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SOMME

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have been well advised to find someone experienced in the military profession to read the final typescript to save them from many of those other elementary mistakes that bring the book's overall worth into question. That would have prevented the Military Air Transport Service from becoming the "Material Air Transport Service," and would also have prevented reporting that in 1967 the USS *Liberty* was sunk, which she was not. There are many other obvious mistakes that careful editing would have prevented. Of these the most important is the failure to recognize in the *Mayaguez* incident that the Cambodian government had decided to release the crew of that captured American freighter before either the Marine landing on Kob Tang Island or the bombing of the Coral Sea had taken place.

This biography of George S. Brown, then, is a last testimonial from his friends—a eulogy and no more. When we do get a history of his stewardship of our national security, we will learn a great deal about crisis leadership, the way that the bureaucracy works, and about survival in Washington in times of political turmoil.

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Macdonald, Lyn. *SOMME*. London: Michael Joseph, 1983. 366pp. \$19.95

The Battle of the Somme opened with an artillery barrage of unprecedented intensity and duration herald-

ing the "Big Push" on 24 June 1916, and ended without achieving its objective over 300,000 casualties later on 21 November 1916. The end was sadly heroic. A forlorn band of ninety men from the Glasgow Boys Brigade Battalion (officially the 16th Highland Light Infantry) reported as "missing" had actually captured a length of battered German trench and held out six days longer. Reduced to fifteen "starving, filthy, frozen, exhausted" men, they were overwhelmed by unrelenting German counterattacks. The German major interrogating them said, "Is this what held the Brigade up for a week? Who are you and where have you come from?"

Lyn Macdonald's book gives the answer to that question. It is an account of *Kitchener's Army*—shipping clerks, errand boys, stevedores, railway porters, grocer's assistants, postmen—men who were transformed from patriotic, high-spirited groups of "pals" on a lark to cannon fodder, corpses and a few surviving soldiers. This is a superb but overwhelmingly sad piece of historical research and writing. The author establishes an objective, and achieves it. "This book does not set out to draw political conclusions and, although it is the story of a battle, it is more concerned with the experience of war than with the war itself."

The story is told in a remarkable series of eyewitness accounts that bring back to life and, death, the men and the times. The author's complete understanding of the battle and mastery of the terrain is the warp

through which is woven the woof-threads of personal experiences by the participants on her narrative loom, which produces a seamless literary fabric. The resulting tapestry is rich in color and texture: killed Scots, the Australians and New Zealanders bronzed and blooded from Gallipoli, Canadians, 35 South Africans who paid their own passage to England to enlist in 1914, the Royal Naval Division (steadfastly retaining naval rank) and the "lads" of *Kitcheners Army*—an agglomeration of local groups of pals, buddies, workmates, fellow-townsmen. It is complete work. Nothing is neglected: Chinese labor battalions, the Zeppelin attacks on London (linked to experiences of soldiers evacuated to England because of glutting of the medical system in France), visits of the King and the Prime Minister to the battle, logistical snarls, meticulous staff work in planning broken down by the underlying false tactical assumptions and lack of any real strategy.

The very organization of the Army insured that the more than 300,000 casualties (over 90,000 dead) would decimate the male population of the communities sponsoring the "lads." The casualties that initially inundated the medical evacuation chain—military hospitals in France and England, civilian hospitals and finally private homes and public buildings—also littered the battlefield with bloated, blackened, rotting men and horses. Casualties also shattered the fighting units of the Army. One example, Corporal Jack

Beament of the Church Lads Brigade (Kings Royal Rifle Corps): "It was a horrible, terrible massacre. We'd lost all the officers out of our company. We lost all the sergeants, all the full corporals and all the NCOs right down to Herbert King who was the senior Lance-Corporal. He was my pal and he brought 'A' Company out of the wood. He rallied them and brought them out. There were more than two hundred of us went in. And Herbert brought them out. Sixty seven men. 'Thar was all.'"

At Delville Wood, the South African Brigade went into action on Bastille Day, 14 July 1916 three thousand strong; at roll-call when they came out, only seven hundred sixty-eight men answered. Two Australian divisions lost over six thousand officers and men in the month of July 1916.

As the story develops, the author is at pains to provide the reader with precise maps of all actions and annotated photographs both from ground vantage points and the air. She wants the reader to see all and understand everything about the terrain and leaves nothing to the imagination; just as the diaries and testimony of the participants do everything to put into the reader's mind the thoughts and words that allows one to recreate the events of the Somme.

It was a senseless, but historic, battle bridging the ages from a cavalry charge at High Wood on Bastille Day to the first use of modern armor, the tank-led assault on Flers, 12 September 1916. Both affairs were badly managed. The lancers' charge

was 12 hours too late to exploit a gap the infantry had made and should have moved into at once. The tank attack dissipated the shock effect by distributing 42 tanks over 15 kilometers. The Somme was conceived with a series of politically motivated designs rather than the result of sound strategic analysis. The grand tactic was faulty, the six-day artillery barrage did not pulverize the German defenses. It started badly with a disastrous ten minute pause in artillery support, which allowed the Germans to come out of their deep bunkers and man machine guns and inflict 57,000 casualties on that day alone. It ended badly, too.

The author does not judge. She uses the results of her own knowledge and the research support (largely volunteers from the 1981 Sixth Form of the Harvey Grammar School of Folkestone, England) which is diverse and international to let the reader have the ability to judge. Her book is the chronicle of a national tragedy that helped to disfigure Western European Civilization.

But it is really a soldier's tale, told by the fighting officers and men on both sides. Perhaps the worst indictment of the strategy and leadership in this phase of World War I is outside the covers of this book. Basil Liddell Hart writing about Passchendaele (as has Lyn Macdonald in a previous work) records the "remorse of one who was largely responsible for it . . . Growing increasingly uneasy as the car approached the swamp-like edges of the battle area, he (the general) eventually burst into

tears crying, 'Good God, did we really send men to fight in that?'"

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Mack, William P. and Paulsen, Thomas D. *The Naval Officer's Guide*. Annapolis, Md.: US Naval Institute Press, 1983. 537pp. \$14.95

Bassett, Frank E. and Smith, Richard A. *Farewell's Rules of the Nautical Road*, 6th ed. Annapolis, Md.: US Naval Institute Press, 1982. 500pp. \$21.95

Two recent editions of classic naval works have been published by the Naval Institute Press, and both are solid additions to any maritime library. *The Naval Officer's Guide* and *Farewell's Rules of the Nautical Road* have been reference works of note for naval officers since their original publication in 1943 and 1941 respectively. Both editions are improvements and refinements of earlier efforts undertaken by highly qualified authors.

The Naval Officer's Guide is clearly aimed at the junior officer who has only recently been commissioned. It contains a wealth of very basic information covering such subjects as "The Importance of Our Navy," "Personal Administration," "Military Courtesy, Honors, and Ceremonies," and so on. It has detailed information on the various branches of the government involved with the Navy, as well as broad coverage of the naval forces themselves. Admiral Mack, a former superintendent of the Naval Academy, manages to