

ASPECTS of **HISTORY**

The past isn't dead, it isn't even past

Women in Combat
Tessa Dunlop on the Veterans of the ATS

Margaret MacMillan on War
Five Questions Answered

Brothers in Arms
James Holland on the Sherwood Rangers

The Summer of '62
David Kynaston on the Dawn of the '60s

POWERS

AND

THRONES

RICHARD FOREMAN INTERVIEWS

DAN JONES

ISSUE SEVEN

EDITOR'S NOTE

Thank you for subscribing to Aspects of History. We've managed to make it one year, and we're still here going strong. Having launched last December, to have made that milestone is quite an achievement for a new magazine, and so thank you, readers, we couldn't have done it without you.

Christmas is upon us already, and in our final issue of 2021, we have plenty of articles on recent books that would make marvellous gifts for friends and family. As ever, we have pieces from bestselling and acclaimed historians and authors, not least including one with contributions from veterans of the Second World War.

Watch out for the Aspects of History Winter Festival on our YouTube channel, when we'll be interviewing four historians across successive nights in the week before Christmas.

We have continued the Aspects of History Book Club, featuring Adam Zamoyksi's hugely successful 1812: Napoleon's Fatal March on Moscow. Published in 2004, it was remarkable in that Adam was able to use sources from Russian, Polish, German and French archives to give the reader the feeling of joining Bonaparte in his disastrous invasion. He vividly described the heat of the summer advance, the suffering of both armies, and the terrible cold of a Russian winter.

The new Aspects of History podcast series continues. Andrew Roberts chatted with me about the subject of his new book, George III. Norman Davies revealed, when discussing George's grandfather, George II, the dysfunction of the Hanoverians. More recently we've discussed the female veterans of the Second World War with Tessa Dunlop, the war in the Far East with Robert Lyman, and the Wars of the Roses with Anne O'Brien.

Aspects of History has continued to publish content from authors as they contact us, not only in the magazine, but also on our website. The site now contains more than 300 features, free to access, and so I encourage you all to visit. You will find articles, short stories, book reviews and interviews from a host of bestsellers and new writers of both history and historical fiction. We continue to strive in our goal for Aspects of History to be a hub to connect both readers and writers to the past, and each other. The subject has the ability to educate and entertain, inform, and inspire.

Aspects of History is more than just a magazine and website, however. We continue to offer Author Platforms on our website for historians, historical novelists, academics, and students to write about their books and history in an ongoing way. In addition, we can provide publishing and promotional services to assist authors and would-be authors – from pitch to publication and beyond. If you are a member of an historical society or creative writing group, then do get in touch.

If you are interested in finding out more, please visit our website at aspectsofhistory.com, follow us on Twitter @aspectshistory, or email me at editor@aspectsofhistory.com. I am always happy to hear from readers and writers alike. This continues to be as much your magazine as ours.

OLIVER WEBB-CARTER
Editor, & Co-Founder, Aspects of History

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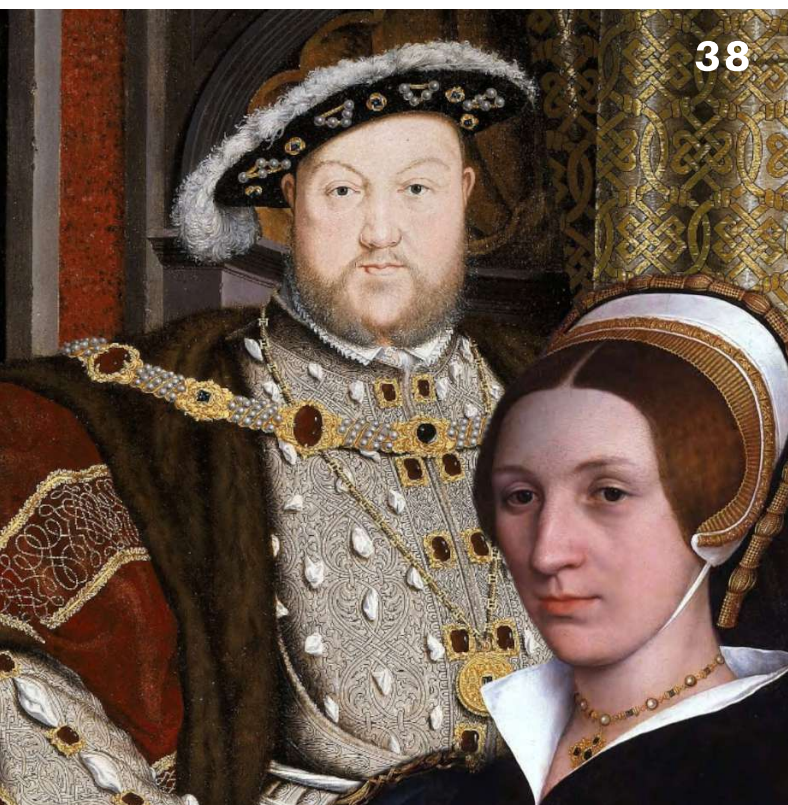
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Q POWERS & THRONES

A & DAN JONES

Interviewed by Richard Foreman

The Middle Ages stretches a thousand years from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Reformation, and during this era the foundations for what is now the West were made. In an epic new account of the period, the acclaimed historian Dan Jones has sought answers to questions that remain relevant today. He sat down with medieval novelist, Richard Foreman, to discuss the hugely influential age.

There is the argument that, as well as being concerned with powers and thrones, the Middle Ages sought to recreate the Roman Empire - which, rightly or wrongly, was deemed a golden era. How much would you subscribe to that viewpoint?

Well, I think as historians, certainly, our framing of the Middle Ages is inevitably concerned with Rome. We usually think of the medieval millennium as beginning with the collapse of the western Roman Empire in the 5th century AD. And the end of the era falls in the 15th or 16th centuries, when Renaissance artists and writers were deliberately trying to revive the spirit and laud the achievements of the ancients, and when the power of the Roman Church was rocked by religious reformers like Martin Luther. So given those two bookends, it is in a sense only natural that medieval historians have traditionally felt drawn to tracing the imprint of Rome.

Now, there is some merit in approaching the Middle Ages with the question of what one brilliant modern scholar has called the 'inheritance of Rome' in our minds. Certainly, if we take the earliest medieval centuries, rulers and politicians of many generations found themselves dealing with the consequences of the western Roman collapse. Think of the

so-called barbarians, carving kingdoms out of what had been the western Roman provinces and Italy itself. Or Eastern emperors like Justinian, redefining the Roman Empire around Nova Roma - Byzantium or Constantinople. And then the first Islamic caliphs, putting together an Empire bonded by faith, language and a common political-cultural outlook across a territory almost as vast as that which had once been ruled by Roman emperors. I'm not saying that every barbarian king or Byzantine emperor or Umayyad caliph got up in the morning and, after eating his Coco Pops wondered to himself 'how am I to recreate the empire of Augustus and Trajan'. But this was what informed the biggest questions of their age.

Later in the Middle Ages, however, I think these questions became less important. It was accepted until the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 that there was a 'Roman' emperor in the east; there was one in the west from the time of Charlemagne onwards. Certain aspects of Romanness endured or were revived - Latin, Christianity, some aspects of law. But I don't think anyone was especially moved by the notion of genuinely re-creating a polity that was, by the later Middle Ages, a thousand years distant.

DAN JONES



Power increasingly shifted eastwards after the fall of Rome. The rise of Islam and the Mongol Empire was rapid. These societies did not just rule by the sword, however. There were periods of peace and prosperity. Culture, trade and science often flourished under their dominion. Can you tell us a little, for instance, about the success of Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire?

I think if we look at all the notable empire-builders of the Middle Ages – not just Genghis Khan and the early Islamic caliphs, but Charlemagne and the Carolingians, the Ayyubid sultans of the crusading era, and so on – we're always looking at rulers or ruling groups who understood that power is about far more than simple military dominion. The implicit offer a great power makes to a conquered people cannot simply be 'obey or die'. There must be the promise of security and prosperity for the submissive, along with the threat of dire consequences for the rebellious.

In the case of the Mongols – Genghis Khan and his sons and descendants who put together a global superpower in the 12th and 13th centuries – both the stick and the carrot were outlandishly large. To resist the Mongols meant to court instant death, the annihilation of your city, the capture and enslavement of your women and children. However, if you submitted to the Mongols, you and your people could generally expect to be ruled by an imperial power that offered religious tolerance, military protection and access to the biggest trading zone in the world, which stretched from Korea to the borders of Poland and Hungary. It was famously said that at the height of Mongol power, the strict enforcement of a *pax mongolica* meant that a virgin could walk from one end of the empire to the other with a crock of gold on her head, and never be harmed. The image of a world in which the roads teemed with safe, happy, gold-bearing maidens is one that is rather attractive. But of course, it was enforced by terrible brutality. That's empire for you.

East meets West in the form in the First Crusade in the 11th century. It was a clash of civilisations and arms. The dramatic story of the re-capturing of Jerusalem is a bloody affair, one which still resonates and grips today. The church let slip the dogs of war. How significant was the First Crusade, both in relation to its short-term and long-term legacy?

Well, I was talking about this the other day to the great Crusades scholar Professor Jonathan Phillips. We were thinking about truly 'world-shifting' moments during the Middle Ages, and Jonathan put the case very convincingly that the fall of Jerusalem to the First Crusaders in 1099 was a leading candidate. In the first place, it made the news everywhere, in a way that, let's say, the conquest of England by William of Normandy in 1066 simply didn't. In terms of the momentary power dynamics of the eastern Mediterranean, the First Crusade took a good deal of regional pressure away from the Byzantine emperors in Constantinople. It served as a wake-up call to the fractured Islamic powers of the region, the Seljuks and the Fatimids. And it created a clutch of small and tenuously held, but important and relatively long-lasting political entities in Palestine and Syria, in the form of the Latin crusader states.

“ The image of a world in which the roads teemed with safe, happy, gold-bearing maidens is one that is rather attractive. But of course, it was enforced by terrible brutality. That's empire for you. ”

Long-term, its legacy was problematic. In practical terms it laid an expensive obligation on the Christian realms of the west to prop up the crusader states and launch massive military interventions when those states were under threat. It also justified within the Latin Church the absurd notion of violence-as-penance, and made crusading a papal weapon that was, by the 13th century, being aimed all over the shop: not just at the near east, but at pagans in the Baltic, Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula, Cathars in southern France, Mongols in eastern Europe and then, eventually, people like the Hohenstaufen Holy Roman Emperors. Today we still feel the legacy of the crusades in the notion – badly bastardised as it is – of a 'civilizational' duel between Christianity and Islam. This was not baked into the original crusading vision, but there's no telling anyone that any more. The crusades are catnip to 21st century Islamist fundamentalists and alt-right wackjobs alike. So, almost a thousand years on, we're still living with what Pope Urban II set going in the 1090s. Thanks for that, Urban.

Many people decided that they had God on their side during the Middle Ages. Sin, hell and heresy existed. Religion permeated society in a way that is scarcely imaginable nowadays. Is there a danger that, due to an increasing secular sensibility, the people of the Middle Ages may appear too remote or alien to us? Yet, arguably, is there not more that unites than divides us because of our shared Christian heritage?

Well, I've always been attracted to the Middle Ages because it seems to me an age where the familiarity and strangeness bump into one another at every turn. Yes, I think in the (largely) secular 21st century West it takes quite a leap of imagination to transport ourselves back to a world where religion was so deeply entrenched in the daily rhythm and cultural fabric of life. Then again, it's not wholly unimaginable. There's a reason people reach for the term 'medieval' when they talk about Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, beyond a lazy reference to the Taliban's patriarchal tendencies and ready resort to violence.

And as you rightly say, there is much that connects us to the Middle Ages – or at least, much in what we consider as the traditional pillars of Western society that has its roots in the Middle Ages. Part of that is Christianity and the omnipresence of the Church – even if that is now an architectural fact rather than a cultural one. But we might also think of institutions like parliaments, universities and inns of court. Monumental

buildings like stone castles and Gothic cathedrals. European languages, national myths and legendary characters like King Arthur or El Cid. I'm just pulling these off the top of my head. There are plenty more.

As well as covering the tectonic shifts in ideas and empires throughout the Middle Ages, one of the book's great attractions is its cast list of individuals - great figures who represented or reformed the times they lived in. The cast list includes Justinian, Muhammad, William Marshal, Leonardo de Vinci, Saladin, Petrarch, Dick Whittington, Martin Luther, and van Eyck, to name but a few. If you were to pick just three figures to have dinner with from the book, who would they be and why?

Oh, I'd have the girls around. Empress Theodora, Eleanor of Aquitaine and Joan of Arc. We'd have a load of white wine and a laugh. And there'd be marginally less chance of a punch-up.

Powers & Thrones prompts us to consider that the Middle Ages has much to teach us. And, whether we like it or not, we are still related to our medieval antecedents in some ways. When you were writing the book, was there any lesson or argument that particularly resonated for you in relation to the past not being such a foreign country after all? For instance, was it strange writing about the Black Death during the pandemic?

One of my aims with Powers & Thrones was to gently invite readers to reflect that even as we sit here in the 21st century, supremely assured of our evolved technological and moral condition, there is as much joining us to the Middle Ages as there is separating us. So as I wrote the book, I tried to lean into themes such as climate change, mass migration and pandemic disease, which I thought might help to make that point. This was an approach I had decided to adopt even before the Covid-19 pandemic began.

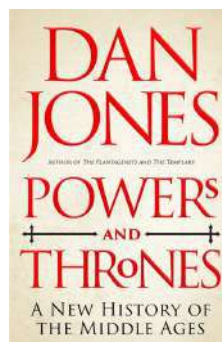
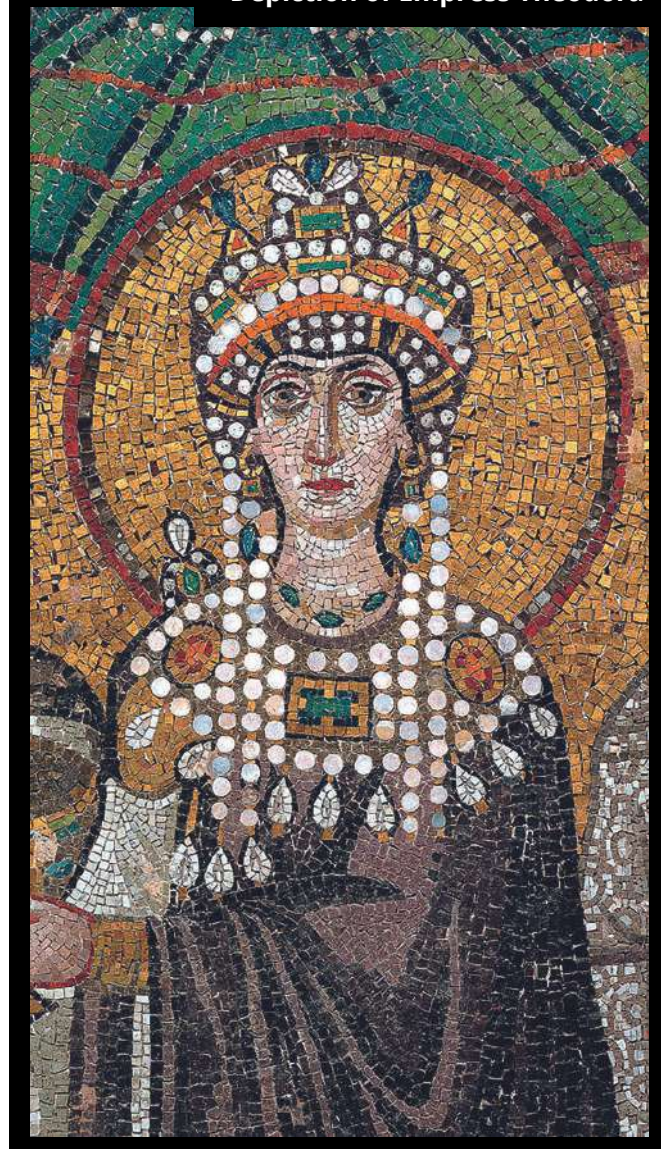
And yes, it was interesting to be writing about the Black Death (which I had done once or twice before in other books) from the vantage-point of another pandemic, albeit one that was mercifully much less lethal. I found I came to believe, or at least to sympathise with, the hysterical accounts of people who really believed that this disease - the Black Death - was bringing about the end of the world. Either the end of the world - full stop - or the end of the world as they knew it. That suddenly felt rather more relatable.

Finally, can you tell us a little about your next project?

Happily. Having written ten non-fiction books, I am taking a brief holiday to work on a trilogy of novels set in the Hundred Years War. The first is called Essex Dogs, and it tracks the progress of Edward III's Crecy campaign through Normandy from the perspective of the 'ordinary grunts' rather than the heroic-chivalric knights lauded by chroniclers like Froissart. It aims to send a rocket up the backside of the myth of knightly combat as glamorous and chivalry as a civilising or restraining factor on the conduct of war. I'm billing it as Medieval Apocalypse Now. It is deeply bound in to real history, but it is

the antithesis of the 'hey nonny no, my liege' school of romantic medieval fiction. I read a lot of hard-bitten and hard-boiled American fiction, and it owes something to that. It could be a Second World War novel, or a Vietnam novel. It just happens to be set in 1346. I'm excited about it. It comes out in October 2022.

Depiction of Empress Theodora



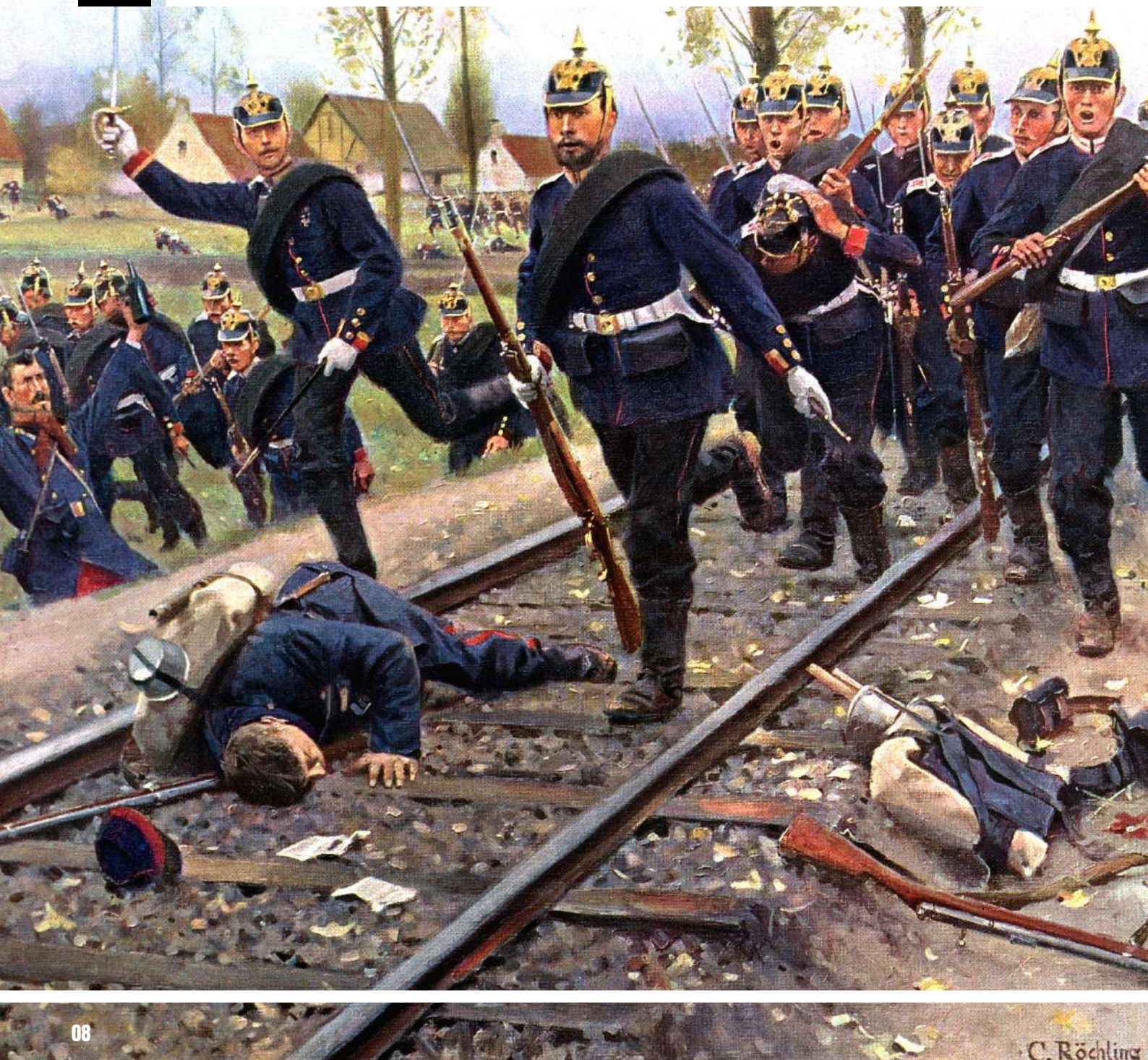
Dan Jones is the author of a number of acclaimed and bestselling books of the medieval period, including *Plantagenets: The Kings Who Made England*, *The Templars: The Rise and Fall of God's Holy Warriors* and most recently *Powers & Thrones: A New History of the Middle Ages*.



Richard Foreman is a writer and publisher and author of *Turpin's Assassin*.

FIVE QUESTIONS ON WAR

Is war the natural state for humanity? Since our early ancestors resolved disputes violently, conflict has been a frequent occurrence, but why, and what of the future? The 2018 BBC Reith Lecturer and author of *War: How Conflict Shaped Us* addresses five questions she is frequently asked.





Mongol troops besiege Baghdad in 1258

Does our biology explain why we have war? I say No: war is not engrained in us (but feel free to disagree with me and lots will). Biology might explain why we sometimes lash out violently when we are angry or afraid, but not why we have wars. War is not a fist fight between individuals, or a brawl outside a bar. It is organised violence by an organised group, call it clan, tribe, horde, or nation. And that organised group has a purpose in mind. War uses violence but it does so in a purposive and directed way. A gang that rushes helter-skelter at the enemy without ensuring it has the necessary weapons and the experience and knowledge of how to fight is not going to last very long against a more organised force.

Evolution has left us, in any case, with contradictory impulses. Yes, as individuals we can be violent but we also have a strong instinct of self-preservation. One of the reasons the military take training so seriously is that they know that it is not natural to risk one's life or to remain disciplined under great pressure. And we ought to take into account culture as well as biology. Some cultures inculcate habits and qualities—physical courage, a willingness obey orders or to sacrifice oneself— that fit the military well. Such societies, ancient Sparta or Rome, the Aztec, the Mongol or more recently Prussia, valued and admired war and were good at it, often better than their neighbours. We should also remember, however, that the values change over time. Sweden and Switzerland, whose fighters were the terror of Europe in early modern history, are now peaceable and contribute much to the humanitarian causes including the attempts to limit and outlaw war.

Have human beings always made war? Another tricky one which has given rise to much debate. Some of us, influenced perhaps by the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, like to think of a world in the far distant past where groups foraged and hunted for their sustenance, where war was not necessary because nature provided enough for everyone. Before our ancestors settled down and became

agriculturalists there was no way to accumulate wealth and no class divisions where the powerful lived off the labour of the poor. The serpent that ended this early Edenic human history, so the story goes, was agriculture and permanent settlements. People had more to defend and could no longer pick up and leave and so we had war. As societies became more organised, they got better at making war. Is that picture right? We may never know or at best make educated guesses because the further back we go the less evidence we have. Early agricultural settlements around the world often had walls which suggest enemies. And archaeologists have found mass graves where the skeletons bear the marks of trauma which suggest conflict. Some of the earliest cave paintings appear to show warriors. Once we get to written records and sculpture, we can find plenty of evidence that wars happened among organised societies around the globe.

So does that mean the more organised the society the more it is likely to fight a war? Not necessarily. Organised societies are better at fighting wars because they can mobilise their resources, from the people to fight to the materials and technology to produce weapons. Fighting wars can in turn drive even more organisation such as bigger and more efficient bureaucracies and stronger central governments. As the sociologist Charles Tilly put it 'War made the state and the state made war'. Yet states may not choose to go to war. Some societies are lucky enough not to have threats to their existence or others may not value war as a tool of state or a good in itself. Again, culture matters. Think of Germany and Japan. Before the Second World War both were highly militarised societies led by elites who were prepared to wage aggressive wars of conquest. It is unthinkable that either country would start a war today for they are so different from the past. We know too what happens when governments try to fight wars that their peoples don't support. A key factor in forcing both France and the United States to end their wars in Indochina was growing domestic opposition.

If women ran the world would it be more peaceful?

Aristophanes wrote a play about what might happen if women took the initiative: his heroine Lysistrata succeeds in ending Peloponnesian war between Athens and Sparta by persuading the women on both sides to withhold sex from their men until the latter make peace. That was a pleasant fantasy but history has many examples of women who have taken a leading role in peace movements or in attempts to outlaw certain kinds of weapons or even war itself. On the other hand, there are plenty of women leaders who took their countries to war - think of Elizabeth I, Maria Theresa, Golda Meir, or Margaret Thatcher. Or women have shamed men into fighting such as those who handed out white feathers during the First World War to men of military age who were not in uniform.

When it comes to women as warriors we get back to the debate over biology versus culture. While women in the vast majority of societies around the world have not traditionally been expected to fight, is that because they are not good at it or because those societies have been patriarchal and expected only men to fight? The evidence suggests the latter. There are enough examples of women who disguised themselves to fight in wars of the past. Recent archaeological evidence indicates that the Amazons were not just a myth but based on reality and that there really were Viking warrior women. In the Second World War Soviet women fought as bravely as men as bomber pilots, snipers or gunners and today a number of armed forces have women in combat roles.

Maria Theresa of Austria





Soviet Sniper Roza Shanina

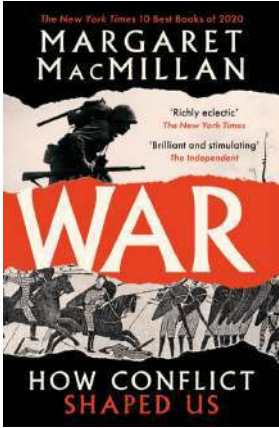
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**HISTORY CANNOT
PREDICT THE FUTURE
BUT IT CAN GIVE US
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Can we look forward to a world without war?

We can always hope, can't we? More, we ought to hope because if we assume war will always be with us, we may not do enough to try and prevent it. The First and Second World Wars were so encompassing and devastating to the world and the societies that fought them that a new term - total war - had to be found for them. They taught the world some salutary lessons. We learned that wars can rapidly run out of the control of those who started them and we found out how difficult they can be to stop. After both world wars leaders and their publics tried to find ways to build international institutions, norms and practices. The League of Nations after 1918 and the United Nations after 1945 were meant to prevent war and, to encourage disarmament and to build a fairer and more just world so that some of the causes of war could be removed. As time has passed and the generations succeed each other we have lost that sense of urgency and become complacent. We assume major war cannot happen to our world. That is what so many thought in Europe in 1914. History cannot predict the future but it can give us much needed warnings.



Margaret MacMillan is professor of History at the University of Toronto and emeritus professor of International History at the University of Oxford. She is the author of *Paris 1919: Six Months that Change the World* and *The War that Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War*. *War: How Conflict Shaped Us* is her latest book.



WOMEN IN COMBAT

During the Second World War, the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) at its peak consisted of nearly 300,000 women, the majority of whom were conscripted. The author of a bestselling new book of oral history spent lockdown talking to seventeen veterans about their experience. Although restricted from front-line duty, more than 700 women were killed during the war, and here she talks to two, Daphne and Grace, as they describe life at Anti-Aircraft batteries.



Daphne is 98 years old; the war was a long time ago but there are some things you never forget. 'My mother didn't want me to go into the ATS, and nor did Reg. He worked with service girls, he said he knew what they were like.' Reg was Daphne's boyfriend and the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) provided female uniformed support for the British army during World War II. By 1941 it had been rebranded the Auxiliary Tarts Service in popular discourse and was stymied with the worst reputation of the three military services for women. Daphne shakes her head, 'it was most unfair, we all worked very hard.' She is fiercely protective of the service she credits with changing her life but retrospectively has some sympathy for Reg's concern and concedes that 'perhaps he felt I might meet somebody if I signed up, that he wouldn't have me to himself anymore. I would no longer be in Feltwell waiting for him.' From her armchair, Daphne neatly articulates the conundrum that bedevilled military thinking in the first half of the war: what were men fighting for if girls were forced to serve alongside them? The sanctity of home and its fecund promise of plenty and peace was a tantalising prospect for thousands of men living off thin rations in mean barracks. Labour MP Agnes Hardie argued that 'war is not a woman's job... women share the bearing and rearing of children and should be exempt from war.

But by 1941 the bald realities of conflict on a giant scale called for a giant rethink. Additional girl power was desperately needed to plug the gaps in Britain's overstretched war machine: defeated in Greece, occupied in Crete, pushed back in North Africa, haemorrhaging at sea, blitzed at home and desperately short of supplies. In the face of this grim reality the British Government made an unprecedented decision. Just days before America entered the war, Winston Churchill told the House of Commons on 2nd December 1941 compulsion was needed to draw more girls into the military. It was a significant U-turn from a Prime

Minister who had long doubted the wisdom of forcing women to serve, having previously argued that 'vociferous opposition of men in the Forces' to the idea of female conscription would cause unrest.

Indicative of the fraught implications of his volte face, Churchill reassured MPs: 'We do not propose at the present time to extend compulsion to join the Services to any married woman, not even childless married women.' Initially the National Service (No.2) Act, (the word 'conscription' was studiously avoided) was confined to the call up of single women, aged between twenty and thirty. Daphne, emboldened by the new legislation, dumped dear Reg and pushed back against her cautious mother. 'I was keen to volunteer early to make sure I got the job I wanted.'

It was in Anti-Aircraft Command where the need for ATS girls was most acute. On 25 April 1941, eight months before female conscription was introduced, regulations had been passed permitting the employment of women on operational gun-sites. General Sir Frederick Timothy Pile, the far-seeing head of AA Command, had finally managed to convince a reluctant War Office that employing women on Britain's vast network of gun-sites was the only way to solve the 'manpower' shortage in the country's first line of defence against the Luftwaffe.

Girls had crossed a military Rubicon and Pile had skilfully negotiated a potential minefield with semantics. Crucially women were not allowed to fire the anti-aircraft guns, a ruling that allowed the War Office to pretend that no real gender threshold had been breached. The general observed 'there was a good deal of muddled thinking which was prepared to allow women to do anything to kill the enemy except actually pull the trigger.' But protest there was none. Just like their male counterparts, serving ATS girls were the



bedrock of a deeply traditional society; the gentle sex knew their place. Former gun-site radar operator Martha, who is now 99 years old, explains 'the guns were ridiculously big, and the shells were very heavy. You wouldn't want to take over that role. There was no need for it.' Sitting in her armchair one-time Lance Corporal Vera hits a similar note: 'I think the guns were a manly thing to do, I can't see a woman going behind big guns like them.' Like Martha, it did not occur to her to challenge the status quo. 'It was just a job. I didn't question it.'

Grace, a private with a Mixed Heavy Anti-Aircraft battery from 1941, sighs. Aged 97 she's been asked this before.

"Look, we never thought about it. I was on the height finder and later in the plotting room underground, with earphones and a mouth piece and we tracked the plane as it moved. We knew we were necessary and that the boys needed us. The girls could not have lifted the shells, we couldn't have run around with them. The girls wouldn't have done that."

Granted it may have required two girls to lift a shell, but elsewhere higher female replacement ratios had been promoted as reassuring proof that women were less physically able than men (at the end of 1941 AA Command expected to see the jobs of 15,000 men taken by 18,500 women and acknowledged that 'in heavier types of work a ratio of even 3:2 was found necessary'). It wasn't the weight of the shells, but rather the preservation of British girls' femininity, (and men's masculinity) that was at the heart of the non-combat rule. Vera is right; as long as women weren't involved, guns were 'the manly thing to do'.

The caveat that saw women retain their non-combat status gave Britain's verbally dexterous Prime Minister's room for manoeuvre when he pushed for female conscription in December 1941. Addressing Parliament Churchill framed women's new role on gun-sites in the context of 'great quantities of anti-aircraft equipment coming out of the factories.' He argued that height finders, predictors and 'a host of elaborate appliances of a highly delicate and highly secret character' would do the fighting, not the girls. The press marvelled that 'modern warfare has not only created a new specialised job for the man behind the gun but has brought the girl behind the gunner', a 'mixed regiment being a unit consisting of both sexes.' Britain recruited girls into anti-aircraft defence two years before Germany, aided and abetted by a Prime Minister who nipped and tucked the realities of operational service. After the 1940-1941 Blitz, gun-sites were less dangerous than they had been, but they weren't risk free.

Daphne leans in. 'We were desk mates, good friends.' She's talking about her school friend Dorothy Lemmon. 'I was very



Grace Taylor (née Clarke)

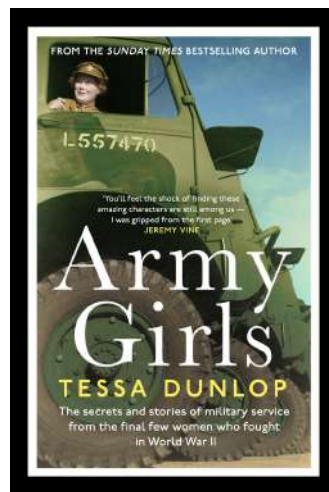


impressed that she managed to persuade her parents to let her go into the ATS as quickly as she did. She was only 17 and a half.' Frederick and Annie Lemmon's oldest daughter Dorothy was an athletic child, a runner, a jumper, an all-round achiever, perfect material for Britain's new-look female army. She badgered and bothered until her parents relented and three days after Christmas in 1941 Dorothy started her new military life training at Talavera camp, on the race course at Northampton, to hone her skills as a 'gunner girl.'

Daphne was awestruck. 'It wasn't just that Dorothy got her way with her parents, but also she wanted to work on a gun-site and that is exactly what happened.' She breezed through Pile's aptitude tests and was moved onto Anglesey where the great guns roared out to sea and Dorothy simulated action on a height finder with her newly formed unit: 511 MHAA Battery. Soon Private Dorothy was in action defending the underbelly of Manchester against enemy fire and then on to Preston just south of Hull, to shore up the city's docks against air attack.

'It was a terrible shock, terrible.' Daphne stops and puts down her cup and saucer. Dorothy is dead. She died 79 years ago. It was a beautiful summer day when a telegram delivered its fatal blow back in Norfolk. 'We regret to inform you that your daughter, W/109181 Pte Dorothy Lemmon was killed in action in the early hours of this morning.' Decades later her younger sister Verna would underscore what that action meant. 'When the air raid warning went, the girls alongside the men had to be on duty and were exposed to exactly the same dangers as the men, their only protection a few sandbags and a tin hat.' Dorothy was caught by falling shrapnel and died instantly. Only just 18, in 1942 she wasn't old enough to vote, but she was old enough to take a hit for King and Country.

Daphne fingers a photograph of her gravestone. 'She's been made quite a lot of and her name is the last name to be read out on the Roll of Honour in our local village, Feltwell. She was a girl you see, and it was different for girls.' Daphne's right, it was different for girls, as a non-combatant Dorothy couldn't be awarded a combat medal. But school friend Daphne was undeterred. 'Oh no, her death didn't put me off serving. I became a tele-plotter for a searchlight company so I was inside on the switchboard.'



Dr. Tessa Dunlop is the author of the bestselling *Bletchley Girls* and *Century Girls*. Her new book is *Army Girls: The secrets and stories of military service from the final few women who fought in World War II*.

Q BROTHERS IN ARMS

& JAMES A HOLLAND

Interviewed by Rupert Hague-Holmes

James Holland has written a bestselling and acclaimed account of the Sherwood Rangers, the British tank regiment awarded more honours than any other during the Second World War. Following the unit from the Normandy landings to the invasion of Germany, Holland has brought their accounts to life in the pages of *Brothers in Arms*, and we chatted with him about history, the Sherwoods, tank warfare and those who served.

Why did you decide originally to research and write about Second World War History? What is it about that period of history that interests you so much?

I always loved history as a boy and read it at university, but although I'd be very into war films, Commando comics and so on when I was young, I never studied the Second World War at all at either school or university. Then one day I was playing cricket and an amazing machine started pirouetting about the sky with the most incredible sound somewhere far behind midwicket. I turned to the umpire and said, 'What's that?' And he turned back and said, 'A Spitfire.' It was a Damascene moment and the following weekend I took myself off to see Flying Legends at Duxford and that was it.

I think what really sucked me in was not the machines but the human experience of war. The human drama. It's still so relatively recent and yet it seems so impossible to imagine too – that ordinary people would have been expected to abandon their normal lives and go off and fight. I always wonder how I would have coped, what service I'd have joined and how I would have confronted those experiences. And, of course, whether I would have survived. The more one gets immersed in the subject the more the whys and wherefores

become increasingly interesting, but at its heart it's still the immense human drama of the conflict that continues to keep me endlessly fascinating.

Why the Sherwood Rangers, rather than say a regiment in the Guards Armoured Division for example? What attracted you in particular to their NW Europe campaign story?

I've had a long association with the Sherwood Rangers that dates back to 2004 and my first trip to Normandy. A friend of mine organised for a group of us to go and one amongst the party was David Christopherson. We hit it off immediately and he also told me his father had served with the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry and had landed on Gold Beach in a tank. Then he revealed that his father, Stanley, had kept a diary and journal throughout the war. He was saying things, 'Dad told me he came ashore here and remembered a gun in this bunker being particularly problematic.' This was the anti-tank gun at WN 37, Le Hamel. We were staying at Audrieu and David his father's 1:250,000 map of Normandy with pencil markings on and so on. We realised we were less than a mile from Point 103, which was on the map and written about repeatedly in Stanley's journals so I suggested to David that

JAMES HOLLAND



James Holland Credit: Wily Wilkison

we head up there. We found the track and it was just as his father had written. It was very easy to half close the eyes and imagine Sherman tanks lined up along it and trucks and half-tracks behind. Anyway, at that moment I was hooked. Damascene moment Number 2!

At the time I was writing about the North Africa campaign and David kindly allowed me to use his father's diaries for that and for me to write about him in the book. Some years later, I then edited Stanley's diaries and we had them published and for part of the contextual writing I added, David and I went around the country interviewing former Sherwood Rangers veterans, including David Render, John Semken and others. So, I knew a lot about them and had testimonies from others. Also, on the back of the diaries, family members of SRY veterans sent me stuff – people like Michael Wharton, who sent me transcripts of his father, Bill's, wartime letters. Bill Wharton then became one of the main characters in the book. When Covid hit and I couldn't gad around the world visiting archives, I realised I probably had enough to write a Band of Brothers style narrative – and fortunately the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry Association allowed me to visit and plunder their archives too. Last October, David Christopherson and I then did a road trip following the Sherwood Rangers' route through Germany and that really was the icing on the cake. An unforgettable trip.

Were the Sherwood Rangers a typical tank unit, or were there some unique features about it?

They were and they weren't. They were a yeomanry regiment – so, pre-war part timers. The yeomanry regiments were the only part of the British Army not mechanised and they were sent overseas in January 1940 to Palestine with their horses. These were taken from them in July that year and they became artillery, seeing action on Crete and in the Siege of Tobruk.

In the autumn of 1941, they became mechanised and first went into action in tanks at the Battle of Alam Halfa at the very end of August 1942, and thereafter did increasingly well, which was why they, and their parent 8th Armoured Brigade, were chosen to lead the spearhead of the invasion on D-Day. But armoured units were either part of an armoured division or an 'independent armoured brigade'. The former was designed to exploit breakthroughs, whereas the latter were specifically to support infantry in the grinding and attritional battle that was to achieve the breakthrough. It was tough role. The Sherwood Rangers ended the war as the single British Army unit with the most battle honours – and that was because they were fire-fighting the whole time.

Which character in the book resonated with you as a personality?

So many. I'm in awe of men like Stanley Christopherson, who managed to hold the regiment together so brilliantly, and who never stopped smiling and laughing or his innate humanity. Padre Leslie Skinner's dedication was outstanding, while I simply don't know how John Semken managed to be such an awe-inspiring squadron commander at just 23. I really warmed to Bill Wharton – his letters to his wife are full

of yearning, wistfulness and anxiety, while his observations of his fellows are wonderfully good humoured and perceptive. I felt I really got to know his 31-year-old self and it was a privilege to put flesh back on his bones, so to speak. I was also hugely enjoyed meeting and getting to know Stan Perry, who at the time was the last surviving Sherwood Rangers officer. He became a good friend, but sadly passed away on 6 October. Another link gone.

Why were tank units like the Sherwood Rangers not trained on how to fight in the Normandy terrain?

They did train of course, but not with infantry and artillery and not in the kind of landscape they would find in Normandy. One has to remember that the UK is a pretty small place and in 1943-44 was absolutely pullulating with millions of troops and vast depots or ordnance and materiel. Britain's transportation system was stretched to the full and there was simply no means of carrying out large-scale all-arms training exercises. The last such was in the spring of 1943 – Operation SPARTAN – but couldn't be repeated in 1944. So, the Sherwood Rangers – and the infantry they were supporting – had no choice but to use past experience and adapt on the hoof, and in quick order.

The Sherwood Rangers used different tank models in the war, but which was the best, and which the worst?

They used Crusaders, which were quickly outmoded, then Grants and then Shermans, with 17-pounder Shermans – Fireflies – as well. I think the Sherman was the best all-round tank of the war: reliable, easy to maintain, highly manoeuvrable, quick-firing, with a gun stabilising gyro and commander turret over-ride. The Firefly was a bit more cumbersome but the 17-pounder was awesome with a greater velocity than the dreaded 88mm.

Being a member of a tank crew was a particularly dangerous existence – can you describe what happened when a tank was struck by an enemy shell?

It all depends on where the shell hits and with what power. If a charge penetrates it's not just the shell that causes damage but also spawling – bits of molten steel from the inside of the tank's armour plate that showers around the belly of the tank. If it's early in the day and there is a lot of ammunition in the tank and one of those penetrates the case and ignites the propellant or explosive, then it's game over for the crew. Having said that, very often a tank would be damaged without crew injuries – or with only light injuries – and the crew would bail out only to be hit subsequently by mortars, machine-guns and so on. Some 75% of all casualties were outside, rather than inside, the tank.

How were the Sherwood Rangers viewed by senior divisional and corps commanders, and even army commanders such as Montgomery?

Very highly. General Horrocks, commander of XXX Corps from August 1944, reckoned they were the tops. The number of battle honours speaks for itself.

What was the Sherwood Rangers' greatest success during its NW Europe campaign? And it's most tragic experience?

I suppose 26 June 1944 has to rate quite highly – when A Squadron knocked out 13 enemy tanks for no loss of their own. Gheel on 10/11 September must be one of the worst – 46 casualties, half fatal and 11 tanks knocked out. B and C Squadron were really hard hit. But Geilenkirchen in November was pretty grim too and they continued losing men right to the end.

How would you describe the relationship between units like the Sherwood Rangers, and the various infantry units it fought with across NW Europe?

The biggest problem with armour and infantry operating together was the lack of communication and this was exacerbated when operating with infantry for the first time – trust and personal relationships had not had a chance to be formed. Nearly all the Sherwood Rangers' darkest moments were when operating with infantry who were new to them: crossing the Noireau, Gheel, Geilenkirchen all spring to mind. Whenever a relationship was forged, everything tended to go a bit more smoothly.

The personalities in the book are eclectic in background. Do you think that was the strength of the unit, given the cramped claustrophobic fighting conditions experienced in Sherman tanks?

Definitely. Almost none of them would have worn uniform had it not been firstly for the approach of war and then the war itself. They were a blend of wily countrymen, worldly types and eccentrics and the mix was a potent and very effective one. Collectively, they brought a great deal to their combined effort.

Major Cotterell, the war correspondent attached to the unit until August 1944, suffered a tragic fate, after dropping with 1st Airborne Division at the Battle of Arnhem, in September 1944. Why did Cotterell end up fighting at Arnhem? Was his death a war atrocity?

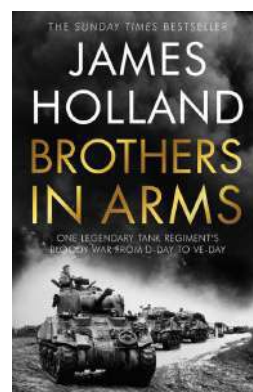
Cotterell wanted to be in the airborne forces and had lobbied hard to be allowed to jump with them on D-Day. Instead, he was attached to 8th Armoured and the Sherwood Rangers. But after that stint he finally got his wish and so went to Arnhem with 1st Airborne. He was taken prisoner and died as others were trying to escape when one of the German guards panicked and accidentally shot those still on the truck – Cotterell included. His death was tragic but not, by all accounts, a deliberate atrocity.

You're a busy man, what with the Chalke Valley History Festival, WarFest, WeHaveWays Podcast and your writing. What's next?

I'm going back to fiction, which is fun, but the next history book will be 'Westwall' – the war in NW Europe from after MARKET GARDEN to the end of the war in May 1945. The

podcast, various festivals and ongoing TV work all keep me pretty busy too. I'm very lucky.

The Akilla Crew in colour



James Holland is the bestselling author of the three volume War in the West, Normandy '44: D-Day and the Battle for France, and Sicily '43: The First Assault on Fortress Europe. *Brothers in Arms: One Legendary Tank Regiment's Bloody War from D-Day to VE-Day* is his latest book.

Rupert Hague-Holmes is an amateur military historian, currently writing a biography about the life and career of Lt Gen Sir George Lea, one of the leading post WW2 British counter-insurgency warfare experts.



ROBERT LYMAN

INDIA'S VICTORY

Both in India and Britain, the war in the Far East has for a long time been considered part of a colonial conflict between the competing armies of the Japanese and British Empires. In a new book on the subject, Robert Lyman has made a compelling case that the war was for the defence of India, by Indians. Here he outlines that view.



Indian troops in Burma, 1944

What do you think of when someone mentions the war in Burma? Is it that 'wild man of the jungle' Orde Wingate? Is it the Burma Star Association? The Chindits? Bill Slim? Jungle? Monsoon? Vinegar Joe Stilwell? Perhaps you might have heard of Kohima, or Imphal, and the haunting lines of the 2nd Division epitaph on Garrison Hill:

**When You Go Home,
Tell Them of Us and Say
For your Tomorrow,
We Gave Our Today**

I wonder whether you've ever considered the strategic role of China or of the role of the Indian Army in the great battles that made up the war in the Far East between December 1941 and August 1945. I have been studying this subject in detail now for 30 years (I first designed and taught a course on the campaign in 1991) and every time I come back to it, I discover something new. Lots more work needs to be done, for instance, on the Chinese war against Japan and the role it played in the Far Eastern theatre as a whole. So, when I embarked on *A War of Empires* a few years ago, I was determined to look at the period through a fresh pair of eyes. I was genuinely surprised at what I found. One of the most profound relates to the nature and role of the Indian Army in securing victory in 1945.

First, it seems extraordinary that, given what we are told about the fragile state of British colonialism in India, and the seething rage of nationalist sentiment across the country, that the Japanese invasion of Southeast Asia in 1941 didn't lead to the collapse of the Raj. After all, some 60,000 Indian POWs did join the Japanese-led Indian National Army in Singapore in 1942 (these numbers were eventually whittled down to 15,000 men in 1944). Japan believed that the loss of their Asian colonies would send the Europeans scurrying back to Europe with their tails between their legs. Instead, the attempt by Japan to expand its own empire by means of war

in 1942 seemed to do the opposite, at least temporarily, as young Indians flocked in large numbers to the service of the Raj, even at a time of growing nationalist clamour at home. Between 1939 and 1945 India's armed forces recruited 2,581,726 (of whom 2,065,554 were serving at the point the war ended). The Indian Air Force, which had begun the war with 285 officers and men, was now the Royal Indian Air Force, with nine squadrons of aircraft and 29,201 officers and men. It appears that rather than destroying it, the crisis of 1942 strengthened the empire temporarily at its point of greatest peril, and allowed it to strike back decisively in 1944 and 1945. Thereafter, Britain relinquished its control of India not because it had been defeated, but precisely because it had been victorious.

In the decades since, a strange consensus has seemed to settle on this period in the West and in India, both of which treats the history of India during the war as an aberration, because of India's status as a colony of the British Empire. Indeed, the assumption by many over the decades since independence is that what happened before 1947 – including the Second World War – happened to another, far distant, country. This is because, so it is argued, pre-1947 India was undivided (and for Indian nationalists, tainted by an Islam that has since been exported to Pakistan and Bangladesh), and second that it was part of the Raj, and thus tainted by Britain. It is politically unbecoming to equate a sense of Indian-hood with what Marxist historians in the West and nationalists in India tells us was India's slave status under colonialism.

But it's hardly logical. In fact, it gives us particular problems when we look at the Second World War and India's contribution to the vast human experience that reset the structure of the modern world. The problem is that the post-colonial interpretation makes slaves of Indians. It argues that they had no personal control of their destiny because the government was in the hands of others. When the British

declared war, India became an unwilling participant. This argument, simply stated, is that the top-down forces of colonial government, together with its systems, structures, cultures and attitudes, were deeply and inherently exploitative, such that it cannot properly be argued that colonial intentions were anything other than unfair and abusive. In this view, Indian men fought and strived against their will, even though they weren't fully aware of it, as cultural coercion blinded them to the reality that they were fighting a British war against Britain's enemies. The absurdity of this argument suggests, to give but one example, that Auchinleck's otherwise culture-challenging efforts in 1943 and 1944 to raise the pay of Indian Commissioned Officers to the levels of their British colleagues, was for the purpose of buying their loyalty rather than of giving them equality with their peers. Equally, it is seriously suggested in some quarters that the offer of money likewise persuaded millions of otherwise impoverished Indians to sign up for war work during the industrial expansion of India. Illiterate peasants knew no better than to take the financial bribes offered in exchange for their labour. It is argued that others were forced by convention and the belief that family and personal honour depended on a military career. Millions of men thus became mercenaries of the British, subject to intense and relentless propaganda which bound their minds and wills in an unprecedented and highly successful, coercive, manipulation.

I suggest that we recognise these assertions to be exaggerations and political point-scoring, to prove that the Raj was bad and that the Indians who willingly stood up against fascism and totalitarianism in the Second World War weren't doing it for India, but because they were forced against their conscious will to do so. But I can find no evidence that 2.5 million men joined the Indian Army between 1939-45 as the result of, as one author puts it, a 'propaganda offensive' by the British government which 'secured the partial allegiance or at least acquiescence of part of the population'? The argument does not explain why the men thus recruited were prepared to die for this compulsion, and why Indian soldiers were to win 22 of the 34 Victoria and George Crosses awarded, for example, during the Burma Campaign. It is rational to conclude that, instead, most Indians who joined the armed forces in such extraordinary numbers did so because they had weighed up the options and assessed the nature of the sacrifice they were willing to make for the sake of the government of India, regardless of its political colour. In this sense, their decision was made on the basis of a conception of India much larger than the framework of politics as it existed within Indian polity at the time. The threat to their conception of what India was and could be therefore far outweighed the rights and wrongs in their minds of colonialism, if the issue or argument ever surfaced at all for the majority of young men making the choice to join up.

The truth is that reality trumped ideology in the face of the imminent and existential danger to the Indian state by the Japanese. Most Indians accepted that the Raj was, rightly or wrongly, or for the time being, the legally constituted Government of India. Like all governments everywhere, it had supporters and opponents. Few who opposed the government on nationalistic or self-governance grounds

questioned its legitimacy, as that would have invalidated their own claim to be its successor in due course. Likewise, the Indian Army was India's army, not Britain's.

Second, the period between defeat in 1942 and victory in 1944 and 1945 saw the transformation of the Indian Army. It had always been a unique institution, not really British (although overwhelmingly officered by Britons) and not truly Indian either, reflective of its origins as one of three mercenary armies (Bengal, Madras and Bombay) in the pay of the East India Company. It formed almost a sub-state within the Raj, with sworn loyalty to the Queen-Empress and her successors, and trained and deployed to protect India's borders, while British battalions on long-service rotation in India maintained 'military aid to the civil power'. It had traditionally recruited from races the British had considered the most martial – Sikhs, Rajput, Jats from the north, north-west and western regions – whose sturdy resilience was melded with battlefield toughness and a fearsome fighting reputation allied to an unquestioning loyalty to their salt. It was these men – Dogras, Gurkhas, Garhwalis, Sikhs, Rajputs, Jats, Kumaons and Pathans among them – who had helped put down the Mutiny in 1857. Other races were recruited into the army, but in supporting roles. Few were to recognize this at the time, but the order to expand the Indian Army to meet the requirements of the new war in 1939 was a watershed moment for India as a nation. For the first time its army would reflect the primary imperative of government – the protection and security of its subjects. In 1939 it might have been true that the Indian Army fought because it was a supremely professional and disciplined army, and in the manner of all good armies, it went where it was sent, did what it was told and did it well. The extraordinary story of the period 1942 – 45 was that of India transforming itself to take responsibility for its own defence. It did so spectacularly and established itself unequivocally as the guardian of its future. This transformation, built on the basis of thorough training for war, created a new, powerful national army able to serve a new nation on the verge of independence. This new army was distinct from the old, pre-1939 Indian Army, which had existed merely to serve British – rather than Indian – interests. By 1945 it had become a truly national army, serving an emerging nation increasingly conscious of and confident in its own destiny, and fighting for its own defence and prerogatives, not for those of a rapidly declining and soon-to-be history British Empire. Nearly half of the 8,578 officers in Allied Land Forces South East Asia were now Indian, in a dramatic change since 1939. It was the recruitment of many thousands of young, educated, politically well-informed young Indians as officers in the army that enabled the rapid expansion of the Indian Army to take place. The Burma campaign, the front line of Britain's war with Japan, thus saw the transformation of an army, from an imperial creation to one of the foundation stones of a modern, democratic state.

Third, the war in Burma has been dismissed by some commentators as a strategic sideshow, in the sense that winning or losing the campaign in Burma was not decisive in ending the war. I disagree. The war in the Far East contributed significantly to the defeat of Japan. First, Burma unexpectedly became, in 1942, the locus for the defence of



Madras sappers at the Mandalay Palace

India. The campaign retained China in the fight and allowed Allied (and American) strategic imperatives regarding China to be fulfilled, as well as allowing India's vast potential of human and material resources to be used for the Allied war effort. Burma was the one place where the Allies could provide support to the Chinese government, and for that reason alone it was essential that the country was recovered from Japanese control after it was lost in 1942. Until that could be achieved, India became the launchpad for aerial operations over the airlift route between the upper reaches of Assam and Yunnan province in China – the Hump – which between 1942 and 1945 airlifted 650,000 tons to China, the equivalent of 260,000 separate C47 sorties, or nearly 240 aircraft flying every single day for three years. By 1945 the airlift comprised 640 aircraft and 34,000 military personnel, the largest such endeavour in human history.

It was in Burma where British and American offensive intentions could be demonstrated to a sceptical China, which was holding down a very substantial part of the entire Imperial Japanese Army and wanted a tangible commitment of Allied effort in Burma in exchange for its continuing sacrifice. By 1944 Burma had, in Japanese planning, taken on the role of the defensive left flank for the rich rice, rubber and oil resources of Malaya, Indochina and the Dutch East Indies. If Burma were lost, the entirety of the Japanese left flank would be opened up, ripe for Allied counterstrike into the heart of Japan's ill-named Co Prosperity Sphere.

Between 1942 and 1945 Burma was home to the Japanese Burma Area Army – at least 308,582 strong at its height – which was a demonstrable threat to India, as indeed it proved in the 'March on Delhi', Operations Ha-Go and U-Go in 1944. Second, a predominantly Indian Army stopped and turned back the Japanese invasion of India in 1944 and recovered Burma from the hands of the invader in 1945. It is true that Tokyo did not seriously plan a full-scale invasion of India, designed to topple the Raj. It was, nevertheless, a glint in Mutaguchi's eye, and if Operation U-Go had been more than competently managed, a very serious threat existed to the security and stability of the whole of Bengal, Assam and Manipur.

India was a very significant element in the Allied war effort as a whole. India was the empire's greatest reservoir of military manpower, providing 2.5 million men across several theatres of the war effort. It also became a significant supplier of war materiel, in the process of which the Indian economy was fundamentally changed, ending the war as a large creditor of the British Exchequer. A successful Japanese invasion, even if only into the Brahmaputra Valley, would have had far reaching consequences both militarily and politically.

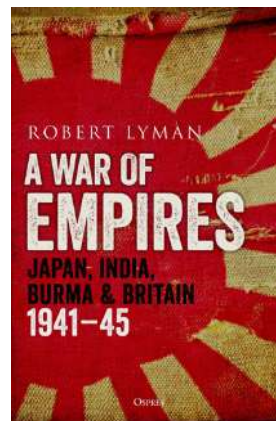
Fourth, the Burma campaign contributed significantly to the destruction of Japanese military power across the whole of Asia and the Pacific. It was in Assam and Burma in 1944 and 1945 that the Japanese suffered their greatest losses in the Second World War, together with a succession of humiliating defeats, losing by their own admission a total of 185,149 killed, nearly 13 times British/Indian losses, in the period between March 1944 and May 1945. This destruction subsequently allowed the Allies to manage the narrative of defeat among the Japanese. Demonstrating that their armies had been militarily defeated in the field removed any post hoc arguments that Japan had fallen merely as a result of the A-bomb. Defeating the Imperial Japanese Army so decisively was important for removing any residual sense in Japanese minds of the power of militarism.

Finally, the Burma campaign provided the opportunity for the Indian Army to play a decisive role in defeating the forces of militarism, building a strong historic narrative in the corporate memory of the new nations that would emerge from Partition in 1947. That India and Pakistan seem to have forgotten these 1944 and 1945 victories does not invalidate or deny this historical reality. It is one that, perhaps, a new generation, less encumbered by the commitment of their parents and grandparents to the founding myths of the post-colonial enterprise, can embrace.

In terms of statistics, the Burma campaign was the longest campaign fought by Allied armies in the Second World War, and in 1945 provided the largest army group ever assembled by the British Commonwealth and its friends. In April 1945 the number of Allied service personnel in South East Asia Command (i.e., excluding India Command) totalled 1,304,126,

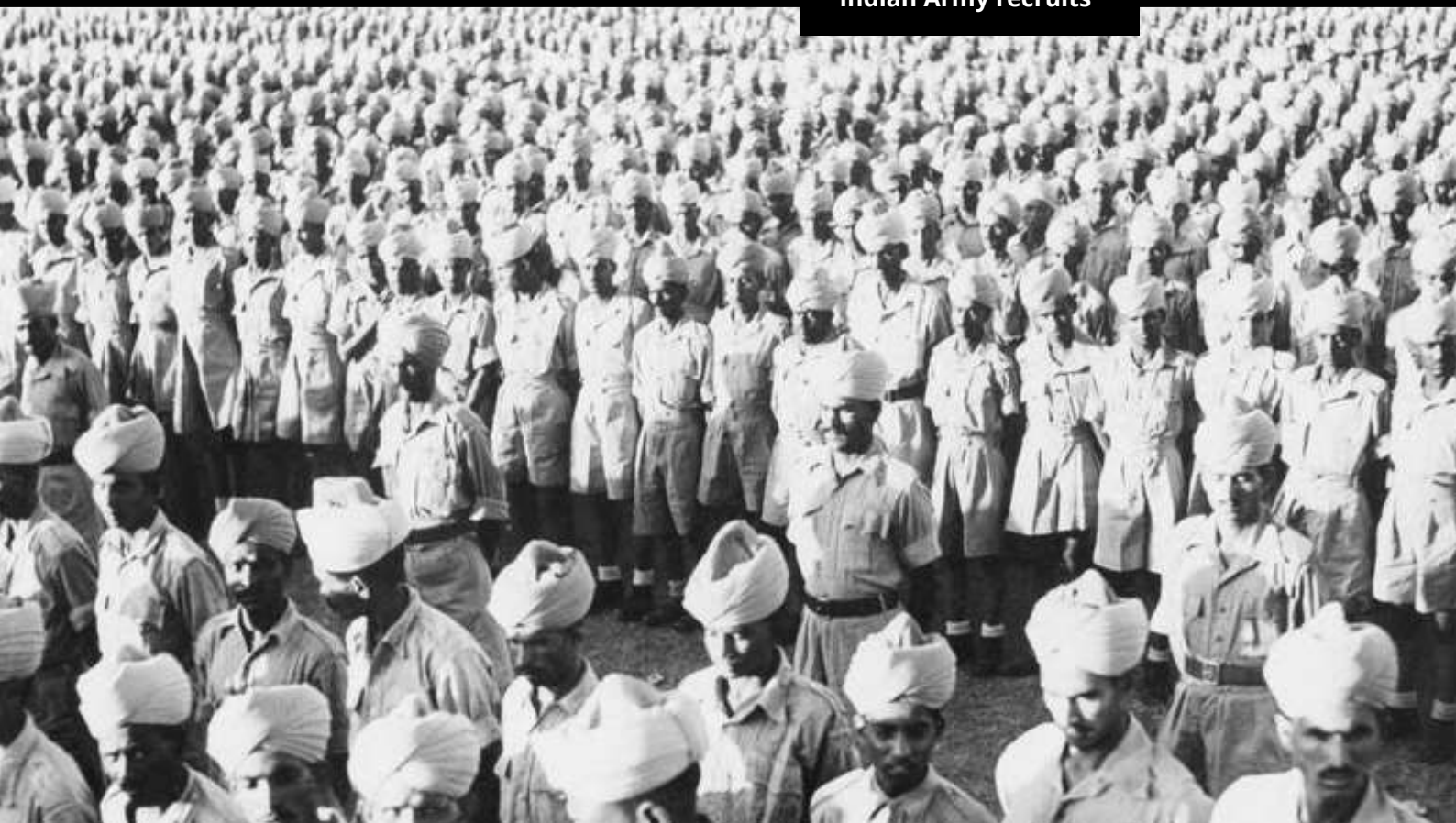
including nearly 300,000 Americans. Of this number the British Commonwealth provided 954,985, of whom 606,149 were in 'Operational Land Forces' – soldiers in the fighting brigades, divisions and corps (4, 15, 33 and the Northern Combat Area Command). Of this total (606,149) 87 per cent were Indian, 3 per cent African and 10 per cent British.

India, therefore, has every right to recover the history of the pre-1947 period, for it was then that the foundations of modern India were established. The Japanese in Assam and Manipur in 1944 and in Burma in 1945 were defeated by an Army that was overwhelmingly Indian. Victory in Asia could never have taken place without Indians coming forward in large numbers, and of their own volition, to serve their country. It is this, which India – and yes, Pakistan and Bangladesh as well – can legitimately take great pride. Britain, the imperial power at the time and for two short years after the end of the war, can do so too.



Robert Lyman is a historian and writer, and author of *Slim: Master of War* and *The Real X-Men: The Heroic Story of the Underwater War: 1942-45*. *A War of Empires: Japan, India, Burma & Britain 1941-45* is his latest book.

Indian Army recruits



HISTORICAL HEROES

Peter Tonkin on

John le Carré

With John le Carré's recent *Silverview* published posthumously, we thought it high time to examine the great author's work, and in particular his anti-hero, George Smiley. Peter Tonkin, himself the author of a number of espionage novels, looks at his novels in the context of other spy writers.

The purpose of this article is to express some personal thoughts about spy novels and the experiences of characters within the fictional espionage world, finally bringing a central focus onto John le Carré's George Smiley. This seems to be an apt moment to do so as the most recent James Bond film *No Time to Die* is released at last, at much the same time as John le Carré's final novel, *Silverview* hits the bookshelves.

A whistlestop tour of early English espionage literature seems to present us with several themes that have carried on through the 'Golden Age' of the Cold War in the early 1960's and into more modern works. Joseph Conrad's seminal *The Secret Agent*, for instance, presents us with a down-at-heel, desperate and grubby London where Verloc the pornographer, employed by the Russian embassy, tries to blow up the Greenwich observatory with tragic results. In many ways this thread of almost squalid realism is the most successful, for it leads through Somerset Maugham (the *Ashenden* stories) and Graham Greene (*The Heart of the Matter*, *The Quiet American*, *Our Man in Havana*, *The Tails of Panama* etc.) to the convincingly credible world of John le Carré, George Smiley and his colleagues at The Circus.

On the other hand, Erskine Childers in *The Riddle of the*

Sands presents us with a couple of daring amateurs (though Carruthers is a minor official in the Foreign Office) who manage to thwart the Germans through cunning, luck and derring-do. Passing onto John Buchan's Richard Hannay – the gifted amateur of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* who becomes more professional in *Greenmantle* as he enters the Great Game – a confrontation already explored by Kipling in *Kim*. The idea of the amateur becoming involved in espionage is given a darker twist by Eric Ambler most famously in *The Mask of Demetrios* and *Epitaph for A Spy* – which has striking similarities with the early Smiley title, *A Murder of Quality*.

The third approach, which became the most popular of all, is in many ways the least 'realistic'. This is the world of the debonair, high-living agent with a taste for the best in food and champagne, an irresistible allure for beautiful women and a license to kill. This is, to begin with, best exemplified by Desmond Cory's *Johnny Fedora* series.

Both Somerset Maugham and Greene served on the edges (at least) of the real intelligence services – hence the confidence with which they present their worlds and the characters who inhabit them; Maugham in the First World War and Greene (overseen by Kim Philby) during the build-

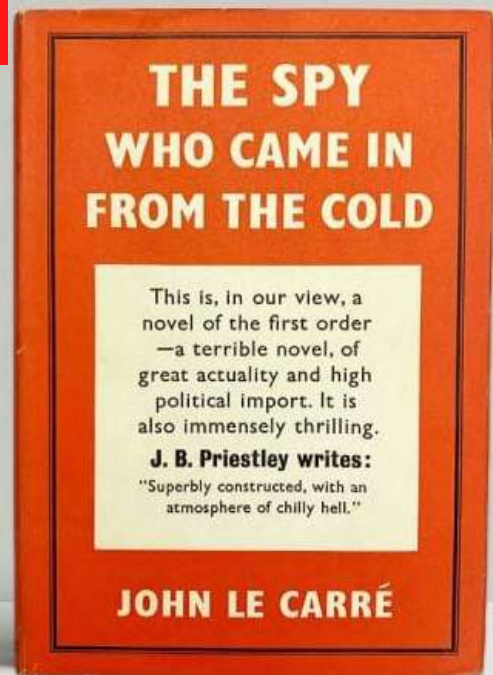


First edition of *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*

up to and early years of the Second World War. It was the Second World War that seems to have revolutionised the spy novel, however, though the Cold War that followed soon after was to turbo-charge the entire genre. Writers such as Ian Fleming and Dennis Wheatley served in the Forces - Fleming in the Navy and Wheatley, having been commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the First World War but invalided out after Passchendaele, worked in the Cabinet Office during the Second World War and was commissioned Wing Commander in the RAFVR. Both men were at the edges of the Anglo-American network with William Stevenson (code-name Intrepid) and 'Wild Bill' Donovan whose Office of Strategic Services (the Central Intelligence Agency after 1947) used the kind of cloak and dagger equipment later made famous by Fleming's 'Q Section'. A department notably absent from Smiley's world.

This war experience did not seem to affect Wheatley's louche hero Gregory Sallust. Sallust's main undercover work in any case is against SS Obergruppenfuhrer Grauber, though in company with the beautiful Erica von Epp, Countess Osterburg. It has famously been observed that 'Before James Bond there was Gregory Sallust' but the two are not all that alike, though the style in which their stories are written is similarly serious and direct. Johnny Fedora is also seen as a precursor of Bond, though Cory's style is lighter than Fleming's or Wheatley's; it has more in common with John Creasey's John Mannering, *The Baron* or Leslie Charteris' more playful stories of Simon Templar, *The Saint*, both of whom did occasional undercover espionage work. One other series deserves mention here - though made for TV with the books coming later. This is *Danger Man* (Secret Agent in America) where Patrick McGooohan famously stole a march on Sean Connery by introducing himself, in 1960, 'Oh yes. My name is Drake. John Drake'. Then he took off on a series of adventures so successful that McGooohan was offered the part of Bond, only to turn it down, in order to pursue his own cult classic, *The Prisoner*.

One element joining almost all of these novels and series together is their focus on the secret agent. Reasons for this are obvious. It is the agent who has adventures, often in exotic locations, who solves problems, confronts danger and generates suspense all of which, of course, grip the reader. As does, it seems, a touch of envy for the freedom, the lifestyle, the moral certainties of this version of the world (not to mention the sex and latent sadism). As the narrator observes in the opening lines of *Live and Let Die*, 'There are moments of great luxury in the life of a secret agent.' There certainly are in Bond's life. He appreciates and has access to all the best things the post-war, austerity smitten reader of the early 1960s could desire, which he enjoys to such an extent and with such familiarity that Sebastian Faulks in *Faulks on Fiction* characterises him as a snob. (He begins to suspect Red Grant the SPECTRE assassin in *From Russia With Love*, remember, because he orders red Chianti with turbot). And Bond's enemies are clearly despicable - Dr No, Hugo Drax, Auric Goldfinger, Mr Big, SMERSH, Red Grant, Rosa Klebb, SPECTRE, Ernst Stavro Blofeldt; every one as clearly in need of destruction as Gregory Sallust's brutal Nazi enemies.



Almost immediately, however, different types of agent began to appear; the militantly lower class, worldly-wise cynic Harry Palmer kicked off Len Deighton's best-selling series with *The Ipcress File*; and Adam Hall's introspective, martial art-loving Quiller (*The Berlin Memorandum*) who, like Palmer, worked for a rather more modest agency than Bond appeared to do - and in both cases an agency with far less clarity of good and bad, black and white, than the world M sent Bond into with his Walther PPK and the latest kit from Q Section.

Bond's footloose upbringing, following his father (a rep for Vickers armaments) and his Swiss mother round Europe between the wars until his parents' death (aged 11, in a climbing accident), his two halves at Eton College in Windsor (aged 12ish) before being sent down, his terms at Fettes College in Edinburgh and his time at the University of Geneva allow him wide social access, as well as a flat in Wellington Square, Chelsea, a faithful housekeeper (May) a supercharged Bentley (destroyed by Hugo Drax in *Moonraker* before a brief flirtation with Aston Martin) and a salary approaching £60,000 in today's money. But he also has first-class travel all over the world and unlimited expenses while on his missions. To be fair, however, there is nothing quite comparable on a social level to the standing afforded Smiley by his marriage - such as it is - to Lady Ann Sercomb (*Call for the Dead*). Smiley who, though he starts out in a dreary flat in Knightsbridge, ends up in 9, Bywater Street, a 3-minute walk from Bond's flat in Wellington Square. But Smiley, crucially, is a different kettle of fish altogether; and if Quiller and Palmer work in the grey areas, politically and morally speaking, Smiley is a creature of the deep, dark shadows.

In calculated contrast to the sort of agent Bond represents (think H. Poirot v S. Holmes), Smiley is short, fat, myopic, unattractive, academic - a man of learning rather than of action. Crucially, a 'handler' rather than an agent. The product of an 'unimpressive' public school and an equally 'unimpressive' Oxford college, his first love is obscure C17th

German poetry but he is tempted away from this and a proposed fellowship at All Souls college by his tutor Jebedee who sends him for an interview by a recruitment panel for the Secret Service (named The Circus because of its offices in Cambridge Circus in the heart of London's West End); and, of course, by the beautiful, aristocratic but flighty Lady Ann.

It is a fascinating exercise to read all nine Smiley novels in order; to see him come and go as le Carré experiments with him as a character and as a member – finally a master – of the chillingly believable milieu he, his friends and his enemies inhabit. His corpulence, his clothes – ill-fitting to allow room for expansion – his nervousness (all very much on show in *Call for the Dead* in which he looks into the death of a man he apparently drove to suicide) are little by little left behind, though Lady Ann is always on hand when we need to feel sympathy for him. He is first presented as a member of the Circus and never really leaves it – even when ‘retired’ on more than one occasion. Peter Guillam and Mendel the policeman are there from the start as well. Smiley more clearly assumes the character of a detective in *A Murder of Quality* (as compared with Ambler's *Epitaph for a Spy* where the unfortunate innocent Joseph Vadassy is mistaken for an agent and must discover the identity of the actual agent in order to save his own life – like Smiley, using many of the tropes of the murder-mystery in the process).

Then Smiley has a walk-on part in perhaps the greatest spy story of the time – conceivably of all time - *The Spy Who Came In From The Cold*. He and Peter Guillam are distantly involved in the tragic assignment undertaken by Alec Leamas, acting under orders of the head of the Circus, Control – a mission that will come back to haunt them later. *The Looking Glass War* shifts to a more satirical tone (cf *Our Man in Havana*) as Leclerc and Haldane who run The Department - a once-famous relic from happier War days but now finding itself sadly superannuated in the new world order of the early '60's - mount a pointless mission based on flawed intelligence in order (largely) to stop The Circus proving them and their Department to be surplus to requirements. An old, out-of-touch agent, Leiser is ineffectively re-trained and then sent into East Germany, where his lack of tradecraft makes him easy meat for the Stasi. When he does not come out again, Smiley, now second in command at The Circus, is dispatched by Control to pull as many chestnuts out of the fire as possible. But alas, by no means all of them are recoverable, starting with Leiser and yet another innocent – his girlfriend. Le Carré later said he wrote the story to reflect the reality of spywork as it really is.

It is at this point, it seems to me, that le Carré decided to shift gear, especially with regard to Smiley. This may have been a reaction to negative reviews of *The Looking Glass War* or something that had been simmering longer in Le Carré's mind after the unmasking and defection of The Cambridge Spies – most famously Kim Philby. Smiley steps once again into the limelight, and this time he stays there for the three great books that comprise the Karla trilogy. In *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, he is summoned out of enforced retirement resulting from the failure of Testify, a mission that led to the capture and torture of Circus agent Jim Prideaux. The man who summons him is Oliver Lacon the under-secretary with

oversight of intelligence who has become convinced that there is a ‘mole’ right at the top of the new team running The Circus. The new, more powerful, quietly but doggedly determined Smiley painstakingly unmasks the ‘mole’ with the help of Guillam, Connie Sachs and Mendel amongst others and in so-doing discovers that the traitor has been working for Karla, Smiley's opposite number in Moscow Centre. In *The Honourable Schoolboy* which follows directly, Smiley, now head of The Circus (rather than Control who is dead) sends Jerry Westerby eastward to uncover the source of Karla's funds in an attempt to disgrace and perhaps even ‘turn’ the Russian masterspy. In London, he is surrounded by his regulars, Lacon, Guillam, Mendel, Connie Sachs but in Hong Kong things do not go as planned and the CIA move in. By the end of the book, Smiley is out in the cold again, though Peter Guillam wonders whether that was all part of Smiley's plan. And Jerry Westerby is dead. In *Smiley's People*, however, the hunt for Karla goes on. Although the novel opens well away from Smiley and his people, circumstances soon cause him to be summoned back and he becomes unusually active, travelling around Europe turning a series of indiscretions by Karla into a case sufficiently powerful to cause his defection. In the end, as he observes his old enemy crossing from the East to the West as he defects, Smiley feels no sense of victory or even achievement. Simply a terrible sadness that the pair of them and the causes – governments – that they have served have been responsible for so much death, tragedy and grief. In so doing, Smiley seems to speak for le Carré and for his view of the Cold War not to mention the Cold Warriors who fought it. Everything was risked; everything was lost by all too many of them, and nothing appreciable or worthwhile was gained.

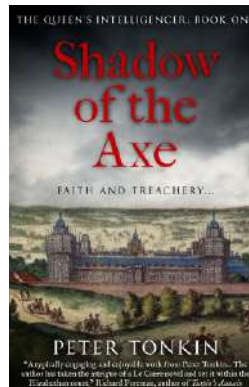
From the BBC TV series, George Smiley and Jerry Westerby



After another appearance as guest speaker at the passing-out ceremony at the spy school 'The Nursery' at Sarratt, organised by tutor, Ned York, in the episodic *The Secret Pilgrim*, Smiley takes his final bow in *A Legacy of Spies*. This tells how Peter Guillam (who narrates it all himself) is summoned back from retirement in France to answer some hard questions during a review of Windfall, the mission that led to the fatal shooting of Alec Leamas and Liz Gold. Now, it seems, Leamas' son is suing the government for his father's death and the new men in the new SIS HQ are looking for someone to blame. In this later novel Le Carré makes it plain (as it has been hinted time and again in earlier work) that it is often people who are counted as colleagues or even friends who turn out to be the most dangerous enemies after all. The review turns into a witch-hunt with Guillam first in line for the stake and the fire. On the very edge of destruction, Peter is fortunate to track down the elderly Smiley long in peaceful retirement 'off the grid' – contentedly alone – on the edge of the Black Forest where he can wander in the woods and contemplate his obscure C17th German poetry. But where he also maintains sufficient powerful contacts to call off the wolves that were hunting Peter.

So, what are we to make of the evolution of George Smiley? The first, and in many ways the most important, thing is that he does evolve. None of the other characters we have discussed (except perhaps for Verloc) really changes, no-matter how many books they pass through. Next, the character that Smiley evolves into resonates in a way that few of the alternatives do; the cynical world of self-serving infighting that he inhabits looks all too modern, though it is

presented as existing in the 1970's. The 'friendly fire' of ruthless territoriality and back-stabbing between warring government departments, is all-too often more destructive than enemy action. The innocent, the relative amateurs like Liz Gold, Leiser, his girlfriend and Jerry Westerby are collateral damage, simply consumed like cannon-fodder. The brutal irony that it is invariably the good deeds, the moments to true humanity, that get punished. If Leamas had left Liz Gold at the foot of the Berlin Wall, he would have survived. But he went back for her and died. Even Karla is trapped and 'turned' because he is trying to help and protect his daughter. Smiley personifies all this but does so with unsettling self-knowledge and a clear view of the tragic pointlessness of it all. As Peter Guillam observes, perhaps with Smiley in mind, 'A professional intelligence officer is no more immune to human feelings than the rest of mankind. What matters to him is the extent to which he is able to suppress them.' A fitting epitaph for the greatest spy of them all, perhaps.



Peter Tonkin is the author of *The Wine Dark Sea* and Tom Musgrave series of novels. His most recent book is *Shadow of the Axe*.

Get *Silverview* by John Le Carré here: <https://amzn.to/3o4ZZMn>

From the BBC TV series, Smiley tolerates Roddy Martindale



JEREMY BLACK

A detailed oil painting of a man with dark, wavy hair and blue eyes, wearing a dark blue military uniform with a prominent red collar and several medals on his chest. The background shows a landscape with a church spire on the left and a building with two towers on the right.

A SHORT HISTORY OF WAR

Warfare from antiquity to the modern day has always provided a fascination for theorists, but does their study fail to take into account a key component - its participants?

'If we forbear to fight, it is likely that some great schism will rend and shake the courage of our people till they make friends of the Medes [Persians]; but if we join battle before some at Athens be infected by corruption, then let Heaven but deal fairly with us, and we may well win in this fight.'

Herodotus' account of Miltiades the Younger outlining in 490 BC what was at stake for Athens when threatened by a Persian invasion, the threatening great power of its day, captured the role of will and the place of divine support in understandings of success in warfare. This remark from the 'Ancient World,' however, is one that in terms of the species is really that of recent history. Humans from the outset were involved in conflict, but not at the scale of that conflict. They had to compete with other animals for food and to prevent them being food for others. They also had to fight for shelter.

Warfare did not therefore only emerge as some result of the corruption of humankind by society, in the shape of agriculture and related social organisation, as was enthusiastically argued in the 1960s, by commentators who were unconsciously copying Judeo-Christian ideas of the Fall of Man due to Adam's sin. Such an account would have warfare begin about 90 per cent of the way into our history as a species. Instead, fighting is integral to human society, and the pattern for modern hunter-gatherer societies, such as those in Amazonia and New Guinea, reflect a formerly more common practice, notably of conflict between human groups. Fighting with other human groups whether to secure hunting areas, to seize slaves, not least for mates and/or to incorporate into the tribe, or to assert masculinity, was part of a continuum with fighting with animals.

How best should military history be presented, discussed and

explained? One of the standard issues with the subject is the way in which the same old thinkers get mentioned when it is discussed, and frequently with a repetition of past arguments and established problems. Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, Jomini and Fuller dominate consideration of war on land, and Mahan and Corbett at sea. Moreover, the standard approach, both academic and popular, to the subject focuses on great commanders, on major wars, and on supposedly decisive battles. Thus, Clausewitz and Jomini had their names made as commentators on warfare in the light of French Revolutionary and Napoleonic conflicts, Fuller as a commentator on World War One and the way to avoid such another costly impasse, and Mahan and Corbett on Britain as the great naval power in the period 1689-1815, and notably its conflict with France. Others have of course been added to the list, including Frunze and Mao Zedong on revolutionary warfare in the twentieth century and Calwall and Galula for counter-insurgency operations; while Sun Tzu and Mao Zedong represent a major effort to engage with the significance of China as a military power. Air power brought in its exponents and analysts (the two overlapping to a damaging effect), notably Douhet.

There are, however, a number of issues with much of the commentary. First, there is a preference for assessing the theories of military thinkers, rather than the thoughts, still less actions, of military actors. The overwhelming majority of the latter do not leave such accounts, and certainly not in any systematic fashion, but the problem with considering military thinkers is that that tells you about ... military thinkers. They do not necessarily get at all close to those who made decisions, nor their reasons for doing so.

Secondly, there is a marked emphasis on conflict between states rather than within them. Indeed, civil wars tend to be



The Battle of Marathon, 490BC



The Fall of the Alamo

addressed only when both sides have formal military structures, as in the English (1642-8) and American (1861-5) Civil Wars, or quasi-formal structures. Thirdly, the discussion is usually of battle, and not skirmish or 'small war,' and that despite the frequency and significance of the latter.

Fourthly, much of the world is 'primitivised,' with the general simplification and primitivisation of many of the combatants, especially steppe peoples and African polities, and a tendency to present them as less sophisticated (and diverse) than 'settled' states, especially if the latter are reliant on large-scale agriculture and industry, and/or Western (European and North American) or East Asian. This creates an insistent geography of significance with an assumption that best practice is synonymous with 'developed societies,' which also tend to have militaries and military commentary formalised in a 'modern' fashion. Thus, the 'undeveloped' societies only appear to gain relevance if they copy aspects of the best practice.

Stated like that, the standard position is clearly problematic. Effective militaries, such as the Huns in the fifth century, the Mongols in the 13th, the armies of Timur the Lame in the 14th, and the Manchu in the 17th, all of which were non-European cavalry forces, are apt to be underplayed or treated as likely to fail in the long-term. In part, this is due to an emphasis instead on Western infantry forces. This process is taken further if the stress is on a military-industrial nexus or 'complex' as the seedbed of the advanced weaponry of modern warfare.

By their nature, steppe societies do not produce such systems. As a result, they appear inherently redundant. This is so even if the redundancy was frequently not given effect until the 19th century, indeed being both a cause and a consequence of the age of imperialism of that period; which, in reality, was just another such age. However, as so often, there is a teleology at play here, and one that does not

appear so secure from the perspective of the 2020s when, for example, Mexican crime cartels as a whole have more armed men than many European armies.

In this context, the Clausewitz-worship of many lectures appears curiously dated. If applied in order to suggest supposedly timeless and universal lessons, the ideas or supposed maxims of Clausewitz are often somewhat trite and, separately, unnecessary as they are generally well-expressed in the particular idioms of the culture in question. Culture indeed is a key concept, for an emphasis on the way in which war can be seen differently in particular cultural settings offers an opportunity to move beyond supposedly universal propositions.

Most modern Western commentators in particular have little or nothing to say about religious values and their role in helping create and sustain particular attitudes to victory and defeat, suffering and loss; and thus to the acceptability of casualties. Yet, tactical, operational and strategic equations of success, and thus practicality, can all be affected by this factor, as was seen back to early accounts of warfare. Indeed, the relative neglect of religion is a problem with one of the most interesting theories about military history, that advanced in the 18th century by writers such as Edward Gibbon, William Robertson and Adam Smith who were convinced that history was a matter of development through socio-economic stages, notably from hunter-gatherers, to pastoral societies, agrarian counterparts, and then urban-based systems, with political and military systems varying accordingly. This thesis, which can be extended to include modern societies, allows for differences in physical and human environments around the world, but not for their counterparts in terms of ideological variations.

Whether with Clausewitz or with Gibbon, we are dealing with ideas over the longue durée, but most theorisation in practice is very short term, notably an analysis of recent

conflicts in order to attempt to understand the capabilities of possible opponents. Thus, the Germans analysed the poor Soviet performance in the Winter War with Finland in 1940, which encouraged them to plan the attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, although, as yet another instance of the tendency of theory and analysis to confirm bias, they underplayed the key point of eventual Soviet victory in the Winter War.

Such military theory was prone to support convenience and apt to confirm institutional, national and social bias. Thus, the American Air Corps analysts, assessing the failure of the German Luftwaffe in the air offensive on Britain in 1940, attributed it to a lack of strategic bombers, rather than the overall deficiencies of the Luftwaffe and the role of Britain's integrated air defence system. In July 1941, Air War Plans Division No. 1 offered a comprehensive plan for defeating Germany by means of air power, which was an instance of the right opponent helping to push forward both the doctrine and the crucial support.

Military theory is very separately advanced through popular culture, with a repeated emphasis on individual heroism, collective bravery, and the group cohesion that helps cement resolve. This is an element from the ancestral tales of the earliest recorded literature to modern electronic games and their equivalents. The theory here is of the triumph of will, although there can be a providentialism and fatalism that ensures a heroic failure, as with the Spartans at Persian hands at Thermopylae in 480 BC or the Texans at Mexican hands at the Alamo in 1836, which itself then becomes a form of triumphant will.

This form of commentary attracts the most attention, and not least because of the popularity, strengthened from the 1970s, of 'face of battle' accounts, with their emphasis on the stories of individual combatants, and the related use of oral history. This approach downplays background elements of great significance, such as strategy, logistics and communications, and focuses, instead, on the tactical dimension and also willpower. This is a long way from Clausewitz, but there is no correct approach.

Moreover, modern cultures are particularly apt to respond to visual stimuli and 'lessons,' and those can focus on tales of heroism as well as the particular capabilities of weaponry. Thus, the specific medium of the history provides a message, and one that, in this case, is a long way from the use of written text which is more readily able to suggest ambiguity and qualifications. Visual media, moreover, are more accessible for usage across much of the world. They are where the theories of military history, generally implicit theories, are being expressed, and they offer the modern equivalents to the oral epics that were so important in the past.

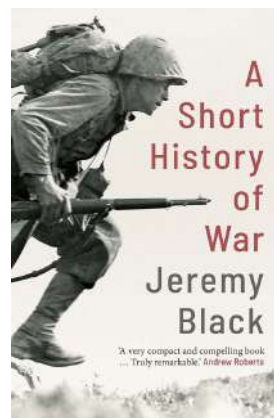
The cruelty of war is not only visited on the living. At the height of the fighting over the fort of St Elmo on Malta in 1565, the bodies of three dead Knights of St John were decapitated and disembowelled before being nailed to wooden crosses that were floated across Valetta harbour in order to discourage the sending of further reinforcements.



Finnish troops during the Winter War with the Soviets

When the fort fell, only five badly wounded knights were captured. They also were nailed by the Turks on crosses that were floated across the harbour.

Wars today can be far shorter than the time it takes to write a chapter, let alone a book, and yet there is no shortage of lengthy books that if dropped from any height might well be fatal to a pedestrian on the ground. A short book, however, risks simplifying the nature of war in order to provide a clear account and use a causal narrative to explain developments. All then falls into a pat analysis, with technological proficiency in weaponry generally the measure of proficiency and the Sorcerer's apprentice of steadily more frenetic conflict. Weaponry provides both a developmental narrative and analysis, and a way to rank and link past, present and future. It also answers to the strong interest in the material culture of war, the sense that it is about things. That is a mistake. War is about people.



Jeremy Black is a prolific lecturer and writer, the author of over 100 books concerning 18th century British, European and American political, diplomatic and military history. His latest book is *A Short History of War*, published by Yale University Press.



K.M. ASHMAN

1066 & All That

We all know about the Battle of Hastings and 1066, but what about its context within the 11th century? The author of a new novel, takes us back to the period and the political machinations that led to the Norman invasion.

Battle of Assandun, showing Edmund Ironside (left) and Cnut the Great. (Matthew Paris, Chronica Majora, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 26, fol. 80v)



1066 is probably one of the most recognisable dates in British history, for it was on 14 October of that year when the course of English history changed forever. The repercussions of that famous battle, fought between King Harold and William of Normandy on and around Senlac Hill somewhere near Hastings, would echo down through the centuries after ending, once and for all, the Anglo-Saxon domination of English, and by association British, politics.

But that momentous event in history did not just happen on the whim of one or two ambitious men. It started decades earlier, probably when most of the combatants on that fateful day were still children, and it is that slow but steady build up to the Battle of Hastings that the Road to Hastings trilogy covers, beginning with the coronation of Edward in 1043.

‘But before we explore those important decades leading up to the battle, it is important to familiarise ourselves with the background. In AD 1014, England was in the possession of the Danish king, Sweyn Forkbeard. When he died on 14 February of that year, his nobles moved quickly to replace him with a man of equal reputation and valour. That man was named Cnut, he of the ‘holding back the tide’ fame, and he would later become known as King Cnut the Great.

Cnut immediately crushed any opposition from the native English and swept through the country with his Viking army before finally being crowned king by the Archbishop of Canterbury in London in 1017. Cnut went on to rule England for nearly two decades, and it was during this time that a certain man rose to prominence within his court. That man’s name was Godwin. Little is known about Godwin’s early life, but his rise was rapid under Cnut’s rule and, by 1018, he was made the first Earl of Wessex.

For the next few years, Godwin served Cnut loyally and marched alongside the king on various campaigns, earning himself a reputation in the process. During this period, he

met and married Gytha Thorkelsdóttir, a Danish noblewoman connected to Cnut’s family by marriage. Thus it was, that by the time Cnut died in AD 1036, Godwin of Wessex already enjoyed a powerful position in Saxon England’s corridors of power.

For the next few years, Godwin served Cnut loyally and marched alongside the king on various campaigns, earning himself a reputation in the process.

The throne of England was contested by two men upon Cnut’s demise, Alfred Ætheling, and Harold Harefoot. Later that year, Alfred Ætheling attempted an invasion of England, but he was intercepted by Godwin, who handed him over to Harold. Alfred was blinded and died soon afterwards, leaving Harefoot as the undisputed king.

Only four years later, in 1040, Harold Harefoot died leaving his half-brother, Harthacnut, as king. But when he also died just a few years later, Godwin supported the claim of Edward the Confessor to the throne. It is during this period where the majority of my trilogy takes place.

Despite being exiled from England for most of his life, Edward was crowned king on 3 April 1043. Two years later, on 23 January 1045, he married Godwin's youngest daughter, Gytha of Wessex, (who was subsequently renamed Ealdgyth), reinforcing the links between the throne and the House of Godwin.

Despite this important association, the king mistrusted Godwin, a feeling that was fuelled by Edward's long-time advisor, Robert of Jumièges, a Norman bishop who had joined him just after his coronation.

Ealdgyth was a pious woman who made a good and loyal queen to Edward, but despite this, their union remained childless, a situation that caused growing concern as the years passed. Some historians claim that the lack of children was down to a vow of celibacy on the king's part, though others dispute this claim as nonsense and put Ealdgyth's failure to produce an heir down to the vagaries of nature. Whatever the reason, the crisis was real and a few years later, the opportunity presented itself for Edward to alter the situation when he fell out with the Godwin family, causing what has since become known as the Crisis of 1051/52.

Before we explore the crisis, it is an interesting fact that in the background, a young monk called Spearhafoc (Sparrowhawk), had worked himself into the queen's favour as an exceptionally talented goldsmith. As such, he became friendly with the House of Godwin and was soon nominated to the position of Bishop of London. However, when the previous Bishop of London, (the king's favourite, Robert of Jumièges,) returned from Rome in 1051, he refused to consecrate Spearhafoc causing several months of tension. Eventually, when Spearhafoc was expelled from London later that year, he disappeared, taking with him a wealth of gold and gems intended for King Edward's crown, as well as treasure from the London diocesan stores, stuffed into "very many bags".

Godwin camped his army outside the walls, making an indirect threat against the throne.

With tensions rising between King Edward and the House of Godwin, it would take little to fan the burning embers of mistrust back into flame. When the king's cousin, the Count of Boulogne, visited him in September 1051, events unfolded that would do just that. The count's men caused an affray in Dover, a town in Godwin's earldom. Seizing upon the opportunity, King Edward, no doubt encouraged by Robert of Jumièges, ordered Godwin to punish the town. The frustrated earl refused.

Tensions grew even more and when the king visited Gloucester later that year. Godwin camped his army outside the walls, making an indirect threat against the throne. Unfortunately for Godwin, the king was quickly reinforced by earls Leofric and Siward, forcing a standoff between all parties. Consequently, Edward and Godwin agreed to meet again in London to sort out the problems, but not before Godwin handed over his son, Wulfnoth and his grandson, Hakon as hostages, who were subsequently sent to Normandy.

Harold swearing oath on holy relics to William, Duke of Normandy





**King Harold II places the crown on his own head.
(Cambridge University Library, Ee.3.59, fo. 30v)**

Godwin eventually went to London to meet the king as agreed but before any negotiations could ensue, all communications broke down and the Godwin family were forced to flee the country, much to the delight of Robert of Jumièges. Queen Ealdgyth was sent to a nunnery, and all Godwin's assets were shared out amongst those loyal to the king.

While most of the family headed to Flanders, two of Godwin's sons fled to Ireland and raised a mercenary army. A few months later, they re-joined their father and returned to England, sailing a fleet of ships up the Thames to challenge the king.

This time, earls Leofric and Siward refused to offer their services in any war between countrymen and eventually an agreement was reached where all of Godwin's lands were returned to him. In addition, Robert of Jumièges was outlawed and fled back to Normandy, the queen was reinstated and the House of Godwin emerged stronger than ever.

All in all, the events of those fascinating few years paved the way for what came next. As the House of Godwin's power grew, so did their influence over the king, so much so that Edward saw them as a threat and decided to seek an heir outside of England.

Times were changing fast and, as the years progressed, more and more pretenders to the throne started casting an eye towards the shores of England, not least, the one man who would re-emerge a few years later as a serious threat to the throne. That man's name was William of Normandy or, as he has since become known, William the Conqueror.

The next book in the series, *The Promises of a King*, covers what happens next and the momentous events that led up to 1066 and the battle that changed the course of British history.



K.M.Ashman is the author of The Templars and Medieval series of novels. His latest, *The Challenges of a King: The Road to Hastings* is published by Canelo.

NO OTHER WILL THAN HIS

by Judith Arnopp

Being married to Henry VIII is a dangerous game.

'The queen is dead!'

The knife slips from the orange I am peeling and sinks deep into my hand. There is no pain, not right away, just a sharp shock and a string of tiny rubies. I watch as the red beads swell and merge into a stream, a river, and finally a flood but although inside I am screaming, my tongue is paralysed.

While I bleed unnoticed, my companion puts her hands to her face and falls to her knees. The other women flap like gulls around a rotting fish. They rage against the king, treason surging from their lips; words that could earn them deaths every bit as gruesome as that of my cousin ... the queen.

It is some time before anyone notices the scarlet stain spreading across my skirts. They wrench themselves from the fascination of royal execution and hurry me away to the still room. While I watch a weeping servant bathe and bind the deep wound, the pain begins.

I've always known of Anne Boleyn, the scintillating queen who by some strange chance of birth is my grown-up cousin. I listened open-mouthed, the tales evoking pictures so clear, it is as if I had been there to watch her dance.

I see her in my mind, clad in a golden gown, peppered with seed pearls and tiny scarlet jewels that leap and shimmer in the torch light. In my imagining she smiles when she notices me. The crowd parts and I feel the touch of her lips on my cheek, hear her merry laughter as she seizes my hand and draws me into the colourful melee of her companions. I am mesmerised by her bright clever eyes, the fall of her long dark hair, the witty remarks that tumble from her lips.

"Look, this is our pretty cousin, Katherine Howard," she turns me toward her brother George, and everyone stops to look at me, the favourite cousin of the queen, and they join their praise to Anne's.

But of course, it was just a childhood fancy. We never really met. I may be a Howard but I am nothing more than an obscure relation from the country, an orphan raised by my irascible granddam, Agnes Tilney, the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk.

I rarely see my grandmother; she leaves my welfare to her ladies. I grow up unheeded, without direction or love. I was an infant when I first arrived and the women made much of me but their interest waned and as I grow, they leave me more and more to my own devices. There are lessons of course but I learn very little.

I am instructed in music by Henry Manox, a man of small talent and much impudence. When he first begins to take liberties, I am too young to know that he shouldn't. I stand compliant and turn my mind from the unpleasantness to dream of my cousin the queen.

I seldom wonder what my own future holds. I have none of Anne's elegance or quick wit, and can never hope to climb as high as she. I don't think I want to. I am just a little girl and she is a queen – or she was. Now, of course, she is dead.

The pain in my palm is hard to bear but I refuse to cry. I am not given to tears or dramatics. When life deals me an unfair blow I have learned to bend and make the best of what is laid before me.



My hand is tightly bound, I nurse it as if it is a swaddled child and realise Manox will be displeased when he discovers I cannot play. I close my eyes against the certainty that he will find me another, less pleasing task. I will perform for him, as I always do. It is not my place to object.

In the days and weeks that follow my cousin's death, I think of her almost constantly. I probably always will. I wish so much to be like Anne; strong and brave enough to speak out against the things I cannot change. She let no man use her, not even the king. It is hard to imagine her strength and vitality extinguished, her beauty butchered.

When they first locked her in the Tower they say she went a little mad. It is little wonder. How can one keep sane waiting day after day for a reprieve? She will have fretted for her daughter, for her brother and the other men accused alongside her but they say that at the end she 'died well'.

"What does that mean?" I ask, swiping tears from my cheeks.

"It means she kept her dignity. She did not think of herself but offered comfort to her ladies. She climbed the scaffold steps with decorum and even called down a blessing upon the king."

I cannot imagine ever calling down a blessing on a man who condemned me to death – king or commoner. I shake my head in wonderment. King Henry severed England from Rome in order to possess my cousin and now he is done with her. How hard it must be to die on the whim of a man who once professed to love you. And the king is, after all, just another man – another fawning, sweating, noxious man.



I close my eyes and try not to think of her kneeling in her brother's blood, waiting for the blade to fall. The image is fastened to the forefront of my mind, I cannot shake it. Did it hurt when the blade sliced through her neck or did she not notice? Is she still trapped in that moment, ever waiting for the pain?

I saw a pig slaughtered in the farmyard once. The butcher struck the sow on the head before hoisting its prone body on a rope. I peeked around the corner of the barn as he slit its throat, and I saw the blade of the knife slicing through the thick, rubbery skin as if it were butter. Crimson blood oozed into a bowl and when the body was empty, the wound gaped wide, like a screaming mouth.

The butcher turned the corpse into chops and sausages but the mangled body of my cousin was hurriedly squeezed into an old arrow chest, her intelligent head shoved beneath her arm.

So much for cleverness.

As the years pass and I approach womanhood, Manox is dismissed from my grandmother's employ, relieving me from the indignity of his attentions. I decide that, although I may not be as clever or as beautiful as the late queen, I have at least learned how to get what I want. I know how to turn men into fools.

When Francis Dereham comes to Lambeth to work as my grandmother's secretary, it is not long before he is falling over himself for my favour. He dismisses my tender years and showers me with gifts. I relish the small jewels and gloves that he delivers in person to the bedchamber I share with the other women.

I've long been used to gentlemen visiting our chambers. It is just a way to ease our boredom. Enchanted by my youth and prettiness, all the gentlemen dally with me; they sit me on their knee and whisper sweetness into my ear. Sometimes I allow them to fondle me, sometimes I don't – it all depends on the treasure they tuck into my bodice. But once Dereham begins to court me, I no longer want to play with the other gentleman.

The ladies smirk at the passion I rouse in him. They lend me clothes and show me how to pinch colour into my cheeks and bite my lips to make them irresistible. Should anyone discover the liberties he has taken, Dereham would be punished. Why do men risk everything to possess that which is forbidden?

Soon Francis begins to call me 'wife' and insists I name him 'husband' but it is all just a game, just a silly game. One day I shall have a proper husband, a man of wealth and position. For now, I only amuse myself and even though people think Dereham a rogue and a reprobate, he is very handsome.

I am returning from the garden when someone grabs my wrist and drags me into a side chamber.

"Let go! Let go!" I cry in alarm as I wriggle to free myself but then, recognising the familiar laughter of my 'husband,' I relax into his embrace.

"You are bad, husband ..." I murmur against the roughness of his beard. His lips are hot on my neck as he lifts my skirts, spreads my thighs and takes me against the wall – the encounter is short, sharp and swift.

A door bangs somewhere in the palace and he pulls away, leaves me breathless when he slinks out without thanking me. I tug down my petticoats and run into the hall where I almost collide with my grandmother. She stops sharply and her horrid little dog barks shrilly at me as she looks down her long nose, her dewlap quivering with indignation. Her elderly retinue of women do the same. With great fear I stare up at the ring of cracked faces and read the condemnation in their faded eyes. The aroma of sickness and approaching death wafts about them like an invisible shroud. They are mouldering even as they live and despise me for my youth and energy, the long years I have yet to live. I swear I shall never grow so decrepit.

"Is that you, Katherine?"

Grandmother's gaze sweeps up and down my body, taking in my crumpled skirts, the badly sewn repair on my bodice that has grown too tight of late. Imagining myself in silk and velvet, I straighten my faded hood and sink into an unnecessarily deep curtsey.

"It is, Grandmother. I hope you and your ladies are well today."

My heart is thumping. Had she arrived but a few seconds sooner she'd have seen Dereham taking leave of me. I go cold imagining the consequences had she guessed the cause of my crumpled clothes and flushed cheeks.

She slaps her fan into the palm of the woman at her elbow and reaches out, places her finger beneath my chin and tilts my face upward to allow the light to fall on it. I close my eyes and pray the marks of Dereham's beard are not livid on my neck.

"Exquisite." She says, addressing no-one in particular.
"Quite exquisite. We must soon set our minds to finding you a husband."

As she sweeps on and turns a corner, I dig my teeth into my lip and dread the day she discovers I am already pledged.

A few days later, my measurements are taken and new clothes ordered. Not just workaday clothes but courtly robes; kirtles, sleeves, gowns of velvet and silk, and hoods encrusted with jewels. When I try them on and strut about the chamber my companions exclaim loudly and jealously but Dereham says nothing as he watches me darkly from the corner.

Later, in the privacy of our bed, he rolls upon me, trapping me in his embrace, his nose an inch from mine. I can smell the wine and spices on his breath, see the pores on his nose, the regrowth of his beard.

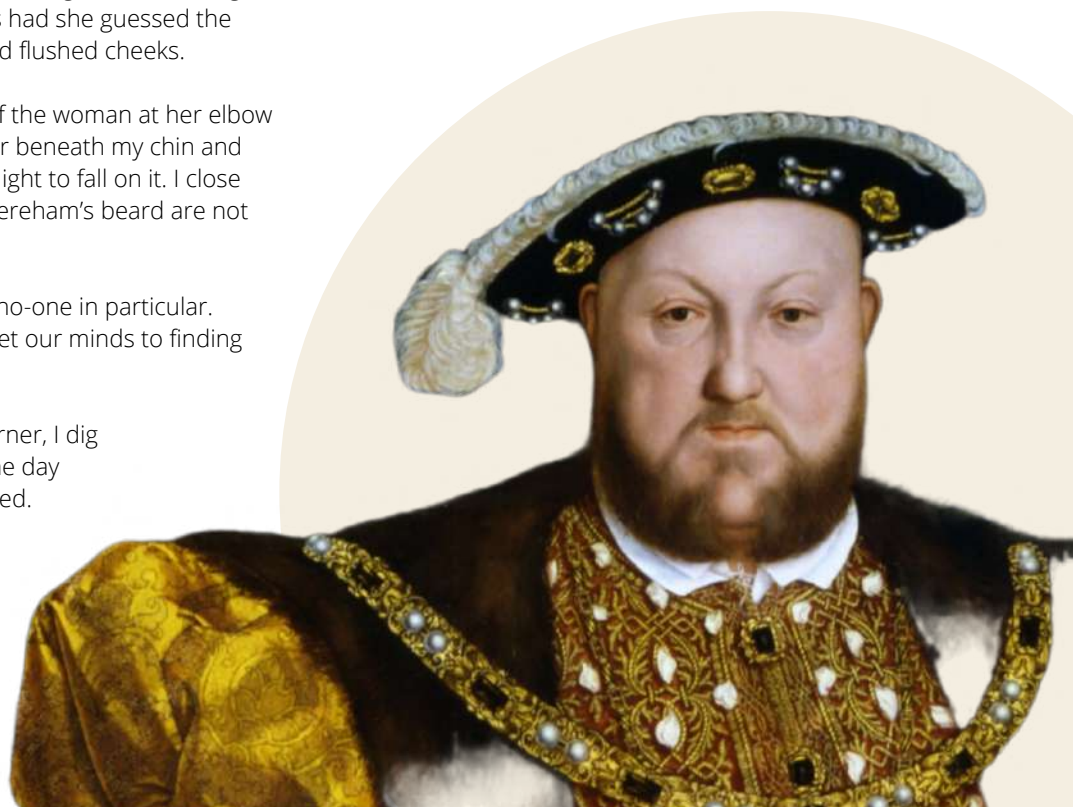
"They are going to marry you to some fat old squire and you will be lost to me forever."

I laugh gently and place a hand either side of his face.

"That is not possible, my love," I murmur, not quite meeting his eye. "I am your wife and nothing can change that."

It is not true, of course. Even as I say it I know my future is not my own. Grandmother and my uncle, the Duke of Norfolk will present me with a suitor very soon. It is not a day I am looking forward to but when it arrives and I am told to prepare myself for a proposal, the last person I expect to come courting is King Henry.

My old life is cast off like a worn glove. My former friends fall away as I am propelled into the highest company in the land. I am no longer the forgotten granddaughter of a duke but the most important woman at court. As I climb higher and higher in the king's favour, people whisper that he has taken leave of his senses. It is not until I am confronted with the obscenity of what lies beneath his robes that I realise what they meant.



When Anne was queen, Henry was still young and vigorous. It will not have been as bad for her. The king I marry is diseased and unhinged. My body revolts at his very touch and it is all I can do not to slap his hands. But I have long been used to the unwanted attentions of men. I learned young how to turn my face away and pretend it is all happening to someone else.

The act does not take long. The king is old and struggles to do his duty. I am many years his junior but I am woman enough to endure him. While he pants and slobbers I focus my thoughts on my stuffed jewel coffers, my overflowing wardrobe, the little lap dog he gave me.

I can bear this, I tell myself. I will outlive him and then I will marry a man of my own choosing. Things are not as bad as all that.

But then, he begins to ask on a monthly basis if there are any signs that I am with child. Of course, there are not! How can I birth a child when he has not fully managed to ... do what needs to be done?

I have to take action. I have to try to get with child and if the king is incapable, then I must look elsewhere.

As soon as I am queen, my old friends come in search of preferment and, in a flurry of panic, I give them what they ask. Some of the women who once shared my bedchamber at my grandmother's house are now part of my royal household. They know everything about me and so does Henry Manox whom I also dare not turn away. And then Dereham arrives, full of bravado at having bedded a queen. When I received him in private to try to instruct him to be silent, he doesn't greet me as a queen but as his wife. I push him away and try to make him see reason, beg his discretion but he is foolish and boastful. In truth, he no longer holds any fascination for me. I cannot imagine what I ever found so charming.

Shortly after I wed the king, another gentleman, Thomas Culpepper, caught my eye. Tom is wild and dangerous but I am held so fast in his trap I fear there can be no escape.

How we laughed, Tom and I, how glibly we dined with death. I forgot I was Henry's queen and longed always to be in Tom's company, and even when it became impossibly dangerous for us to go on, I could not, would not give him up. In the king's presence, Tom was obedient and attentive but I quickly discovered he revelled in the thrill of adventure. He rode the fastest horses, played the highest stakes, and trifled where he could with the wives of his friends. He saw me as one more challenge, one more petticoat to be lifted. I knew all this but the knowledge did not stop me from loving him.

I've not been as wicked as people say. If you don't include the dalliances at my grandmother's house, there's only ever been Tom. Tom Culpepper, for all his naughtiness, is the only man I've ever really wanted, the only one I ever loved ... and still love to this day.

Poor Tom is past both pain and pleasure now. His broken body lies in an unmarked grave while his boiled and tarred head is impaled high upon London Bridge. My confessor assures me he burns in hell and threatens that if I do not recant my sin I will burn alongside him. If I am to die, I do not care if I go to hell ... as long as Tom is there.

I screamed when they came to take me but I am calmer now. I have had weeks to prepare myself, to grow calm at the thought of death. Last night, I asked for the block to be brought to my prison so I could practise how to correctly place my head upon it. It is important that I die well, as my cousin did.

Henry cared enough for Anne to send to Calais for a swordsman but I am given no such consideration. I shall die by the axe which is somehow less noble than death by sword. I hope I shall not make a muddle of it.

I turn my head sharply toward the sound of approaching footsteps. The key turns in the lock, the door swings open to reveal my confessor has come to escort me to my death. He greets me cordially, as if it is an ordinary day and bids me kneel that we might pray together.

I lower my head, close my eyes but I don't believe God is listening. He cannot hear me. I cannot hear him. My head is empty. My soul is numb. When my confessor marks a cross upon my brow I do not feel blessed and the tears that glisten on his lashes betray a sorrow I do not share. My own eyes are dry.

The February sky is bright after the darkness of my prison. I blink until my vision returns and discover it is my favourite sort of day. Usually on such a morning I would call for my horse and gallop across heath and forest, a hawk on my wrist and my heart full of joy. I recall the recent laughter of my companions as we rode out, Henry beside me on his own mount, his fat, red face benevolent and full of love. *How can he mean to kill me?*

The screech of a raven draws my attention back to the present. I hold up a hand, shield my eyes from the sun's glare, and focus on the dark cloud of raucous birds that circle the castle green. It is as if they are laughing at the mournful cavalcade below.

As I am led through the crowd toward the scaffold, the people drag off their caps. One or two of them call my name, and some of them appear to be weeping but I keep my head lowered, my eyes focussed on the priest's heels that flick rhythmically from beneath his cassock.

The steps rear before me, too steep to climb. All strength drains from my limbs until strong arms grasp me and bear me to the top. I stand with the brisk February wind in my ears and look without seeing across the sea of strangers gathered. What stories will they tell of me when I am gone?

My eyes stray to the block; a ghastly island in an ocean of fetid straw. I turn to my women. I must say something, thank them for their care but the words will not come so I turn away again. Someone nudges me from behind. As I stumble forward the faces of the onlookers gape greedily, waiting, longing for me to fail.

They do not know me.

The people of England are so accustomed to death they are no longer sickened by bloodshed. All they see is another of Henry's queens succumbing to his will. *I must die well.*

I think of Anne who wasted her last words with a blessing on the king. But she had Elizabeth to think of. To speak of the injustice of her death would have meant punishment for her daughter. I have nobody. I shall not be missed.

I moisten my lips, take a breath, one of my last, and clear my throat.

'Good people ...' I begin but I cannot think what else to say. My mind is empty. In a rush of panic, I stutter something about a 'just and worthy punishment' and thrust a bag of coin into the hands of the masked man.

Why did I lie? There has never been anything in my life that is either 'just' or 'worthy.' I open my mouth to address the crowd again, to rectify some wrongs but hands are pushing me downward and I am on my knees in the straw.

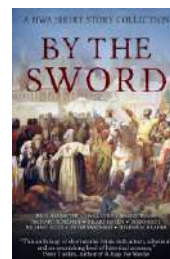
It reeks of piss and is slimy beneath my hands. Wetness soaks my petticoats. I shiver as the sun slips behind a cloud, turning the world dark. My hair is pulled back and cold fingers fumble with the blindfold.

It is even darker now.

I think of Thomas, gone before me into ... into what? Perhaps the hereafter holds only darkness.

Blindly, I reach for the rough, splintered wood of the block, my mouth gaping as my courage fails. My breath rasps as with palsied hands, I lower my head ...

God have mercy, God have mercy!



No Other Will Than His forms part of the HWA Short Story Collection, *By The Sword*.





CHRISTOPHER JOLL

IMPERIAL IMPRESARIO

Napoleonica, the artefacts and collectibles from the Emperor's era, makes for a fascinating world of imperial iconography. From seemingly prosaic items such as horse hooves to the more impressive throne and robes, they all tell a story.

It is no coincidence that the membership of London's Garrick Club, whose motto is *All The World's A Stage*, has a higher proportion of politicians than actors amongst its members. Indeed, during Mrs Thatcher's administration, the Members' Bar at lunchtime frequently looked like an informal gathering of the Cabinet; but then politicians are, by default, actors. This is because, since time immemorial, politics has involved a great deal of 'performance' on the part of its practitioners: from the hustings to the debating chamber. A handful of actors have even abandoned the greasepaint in favour of the ballot box, although not always with success.

Enduring political stars are, however, rare and it is not just the script and the performances that generate longevity in office. In politics, as with the theatre, the supporting actors, the costumes, the sets, the props, the merchandising, the tours, the reviews and the fan clubs are all part of the success or otherwise of the show, albeit – when it comes to make-up – varying in quality from the sublimity of Tutankhamen's gold death mask to the bizarre haircut of President Kim Jong Un.

Political power is also hedged around with a great deal of pageantry, which is nothing if it is not 'theatre', and which requires skilled choreography to make it work. That said, success at the time does not guarantee a legacy: the panoply of Persia's shahs and the rigid etiquette of Versailles under the Bourbons are all vanished and the sinister sets made for Italy's Fascist and Germany's National Socialist rallies have all been swept away or repurposed.

The same is true of political monuments. Despite the carefully choreographed ceremonies, the monumentalised images in bronze and stone, and the thornless red roses – the grotesque statues, the scenes of dictatorial triumphs and the scented imagery are all gone with the wind. Indeed, for the impresarios of power in Tripoli, Baghdad, Persepolis, Berlin, Rome and elsewhere, all that remains are fragments in paint, stone, brick, bronze, porcelain, silver and gold. As Percy Bysshe Shelley so eloquently expressed it in *Ozymandias*:

**I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert... Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.'**

Napoleon's Mameluke dressing gown



This was not, however, the fate of the greatest of all political impresarios: Napoleon Bonaparte. For not only does most of his legacy remain but, unlike the Caesars, the kings, the dictators and the spin doctors, who often had decades in power, it took Napoleon just a few short years in which to create – in every conceivable medium – the enduring image of First Empire France as the 19th century's version of Imperial Rome: an absolutist empire based on a revolutionary republic.

The many tangible remains of this grand, imperial *mise en scène* – from the larger-than-life marble statues to monogrammed silk stockings – have ever since excited collectors, while his buildings and monuments still draw visitors in their hundreds of thousands.

Even more extraordinarily, the collecting of Napoleonica started while the man himself was still alive and was led by his principal enemy, the portly Prince Regent. For, while somewhat dementedly claiming the credit for toppling Napoleon, His Royal Highness stated openly his wish to exceed the Empire style and was a serious collector not only of French furniture of the period, but also of personal items belonging to, or associated with, the Emperor. These intimate artefacts included Napoleon's Mameluke dressing gown and a brace of imperial gilt-lined silver chamber pots.

Prinny was not, however, the only royal collector of Napoleonica. King Frederick William III of Prussia was more than pleased to receive the Emperor's hat, sword, and personal orders and decorations, sent to him by Marshal Blücher after Waterloo. These he put on a display at the Prussian Hall of Fame in the Zeughaus (Arsenal) Museum in Berlin (now the German Historical Museum). Unfortunately, all but the bicorne were 'acquired' by the Russians in 1945

and can now be seen in the State Hermitage Collection. Queen Alexandra, as Princess of Wales, created a room at Marlborough House dedicated to Napoleon and filled it with French imperial memorabilia. Her daughter-in-law, the formidably acquisitive Queen Mary, bought or was 'given' a number of Bonaparte-related items, some of which were of dubious provenance. And Prince Louis II of Monaco created an entire Napoleonica museum in his tiny Mediterranean principality.

Beyond the courts of Europe, the collecting of items that had belonged to, or were associated with, the Emperor was shared by many leading figures of his day including the 6th Duke of Devonshire, the 3rd Earl of Onslow, and William Bullock, owner of Bullock's Museum on Piccadilly. Later collectors included Madame Tussaud and the 1st Viscount Leverhulme.

In the course of *The Imperial Impresario* frequent reference is made to three highly important, collector-related events in the history of Napoleonica. The first was the sale of a collection of items seized in the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 and displayed at Bullock's Museum in the Egyptian Hall on London's Piccadilly, from where they were auctioned on Friday 11th June 1819. William Bullock is best described as an entrepreneur. His fortune was derived from his goldsmith and jewellery business in Birmingham, but his fame derives from his short-lived museum, variously known as Bullock's Museum, Bullock's Museum of Natural Curiosities and the London Museum. The auctioneer at the 1819 sale of the museum's contents was Mr Bullock himself and the sale catalogue, annotated in his own hand with information on provenance, the prices paid and the names of the buyers, still exists and is extensively quoted in *The Imperial Impresario*. So successful was the sale that Bullock



Madame Tussaud

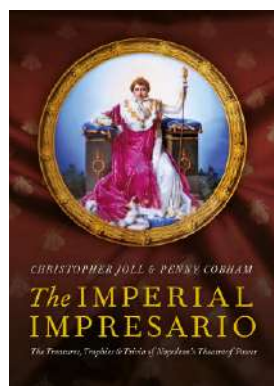
commenced a third career as an auctioneer, using his vacant Piccadilly premises for the purpose.

Many of the items bought in the Bullock sale, and other items of Napoleonica that were acquired from Bullock before the sale or elsewhere, ended up in Madame Tussaud's Exhibition on Baker Street and, sadly, were lost in the fire that devastated the upper floors of the building on the night of 18th March 1925. Known today for the waxworks that still bear her name, until the fire Marie Tussaud's exhibition was, in fact, more in the nature of a museum of curiosities of which the most important component was her collection of Napoleonica. Madame Tussaud, who was a Swiss wax modeller, had experienced the excesses of the French Revolution at first hand, and moved to London in 1802, where she immediately established her exhibition. Dying in 1850, the business of Madame Tussaud's was continued by three generations of her family, and it was her son and grandson who added much of the Napoleonica to the collection. In the course of the research for the book, the authors were given access to Madame Tussaud's Napoleonica archive, which includes a comprehensive catalogue of the items lost in the fire, prices paid for certain items and some images that are published in the book for the first time.

Lastly, on 15th and 16th November 2014, the bulk of the important collection of Napoleonica accumulated in the period 1922-1949 by Prince Louis II of Monaco was auctioned at Versailles by Osenat. Prince Louis was a former soldier and related to Napoleon through his mother, the grand-daughter of Stéphanie de Beauharnais, Grand Duchess of Baden, who was the Emperor's adopted daughter and Josephine's second cousin. His extensive collection of Napoleonica was exhibited in the Musée des Souvenirs Napoléoniens in the Palace of Monaco until the sale in 2014. The well-researched, two-volume catalogue for that sale has informed some of the contents of the book.

Today – in addition to the many extant buildings, monuments and works-of-art – contemporary souvenirs and personal items of Napoleonica can be found in numerous royal, national, military and private collections around the world, including those of the co-authors. And when personal items of Napoleonica appear on the open market they command enormous prices: one of the twenty surviving French-made bicorne hats worn by the Emperor sold in 2014 for nearly £2 million and, were it ever to come on the market, his own diamond-encrusted snuff box, which sold in 1819 for £166 (2020: £14,880), would now sell for substantially more than his hat.

The Imperial Impresario is not, however, a book about Napoleon; that section of the library shelf is already overcrowded. Nor is it a comprehensive catalogue of museums with collections of Napoleonica; many such institutions, including the Musée Masséna in Nice and the Musée Marmattan in Paris are not included. It is, instead, a contextual examination of a representative cross-section of the relics from the Emperor's deliberately Roman-themed amphitheatre of power, that were created under the aegis of the Imperial Impresario himself, and which still exist in profusion – some with enormous value – two hundred years after his death in 1821 on St Helena.



Christopher Joll is the official historian of the Household Cavalry, and the author of *Spoils of War* and *The Speedicut Memoirs*. His latest book is *The Imperial Impresario: The Treasures, Trophies & Trivia of Napoleon's Theatre of Power* published by Nine Elms Books.



Napoleon's bicorne hat

A black and white photograph of David Kynaston, an older man with a mustache, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is seated at a desk, looking slightly to the right of the camera. Behind him is a bookshelf filled with books. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

DAVID KYNASTON

THE SUMMER OF '62

1962 was really the start of the sixties, so David Kynaston argues. He takes us back to a four month period that whilst familiar, is also alien, with bands such as the Stones and Beatles on the up, but homosexuality was still illegal and open racism commonplace.



The Rolling Stones in 1965

Glimpses of Britain in summer 1962. The actor Kenneth Williams “disgusted” in Hyde Park by the sight of men receiving “kissings & caressings” from their female companions; a sharp polio outbreak in Dundee; health minister Enoch Powell wanting hospitals to allow daily visiting; the TV soap *Compact* fading out considerably when a pregnant character’s labour pains began; Harold in *Step toe and Son* causing a sensation by using the swear word “bleeding”; BBC’s Richard Dimbleby welcoming “our friend Telstar” as the first live pictures were beamed from across the Atlantic; a survey of teenage consumption finding that boys on average spent almost 15 shillings per week more than girls; London’s magnificent Coal Exchange briefly open to the public before the wrecking ball arrived; a former Tory MP receiving a four-year prison sentence for homosexual offences; sixteen-year-old Syd Barrett, future inspirational genius of Pink Floyd, caned for “absences”, shortly before leaving his Cambridge school for good; colour slides, as exhibited by district nurse Miss Punshon, among the attractions at the annual church fete at Lodgers Court in Dorset; and in Blackpool, still unrivalled home of the traditional British seaside holiday, Thora Hird starring at the Grand Theatre, Ken Dodd at the Opera House, Arthur Haynes in a record-breaking season at the Winter Gardens, and of course Sooty and Sweep at the South Pier’s Rainbow Theatre.

On the Cusp, the latest in my post-war sequence *Tales of a New Jerusalem*, is largely about four months – the four months before, on 5 October 1962, the premiere of the first James Bond film, *Dr No*, coincided with the release of the first Beatles single, “Love Me Do”. That particular day, I would argue, represents as good a date as any to mark the real start of that semi-mythical period, “the Sixties”. And through a wide range of sources – especially diaries and local newspapers – I try to give a flavour of what Britain was like just before a major wave of change. A moment in time in a sense utterly remote; yet also, in some distinct ways, feeling like the day before yesterday.

Including by 1962 the vexed question of Europe, as Harold Macmillan’s Conservative government awaited the outcome of its recent application to join the European Economic Community, created five years earlier and widely known as the Common Market. But at this stage in what would be the long and tragi-comic saga of Britain’s relationship with its nearest neighbours, it was the Conservatives who were pushing for Britain to join and Labour which was largely against. Macmillan’s grand geo-political design was that membership would enable Britain to be the indispensable link between Europe and America, while in a TV address to the nation he projected Britain-in-Europe as a symbol of progress and modernity, an end to “old disputes” and “obsolete conceptions”. By contrast, addressing Labour’s party conference at Brighton, his opposite number Hugh Gaitskell won a standing ovation as he warned of the end of “a thousand years of history” if Britain were to join. And the great British public, what did they think? Certainly no talk of a referendum, but opinion polls suggested a small majority in favour, though with what the shrewd observer Mollie Panter-Downes described as “a steadily increasing rumble of doubts”. Yet at this point, most would probably have agreed with the diarist Anthony Heap. “What a bore the Common Market has become!” he reflected. “Personally I’ve no strong feelings in the matter one way or t’other.”

Sadly, the same did not apply to non-white immigration from the Commonwealth, where almost all the evidence points to those immigrants – mainly from the West Indies, India and Pakistan – being viewed and treated on a negative spectrum which ranged from mistrust and suspicion at one end to outright hostility at the other. During these four months alone, trade unionists employed at an aluminium works in Banbury were asked in a secret ballot, “Should coloured workers be admitted to the factory?”, and voted 591-205 against; anti-black supporters of Sir Oswald Mosley were on the “Keep Britain White” march, including in Dalston’s Ridley Road; four consecutive nights of race riots in Dudley saw

armed white men behaving (in the police's words) "like a pack of ravening wolves after their prey"; not so far away in Smethwick, the future Conservative MP Peter Griffiths was stirring up trouble; while as for housing, the discrimination against non-white immigrants was systemic (whether from local councils or private landlords) and the conditions almost uniformly appalling. "You would telephone for a flat or a room, mostly, and the person would say, 'Yes, it's vacant, come and get it,'" recalled Eric Huntley, who had arrived from Guyana some years earlier, about his ongoing experiences in north London. "And then you'd get there, it was so obvious that when you got there, as soon as she saw your face it's gone."

In what was still an overwhelmingly monocultural society, with non-white residents comprising barely 1 per cent of the total UK population, this was particularly so in rural Britain. There, the consequences of the 1947 Agriculture Act – essentially, the provision of cheap food for urban consumers through price-support manipulation, capital grants, subsidies and so on for the not always especially grateful farmers – were by 1962, for better or worse, being played out. These included rapidly increasing mechanisation (tractors, combine harvesters, milking machines), a much-reduced need for manpower, ever more relentless emphasis on size (above all in England's eastern counties), and the application of science in many and varied forms, such as genetic, nutritional and chemical. About to be published was Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, instantly acclaimed as a powerful indictment of how an agricultural juggernaut was wilfully destroying nature and biodiversity, symbolised respectively by the disappearing hedgerow and the disappearing peregrine. But as yet, in a society where the modernity zeitgeist still seemingly ruled, there was little sign of any political will, or indeed serious wider demand, to take on and reform that mighty juggernaut.

Instead, where there was increasing impatience from that zeitgeist was with the public-school-and-Oxbridge-educated Establishment, viewed by many as too old, too amateur in approach, and too out of touch with the rest of society. Anthony Sampson's *Anatomy of Britain*, published in June, was a best-seller, chiming in with that critical mood as it portrayed a country badly in need of an infusion of hard-headed, unsentimental, classless professionalism – the very antithesis, in other words, of the Macmillan's Edwardian, grouse-moor image. Appropriately, this was the cricket season which saw, just a few weeks after Sampson's book, the final iteration of the contest at Lord's between the Gentlemen (i.e. the amateurs) and the Players (i.e. the professionals), a fixture going back to 1806. Even more potently, David Frost and co were limbering up with *That Was the Week That Was*, not starting for real until November but already being piloted. Two years on from *Beyond the Fringe*, the first great irreverent breakthrough of the satire movement, this would be the TV programme – loved, loathed and feared in roughly equal proportions – which more than any other defined the rest of the decade.

Is there a direct line to be drawn from the coruscating *TW3* through to the populist, anti-Establishment vote for Leave in the 2016 referendum? More plausible perhaps, as a connection across the half-century, is the way in which by 1962 a newly reinvigorated debate about the North-South question, relatively quiescent since the inter-war slump, anticipated the anti-London aspect of that vote and indeed presaged the current "levelling up" agenda. "The idea that over the past few years two Englands have taken shape, one in the North and the other in the South, unequal socially and economically, has become our major domestic preoccupation," Geoffrey Moorhouse would note soon afterwards in his Penguin Special, *The Other England*, against a

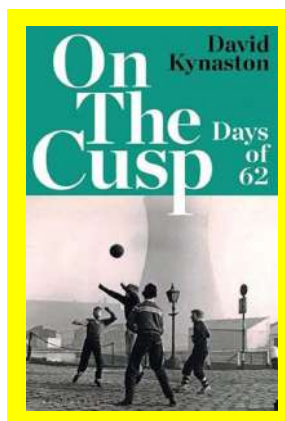


That Was the Week That Was

background of the traditional staple industries (coal, cotton, steel) in palpable decline, accompanied by large-scale population drift southwards. It was no wonder that many northern city councils were by now pinning their hopes on large-scale urban redevelopment – all too often with disastrous consequences not only for the city centres themselves, but for the cohesion of working-class communities. Did popular culture potentially offer an alternative route to a northern renaissance? British cinema's New Wave, majoring on emphatically non-southern social realism (including in 1962 itself *A Kind of Loving*, with *This Sporting Life* and *Billy Liar* both in production), was already raising general awareness of the north; so too *Coronation Street*, twice-weekly on ITV since December 1960; and soon the rest of Britain was about to hear a distinctive sound from Merseyside.

A "refreshing, do-it-yourself approach" was how the *Liverpool Echo* greeted the imminent release of "Love Me Do", that historic Parlophone single's first review. Certainly the pop world – and indeed the wider cultural world – needed by autumn 1962 the raw energy of the Beatles. Big hits that summer had included Elvis Presley's "Good Luck Charm", Cliff Richard's "I'm Lookin' out the Window" and Mike Sarne's "Come Outside"; average age on a typical edition of *Juke Box Jury* was in the mid-thirties; and novelty records like Charlie

Drake's "My Boomerang Won't Come Back" were still on teenagers' lips. Even so, it was unlikely all to happen overnight. Playing on that legendary October 5th, in the back room of a pub in North Cheam, were a recently formed rhythm 'n blues group called the Rolling Stones. Only two people paid to see them perform, while four people stood outside listening for free. In what remained deep down a socially very conservative country, resistant to change and obstinately believing that British was best, the "real" 1960s were off to a patchy start.



David Kynaston is a bestselling and acclaimed historian and author of *City of London: The History*, *Austerity Britain: 1945-51*, *Family Britain: 1951-57* and *Modernity Britain 1957-62* (2 volumes). His latest book is *On the Cusp: Days of '62*. He is currently a visiting professor at Kingston University.



The Beatles perform on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1964

ADAM ZAMOYSKI & 1812:

Napoleon's Fatal March on Moscow.



Our latest Book Club title is the epic story of Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Russia, 1812, by Adam Zamoyski. This book was a bestseller when released, and was notable for its use of Russian, Polish, German and of course, French accounts. In this interview, with questions from our readers, we discussed the book itself, how close Napoleon was to victory, and the horrific experience of the soldiers on all sides.

1812: Napoleon's Fatal March on Moscow was an immediate success when it came out in 2004, and a Sunday Times bestseller. Were you surprised by the extent of the success of the book? After all, the British experience of the Napoleonic Wars was in the Peninsular and at Waterloo. 1812 also became a bestseller in Germany. Is the German audience, along with the British, split in its view towards Napoleon?

When I embarked on the subject I thought it would just be another military and diplomatic history. But when I got stuck into the research I became aware of the epic, and at the same time absurd, nature of the stand-off Napoleon and Alexander had got themselves into. And when I delved into the detail of the military operations and the physical aspects of living with or dying of, the extremes of heat and cold, of hunger and thirst, of cruelty and compassion, I knew this was a potential winner. Although there was no British involvement and the story was only known to the average person in this country through Tolstoy's War and Peace, I knew that if people began reading they would be gripped, if only by the almost lurid physical details.

I'm not sure whether most of the readers actually picked up

the extraordinary ironies implicit in the causes of the war; here were two men seemingly all-powerful emperors ruling over multitudes and vast resources, both inexorably forced to make war by their psychological insecurities. The book's even greater success in Germany I cannot explain, as I do not really know the readership there. But I suspect part of the reason was that although the struggle between Napoleon and Alexander was largely about who would dominate Central Europe, and therefore Germany, and although vast numbers of Germans fought and died in the campaign, it had not been properly written about before.

As for attitudes to Napoleon, they are highly complicated and often irrational. There are definitely more open admirers of Napoleon in Britain than in France, and as far as I can tell he arouses mixed emotions in Germany, probably affected by which part of Germany one is talking about. He did do much for areas of southern Germany, but treated Prussia abominably and humiliated it repeatedly.

The invasion of Russia in 1812 was an epic clash - Emperor Napoleon and Tsar Alexander, France and her empire v. Russia and its own, West vs. East. Was this fundamental clash - of cultures, personalities and arms - central in relation to why you wrote the book?

To be honest, I didn't really have much of an idea of what the war was really about when I began working on the book. I suppose I must have nurtured the widespread assumption that it was the ultimate expression of Napoleon's megalomania. And after researching and writing the book I don't think it was either inevitable or that it was some kind of clash of cultures. Quite the contrary, in fact. Leaving aside the loss of life and misery it cost, the real tragedy lies in what it did to Russian society, and, in consequence, to Russia's relationship with the rest of Europe ever since. The war of the Second coalition drew Russia into the heart of European affairs and her armies into Italy and Switzerland, whence they were humiliatingly expelled. Russia's participation in the Third Coalition once again involved it in the affairs of Europe, and humiliated her thoroughly with the crushing defeats of Austerlitz and Friedland. Russian society, which had in the previous decades been growing more integrated into European culture (the nobility spoke French, was drawn to the ideas of the Enlightenment and was even drifting away from the Orthodox church), felt these humiliations keenly. Napoleon's invasion was the final insult, and I think it elicited something of a psychological retreat into what for lack of a better word one might term an Asiatic tactic, allowing the French to take Moscow rather than stoop to parley with the enemy. Stung in its most sensitive spot, psychologically speaking, Russian society closed in on itself and has from then on viewed the West as the eternal enemy. Had these wars not taken place, it seems highly likely that the Russian world would have fused gradually with the rest of Europe. I am not saying there would not have been wars, but they might not have been dominated by the fierce sense of victimhood which has bred in the Russian psyche a default aggression.

You drew on a huge number of first-hand accounts, in a variety of languages. It is a great advertisement as to why historians should be versed in more than one language. What advice would you give a young historian, as to learning different languages and researching European history?

This is a very good question, and in my case very much of the essence. I went up to Oxford to read History, but found the curriculum and the way it was taught profoundly uninspiring, and above all parochial. We were studying the Chartists, with, I might add, a very left-wing slant. There was no mention of what was going on elsewhere in Europe. I assumed that as we came closer to 1848 there might be some reference to Lamartine, Mazzini and other revolutionaries, not to mention Karl Marx, but the great pan-European wave of revolutions was totally ignored. This was halfway through my second term, and on leaving the seminar in question I decided to switch to Modern Languages – which I chose partly out of laziness, since I had spoken French from the cradle and I knew Russian well enough to pass an A level in (if I remember correctly, in those days the only languages on offer at Oxford were French, German, Spanish and Russian). This turned out to be one of the best decisions I have taken. I spent the rest of my days at Oxford essentially reading the literatures of France and Russia.



Since all literature was interconnected and educated people in those days kept abreast of what was written in other parts of Europe, this covered pretty much the whole canon of Enlightenment thought, the Romantic movement and early capitalism and socialism. And it taught me a good deal more about history than any history tutorials or seminars. First, by studying the works which formed their patterns of rational or irrational thought, stirred their emotions and inflamed their imaginations, I learnt what and how people thought, how they behaved and how they saw the world. Second, I was able to read sources as they were meant to be read: on the one hand, languages change and words come to mean more or less subtly different things with the passage of time, and on the other, people in those days often expressed themselves through literary references – none more so than Napoleon, who was always referring to the works of Corneille, Racine, Voltaire, Rousseau and so on. I cannot imagine how anyone who has not read *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, *Paul et Virginie*, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, and all the plays of Corneille and Racine, along with the James Macpherson's Ossianic fantasies, could begin to get into the mind of Napoleon.

How important was the Continental System as the driver to war, and in limiting the resources available to the Grand Armée once it had crossed the Niemen?

The Continental System was absolutely key to what took place from the Berlin Decrees of 1807 onwards. Napoleon had placed himself in a trap of his own making; he had to impose on all his allies a ruinous blockade which in the end left them no choice but to smuggle or defy him. This was what lay behind his involvement in Spain as well as Germany and Russia. And of course it undermined the French economy it was supposed to protect. It is true that it did bring Britain to the brink of serious civil unrest by 1812 and had he been able to keep it up for another year it might well have brought her to the negotiating table. Trade wars tend to be self-defeating.

Prior to the invasion, Poland seemed to be involved in a tug of war between Napoleon and Alexander over whether the Duchy of Poland was to remain in existence. Ultimately, Napoleon chose honour and protecting the Duchy. Does that mean we should look on the invasion with sympathy? After all, Poland contributed 95,000 men to the invasion force.

Poland was caught between the hammer and the anvil. It had been wiped off the map in 1795 by Russia, Prussia and Austria, and after defeating Prussia and Russia in 1807 Napoleon created the Grand Duchy of Warsaw out of the part Prussia had helped itself to. Then, during the war with Austria in 1809 the Poles had liberated the part of their country Austria had taken, but Napoleon did not want to antagonise Russia too much at that stage, so he would not let them keep all of it. Polish society was split. There were those who thought a Polish state allied to Russia was a surer bet, since Russia still ruled most of the former Polish lands and Tsar Alexander was well disposed to them. Others believed that Napoleon would be a more reliable liberator and protector. But Alexander was not free to do as he wished since Russian public opinion would not tolerate the restoration of a credible Polish state, while Napoleon would not commit himself since he was prepared to trade Poland in return for Alexander enforcing the Continental System. The problem at the heart of the events of 1812 is that Napoleon did not have a clear war aim or a long-term strategy, and he wanted to keep all options open. That was his undoing.

The Battle of Borodino was a pivotal moment. Had Napoleon delivered a final coup de grace, in the form of the Guard, how significant would that have been to the result of the invasion?

Napoleon botched Borodino. Not only did he allow what was left of his cavalry to stand on horseback for hours within easy range of the Russian guns, thereby denying himself a vital asset, he failed to clinch what would have been a devastating victory by sending in the Guard. Had he done so, even the skeleton of the Russian army would have been torn apart, making it impossible for Kutuzov to rebuild a fighting force within a year. That would have made it well-nigh impossible for Alexander to field the army which was vital to the campaigns of 1813 and 1814.

Did Napoleon spend two weeks too long in Moscow, as he himself said later?

Definitely. People who left even one week earlier were able to travel back to France without much difficulty. And even if he had stayed on but sent back cavalrymen who had lost their horses, the lightly wounded, and some of his artillery a week or two earlier he would have saved thousands of lives, including those of the thousands of cavalrymen he would so sorely miss in the campaigns of 1813 and 1814. While he was able to scrape together a new army in the spring of 1813, he did not have time to train up horsemen, and his shortage of these saved the Russians and Prussians from total defeat at Lutzen and Bautzen.

The retreat was an absolutely tragic tale, and you give a vivid account of the horrors involved. Was this the beginning of the end for Napoleon?

It was a terrible business and it seriously dented his reputation as an unvanquished general. Although no other general could have saved as much as he did from disaster, or managed to inspire such feats as the crossing of the Berezina, it did dispel some of the magic which made the enemy quake. But it need not have spelt the end for him. He had plenty of opportunities in the course of 1813 to make peace on condition he gave up his grip over Germany and various other areas, such as the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Metternich begged him to do so as he hoped to keep him on the throne of France. Even Prince Joseph Poniatowski, the commander of his Polish contingent, urged him to make peace and give himself a breather so he could sally forth and defeat his enemies later.

But Napoleon was haunted by the conviction that if he made peace from apposition of weakness and gave up any of his conquests his reputation would be so dented that his claim to the throne would be fatally undermined. If he had been prepared in 1813 to accept a great deal more than he was prepared to in 1815, he would have kept his throne.

In 2018 you wrote an acclaimed biography of Napoleon (*Napoleon: The Man Behind the Myth*), but if you were to issue a new edition of 1812, is there anything you would amend or add?

Napoleon in a burning Moscow



I don't think so. My further studies of the man did yield more insights, but they would not have added anything to 1812, which was essentially about the campaign itself; more political context than I absolutely had to include would have made it top-heavy and too dense.

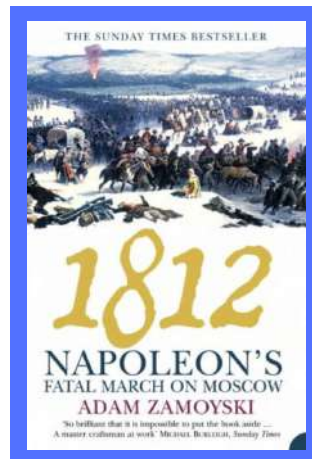
Finally, can you tell us a bit about what you are currently working on?

I have two books on contract at the moment. One is on Napoleon's intervention in Spain. One aspect of that is the Peninsular War, which is worth a good fresh look at in my opinion, as there are a numbers of myths here that need to be challenged. The idea of an idealistic guerrilla by patriotic Spaniards against the godless French invader most certainly needs to be qualified, as motivations were very mixed. A significant number of Spaniards supported French rule and fought against the British and Spanish troops. The British legend of a brilliant Wellington gallantly helping to liberate the oppressed Spanish people also needs a second look. The actual war, which was fought by as many different nationalities as that of 1812 (except for the Russians) was a nasty, dirty war which has many of the same elements as 1812, combining extraordinary savagery with appalling conditions.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect is Napoleon's attitude: whether consciously or not, he did everything he possibly could have to undermine his brother Joseph's rule, to hamper the military operations of his own armies and to turn the whole venture into a disaster that would contribute to his

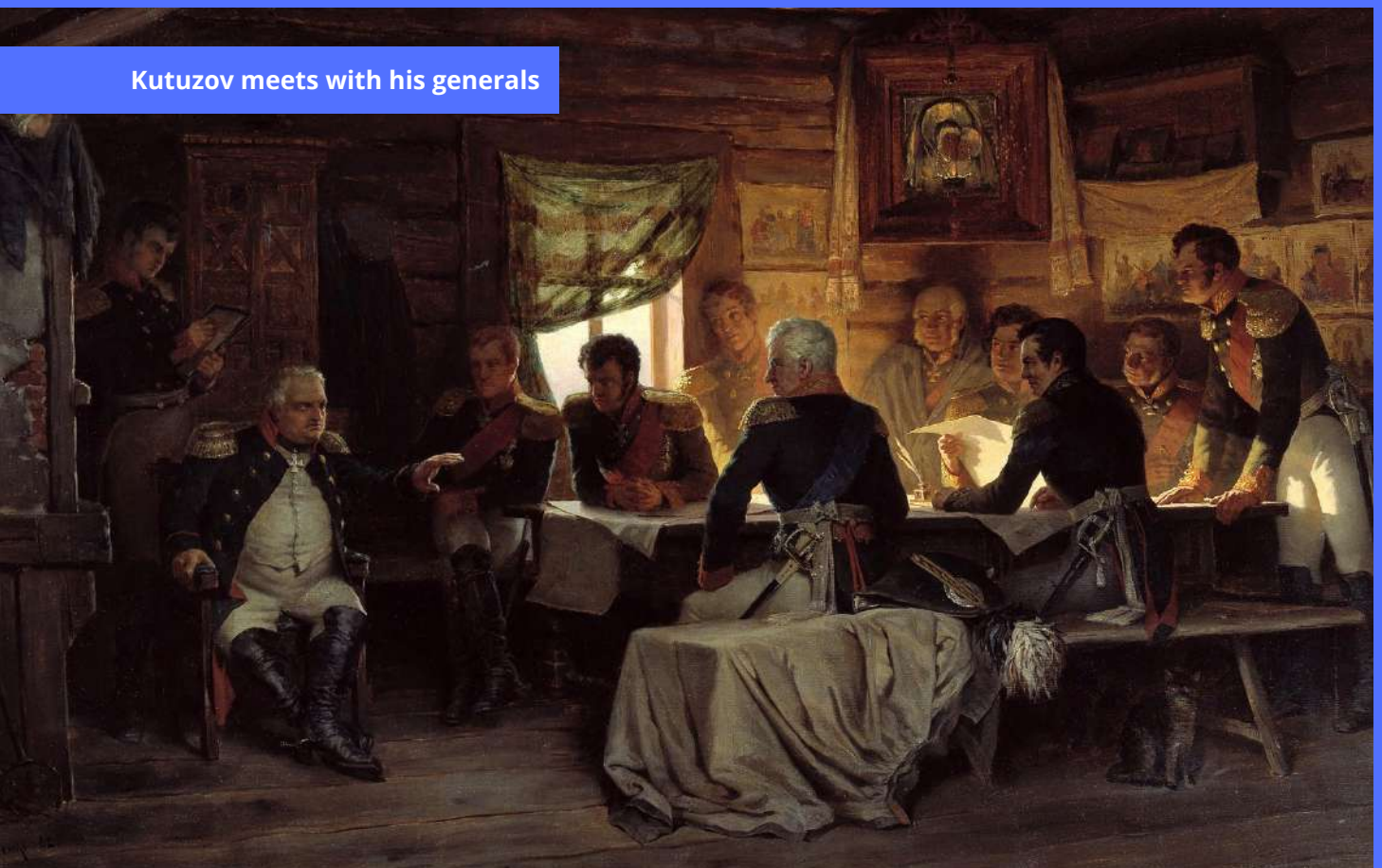
own downfall. I believe this subject contains many of the epic qualities that made 1812 so fascinating.

The other is a shorter book, a life of an ancestor of mine, a Polish girl who lived the most extraordinarily life from 1745 to 1835. It is a story of personal liberation, emotional turmoil, tragedy and triumph, of a woman who saw her world torn apart by the Partitions of Poland and the Napoleonic Wars. It is difficult to encapsulate in a couple of sentences, as it ranges widely, touches on many historical events, and the cast of characters includes Rousseau, Frederick the Great, Marie-Antoinette, Joseph II, Benjamin Franklin, Catherine the Great, Tsar Alexander, and many more.



Adam Zamoyski is the bestselling historian and author of *Napoleon: The Man Behind the Myth* and *Poland: A History*.

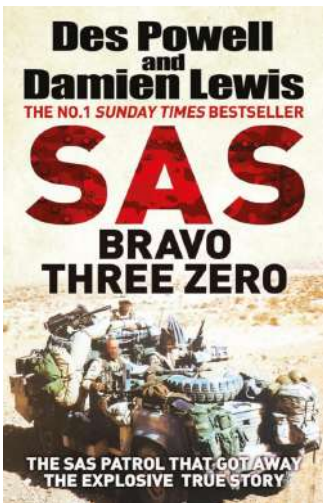
Kutuzov meets with his generals



SAS BRAVO THREE ZERO

by Des Powell & Damien Lewis

We all know about the Gulf War story Bravo Two Zero, but Bravo Three Zero was the successful operation. In this extract, Des Powell and his comrades reach a crucial point in their mission behind enemy lines in Iraq, 1990.



As we neared the high point we dropped to our knees, toppling out crawling on our bellies. Up here, the wind was utterly punishing, as it sliced across the open desert like a knife. It cut through the NBC suits as if they were made of paper, chilling us to the marrow. As we eased our heads over the lip of land, all of a sudden we spotted it. To the west, further away from the Main Supply Route, there was a massive halo of light illuminating a vast expanse of terrain. It reminded me of the kind of effect made by ranks of arc lights, when road crews work on the motorways at night. Beneath the lights it was a veritable hive of activity. Dark, ant-like figures dashed hither and thither, moving between trucks, jeeps and other vehicles.

It had to be Iraqi military, but was this the big one – the launch site for a Scud?

Keeping low, I broke out my pocket night-vision scope from my belt kit. I studied the scene for several long moments, sweeping the lenses this way and that. I could see a lot of men in uniforms, but very few weapons. They didn't strike

me as being a force preparing for some kind of a battle or sortie. It looked more like they were technicians – engineers? – preparing for some kind of military-engineering tech set-up.

But were they readying a Scud site? Was this what a Scud team in action looked like? What else might they be doing out here?

'What the hell d'you think it is?' Joe hissed.

I kept my eyes glued to the scope, as I shot back a reply: 'Bunch of RAF rock apes getting ready for their annual ball.'

'Yeah. Real funny.' Pause. 'But d'you think it could be a Scud crew? Preparing for a launch?'

'Dunno. Let's keep looking.'

I swept the scope this way and that, scanning for the smoking gun: the erect form of a V2-like missile, or a similar shape lying prone on its carrier. But no matter how hard I searched, I couldn't see anything remotely resembling a Scud. Of course, that didn't mean a thing. In the intel briefings we'd been told how Saddam had ordered the actual missiles to be delivered at the last moment, when the launch site was 100 per cent ready: that would minimize the risk of any being spotted and taken out.

Lying on our bellies in hiding, there was something mesmerizing about watching the frenetic preparations. Part of me was tempted to wait for as long as it took to actually witness the arrival of a Scud. Part of me just wanted to see one being jacked up to vertical on its launcher, as the entrails of the exhaust fumes began to curl around the base at its base, menacingly. But it made far

more sense to get the coordinates radioed back to HQ, so our fast jets could arrow in, take a look, and if necessary, hit them.

After spending a good thirty minutes on that ridgeline, the two of us were chilled to the core. Decked out in our noddy suits, I'd sweated profusely during the climb, and the congealed sweat was now freezing to my body, with embedded grains of sand for extra comfort. Much longer and we'd be like blocks of ice, welded to the ground. Forcing our limbs into motion, we scrambled downslope, moving back towards the vehicles.

Once we got there, we gathered everyone for a rushed con ab. Our mission was clear. It was not to attack; not to hit the enemy. It was to radio back intel on key targets. Trouble was, we didn't know if our messages were getting through. So, did we take matters into our own hands and launch some kind of assault? Even if we did, we had to wonder what our chances were with a target like this one.

There were eight of us, in a Pinkie and a Dinky. We had no heavy weapons and nothing to engage at long range. The beauty of the .50-cal and the Mk 19 grenade launchers was that you could lob in the rounds from a good 1,500 metres away and do some real damage. If the wagons were carrying that kind of armament, we could remain where we were and arc in the rear, with a spotter on the ridge calling in the shots. The enemy would be hit by utter surprise, and with a devastating barrage of rear.

As it was, even if by some miracle we managed to shoot up the enemy with the weapons we had to hand, what were our chances of making a getaway? Unless we disabled all their vehicles, they were likely to be as fast as we were across such ground, and very likely a lot slower. Big six-wheel-drive trucks of the types I'd seen would doubtless crunch and bust their way across the stony desert, whereas we had to feel a way through.

But the clincher was Chewie's take on things. Somehow, he was certain his signals were getting through. It was just the return messages that were proving somewhat elusive. In that case, if we could radio the enemy's coordinates to HQ, we had to presume there would follow the mother of all air missions.

Decision made.

Using our Magellan GPS, we worked out that the enemy position was around 2 km west of us. By extrapolating from our own grid, we were able to give an accurate x on its location. That done, Chewie broke out the Clansman, rigged up his antenna and sent the burst message winging into the skies.

One of the biggest problems with the radio was the amount of time it took to set up and to crank out the message. In the briefings at Camp Victor, we'd been warned about the skills and the technological competence of the Iraqi military's DF – direction-finding – units, electronic warfare specialists who were able to trace the source of any signal.

So once Chewie's burst had been sent, we packed up as fast as we could and got motoring.

When the F-16 Fighting Falcons – about the fastest warplane in the US arsenal – got over that target, their strike mission would render that convoy and the surrounding desert into ruin. We did not want to be anywhere near here when that happened. If nothing else, you didn't need the brains of a rocket scientist to work out what a high-ying pilot might make of two GAZ-like jeeps trundling across the nearby desert.

Whoopee. Time for extras.

We set off, aiming to melt away into the open and to seek out a new Lying Up Point. It had taken a good while to find, scope out and report in that enemy position, and first light was but a couple of hours away. We wanted to be well hidden come sun-up. Once again, the race was on to find a half-decent place of hiding.

But barely had we covered 500 metres when the desert right on the noses of our wagons dissolved into a wall of seething flame. Out of absolutely nothing and the raw darkness, the terrain 100 metres ahead of the Pinkie just erupted into a paroxysm of flaming, fiery ruin. We ground to a halt, as the rock and sand simply transformed before our very eyes.

It was like a scene from the movie *Apocalypse Now*, when the US warplanes tear overhead, unleashing napalm, the cloud of fuel mixed with gelling agent igniting into a deadly writhing hell-storm. The massive burst of boiling orange fire rose high above us, tinged with a thick pall of black oily smoke, spreading a good 100 metres across the desert to our front.

The deafening roar of the inferno washed over us, rocking the Dinky on its springs, as the ash of the conflagration lit up a huge swathe of sky. I was so shocked, I was rendered utterly speechless. As the burning heat tore into my exposed skin, I was also shit scared. We tried to shield our faces from the whirlwind of blasted grit and rocks, as I wondered what in the name of God could have caused it. It looked to me as if a string of bombs must have tumbled into the desert, followed by the mother of all firestorms.

Obviously, Jim had pulled to a halt in the Pinkie, but his position in the lead had put him a good few dozen yards closer to the fire. Once the worst was over, we pulled up alongside his wagon. For a good few seconds we just stared at each other in a totally stunned silence. We were lost for words. Just ahead of us, the desert was still smoking and blackened from end to end, with licks of flame still crackling hungrily, and the unmistakable smell of burning gasoline lay thick in the air.

One hundred metres. It had been so damn close. Had we set off a little earlier; had we been driving a little faster; had the pilot's aim been a little more accurate – then we would have been toast.

THE WEDDING

by L.J. Trafford

Emperor Nero is not one to displease.

I.

It was never easy to hold the emperor's attention. He was prone to distraction, whether it be the latest chariot racing results or a sudden inspiration for a poem. Either of which could grip hold of him for hours, whilst the unsigned scrolls lay forgotten on a desk.

Not this time though. Epaphroditus, Private Secretary to his Imperial Majesty Nero Caesar, had planned his moment perfectly. The races had concluded the previous afternoon, giving Nero a clear twelve hours to lament the result. Dire punishments had been cursed upon both the captain of the Blues, for daring to win, and the captain of the Greens, for such a miserably awful performance.

Sated by imaging violent deaths for all concerned (including the spectators who had cheered the winning Blues over the finish line) Nero was then presented with a visiting Greek poet. Several hours of culture later, the poet had managed to extract from the emperor an epic verse that had the Blue team obliterated by one of Jupiter's thunderbolts. The final line, concerning the smell of singed horse flesh, had Epaphroditus' innards wincing at its sheer awfulness. But it at least conveyed the obsessive passion for the races that afflicted the emperor.

Artistic needs met, Nero's more bodily wants were dealt with by a serving of light dishes. The secretary needed Nero full enough to not be distracted by hunger, but not so full as to nod off during Epaphroditus' reading of the latest report from the Northern Provinces. Or as Nero referred to them: The savage lands of barbarians.

The secretary hoped to avoid yet another discussion on why Rome bothered with them when they didn't even have theatres or art or poetry! Usually a list of the gold, silver and

pearls, which the Northern Empire possessed in abundance, was enough to forestall a sudden Imperial declaration that Rome should just forget about those hairy barbarians and concentrate on the civilised world. Usually.

Today Epaphroditus had high hopes he would get to the end of the report without interruption. Nero was reclining on a couch sipping at a glass of asparagus juice (good for his voice, so the Greek poet had claimed) and the gaze from those watery blue eyes was friendly. The emperor appeared relaxed, happy even. This was the perfect moment.

"Imperial Majesty," said Epaphroditus, stepping forward with his head bowed respectfully.

"Ahhh, Epaphroditus," replied Nero. "What do you have for me today?"

"Imperial Majesty, I bring the provincial reports."

Beside Epaphroditus stood his assistant, Philo (possessed of the fastest shorthand in the palace), whose role today was to hand the scroll to his boss. This he did with his customary efficiency at the exact moment the secretary concluded his speech.

Epaphroditus cleared his throat and read, "Germania Inferior deliver their best wishes for the..."

The best wishes of those inferior Germans were cut short by a yawn. A yawn the likes of which had never been naturally produced. It was exaggerated to the extreme, loud and long, and geared solely to attract attention. It came not from the emperor, but rather from the creature who reclined beside him. It was dressed in a blue gown sewn with pearls that might well have come from the Northern Provinces, and a matching pearl studded tiara



pinned to ringletted red hair. A hand with long perfectly manicured nails was pressed over its painted lips, failing to disguise the noise.

Epaphroditus ignored it. "Germania Inferior"

Yawn

Epaphroditus shot it a look. It smiled back at him, and then winked.

"Poppaea, my dear," fussed Nero, brushing his hand over its bare arm. "Are you well, my love?"

A bottom lip trembled a little, causing Nero to enquire, "What is it, my love? What ails you?" He held onto its hands, his eyes now full of concern.

"Oh my love," it said, before executing a fake swoon backwards, complete with sweeping arm.

"Oh Poppaea, Poppaea!" cried Nero. "My Poppaea is fatigued! Slaves! Quickly! We must take her to the Imperial bedchamber."

Epaphroditus stood back as four burly slaves rushed forward. They lifted the creature, who wasn't so fatigued that it couldn't snap at them not to crease its gown, and transported it to the door. The emperor rushed in front of them, crying, "I'll clear the way! We must hurry! Hurry!"

Looking over the shoulder of a slave, the creature made sure it gave the secretary a farewell wave before it was carried away.

Epaphroditus held it together for a count of twenty after their departure, before flinging the scroll across the room. It hit the wall with a disappointing 'pfft'. Philo ran over to retrieve it.

"That is it!" stormed Epaphroditus, as Philo tried to manipulate out the bent he'd caused on the Northern provinces report. "It goes. That thing goes!"

"Sir?" enquired Philo, handing him back the battered scroll.

"That thing. That thing playing Poppaea. That damned eunuch!"

"Sporus, sir?"

"Yes, Sporus!" fumed Epaphroditus. "How many other eunuchs do we have in the palace pretending to be the dead empress?"

It was obviously rhetorical, but Philo was made from very literally minded material. "Only Sporus, sir. So far." Then added, "He is very good at it, sir."

"Oh I know he is. He is far too good at it. That's the problem." Epaphroditus sat down on the emperor's deserted couch. "I accepted it at first. It seemed to be aiding the emperor in his grief over the empress' unfortunate death."

Which was how Poppaea's demise at the hands of her husband was spoken of in the palace; 'unfortunate'. An 'unfortunate' accident that had Nero's foot colliding with Poppaea's pregnant stomach, killing both mother and potential heir.

"But now? It's been months and the emperor shows no sign of dropping his fantasy that Poppaea is still alive. Of course it doesn't help that the damned eunuch can impersonate the empress to her very gesture. Nor that it seems quite happy to pretend to be someone else. I have a bad feeling about which way this thing is headed. Before we know it Sporus will be insisting upon accompanying the emperor to the Senate House, overseeing the Bona Dea festival and having dinner with the Chief Vestal!"

He winced at the very plausibility of it. Nobody wanted to be the one to break down Nero's delusion. Certainly not Epaphroditus. He valued his life far too much. Something Sporus was taking full advantage of.

"It's also not helping the financial situation, sir," interjected Philo.

Epaphroditus looked up. "How so?"

It took Philo's prodigious memory quite some time to reel off the entire list of Sporus' expenditure as empress, particularly as he'd organised the spending into helpful subheadings such as: bronze headwear, silver plated headwear, gold plated headwear, headwear containing additional jewels and so forth.

By the end of this catalogue of waste (in Epaphroditus' view – for Sporus was now in possession of enough dresses to change twice a day for the next year) the secretary had made a decision.

"That eunuch goes."

A statement Philo felt compelled to record in the note tablet he was never without. After scrawling this in the wax, he asked anxiously. "Sir?"

"The emperor will remarry," said Epaphroditus. "He simply cannot keep up this farce when there is a new empress on his arm. One that is an actual woman!"

II.

Calvia Crispinilla, Nero's Mistress of the Wardrobe, palace party planner extraordinaire and dresser of that damned eunuch, strode into Epaphroditus' office. She was accompanied by a flurry of slave girls present to cater to her every whim, and Philo, whom she'd had a whim the slave girls should push out of her way when he asked her politely her business with Epaphroditus.

"I'm sorry, sir," began Philo, hurrying ahead of Calvia. "I know you don't like to be interrupted unannounced, sir."

"Quite," said Calvia, sitting herself down. "Who knows what depraved act you might walk in on."

"The Treasury report," said Epaphroditus, using a stylus to point at the scroll unrolled in front of him.

"Filthy stuff, I'm sure. I have important news." She leaned forward. "I have found the most astounding tunic for the emperor's wedding. Truly. It is astonishing. It has to be seen to be believed. It's magnificent."

"And the bride?" asked Epaphroditus. "Have you found an astounding one of those yet?"

Calvia waved her hand. "That's all sorted. Now, I want to talk about the arrangements. I'm thinking the grand banquet hall for the day time events."

"You found an empress?" interrupted Epaphroditus. "For the emperor?"

Calvia, adjusted the shawl draped across her shoulders, "I said I would, did I not? And I did. Lovely girl. Perfect."

"And she is?" prompted the secretary. Beside him Philo whipped out a note tablet ready.

"Statilia Messalina."

As a grand announcement it fell somewhat short.

"Never heard of her," said Epaphroditus.

"Which is one of many reasons why she is perfect. Statilia Messalina is of a good, suitably noble family bursting to the brim with Senators and others of that ilk. She's been married three times. Which is a good thing," she stressed, before Epaphroditus could interrupt her. "Because it means she'll not be shocked by some of the emperor's more 'specialist' requirements."

"Age?"

"Early 30's. Young enough to beget an heir for his Imperial Majesty but old enough to appeal to the emperor's preference for the more mature lady."

Epaphroditus sat back in his chair. "She sounds suitable."

"You said, find a suitable bride. I did. She's also very pretty."

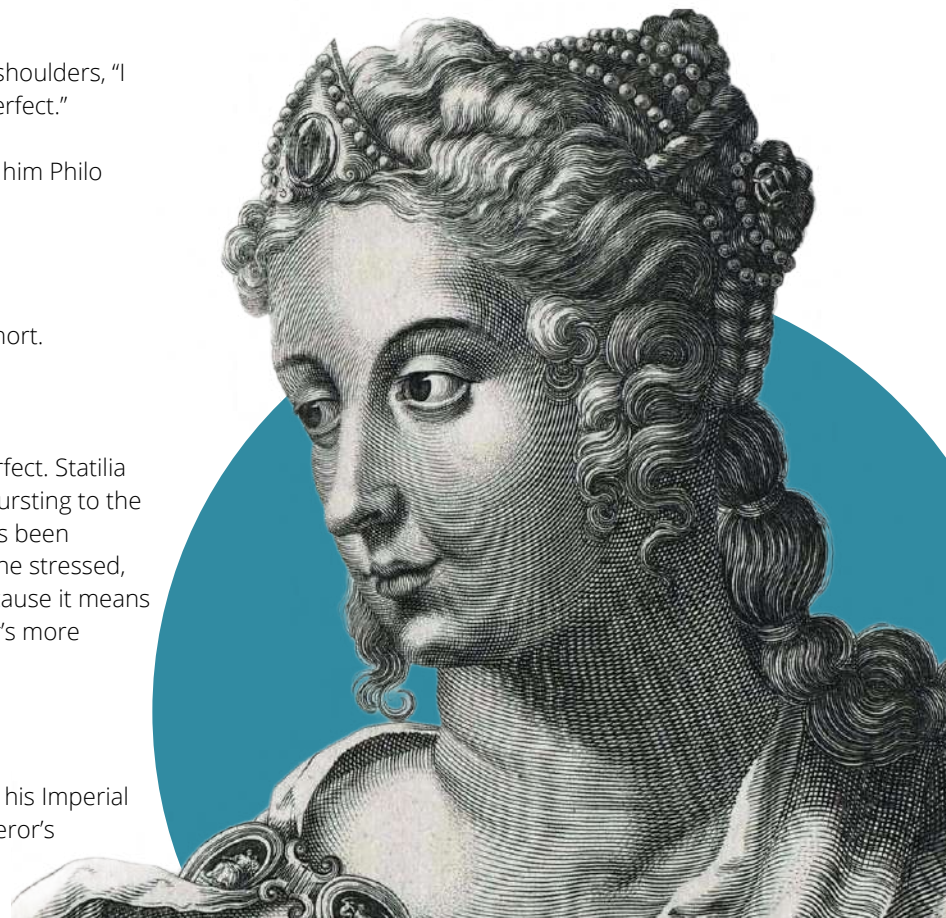
"Good."

"But," added Calvia, rising to her feet. "If you think any of that will dislodge Sporus I fear you will be disappointed."

"It will," insisted Epaphroditus. "It most definitely will."

The wedding of Nero Claudius Germanicus Drusus to Statilia Messalina occurred five days later. Such was the speed of the arrangements that popular palace gossip claimed Statilia herself only found out about the wedding when she arrived for a dinner invitation and was handed the brides' scarlet veil. To Epaphroditus' mind it was just in time. That damned eunuch had started to complain of nausea and the secretary harboured a horrible suspicion that it was about to announce a pregnancy.

Epaphroditus straightened his wedding outfit. In celebration he'd upped his usual muted style to a green tunic hemmed with gold braiding. It should be one terrific party. Epaphroditus had seen the list of events Calvia had organised and even he, jaded palace party goer that he was, was inwardly bouncing with anticipation. Utterly unlike his fellow wedding attendee, Philo, who stood in the doorway in his standard white palace issued tunic, looking thoroughly miserable.



Aware of his assistant's great dislike of unstructured gatherings for the purposes of fun, Epaphroditus said, "You'll enjoy it." Philo looked unconvinced. "It's the party of the year! Perhaps even the decade!"

Philo fiddled with the strap on his satchel, avoiding his boss' gaze.

"Obviously I'll expect a full report on it."

Philo looked up, his expression quizzical.

"Somebody needs to record the full detail of the event," he continued. "So that we may fully study what parts were successful and which parts were less successful. Your findings can be used to inform future weddings. Not that we'll have any in the near future. This one is set to last." So Epaphroditus had decided.

"I think that could be useful, sir," said Philo, after a moment's consideration.

"I think so too," said the secretary, hoping that Philo would at least relax enough to enjoy a little of the day's festivities. He clapped his palms together. "Right! We'd better go see this thing through."

A declaration immediately thwarted by the simultaneous arrival of two Imperial messengers.

"Sir, the emperor demands your presence. He wishes to cancel the wedding."

Of course he did.

"Sir, the eunuch's on the loose."

Of course it was.

Used to crisis management, Imperial service was nothing but one long crisis, Epaphroditus responded calmly.

"Philo, you handle the Sporus situation. I'll deal with the emperor."

Epaphroditus found the emperor standing in the centre of his chamber in what was, as Calvia had promised, a truly astonishing wedding tunic. It was sunshine yellow in a shade that had the secretary squinting at its brightness. The rest of the outfit consisted of a red cape and spiky diadem crusted with rubies. Epaphroditus recognised Calvia's vision: Nero was to be Apollo, the sun God. His yellow beam to join with his bride's fiery scarlet veil.

It was a shame that the Emperor was not radiating this vision; Epaphroditus doubted Apollo was given to such mopes.

"Oh Epaphroditus!" whined the emperor, kicking away the two slaves who fussed at his cape alignment. "What about Poppaea?"

"Imperial Majesty," began Epaphroditus, in the soft tone he often used to placate his children. "Did we not discuss this yesterday?"

Nero brushed his hands through the air. "I know, I know! But Poppaea! I don't see_"

"As we discussed Caesar, Poppaea agrees to this marriage because she recognises the importance of an heir for Caesar. She has been most insistent on that point and I have to say, very dignified. It becomes her majesty that she has chosen to step aside for the good of her husband and the Empire."

"She might yet have a child_" pouted Nero.

Epaphroditus held his hands apart, showing his palms. "Alas, the doctors are all in agreement, Caesar. But as we discussed this does not mean that Caesar may not visit Poppaea occasionally if he desires."

Nero's head bobbed up and down, the diadem bouncing on his curls.

"It is necessary though for Caesar to marry and produce an heir. It is his duty."

"Duty!" cried Nero, his eyes moistening. "Should the Gods punish me so! To make me divorce the woman I adore with all my heart!"

"It is as Poppaea wishes, Caesar."

"Such a good woman, such a wonderful woman. To sacrifice herself for me! I do not deserve her. But I shall do her will, Epaphroditus, I shall!" The pout stiffened in resolve.

"Statilia Messalina is an exceptionally beautiful woman," slipped in the secretary.

"Naturally," said Nero. "I would not marry less. I am emperor."



Since the marriage announcement Sporus had fallen into a weeping, wailing grief. At first there had been sympathy for the heartbroken eunuch. A whole army of slave girls had sat up late into the night listening to his woes, offering a soft bosom for him to lean on and kind understanding which the eunuch absorbed as his right. But as the wedding drew nearer and Sporus' hysterics became shriller, they grew a little tired of his antics.



Soft bosoms no longer welcoming his head, Sporus found new ways to attract the light he so craved. Dressed in a long black gown which puddled like ink behind him, one arm swept across his brow, wailing hysterically, Sporus roamed the corridors of the slave complex. He took to grasping onto the arms of passing slaves, beseeching them to dispatch him now for he could not bear to be so betrayed! To see his beloved Nero wed to another! Why he would rather die than let his eyes view such poison! Let the Gods strike him down now with their almighty power!

And thus a new word entered the palace lingo: Sporused.

Sporus was hurt. He was wounded. He was suffering dreadfully. Why would nobody acknowledge it? To this end Sporus' Sporusing widened beyond the unsympathetic slave complex and into the public areas of the palace. It was a particularly noteworthy collision with an ex-consul that led to a firm conclusion: Sporus must be contained. Since then he'd been held in his suite of rooms with two praetorian guards placed outside to prevent any further escapades.

"I don't understand," worried Philo. "You say that he did not come past you?"

"No, definitely not," said Guardsmen Proculus.

Philo gazed about the room, leaning a palm on the wall: solid.

"There's no other way out, though. Not even a window for him to squeeze through."

"Regular mystery it is," offered Guardsman Lucullus. "I think there's magic involved here, sir. I reckon she's a witch and magicked her way out. They can do that, sir, witches. They are pretty cunning."

As an explanation it did not satisfy Philo. He bent down, peering under the couch. An expectedly dark space. Hang on, what was that? He lay on the floor and fished an arm in, his hand closing round the object. Getting to his feet he showed it to the guards.

"It's a shoe."

It was a high heeled sandal with glittering diamonds in the toes and a golden buckle. It could only belong to Sporus. "Tell me again how you found he was missing."

"Well sir, we got a bit worried about her. We could hear her crying."

"And...banging."

"Banging?"

"Yeah, banging. We thought we'd better check it out, see that the little lady was alright. Not hurting herself or nothing."

"So we came in and she wasn't here."

"Not a sign."

"You both came in?"

"Yes, sir."

Philo looked to the door, then to the couch, then to the guards, asking, "You both came in and you stood about here?"

Philo stepped into the centre of the room, the door behind him, the couch to his right.

"Yeah about that sir. Scratching our heads we were."

Scratching their heads, puzzling it out as Sporus crawled out from under the couch, losing a shoe in the process and nipped out the door behind them, concluded Philo.

Felix, Head of Slave Placements and Chief Overseer cracked his knuckles and furrowed his red eyebrows across his prominent nose like two furry caterpillars looking to scarp to the death. In front of him were his slave overseers, the men whose job it was to keep the Imperial workforce working. Order had to be maintained and these were the men that did it. Their tactics were simple: they menaced. Standing directly in front of Felix was the most menacing of them all: Straton. Of impressive bulk, he was less of a man and more akin to a semi-shaven bear. He might not have possessed claws, but what he did have was a whip. This was hung on his thick leather belt for easy access and had been used to painful effect on generations of palace slaves.

"Right," growled Felix. "The praetorians,"

The overseers jeered at that word, for there was a hefty rivalry between the guard and the overseers, both sides believing themselves to be the premier security force in the palace.

"The praetorians," began Felix again, injecting a sneer of his own, "were given a eunuch to guard. They were supposed to keep him out of mischief. They failed."

Another round of jeers.

"So now we have the job. The eunuch known as Sporus is on the loose. We need to find him. Now it's a big old palace and we need to be fucking smart about this." Felix tapped a large digit against his temple. "We need to think like Sporus. We need to get into his head and then we'll find him."

"So. I'm a flighty, fancy, poncy, attention seeking, ball-less wonder. I delight in mischief, trouble and mincing about. I've made my escape from my crap, good for nowt praetorian fuckwits and I'm loose in the palace. Which I

have no fucking right to be. Where the fuck would I go?"

Felix threw an enquiring look at this gathered team. A series of spectacularly ugly, but blank faces stared back.

Felix scratched at his beard mumbling, "Knew this would be a fucking waste of time, appealing to their fucking intelligence. When was the last time they held an actual thought in their actual heads? HEY HEY! LET'S HAVE SOME FUCKING IDEAS!!!!"

A hand shot up. "Yes Xagoras."

"Bathroom."

"We don't have bathroom breaks Xagoras. You can piss in a corner. We got fucking WORK TO DO!"

"Sir, I meant the eunuch. If I were a lack ball and I'd given the Guards the slip, I'd probably want to, you know, freshen up a bit."

Felix considered, "Not a bad idea Xagoras, you go check it out."

"Err which bathroom?"

"ALL OF THEM!" bellowed Felix, Xagoras dashing out to search the many, many, many bathrooms that littered all ends of the palace from the Palatine to the Oppian Hill.

"RIGHT! Let's have some suggestions from the rest of you."

"Wardrobe? He lost a shoe, he won't want to be un-coordinated."

"Not bad Pius. You go see to that."

Straton cleared his throat, a sound not unlike an elephant taking a dislike to his trainer in the moment before a fatal tusk.

"MINERVA'S ARSE! You got an idea Straton? That's got to be a fucking first. You get struck by lightning on the way in? Fucking illuminate you, did it? Go on then, where would you go?"

Straton grinned, showing his sharp blackened teeth. "Weddin'. Emperor's weddin'"

Felix's hand shot up and slapped his forehead with a wince inducing thwack for those watching. Oh, Mars' favourite whore! That is exactly where the little fucker would head. Hadn't he been whining and crying all over the palace about being dumped by the Emperor? What better place to fully express his hurt and grief than in front of 500 wedding guests, all the dignitary Rome had to offer and the actual lady that had displaced him as empress?

Felix scrunched his eyes shut as the full horror of a Sporus injected wedding coursed through him. He took a deep breath, filling up his entire barrel of a chest. Then he fixed his eyes on Straton.

"Stop him. Now. By whatever means."

Straton hitched up his belt and grinned.

IV.

As Xagoras dashed from bathroom to bathroom, Straton preferred not to exert himself. No point working up a sweat scouring the palace for the eunuch, when he could prop a shoulder against a pillar and wait for Sporus to come to him. The pillar in question was one of twelve that held up the roof of the grand entrance hall to the banqueting suite. The pink marble was ten feet in diameter and thus able to disguise even a man of Straton's impressive bulk from the arriving wedding guests.

One shoulder leant against the marble. Straton's black eyes scanned the crowds of well-dressed dignitaries, their wives and their slaves. The latter on hand to provide assistance, comfort and an arm to hold onto when they all staggered out drunk later in the evening. Straton figured that Sporus would wait until all the guests were settled before making his entrance, for maximum effect. The best way to do that was to sneak in with the guests, hence Straton's vigilance. His eyes moved quickly across the scene, one hand gripping the handle of the whip which hung from his belt.

Epaphroditus, having soothed the emperor's concerns over the invented divorce from Poppaea, followed the Imperial entourage to the hall. Calvia's exquisite wedding planning involved Nero and Statilia parading down opposite sides of the entrance hall, following two groups of lyre players; one group plucking a tune for the Emperor and one for the Empress. As the couple approached the door the tunes would meld into one harmonious melody as the happy couple met.

For Epaphroditus this was not a metaphor of Imperial marriage that he recognised. But he admired the organisation of it.

There were no cock ups for Philo to record in his note tablet as the bride and groom met. This was Epaphroditus' first glimpse of Statilia Messalina. Her eyes were blue, her nose small and her lips on the plumpish. She was pretty. Calvia had chosen well. Epaphroditus approved.

Nero too seemed satisfied with Statilia Messalina. Glancing back over his shoulder at Epaphroditus, he mouthed, 'tasty.'

She stood upright as a pillar. Her face neutral, displaying neither fear nor joy, letting Nero take her arm without a

flinch. Epaphroditus, though, noted the deep intake of breath that puffed out her breast as the first trumpet sounded.

"Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!"

Came a high pitched squeal from the back of the room. From behind a pillar shot Sporus, running full pelt down the centre of the hall. The emperor and empress pivoted.

"What the ___?" began Nero.

A thought shared by the trumpet players, who went spectacularly off key.

The guards proved their general uselessness once again by their motionless gawps as Sporus headed towards the Imperial party. Epaphroditus was much quicker off the mark.

"An assassin!" declared the secretary.

He dashed off towards the eunuch before the emperor could recognise him.

Sporus, surprisingly for such a natural coward, was unfazed by the sight of the Emperor's Private Secretary running towards him. He was even unfazed by the two praetorians who finally joined the race. His thoughts were solely concentrated on stopping this pantomime of a wedding.

Nero wouldn't hurt him so, not after he saw how upset his darling Sporus/Poppaea/Whatever was at this betrayal. His eyes were firmly on Epaphroditus, intending to scoot round him at the last moment. Which was why Sporus failed to see Straton slip out from his hiding spot.

Crack. The thong of Straton's whip propelled forward and attached itself round Sporus' ankle. The overseer gave it a hard tug. Thump. Sporus hit the marble floor. The air was oomphed out of him. His chin banged on the ground. A red slash on his ankle bled from Straton's targeted shot.

The overseer grabbed him by the other ankle, dangling him upside down. "Got me eunuch," he grinned.

Epaphroditus, fully engaged on his interception mission, realised with dismay that he was moving too fast to stop in time.

"Minerva's Arse!" he swore, as he careered into Straton, knocking him over.

To fell a man of Straton's size was an astounding feat, but Epaphroditus had no time to dwell on this success since the two praetorians who'd also been in pursuit smacked into the pile of overseer/eunuch/secretarial staff.

The confusion of limbs, whips and swords freed Sporus from Straton's hold, he wriggled out from beneath a yelping praetorian. Giving no thought to the state of his dress, a first for Sporus and one born of his single-minded mission, the eunuch escaped by crawling along the floor, his long nails

clicking on the marble as he did.

Epaphroditus, his eye smarting from an accidental encounter with Straton's elbow, struggled to free himself. Seeing Sporus heading towards the emperor's end of the hall, he thrust his foot into a praetorian groin and kicked hard. The guard screamed in presumed agony and it was this pain that no doubt clouded his judgement in such a terrible way. Mistaking Straton for the cause of his throbbing testicles, he yelled, "You ugly bastard! I'm going to get you for that!"

In the chronicles of palace history there had scarcely been a more misguided declaration. Or more wrong. As demonstrated when Straton, with the effortless strength that was his hallmark, picked up the guard and threw him at a pillar. There was a sort of crunching sound as praetorian and marble met. A sound Straton seemed intent on repeating, as he picked up the comatose guard again.

Epaphroditus had no time (or indeed inclination) to intervene in Straton's thorough beating, he had a eunuch to catch. By now Sporus was an alarming third of the way across the hall, almost within recognisable distance to the Imperial couple. This was no time for hesitation. Scrambling to his feet he ran and threw himself on top of the eunuch, flattening it.

"Oh no you don't," he hissed in Sporus' ear.

At the far end of the hall the wedding party stood in bemused silence. "What is going on?" asked Statilia.

Nero, keen to appear in charge in front of his soon to be wife, cupped his hands over his mouth and called. "EPAPHRODITUS! WHAT'S GOING ON?"

"All under control Caesar," came the call back.

"Well that's good," Nero smiled to Statilia. "Shall we go in?" Taking her arm. There came a perfectly tuned blast from the trumpets and the great doors of the banqueting hall were flung open.

V.

Epaphroditus lay prone on the couch. A wet cloth, which he claimed was for his Straton induced black eye, but that was really more connected to his throbbing post wedding induced hangover, was pressed over his face.

It had been quite the wedding and quite the party. With Straton on Sporus minding duty Epaphroditus had been able to relax and enjoy the festivities. He had pulled it off hadn't he? Nero was safely married off. The eunuch would soon be forgotten and back to its normal duties dancing about and irritating the other eunuchs. All was well.

Apart from his dry mouth, extremely delicate stomach and the pounding in his cranium.

"There was, sir, a distinct under performance in the catering team," said Philo.

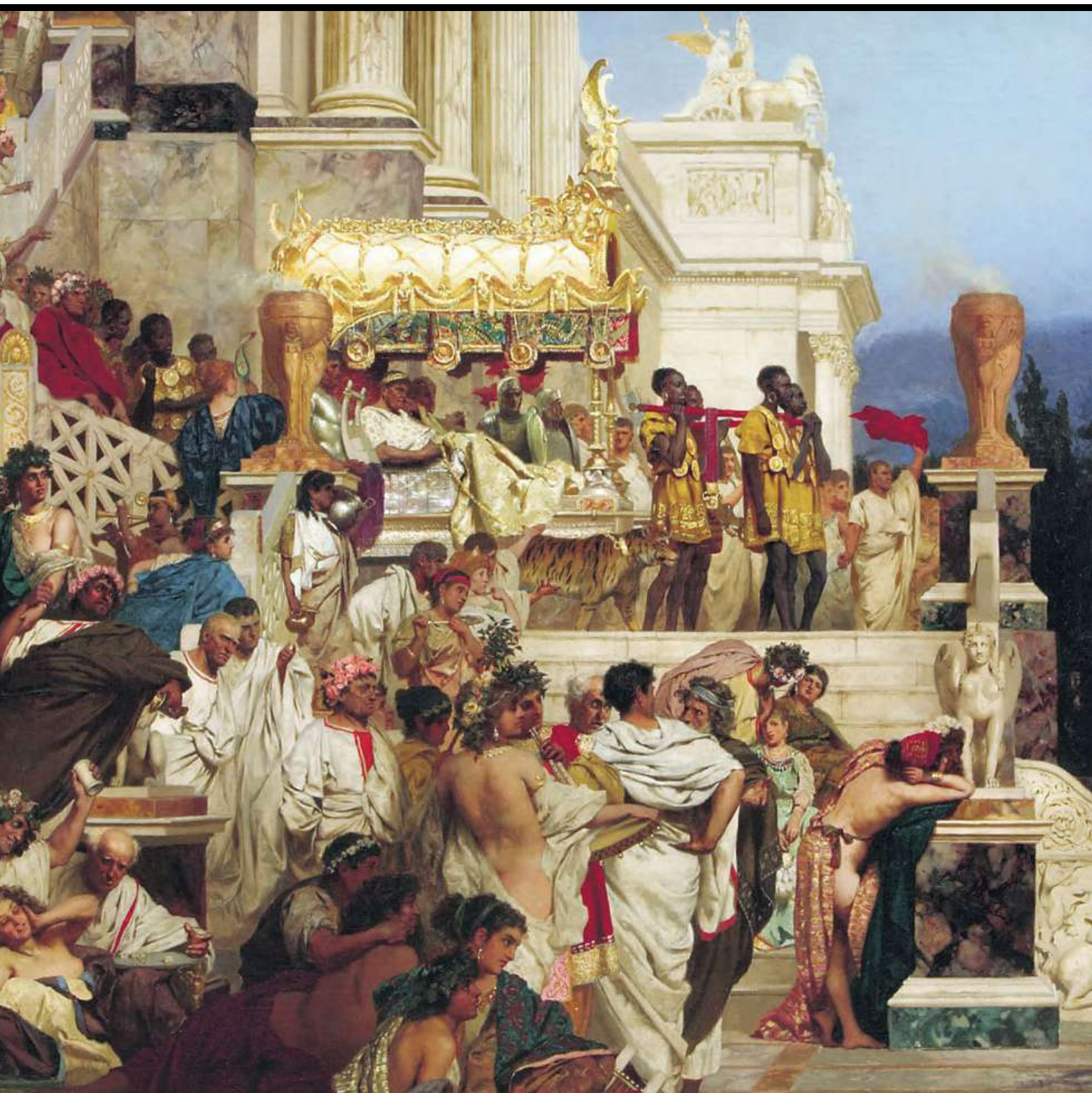
This was hour two of his detailed report into the events of the wedding. Peeking out from under the cloth, Epaphroditus noted a further four note tablets poking out of Philo's satchel.

"The first dishes of roasted pigeon, sir, were not of sufficient crispness. I noted one of the guests, Senator Regulus, make a comment to his wife that he had tasted better when dining with the Consul...."

The secretary gave a pained groan that did not dent Philo's commentary in the slightest.



The Wedding forms part of the HWA Short Story Collection, *Rubicon*.



A black and white portrait of Winston Churchill, looking slightly to the left with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a dark bow tie. A pocket square is visible in his jacket. The background is dark and out of focus.

ANTHONY TUCKER-JONES

HIS FINEST HOUR?

WINSTON CHURCHILL AND THE WAR

Winston Churchill was the only man capable of leading the country due to the dire straits Britain, and the world, found itself. We know this now, and the miracle of Dunkirk soon followed, but what about his later involvement in military operations? For every victory, there was a defeat lurking nearby.



Churchill in between Brooke and Montgomery

'Never has any land found any leader,' remarked Field Marshal Montgomery, **'who so matched the hour as did Sir Winston Churchill.'** Fatefully on 10 May 1940 Churchill became Prime Minister. He not only became the country's premier, he also made himself the country's very first Defence Minister. He became Britain's political master and military commander in one fell swoop. By taking on the role of Defence Minister he personally took charge of the strategic direction of the British war effort. 'During the war Mr Churchill maintained such close contact with all operations,' observed allied supreme commander General Dwight Eisenhower, 'as to make him a virtual member of the British Chiefs of Staff.'

Churchill remarked 'At last I had authority to give directions over the whole scene. ... I thought I knew a good deal about it all, and I was sure I should not fail.' These were confident words in light of the British Expeditionary Force facing defeat in France and the French army on the verge of collapse. Churchill, journalist, author and historian always with an eye on his legacy added, 'I felt as if I were walking with destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial.' Poetic words, but were they true? His comments raise two questions; firstly, was Churchill qualified for the job and second did he really make a success of it?

'Winston never had the slightest doubt that he had inherited all the military genius of his great ancestor, Marlborough,' observed General Alan Brooke who served as the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. General Edward Spears who attended Churchill's maiden address as Prime Minister recalled 'suddenly he was transformed into an inspired leader, the High Priest of a great religion dedicating a nation to measureless sacrifice.'

Thanks to his military career and as a senior politician Churchill had developed an intimate knowledge of the nation's armed forces. He served as First Sea Lord, the political head of the Royal Navy as well as Secretary of State

for War and Secretary of State for Air. Both these latter posts made him the political head of the army and the Royal Air Force. Furthermore, during the First World War he had been the Minister for Munitions so fully understood the logistical needs of the armed forces. Likewise, his stint of Secretary of State for the Colonies had greatly enhanced his strategic outlook on the world, especially in the Middle East.

What followed under his wartime premiership was a remarkable catalogue of triumphs and abject failures.

What followed under his wartime premiership was a remarkable catalogue of triumphs and abject failures. Under him Britain would face down Germany, Italy and Japan. He alone refused to negotiate with Hitler and he alone ordered the rescue of the BEF from Dunkirk. Under him the country triumphed in the Battle of Britain and stoically endured the terrible Blitz. In Egypt and Libya his generals fought and decisively defeated the Italians.

Then came the errors as Churchill became strategically distracted. The chance to take the Libyan capital Tripoli was thrown away when Churchill rashly pledged to help the Greeks fend off Mussolini. Hitler riding to Mussolini's rescue overran both Yugoslavia and Greece and the survivors fled to

Crete. Hitler then proceeded to capture the latter with the most audacious airborne invasion in history. In the meantime, General Erwin Rommel arrived in Libya to take advantage of Britain's weakened position in Egypt. Churchill's insistence on counterattacking Rommel then led to a series of costly and embarrassing defeats.

Defiantly though Churchill clung to the vital naval bases at Gibraltar and Malta providing a vital life line across the Mediterranean to Alexandria and Egypt. Holding Malta meant that the Royal Navy and the RAF were ultimately able to strangle Rommel's supply lines. He also headed off German aspirations in the Levant and Middle East and defeated the Italians in the Horn of Africa. Hitler's foolhardy invasion of the Soviet Union gave Churchill a much-needed ally, but his pledge to arm the Red Army greatly weakened Britain's armed forces. Then disaster struck with the muddled defence of Burma and Malaya in the face of Japanese attack. The loss of Singapore was particularly humiliating for Churchill as was the loss of the warships Prince of Wales and Repulse sent in a futile display of naval power.

The only consolation was that Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor brought America into the war in December 1941 creating the grand alliance between Britain, America and the Soviet Union. Stalin wanted Churchill and Roosevelt to open the Second Front in France as soon as possible to take the pressure off the mauled Red Army. Churchill however, successfully argued for a Mediterranean first strategy, in which the Germans and Italians would be cleared from North Africa. Churchill persuaded Roosevelt and Eisenhower that invading Sicily and then the Italian mainland would negate an invasion of France.

In the event Churchill was proved wrong. Hitler swiftly occupied northern Italy and tenaciously held on there. The defection of the remainder of Italy opened up new

possibilities and Churchill instructed that the Germans be driven from the Dodecanese islands before they could take over. This was another botched and rushed operation that ended in defeat for the British. A disgruntled Churchill watched as his influence waned once the Allies invaded Normandy and the Riviera and relentlessly pushed on Germany. Against Roosevelt's wishes Churchill sent troops to Greece to prevent Greek communists seizing power in the wake of the German withdrawal. Although Athens was saved the country was plunged into a costly civil war.

Churchill's direction of the war had mixed results, but crucially he had galvanised the country in its hour of need, provided firm leadership and seen it through to victory. Anthony Eden, Churchill's Foreign Secretary, recalled 'The machinery for the military and political conduct of the war had been discerningly built and it worked.' Even King George VI was moved to say, 'I could not have a better Prime Minister.'

'I could not have a better Prime Minister.'

King George VI

Churchill in Carthage, June 1943





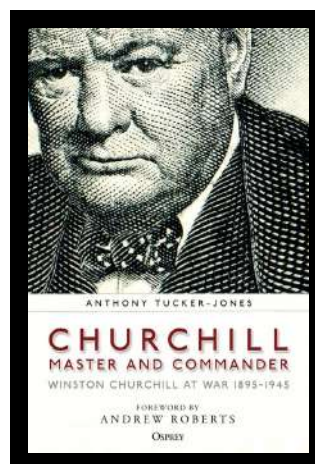
Winston Churchill takes aim with a Sten gun during a visit to the Royal Artillery experimental station at Shoeburyness in Essex, 13 June 1941.



Eisenhower noted that Churchill embodied 'the age-old truth that politics and military activities are never completely separate.' Churchill was determined to lead and lead he did. Air Marshal Arthur Harris, in charge of Bomber Command, observed, 'He was always at his best when things were worst, which, of course, is the mark of real leadership.' Churchill's domination of his War Cabinet was not without upsets. 'This balance, as between chiefs of staff and political chiefs, is not easily achieved,' wrote Field Marshal Harold Alexander. 'During the war it worked out pretty satisfactory in the end, but not without blood, sweat and tears.' It is true that his generals often struggled to control Churchill's impulses and to avoid being sacked. 'His military plans and ideas varied from the most brilliant conceptions at one end,' said General Brooke, 'to the wildest and most dangerous ideas at the other.'

Churchill was an impatient man and that came at a cost. 'There were times when it would appear,' noted Air Chief Marshal Arthur Tedder, 'that he would almost prefer action at any cost providing it was immediate.' Montgomery ensured victory at El Alamein in late 1942 by standing up to Churchill. He would only attack Rommel when he was ready. 'You do not know how to fight this battle, or when. I do know,' Montgomery had sternly warned the Prime Minister. It is notable that on VE day the chiefs of staff did not toast Churchill. He had trodden on too many toes over the years. Nonetheless, General Brooke who endured a quite turbulent relationship with the prime minister generously concluded, 'For all that I thank God that I was given the opportunity of working alongside such a man and having my eyes opened to the fact that occasionally such supermen exist on this earth.'

'We all think back to Sir Winston Churchill as a man who bespoke confidence,' said Eisenhower in 1965 upon Churchill's death. He was right. Churchill drawing on all his hard-won experience on the battlefield and in government had risen admirably to the role of master and commander. His wartime failures proved he was human and prepared to make unpleasant decisions.



Anthony Tucker-Jones is former defence intelligence officer, historian and the author of *The Devil's Bridge: The German Victory at Arnhem, 1944*. *Churchill, Master and Commander: Winston Churchill at War 1895-1945* is his latest book and is published by Osprey.

Q & A

OPERATION JUBILEE

PATRICK BISHOP

Interviewed by Robert Lyman



The two military historians discuss Operation *Jubilee*, the subject of Patrick's new book. The raid was an amphibious attack on the German occupied port of Dieppe, and was an unmitigated disaster, costing over 6,000 men, mostly Canadian. Louis Mountbatten played a key role in planning the operation, and it was claimed that lessons were learned for D-Day nearly two years later.

You've written a range of detailed accounts of military adventures before, most of which from what I recall weren't complete disasters. What prompted you to have a look at the Dieppe raid?

It was actually Daniel Crewe at Penguin Random House who suggested the subject. I was intrigued as it provided an opportunity to anatomise a notorious disaster. I've always been interested in wartime decision making and this was an ideal subject for study. No-one wants a blunder yet they recur with appalling regularity in time of war. The inexorability with which a bad decision is made and then compounded by successive bad decisions, even when it is increasingly clear that catastrophe is looming is one of the big themes of the book. Incidentally Max Hastings remarked to me the other day that he had tended to avoid subjects where there were no redeeming features to the story. I think there were some uplifting aspects to *Jubilee*, notably the incredible heroism of the troops.

Did you find anything new, or requiring a new historical assessment, during your research?

I did in the sense that I came across numerous other raid

proposals floating around at the time that Dieppe was gestating that carried even greater risks. One was Op Emperor which proposed landing an armoured column in the Pas de Calais which would then proceed to Paris, shoot up various military headquarters then return to the Channel to be shipped home. Completely mad and thank God it was eventually vetoed.

One of the standout features of your depiction of the raid, both in its planning and execution, was the array of egos involved. How much did competing and conflicting ambitions contribute to the outcome?

Yes, there is a full set of massively self-regarding players in the story, led by Mountbatten. I think it was less a case of competition among them than Mountbatten's burning desire to boost his reputation and that of Combined Operations, both of which were waning at the time, in order to ensure his future prospects and his place in history.

Was there a single overriding reason why Operation *Jubilee* was such an unmitigated disaster, or was it a cluster of failures that unhappily coalesced?

PATRICK BISHOP



I think the latter – a perfect storm of circumstances, bad decisions, a terrible plan and the driving force of external political considerations – notably the necessity to appease the Americans and the Soviets who were pressing for the opening of a Second Front.

Do you think that, despite what appears to have been a shockingly ill-prepared and planned operation, was anything learned from it that influenced Operation Torch a few months later? Was Operation Overlord won on the beaches of Dieppe?

Not really. The claim that *Jubilee* was somehow a 'rehearsal for D-Day' was loudly trumpeted by Mountbatten and his team as well as others after the raid failed. He claimed until his dying day that it had always been intended as an experiment to test the feasibility of capturing a French port intact as the central element in the eventual invasion of North Western Europe. This, he maintained, justified the whole affair and the lessons learned meant that many lives were saved when D-Day finally dawned. I don't believe this. For one thing there is nothing at all in the voluminous orders which lays out a methodology for observing and reporting what is going on and measuring the success or otherwise of various parts of the operation. This would surely be the case if *Jubilee* was intended as some kind of military experiment. The claim that the experience of Dieppe contributed greatly to the successful planning for Overlord also fails to stand up to close examination.

“ **The claim that Jubilee was somehow a ‘rehearsal for D-Day’ was loudly trumpeted by Mountbatten and his team as well as others after the raid failed.** ”

Most of the 'lessons learned' published in the post operational report were statements of the obvious and would have emerged from an afternoon-long junior staff college exercise of the problems of mounting a major amphibious operation. They did not need a bloody debacle to reveal themselves.

You pick up on the discovery by the Canadian historian David O'Keefe that the early commando raids included in their objectives the capture of German coding machines and codes. What do you think of his argument that it was the exclusive reason (though secret) for the Dieppe raid?

I'm afraid I don't buy that. 'Pinch' operations to grab Enigma machines and code books were routinely bolted on to the plans of all big raids at this period. The acquisition of naval and military intelligence material is clearly stated repeatedly in the orders so there was no great mystery about that aspect of *Jubilee* – though of course Enigma is not mentioned by name. Ian Fleming's special intelligence gathering 30 Assault Unit were present but they did not get ashore. However, it seems to me incredible that such a huge operation for this stage of the British war would be mounted simply as camouflage for this aim. What strikes me as a clinching argument against O'Keefe's thesis is that if it was true, Mountbatten would surely have employed it in his tireless campaign to justify the raid. The Ultra Secret was known to the general public from 1974 with the publication of F.W. Winterbotham's book of the same name. If seizing Enigma material had been the sole or even a major driver of the raid, surely Mountbatten – who was very much alive for a further five years afterwards – would have seized on it in his defence.

Why was it that Mountbatten, Montgomery and others were allowed to side step responsibility for a poorly conceived plan after the event?



Wounded troops on the beach of Dieppe

This is what happens in wartime. There is little to be gained from too close investigation of a disaster though Churchill made attempts to get to the bottom of who was responsible, without much success due to Mountbatten's energetic track-covering. There is often much to be lost by sacking people unless they have proved to be completely useless, which Monty and Mountbatten certainly were not. The war still has to be fought so the great imperative is to press on and leave history to apportion blame.

The Canadians suffered terribly in the operation - how much did this affect relations between Canada and Britain?

Good question. Much less than you might imagine. The Canadian government and its top commanders in Britain knew all about the operation and had approved it. McNaughton and Crerar had both pressed for Canadian troops to be used, even though they had no hand in the original plan. Later they did contribute but failed to modify it to increase fire support or insist on other measures to lessen the odds against their men. So they shared a degree of responsibility for the disaster and were consequently reluctant to play the blame game afterwards. Instead, they recast the story as one of incredible Canadian heroism, which indeed it was, as well as backing the narrative that it was a painful but necessary preparation for D-Day.

What you are planning to write next?

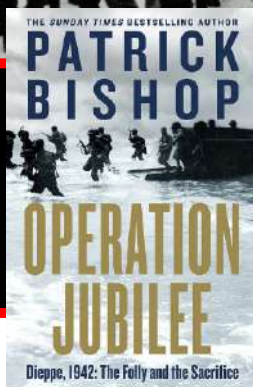
I'm working on a book on the liberation of Paris, seen through the eyes of a dozen or so participants on all sides of the story.

Mountbatten in 1943

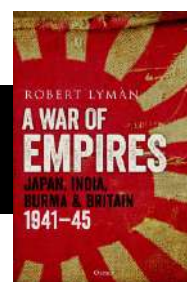


Canadian POWs in Dieppe

Patrick Bishop is the author of *Fighter Boys: The Pilots Behind the Battle of Britain* and *3 PARA: Afghanistan 2006*. *Operation Jubilee, Dieppe 1942: The Folly & The Sacrifice* is his latest book.



Robert Lyman is a historian and writer, and author of *A War of Empires: Japan, India, Burma & Britain 1941-45*.



HITLER'S GREATEST MISTAKE

The declaration of war on America by Japan and Germany is a subject that has not had the attention that it has deserved - until now. Here the argument is made that the attack on Pearl Harbor was driven, in part, by the Lend-Lease policy. With the U.S. reluctant to fight on two fronts, Hitler took the decision out of Roosevelt's hands, with fatal consequences for Nazi Germany and triumph for Winston Churchill.



The attack on Pearl Harbor from a Japanese viewpoint

In early 1941, the U.S. Congress debated the passage of a landmark bill, one that would enable Britain to purchase £3 billion worth of arms from America. At the time, Britain was confronted with a financial and military crisis, encapsulated by Ambassador Lord Lothian's famous, although probably fictitious, declaration to American reporters: "Well boys, Britain's broke: it's your money we want!" President Franklin Roosevelt had devised an ingenious plan to circumvent the web of neutrality legislation erected by congressional anti-interventionists to prevent the U.S. becoming embroiled in the war. This enabled the administration to lend Britain supplies while deferring payment. Winston Churchill later celebrated the Lend-Lease Bill as the "most unsordid act in the whole of recorded history" but it was certainly not an act of disinterested charity.

Roosevelt presented the legislation as an "Act Further to promote the Defense of the United States." Aware that the overwhelming majority of Americans were opposed to committing U.S. troops overseas, he regarded the Act as a vital contribution to defeating Nazi Germany without American military intervention. He subsequently extended Lend-Lease aid to other nations fighting the Axis powers. Even as tensions rose with Japan, Roosevelt and his military aides continued to regard Germany as the principal threat to the U.S. But when the situation in the Pacific deteriorated in the latter half of 1941, the Roosevelt administration and, more acutely, the recipients of Lend-Lease aid in the struggle against Hitler, were confronted with a potential dilemma: What would happen if the U.S. found itself at war with Japan but not Germany? Would America's attention and, more importantly, its resources be focused on the Pacific rather than the Atlantic?

The passage of the Lend-Lease Bill was a political triumph for Churchill. Ever since assuming the premiership in 1940, his strategy had been based on holding out long enough against Hitler and Mussolini until, as he phrased it in his famous "Fight Them on the Beaches" speech, "in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old." While Congress was debating the Bill, Churchill urged Roosevelt to put his

"confidence in us ... Give us the tools, and we will finish the job." The ultimate passage of Lend-Lease in early March helped Britain stave off bankruptcy and secured the weapons needed to carry on the fight against Nazism. Churchill publicly lauded it as a second Magna Carta. Even in private, he assured King George VI that it would allow Britain to "carry on and win the war." Yet Churchill knew that, while Lend-Lease was essential to keep Britain's war effort going, it was really a holding operation and only a full-scale US intervention could ensure ultimate victory.

By early December 1941, however, Roosevelt seemed no closer to bringing the U.S. into the war and, as Churchill informed the President's principal advisor, Harry Hopkins, this was causing "depression through Cabinet and other informed circles here." More ominously, Japan's growing aggressiveness in the Pacific threatened to put Britain in an even graver position. If Japan attacked the British Empire in Asia – while scrupulously avoiding action against the U.S. – then Britain would find itself in a two-front war, alone except for the U.S.S.R., then fighting desperately to prevent Hitler capturing Moscow.

On the night of December 7th, Churchill initially responded to the news of the devastating Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor with excitement, which he heard on the radio from a BBC newscaster, while at dinner with the president's Lend-Lease co-ordinator, Averell Harriman, and the U.S. Ambassador John G. Winant. He immediately called Roosevelt, who confirmed the news and told him: "We are in the same boat now." But it soon became apparent that the U.S. and Britain were together in the Pacific but not necessarily in the Atlantic. Britain had avoided the worst-case scenario – fighting Japan and Germany across two oceans without the U.S. But the fear now loomed that Washington would focus entirely on Japan, devoting its resources to its own war, and leaving Britain to face Hitler unaided. As a result, Churchill's sleep that night was far less restful than he later claimed.

In Washington, amidst the horror and confusion as reports filtered in from the Pacific, Roosevelt told his wife, Eleanor,

that he “never wanted to fight this war on two fronts ... we haven’t got the Navy to fight in both the Atlantic and the Pacific.” Roosevelt had spent more than a year carefully educating his fellow countrymen about the threat posed by Hitler’s Germany. The president had established the U.S. as the “Arsenal of Democracy,” providing as much aid as was politically feasible to the Allied nations fighting Hitler, while evincing comparably less concern about Japan’s ambitions in the Pacific. Now, the U.S. found itself at war with Japan but not Nazi Germany. While cables from Berlin to Tokyo, intercepted and decoded by U.S. intelligence, suggested that Germany would join any war that Japan fought against the United States, could Roosevelt be certain how Hitler would respond? As Roosevelt’s speech writer, Robert Sherwood, later noted, the Nazis “were in honour bound by their pledges to the Japanese, but they had not previously shown much inclination to let such bourgeois-democratic considerations interfere with their own concepts on self-interest.”

At a conference, held by Roosevelt with his leading military and diplomatic advisors on the night of the 7th, there was clear consensus that “in the last analysis the enemy [is] Hitler” and conflict with Japan might also lead to war with Germany. But Roosevelt rejected the counsel of Secretary of War Henry Stimson to include Germany in his declaration of war against Japan. The president remained acutely conscious of the large swathe of anti-war sentiment in the country.

The most influential anti-interventionist organisation in the country, the America First committee, issued a statement committing itself to full support of the war effort against Japan but pointedly made no reference to its attitude in connection with the war in Europe. Furthermore, a circular sent by the Committee’s founder to all chapter chairmen stated that “the facts and arguments against intervention in

Europe remain the same as they were before the Japanese issue arose,” and informed them that the National Committee would meet in Chicago that Thursday, December 11th, to decide its policy. Clearly, the later historical interpretation that Pearl Harbor led to the instant collapse of isolationism was not yet apparent. Moreover, the U.S. Army and Navy shared Roosevelt’s fear that the U.S. lacked the resources to fight a two-front war and, as a result, immediately suspended the transfer of Lend-Lease aid to Europe.

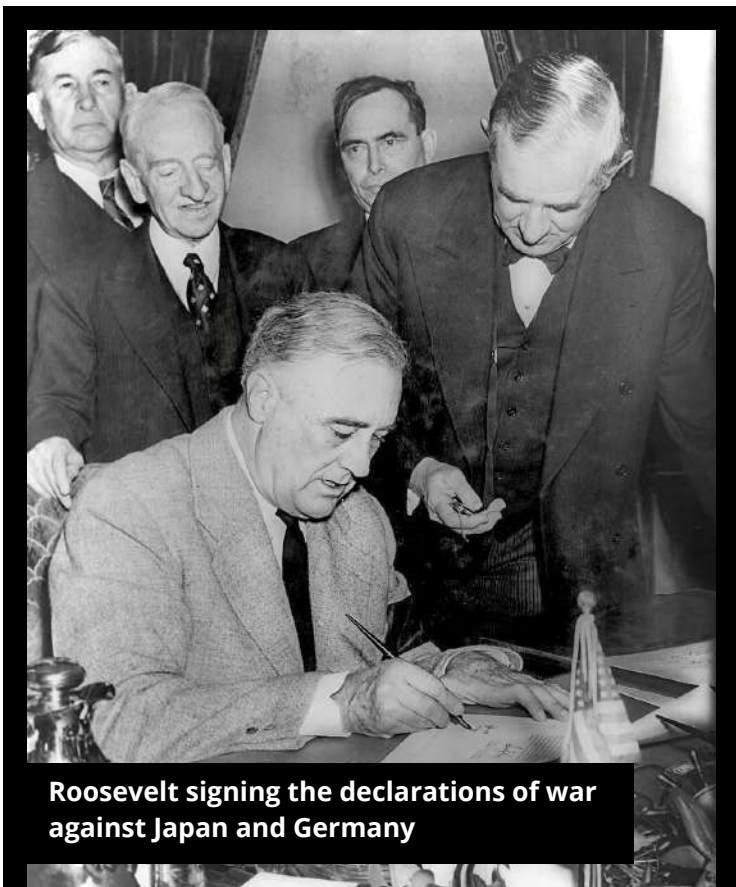
Immediately upon hearing news of Pearl Harbor, Churchill began making urgent plans to travel to Washington. As he informed the King, he was desperate to ensure that the influx of American aid, on which Britain’s fighting capacity depended, “does not suffer more than is, I fear, inevitable.” His fears were heightened when he received news of the Lend-Lease embargo. From Washington, Britain’s Ambassador, Lord Halifax, warned Churchill that Roosevelt was reluctant to accept his visit as the American public was focused on Japan and a significant number of Americans remained unconvinced about conflict with Germany too.

7th December was also that day that a new Soviet Ambassador Maxim Litvinov arrived in Washington. In a lunchtime meeting with Joseph E. Davies, an advisor to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Litvinov stated that he personally felt U.S. intervention was probably too late to make a difference to the war with Hitler.

Of greater concern to Litvinov was the belief that the American war in the Pacific would prevent the delivery of vital Lend-Lease supplies. Although the offer of Lend-Lease aid had been extended to the Soviets after Hitler’s invasion, the set-up had been slow and protracted, not helped by Congressional opposition and the scepticism of the U.S. military attaché in Moscow who was convinced that the Soviet forces were in danger of imminent collapse. Consequently, most of the initial supply of Lend-Lease allocations came through Britain, much of it from the aircrafts and tanks that London received from the U.S. These tanks were crucial to the defence of Moscow, making up 30-40% of the heavy and medium tank strength of the Soviets in those critical battles.

The news of Pearl Harbor also triggered intense anxiety in the Soviet Union itself. While Stalin was relieved that the Japanese had not attacked him, the Soviet dictator was anxious about the diversion of British and American resources, not least because territorial losses, enemy action and the disruption caused by the evacuation programme had slashed domestic production. Lend-Lease supplies would be vital when the Nazi offensive on Moscow resumed, and there was a real danger that they would not be forthcoming.

British and Soviet observers, therefore, anxiously awaited developments as Roosevelt travelled to Congress on the 8th to request an American declaration of war against Japan. His speech made no mention of Germany and Italy. The president recognised that, despite Pearl Harbor, there was still considerable opposition to the U.S. again dispatching its young men to die in a European war and this explained his decision to refrain from including any of the other Axis powers in his speech. One of the leading dissenters, former President Herbert Hoover, confirmed the accuracy of



Roosevelt signing the declarations of war against Japan and Germany

Roosevelt's analysis in a letter that day to leading anti-interventionist Senator Robert Taft: "I thought the President was very wise in limiting his declaration of war to Japan. I know he was strongly urged to declare it on the whole world. I am in hopes that we can even yet limit the area of the war."

Nevertheless, eager to redirect public opinion back to the principal enemy, Roosevelt released a statement to the Press: "Obviously Germany did all it could to push Japan into the war as it hoped that such a conflict would put an end to the Lend-Lease program." The administration was aware that German propaganda was gleefully claiming that war in the Pacific would deprive Britain of Lend-Lease supplies. As a result, the Roosevelt administration informed the press that "the Lend-Lease program is and will continue in full operation," but did not mention that distribution had, in fact, been suspended the night before.

In Britain, panic ensued as the suspension of Lend-Lease material became apparent. The U.S. Lend-Lease administrator, Edward Stettinius, reported that shipments had been virtually stopped, ships were being held at the docks, and goods in transit were now backed up, under orders from the Army and Navy. This "complete embargo" caused an "embarrassing situation" for U.S. officials, as the UK government pleaded for desperately needed materials. British officials told their American counterparts that aid was desperately needed for their campaign against the Axis in North Africa and delay in releasing the supplies could prove disastrous.

The possible consequences for the Soviets, when their resources were so stretched, was even more dire. The mood in the Kremlin was tense. Stalin was under strong American pressure to declare war on Japan, which would make Roosevelt's task of selling continued support to the Soviets much easier. The dictator refused on the grounds that the conflict with Hitler was absorbing all of his resources, including most of the men and equipment formerly stationed in the east. Moreover, he added with remarkable chutzpah given the recent record of Soviet aggression, that he did "not consider it possible to take the initiative in violating the pact, for we ourselves have always condemned governments that violated treaties." Stalin even refused a military demonstration on the border to distract Tokyo, because he feared that this would provoke a Japanese pre-emptive strike. Stalin had the stronger nerves. On December 9th after Litvinov refused to issue a joint communique, probably for fear of antagonising Japan, the Americans caved in. They announced that despite the demands of the Pacific War, the U.S. was committed to "continue to carry out its program of aid to the Soviet Union." Amidst all the uncertainty, it was the embattled Soviet dictator who was the first to achieve a positive clarification of his position.

On the morning of December 11th, a visibly exhausted Churchill delivered a weary address to the Commons. He reviewed the British position and conveyed the extent of the disaster in East Asia, after the Japanese sinking of the HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales the previous day, but concluded on a hopeful note that Britain's war effort would be bolstered by a flow of American "munitions and aid of

every kind [that] will vastly exceed anything that had been expected on the peace-time basis that had ruled up to the present." Yet, at the same time, Harriman was reporting to Washington that the supplies which Britain desperately needed for the North African campaign were still being "held up" and urged them to be released urgently to prevent disaster. Despite Churchill's bravado, his government remained fearful that American aid would continue to dwindle and that this would have dire consequences for the war against Hitler.

Shortly after Churchill finished addressing Parliament, at 8 am in Washington, the German chargé d'affaires, Hans Thomsen, arrived at the State Department to deliver a message but Secretary Hull refused to receive him. It was not until 9:30 am that the head of the European Division of the U.S. State Department received the German message, which declared that they had reached the end of their tether and a formal state of war was now declared. The U.S. chargé d'affaires in Berlin, Leland Morris, received the same message, shortly before Hitler publicly declared war in an address to the Reichstag.

At 12:30pm, Washington time, Roosevelt responded with a message to Congress and a simultaneous press release, declaring that the "long known and long expected has thus taken place," and urged Americans to rise to this unprecedented "challenge to life, liberty and civilization." After five days of apprehension and uncertainty, Hitler had followed Japan in solving Roosevelt's "sorest problems." It was only with Germany's declaration of war that the anti-interventionist resistance was finally broken. Meeting in Chicago at 12 noon local time, just half an hour after Roosevelt responded to Hitler's gambit, the America First Committee dissolved itself, issuing a final salvo that "their principles were right" and, if followed, "war could have been avoided" but the German declaration had now settled that debate.

Inside the White House, Roosevelt's advisers breathed a huge sigh of relief. According to the president's economic advisor, John Kenneth Galbraith: "When Pearl Harbor happened, we were desperate ... we were all in agony," as the public mood meant the administration would be "forced to concentrate all our efforts on the Pacific, unable from then on to give more than purely peripheral help to Britain." To the amazement of the president and his advisers, Hitler made the "truly astounding" and "totally irrational" decision to declare war on the United States. Galbraith recalled an indescribable "feeling of triumph" upon hearing the news from Berlin: "I think it saved Europe."



Charlie Laderman is the author, along with Brendan Simms, of *Hitler's American Gamble: Pearl Harbor and the German March to Global War*. He is the author of *Sharing the Burden: The Armenian Question, Humanitarian Intervention and Anglo-American Visions of Global Order* which was shortlisted for the Royal Historical Society's Whitfield Prize.

The Story Behind the Novel



Marion Kummerow's latest novel explores the dark side of Nazi Germany, through the eyes of a Jewish woman. In this piece she explains the history behind her story, and how the holocaust is never far from sight in her native Germany.

Words: Marion Kummerow

From the Dark We Rise is the second book in a trilogy about Margarete, a young Jewish woman hiding from the Nazis by becoming one of them. After her adventure in Paris, I planned for Margarete to watch the war from the sidelines in a nice, quiet location. It had to be within a reasonable distance from Berlin though, and I finally settled on the quaint little town Plau am See by the lake called Plauer See, thinking the modest and down-to-earth Margarete would love to live in such a beautiful location after all the horrible things that had happened to her.

There was no widespread resistance organisation in Germany that she could have joined, and definitely not in such a remote area. On the other hand, I couldn't let her return to Berlin, since it would have been inevitable that someone recognized her and blew her cover.

Carrying out research into the area around Plau am See, I discovered there was an ammunition factory in Malchow, just across the lake. The factory workers were mostly Jews and other 'undesirables' forced to work there by the Nazis, in extremely unhealthy and dangerous conditions. Most were women.

It was the perfect place for Margarete to help her fellow Jews, although she didn't know yet what would await her there. The factory plays a big role in the book, even before Margarete becomes aware of it. And once she does, she finds out about my wicked twist, which causes her a lot of grief and soul-searching. But I must give her credit, she valiantly deals with all of it.

Since I love to travel, doing research for the book was the perfect excuse to leave husband and kids for four days and embark on a trip to the northeast of Germany. On my tour I

immersed myself into the history of the locations where Margarete's story takes place, the towns Plau am See, Malchow and Waren.

The ammunition factory was the one thing I wanted to see most. Unfortunately, there isn't much left of it. Most of the buildings were blasted before the Red Army arrived. Once there, the Russians dismantled every machine as part of the war reparations and shipped them to the Soviet Union. 80 years of abandonment did the rest.

Today, the forest has reclaimed the area and overgrown almost everything, apart from the odd concrete wall or brick structure half-hidden beneath decaying leaves.

It was still a worthwhile visit, because I got a feel for the hardships of the prisoners: due to the danger from cooking explosives, the factory wasn't one huge building, but many small concrete bunkers spread across the grounds. As you can imagine, not having everything in one building enlarged the area by a lot. In total, the factory covered an area of 360 hectares (1.4 square miles).

To further reduce the risk of a chain reaction when one of the bunkers exploded, the prisoners had to dig deep ditches with high earth walls between them.

Since they didn't have the luxury of transportation, they had to walk long distances every day, in addition to their backbreaking twelve-hour shifts at the factory. Their sleeping quarters weren't in the factory itself, but in a camp some kilometres to the east, bordering the town of Malchow.

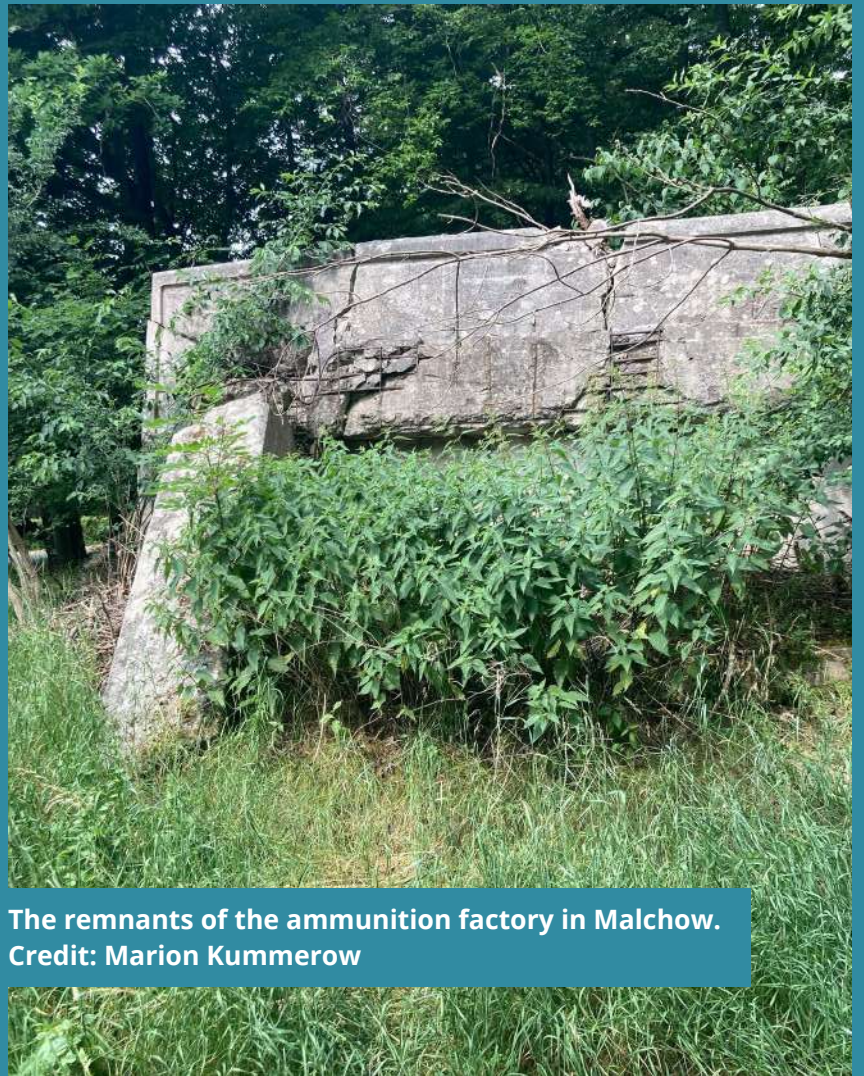


I also visited the memorial site, but there's nothing left of the camp either. A few fenceposts of the same kind you know from images of barbed wire fences and a signpost mark the outer border of the former camp. I arrived in the early morning and was the only person to visit. The weather suited the occasion perfectly: a grey, foggy morning. And I swear I could feel the tortured souls still roaming the place.

If you've never done so, I highly recommend a visit to one of the concentration camp memorials. It will give you an entirely new perspective about what happened during the Holocaust.

But back to Margarete Rosenbaum, who has taken on the identity of the deceased Annegret Huber, the daughter of a high-ranking Nazi: She's now the lady of the manor, which is a challenge in itself, because she used to be the maid, and a Jew – the lowest of the low in Hitler's racial hierarchy.

She'll find some allies and some who want to take advantage of her, and she'll find her purpose in helping those who cannot help themselves. But will she achieve her goal? Or does she fail in the attempt?

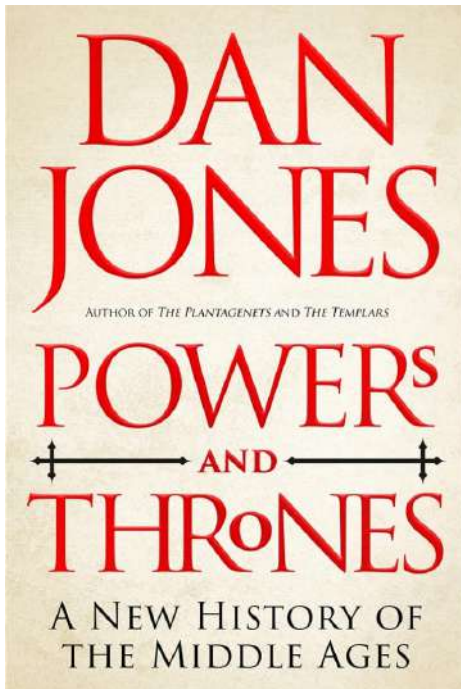


The remnants of the ammunition factory in Malchow. Credit: Marion Kummerow



Marion Kummerow is a German author and lives with her family in Munich. She started writing about the Second World War to honour her grandparents, who fought against the Nazi regime. She is the author of *A Light in the Window* and *Not Without My Sister*. *From the Dark We Rise* is her latest novel published by Bookouture.

REVIEW



Powers & Thrones: A New History of the Middle Ages

Dan Jones

Richard Foreman is a writer and publisher and author of *Turpin's Assassin*.

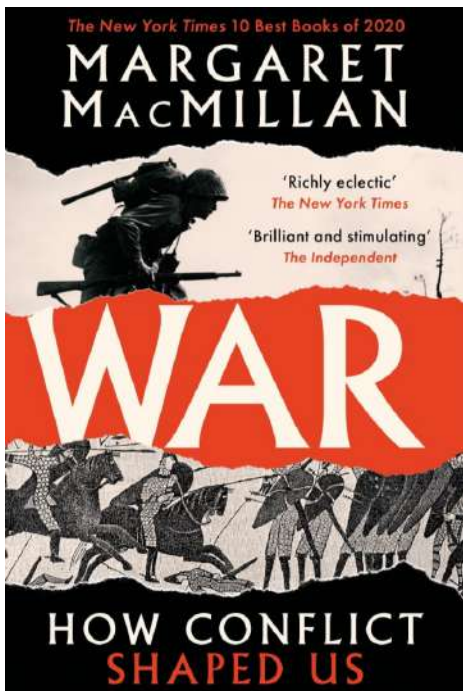
Dan Jones argues, if not proves, in his revelatory new book, *Powers and Thrones: A New History of the Middle Ages*, that the period made us. Good history doesn't necessarily need to be relevant, but more than most non-fiction titles this year *Powers and Thrones* will resonate for a number of reasons. The book touches upon the rise and fall of empires, pandemics, religious conflict, the failure of a two-state solution in Jerusalem and even plutocrats giving their fortunes away. Powers and thrones still very much exist.

The Middle Ages made us, but equally so the period makes for a cracking story. Jones is careful to entertain, as well as enlighten. This is one of the paciest 600 plus page books I have ever read. *Powers and Thrones* is cannily structured and embroidered with style. The book takes us from Marcus Aurelius to Henry VIII, without a single wasted paragraph. The narrative addresses epochal moments and movements (such as the demise of Rome, the rise of Islam, the Crusades, the Black Death, Protestantism) – which are interspersed with lively portraits of remarkable and representative figures during the period, including William Marshal, Dick Whittington, Charlemagne, and Christopher Columbus to name but a few. Not every character in the vast cast list may be deemed admirable or virtuous, but none are dull.

The chapters dealing with the Crusades, Templars and Plantagenets are understandably insightful, given the author's previous bestselling titles on the subjects. But there is plenty of rich and judicious material to be found when Jones writes about the success (and decline) of the Mongol Empire, and how the Black Death was succeeded by a spirit of renewal. Scholarship is wedded to storytelling – and flashes of humour exist on the same page as academic rigour, as Jones contrasts the Medieval world with our own (and finds that there is more that unites than divides us).

“ I thought to myself that the author may not write a better book than *The Plantagenets*. Not for the first time in my life, I was wrong. ”

Credit should also go to the publisher, Head of Zeus, for the production values of the book. There are copious colour plates, which will help turn *Powers and Thrones* into a great gift, as well as a great read. A few years ago, I thought to myself that the author may not write a better book than *The Plantagenets*. Not for the first time in my life, I was wrong.



War: How Conflict Shaped Us

Margaret MacMillan

Charlotte Cowell is a historian and restorer of the masterworks of legendary St Petersburg occultist, G.O. Mebes, for the English-speaking world via her Shin Publications imprint. Her new book, *The Solar Way*, is an English translation of one of the only surviving works of White Russian Sister, Nina Roudnikova.

The primary lesson of *War* is that it has shaped human history since the mark of Cain condemned us to endless cycles of conflict and the gods urged champions onto victory from the vantage point of Mount Olympus. The tangled roots of warfare are so densely packed it's difficult to avoid looking skyward, for if war is "not the fault of the gods, who started it?"

Margaret MacMillan is renowned for posing such questions but - whilst the quest for answers is profound - the subject can't help but raise a series of imponderables, not least of all about human nature: Does mankind have greater kinship with warlike chimpanzees or loving bonobos, both close cousins on the evolutionary scale?

A strong case is made for belligerent chimps, but as the pages of *War* unfold it becomes tragically clear that organised societies invariably wage more systematic warfare. As individuals attempt to make sense of the horrors of war and to preserve the memories of their people, technocratic nations seek to overpower mankind with robots - fully autonomous weapons - and humanity is pushed back to the dark ages.

In a chapter on the Reasons for War, greed, self-defence, emotions and ideas are shown to have been paramount over millennia of conflict, whilst "honour and glory can matter more than life itself". The ubiquitous assertion is acknowledged with a pithy observation that religion is "a most convenient excuse". More convenient than the "singularly stupid mistake of going to Sarajevo" committed by the Austrian heir, on the Serbian National Day of June 28th 1914.

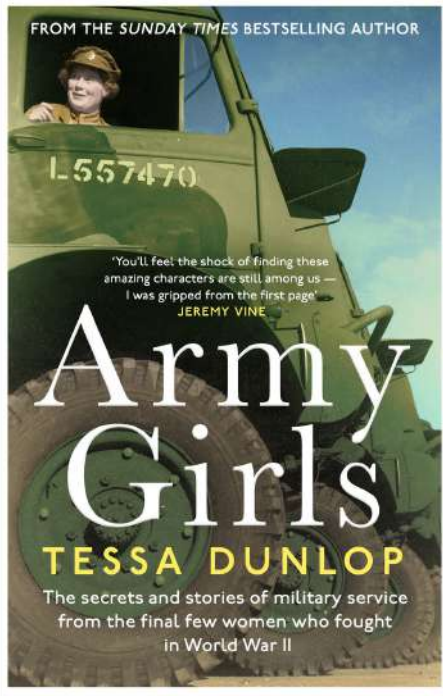
It is difficult, at such times, to escape the notion that it's easier to blame the gods than to blame ourselves for such disasters.

Whilst conflicts between states have arguably decreased since 1945, civil wars fought with the fervour of Crusades have proliferated, resulting in deaths unknown. Remembrance of the incalculable human cost brings deepening pathos to MacMillan's study, as higher powers become increasingly efficient and ruthless in their offerings of ever-greater human sacrifice. Her chapter on Modern Warfare is chilling in its technical specifications and ingenious methodologies, whilst state propaganda is recalled as that most cynical of weapons, deployed against friend and foe with impunity.

All this is set in poignant contrast with the personal bravery required of a warrior, who in the eyes of Pericles "best knows the meaning of what is sweet in life and what is terrible".

Civilians left at home are not forgotten, so often paying the heaviest penalties of defeat, even as they share the spoils of victory. The same defeats and victories are immortalised by monumental works of art and literature, which transport us back to the realm of gods and heroes. The tragedy is still real, but as war gives way to terrorism - and monuments to reportage - I can't help thinking the glory days are long gone. Could war really be over if we want it to be?

Margaret MacMillan's ability to make us ponder these questions deeply makes her book as moving as it is informative. Densely-packed with enthralling fragments gleaned from vast swathes of history - spanning the globe from her native Canada and the Commonwealth to China and Carthage - there is as much here to learn for the interested layman as there is for the politician.



Army Girls: The secrets and stories of military service from the final few women who fought in World War II

Tessa Dunlop

Ella Beales is a Historical Researcher, Archivist and Public Historian, currently in postgraduate study at the University of Bristol.

Tessa Dunlop writes that 'in 1940s Britain, no matter what their achievements, girls came second.' *Army Girls* ensures that this is no longer the case. Masterfully weaving the past and present together, Dunlop reveals the rich tapestry of female British military experience by sharing the voices of 17 women who served in the Auxiliary Territorial Army (ATS) during the Second World War.

Written during the Covid-19 pandemic, Dunlop integrates the impact of this global event into her work, offering a link between the crises of the past and present and the determination of these women in both their youth and old age. Interviewing the last surviving veterans who served in Britain's female army, Dunlop incorporates their voices, alongside their letters, with wider histories of the military and the war. Moving away from a simplified commemoration of female military experience, as often crafted for public consumption, *Army Girls* offers the women involved a chance to see the complexities of their histories recorded on paper. Described as a 'story about belonging', *Army Girls* achieves this by not only placing female experience at the forefront of our understandings of key memories of the conflict, but also through Dunlop's touching personal rapport with the women she is interviewing.

Army Girls offers enticing storytelling but, most importantly, Dunlop's writing is eminently accessible. Taking time to explain the history of the ATS, Dunlop provides footnotes explaining key events and the meanings of key military terms. Writing in this way, however, does not detract from the depth and breadth of knowledge that Dunlop imparts upon the reader and, as such, it is the perfect book for beginners and experts alike.

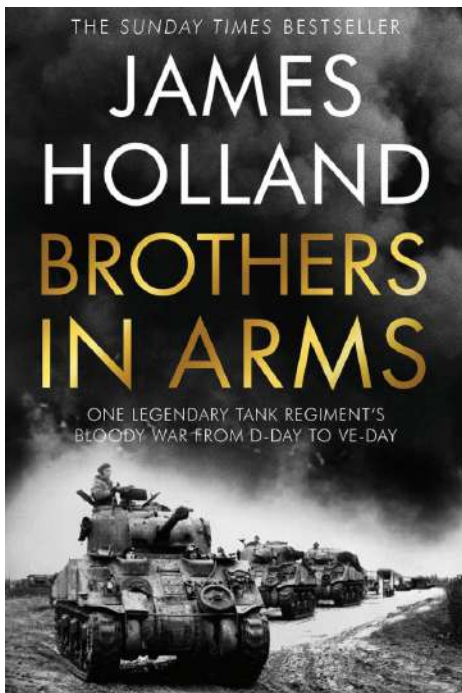
At a time of social conservatism, sexism and snobbery, the ATS was viewed as being a hotbed of sexual immorality, and this narrow view has often prevented justice being done in the

“**Army Girls** lets their voices shine through, and is the perfect tribute to the lives and achievements of these women.”

telling of its history. However, whilst Dunlop touches upon this perception of the ATS in *Army Girls*, she chooses instead to focus on what really mattered to the women of the ATS themselves. Such topics include: using the opportunities that war offered to improve their future employability, the role of war as a catalyst for their emergence into adulthood, and ultimately how, despite their differences, these women are forever bound together by their experiences.

Amongst the 17 women interviewed by Dunlop, we uncover stories of ambulance drivers in France, the history of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY), those who travelled to serve with the ATS overseas, and women involved in the espionage heart of the British military – the Special Operations Executive (SOE). Looking at issues of gender, class and race in wartime Britain, and sharing stories of love and romance, friendship and comradeship, grief and loss, and finding their place in the world, *Army Girls* is an exploration of the lives and stories of ordinary women and the extraordinary things they achieved.

There were 290,000 women who supported the army in the ATS during the Second World War: *Army Girls* lets their voices shine through, and is the perfect tribute to the lives and achievements of these women.



Brothers in Arms: One Legendary Tank Regiment's Bloody War from D-Day to VE-Day

James Holland

Rupert Hague-Holmes is an amateur military historian, currently writing a biography about the life and career of Lt Gen Sir George Lea, one of the leading post WW2 British counterinsurgency warfare experts.

The renowned Second World War historian, James Holland, has produced an outstanding account of a unit's campaign across North West Europe from D-Day in June 1944 to VE-Day in May 1945. The subject unit - The Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry (SRY) - was a Territorial Army formation, used initially as a horsed cavalry unit in Palestine at the outbreak of WW2, subsequently converting to an artillery unit and then an armoured unit during the Western Desert campaign equipped with M3 Grant and Crusader tanks, finally landing on D-Day, equipped with M4 Sherman and Firefly tanks.

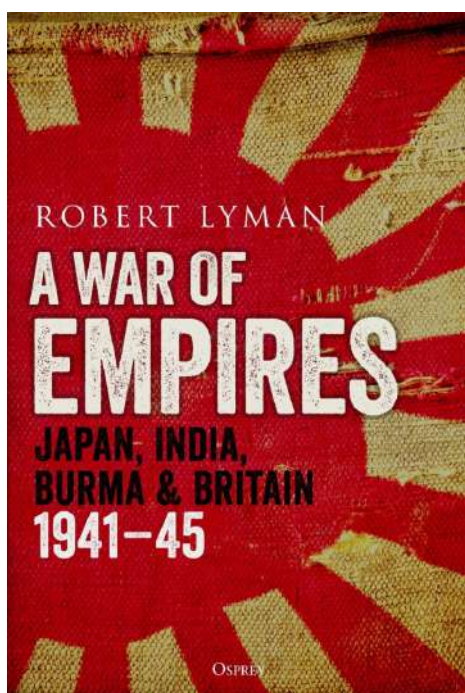
Holland's book graphically takes the reader through the experiences of the unit, and the men who fought with it, from the nervous apprehension of landing on enemy occupied France on Gold Beach early in the morning on D-Day, to the joy and relief of the announcement of the German surrender in May 1945. Holland writes in such a way that enables the reader to understand clearly the pressures of fighting a long campaign inside a tank - the claustrophobia, the smells and dirt, the lack of space, the camaraderie associated with shared dangers, the typical British Army black humour, the tensions of battle. It's almost as if Holland can transport you there - his story-telling is that good. Holland explains the rationale for the high casualty rates amongst tank crews - by the time the SRY had reached the German border in late 1944, there had been a 100% turnover in its tank crews - and how the majority of casualties for tank crews were suffered outside the tanks, invariably men bailing out from the tank, after being hit, and being killed by infantry as a result.

Using many first-hand sources and some great maps, Holland narrates the experiences and feelings of many of the men who served in the SRY during the campaign - their sense of pride in their unit, the constant fear of death at any time, their guilt, and deep sense of loss, when good friends are killed and the emotional pain of missing loved ones. The close bonds of the tank crews, and the relaxed, yet professional, tone of leadership

Using many first-hand sources and some great maps, Holland narrates the experiences and feelings of many of the men who served in the SRY during the campaign.

of SRY's Commanding Officer, Stanley Christopherson, as he struggles inwardly to manage the pressures of combat, and loneliness of command, are all too evident, as is the 'family feel' to the SRY - with an ex-CO's wife, based in England, providing a welfare service for the families of those serving. The most graphic parts of the book are the experiences of the unit's Padre, regularly going into dangerous combat areas, to retrieve the SRY fallen - often mutilated beyond recognition - and conducting burial services, in many instances under the watch of the enemy.

For any serious student of British WW2 armoured warfare, this book is a must-read - as a novice reader about armoured warfare, I appreciated particularly the explanations by Holland of the detailed characteristics of the Sherman tank, and the nuances of the fighting across North West Europe experienced by those in tanks.



A War of Empires: Japan, India, Burma & Britain 1941-45

Robert Lyman

Gordon Corrigan is a historian and writer, and author of *The Second World War: A Military History, Mud, Blood and Poppycock* and *Waterloo: A New History of the Battle and its Armies*.

There have been many accounts of the disasters followed by the triumph of the Burma campaign in the Far East war, but few with the detail and perceptive analysis of *A War of Empires*. Robert Lyman is of course a noted authority on the history of the region, and his biography of Bill Slim is a model of how such studies should be constructed. Here the reader is taken through the entire campaign from start to finish with a particularly good introduction setting out the political and military background of all the players. As an ex-professional soldier, Lyman is well placed to understand the military aspects of the war but is also fully cognisant of the political imperatives which, at least in a democracy, dictate the limits of military action. The humiliating attempt at the defence of and then the scuttle from an underfunded and ill-equipped Burma is well covered as is the incompetent Arakan caper of 1943. The author is severely critical of Archibald Wavell, Noel Irwin and Wilfrid Lloyd, and the evidence he cites and the conclusions he draws have forced at least this reviewer to re-examine his own perceptions of Wavell.

It is refreshing to find some compassion for John 'Jackie' Smyth, blamed by many as having been solely responsible for the Sittang bridge disaster. Those of us who consider Wingate to have been a dangerous lunatic would be well advised to read Lyman's succinct assessment of the man and his methods, which shows that many of Wingate's ideas were sound, even if their execution was not. The lessons learned from fighting the Japanese and their application to the re-vamped training methods instituted by Claude Auchinleck to prepare the Indian Army for its return to the fray is well covered as is the obstruction caused by the unfortunate attitude of Churchill to consider the Indian army as nothing more than a 'band of potential mutineers'. The book is perhaps more sympathetic to the motivation of those prisoners who chose to join 'Netaji's' Indian National Army (that sided with Japan), than were those prisoners who withstood appalling brutality when refusing to join (including one subedar major of a Gurkha battalion who was beheaded), but the circumstances

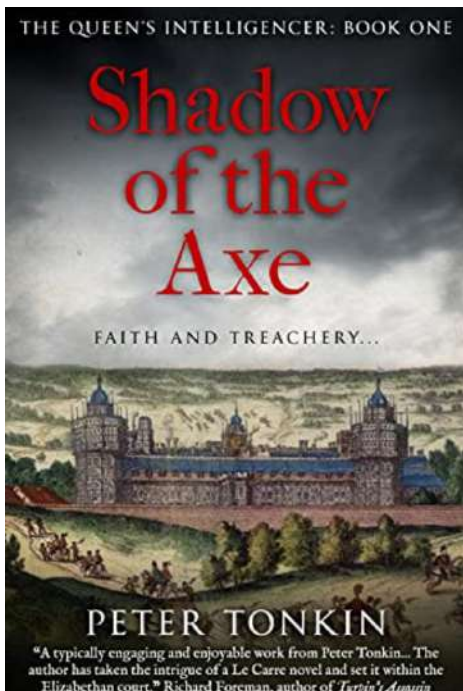
have been assessed in more detail than has been seen elsewhere.

The contribution of Auchinleck, unfairly sacked by Churchill and traduced by Montgomery, in rebuilding the army and of Slim in leading it are fully acknowledged, as is the prodigious logistic effort involved. The sequence of events and the battles in the subsequent victorious return to Burma are masterfully described, and where he finds 'official histories' in error Lyman says so and shows how. One of the major problems, perhaps the greatest problem next to the Japanese, was that the Far East in general and Burma in particular was bottom of the Allied priority for equipment, shipping, aircraft and manpower, much having to be improvised in India or on the battlefield.

One of the most helpful aspects of this book is the way in which the author describes the interplay between the various allies, all with the same ultimate aim - to defeat the Japanese - but all with their own differing agenda and coming at the common aim from different directions. The misconceptions, suspicions, cultural clashes and pure mutual ignorance all made coordination and concentration of effort very difficult and sometimes impossible, a prime example being the description of the relationship between Joseph Stillwell and Generalissimo Chiang.

Slim is rightly lauded for his far seeing and perceptive assessments of what was possible and what was not, and for his drive and leadership throughout - he will surely be recognised by future historians as being far and away the best British general of the Second World War. Each of the important battles is illustrated by a clear and unambiguous map, and the plates are well chosen.

A War of Empires is meticulously sourced, a delight to read and will surely be the definitive account of this, the most harrowing campaign of the Second World War.



Shadow of the Axe

Peter Tonkin

Review by Louise Banks

Peter Tonkin proves again there is much to explore within the dramatic reign of Queen Elizabeth I. His first novel in The Queen's Intelligencer series, *Shadow of the Axe*, focuses on the fascinating events that led to the Essex Rebellion of 1601, and the rival factions of Robert Cecil and the Earl of Essex. The novel opens on a stormy autumn night with horsemen riding towards the great Nonsuch Palace. Among these horsemen are the key figures of Robert Devereux (the Earl of Essex), Gelly Meyrick and Henry Cuffe. The Earl of Essex reaches the great Tudor Palace and demands an audience with Queen Elizabeth. Upon his peace-making with Ireland, Essex breaks into Queen Elizabeth's chamber and attempts to explain his actions. Both alarmed and angered, Queen Elizabeth places him under house arrest. Now, one would assume Tonkin would follow the Earl of Essex's perspective throughout the entire novel but, interestingly, he instead focuses on the character of Robert Poley, one of the most notorious spies of the age. A double agent and informer, Poley was known for his involvement in the Babington plot. After Devereux's interruption, Robert Cecil privately speaks to Poley. Cecil wants the Earl of Essex to be 'destroyed'.

Upon frequenting a pub, Robert Poley is then seemingly trapped and taken to Fleet Prison. Through making friends with a fellow prisoner, Henry Cuffe, he is rescued and brought to the House of Essex. Thus ensues a complicated and intricate game Poley must play. He must prove his loyalty to the Earl of Essex yet also feed information to Lady Janet Percy (one of the Queen's handmaidens), for the ears of Robert Cecil. Playing the role of double agent is a precarious game, and Poley must do everything to ensure his cover is kept intact.

Shadow of the Axe is an intricate and gripping novel for those looking for a window into the events leading up to the Essex Rebellion. Opening with the excitement of the Earl bursting into the Queen's bedchamber, to concluding chapters of the executions of beloved characters, Tonkin ensures that the reader

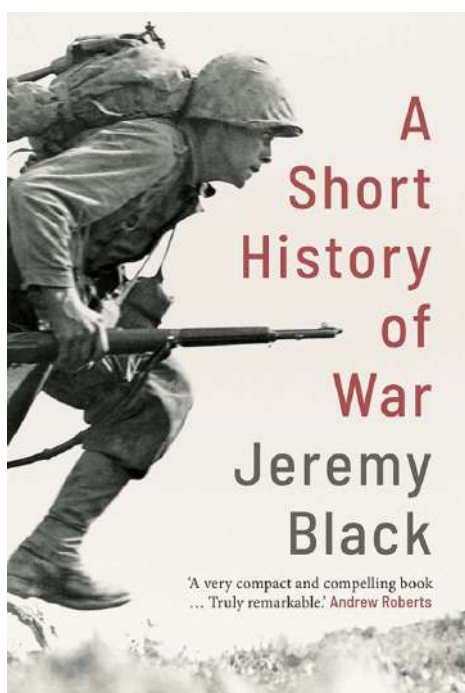
is constantly on the edge of their seat.

The descriptions of the prisons, pubs and houses are well researched and transport the reader back to the Elizabethan era. The streets are alive with detail and colour, but this is never to the detriment of the novel's pace or suspense. Tonkin has combined his thorough research with impressive storytelling skills to create a novel that never flags.

Furthermore, through making Poley a witness to Essex's downfall, we are given a fascinating story of the Elizabethan court. We see events through the complex role of a double agent. Tonkin does well to show the mixed emotions of Robert Poley:

"He was simply torn between his duty as he saw it to the Council, Cecil, and the Queen and the friendship and duty his undercover self-owed to the men and women who had taken him in."

The final chapter is as heart wrenching as it is gory. Regardless of your knowledge of the Essex Rebellion or the key players of the Elizabethan court, the reader will still find much to enjoy in the *Shadow of the Axe*.



A Short History of War

Jeremy Black

Major General Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter saw service in Northern Ireland and Bosnia, and later commanded the Household Division, and was General Officer Commanding London District.

A Short History of War is indeed short at 240 pages, however I have learnt that it is extremely challenging putting a big story into few words and in this Jeremy Black has succeeded with distinction. He writes in a snappy style with an abundance of facts to cover the history warfare across the globe from the time of Adam and Eve to today. An excellent reference for any student of warfare, it includes all likely campaigns and wars they may have to study and many they won't. The chapters are commendably brief, and describe initially the early years BC and are taken at a gallop covering several centuries in a paragraph; the Waterloo campaign is described in two sentences. If interest is sparked, for example, by the Chinese dynasties of which there were over a dozen, Black has prompted the reader to delve elsewhere for the detail. What is so interesting is the variety of means in which tribes, nations and armies conducted warfare throughout history.

Some astonishing facts appear such as it was Napoleon III who instigated a competition to find a non-rancid substitute to butter, margarine, for use by campaigning armies; and the fact that Portugal in the 20th century produced the greatest (less the Israelis) percentage of the population in an Army. Many of us will have been taught that Hannibal crossed the Alps with elephants when in fact only one actually traversed and the poor beast died shortly after.

Black has made a point in placing emphasis on the development of military power in and within China over the ages, something we all should take note of in the current political climate. It was interesting to see Wuhan appear in an entirely non-Covid context as the site of the 1911/12 revolution. The mention of Cannae, which had a disproportionate influence on military thinking in 1911 and its connection to the Schlieffen plan brings to mind the fact that although Carthage won that particular battle, Rome won the war.

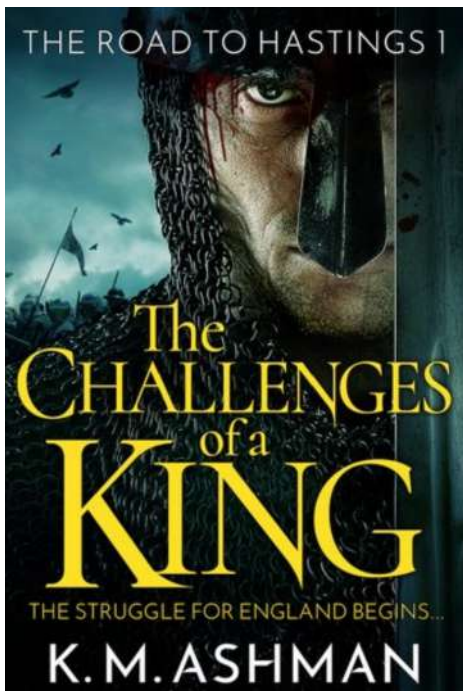


Black has demonstrated an enormous capacity for the length, breadth and depth of global military history which will prompt readers to explore further into campaigns they know little about.



The latter chapters are perhaps the most interesting as they are a commentary on our current, troubled world. In that context the table of comparative defence expenditure in 2019 is revealing. The points Black makes about a looming China and the potential for India to rise in the century to come are sobering, and for this reason he has dwelt less on the European story to ensure the reader grasps the historical context of these two nations, particularly China.

Black has demonstrated an enormous capacity for the length, breadth and depth of global military history which will prompt readers to explore further into campaigns they know little about.



The Challenges of a King

K.M Ashman

Paul Bernardi is the author of the Huscarl Chronicles set during the Norman Conquest. His latest novel is *Thurkill's Rebellion*.

At times, it can be very easy to take matters of historical fact for granted. In this case, as every school child knows (or should know), Duke William of Normandy defeated King Harold II of England at the Battle of Hastings in October 1066 to become the first of the Norman Kings of England. Those with a little more knowledge might also be aware of other, related stories, such as how Harold (when Earl of Wessex) went to Normandy and supposedly swore on sacred relics that he would support Duke William's claim; a famous incident that is commemorated on the Bayeux Tapestry after all.

But if you take a moment to really stop and think, then all manner of questions spring to mind about this period that might leave you scratching your head. Why did Duke William think he had a claim to the throne of England? Why did Edward have no heir, even though he was married to Harold's sister for many years? To name but two.

In the first book of K M Ashman's new series on the road to Hastings, we have the opportunity to learn about possible answers to these, and other, questions relating to the period leading up to 1066; but to do so in the pages of a rollicking "fictional" romp. I say "fictional" because the story is so well researched and so deeply rooted in the available sources, that you feel like you are learning at the same time as being entertained.

And it must be said that the sources for this period are fascinating; not least the differences between what the Normans say (perhaps seeking to justify later events) versus what the English recorded (or sometimes what they didn't record). And I'm glad to say that Ashman makes good but intelligent use of them to steer a course through these choppy waters, helping him to map out a story arc that is both engaging and believable; and one which keeps his story on track throughout.

Book 1 of the Road to Hastings series deals with the first half of King Edward the Confessor's reign from his coronation in 1043 up to 1052. It covers the years when he was seeking to establish himself on the throne after a childhood brought up in Normandy (following King Knut's conquest of 1016 after which he and his brother, Alfred, were exiled with their mother back to her homeland).

The main driver for the story is Edward's often troubled relationship with the mighty Godwin family, made worse by the machinations of the two most senior churchmen of the day: Archbishop Robert of Jumieges and Bishop Stigand of London. At the heart of this struggle (apart from a supposition that Godwin was somehow responsible for Alfred's death) was a growing disquiet over the increasing Norman influence in the affairs of English government, spearheaded by Archbishop Robert. It was perhaps not surprising that a man who had lived more than half his life in Normandy drew comfort from having such men around him, rather than Saxons whom he barely knew and may not have trusted.

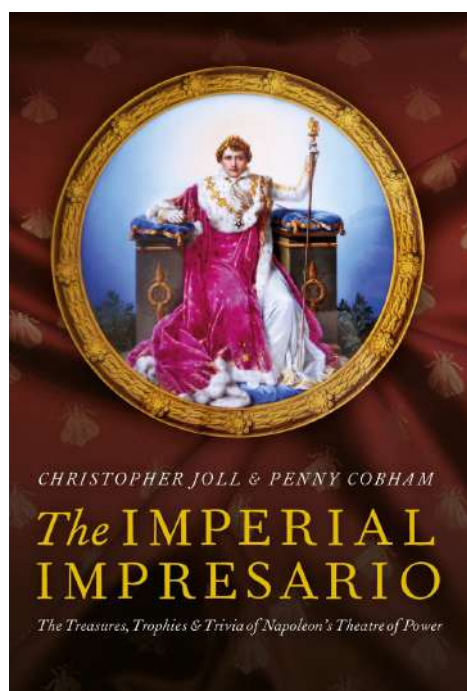
The narrative rattles on at a fair old pace, from one crisis to the next, culminating in the climactic events of 1051/2 in which the whole Godwin family was exiled from Edward's court, at the behest of Archbishop Robert.

As an author of my own series based around 1066 and beyond, I am quite familiar with this history but, I have to say, I found that I tore through the pages in little more than a few days. Ashman's conversational, approachable style had me hooked from the start and left me keen to find out what happened next, despite my familiarity. I'm glad to say, though, with *The Challenges of a King* being but book one of a series of three, I have two more to look forward to.

The Imperial Impresario: The Treasures, Trophies and Trivia of Napoleon's Theatre of Power

Christopher Joll & Penny Cobham

Oliver Webb-Carter is the editor of Aspects of History



In October 2021 a bicorne 'believed' to have been worn by Napoleon Bonaparte was sold at auction for over £200,000. I was quite struck that the hat, made of beaver felt and silk and made in 1806 or 07, had reached such a price since Bonhams could not be 100% certain it had ever been placed on the great man's head. I should mention, in case the person behind the winning bid is reading, that traces of DNA were found on the headwear. Interesting it reached such an amount, when one considers it was probably bought from Messieurs Poupard et Delaunay for a mere 60 francs. But perhaps £200,000 is a snip since, as the Duke of Wellington famously said, 'his presence on the battlefield is worth 40,000 men'.

This item is just one of a huge quantity of Napoleonica that appears in a new book by the writing partnership of Christopher Joll and Penny Cobham. It is a publication that is a joy to read, as Napoleonic artefacts throughout his career are described and depicted, and in some cases exposed for what they are. If visiting the Musée Africain de l'île d'Aix, I would be wary of getting too excited by 'Napoleon's camel', and the story behind his horse, Marengo, if indeed it was, is entertaining.

We start as the authors trace Napoleon's career from his achievements in Egypt and the Middle East, through to his triumphs in Europe and the summit of his coronation as Emperor in 1804. His early years as General and First Consul are relatively low-key, but his coronation as emperor was not, despite his claim that 'a throne is only a bench covered in velvet.' The influence of Rome is clear throughout, most obviously with the French regimental Eagles. It's fascinating to learn of each one's fate. Indeed, one of the Eagles captured at Waterloo resulted in a long-running dispute, that remains unresolved today.

It's not just Bonaparte's imperial items that we learn of, but even a sensitive and vital part of his anatomy. This item had been

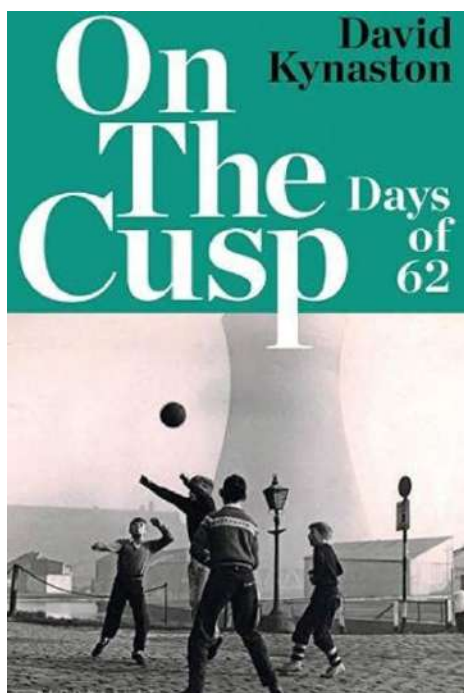


It's not just Bonaparte's imperial items that we learn of, but even a sensitive and vital part of his anatomy.



rather cruelly removed, post-mortem, and has been passed among various owners with an estimate of its price today of well over £1 million.

Napoleon's iconography has echoed through the ages, from sales of sabres at high-class auctioneers, to exhibitions that are well attended today, through even to retail (one can pick up imitation cushions decorated with the Napoleonic bee at a very reasonable £20 from Habitat). It remains a subject of fascination to many, and one which Joll & Cobham have done admirable justice.



On the Cusp: Days of '62

David Kynaston

Get your copy of *On The Cusp* here:

Lucy Binnersley is the Managing Editor of *The London Magazine*, England's oldest literary periodical. <https://www.thelondonmagazine.org/>

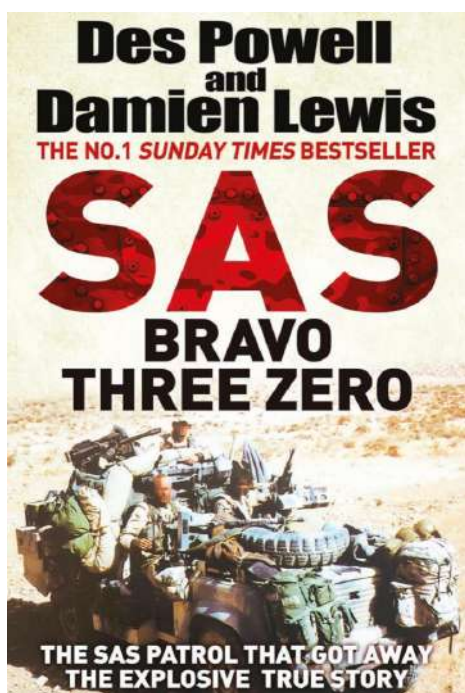
On the Cusp marks the halfway point of David Kynaston's multi-volume *Tales of a New Jerusalem* sequence, covering postwar Britain from 1945 through to the 1979 general election. This volume heralds a stalling in the series; whereas previous titles have covered segments of five years, now in a distinct change of style and pace, we have this short book, that rolls into the summer of 1962 and stays put. Its narrow focus is on the few months leading up to 5 October 1962 – the day the Beatles released their first single, "Love Me Do", and the first James Bond film, *Dr No*, came out. Kynaston believes this to be the very moment that the lightning bolt struck; the transition between the old world and the "real" 1960s got well and truly underway.

Widely believed to be the most momentous decade in postwar history, the 1960s saw Britain change dramatically. The tremors of striking social change were being felt: there was the collapse of prewar attitudes and conventions, the loosening of norms and morals, the arrival of the miniskirt and the lionising of youth – all with a roaring rock 'n' roll soundtrack. Kynaston recounts these feverish few months through historical collage, by collecting and assembling from a wealth of sources: diaries, journalism, official and unofficial reports and academic studies. There are many voices and multiple viewpoints. His approach is entirely democratic and classless: giving equal weight to politicians as he does to common folk. He effortlessly flits from the top desk in Whitehall, where Macmillan is inflicting his major cabinet reshuffle (in what would come to be known as 'The Night of the Long Knives'); to Barrow-in-Furness, where Nella Last is having her own dispute, albeit it with the television rental shop over her temperamental ITV signal; while over in Cheam, a little-known band, called the Rolling Stones, are playing to an audience of two.

The Sixties were a time of great change, of increasing tolerance and openness, but the impact and legacy of these changes are, at times, elusive and hard to grasp. Whilst *On the Cusp* does not

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On the Cusp
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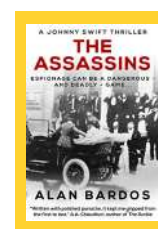
provide much in the way of nuanced analysis, Kynaston does observe that 1962 often feels "simultaneously a very long time ago and the day before yesterday" – certainly, in terms of current events and attitudes towards Europe and immigration, it can be asked if much at all really has changed. There are no certain answers here; it is left to the reader to ponder whether this long, hot summer holds much in the way of legacy. *On the Cusp* is a highly entertaining and accessible title – readers have little chance of being bored or overwhelmed as Kynaston is an astoundingly agile and playful conductor of the sources. More so, he appears to have a genuine rapport and empathy with the characters featured. Kynaston has hit on a winning formula: *On the Cusp* captures a remarkable snapshot of everyday life and brings it to the centre of the historical stage.



Bravo Three Zero

Des Powell & Damien Lewis

Alan Bardos is the author of **The Assassins & The Dardanelles Conspiracy**, both espionage thrillers part of the Johnny Swift series.



The story of Bravo Two Zero's patrol during the First Gulf War is the stuff of legend, not surprisingly it is less well documented that there were two other 'Bravo' patrols. Bravo One aborted due to conditions on the ground and Bravo Three is the subject of this book.

There are obvious comparisons between *SAS Bravo Three Zero* and Andy McNab's *Bravo Two Zero*. They are both first-hand accounts of an SAS patrol sent behind Iraqi lines, something the authors do not shy away from, referencing McNab's patrol throughout.

However, they are very different stories, *Bravo Two Zero* focuses on the patrol's fight for survival after being compromised. Bravo Three Zero focuses on their patrol's battle to complete their mission. The key difference between *Bravo Three Zero* and the other two patrols was their decision to take vehicles, which weren't fit for purpose, but 'better than nothing'.

Special forces had not originally been intended to play a large part in the Gulf War, but following an escalation in the conflict were rushed to the Middle East. They were therefore badly equipped and prepared, Des Powell was even in the middle of buying a house when he was deployed.

However, the stakes couldn't have been higher. Saddam Hussain had begun to launch Scud missiles at Israel, trying to draw the Arab Alliance against him into switching sides and provoke World War III. The Scuds attacks had to be stopped, but they were highly mobile and were often disguised. This made them almost impossible to track from the air. The Bravo patrols were deployed to find the launch sites and radio in air strikes.

Speed was of the essence and the patrol had to improvise with poor equipment and beg, borrow and steal basic supplies. The

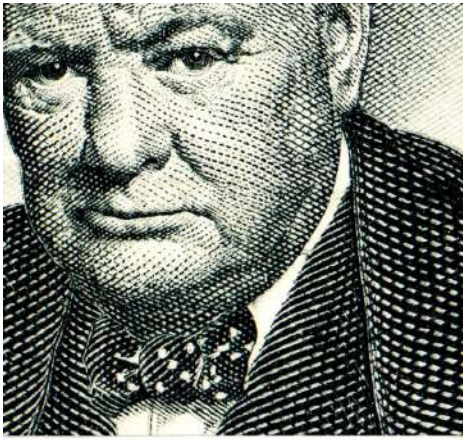
"This is a well-rounded and no holds barred account of men on the brink."

most concerning aspect of this was the poor intelligence. The patrol was told to expect mild weather, 'England in the spring' and were unprepared for the 'worst winter in living memory'. The weather became their main enemy, with snow drifts in the desert to combat. The book chronicles the patrol's tenacity and initiative to survive, even resorting to wearing their rubber NBC suits. Des Powell gives a harrowing account of the constant cold, with little protection from the elements and having no way to get warm.

Despite suffering from the effects of hypothermia, Bravo Three Zero were able to avoid capture and death to call in airstrikes that inflicted significant casualties on the enemy.

The narrative is interspersed with Des Powell's life story, portraying a very human side to a seemingly ordinary man, who gets injured, makes mistakes, wonders how many times he can cheat death and worries about his wife at home. Yet is capable of extraordinary acts on a day to day basis.

This is a well-rounded and no holds barred account of men on the brink, successfully pulling off what was to all intents and purposes a suicide mission; combining the testimony of someone who was there, with the skill of a gifted historian.



ANTHONY TUCKER-JONES

CHURCHILL MASTER AND COMMANDER

WINSTON CHURCHILL AT WAR 1895-1945

FOREWORD BY
ANDREW ROBERTS

OSPREY

Churchill, Master & Commander:

Winston Churchill at War 1895-1945

Anthony Tucker-Jones

Rupert Hague-Holmes is an amateur military historian, currently writing a biography about the life and career of Lt Gen Sir George Lea, one of the leading post WW2 British counterinsurgency warfare experts.

There are many published books about Winston Churchill, but this is not yet another one. It is a quite remarkable analysis of, and insight into, Churchill's personality traits and experiences, as a young soldier and journalist during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the impact and influence of those traits and experiences on Churchill when Prime Minister during the Second World War. It is easy to read and, as befits its author's background as an intelligence officer, well researched and laid out.

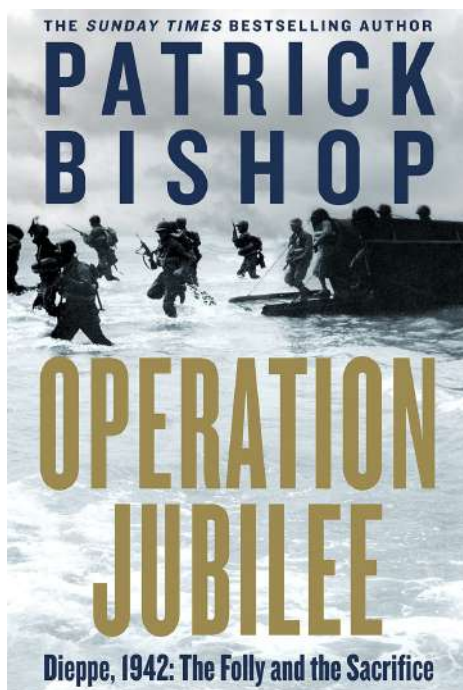
Churchill, Master & Commander would represent a great Christmas gift to any aspiring student of Churchill's leadership style and quirky personality. Its quality is augmented by useful maps and its bite-size chapters, each covering a particular theme, rather than historical sequence. The author cleverly draws out several attributes from Churchill's early years as a soldier-journalist - his impetuosity, willingness to take extreme personal risk and his aggression and desperation to be involved in any action. He then overlays Churchill's experiences, as a soldier, with his early years in public office. For example, his exposure to the Boer 'Kommando' guerrilla tactics during the Boer War, the disaster of the Gallipoli campaign, in 1915-6, when First Lord of the Admiralty, and his support for the aerial 'police bombing' by the RAF of recalcitrant tribes on the North West Frontier and Middle East, during the 1920s and 1930s. Tucker-Jones then highlights how this experience shaped, and contributed to, his leadership style during the Second World War. Good examples of the drawing together of these themes are the creation of the Commando units (based on the Boer experience) to conduct raids on occupied Europe and 'set it ablaze', and the carpet-bombing by RAF Bomber Command of German cities - initially supported by Churchill during the early years as a means of hitting back at the Germans.

That is the uniqueness of Tucker-Jones' book. Not a sycophantic biography, it is a balanced and thorough analysis of why Churchill

"There are many published books about Winston Churchill, but this is not yet another one."

was so successful as Prime Minister, particularly during the early days of the Second World War when Britain stood alone. Churchill's desire to be in the thick of any action meant he meddled continuously in the tactical execution of the war - much to his generals' frustration. Tucker-Jones unashamedly points out many of Churchill's failings - particularly, his poor judgement calls: his support for Edward VIII's desire to marry Wallis Simpson; his misreading of Japanese intentions during the Far East conflicts with China in the 1930s; the disastrous raid on Dieppe in 1942; and the costly military intervention to support Greece in 1941 - these last two operations carried out at Churchill's direct instigation.

However, as Tucker-Jones points out, despite these failings, Churchill's leadership was about optimism and defiance - when it was most needed - and his ability to inspire, motivate and engage a country to fight a war, which initially seemed a lost cause. That resilience was Churchill's real leadership legacy. This is a thoroughly recommended book and important to appreciate its focus and scope as a welcome addition to the Churchill library.



Operation Jubilee, Dieppe 1942: The Folly & The Sacrifice

Patrick Bishop

Robert Lyman is a historian and writer, and author of *Slim: Master of War* and *The Real X-Men: The Heroic Story of the Underwater War: 1942-45*. *A War of Empires: Japan, India, Burma & Britain 1941-45* is his latest book.

This is another thoroughbred from Bishop's stable, the essence of which is pithily summed up in the title. The raid on Dieppe in 1942 was a piece of monumental folly that the architects spent the rest of their lives trying to escape from and blame each other for. Bishop's brilliance as an historian (helped by his expertise as a biographer) lies in building a detailed picture of the context in which military operations took place, together with fine portrayals of the broad cast of characters who played roles in first designing and then executing the folly that was the Dieppe raid in August 1942. It is through both the context for the raid – the political and military urgency to 'do something' to demonstrate to oneself let alone one's allies that Britain was able to defeat the Germans in battle, all at a time of deep strategic gloom (think of the ongoing U-Boat menace and the loss of Singapore and Tobruk to reinforce a feeling among Britain's own population and politicians of serial military incompetence) – and the detailed character sketches, that we can trace the follies and foibles – and occasional strokes of genius and naïve pre-battle exuberance of un-blooded men keen to prove themselves worthy of their fathers – that makes up this terrible story. For it was terrible. Of the 6,086 men who landed (5,000 of whom were Canadians), by the end of the day 3,623 had been killed, wounded or been taken prisoner. The Royal Navy and RAF also lost heavily. It's a story of over-reach, hasty judgements, ignorant assumptions and wishful thinking, together with selfishness, point-scoring and buck-passing. No one comes out well from the story, except for the brave men who were sent into the jaws of death in a vain but valiant attempt to rescue a hopeless plan, and paid for it in blood.

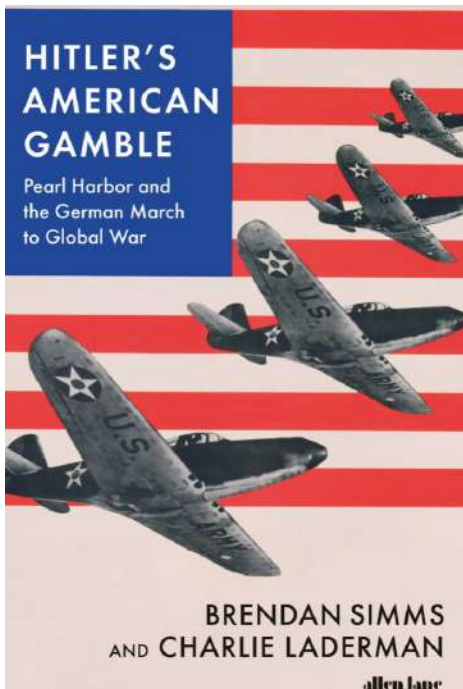
Bishop carefully evaluates the reasons for the raid – strategic, operational and personal – and concludes that in the nexus between the political desire for an attack on mainland France, the over-optimistic planning and the poor coordination between the three services – and the shocking lack of accountability by virtually every decision-maker in the process – lay chaos and

"For all its folly, and one wishes the terrible loss of life were otherwise, the sacrifice of Dieppe was, probably, worth it."

disaster. He considers the argument that the raid was mounted solely to find Enigma machines and codes and while recognising that this was one aim of the raid, finds the mono-causal claim unconvincing.

Bishop correctly paints Operation *Jubilee* as a piece of abject folly driven by hubris. He is surely correct. While it wasn't mounted to learn lessons in advance of a future cross-channel invasion (as Hughes-Hallett was later to claim), there is no doubt that D Day two-years on learned much from this disaster, not least of all in the careful planning of every element of the attack; the coordination of sea, land and air assets; the decision not to land on a heavily defended shore; the use of preliminary shore bombardment and much more. Most importantly, although not absent entirely in 1944, D Day saw a considerably more fluent interaction between the primary planners and the three services providing the tools to do the job on the beaches of Normandy and beyond. Some lessons were clearly learned.

For all its folly, and one wishes the terrible loss of life were otherwise, the sacrifice of Dieppe was, probably, worth it.



Hitler's American Gamble:

Pearl Harbor and the German March to Global War

Brendan Simms & Charlie Laderman

Cormac Quinn is a diplomat working at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office on international development, having served overseas in Africa and the Middle East; he has previously worked for the EU.

With so many books written on the Second World War you'd be hard pressed to find one that does not ask a question that has already been answered and debated at length, but *Hitler's American Gamble* is one such book.

Why on earth would Japan and Germany dare to declare war on America, who were clearly the world's industrial superpower - surely this was insanity?

Brendan Simms and Charlie Laderman's collaborative work is as gripping as it is well researched. A compelling hour-by-hour epic account of world domination. They brilliantly combine personal insights of world leaders, letters from the front and the views of the man on the street to dramatise a momentous week that shaped the modern world as we know it today.

Spanning 6-12th December 1941, from the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to Hitler's declaration of war on the United States, they devote a chapter to each day, but the narrative is anything but formulaic. These two historians enthrall the reader through the global twists and turns from the vast seas of the Pacific, to the sand dunes of North Africa and bitter cold battlefields of Russia.

As we know, the narrative on past wars is usually monopolised by the victors but Simms and Laderman are careful to give equal space, explaining how Hitler saw the war as a clash between the haves (in his view Anglo-Saxons and Jewish plutocracy) and have nots (led by the German Reich) and why the Japanese felt trapped by the slow strangulation of US sanctions.

They capture the despair of Churchill, the paranoia of Hitler, the leap of faith by the Japanese and dilemmas faced by Roosevelt. Through the journey the reader begins to understand why certain decisions that with hindsight seem crazy, in fact had basis in rationale.

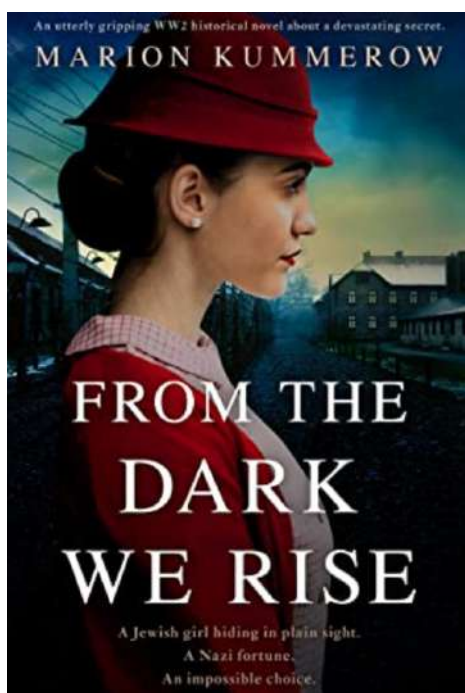
The sheer audacity of the initial Japanese surprise attack of Pearl Harbor and their sinking of the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* are compelling retold - confounding the antiquated and frankly racist views previously held by the Anglo-Saxon world. With US Navy Secretary Knox having assured Roosevelt before the attack that the US could "lick the Japs in two weeks" and Churchill boasting that the Japanese would "fold up like the Italians". Even after the initial attacks, there was still a conviction that the Germans must have directed actions and taken part in the opening operations.

While Churchill was clear that "if Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons", Roosevelt remained ultra-cautious due to strong anti-interventionist sentiment, leaving Hitler to finally pull the trigger among much pomp and ceremony in the Reichstag on 11th December 1941.

Before this pivotal moment, you are gripped and left to reflect on a set of potential Sliding Doors scenarios that could have played out if leaders had made slightly different decisions - some of which would have almost certainly spelt disaster for Britain and the Soviet Union.

The book also painfully sets out of the initial stages of the Jewish holocaust and how they were unwittingly used as geo-political hostages by Hitler, whose gruesome fate was sealed once war was formally declared.

It is not that some of the points in this book are a revelation. Indeed, many facts covered are well-known to most historians, but what *Hitler's American Gamble* does is to challenge some of our long-standing narratives on the outcomes of the Second World War. Simms and Laderman have created a truly thought-provoking book, which unexpectedly for me shed new light on a period of history that I thought had all angles covered.



From the Dark We Rise

Marion Kummerow

Allan Martin is a writer, and author of *The Inspector Angus Blue Mysteries*. His latest novel is *The Dead of Appin*.

Marion Kummerow is German but writes in English, and is a prolific author of historical and historical romance fiction, mainly set in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s. *From the Dark We Rise* is the second in her 'Margarete's Journey' series, which began with *A Light in the Window*. In that book Margarete Rosenbaum, a Jewish girl, works in Berlin as a housemaid for a senior SS officer. However, in 1941 the house is bombed, killing the officer, his wife and their daughter. Rescued from the rubble, she is mistaken for the daughter, Annegret Huber, to whom she had some similarities of appearance. She gratefully assumes Annegret's identity. She eventually moves to Paris where she meets Annegret's brother Wilhelm, who goes along with her imposture, and makes contact with the French resistance. She falls in love with Wilhelm, but he and his brother are killed in a bomb blast.

In *From the Dark We Rise* Margarete, still posing as Annegret Huber, has moved in the summer of 1942 to the family's country estate in the Mecklenburg Lake District. Here she must learn to be the mistress of a large estate, working with housekeeper Frau Mertens and estate manager Gustav Fischer. Maintaining her assumed identity is hard work, especially her refusal to ride a horse, since, unlike Annegret, Margarete can't ride. This arouses the suspicions of stableman Oliver Gundelmann, who knew, and hated, Annegret as a child. She also discovers something she is not supposed to know about: there is an ammunition factory on the estate, using forced labour in dangerous conditions. She comes across, and decides to hide a Jewish woman who has escaped from the factory. To make matters worse, food and raw materials for the factory are being skimmed off for private sale. How can Margarete deal with this without giving herself away? This is part of a series, so naturally Margarete will manage to survive. You'll have to read the book to find out how.

The book has very much the feel of a historical romance, rather than a historical thriller, and there is indeed a passion between

"The book has very much the feel of a historical romance, rather than a historical thriller."

Dora, Margarete's Ukrainian maid, and Oliver, with a suitably happy ending. No doubt the next in the series will bring romance again for Margarete, as there was in Book One.

From the Dark We Rise offers a readable tale of relationships in a rural setting, and will satisfy many readers of the historical romance genre, who will look forward to the next episode of Margarete's journey.

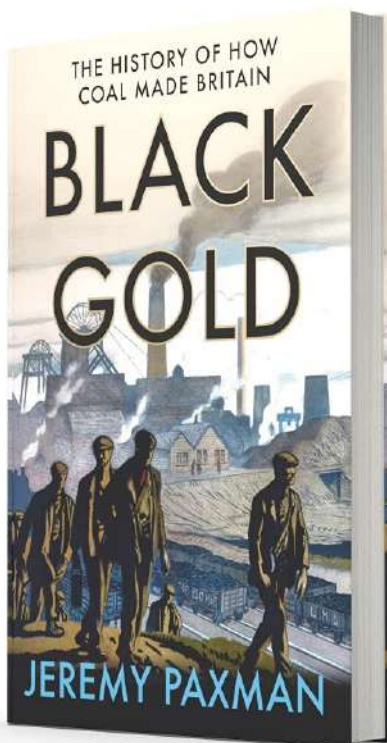
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