2023 by Lexington Press. A chapter entitled "Inoculation in Washington's Army: The Battle Against Smallpox," appeared in Margaret Vining and Barton C. Hacker, eds., *Science in Uniform, Uniforms in Science: Historical Studies of American Military and Scientific Interactions* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007). Dr. Becker has presented at numerous academic conferences, including the American Historical Association, and has published several articles in scholarly journals and three photo history books.





NAPOLEON ABSENT, COALITION ASCENDANT: THE 1799 CAMPAIGN IN ITALY AND SWITZERLAND, VOLUME 1

BY CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ
TRANSLATED AND EDITED
BY NICHOLAS MURRAY
AND CHRISTOPHER PRINGLE

University Press of Kansas, 2021
Pp xvi, 435. \$39.95

REVIEW BY TOM VANCE

This is a translation of volume one of the two-volume *The 1799 Campaign in Italy and Switzerland* by Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831). It is more than just a translation, however. Once you begin reading, it becomes clear why it has its own title (aside from the obvious marketing advantages of Napoleon’s name). During this campaign, General Bonaparte commanded the French expedition of 45,000 troops in Egypt (1798–1799). However, his shadow is present as France faces off against Austria and Russia of the Second Coalition (1799–1802). With 509 footnotes accompanying Clausewitz’s original 39 notes, Murray and Pringle have created an engaging book within this translation.

Clausewitz’s fame comes from his magnum opus *On War*, published posthumously by his wife Marie and longtime friend Maj. Franz August O’Etelz, but he also had a distinguished active-duty career.¹ Clausewitz

received his commission at age 12 and his baptism of fire a year later during the war of the First Coalition (1791–1797) against revolutionary France. After graduating at the top of his class from the Prussian War College, he served in staff assignments during the Napoleonic Wars at Jena-Auerstedt (becoming a prisoner of war, 1806–1808); Borodino (1812), Leipzig (1813), and finally in the Waterloo campaign (1815), serving as a corps chief of staff. Clausewitz directed the War College and served as chief of staff to Prussia’s commanding general. He died of cholera at age 51 while organizing army resources to control an outbreak in Germany.²

Clausewitz’s text and Murray and Pringle’s commentary and analysis are so seamless that it is easy to forget whose voice you are reading (especially as Clausewitz wrote with the editorial *we*). Nicholas Murray teaches strategy and policy at the U.S. Naval War College, whereas Christopher Pringle, formerly with the British Territorial Army, is an academic publishing executive. They are also the translators and editors of volume two of the series, *The Coalition Crumbles, Napoleon Returns: The 1799 Campaign in Italy and Switzerland* (2021) and *Napoleon’s 1796 Italian Campaign* (2018), also published by the University Press of Kansas.

Murray and Pringle’s motivation for translating Clausewitz is simple. They want to share Clausewitz’s campaign histories with “a broader audience so that they too might benefit from his historical analysis and the testing of his theoretical models against the campaigns themselves” (2). They believe this would increase understanding of Clausewitz’s *On War* (3). This work serves as a primer (or refresher) for *On War*, with our translator’s footnotes cross-referencing Clausewitz’s principles of war.³ Murray and Pringle also compare nuances of the campaign accounts by two of Clausewitz’s contemporaries: the formidable general Charles Louis, Archduke of Austria, and Clausewitz’s rival as a military theorist, General Baron Antoine-Henri de Jomini.⁴

Bonaparte appears nineteen times in Clausewitz’s text, and Murray and Pringle refer to the absent general in nine footnotes. Most references are to Bonaparte’s successful 1796 Italian campaign—Clausewitz calls it “glorious” (394)—and Bonaparte’s abilities as a commander.⁵ In one instance, while describing the options of the commanding generals, Clausewitz wrote, “Bonaparte’s method in 1796 was disregarded” (341), along with related phrases scattered throughout like “A Bonaparte might have . . .” or “If one side

had had a Bonaparte in charge. . . .” Bonaparte’s absence did indeed contribute to French reverses during the campaign, as did political instability in France.⁶ There are several ironies to note: the Egyptian campaign was a trigger for the Second Coalition against France (14); the early French defeats eliminated the gains from Bonaparte’s 1796 campaign and hastened Bonaparte’s return from Egypt, creating the opportunity for his seizing control of the nation and then turning the tide of the war in France’s favor—hence the title of volume two, *The Coalition Crumbles, Napoleon Returns*.

In his introduction, Clausewitz describes the campaigns in Italy and Switzerland as “among the most significant and richest in lessons of any campaigns in the history of warfare” (7). He classifies the four key leaders of the campaign as commanders of “great repute” (7): Aleksandr Suvorov and Archduke Charles leading the Allies; Jean Victor Marie Moreau and André Masséna for the French. Clausewitz’s text, written in the present tense, is arranged into five chapters: (1) General Situation; Opening the Campaign in Germany; (2) Opening the Campaign in Italy; (3) Continuation of the Campaign in Switzerland; (4) Continuation of the Campaign in Italy; and (5) The Allies Take Mantua and Alessandria. The five chapters have fifty-six sections in total, each with subheads, which provides easier reading (especially as there is no chronology). He describes seven major battles and twenty-nine actions or encounters. The final battle is at Novi, where Russian general Suvorov defeated General Barthélemy-Catherine Joubert (who was killed in action). Of Suvorov, Clausewitz says, “Something out of the ordinary could always be expected” (25). We learn about the fog of war, the interference of government instructions to field commanders, local uprisings in Italy against French forces, and alliance issues between the Austrians and Russians.

Murray and Pringle include translators’ and editors’ notes, and a note on the utility of war-gaming in understanding Clausewitz (Murray conducts these at the Naval Academy and Pringle wrote a book on war-gaming). Eleven maps, a bibliography, and an index complete the book. Their footnotes are conversational and include fifty-five mini-bios of Austrian, Russian, and French leaders, including many of Napoleon’s future marshals. We learn that Clausewitz and Jomini “exhibited a severe enmity for each other’s works” (29n45) and of Clausewitz’s

“hatred of the French Republic” (66n91). General Suvorov was “an intellectual and dynamic soldier right up to his death in 1800, in contrast to many of his contemporaries from Russia and Austria, who seem to have been almost universally slow moving and slow witted” (15n13). They also point out the French advantage of having younger generals than the allies (75n109).

Although I do not have the credentials to criticize Clausewitz, his chapter on the general situation, filling one-third of the book, is a bit long. I smiled when he admitted that he wrote some of it “at the risk [of being] too vague to see the wood for the trees” (127). I hope Murray and Pringle will not mind my saying that their book requires studying, not just reading. However, the effort is worth it. Their commentary is easy to follow, and the cross-referencing creates an engaging and interactive experience (especially if you were to follow along with a copy of *On War*, which I did not). When you are finished, however, you feel like you have earned several professional military education credits.

Tom Vance is a retired Army Reserve lieutenant colonel with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in history from Western Michigan University, where he received his Army ROTC commission branched Adjutant General Corps. After ten years of active duty, he served as a part-time ROTC instructor at his alma mater and in public affairs assignments in Washington, D.C. His article “Napoleon’s Son: Commissioning and Professional Development” was a *Military Review* Online Exclusive in December 2022.

NOTES

1. Clausewitz’s works, published between 1832–1834, include three campaign histories (1796, 1799, and 1812) and his *On War*. Also see Vanya Eftimova Bellinger, *Marie von Clausewitz: The Woman Behind the Making of On War* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

2. Michael Howard, *Clausewitz: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 5–11.

3. Murray and Pringle use Michael Howard and Peter Paret’s translation of *On War* (Princeton University Press, 1989).

4. Jomini (1779–1869) was a Swiss army officer and historian before joining Marshal Michel Ney’s staff. In addition to being theorists, Jomini and Clausewitz have two things in common.

Their wartime experience came from staff, not command, assignments, and each of them served in Russian uniform: Clausewitz during 1812–1813 and Jomini beginning with the armistice in 1813. Theodore Ayrault Dodge says Jomini “left the French army and took service with the Russians” (*Napoleon*, vol. 4, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1907, 113–14), whereas Albert Sidney Britt III calls it “desertion” (*The Wars of Napoleon*, West Point Military History Series, Garden City, NY: Square One Publishers, 2003, 132).

5. For accounts of the 1796 campaign by U.S. Army officers, see 1st Lt. Herbert H. Sargent, *Napoleon Bonaparte’s First Campaign, With Comments* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1895) and Col. G. J. Fiebeger, *The Campaigns of Napoleon Bonaparte of 1796–1797* (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy Printing Office, 1911).

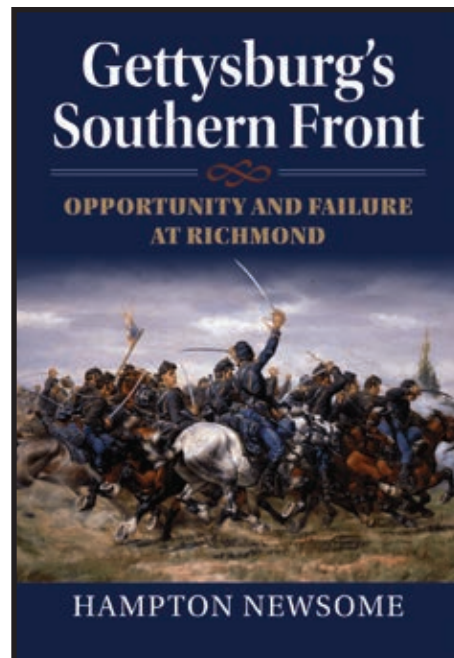
6. According to Murray and Pringle, France’s “three most distinguished commanders” were absent. In addition to Bonaparte: General Jean-Charles Pichegru was in exile and General Jean Victor Moreau was in exile at the start of the campaign but was then reinstated (20).

American Civil War, as author Hampton Newsome intends. Moreover, although the U.S. Army’s operations around Richmond in 1863 were related tangentially to the Gettysburg campaign, their limited success, distance from the great battle in Pennsylvania, and relative insignificance in the minds of the U.S. Army high command make a weak connection to the Confederate invasion of the North.

This initial observation aside, Newsome’s work is a well-researched, clear account of the little-known U.S. Army operations around Richmond during the summer of 1863, supported by several helpful maps. These movements were intended to interrupt Confederate logistics and threaten the Confederate capital when General Robert E. Lee moved north into Pennsylvania and subsequently fought the battle of Gettysburg. The rail lines running north and west from the Richmond area were the chief targets of Army commanders, who also knew that the Confederate capital would be guarded lightly. The author holds that the failure of these operations was a lost opportunity to capture Richmond and seriously damage Confederate supply efforts that summer. It was a “small, oft-overlooked component of the massive operations, taking place during the Gettysburg campaign,” Newsome contends (2).

The author begins his study with Lee’s invasion of Pennsylvania and the efforts of General Chief Henry W. Halleck to counter this danger. Part of his plan was to task Maj. Gen. John A. Dix, commander of the Department of Virginia headquartered at Fort Monroe in Hampton (in the coastal Tidewater region), with threatening Richmond and destroying the railroad bridges over the North and South Anna Rivers in Hanover County, north of the city. Supplies moved from Richmond along the Virginia Central Railroad west to Staunton, then by wagons in the wake of Lee’s army. Trains on this rail line had to cross the South Anna River, and thus, the bridge there became the target. Another objective was the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac railroad bridges that crossed over both the North and South Anna Rivers.

General Dix was a curious choice to lead the expedition from Fort Monroe, as he was not known as an aggressive, fast-moving leader. Almost 65 years old when the raid began, he was a War of 1812 veteran and had resigned from the U.S. Army in 1828. He moved 20,000 largely inexperienced



GETTYSBURG’S SOUTHERN FRONT: OPPORTUNITY AND FAILURE AT RICHMOND

BY HAMPTON NEWSOME

University Press of Kansas, 2022
Pp. vii, 411. \$29.95

REVIEW BY JOHN R. MAASS

The title of this book is oddly misleading. The term *front* was not used during the

troops west to White House Landing on the Pamunkey River, soldiers of the IV and VII Corps commanded by Maj. Gen. Erasmus D. Keyes and Brig. Gen. George W. Getty, respectively. From here, the troops launched their raid on 23 June in what Newsome aptly calls “a story of might-have-beens, confusion, and failure” (5).

Dix developed a two-part plan of attack. The IV Corps under Keyes would advance toward Richmond by way of Bottoms Bridge on the Chickahominy River in a feint to hold the defenders of the capital in their trenches, while the VII Corps under Getty would move rapidly to destroy the railroad bridges in Hanover County. Getty’s “entire purpose was to generate a vigorous demonstration and prevent the Confederates from sending troops north to repel Gettys column at the railroad bridges in Hanover” (179).

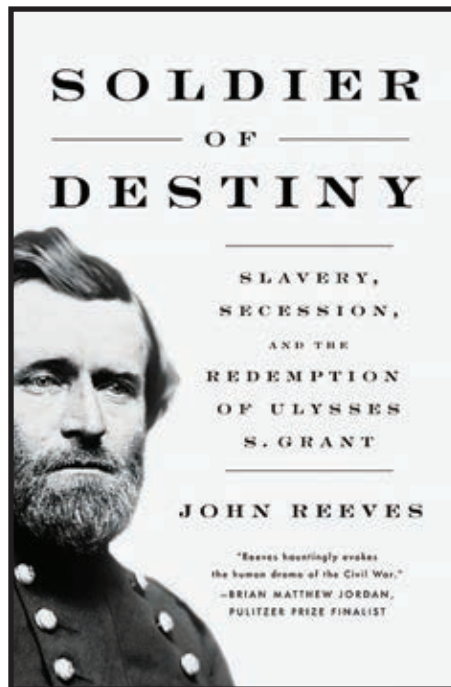
Newsome gives a highly detailed account of both columns’ movements and attacks and is adept at describing the marches and skirmishes. Col. Samuel P. Spear led the expedition to destroy Virginia Central’s South Anna River bridge with his 11th Pennsylvania Cavalry. Along the way near Ashland, this column captured rebel cavalry commander Brig. Gen. William Henry Fitzhugh “Rooney” Lee, who was recuperating from a wound in Hanover. The bluecoats attacked the bridge and burned it after pushing off rebel defenders. However, Spear did not destroy the wooden Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac trestle just a few miles away, which significantly limited the effectiveness of the expedition.

To the south, Keyes’ troops made little impression on Richmond’s Confederates under the overall command of Lt. Gen. D. H. Hill. Newsome provides details on an action at Crump’s Crossroads, between Bottoms Bridge and White House on 2 July, which stopped the Army forces in their tracks due to Keyes’s ineptitude. The rebels’ successful defense of the city is surprising, given that their command structure was overlapping and ineffective, the troops were spread out in too many locations, and several of their top generals were not up to the job.

Newsome concludes his study by noting that the Lincoln Administration was disappointed with the insignificant results achieved by Dix. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton likewise thought the operation was a “waste of force” (277), and there was even disagreement afterward about

whether capturing Richmond was the main objective of the expedition or not. “In the end, it was clear that the federal effort to cut Lee’s communications had failed to generate decisive results” (286).

Dr. John R. Maass is a historian at the National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.



SOLDIER OF DESTINY: SLAVERY, SECESSION, AND THE REDEMPTION OF ULYSSES S. GRANT

BY JOHN REEVES

Pegasus Books, 2023
Pp. iv, 289. \$29.95

REVIEW BY MATTHEW J. MARGIS

Ulysses S. Grant has experienced a resurgence in the popular American imagination over the past decade. Initially considered a larger-than-life hero in the years following the Civil War, Grant’s reputation ebbed and flowed over the following century. Lost Cause supporters often portrayed Grant as little more than a drunkard who only achieved victory by brute force and sheer numbers. However, the diligent work of historians has corrected this inaccurate and unfair portrayal in recent years. Works such as Ronald C. White’s 2016 biography *American Ulysses*,

Ron Chernow’s 2017 *Grant*, and a 2020 History Channel miniseries have reshaped Grant in the popular imagination. This renewed affinity for the once-marginalized Grant culminated in a clause within the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act that promoted Ulysses S. Grant posthumously to General of the Armies, a rank held only by George Washington and John. J. Pershing. John Reeves’s *Soldier of Destiny: Slavery, Secession, and the Redemption of Ulysses S. Grant* fits this environment. Reeves set out to examine Ulysses S. Grant as a human being rather than as a mythical figure. What emerges is a character study that sheds new light on a figure who has been the focus of countless studies and historical debates.

Unlike most other works that cover Grant’s life, Reeves dedicates little time to the general’s military exploits, political pursuits, or childhood. All of this has been covered elsewhere. Instead, Reeves focuses on the ten years between 1854, when then-Captain Grant resigned his commission from the United States Army, and 1864, when Grant became the first person since George Washington to earn the permanent rank of lieutenant general in the Army. During this period, Grant’s life took many different turns. He left the Army, returned to his family living in Missouri, became a slave owner, struggled financially, faced internal demons, moved to Illinois to work in a leather goods store, reentered the Army, rose through the ranks, continued to struggle with alcoholism, possibly shifted his views on slavery, overcame numerous obstacles, and achieved the highest military honor one could. This amounted to a theoretical fall from grace capped by both personal and professional redemption.

Although this book is not without its flaws, its focus on this period in Grant’s life offers a unique, though often blurry, glimpse into his personal relationships, views on slavery, and struggles with alcohol. Reeves pays particular attention to Grant’s relationships with his wife, Julia Dent; his father, Jesse Root Grant; his father-in-law, Frederick Dent; the Dent slaves; his children; and various other friends and acquaintances. Reeves notes that Grant came from a northern antislavery family. Yet he married into a slave-owning family and owned slaves himself. Grant lived and worked on his father-in-law’s plantation and personally benefited from slavery. His wife, whom he

adored, continued owning slaves and even traveled with her enslaved nurse until late 1863. Although Grant offered freedom to one of his slaves (perhaps the only one he owned personally) in 1859, Reeves shows this was probably a move drawn less from moral convictions than from a pragmatic decision as he prepared to move to Galena, Illinois.

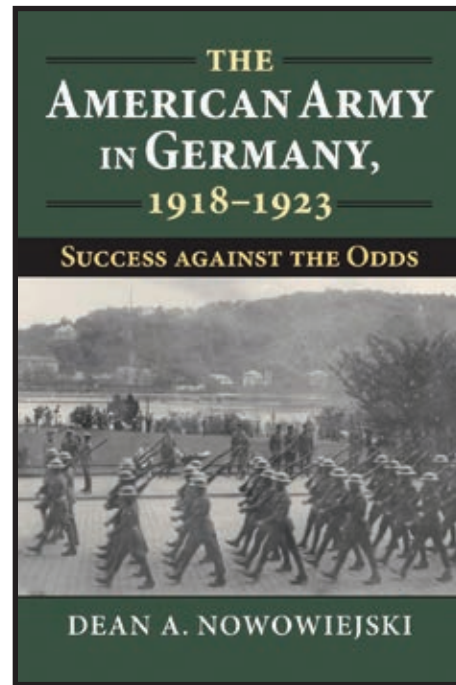
Throughout this book, Reeves digs into the often contradictory and complex nature of Grant the person. As noted above, he benefited from slavery. Eventually, he served as one of the key figures in emancipation as his armies broke the yoke of bondage in its wake. Reeves demonstrates that Grant was undoubtedly not an abolitionist like his father—at least not early in the war—and Grant even held some extremely prejudiced views, as evidenced by his antisemitic General Orders 11. Grant, however, evolved throughout his life and remained fiercely pro-Union and antisecession. This unyielding attitude drove him back into the Army in 1861. It served as the foundation of his wartime attitudes toward political issues, which were weighty and impactful. Grant was more than happy to see slavery end in exchange for preserving the country. Grant's philosophical redemption, then, was borne out of the violence of the Civil War.

In addition to Grant's relationships and views on slavery, Reeves dedicates significant time to discussing Grant's complicated struggles with alcohol. As with other aspects of Grant's life, his supposed alcohol abuse has been the subject of much scrutiny over the past century. Although Reeves does not go so far as to call Grant an alcoholic, he does discuss this issue with poise. He represents Grant as a man who struggled with sobriety and often had moments of weakness when faced with loneliness or prolonged stress. Grant found support from Julia and a trusted advisor, John A. Rawlins. They helped keep Grant on the straight and narrow. Others, though, could tempt Grant with drink, and many of his enemies were quick to spread rumors and gossip. Reeves does a masterful job of discounting unreliable stories while acknowledging the potential truth in others. As with the other aspects of Grant's life, his alcohol use was complicated and nuanced. Reeves's treatment of this subject is fair.

Although this book is wonderfully written and offers an in-depth look at Grant as a person, it is not without its

shortcomings. One is the author's lack of voice and interpretation. This reviewer waited for Reeves to provide context for Grant's internal contradictions. Reeves acknowledges that finding the real Grant is almost impossible, but Grant's theoretical redemption is somewhat ambiguous. Reeves hints at Grant's eventual move toward abolition. Those familiar with Grant will know how he treated freed persons as commanding general and president. Those with less familiarity, though, may tend to read this book and conclude that Grant was a typical slaveholder with an occasional drinking problem who hated secession. This is certainly not Reeves's intention, but a more extensive concluding chapter could have provided additional context for a character as complicated as Grant. Nonetheless, this book has the potential to change readers' understanding of Grant, offering a deeper look than most biographies offer into a flawed human who achieved greatness. Readers will have difficulty putting this book down. It is a fine addition to any Grant scholar's collection.

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THE AMERICAN ARMY IN
GERMANY, 1918–1923:
SUCCESS AGAINST THE ODDS

BY DEAN A. NOWOWIEJSKI

University Press of Kansas, 2021

Pp. viii, 376. \$54.95

REVIEW BY JANINE M. HUBAI

In *The American Army in Germany, 1918–1923: Success Against the Odds*, Dean A. Nowowiejski tells the story of the American occupation of the Rhineland in Germany after World War I. Attempting to fill in gaps of scholarship in military governance, Nowowiejski moves away from a diplomatic history and focuses on the institutional history of post-World War I governance of the American zone in the German Rhineland by the U.S. Army. He breaks the occupation of the American Zone of the Rhineland into two major phases: (1) The Third Army's occupation in Germany from December 1918 to July 1919, and (2) the American Forces in Germany's (AFG) occupation from 8 July 1919 until its departure in 1923—although he dedicates the bulk of his book to the latter. Celebrating the ability of the commander of the AFG, Nowowiejski argues that Maj. Gen. Henry T. Allen's successful navigation of the complex relationships of the Inter-Allied Rhineland High Commission (IARHC) and his skill in turning the recruits of the

AFG into a highly trained and respected force makes it a surprising and worthy story about “leadership, diplomacy, international relations, soldier training and education . . . and the performance of the United States Army in military government” (8).

During the first phase of the occupation, the Third Army followed the retreating German Army through difficult, war-torn terrain to Coblenz, Germany. Leaving France’s friendly and celebratory atmosphere for the uncertain environment of a defeated Germany, the American soldiers found a trepid civilian populace who expected a barbarian American Army. Yet, over time, civilians found the Americans to be disciplined soldiers whose job entailed enforcing order and international laws. Although there were antifraternalization laws, American soldiers were billeted in local German hotels and homes, which made avoiding social intimacy difficult. Brig. Gen. H. A. Smith and Col. Irvin L. Hunt oversaw the initial months of the occupation by writing the ordinances of the military government, supervising their implementation, and administering them to the city of Trier. Despite flaws such as confusing lines of authority and uneven policy creation, Nowowiejski details the efforts of the Third Army to grant some authority to local German leaders to give a sense of partnership between the occupier and the occupied, setting the stage for the second phase.

The second phase occurred when the Third Army changed to the AFG, and Allen took command on 8 July 1919. Here, the author strongly celebrates Allen’s leadership in the Rhineland. Nowowiejski calls Allen a “model commander and accomplished soldier-diplomat,” whose internationalism was unusual when Americans favored isolationism (10). Nowowiejski claims that Allen managed the occupation largely on his own with limited direction from the U.S. State Department or the War Department. As an officer with international experience as an attaché to Russia and Germany before World War I, as the military governor of Leyte in the Philippines, and as the founder of the Philippine Constabulary, Allen understood the workings of military governance. He was a man of wealth who felt most comfortable in the upper echelons of society, making it easy for

him to blend into the diplomatic and political circles of the IARHC, using his influence to protect American interests in the region. Nowowiejski successfully frames Allen’s position in the political context of America’s refusal to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations, which prompted America to sign a separate peace agreement with Germany. This state of affairs gave Allen an “unofficial observer” role in the workings of the IARHC, rather than being an official member. Allen used his diplomatic skills and networks to keep the French and Belgians from infringing on German soil and interfering in the economic redevelopment of the American zone. As Warren G. Harding entered the White House in 1921 and the Senate refused to continue funding the AFG efforts, Allen lost his influence in the region as the number of American soldiers dwindled. The occupation ended in 1923.

Nowowiejski’s work is strongest in detailing the history of the training and education program that Allen implemented to turn the AFG recruits into disciplined, well-respected soldiers. When many World War I veterans returned home, recruits replaced the combat-tested veterans. Given the delicate political and diplomatic situation in postwar Europe, the American soldiers needed to be ready for any resurgence of violence. Nowowiejski’s meticulous description of the development of Allen’s training program is a testament to the thoroughness of his historical account. He also details the responsibilities of the occupying force, including maintenance of roads, bridges, railroads, public utilities, public health, and food supplies. The soldiers also were tasked with destroying German war materiel and selling American vehicles, animals, and other items to German citizens. The AFG offered the local community protection and helped the Rhineland regional economy in several ways: industries and public utilities were profitable, Army excess livestock was sold to local farmers to restock their farms, and the money spent by the AFG soldiers in the community boosted the local economy. The American soldiers lived a privileged life in Coblenz, as they tended to have better financial conditions than most of the German population and enjoyed the city’s recreational offerings. Allen ensured that the Salvation Army

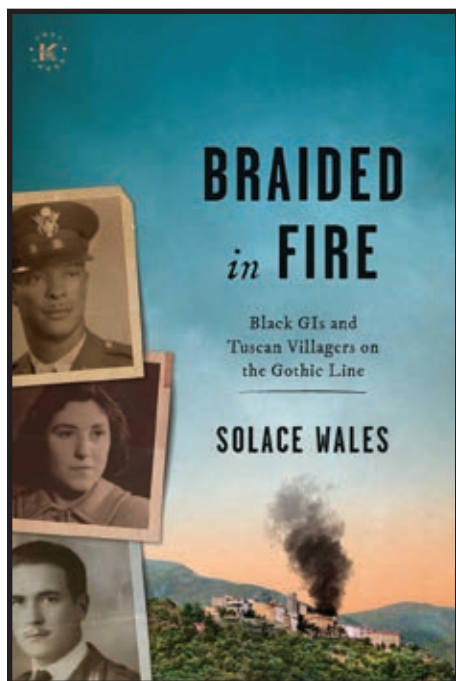
and YMCA huts provided the soldiers with plenty of entertainment (especially to ward off visits to the local red-light district). Allen also organized horsemanship events and competitions with other occupied armies to show the strength and abilities of the American forces.

Nowowiejski offers an extensive, even exhaustive, number of examples of Allen’s leadership skills. He paints Allen as almost too perfect, skirts over potential areas of flaws, and overextends some of Allen’s perceived legacies. In one instance, Nowowiejski suggests that “Allen’s interaction with diplomats across Europe . . . in many ways foreshadowed . . . American relations that happen today in the United States’ Mission” to NATO (41). However, he offers little evidence of how or why he makes this assertion. Part of Nowowiejski’s issue is the lack of varied sources. He often relies on one or two sources written by either the person of the subject themselves or the Army in general, offering only one perspective. This same problem also indicates an unbalanced view when discussing how the Germans viewed the Americans. Although it may be true that Americans and Germans found a way to coexist and that Americans helped increase the region’s economy, Nowowiejski offers too perfect of a picture. He suggests that Germans escalated violence shortly before the official signing of the Treaty of Versailles and that some American soldiers committed infractions. However, he does not go into further details. Looking into records that give the Germans’ point of view could have offered a more balanced reality of American occupation, and issues of soldier-civilian relations. Nowowiejski too often refers to the “benevolence” of the AFG but explains Allen as a “successful host while using his authority over billeting . . . to cultivate friends and to resist pressure” (86). Would the inhabitants whose living circumstances were leveraged by the occupying power speak of their benevolence in the same way Nowowiejski suggests? This critique underscores the need for a more realistic and balanced view of history, highlighting the dangers of an overly idealistic portrayal of historical events.

These criticisms aside, this book provides a wealth of useful information about the workings of leadership and

the Army during its occupation of the Rhineland. Despite the complex and changing nature of the postwar landscape, the narrative is easy to read. It is of value to anyone interested in American military governance, U.S. Army life, or European history during the first half of the twentieth century.

Janine M. Hubai is a multimedia historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History and a PhD candidate at George Mason University, specializing in military, public, and digital history. She has produced video projects for the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media and created digital exhibits for the Center of Mason Legacies and Dr. Gabrielle A. Tayac. Her areas of interest include war and society, the Cold War, and racial segregation and integration in the U.S. Army.



BRAIDED IN FIRE: BLACK GIS AND TUSCAN VILLAGERS ON THE GOTHIC LINE

BY SOLACE WALES

Knox Press, 2020
Pp. xxxii, 447. \$20

REVIEW BY BRADLEY J. SOMMER

The Second World War often is framed as a conflict to protect democracy and

freedom. The fascism and militarism of the Axis Powers represented serious threats to liberal democracies and constitutional monarchies. They provided an ideological rallying point for the world. The narrative of the war being a conflict over political ideologies became the dominant one and is the most commonly cited explanation for the war today. This perspective certainly is accurate and does provide a viable means of understanding the Second World War. A critical aspect of the political ideology of the Axis Powers was race on both sides. In every major theatre of the war, the conflict was framed in racial terms. The Nazis' political worldview was linked irrevocably with race. In the Pacific, the Japanese and the United States both used heavily racialized language and imagery. Within the United States, civil rights leaders developed the "Double V" or "Double Victory" campaign to promote the defeat of racism abroad and at home. The Second World War was undoubtedly a racial conflict; however, the larger understanding of that conflict is not understood wholly. In her book *Braided in Fire: Black GIs and Tuscan Villagers on the Gothic Line*, Solace Wales details the experiences of Black soldiers fighting Germans in Italy, revealing the complexities of race on the battlefield and exposing a dramatic and complicated history.

Braided in Fire is a winding series of vignettes and oral histories connected by a shared location and experience. Wales focuses on the relationship between the American 92d Infantry Division and the people of Sommocolonia, a small town with great strategic importance on the Gothic Line. Part of the U.S. Fifth Army fighting its way up north through the soft underbelly of Italy, the 92d was the only African American unit to see combat in the European Theater. Wales takes great care in describing the settings and the actors, creating a richness and texture that makes her book a stylistic standout from contemporary professional history. She writes a deeply affecting and personal narrative, with dialogue and internal monologue befitting a fine novel or dramatic play. Wales balances a large historical cast, weaving elegantly between the rather mundane aspects of life in Sommocolonia and the harsh realities of the slogging and brutal fighting that characterized the Italian Campaign. Individual backstories on each of the central figures allows us a better understanding of their motivations,

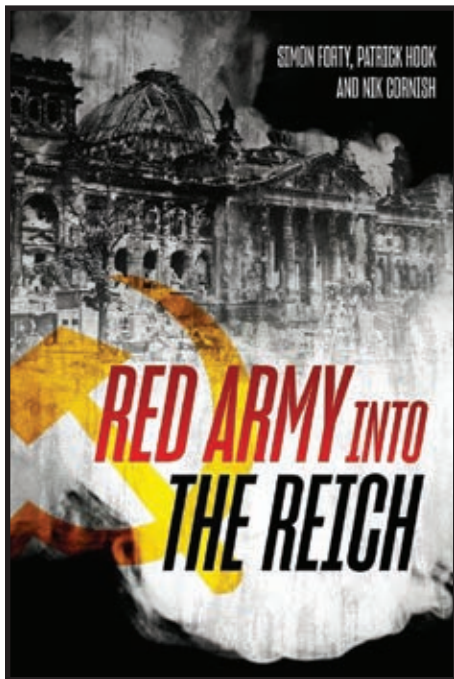
even if Wales takes some liberties with her inferences and presents a much more human picture of war and race relations in the Italian countryside. This approach is not without drawbacks. Wales's attention to detail sacrifices much in the way of scope, claiming to place the story of the 92d and the people of Sommocolonia into a larger discussion of the Second World War despite ultimately failing to do so.

Recounting the experience of such a distinguished and historic unit is certainly a worthwhile endeavor. Wales provides keen insights and rich descriptions of the fighting and the complex relationship between Italians—many of whom had embraced Benito Mussolini's rhetoric and ideologies heartily, if not his leadership—and soldiers who had more pressure on them beyond the mission and their lives. The book is not without its faults, though. Despite its claims to a larger experience of Black soldiers across the Gothic Line, Wales focuses much of the narrative on the Biondi family, as well as the life and experience of Lt. John R. Fox, particularly the events leading up to his heroic sacrifice for which he eventually would receive a posthumous Medal of Honor fifty-two years after his death. The struggle for Fox's recognition is a story in itself. Putting the story at the end of the book is a missed opportunity to explore the most interesting part of the narrative. One cannot help but feel that Wales buries the lede a bit here.

Sometimes, historians take too large of a scope, letting the details and the human experience get lost amid historiographical scuffles and exercises in semantics. Wales, herself not a professional historian, then indirectly demonstrates a style of writing that is available to us, even if we rarely use it. Her book's most significant contribution is not to the historiography, perhaps the weakest part of the book, but how we write history with fluid, engaging prose and articulate thoughts of the lives of historical actors that delve into personal motivations. This can be as compelling as critical historical interventions and major historiographical revelations. Wales lived in Italy and is fluent in Italian, so her proximity to the source and polyglot nature certainly put her level of immersion out of reach for some people, toeing the line between history and anthropology. However, if history is storytelling, even just in part, the discipline would be wise to take note of how to tell a good story

while staying true and faithful to the facts. Wales has opened the door on an important topic. Now, someone needs to walk through.

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RED ARMY INTO THE REICH

BY SIMON FORTY, PATRICK HOOK,
AND NIK CORNISH

Casemate, 2021
Pp. 256. \$37.95

REVIEW BY DEVIN L. DAVIS

World War II saw mass destruction and the introduction of mass logistics and warfare on a scale that had not been seen yet in military history. Although historians have researched and discussed the demarcation of the Axis and Allied powers many times, the historical prevalence of the so-called Western Allies and Eastern Allies is often overlooked.

In this case, the Western Allies refer to the Soviet Union and the Red Army specifically. The numerous campaigns and battles fought from the Red Army's perspective are often overlooked and not discussed compared to the D-Day landings at Normandy or the Eastern Allies' push across the Rhine. Simon Forty, Patrick Hook, and Nik Cornish set out to research, examine, and present the everyday armchair historian with an accurate, precise, and well-illustrated look into the operations on the Eastern Front.

Their collective work, titled *Red Army into the Reich*, was published in 2021 by Casemate. It is an excellently researched and illustrated timeline of the Soviet Union's advance toward Berlin in 1944 and 1945 and the birth of early Cold War tensions. Although this work does not encompass all campaigns and countries of German occupation, it provides a masterful overview of each in references and text, as well as vivid color illustrations and maps.

The introductory narrative sets the stage for not only Adolf Hitler's initial failures during the initial invasion of the Soviet Union but also discusses the efforts made by the Soviet Union to change the tides of war on the Eastern Front. The German Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe's use of the Blitzkrieg, or Lightning War, against Poland was not unknown to the Soviet Union. Although Hitler had planned for a march toward Moscow, the Red Army eventually would surround the eastern side of Berlin utilizing their version of the Lightning War.

The introduction also contains an in-depth and well-constructed overview of many facets of the Allied war effort that not only affected the Western advance into Germany but also the Eastern advance by the Red Army; for instance: the importance of partisan warfare and the introduction of Lend-Lease in June 1941. The final pages of the introduction also play a vital role in the readability of the narrative by providing numerous pages on key military and political figures. An overview of the German and Soviet leaders helps the reader understand the greater context of each operation that follows in the subsequent chapters. The book also contains an overview of weaponry, a key element not only in setting the narrative but also

in emphasizing the sheer scale and size of each campaign that was orchestrated to bring down the Third Reich.

After the introductory narrative flows a sequence of campaigns that each could encompass an entire standalone published work. The Red Army advanced through many countries on their drive toward Berlin—for example, Poland, Hungary, the Balkans, and eventually Austria. Although each of these countries have a vast history in World War II, the authors meticulously included the historical foundation needed to understand each nation's impact on the Red Army. The authors did a superb job at keeping the narrative clear and concise to provide the greatest overview of each campaign or country and its impact on the conclusion of World War II.

The principal value in this work is in the illustrations that are provided throughout, both within the narrative as well as outside of the narrative. Campaign maps, such as the map of coastal batteries along Norway as part of the Atlantic Wall, are paramount to understanding the Red Army's quest toward gaining the northern advantage. Campaign and fortification maps are included throughout, as well as an abundance of images of key military leaders, military weaponry, and location images during the war and postwar. These images do a great job of projecting not only the brutality of war on the Eastern Front but also the scale at which the war was fought.

Overall, *Red Army into the Reich* is a well-written, well-illustrated, and pleasing read that I could recommend to almost anyone. The illustrations help the ease of reading, and the clear timelines help the reader follow the war easily, without any confusion of dates or Army group positions. This book could be viewed as inadequate or controversial by some because of its lack of historical references, and its abundance of illustrations. However, both are an added benefit and help paint a more vivid picture of the war for the reader.

WO1 Devin L. Davis is an active-duty army officer serving as an AH-64E Apache aviator. He earned his bachelor's degree in American military history in 2019 and his master's degree in military history with a concentration in World War II in 2022, both from

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