

The CMH Dispatch ~August 2012

Travels

So far, it has a year of much travels and much pressing work besides. Nevertheless, the Dispatch goes on and you will find many fine reviews below. The reviewers must be lauded for contributing no less than ten reviews in the case of Mr. Calvert, which is followed closely by seven reviews from Mr. Ronan.

In recent travels, I would recommend, if you happen to be on the spot, the naval museums at Rio de Janeiro, Malta, Dubrovnik and Venice. All have remarkable objects and paintings that members usually enjoy. The Halifax Citadel in the center of that city is well worth the visit and, if you have a car, the forts and batteries at Prince of Wales Martello Tower and York Redoubt.

Francis Back, who has contributed many MUIA plates in the past 30 years, is the subject of an exhibition devoted to his work. If you happen to be in Montreal between now and April 2013, go to the Marguerite Bourgeois Museum (she was the city's co-founded in 1642) situated at 400 St. Paul St. East in Old Montreal, an historic area worth the visit on its own.

There is also an exhibit on the War of 1812 seen from four viewpoints at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. Another remarkable exhibit on the arts in New France that features several officer's portraits at the Musée national des Beaux-Arts in Quebec City.

Downloading goodies

The National Historic Sites of Parks Canada are starting to put some of their research reports online through the Society for Historical Archaeology at:

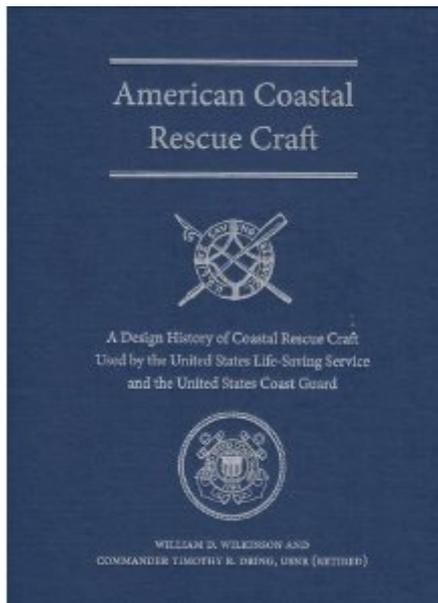
http://www.sha.org/research_resources/parks_canada.cfm

There, one can download in PDF some "classics" on military material culture. For instance, David McConnell's huge report on "*British Smoothbore Artillery*" is again available to researchers. And it remains unequalled. Indeed, any historian working on this topic that would not consult this work would be close to folly, especially as it is now free! Even in its basic soft covers, no frills original presentation, it went for about \$40 two decades ago.

All other reports are also available with a few mouse clicks. A very useful booklet now online is "*Buttons manufacturers from the London Directories 1800-1899*" that has been a God Send for dating buttons thanks to their back marks.

René Chartrand
Interim editor

The Reviews:



American Coastal Rescue Craft: A Design History of Coastal Rescue Craft Used by the United States Life-Saving Service and the United States Coast Guard by William D. Wilkinson and Timothy R. Dring. University Press of Florida, 15 NW 15th Street, Gainesville, FL 32611-2079. 185 pp. b & w illus. \$125.00 ISBN 13-978-0-8130-333-1

A comprehensive look at the small ships and boats used to help mariners in peril off our shores, historically enforce regulations regarding imports, and, in more recent years, cope with illegal immigration and the flow of drugs into the United States. The authors wrote the book to document the role of small craft in carrying out the life saving programs of the Coast Guard. It makes the point that while major rescues at sea attract wide-spread

attention, the more frequent help from smaller boats has not received the attention it is due.

With its miles of rugged coastline and a reputation as a seafaring nation, it is no wonder that much of the early development of lifeboats took place in Great Britain and early lifeboats in this country were based on British designs. By 1807, the Massachusetts Humane Society had lifesaving stations up and down that state's coast. It ordered a specially-made 30-foot wooden boat, 10 feet wide with cork lining to make it less sinkable, manned by 10 rowers.

In 1841, Joseph Francis developed what he called the first self-righting, self-bailing wooden lifeboat. He later tried to adapt these features to boats with a galvanized iron frame, but the boat was heavy and difficult to be hauled around on a beach. Nevertheless, the federal government purchased 82 for use on the Atlantic coast and in the Great Lakes.

Following the Civil War there were so many shipwrecks along our coasts that public outcry led to the federal government's hiring full-time surfmen to staff lifeboat stations, particularly during the stormy winter months. Most of these boats were wooden, based on designs that had been used for many years. A major problem at this time was the lack of good roads running along the shore to help move the lifeboats quickly to where they were most needed.

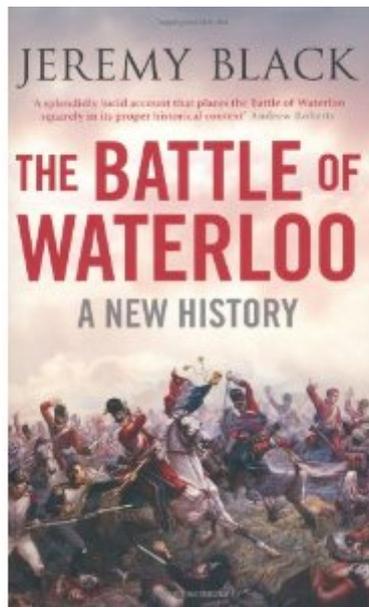
The authors make the point that improvements in lifeboats were rather minimal until the period following World War II. Then the Coast Guard adapted the Army's amphibious truck, the "DUKW" to haul boats on roads or beaches to where they needed to be launched. It also approved the design for a 44-foot steel motor lifeboat which was both self-righting and self-bailing and could operate under the worst weather conditions. With its construction, the Coast Guard finally abandoned wooden boats.

As the Coast Guard of the 1980's became somewhat less focused on rescues at sea and more on law enforcement, it developed the CG47202, a 47-foot boat, with a beam of 15 feet, a draft of just 4 feet 6 inches, and a top speed 25 kts. It also turned to smaller foam-collar boats to be used where larger, more rigid boats could not venture or were overpowering.

The boat is filled with very helpful illustrations, averaging around one picture to a page, and ends with a strong section on the Coast Guard today. This is a truly authoritative work.

Robert Calvert, Jr.

The Battle of Waterloo by Jeremy Black. Random House, 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. 2010. Hardback; 236pp. \$26.00 ISBN 978-1-4000-6737-4.



This slim volume, written by a distinguished British historian, describes the life of Napoleon but focuses on Waterloo and its aftermath. It intensifies in drama in March 1815 when Napoleon emerges from his year-long exile on the island of Elbe. Landing in Southern France, Napoleon quickly won over the French troops sent to arrest him and replaced the French Bourbon king .

The Napoleon who faced Wellington at Waterloo, however, was far from the powerful ruler who entered Russia in 1812 at the head of 400,000 troops. With no allies and with a divided France behind him only 74,000 French troops were on hand at Waterloo. Of twenty-three living French marshals, only six had agreed to serve again in his forces. Opposing the French were 67,000 allied

(English, German, Dutch, Belgian, etc.) troops under Wellington, while nearby was a supporting Prussian army of 50,000 led by Blucher.

Napoleon opted to attack Wellington before his army grew larger but dallied on 16-17 June 1815. Some felt Napoleon did not feel well. Others blamed the inactivity on poor, or non-existent, staff work. The morning of 18 June was a wet one and the French did not attack the British forces until midday. The first attack on the center was led by cavalry who found they were foiled by the defensive squares into which Wellington had placed his men. Thirteen of these squares were created, each just 100 meters from the next.

The famed French artillery was also at a handicap. In the moist ground, Its cannon balls sunk in the mud, rather than creating a deadly path along a hard surface. Nor were things any better for the French on the wings. Finally at 7:30 pm. Napoleon committed his elite Imperial Guards walking with them in person to the line of departure. Their frontal attack proved no more successful than that of Gen. Robert E. Lee on the third day at Gettysburg. Reinforced by Blucher and his Prussians the Guards attack was smashed and with that all hope for the French forces.

Napoleon fled to Paris, hoping to find an army somewhere in his future. But the pursuing forces quickly eliminated any group which appeared to take up his fight. In July, Napoleon was on the Atlantic coast hoping to catch a boat to America or go into exile in Britain. However, the British navy thwarted this plan and he was sentenced to exile again, this time far away from Europe in the South Atlantic.

Waterloo changed the future of Europe and left us with many reminders, from London's Waterloo Bridge to the phrase, "It was my Waterloo." Wellington, like U.S. Grant and Dwight Eisenhower, later led his country - serving as prime minister from 1828-1830. The fact that a single battle had

ended a war led many of the young soldiers who picked up arms in this country in 1861 to assume a single quick battle would end their quarrel.

Robert Calvert, Jr.

The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies by Alan Taylor. Alfred A. Knopf, 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. 2010 Hardback. 620pp. b & w illus. \$35.00. ISBN 978-1-4000-4265-4.

Beginning with the end of the American Revolution, the author traces the relationships between, the United States, Britain, Canada, and the Indian tribes of the Ohio Valley. During this period, thousands of Tories, still loyal to Britain, fled to Canada. Thousands of Irish, with no love for the crown, moved to America, and the Indians, witnessing the steady movement westward of the new United States, sought alliances with the British. The conflict which evolved, and called by us as the War of 1812, was described by one participant as "a hot and unnatural war between kindred people."

The British, as Taylor points out, still had designs on their former colonies. Lord Shelburne felt with a vast territory and few people, America would remain an agricultural nation, dependent upon Britain for manufactured goods and would eventually seek some sort of close political alliance with Britain. As for the United States, President Madison really wanted to take over Canada and merge into the United States -if only he could afford the 100,000 troops required.

The War had three causes. First, the British Orders in Council which authorized the Royal Navy to restrict American ships from trading with certain European powers - but aimed mainly at France., Trade with Europe had been one of the most lucrative activities for the rising American merchant class. Second, the impressment of sailors, reportedly deserters from the British Navy, done by stopping American vessels and examining their seamen. With hundreds of ships at sea and soldiers required for Wellington's forces fighting Napoleon on the Continent, Britain was woefully short of manpower for its armed forces. But impressment proved particularly hateful to America. Third, the alliances British made with Indian tribes, many living within territories claimed by the United States. The British treated tribal leaders with respect and made no attempt to change their ways. By contrast, President Jefferson's goal was to convert them from hunters and warriors to farmers.

Congress voted to go to war against Great Britain in June 1812. While greatly outnumbered at sea by the British Navy, it looked like land battles should be a pushover for the United States. The author notes that the 7.7 million living in the United States at the time had to face only 300,000 British living in Canada. Former president Jefferson felt "the acquisition of Canada, this year, as far as the neighborhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching." And he went to say, "would lead a year later to the final expulsion of England from the American continent."

The problem was that inept American military leadership led to numerous disasters. William Hull may have looked like a capable military leader but he led a small army of 2,500 American volunteers north to defeat. In August 1812, Hull was locked up in a fort near the present day city of Detroit. The brilliant Canadian general Brock, outnumbered, had his Indian allies dress in their most fearsome outfits and parade in a never ending circle which struck terror in the hearts of many Americans. It was generally assumed that if you fought the Indians and lost, you would be scalped., However, if you surrendered, you might live to die in your own bed. Hull choose to surrender.

In 1813, American forces suffered a number of defeats on land. One army was defeated at Frenchtown on the Raisin River. York (now called Toronto) was captured briefly but the American forces were driven out. Then in the fall, General Wilkinson failed in an attempt to take Montreal. The only good news that year, from the American side, was the defeat of a British fleet on Lake Erie by Commodore Perry and the success of General William Henry Harrison at the Battle of the Thames in Michigan.

By 1814, things were looking grim from the American point-of-view. With Napoleon defeated thousands of British troops were free to come to North America. However, American forces led by Generals Jacob Brown and Winfield Scott (destined for three American wars) successfully withheld British troops at Niagara and both sides were ready for a settlement.

The Treaty of Ghent ended British impressments of sailors, helped to firm up the border with Canada, and provided for open and free transit on the Great Lakes. Only the Indians lost. Their desire for a guaranteed open space was denied. All they received was an assurance, soon broken, that their 1811 territories would be honored.

The book does an excellent job of covering the political aspects of the conflict. However, it strangely omits much of its military history. For example, it covers the British landing in Maryland and the subsequent burning of the White House in less than two pages and does an equally skimpy job with the Battle of New Orleans.

Robert Calvert, Jr.

Civil War Northern Virginia, 1861. William S. Connery. The History Press, Charleston, SC.2011. Softcover; 159 pages, Illus., Maps, Index, Biblio. ISBN: 978-1-60949-352-3. \$19.99.

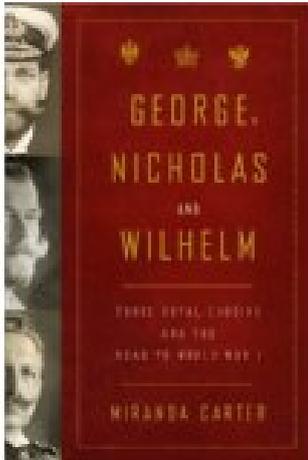
This is not a military history, but a local history of the first months of the Civil War in three Potomac counties of Virginia; Loudoun, Fairfax, and Prince William. They were the scenes of the First Battle of Bull Run and the battles at Ball's Bluff and Dranesville. Also located here was the home of the descendants of George Washington in Arlington and his own home. Mount Vernon. As well as Secessionists, Union men and Quakers were in the areas of population, also. The author not only describes local reaction to the events transpiring across the country but gives a feel of what this now heavily populated and affluent area was like in the nineteenth century. From the tragedy of secession to the death of Elmer Ellsworth to the effort to preserve the sanctity of Washington's home many events in the three counties in 1861 are detailed.

Civil War Northern Virginia, 1861 is an entry in History Press' Civil War Sesquicentennial Series of some seventy-five volumes. Many of these are local histories, designed to reveal the lives of the less prominent citizens who were confronted with that most terrible calamity, civil war.

The author is a graduate of the University of Maryland, a member of the Company of Military Historians and a contributor to Civil War publications and a speaker on the subject.

This work is recommended for students of Virginia history.

James B. Ronan II



George, Nicholas, and Wilhelm: Three Royal Cousins and the Road to World War I by Miranda Carter. Alfred A. Knopf, 1745 Broadway. New York, NY 10019. 2010. Hardback 498 pp. b & w illus. \$30.00. ISBN 978-1-4000-4363-7.

Queen Victoria was noted for far more than her long reign (1837-1901 the longest in British history and, incidentally, just three years longer than the current Queen Elizabeth II) Perhaps her greatest impact was on Europe's royalty. The mother of nine children she devoted much of her life to placing her children in marriages with European royalty.

This fine book by a British author traces the lives of three members of Victoria's extended family: King George V of England, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, and Nicholas II, Czar of Russia. Royal cousins, they never forgot their linkage through Victoria, whose rule actually dominated more than the first half of their lives. Their notes and letters to each are filled with affectionate phrases. George would refer to his cousin as "my dear Nicky, " Nicholas commented during a 1912 visit that Wilhelm "was very gay and affable and would have his joke with Anastasia." Despite their personal relationships, the truth of the matter is that none of them could be classed as a strong ruler.

A biography of Nicholas observed that "In England where a sovereign need only to be a good man in order to be a good king, Nicholas II would have made an admirable monarch." He was the best father of the three, but almost to the exclusion of the duties one normally associated with being the leader of a generally despotic country such as Russia. Words such as "insecure, lack of confidence, and unassertive," are used to describe him as well as kinder terms such as "modest, gentle, and polite." He spent most of his time in Tsarkoe Selo, literally translated "the Tsar's village," 15 miles from St. Petersburg. There he loved to walk his dogs and go out for rides with some of his four daughters. When his fifth child was born, finally a son and heir, his joy quickly turned to sorrow when it was discovered Alexis suffered from hemophilia and was in constant danger of bleeding to death. This concern made the family even more close-knit and even more removed from general society.

When in 1905 Russian troops fired on a crowd which had come to the Winter Palace to petition Nicholas to do more to help the poor, he blamed the deaths on those who had led the peasants.. Unwilling to focus on the needs of his people and ill-served by fawning government officials, his weaknesses were highlighted by Russia's abysmal record in the Great War. All of this led to the Communist take over of Russia and the murder of the royal family in July 1918 in a basement in Ekaterinburg, Siberia.

Wilhelm had quite a different story. His mother was Queen Victoria's oldest, and perhaps favorite child, also named Victoria. His father was well-thought of but ruled for only three months as Kaiser Friedrich before dying of throat cancer. The 29-year old Kaiser Wilhelm II who succeeded him was the only one of the three royal cousins who relished the idea of becoming head of his country. His concept of leadership, however, had more to do with redesign of military uniforms than listening to the concerns off either government officials or citizen groups. One of his ministers complained that "Wilhelm thinks he knows everything" and fails to listen to those with sound advice. People who flattered him , on the other hand, rose to top positions.

His mother tried to mold Wilhelm and Germany into strong friendships with Britain. Wilhelm, while professing great love for his British grandmother took an opposite tact in foreign relations. He was constantly trying to develop alliances against France, Britain's closest ally. When the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire was killed by a Serbian nationalist, and all Europe tottered on the brink of world war, Wilhelm tried to defuse the situation through direct negotiations with heads of the countries involved. Later, during the war, he spent a lot of time at army headquarters but did not direct operations. And those stories about German soldiers racing Belgian nurses and cutting off the hands of school children had no basis in fact. At the end of the war, it was obvious that Wilhelm must go and he abdicated, fled to sanctuary in the Netherlands, and died there in his bed in 1941.

History has treated King George V of Great Britain kindly. A short, basically shy person he was thrust into the monarchy because his older brother Eddy died suddenly. George had spent some years in the Navy, not something he really enjoyed. Like most royals of his period, George was ill-educated by modern standards. He had the good fortune to be born British which meant he had dozens of able officials to help govern his country. He also had the good fortune to marry a poor, but very smart woman who as Queen Mary probably contributed more than was thought at the time.

George spent considerable time on his "Wilhelm problem." The ruler of Germany wanted to spend time in Britain, wear the uniform of the Royal regiment to which he had been named honorary colonel, and lobby for his special interests. His casual requests to visit were brushed off. His more formal requests had to be occasionally honored. George had another visitation problem. Overthrown by his people and in a precarious position, Nicholas expressed interest in coming in exile to Britain. George and his government had serious reservations about what the arrival of the Romanovs would mean to their country and thanks, in part, to their delay the Russian royal family perished.

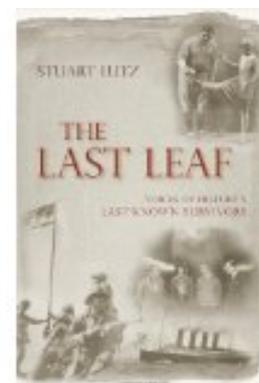
Overall, there is enough fascinating content in this book to make three excellent biographies.

Well researched, well written, and a story that may still be significant, this book can be highly recommended.

Robert Calvert, Jr.

The Last Leaf: Voices of History's Last-Known Survivors by Stuart Lutz. Prometheus Books, 59 John Glenn Drive, Amherst, NY 14228-2119. 2010. Hardback. 370pp. b & w illus. \$26.00. ISBN 978-1-61614-162-2

In 1934, a nineteen-year-old Arkansas woman named Maudie Acklin married William Cantrell, an eighty-seven-year-old former Confederate soldier. He died three years later after a mule threw him to the ground. His wife survived him and when she died in 2008 at the age of ninety-three she was hailed as the "Last Confederate Widow." In 1927, an eighteen-year-old Tennessee woman married an 81-year old Union veteran of the Civil War. When she died in 2003 at the age of ninety-three, Gertrude Grubb Janeway was heralded as the "Last Union Widow."



These are among the thirty-plus stories of survivors cited in this unique volume. The title comes from a poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes about the last leaf to finally fall from a tree in the fall. The author worked on the book over a period of ten years identifying and then visiting the survivors of such things as service with Harry Truman in World War I, the last pitcher to surrender a home run to Babe Ruth, and the last living person to have flown on a plane with Amelia Earhart.

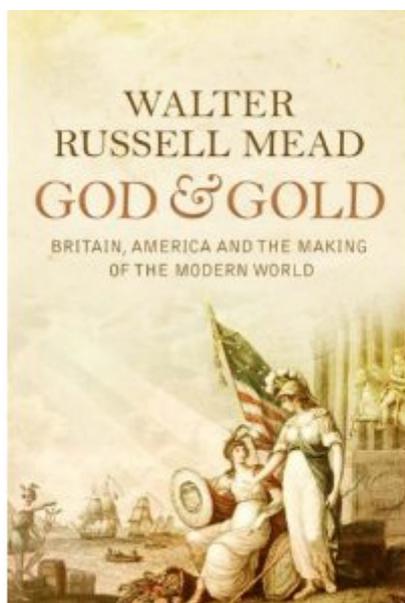
One of the stories is about Rose Freedman who survived the tragic 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in Lower Manhattan. In this historic tragedy, 146 people, nearly all immigrant women, were trapped in a burning building and died because the owners to discourage unauthorized breaks had locked many of the outer doors. Rose, who was eighteen at the time, saw how the fire had trapped her fellow workers and instead of trying to go down the jammed stairs decided to climb up one flight to where the executives were stationed. There she found they were all gone, but that a window had been broken open so she went over and climbed out on the roof. From there she escaped to the next building. Rose died in 2001 at the age of 107.

Another is Dorothy Young who at age seventeen was hired to be the stage assistant to the great Houdini. The fact that she was lithe from taking dancing lesson and only five feet tall may have helped her get the job with the famous magician. She recalls she was the only applicant in the tryouts who was shorter than Houdini. Later, Dorothy met Mrs. Houdini who treated her as one of the family. On stage, Dorothy danced between magic tricks and did such things as hiding in a large radio case. She spent only one year with Houdini (the last year of his life) for he died in 1927 after a college student hit him in the stomach and burst his appendix. She is one of the few "last leaves" who was still living when the book was published.

Some of the stories feature people who were very young when they observed a famous event. Barbara Anderson McDermitt was only three when she was a passenger on the liner Lusitania, sunk by a German submarine on 7 May 1915. Cora Luchetti was just five when she lived through the great 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and George Putnam Jr. was thirteen when he was flown in airplanes by his step-mother, Amelia Earhart.

The diverse group of stories makes interesting reading. It would have helped if more had been told about the lives of the "last leaves" after their moment in history. The author deserves kudos for the many great pictures in the book. Many show people as they were when history entered their lives, other s show people as they looked at the time of their interviews.

Robert Calvert, Jr.



God and Gold: Britain, America and the Making of the Modern World, by Walter Russell Mead. Alfred A. Knopf, 1745 Broadway, New York, N Y 10019. 20076. Hardback. 449 pp. \$27.95. ISBN 978-0-375-41403-9.

Many writers today take a negative view of western powers and their future compared to such rising countries as China, India, and Brazil. By contrast, Mead's thesis is that Great Britain and the United States have dominated the world for the past three centuries and he wants to find out why this happened. He sees the last sixty years of American supremacy in the world as simply the latest stage in our long-term development.

Among the leading causes is the capitalistic system which dominated in both of these countries. This was aided by political systems and political values that accommodated clashes of opposing interests without blowing up. Thanks also to a strong religious heritage moral values developed which strengthened the societies and prepared them to meet new challenges as they arose. Along with the less tangibles, the development of maritime interests (read: trade) aided both countries.. Over the years, maritime supremacy in the world shifted from the Netherlands to Britain and finally to the United States. From his perspective, the "English Channel seems wider and deeper than usual - and the Atlantic seems smaller and less deep."

Our future in a world marked by terror and inequality will require combining a capacity for action and assertion with a capacity for reflection and self-criticism. However, a wide gap exists in this country between the elites who set our foreign policy and the great mass of our other citizens. Unless that gap can be reduced, our national objectives will remain confused. The author feels great danger to the United States would result if either China or India failed modernize and grow. Our own future is more assured with strong and stable economies in both of those countries.

He feels the physical aspects of our modern life may fade in time, our Interstate Highway System may go the way of the Roman roads. But our culture, religion, law, finance, science, and mathematics legacies will remain and sustain our Anglo-American heritage.

Robert Calvert, Jr.

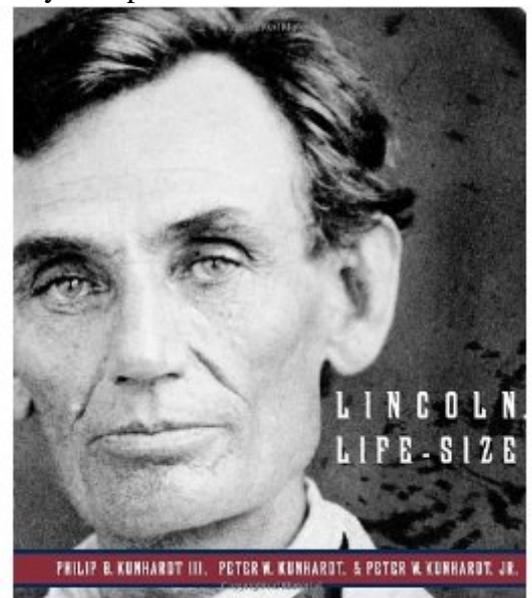
Lincoln, Life-Size by Philip B. Kunhardt III, Peter W. Kunhardt, and Peter W. Kunhardt, Jr. Alfred A. Knopf, 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. 2009 Hardback. 187pp. b&w illus. \$50.00 ISBN 978-0-307-27081-8.

This coffee table book presents over 130 pictures of Lincoln, ranging from an early one estimated to date from 1846 to a final one taken on March 1865 at the time of his second inauguration. Each is annotated by paragraph or two of text. This may be used to explain the setting for a photo or its timeliness. In other cases, the text may consist of a quote from Lincoln or perhaps a statement made by such associates as his Cabinet officers or newspaper reporters.

Almost all the photos are head shots - little action here. The only exceptions are those taken when Lincoln visited his troops. Here he loomed tall, and with his tall black hat, towered over the military figures.

The authors give full credit to Frederick Hill Meserve who in 1897 began to collect Lincoln pictures and by 1911 published his first book of around 100 Lincoln pictures. Later, he published four updates but without many new pictures. In 1963, Lloyd Ostendorf came on the scene and his publication included 118 Lincoln photos This book is published by descendants of Meserve.

It's rather interesting to think of how many portraits Lincoln had taken, Most of us can't remember more than a dozen in our lifetime. Lincoln certainly wasn't vain about his looks. In fact, when his debate

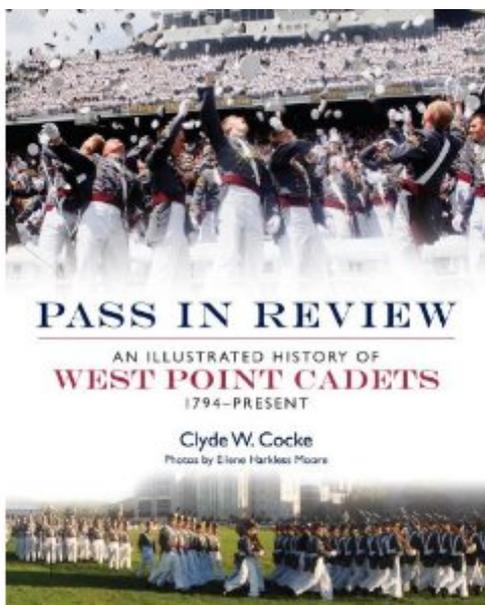


opponent, Stephen A., Douglas, called him two-faced, Lincoln replied, "I'll leave it to my audience. If I had another face, do you think I would wear this one?" Once when a camera man told him to "just look natural," Lincoln replied, "That is what I would like to avoid."

Studies have shown that there have been more books written about Lincoln than almost any other man. This attractive and carefully-edited niche volume adds to their total.

Robert Calvert, Jr.

Pass In Review, An Illustrated History of West Point Cadets, 1794-Present. Clyde W. Cocke. Oxford: Osprey, 2012. Hardcover; 172 pp.. illus., app., index. \$29.95. ISBN: 978-1-84908-558-8.



The United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, New York, is not well known to most Americans despite its reputation as an educational institution and its 218 year history. Equally unknown are the struggles of the school for academic excellence, relevance, and the number and contributions of its graduates on the United States. The author tells the story of West Point through the medium of cadet uniforms, through symbols of academy life, and through vignettes of the history of the school. Major Cocke's even-handed treatment of the academy's history from a defensive post on the Hudson River to one of the world's most esteemed institutions of higher learning is superb and is vividly

illustrated by the excellent photography of Ms. Eilene Harless Moore.

Originally, cadets were assigned as supernumeraries in the U.S. Army units stationed at the post. They were to be trained in the technicalities of engineering and artillery before receiving commissions as officers. The school had several false starts and a series of administrative and personnel problems before the arrival of the determined Capt. Sylvanus Thayer, Dartmouth (1807) and USMA (1808) in 1817. His tenure began the rise of the academy as an institution and its fifty-year-reign as the premier engineering school in the world. From Thayer's reforms would come the institution that produced so many soldiers who have brilliantly served the United States and produce the school's world wide reputation for excellence. The academy's reputation was also enhanced, after a period in the doldrums, by then Brig. Gen. Douglas MacArthur (USMA 1901) after World War I.

To explain the *esprit* of the academy the author uses prints and lithographs of the academy's early days, many uniform depictions (many by members of the Company of Military Historians) and photographs of past and present academy life to color his narrative. Fixtures of the academy, the West Point Band, the soldiers that form garrison, class rings, and ceremonies explain the academy's traditions and cadet life through the decades. And, many glimpses of twenty-first century academy life are included. Most evocative is the gallery of photographs depicting the headstones of generals, astronauts, and platoon leaders in the West

Point Cemetery, illustrating the devotion to duty of the academy's some 67,000 graduates (p.136).

Maj. Clyde W. Cocke, USA, (Ret.), is a 1977 graduate of USMA and a member of the Company of Military Historians. Ms. Eilene Harkless Moore is professional photographer whose work has appeared in many national periodicals.

This Osprey number is lavishly illustrated. *Pass In Review* is highly recommended for general readers interested in West Point, or for parents and counselors who want to provide information on the academy to students interested in attending the academy.

James B. Ronan II

Plataea, 479 B.C., The Most Glorious Victory Ever Seen. William Shepherd. Osprey, Oxford, UK. 2012. Softcover; 96 pp., illus., maps, index, biblio., chronology. \$19.95. ISBN: 978-1-84908-554-0.

Plataea I, *Third Persian Invasion*, 479 BC, between the Greeks, about 80,000 strong under Pausanias. the Spartan. and 120,000 Persians with 50,000 Greek auxiliaries, under Mardonius. The Persians fought bravely but were overwhelmed by the superior discipline and heavier armor of the Greeks, and after Mardonius fell, a panic ensued and they fled to their entrenched camp. This was stormed by the Athenians and no quarter given. Only three thousand Persians escaped. Greece was saved from invasion. (*Dictionary of Battles*, Thomas Harbottle. Revised and updated by George Bruce. 1971).

This is a standard account of this pivotal and colossal battle between the Greeks and the Persians (or the West and the East). The final Persian invasion of Greece failed. Salamis was fought the year before and later in 479, the Greeks defeated the Persians at Mycale and ended the Persian invasion. But where is Plataea? How were the armies organized and equipped? What did the terrain fought over look like? What are the ancient sources for our accounts of the battle?

All these questions are answered in this Osprey number in typical fine Osprey style. The narrative is easy to follow and is well illustrated, depicting terrain, operations, costume, and weapons. It will make a fine companion to readers of the ancients who want more detail or who wish a primer on this battle which is over-shadowed by Salamis or Marathon. The author states, "In the region of two hundred thousand men fought this battle for civilization the same number as at Waterloo and rather more that fought at Gettysburg or were shipped over the Channel on D-Day" (p.37).

The author, a retired Chief Executive Officer at Osprey, studied classics at Clare College, Cambridge, and is the author of *The Persian War* (Cambridge, 1982). The illustrator, Peter Dennis, studied at Liverpool Art College and has contributed to hundreds of books.

Plataea is highly recommended for those interested in ancient history or the wars between the Greeks and the Persians.

James B. Ronan II

Pompey. Nic Fields. Oxford, UK: Osprey, 2012. Softcover; 64 pp., illus., maps, index, biblio., glossary. ISBN: 978-1-84908-572-4.

Long seen as playing second fiddle to Julius Caesar, *Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus*, Pompey the Great (106 B.C.-47 B.C.) , was a leading character in the Late Roman Republic, not only for his military skill but for his political acumen. Deftly handling Roman rivals such as Sulla and Crassus and defeating foreign enemies including pirates, Mithridates and the Sadducees of Judea, Pompey was accorded a triumph at the age of 24 and incorporated the whole east coast of the Mediterranean into the Roman Empire. He was undone by the gradual dissipation of old age, his own opinion of his genius and by Caesar.

Usually satisfying in encapsulating episodes in ancient history this Osprey number is less so. To be sure, it is a biography of Pompey but the maps are tactical maps of particular battles and bear little relation to the strategy discussed in the text. The illustrations that reconstruct ancient historical events are not as evocative as previous Osprey numbers, also. And, why illustrate the battle of Pharsalus, Pompey's down fall, but not show a map of the action? It would seem that because Pompey left no commentaries, his life and exploits must be reconstructed by relying on the writings of other ancients and Pompey suffers in the telling. Oddly there is a list of ancient authors in the books front matter but they are not listed as sources in the bibliography.

Nic Fields is a former Royal Marine who completed a BA and PhD in Ancient History at the University of Newcastle.

This work is useful as a precis of Roman political strife 98 B.C. to 47 B.C.

James B. Ronan II

Prendre la mesure des ombres: archéologie de la chapelle, Ile aux Oies (Québec), by Marcel Moussette, Les Éditions GID, Québec, 2009, 316 pp., 105 illustrations, \$34.95 CAD (plus post and taxes where applicable). French text. Contact: distributionfiligrane@gdweb.com or (418) 877-3666.

Although this excellent report of the ten archaeological campaigns, done under the direction of Dr. Moussette of Laval University between 1987 and 1997, is not strictly military as such, it can be of considerable importance to anyone interpreting or reenacting the days of New France. This is because this site, situated on an isolated island in the St. Lawrence River, was settled in 1645 by French colonists, whose first building was surrounded by a stockade, and was abandoned after a disastrous fire in 1764. Thereafter, there was (and is) little activity and practically no inhabitants on the island and, when archaeologists got to the early French site, it was basically pristine. Evidence was found of early aboriginal occupation from about 1,000 AD, but, as the bulk of this report illustrates, it was an outstanding trove of everyday objects from the French Regime because they were not mixed with other provenances from post-1764 activities.

None of the objects are fit for a king; this was a settlement of fishermen and of farmers. It was a seigneur's concession, first granted to an officer of the Carignan-Salières Regiment in 1668, Pierre Bécard de Granville, who was also its first militia officer, and included a stone manor house as well as a building belonging to the "Hospitalières" Order of nursing nuns. The

artefacts found form remarkable collection of daily life objects. These include gun parts from hunting muskets as well as some metallic items for costume. Of further interest in this report are the illustrations showing the presumed appearance of several buildings. Highly recommended for the material culture of New France.

René Chartrand

Roman Centurions, 753-31 B.C., The Kingdom and the Age of the Consuls. Rafael D'Amato. (Oxford: Osprey, 2011). Softcover; 48 pp., illus., biblio., index. \$17.95.SBN- 978-1-84908-541-0.

Archeology constantly challenges our perceptions whether by new discoveries or new interpretations. This Osprey number presents the history of the dress, arms and duties of those mainstays of Roman military power, the centurions of the legions. Tracing their presence from the earliest history of the city and its Etruscan roots, and tracing the development of these soldiers to the end of the republic we learn how they were arrayed throughout the legions. Varying grades and varying duties are all documented, from the headquarters to the first rank of the deployed legion to detached duty on dangerous missions. The author pays particular attention to ancient texts and monuments and thus we are able to know many centurions by name and service. In fact, Titus Pullo and Lucius Vorenus, two characters in a recent television series are based on real soldiers who were mentioned by Caesar in *De Bello Gallico* (p. 33). In addition to organizational details and daring do, arms, armor, decorations are all covered. The artist, Giuseppe Rava, skillfully brings color to data collected from written records and monuments and shows the centurions in action and performing civic duties. His rendition of a centurion leading the captured King of Numidia in the triumph of Marius (104 B.C.) is very evocative (Plate E).

The author Raffaele D'Amato, has a PhD in Roman Military Archeology and is currently vice-head of the Laboratory of the Danubian Provinces at the University of Ferrara. The artist, Giuseppe Rava, is a self-taught and leading military artist [who also kindly contributed to MUIA – note by editor].

For the general reader or as a reference while reading the classics, *Roman Centurions* is highly recommended. It also gives insights on the development of the corps of officers and noncommissioned officers in modern armies.

James B. Ronan II

Roman Centurions, 31 BC-AD 500, The Classical and Late Empire. Raffaele D'Amato. Osprey, Oxford, UK. 2012. Softcover; 48 pp., illus., index, biblio., glossary. \$17.95. ISBN: 978-1-84908-795-7.

This volume is a follow up to *Roman Centurians, 753-31 BC, The Kingdom and the Age of the Consuls* by the same author. Using ancient records and sources and archeological evidence the author and the illustrator (Company Member Guiseppe Rava) reconstruct the ever changing uniform of the Roman centurion from the Age of Augustus to the extinction of the Western Empire. Nowhere do we meet a drab centurion. Variations in leg armor, and helmet, and armor styles are well depicted and explained. Even the centurion's vine staff (*vitis*) changes and the distinguishing transverse crest appears. We even see a Roman

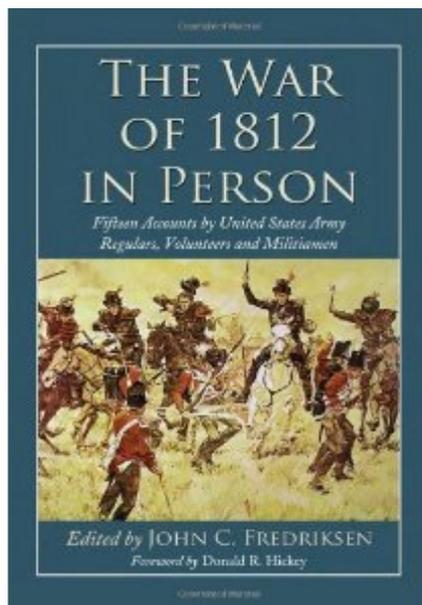
adaptation of Christian symbols on the uniform and a re-created investiture ceremony (Plates H1 and C).

All centurion ranks are classified, their decorations are illustrated and, as in the previous volume, we are acquainted with actual centurions through their grave markers and their personal inscriptions left on various monuments around the empire. Particularly evocative is the inscription (found in modern Bulgaria-ancient Moesia and dated to 184 AD) of Lucius Maximus Gaetulicus, chief centurion of Legion I Italica, who served for 57 years (p.3). The author Raffaele D'Amato, has a Ph.D. in Roman Military Archeology and is currently vice-head of the Laboratory of the Danubian Provinces at the University of Ferrara. The artist, Giuseppe Rava, is a self-taught and leading military artist [who also kindly contributed to MUIA – note by editor].

For the general reader or as a reference while reading the classics, *Roman Centurions* is highly recommended.

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The War of 1812 in Person, Fifteen Accounts by United States Army Regulars, Volunteers and Militiamen. John C. Fredriksen, ed. Foreward by Donald R. Hickey. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010. Softcover; 324 pages. Illus., Maps, Index, Biblio. ISBN: 978-0-7864-4792-3.10



There are things and events that always bring to mind the War of 1812; The USS. *Constitution's* victories at sea, the Battle of New Orleans, and of course, the Star Spangled Banner. However, the war as a historical event is by and large forgotten. Few remember that the land war alone took place in six different theaters and encompassed nearly all of what was then the United States. *The War of 1812 in Person* relates events in one of these theaters of war, northern New York State, as seen by fifteen participants in the war. Eleven U.S. Regulars, ranging in rank from lieutenant to brigadier general and four private soldiers, all militiamen and volunteers, tell of their

experiences in the battles that took place between Niagara Falls and Lake Champlain.

Accounts of American soldiers prior to the Civil War are rare and more so for soldiers of the War of 1812. The constant themes in all these accounts are hardship bought about by the inability of the United States to feed and clothe its soldiers, the frustrations arising from diminished expectation and failed campaigns and withal, the soldiers desire to do their duty and engage and defeat the enemy. Some relate the political divisions that existed during the war, as the soldiers describe smuggling between New York and Canada, and citizen indifference. These soldiers also describe a good deal of marching, shooting, and charging, preceded and followed by long marches or river travel under extraordinarily harsh conditions. It may be a revelation to learn that the United States Army was led, not by professional

soldiers but by citizens, some of whom served in the American Revolution and that the Regular Army was in large part made up of new regiments raised for the war.

Mr. Fredriksen has arranged the book as a series of stand alone installments, each in the words of a participant. Editorial notes precede each installment and explain the general situation and introduce the writer. End notes give references to the people and events described by the writer. Therefore, a reader may digest the book as a whole or refer to a specific soldier's account to amplify other reading. A general history of the war or of the northern frontier war and a map of northern New York are recommended to fully appreciate the soldier narratives.

John C. Fredriksen has written twenty historical works including *The United States Army in the War of 1812* (McFarland, 2009).

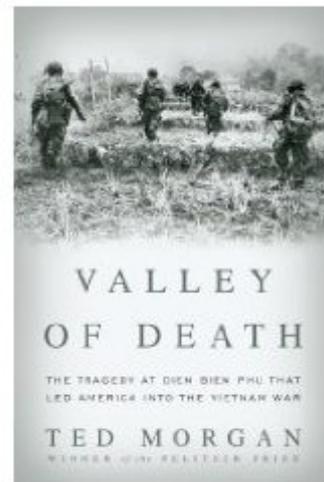
The War of 1812 in Person, Fifteen Accounts by United States Army Regulars, Volunteers and Militiamen is highly recommended for students of the War of 1812 or the United States Army in the nineteenth Century.

James B. Ronan II

Valley of Death: The Tragedy at Dien Bien Phu That Led America into the Vietnam War by Ted Morgan Random House, 1745 Broadway, New York, N.Y., 10019. 2010. Hardback. 722 pp., b & w illus, \$35.00. ISBN 978-1-4000-6664-3.

For several months in the spring of 1954, leaders of much of the so-called western world focused their attention on an isolated outpost in the hills of Indochina where a small detachment of around 15,000 French and allied troops tried to defend themselves against a revolutionary army led by a determined native officer. Gen. Vu Nguyen Giap.

This well-researched book by a former officer of the French Army, but who did not serve in Asia, goes back to the early 1940s to trace the origins of the movement to drive the French out of Indochina. It describes the early movement by Ho Chi Minh to free his country from colonial domination. A movement encouraged by the declaration from the United States that it intended to grant independence to the Philippines. But the focus is on what took place at Dien Bien Phu.



At the outset, most western observers assumed the French would fight off the Asian army. Included in the defending troops were units of the French Foreign Legion, many of the non-French enlisted in its ranks were battle-hardened Germans who had fought against the Soviets in World War II. But, France like many western powers was more concerned about East-West tensions in Europe and had trouble furnishing all the men their generals in Asia requested. As a result, some French Foreign Legion units often were 40 percent Vietnamese. As the battle progressed, it was not unusual to find Vietnamese, Algerian, Thai, and other supposedly "French" troops deserting. It was fairly evident towards the end who was going to win. Some deserters joined the "Rats of Nam Yum," who stayed in

the area, built shanties., and survived by scavenging supplies dropped by parachute and by stealing from battlefield corpses.

The battle took place in two phases. The first period, from 21 November 1953 to 12 March 1954 saw number of skirmishes but less fighting. Then, the attacking Vietnamese fighters encircled Dien Bien Phu and forced the French to reinforce and supply its troops by air, either landing planes or dropping men and supplies by parachute. The second phase began 13 March and lasted until the French surrendered on 7 May 1954. French losses in the first period were 1,037 but zoomed in the second to 7,183 of which 1,605 were unaccounted for, largely deserters.

The attacking Vietnamese forces had many advantages including an overwhelming superiority in manpower. Furthermore as their units suffered casualties, they were withdrawn and replaced with fresh troops. Aided by support from China, they had ample resources such as artillery. Their artillery was hidden in caves to hinder French detection, and only brought out the moment they were fired. In a move to sap the strength of the French garrison, Giap allowed it to retrieve their wounded after key battles. Caring for thousands of wounded meant fewer able-bodied French soldiers were available for military operations.

Giap and his forces nibbled away at the French garrisons, attacking whichever outpost seemed the weakest. As their wounded, dead, and deserters mounted up, there appeared little hope of a French victory. Meanwhile the attacking force was encouraged to demonstrate its military superiority to aid its position in peace talks which were beginning in Geneva. Finally, when a peace agreement was reached, fixing a dividing line of the 17th parallel between North and South Vietnam, some 10,000 battered French Army soldiers surrendered at Dien Bien Phu.

All this time the United States stood by, debating how to help the French without becoming fully involved. It gave the French money, in the millions of dollars, sent an aircraft carrier into the Pacific to discourage more foreign intervention, and provided some cargo planes and pilots, although planes were marked with French insignia. John Foster Dulles, the U.S. Secretary of State believed in the "Domino" theory and did not want to see another country topple into Communist hands. Meanwhile, President Eisenhower was upset that the French did not send its conscripted soldiers to fight in Asia. The U.S. sent its draftees to fight in Korea.

Eisenhower told members of Congress, privately, that he was considering asking Chiang Kai-shek to land some of his troops on the Island of Hainan. He did not follow the advice of his top military adviser, Admiral Radford, who wished to enter some of our armed forces into the fight. But the peace treaty led to a new country, South Vietnam, which we supported, and this led to a far more serious war than the fight over Dien Bien Phu.

This book explains what happened before the United States found itself in a full-scale war in Vietnam. It also helps explain why we lost.

Robert Calvert, Jr.

Victory in Defeat: The Wake Island Defenders in Defeat by Gregory J. W. Urwin. Naval Institute Press, 291 Wood Road, Annapolis, MD 21402. 2010 Hardback. 478 pp. b&w illus. \$ 38.95. ISBN 9-781591-148999.

In the dark days following the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, some of the most critical war news came from a small coral atoll, (three square miles) Wake Island, located in

the Pacific 2,300 miles west of Hawaii. The Japanese attacked this American held island by air on 9 December and two days later by sea. Shocked by the fierce defense from a few hundred Marines, armed civilian construction workers, and some Navy personnel, the Japanese withdrew, regrouped and returned on 23 December with an overwhelming force. After a brief, spirited defense, the naval commander of the island saw his cause was hopeless and surrendered the island. The defense made by the Marines and others to slow down the Japanese advance was made into "Wake Island," a 1942 movie popular in an America searching for some signs of our military prowess.

While the book briefly describes the efforts made by 1,600 Americans to fight off the Japanese, Its main thrust is what happened to them after the surrender. Many had heard how Japanese had treated prisoners in other wars and assumed they would be killed. The initial Japanese moves did little to alter that opinion. The Americans were stripped of their clothes, had their hands tied right up under their necks with sharp wire, and were forced to sit on hard coral for hours under a cold rain. Many were sorry they had ever surrendered.

Then, suddenly, a Japanese interpreter appeared and read a statement to the effect that the Japanese Emperor had decided to spare their lives. The prisoners were treated fairly well in the two weeks that followed, eating food from the huge stockpile on the island.

On 11 January 1942, the names of 1,235 prisoners were called out to be shipped from Wake, almost all US Marines or other military. At the same time, 367 civilian contractors with construction skills were left on the island to help the Japanese finish plans for an airport.

The departing troops were jammed into the hold of the Nitta Mara, a relatively new luxury liner. Their trip, however, was hardly luxurious. For their introduction to the ship, the Americans were forced to run a gauntlet between two rows of Japanese guards who struck at them with clubs and other weapons. They were then forced down into holds so small that there was barely room to turn around. The hatch doors were closed so the air quickly grew foul and men couldn't even tell night from day and guards beat prisoners for even the most minor infractions.

Finally, on 24 January the ship docked in Shanghai and in the cold and wet the men were marched to a desolate camp they called Woosung. Here life had its terrors, its hardships, and its saving graces. Food and clothing were two things generally in short supply. Forced to work on camp projects and on things in the surrounding countryside, the Americans had barely had enough food to keep alive. They were aided to cope with the circumstances by the installation of military discipline led by their officers.

Things began to pick up when the first Red Cross boxes arrived from the US with canned foods, cigarettes, soap, etc. While the Japanese guards took some of the boxes, the prisoners clearly benefited from them. Then an angel appeared in the form of Edouard Egle, a Swiss resident of Shanghai who got himself appointed official Red Cross delegate to the prison. He raised hundreds of pounds of food, clothing, garden tools, and even sporting goods from the expatriate community of the area.

Later the book tells how the prisoners were moved to other camps, split up, joined by other Allied prisoners, etc. Fearing an American attack to retake Wake, in 1943 its Japanese commander ordered the few Americans still left on the island to be killed. For the bulk of the Wake Island prisoners, despite their privations, only 15 percent died in captivity. This is a far lower rate than the 30 percent for all prisoners taken by the Japanese in the war.

Overall, while a niche book, this volume makes for good reading and tells some inspiring stories of men who would not give up even in the face of tremendous adversity.

Robert Calvert, Jr

World War II Behind Closed Doors: Stalin, the Nazis and the West by Laurence Rees. Pantheon Books. 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. 2008 Hardback 442 pp. b&w illus. \$35.00. ISBN 978-0-307-37730-2.

A magnificent book which shows how Stalin and the Russians perceived World War II, how they tried to manipulate, threaten, and fool Churchill and Roosevelt to advance their aims. Written by a British author, much of the material was used in a series he prepared for BBC-TV.

Among the actions explained in the book is why Russia was so ready to sign an alliance with Germany in 1939. In August 1939, the week before Germany invaded Poland to start WWII, German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop flew into Moscow with the startling proposal to offer the Russians a "non-aggression agreement between the two countries which would last for a hundred years." Stalin laughed at the 100 years and suggested 10 would be more appropriate. The Russians did not trust the Germans but had little to lose. Their armies would be stronger later, the chance to seize the eastern part of Poland was enticing and, in the short-run, Germany was better to have as a friend than a foe.

As the Germans successfully drove France out of the war and Britain off the Continent, Stalin was disturbed. He would have preferred to have preferred a long war, exhausting German resources and eliminating any thought of German moves against Russia or any other European power.

Russia used this period to enforce its brand of government on its newly-captured Polish lands. To remove potential trouble-makers, it slaughtered 10,000 or more Polish officers and government leaders in the forest of Katyn.

With the German Attack on Russia in June 1941 and the emergence of Britain and, later the United States as Soviet allies, the war takes an unexpected turn. While pleased to see Germany lose manpower on the Russian steppes, the western nations had more at stake in the German-Russia war. A quick Russian defeat would have freed millions of German soldiers with their next most likely next target: Great Britain.

The goal of the western allies was to keep Russia in the war and to try to mollify Stalin's demands. His main goal was to have Britain and the United States launch an attack on Europe to draw off some of the German divisions facing the Soviets. They kept stalling until June 1944 when, by then, the outcome of the war was in little doubt. Churchill and Roosevelt were afraid that Stalin would accept a German peace offer. This seemed more likely after a famous tank battle at Kursk in 1943 which seemed to break the heart of German aggression. When Stalin talked about post-war boundaries, the western allies were willing to make concessions to atone for their lack of divisions in the war against Germany.

Roosevelt comes out rather badly in this book by a British historian. FDR always felt he could charm anyone and sway them to his position. He tried his charms on Stalin to no avail. He even criticized Churchill to the Russian leader in an ill-fated attempt to curry favor. In no case were Roosevelt and Churchill more deceitful than when dealing with the Katyn massacre. Stalin tried to say this had occurred after Germany invaded Poland in 1941. But, all evidence pointed to 1940, when the Russians'

controlled the area. When George Earle, former governor of Pennsylvania and the President's special emissary to the Balkans, tried to show FDR such evidence as letters from 1940 found on the bodies, Roosevelt refused to listen and, in fact, two days later sent him a letter transferring him immediately to a post in American Samoa.

All in all, a great book about wartime allies whose alliance was about to be shattered by the Cold War.

Robert Calvert, Jr.